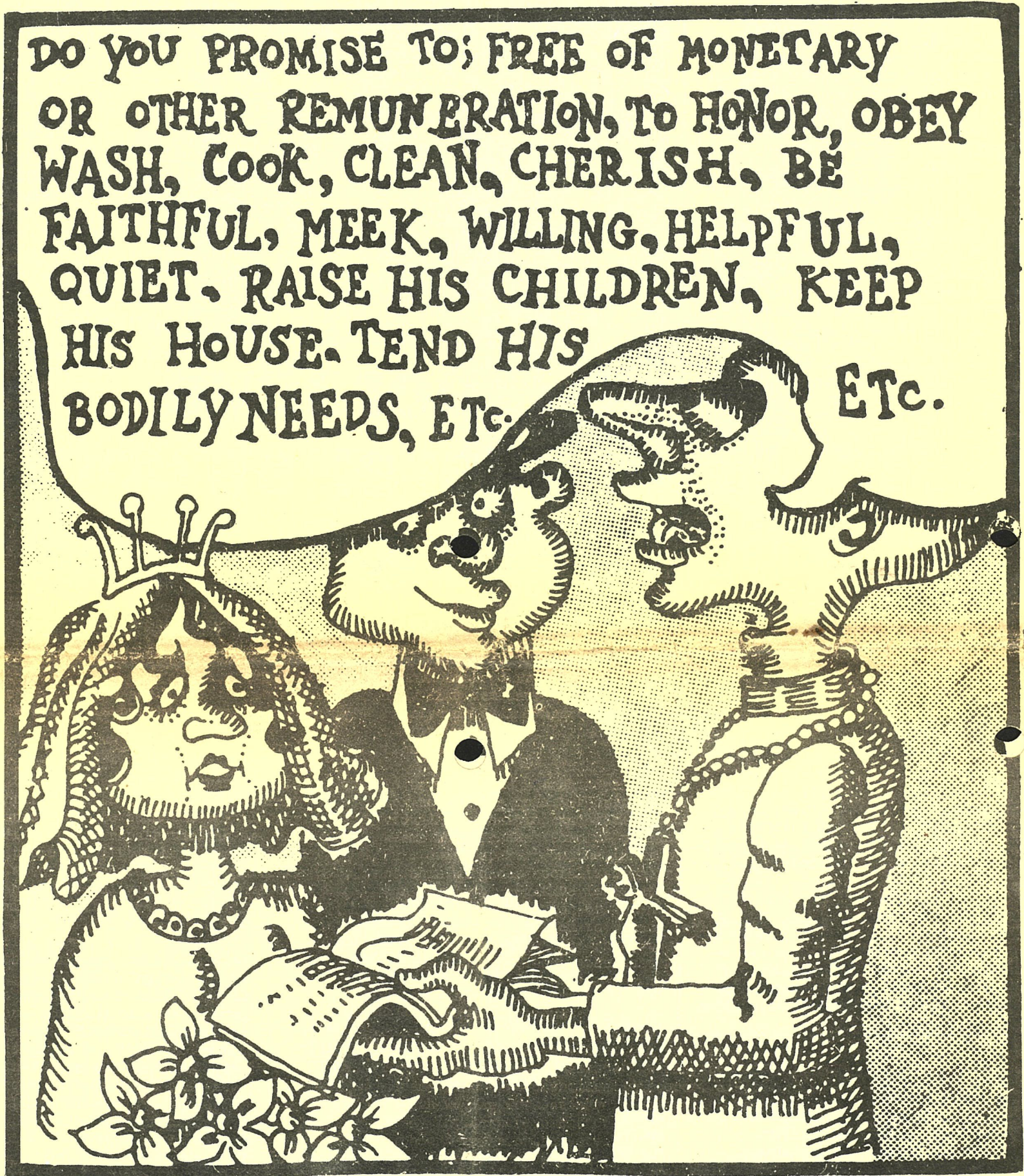


VELVET



FIST

a women's liberation newspaper



page 3: abortion campaign
 focusses on Nov. 20
 page 4: Germaine Greer
 in Toronto

editorial:

This issue of Velvet Fist is being published in the midst of the activities which were projected by the Ontario Women's Abortion Action Conference on Oct. 2: the campaign to gather petitions across the country supporting abortion law repeal, and the preparations for the Nov. 20 procession and assembly in Ottawa. These two actions are part of what is emerging as the most dynamic and impressive campaign for women's rights since the fight for female suffrage fifty years ago: the campaign to remove abortion from the Criminal Code.

The Velvet Fist is a women's liberation paper. Its writers have, in different ways, described the situation of women today and have argued for the necessity to change this situation. We have emphasized the necessity to build a movement which can unite women despite our differences, and which can, through this unity, have the strength to win crucial victories for women.

It is in the growth of the abortion campaign that we are seeing the beginnings of this movement. This campaign is reaching out far past the forces known as the "women's liberation movement" to bring together women who perhaps never before thought they had anything in common. High school women and women from the church auxiliaries, campus women and housewives, professional women, office women, welfare women, women of all ages and of all walks of life, are uniting in meetings and conferences and actions across the country to fight for ABORTION: A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE.

It is no accident that abortion is the issue which is uniting women. The fact that we are all vulnerable to unplanned pregnancy becomes the rationale and basis of most of the discrimination and indignity suffered by women; there is hardly a woman alive who hasn't felt the anguish and frustration of her lack of control over her body's functioning. Canada's women are beginning to awaken. It's not surprising that a woman's right to choose when and whether she will bear a child is the first issue that masses of women can agree on.

Abortion law repeal is a crucial reform. In itself it will end the victimization of countless women who suffer the consequences of abortion being a crime—either through bearing an unwanted child, or through undergoing backstreet abortions, or through enduring the indignities of waiting for a hospital committee decision.

