

# Revolution necessary for women's lib?

The following is an interview by the Women's Program Centre with Margaret Randall, a visiting feminist author from Cuba.

Q: The United Nations has proclaimed 1975 as International Women's Year. Our government has spent a large amount of money on a big advertisement campaign to change attitudes towards women, but laws have not been changed. What is being done in Cuba during IWY?

A: *IWY* has been very important to Cuban women. However, the current phase for full equality began in 1959 (when the Cuban revolution triumphed). It is an ongoing process. *IWY* simply added dimension to that struggle.

It happens that in November of 1974 the 2nd Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women was held where profound analysis was carried out around women's problems in society. The congress was the culmination of months of grass root level discussion throughout the country.

Many of the ideas emerging from those discussions and coming out of the congress itself are being put into practice now throughout the island.

Q: Here in Canada many feminists oppose men. How is this viewed in Cuba?

A: This is viewed as a reactionary tendency, which in the last analysis does not serve women but serves the enemy. The problem of women's oppression is a social problem, a class problem, and can only really be solved by changing the economic structure of society and by economic freedom, giving women the concrete possibility of vanguarding the

struggle against old, exploitative and oppressive values.

Q: Have women in Cuba achieved something that women in Canada are still striving for?

A: Yes, of course, they have. They have achieved a revolution. The possibility of building a socialist society, full economic equality, full educational opportunity and equal status in the labour force. They have achieved the recognition that sexism and related problems are social problems and not individual problems.

Women are leading this ideological struggle in Cuba with full participation of Men and full participation of a revolutionary state.

Q: In Canada men behave like they do towards women because of traditional attitudes. How is it in Cuba which is traditionally a male dominated society. Is it still in evidence in Cuba?

A: Of course it is still in evidence. Cubans would be the last to deny it. Once the economic changes take place, changes in the superstructure can be carried out.

Socialist revolution is not synonymous with women's liberation, but it is a necessary pre-requisite to that liberation. The struggle to free Cubans of all sexist attitudes will be a long one as it is true all over the world.

What Cubans can say with pride is that they are waging that struggle in a social context and that they have full support of their people's government.

Q: Do women realize themselves in hard work?

A: Of course not. No one claims

that any human being realizes their potential in hard work. Women's incorporation into the salaried labour force is basic in terms of her economic independence and in terms of getting her out of the home and

broadening her social horizon. Full realization, full equality means many things. Incorporation into production simply sets the stage for this equality, for this self realization.

## Recipe

Take 1 student

- 1/2 cup mixed emotions
- 2 exam failures
- 1 overdue term paper
- 1/4 lb. discontent
- 3 cups all-purpose sifted frustration
- 4 oz. misdirected motivation
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