

# Women are serfs . . .

Thanksgiving weekend, Cathy Morris, Gateway reporter, went to the Regional Women's Caucus in Vancouver to report on women's liberation activities in western North America.

She went with a relatively open mind to the subject, having been exposed to little if any propaganda either for or against women's liberation.

Being almost constantly exposed to the movement, 24 hours a day for three days, Cathy returned confused, not knowing exactly what to make of it.

After a week to settle down and look more objectively at the subject, Cathy wrote the following.

By CATHERINE MORRIS

She'll probably be wearing blue jeans. She'll look like what you may call a hippie. She doesn't use hair-curlers. She has no use for make-up. She might not wear the paraphernalia traditionally worn by all "nice girls", that is, a brassiere. If you're a woman she might call you "sister". And she is probably quite intelligent.

That would be the description you could apply to most of the liberationist women in North America.

I base the description on a three-day encounter with about 150 women in Vancouver, Thanksgiving weekend. They rallied from Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Washington State, and Oregon. They came to discuss organization of Women's Liberation Groups in Canada and the USA.

What did they talk about?

They talked of being oppressed by men, but mostly by the whole of society. They discussed possible solutions.

## EMPLOYERS DISCRIMINATE AGAINST WOMEN

How are women oppressed?

Women are oppressed by wage discrimination. And that's a fact. Women who work outside the home make less than 40 per cent of what men make. Only about 15 per cent of working women are organized in trade unions today so they may combat wage discrimination.

Here's a quote from Vancouver's Women's Caucus publication *The Pedestal*.

Attorney General Leslie Peterson in 1969 announced a Human Rights Bill would go into effect on June 16th, 1969—by an Order in Council of the B.C. Government . . . It stated that a woman would not be discriminated against because of her SEX.

In one of Mr. Leslie Peterson's own Attorney General Offices, here is a look at the salaries paid males and females:

The lowest paid a male is \$580.00

The highest salary obtainable is \$1,060.00

Average length of time employed. Male, approx. 10½ years.

The lowest paid a female is \$317.00

The highest paid a female is \$461.00

Average length of time employed: Females, approx. 20 years

## WOMEN OPPRESSED BY DEFINITION

Women are oppressed by society's very definition of a woman's role in society.

That's what liberationists call "psychological oppression".

The pamphlet called *Women's Caucus Program* distributed at the conference had this to say.

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 object is to make themselves as attractive as possible to men—they are por-

**LABOURING**

**UNDER**

**A MIS-**

**CONCEPTION**

**LEGALIZE ALL**

**ABORTION**

**NOW!**



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trayed 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 Women'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.

This image of the role of women goes back to earliest man. According to Marcy Toms, Vancouver's Women's Caucus, the whole myth originates from the first division of labour between man and woman. That is, "it goes back to 'Points and Scrapers'." Men pointed (with spears) and women scraped (skin animals).

The division of labor graduated to what we have now, that is, men point (bring home the money) and women scrape (do the housekeeping).

The myth of the role of women is perpetuated by the sociologists.

Marcy Cohen, of Vancouver Women's Caucus, illustrated the above statement by quoting Tupper Parsons, leading American sociologist.

Parsons stated that wife and husband have necessary complementary functions. The husband takes the initiative (and here there is uproarious but cynical laughter from the 150 women). The wife provides support and emotional integration (more laughter—louder this time). Parsons uses the sexual act as an illustration, with the wife being submissive and the husband being the initiator, the giver of pleasure.

## WOMEN ARE SLAVES TO THEIR BODIES

Women are oppressed by abortion laws and attitudes towards birth control.

In the past women could be kept in slavery by their bodies. There was nothing but abstinence from sexual intercourse to prevent their becoming pregnant.

Now, with birth control methods being so effective, women want the freedom of sexual behavior that men have. Their bodies **need not** be enslaved by unwanted pregnancies. Their young marriages, their careers, **need not** be encumbered by a child at the wrong time.

But birth control information is not available