And victory on this issue will point the way for future victories. Velvet Fist staff are working for the Nov. 20 actions and the petition campaign; we urge our readers to do the same. This is how our movement will be built—the movement that will truly be called the women's liberation movement.

Vol. 1 No. 8

Editorial Staff for this issue:

Lis Angus, Mary-Ellen Clark, Karen Cunliffe, Sandra Fox, Lorna Grant, Pat Leslie, Ellen May, Ellen Seretan, Iva Stanley, Jill Thompson.



co-operative daycare: struggle at Sussex St.

by PAT LESLIE

Mothers represent 24% of female workers and half have children under 6. Day care is not accessible to many of these women for a variety of reasons: there are waiting lists to get on waiting lists, and the majority could not afford day care even if their children were pooled.

It is not easy to set up your own centre. You need facilities. You must meet requirements. And there are reasons for government restrictions. If day care were easily available to all, it would free many mothers to work—at a time when the labour market is least capable of accommodating what has always been "reserve labour" (i.e., female labour) and setting women in competition for men's jobs. Is it not true that day care centers were closed after the men came back from the second world war?

However, it is not enough that day care be provided only for working mothers. Twenty-four hour day care means mother need not fear illness. She can go shopping or have free time for her hobby. It is not so wrong for a mother to want to be alone for awhile.

But child care provides more than a baby-sitting service. It liberates the child

as well—to develop relationships with other children its own age, free from dependence on the mother. How many youngsters are torn away from their mothers for the first time when they enter primary school?

A mother can raise 10 children but is not qualified to care for 10 unrelated children. Two mothers looking after 10 children free eight women. But a group of mothers who want to raise children on a co-operative basis is unable to do so legally in Ontario because suddenly they are "unqualified". And raising children cooperatively is exactly what the Campus Community Cooperative Day Care Centre in Toronto is doing.

"Welcome to the House Full of Little People" says the sign at 12 Sussex, a second home for 20 babies under two years. They are growing up with children who are not their brothers and sisters, and the centre is theirs to shape and change while adults are there only for service and affection. These little people for whom I have done volunteer work are in danger of losing this house if their parents do not win a court appeal this month.

After a long battle with the university for adequate funding, Sussex parents have met all provincial requirements but one. They have no "qualified" person who is acceptable to the Day Nurseries Branch, which means a specially trained Mothercraft coordinator. To hire trained personnel would be an intolerable compromise of 12 Sussex principles. The government argument is that Sussex has good intentions but does not know enough about raising children. They are presumed to be experts in their own homes but not in a collective situation! The presence of the fathers has even been questioned, since child care is supposed to be woman's work. As the government has let the centre run two years with no licence, it almost looks like university sabotage.

Twelve Sussex should be granted a licence not only because of the serious need but because this centre is the only one in the city with cooperative child care as its operational perspective. Try to keep informed of its future. It needs us and we need it as a community alternative.

WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENING?

VELVET FIST carries regular news and articles from the growing women's liberation movement. Write to:

SUBSCRIPTIONS, VELVET FIST
188 Adelaide Street West,
Toronto, Ontario.

() Enclosed is \$1.00 for five issues of the Velvet Fist
() Enclosed is \$2.00 for ten issues of the Velvet Fist
Please send me a regular bundle of 5, 10, 15, 20,
more at 15¢ a copy to sell at 25¢. Enclosed is my
cheque for \$_____

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

abortion- united we will win

by KAREN CUNLIFFE

We are now able to report on the decisions reached at all the abortion law repeal coalition conferences held across Canada within the last month, with the exception of the Winnipeg conference which occurs too late for our deadline this issue.

Conferences were held in Toronto, Vancouver, Saskatoon and there were two in Montreal. All the coalitions have endorsed actions for November 20. The other major decision taken was to launch a petition campaign in support of Grace MacInnis' (NDP Vancouver-Kingsway) and Hylliard Chappell's (Liberal Peel South) private members bills which call for repeal of all those sections of the Criminal Code dealing with abortion.

Nov. 20 in Ottawa

At the Ontario Women's Action Conference held in Toronto, attended by approximately 200 women, it was decided the central theme of the campaign will be "Abortion—A Woman's Right to Choose". The coalition also defends the right of all women to have access to safe birth control devices and information and that abortion must be available without the threat of forced sterilization. There was a call for a mass demonstration in Ottawa on November 20. We have been advised that Laura Sabia, President of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Status of Women, plans to attend and is urging the women of her organization also to be there. The conference closed with a statement by Esther Greenglass, Assistant Professor of Psychology at York University and member of the Liberal Task Force on the Status of Women: "We are sick and tired of being told by groups of celebrities and male politicians what we can and cannot do with our bodies. United we will win!"

bi-national rally

Two conferences were held in Montreal. The English-speaking women voted their complete support for the Ottawa mass demonstration and will send representation. Their major plan of action will be the petition campaign and they also plan to hold a march and rally in Montreal in conjunction with the French-speaking coalition on November 20—probably in front of the Criminal Court building. Rita MacNeil of Toronto Women's Caucus (whom many of our readers have heard either in person or on her record) attended, singing her own women's liberation songs. As always, her singing inspired and moved many women. Also in Montreal, le Front Commun pour l'Abrogation des Lois sur l'Avortement held a meeting attended by over 100 abortion law repeal supporters. This meeting was a tremendous success. They endorsed the petition campaign and, as mentioned, will jointly participate in a demonstration in Montreal on November 20. Their new sponsors include Pauline Julien, the well-known singer; Francine Lalonde, President of FNEQ, a union representing 5,000 teachers; and the Quebec NDP.

abortion caravan

Saskatoon women supported the petition campaign and are planning a caravan to Regina on November 20 to demand that the NDP Government explain why it has not implemented its policy of repeal. The sponsors of this coalition include Pat Evans, Chairwoman, Unitarian Fellowship of Saskatoon; Dr. Doris Dyke, Professor, U. of S. College of Education; Judge Tillie Taylor; Alderman George Raylor; Miro Kwasnica, NDP-MLA for Cutknife; Mary Marino, Professor of Anthropology, U. of S.



