

Basis of women's oppression

by Chris Nielsen

All across the country, and around the world, there is motion by women to organize to solve their problems. International Women's Year is a reflection of this motion and of the fact that the various world powers have been forced to recognize that women do have problems.

Here at Dalhousie this year, we have seen the enthusiasm of women to organize. Reflecting this, various groups such as Dalhousie Women's Movement have been formed to deal with the problems of women on campus. Several different programmes have been initiated and discussion increases with each meeting. This is an extremely good thing.

However, there are problems for Canadian women to deal with not only outside the movement but within the liberation movement itself. There is a tendency to look at the oppression of women in a very superficial manner. There are women whose only analysis is that there are "two sexes" and since ours is oppressed, it must be the fault of men. This is altogether wrong. The result of this view is to continue in a new form the age old, comic-strip of the sexes and lead women into the swamp of bitterness and resentment against men, away from the solution of our problems. Many women simply turn away from the movement because of this.

Those who promote the idea that the oppression of women is due to men and shout, "Sexism! Sexism!" at every chance remark their eager, ever-open ears hear are themselves guilty of the sexism they supposedly deplore. They nose around like some kind of bloodhound on the trail, ears pricked, ready to pounce on some unsuspecting individual male and ridicule him as a sexist! Even worse, there are women who denounce the whole male sex out of hand and refuse to have anything to do with them. What that line leads to is not the emancipation of women but their extermination!

It is true that these extremists haven't that much currency with the majority of women but I think it is important for women in the movement to be quite wary of those who try to say that sexism is the main problem around which women should organize and that it is right that men and women should split on the question of who is sexist. The oppression of women will not be wiped out simply by fighting sexism. Sexism is not the main problem.

The main problem is class society. This analysis was clearly explained at a recent conference of women organized by Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) by Hardial Bains, Party Chairman.

Women from all across Canada, many of whom had had experience in women's liberation groups and realized the reformist and single-issue limitation of these groups, met in Waterloo to discuss CPC (M-L)'s line on women and to begin the work of organizing women to fight oppression.

Discussion centered around two main points; the basis of women's oppression and how women can organize to fight it.

CPC (M-L)'s analysis of the basis of women's oppression is that women are a section of society singled out for exploitation by the monopoly capitalist class. This is because of women's unique role as both producers and reproducers. Working class women are the most intensely exploited. They are exploited as producers just as working class men are. However their wages are generally even lower than men's.

All women, except for a small number of the bourgeoisie, are exploited as reproducers. Because women are the bearers of children, they can be shifted in and out of the labour force according to the needs of the ruling class. Historically, this has always been the case.

Many people will remember in the history of Canada, the story of "Les filles du Roi". These were women who were rounded up and shipped off to the New World in the reign of

Louis XIV to marry the soldiers and colonists there and populate the colonies with labourers. These women did not come only from the working class as one would suppose, but from all classes, from the nobility and upper class merchants to peasants and prostitutes. All were deceived as to what awaited them in the harsh life of New France. Their main function there was to serve feudalism and colonialism in the capacity of reproducers. Labourers were needed. Women must supply them.

This is one example of how the exploitation of women as reproducers. As to how they are shifted in and out of the labour force, a good example is the experience of the 1940's. During the second World War when men were sent overseas to fight in the armies of North America, labourers were needed to run the factories at home. In the name of the war effort, women were encouraged to leave their homes and work in the factories. Day care centres were provided at the place of employment. When the men returned after the war, a massive propaganda campaign was launched through women's magazine and Dr. Spock to glorify the role of wife and mother and denounced working women. The women went back to their homes and the day care centers disappeared.

We can see that women are used as a section to serve the interests of

capitalism. The exploitation is class-based. It is the ruling class throughout history that has shown interest in exploiting women. The only class that hasn't appeared to exploit women is the proletariat. Because it represents a majority of people who have a common goal in overthrowing capitalism and building socialism, it has no interest in working side by side with them to achieve common goals.

Therefore, women of all classes can help emancipate themselves by taking up the struggle of the proletariat to seize power. This is the basis on which women must organize, according to the CPC.

