



Cuban women battle sexism

hours of life. Then she had to face the array of attacks by diseases, insects, and internal parasites that all her Latin American counterparts are subjected to.

If she survived that, she was confronted with an almost total absence of educational opportunities for women. Only 9% of all women had jobs, and of those fully 70% lived the slavish existence of domestic servants. Many young children were steered into becoming prostitutes, of which there was an unseemingly proliferation. The "luckier" ones were married off at the age of 14 or so.

After sixteen years of the new government, there has been a dramatic change. Randall pointed out there is a very low infant mortality rate which compares favourably with that of developed nations. There are now extensive child care facilities throughout Cuba.

Women now have oppor-

tunities for higher education and opportunities in a host of jobs that were formerly open only to men. Older women were re-educated to become taxidrivers, daycare instructors, and sometimes doctors and administrators.

Illiteracy among both men and women, which was the rule before the revolution, has been reduced to 3%. Girls and women were sent out into the countryside to teach peasants to read and write as part of a national drive to stamp out illiteracy. Only Cuba can show such progress, she said.

Sexism is a part of Latin American life, she said, but in Cuba attempts have and are being made to combat it through both education and legislation. Sexism is not regarded as a women's problem, it is regarded as a social problem.

Recently the Family Code was put before the people to be

discussed and criticized. The Family Code is legislation that establishes relationships within the family. Among other things it strives to eliminate discrimination against unwed mothers and illegitimate children.

Under the legislation husbands of working wives are required to assume one half of the child care and household duties of his family. Randall reported discussion of the code among the people of Cuba was intense. Various groups made recommendations to the government and legislation reflecting these recommendations was passed. The Family Code became law.

During the film presentation, it was evident that the "macho male" psych was still present, but gave equal, if not overwhelming evidence that conscious efforts at eliminating this was a continuing thing in Cuba.

By Walter Aiello
Margaret Randall, Cuban author, journalist, and feminist ambassador visited campus last Friday, giving a presentation on the new status of women in Cuba.

In her speech and film presentation, Randall spoke of

the advances Cuban women have made since the revolution in 1959.

She pointed out that a baby girl born before the revolution faced a bleak future. First of all the child stood an excellent chance of dying during her first

Pelrine to defend Morgentaler

Eleanor Wright Pelrine, an executive member of the Canadian Association for Repeal of the Abortion Law (CARAL), will speak to a public meeting here Wednesday. The subject under discussion is, "Dr. Morgentaler's Fight For Abortion Law Repeal."

Pelrine's appearance in Edmonton is part of a cross-Canada tour to promote her second book, *Morgentaler: The Doctor Who Wouldn't Turn Away* released on November 15. *Abortion in Canada*, Pelrine's first book, was published in 1971.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler's case has been a controversial issue over the past year. Though acquitted twice by Canadian juries, he is presently serving an 18-month jail term for performing an illegal abortion. He was granted the 1975 Humanist of the Year award jointly with Betty Friedan, but was denied prison leave to receive it.

Among the aims of CARAL are the immediate release of Dr. Morgentaler, the repeal of all sections of the Canadian Criminal Code dealing with abortion, and the establishment of contraceptive and abortion counselling services across Canada. It regards access to safe legal abortion as a fundamental human right.

Pelrine's address is

scheduled for November 26 in Tory Lecture TLB-1 at 7:30 p.m. All interested persons are invited to attend and participate in the discussion. Further information about Pelrine's tour and CARAL's activities may be obtained by phoning 433-7425 (days), 433-9912 or 488-1485 (evenings).

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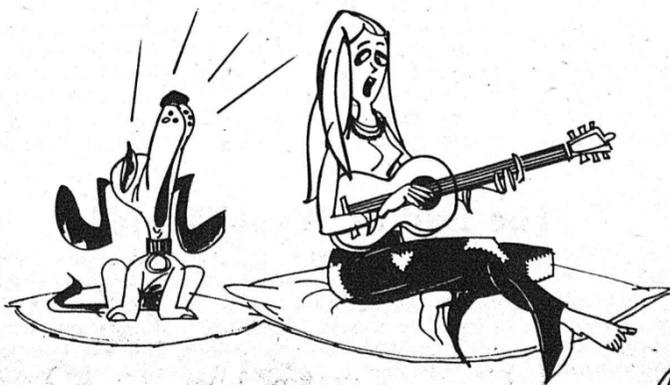
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