Esther Greenglass



Laura Sabia

B.C. conference

At their conference on October 2, B.C. Women's Abortion Law Repeal Coalition voted in favour of a petition campaign and a march and rally in Vancouver's Thornton Park on November 20. The theme will be "Repeal all Abortion Laws Now: Abortion—Each Woman's Right to Choose". They have come up with an ingenious idea to draw attention to the petition campaign. They took a cart which looks like a desk on wheels to the Hudson's Bay store and obtained 200 signatures in 1½ hours!

petition campaign

The petition campaign is crucial to winning repeal. Pierre Trudeau, long silent on the issue of abortion, claimed on October 29 in Halifax that the liberalization of the grounds for abortion have divided the country greatly and "Quite frankly that is as far as I want to go." He also said he "would really be very influenced by the overwhelming feeling of women ... I don't feel I can speak with great authority on this because I am not a woman." Trudeau himself recognizes that abortion is a woman's issue but that he is not prepared to do anything about it unless forced into it by public opinion. The Catholic Women's League's Project 100,000 letters will give Trudeau an idea of what some Canadian women want; we through our petition campaign across the country will have to show him these women don't speak for all Canadian women—they don't speak for us. Women in small communities, or those not involved in feminist groups, can involve themselves in the struggle for abortion: A Woman's Right to Choose in a tangible way by taking this petition to their jobs, to social, professional or church groups they belong to. They can circulate it among their friends. It isn't hard to get signatures. It has been our experience at Toronto Women's Caucus that women are often eager to sign; the sentiment obviously is strong to repeal the abortion laws. Trudeau's personal opinion cannot stand in the way of what the majority of Canadian women are demanding. These petitions are available at all the coalition offices in Canada. These addresses are in the Velvet Fist. We urge you to contact the one in your province and take part in this campaign.



Grace MacInnis

debate this session?

Winnipeg women confronted Minister of Justice, John Turner in that city on October 20. They demanded to know why the Liberal Government and Turner's Department have refused to act upon Section 237 of the Criminal Code although the Royal Commission on the Status of Women strongly recommended change. They laid the blame squarely on the Government for the "continued sufferings of Canadian women who are faced with unwanted pregnancies." Since the Federal Liberal Party has supported abortion law repeal, they demanded to know why the Federal Government doesn't. "Enforced maternity has no place in a 'just' society", they said. Grace MacInnis' bill on abortion law repeal has been pending since 1969 and the group demanded to know when the Government will have a debate on it. In response to these questions, Justice Minister Turner committed himself to bringing MacInnis' bill before the House before the end of this session. Trudeau in Halifax, doubted the bill would pass. He said Parliament probably wouldn't decide the issue quickly. "It would not only take weeks or months, but it probably wouldn't even pass anyway." Obviously, the only way to succeed is to show the Government what we want and demand that we get it.

campaign addresses

263-9773
ONTARIO WOMEN'S ABORTION LAW
REPEAL COALITION
Mail: Box 5673, Stn. A, Tor.
Office: 96 Gerrard St. E. Tor.

WOMEN'S COALITION FOR ABORTION
LAW REPEAL
1355 Dorchester West
Montreal, Quebec

COMITE POUR L'ABROGATION DES
LOIS SUR L'AVORTEMENT
877 av. Dollard
Outremont, Quebec

MANITOBA ABORTION ACTION
COALITION
315B-416 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

B.C. WOMEN'S ABORTION LAW
REPEAL COALITION
483 East 28th Street
Vancouver 10, B.C.

SASKATOON WOMEN FOR ABORTION
LAW REPEAL
#2-521-18th Street West
Saskatoon, Sask.

Eleanor Pelrine is the author of Abortion in Canada, one of the few published studies of the abortion situation in this country. Now 39, she has been a free-lance writer for nearly 16 years. Eleanor met her husband Dennis, who is also an author, nine years ago, while editing a Homes and Living magazine. Upon marriage she inherited 5 sons, now aged 18-25. The Pelrines presently live in a small village in Mexico with their 3 year old son, Miguel.

interview with Eleanor P

by LORNA GRANT

I interviewed Eleanor during her recent visit to Toronto. During this time she attended the Ontario Women's Abortion Action Conference and has been actively involved in the Ontario Women's Abortion Law Repeal Coalition.



Abortion in Canada was written for very definite reasons. Eleanor explains: "Apart from an interest in the subject over several years, I think the demonstration in Ottawa in May, 1970 really woke me up to the fact that the so-called liberalized law was not at all liberalized and the women of Canada were still suffering. We listened to CBC shortwave radio news from Canada and heard the account of the demonstration. My first reaction was one of surprise that such a demonstration had been considered well advised and, secondly necessary. As I got the second reports I realized that it was very well thought out and terribly well organized. That was what got my attention. Dennis and I sat up that night until midnight discussing the situation and then I decided to come to Canada to research the subject and see whether a book was necessary. After a week I decided it.....There had to be some kind of

document which could be read; could be passed around; something which could say publicly what a great many of us suspected for a long time - that this law was bloody immoral and devastating to Canadian women and simply was not working."