Today the main enemies of the world's people, men and women, are U.S. Imperialism and Soviet-socialist Imperialism. The two superpowers are intensifying their oppression of the world's people in order to shift the burden of the economic crisis onto their backs.

Therefore, the tasks of women today are twofold. Firstly, women must learn to organize themselves and nothing must be allowed to interfere with this task. Secondly, women must organize, along with other progressive groups to oppose the two superpowers and to support the national liberation struggles of the people of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Every attack launched against imperialism is a blow which weakens it and aids in a

concrete way those countries actually engaged in armed struggle.

Cambodia, a small country of eight million people, is a case in point. The women and children in this country are not only oppressed by imperialism, but are being ruthlessly slaughtered by its agents. Would it not be ludicrous for them to claim sexism as their main problem and refuse to pick up the banner of anti-imperialist armed struggle? Is it not in their interest to deal with the main enemy of vicious imperialism which is oppressing the whole country for its own gain? It definitely is. Right now in Cambodia, women have shouldered guns and are fighting for their lives and country side by side with men. It is right that women everywhere should support their struggles and cheer their victories. U.S. Imperialism will not hesitate for its own gains to crush the people of Canada as ruthlessly as it now crushes the women and men of Cambodia. It is definitely in the interests of Canadian women to fight on this basis.

Therefore in International Women's Year, women should become internationalists. It is up to progressive women to lead the women's movement in the fight against the savage aggression of the two superpowers in every part of the world and to support those struggles here in Canada that objectively oppose U.S. Imperialism and capitalism.

French Dept conning students

by Donalee Moulton

The French Department has somewhat altered their first year course for next year. There will be two divisions — one stressing oral French; the other dealing almost exclusively with the written word. This sounds like a well-rounded French course. However, and here's the flaw — these divisions are separate, i.e. they constitute individual courses. It will be possible for a student to take each section, but this is highly unlikely as the work load would be very heavy and most students take French as an elective. Sounds like just a little tough luck — students will have to take one or the other. But it's more than just a little tough luck — and here's the crunch — students will not be informed as to what section they will be in. They will not even be informed that there are two distinct areas!

This means that the freshman, under the belief that he is enrolling in an oral orientated French course, is being conned. He has no choice; he will be randomly placed in one stream or the other. The

course note on French 102 in the '75 calendar is the biggest deception (and I quote) "This is an intensive course designed for students who wish to achieve proficiency in spoken and written French..."

"There will be an emphasis on oral proficiency."

This outline from which new students will be basing their decisions is more than misleading — it is also false. Oral proficiency will be achieved only if you happen to be placed in that section and vice versa. Here are students foreign to a university and its ways depending for guidance and reliability upon this outline. Their expectancies are not going to be fulfilled. They are being deliberately deceived. The French department has withheld the information of a split in the course on the grounds that students will receive some oral knowledge in the written section and some writing necessities in the oral stream. Another reason is that the student is not mature enough to make his own decision. (How can he be when he's not given the opportunity). The ma-

majority of French profs have agreed to this system and its highly probable that if a choice was made available, most students would take the oral section. This must worry the profs teaching the written section — worry them sufficiently to keep the course outline a secret.

What does this mean for the students though? It

means that they have a fifty-fifty chance to end up in the section that does not appeal to them. So after the heat, wait, chaos and utter horror or registration, they will appear in the Registrar's office for a "class change" slip. Much reshuffling will have to be done unnecessarily — at the expense of the student.

UNB will cost more

by Mary Pat MacKenzie

The University of New Brunswick announced Tuesday there will be an increase in both tuition and residence fees. Tuition for all faculties except Engineering will be increased by 8.2%. The Engineering Faculty will see an increase of 4.6%.

Residence fee will be increased by 26-30%, with a slightly lower increase for married students' housing. Double rooms at UNB that now cost \$1025. will cost \$1300. next September.

The Student Represent-

ative Council at UNB and the University Board of Governors are presenting a brief to the New Brunswick Legislature requesting that adjustments be made to the present Student Aid Program. The Board of Governors are in full support of the students problems and at their last meeting unanimously passed a motion supporting, in principle, the students demands for higher aid. Inflation was the reason given for the raise in fees by the University authorities.