Canadians are not aware that the present abortion law, which Eleanor calls "the reform that hardly was", is not working. She observes: "The public does not know that the law does not require hospitals to establish therapeutic abortion committees and without therapeutic abortion committees there can be no legal abortions. On the basis of my survey of hospitals, fewer than one-third of Canadian hospitals with 100 beds or more even have therapeutic abortion committees. I think that the law as it is worded makes it easy for hospitals to refuse to face up to their responsibilities. Canada's experience isn't unique - every country which has attempted to enact liberalized abortion laws has discovered that it doesn't cover anything at all, because in practice it simply doesn't work. You get people shuffling papers, buried by administrative details and ultimately it's the woman who suffers or, if she's unfortunate enough to actually bear the unwanted child, the child who suffers."

Since the publication of Abortion in Canada the Canadian Psychiatric Association, the B.C. Medical Association, the Alberta Medical Association, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Canadian Medical Association and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists have all called for repeal of the abortion laws. Eleanor feels: "Very soon Mr. Trudeau will have no place to go; he's in his last corner now. First he said he didn't know how the law was working so, among other people, I helped to enlighten him about that. Then he said, has he shrugged off the complaints women were making about the inhumanity of the law, ask the doctors. So they asked the doctors - and the doctors answered."



Eleanor feels that, besides political confrontation "over and over and over again", one of the main tasks of the abortion campaign is to educate people - "One woman said to me 'If you repeal the abortion law every Tom, Dick and Harry will be applying for an abortion.' Even she realized how funny that was, but then I realized after talking to her that she was baffled. She's of the opinion that she and her friends have the ability to judge; the right to judge. She's not sure that all those people 'out there' are equipped to make the necessary judgement."

Greer in Toronto

by ELLEN SERETAN

On Saturday afternoon, October 23, Germaine Greer, author of The Female Eunuch and "superstar" of the feminist movement, presented herself to an audience of seven to eight hundred—probably the largest gathering of conscious and interested women Toronto has ever seen. Unfortunately Germaine was unprepared for the occasion; she had expected to meet with only a handful of feminist leaders for an informal discussion and she expressed her disappointment at not being able to do so that afternoon. Nevertheless, she spoke articulately on a number of subjects that interest feminists and answered many questions from the floor.

She conveyed her anxiety about the day care situation and asked what was going on in Toronto. Women in the audience explained the plight of the Sussex St. Cooperative Day Care Centre and why they are unable to obtain a license. Germaine pointed out the gross contradictions in the law that holds one woman responsible for the care of 16 children if they belong to her but requires the employment of so-called "experts" if 16 children born to several different mothers are gathered in a single home for the day. Germaine then asked the audience if the Sussex mothers can rely on their sisters to support them in their struggle against what she termed "the forces of law and order", and the response was encouraging. Germaine indicated that she considers

day care to be one of the first priorities of the women's movement, since it makes women aware of the values of a cooperative society—that is, owning goods in common.

A woman in the audience asked if the non-political woman had any place in the feminist movement, but the process of discovering one's own oppression will hopefully lead the formerly non-political woman to certain realizations about the society that not only sanctions their oppression but depends upon it for economic reasons. And these realizations are necessarily of a political nature.

On the question of abortion Germaine said that we are asking that women be allowed to be moral creatures and that children be conceived as an act of will. She said that we should not be disdainful of our Catholic sisters, who are among the most oppressed of all women. She stressed that we must be compassionate and understanding of the great problems and anxieties they face because of Church dogma.

Germaine expressed her desire to shed her media-concocted "superstar" image and devote her energies to the real problems of women's liberation. She found a sympathetic and enthusiastic audience in those of us who were present, and it was obvious to all that there is strong but as yet untapped sentiment for the women's liberation movement in Toronto.



elrine



Eleanor Pelrine and Miguel

The medical profession, too, needs educating, according to Eleanor who recalls: "I heard a doctor say that he freely suggests abortion for most women who want it unless they want it for 'trivial' reasons. He talked with some complacency and I think, some pride about a schizophrenic woman who had come before him to ask for an abortion and how he had recommended to the therapeutic committee of this hospital that she not have one because it was his medical judgement that her schizophrenic condition would be worsened by guilt feelings after the abortion. I asked him, 'Did you not consider the fate of the unborn child?' and he said, 'Well, she was the patient before me.' And I just had to shake my head."



Eleven years before writing Abortion in Canada, Eleanor experienced first-hand the trauma of illegal abortion. This had a tremendous impact upon her. She recalls, "I had an illegal abortion in Montreal, performed by a doctor purported to have formerly been a doctor in a Nazi prison camp. It was a D and C, performed without anesthetic at all. He smoked a cigar and sang opera throughout. It was one of the most traumatic experiences I've ever had, not because of the physical pain but because of the terrible, terrible indignity. I felt anger and resentment at the society which forced me to resort to this kind of abortion, which forced me to be even in the same room, let alone to submit to a medical procedure by that kind of man. However, I can assure you that, after the fact of the abortion, I was relieved. I was grateful that he had at least been medically competent and I don't think I felt guilt ever. I felt regret. I was involved in an impossible relationship and I was accidentally pregnant. Twelve years ago the Pill was really just being tested in Canada. I realized then, as I realize now, that my involvement was totally impossible on any permanent basis and that it would have been very wrong for me to bring a child into that relationship."

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Eleanor attended the Ontario Women's Abortion Action Conference on October 2. The conference marked the Ontario Women's Abortion Law Repeal Coalition and mapped out plans for a campaign to win repeal of the abortion laws. One of the decisions of the conference was that the Coalition be a woman's coalition - because, since it is women who suffer most directly from the present laws, it should be women who take the initiative to change them.

Eleanor felt in advance of the conference that it was not desirable to have a women's coalition; but during the course of the conference, she changed her opinion. She explains, "I felt it was not desirable, especially from a public relations standpoint, to spell out for the benefit of the media that policy decisions would be made only by women. However I happily went to the conference since we shared so many aims

and I wound up feeling that the women who contended that for years we've waited for men to do something about this, were really right; that, in fact, policy decisions should be made by women; that it was right and reasonable that this should be a strictly women's coalition."

Eleanor continued, "I'm in sharp disagreement with the Association for the Repeal of Canadian Abortion Laws (ARCAL) on this, as well as some other issues, based on their attitude to pull out. (Ed. note: ARCAL withdrew their support from the Coalition because of the women-only policy.) I don't know how national that decision was or how much of it was based upon the attitude of one or two women. In any case, I think that it's a great, great shame because what ARCAL needs, in my opinion, is a strong activist spark. ARCAL, in my experience, has a number of reasoned and reasonable people who lack activist training and experience and for that reason I think they belong in the Coalition and they would benefit as much as the Coalition would benefit. I think the Coalition can exist without them but I think they'll both lose a little."



Eleanor, who considers herself a feminist, says, "I've been fighting for all the things we're all fighting for now for a number of years but I've been doing it as an individual. Professionally I've been struggling to get equal pay for equal work. I've struggled socially to the point where, when I finally met my husband when I was 30, I had absolutely determined that I was never going to marry. Fortunately, I met a man who wants me to be my own person; who's delighted that I'm my own person; who doesn't question anything I do professionally. He doesn't let my opinions interfere with what we've managed to build together and he doesn't try to impose his opinions on me. I think he is part of a very rare breed. At the moment I don't see marriage, as it now exists, as being an institution which needs preservation. I happen to be married, I happen to be happy but I think that's very rare. I think the whole structure of society needs to change - the obvious things that the feminists fight for - day care centres; the concept of having a whole lot

of people involved in the care and educational training rather than having your children confined within four walls smothered in the attention of a very frustrated mother. All these things I believe in, but until the women's liberation movement grew up I thought I was the only person in the whole world who did. I suppose that's a common experience."



Eleanor finds the women's liberation movement exciting, but is disappointed that so many of her contemporaries do not share her enthusiasm. She finds that most of her communication is with younger women, who are feminists. She says, "I'm finding they're intelligent; they're activists. They make me believe that there's hope for the world after all. I don't find that with most of my contemporaries. I think that's sad. It's a matter of education; of women talking to each other, trying to be tolerant of each other."

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Her advice to women who are becoming conscious of the need for women's liberation? "First of all, I'm in favour of an activist approach, but a positive one rather than a negative one. I don't think it does any good to tear down a social structure unless you have something to replace it. I think it does a great deal of good to question; to petition; to challenge. I think for me and the development of my philosophy, it's been reading. I've been an insatiable reader over the years and have read all sorts of things. Education first; not being afraid to speak out; not being afraid to question and just an insistence on recognition of women as people."

Editor's note: Abortion In Canada, by Eleanor Pelrine is published by New Press, Toronto and will be available in a revised, expanded paperback edition in the Spring of 1972. Eleanor is currently writing a new book Notes From a Wicked Stepmother. Watch for it!!

Texpack strike

by JULIE TOLENTINO and PAT SCHULZ

Interview with Madeleine Parent, Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Textile & Chemical Union.

The Texpack strike in Brantford was a pitched battle from start to finish. American Hospital Supply Corporation used every weapon in the book to defeat these workers. When they couldn't get any Texpack or even Brantford workers to scab, they brought strike-breakers in from Hamilton using agencies and buses. They got injunctions and laid over 100 charges against picketers. Their buses crashed the picket line leaving two picketers with fractured ankles. The police left one woman unconscious after hitting her across the back. The company moved its operations to its Rexdale plant and with the company's tacit agreement another union applied for bargaining rights in the Rexdale plant. The strikers fought back for 3 months and none of them scabbed. The important factor in this strike however, is that about 80% of the strikers were women. Their ages range from 17 to 50 — many of them are bringing up children single-handed. The picket lines were manned (or womanned) equally by them — none of them scabbed in spite of the extra pressures. Their attendance at union meetings is as high as the men's — in fact in quiet periods they are better

represented. The president and most of the executive officers of the local are women.

The strike got a lot of outside support — including help from the sisters, mothers and daughters of the women on strike. The wives of the male strikers came out too along with a few Women's Liberation supporters.

What were they on strike for? One woman on the line replied to that question with one word — "Money". Most of them earn \$1.93 which gives a gross pay before the government grabs its share of \$77.20 — not much to live on much less support a family. For that they work on an assembly line — which has been speeded up recently — they have to get a relief worker before they can leave the line. They wear a company uniform — eat in a "not so bad" lunchroom (they used to eat at the machine) and can plan on doing just that for the rest of their lives — that is if they are lucky and don't get laid off. The men earn \$2.50, but the women I talked to thought "that's fair since they do heavy lifting I won't do." Of eight to ten supervisors, only two or three are women and in the lowest category. At one time the plant superintendent was a very competent woman but she was replaced. Another issue in the strike is the company's practice of taking old bandages — packaged as long ago as World War II and

rewrapping them, without sterilization, and falsely labelling them "Made in Canada". Some of the crates were so old and mildewed they stank as they were opened.

The strikers demanded 35¢ more per hour this year and another 30¢ next year, along with better vacation and holiday pay, improved welfare provisions and a cost-of-living allowance to partly make up for inflation. After the three month strike they settled for 17¢ now, 10¢ next year and 17¢ in fringe benefits, an increase of 24¢ over the company's original offer.

That's the kind of fight we have to put up to try and get a living wage.

Meanwhile I see our sisters at Bell Telephone are out.....



Police arrest women on Tex Pack picket

women themselves who direct their energies to improving their outer image rather than developing the more valuable resources which lie dormant within.

Beauty contests serve also to keep women competing with each other. The basis of competition may seem a shallow, unimportant thing, but it is, in fact, a fight for survival—if you don't measure up, you don't get married, and there are few satisfactory alternatives to marriage, children and housework for many women because they don't have the skills and the status and haven't been taught to be aggressive, thus cannot make it on their own in our society. Man-centered values and competition among women keep them isolated from each other, keep them from discovering their common oppression, and keep them from changing the structure of this society which operates for the benefit of a privileged few.

These "harmless" beauty contests stand out as oppressive because they so purely typify general attitudes towards women. On the street we are faced daily with the beauty contest mentality by men who clearly see us as mere sexual objects and not as people.

But women are people, and Miss Canada is a human being. And what about Miss Canada: what is her reward for being the ultimate in Canadian womanhood?

She gets a brief taste of glamour (expensive chinchilla coat, etc.) and then is used by her promoters as an advertising gimmick to promote their products and con more women into playing the beauty game.

And where will Miss Canada be when she's forty-five?

Miss Canada?

by JILL THOMPSON

Most people think of the Miss Canada Pageant as a rather harmless, wholesome institution, especially when compared to some of the blatant sexual exploitation which surrounds us. However, because beauty pageants are considered respectable, they are able to get across a certain message to us: women are not valued as individual, intelligent human beings, but rather are valued according to physical appearance and little niceties of personality. The only way we can make it in this society is to be pretty

and pleasant—that is, able to get a man.

In our society, we must measure up to a current standard of beauty based on a certain figure- and face-type that most women just don't have. In order to keep up, we spend millions of dollars on cosmetics, padded bras, stylish clothes and figure improvement courses.

This is certainly in the interests of the large corporations and their advertisers who run beauty contests as one means of teaching women what they should look (and be) like. It is not in the interests of



Miss Canada contestants

We're Growing

VANCOUVER:
 Women's Liberation Alliance
 1776 Alberni, 684-3535
 Women's Caucus
 511 Carrall, 684-0525
CALGARY
 Jo Ann Dundas
 215 22nd Ave., NE Calgary 64
LETHBRIDGE
 Lorna & Linda Rasmussen
 722 10th St. S.
SASKATOON
 Women's liberation
 517 Lansdowne 242-5830
REGINA:
 Women's Liberation
 2259 Cameron 525-6252
WINNIPEG
 Women's Liberation
 606B, 416 Main St.
 University of Manitoba,
 Feminist Club,
 c/o University of Manitoba,
 Students Union,
 University of Manitoba,
 Winnipeg, Manitoba.

THUNDER BAY
 Laurie Wendt
 Women's Liberation
 Lakehead University
SUDBURY
 Cynthia Gedye, WLM
 Rm. 319, Mine-Mill Hall
 19 Regent South
SAULT STE. MARIE
 Mercedes Clark
 Algoma College
KITCHENER-WATERLOO
 Women's Caucus
 P.O.Box 664
 Waterloo
GUELPH
 U. of Guelph Women's Lib.
 Marilynne Bell
 Box 2, Johnson Hall
 Women's Liberation Office,
 Room 603, 76 University Avenue West,
 Windsor 12, Ontario.

ST. CATHARINES
 Pat Smith
 123 Lake St. 685-1915
LONDON
 Pat Dewdney, 38 Craig St.
PETERBOROUGH
 Pat Saunders
 Trent University
 Lady Eaton College
HAMILTON & DISTRICT
 Women's Liberation
 77 Delawana Drive
 Apt. 707, Stoney Creek
TORONTO
 Toronto Women's Caucus
 188 Adelaide St. W.
 York Women's Caucus
 241-6557 or 449-2961
 Stowe - Gullen Feminists of Hamilton Area,
 P.O. Box 207,
 Ancaster, Ontario.

WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT
 325 Church Street
 Abortion Referral 924-0895
OTTAWA
 Women's Justice
 Box 14, Station A
MONTREAL
 Women's Action Movement
 Box 37, Station N
 Women's Liberation
 Women's Centre
 3964 Ste. Famille
FREDERICTON
 Carol Hamilton-Smith
 748 Forest Hill Road
HALIFAX
 Pat Beresford
 6124 Pepperell

bringing women together

by IVA STANLEY

The isolation of women from each other became a very real thing to me by watching a 16 year old woman struggling to share her new feminist awareness. Alone, on a farm, going to a rural high school, she feels unable to change. Thinking about her geographic isolation, I realized that I have experienced the same thing in a downtown highrise. So have women in suburbs and small towns; women with children; women with oppressive husbands; in general, women separated from other women.

After almost a year of being actively involved in The Toronto Women's Caucus, I now have some concept of this problem that so many women face. It was made even clearer to me knowing the pain of this woman I love.

Articles about women's liberation have appeared in almost every newspaper and magazine, some accurate, other distorted. Nevertheless, this presents women with the awareness that there may be alternate lifestyles, that they may have something to give society other than motherhood; that they do have personal worth; and that there are women working for changes. With this realization a woman alone can relate emotionally to the struggle for what she feels, at a gut level, she deserves. However, a women's liberation group may still be a bit too frightening or, sadly, unavailable.

The right to abortion, 24 hour child-care, and equal pay for equal work, are issues that most women are familiar with and can relate to. However, to carry a placard or to go to a meeting may be a different story. Besides, feminists are allegedly man-haters, and the possibility of offending men, or family, would prevent women from joining groups even if they were always available.

As women, we have been used to seeing ourselves reflected in men's eyes, to value their impression more than those of women. We may be interested in relating to women but are taught to feel it is more socially acceptable to go out with a man, than to spend time rapping with a woman. When with women, we keep one eye out for an available man, or suddenly change our behaviour and redirect our attention when a man appears.

After I noticed I was reacting like this, I began to realize I was being dishonest with myself and with the people that I was with. I didn't want to turn away women who I find to be truer and more lasting friends, or to present an image to a man that was not really me. As a result I resented myself; other women; and became angry with men.

In this state of limbo I stumbled, in my usual fashion, into a women's liberation group. It was exhilarating to be among women and I soon found myself fearfully carrying a placard on an abortion demonstration. Before this I just felt that those women out there demonstrating were making fools of themselves for me, so that one day I could get an abortion if I needed one. This was my first experience of Sisterhood, bringing with it, disappointments, problems and its actuality.



One may feel that all of these thoughts may not help the woman who is isolated and in her particular situation. However, it may help all of us to have the knowledge that our sisters understand and are out there fighting for our rights - the rights of all women. We must create a deep-rooted feeling everywhere that together we all can change our role in society, regardless of our geographical or otherwise imposed isolation.

I felt very silly at first, referring to someone as "my sister". However, I soon realized how much we had in common: most of us feared an unwanted pregnancy, had problems asserting ourselves, and were hassled on the streets. I learned that my fears and inadequacies weren't so shameful. All of us shared common experiences, just being women, and were in fact sisters struggling to change our situation. Eventually, I channeled my anger and resentment constructively. While working with these women some also became close friends.

Sisterhood is a supportive thing. Sisters were interested in what I had to say, talked to me and did not pass judgments on my actions. The headquarters became a home base where I was accepted, regardless of my weaknesses; where I could feel comfortable away from the sexism that penetrates every other aspect of society. The only ticket I needed was that I was a woman. When I had problems there wasn't a strong masculine arm there to shield me. Rather, there was a human being, one who lived the same problems; who talked to me; who encouraged me to stand on my own, rather than be dependent. It took a long time to grasp this particular concept and I frequently ran back to men, so I could be engulfed in their need to protect the weaker sex.

Friendship and respect have not been cherished or promoted among the female sex. Even a close friendship was a sometime thing to push aside when a man entered our life. Women, according to society, should be sensitive. With this comes the capacity to have love, warmth and loyalty for human beings, especially those that share most of your feelings, women. Unity among women takes a great deal of time and effort to build, to experiment with, to test, and to at times fail-but when you need help, that is when sisterhood really proves its reality.

Individual women can play an active role in this struggle. Any attempt to look after children collectively is freeing yourself and your neighbours from the total occupation of child raising. One man told, not too politely, not to hassle you on the street is going to think twice before he tries again. One argument for repeal of the abortion laws will instill the beginning of awareness of women's problems in the listener's head. Women getting together can learn to trust each other, to stop concentrating on their physical image as our main asset, to stop feeling that we have nothing to contribute, to build each other's confidence that we can change. A few women meeting at lunch, school or church can start to accomplish this.

Literature about women's liberation is increasing. Women's courses are now available in some universities. This information helps to develop a pride in what we are, not carbon copies of men, but women who are uniting and standing on our own.

Every time you get a chance to talk or listen to a woman, try scratching the surface and, who knows, you may find a feminist.

sugar'n spice

by S.W. PYKE

What is sex typing? It has nothing directly to do with the steno pool but, like our secretaries, bears some relation to sexual stereotypes. We all know about the nurturant, passive, security seeking, beautiful but dumb female and the active, aggressive, dynamic, risk taking male. As a result of such stereotypes, we prescribe or expect certain kinds of behaviours and attitudes from women and other different kinds of behaviours and attitudes from men. The process whereby individuals of each sex learn the acceptable behaviour and attitude patterns appropriate for their sex is termed socialization, and the primary socialization agent is the family.

Sex typing for the individual or the effect of sexual stereotypes occurs almost from the moment of conception or even before. Parents, themselves sex typed, wish for a male baby to carry on the family name. In preparing for the new child, more parents buy blue bassinets than pink. The naming process is a blatant example of sex typing. It would be out of the question to name a male child "Amanda" or "Rosemarie" or similarly, to call a female child "Mordecai" or "Benjamin". We have some unisex, homonym names but extraordinary care is taken to ensure male and female spellings - for example, Jesse and Jessie and Arron and Aryn.

On the operating table, as Mom is in the final throes of labour, the doctor eases the baby free and his first comment is to identify the sex. The last thing Mom is interested in is the sex. First, she wants to know if she's had a baby or has this whole experience been a massive bowel movement and second, is the baby all right. But no, sex identification seems to be important.

With the baby in arms at home, parents continue the trend. Not content with knowing the sex ourselves, we colour code the child - blue for boys, right down to the diaper pins and pink for girls, just in case some visitor might err. Passersby who incorrectly label the child are gently chided and corrected. Isn't it terrible to have your male child called a "sweet little girl?" But if your little girl is called a boy, are you just a tiny bit proud that she's somehow "good enough to be mistaken for a boy?" Funny, but mislabelling doesn't seem to bother the children until we make an issue of it.

As the child masters language, and even before, eager parents bring home story books to broaden the child's horizons and stimulate his-her mind. What's the role of children's literature in the socialization process? Clearly, current books reinforce sex typing. Catalogues go so far as to list separately books especially for boys from books especially for girls. A prime example of sex typing for females is a book entitled "Little Mommy", written and illustrated by Sharon Kane, published by Golden Press. In verse and picture, a female's role is depicted as child care, house cleaning, washing ironing, teaching, baking, and tea partying. Males make three appearances in the volume - a doctor treating a sick child, daddy going off to work in his new car and daddy sitting at the dinner table (he disappears when it's time to put the children to bed).

We are currently in the process of analysing the content of a large number of preschooler books with respect to sex typing. We have analysed 20 books to date, a total of 438 pages of text. One hundred and four pages illustrated females engaging female activities - dressing up, cooking, playing with dolls, etc. A similar amount of text depicts males involved in traditional male activities - flying kites, sailing, fighting fires, directing traffic. Only seven pages of the 438 showed females doing male

type things and only 16 pages with males performing female functions.

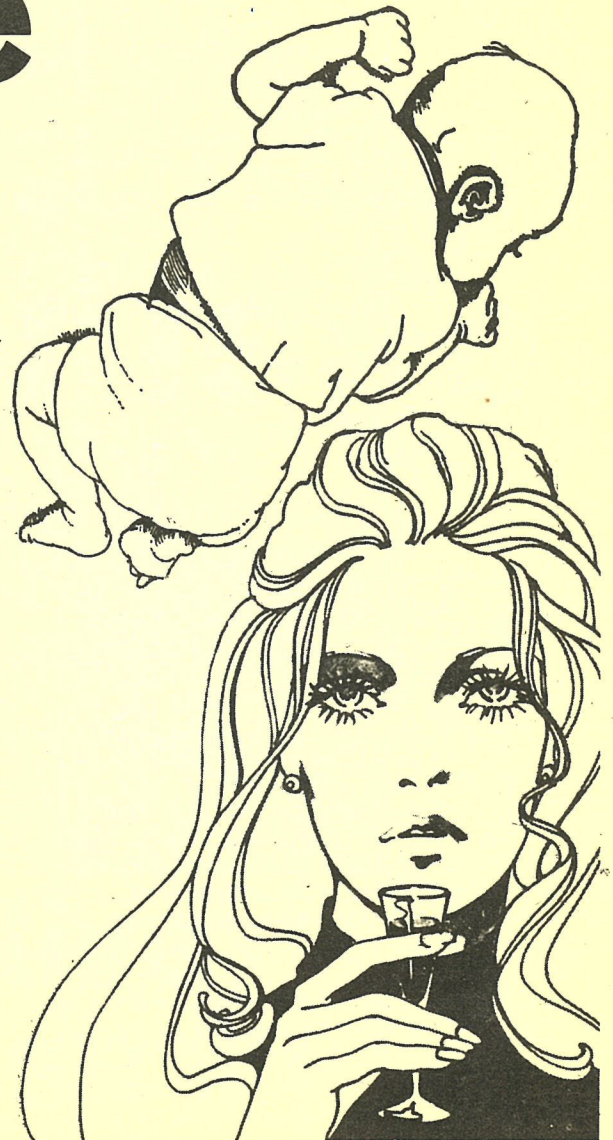
Toy, clothes, and game manufacturers are extremely sensitive to sex typing and milk it for all it's worth. Bake sets and Barbie dolls for girls, G.I. Joes and Meccano sets for boys; shirts with bows for girls and sans bows for boys. Little boys take judo, drumming or boxing while little girls spend Saturday morning on their toes or on fancy skates or hunched over the ivories.

Television is becoming an increasingly important socialization agent. It is estimated that children spend something in the neighbourhood of 12,000 hours watching T.V. before they are of school age. Quite apart from the violence and callousness of the T.V. cartoons, they also reinforce sexual stereotypes. Most cartoon figures are males doing male action-oriented things. One notable exception is Penelope Pitstop, who is always in peril. She's very attractive, ineffectual and brainless. And, is forever being rescued from the clutches of the Claw, by the Ant Hill mob who are, naturally, all male. Wouldn't it be marvellous if one day, the Ant Hill mob were late?

Outside the home, what roles does the child see performed by other children? Well, there's the newspaper boy, and there's the choir boy and occasionally a delivery boy. Even as children, girls are economically disadvantaged and denied the other valuable experiences that such formal activities entail. Even in kindergarten it is the boys who are asked to help move chairs and other paraphernalia while girls sit primly and watch.

In the typical Canadian home, the roles performed by each parent facilitate the sex typing process. Children tend to identify with their like-sexed parent because they are told to. Little girls don't help dad repair the car or build the patio and little boys rarely help mom with the mending or the family wash. Why not? Usually mom is at home performing the vice presidential functions for the family (the mundane things) while dad is off daily fighting the big fight in the exciting world outside.

What are some of the implications and concrete effects of this sex role differentiation? A study done with fourth graders in Maryland indicated that the little boys did not regard themselves as smarter or less smart than girls and similarly girls did not see themselves as intellectually different from boys. All children, however, regarded daddies as being smarter than mommies. In two casual observational studies done by York University students, female children ages 2 to 2½ as well as public schoolers were much more passive in their play than boys. Why? They are not physically weaker - if anything the evidence would suggest the contrary.



These children are being differentially reinforced. If you're a boy, you get brownie points for being rowdy, boisterous and daring. Crying, and gentle loving behaviour is discouraged. If you're a girl, acts of derring-do, and aggressive behaviours are frowned on while a genteel, lady-like demeanor wins smiles and nods. Passive males and aggressive females are misfits, examples of inadequate socialization.

To try to force all children of the same sex to fit one mold, ignoring their individual propensities and inclinations, seems the harshest form of punishment. But, quite apart from the inhuman aspects of this mindless socialization process is the very real negative implications for the self actualization of women. Women are in fact socialized to be and feel inferior. Surveys have shown that many of us still believe the myths that male doctors, lawyers, dentists and ministers are better than their female counterparts. We ourselves perpetuate the existing sexual stereotypes. In a very real sense, we are inferior by almost any criteria you pick. We're less educated, although we may be as smart. We're economically poorer, although we may work as hard. We don't have a say in the government of the country, although we have the vote. We have difficulty getting credit, although we pay our bills. We must unfreeze our stereotypes and raise our children, not to be role fitters but to be flexible, adaptable human beings who can turn their hands and minds to any activity without being hamstrung by these archaic sexual stereotypes.



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cards

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