

Laura Sabia speaks out in Moot Court

Women's leader attacks all-male hierarchy

By BRENDA WEEKS
 "Women have been idiotized, patronized and exploited," said Laura Sabia, Tuesday, speaking in

the Moot Court as the featured speaker of this year's second Gerstein lecture. The first chairwoman of the Ontario Status of

Women's Council, Sabia replaced Rosemary Brown, the schedule speaker at the lecture, when Brown cancelled the engagement last week.

"The saying 'her future is her biology' must be buried for ever in the graveyard of male supremacy," continued Sabia. "The all-male hierarchy which rules women in a male vacuum must be stopped. If men were the ones who had babies, abortion would have been a sacrament long ago."

Sabia explained that one of the reasons there still is a strong anti-abortionist movement, is that "most dangerous of myths which says that sex for pleasure is bad. No minister of justice would dare eliminate abortion from the criminal code".

"I don't want Trudeau or the Pope making the rules for me," she exclaimed.

Many of the laws on the statutes today, Sabia said, including abortion, are "abysmally discriminatory."

Sabia explained that women are

far from the normal candidates since they are usually urged into politics to perform the menial jobs. "I suppose nine women M.P.'s is better than one," said Sabia, "but when you realize that that consists of three per cent of all M.P.'s in Canada, is it any wonder that our laws concerning women are so antiquated?" In order to improve this state of affairs, Sabia believes women must enter politics actively on the municipal, provincial and federal level. "Women's Lib must spell equal opportunity, equal representation and equal choices," Sabia said. "And yet, for many women, they find it hardest to accept the idea of equal responsibility. There are women in politics, content with no power."

In speaking of the Royal Commission of the Status of Women has compiled 165 recom-

mendations and while the government have implemented approximately one third of them, "don't be fooled," warned Sabia.

"They passed only the easy ones. I don't know why women tolerate politicians who won't take abortion out of the criminal code."

On International Women's Year, Sabia speaks plainly: "Ha! The UN's lofty words of equality, peace and development are just the same old political doubletalk. They have the affrontery to tell the world what to do, when the UN is a cesspool of sexual discrimination."

"The Canadian Government spent \$5 million to show the public how much politicians love women," said Sabia. "We still have our 'Why not' buttons and our jingles, but what have they done about daycare or the marriage laws?"



Author, feminist Katie Curtin explains what it's like to be a woman in the People's Republic of China

Women in Ching; far from liberated, says author

By ROSS FREAKER

When the Chinese Communist Party came to power in China in 1949, women were given the vote, and concubinage and foot-binding were abolished. Yet women in China are still not free, said Katie Curtin, activist-feminist and editor of Young Socialist, who talked on women in China at York last Thursday.

"The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is not interested in women's liberation and has reinforced problems," said Curtin, who has just finished a cross-country tour lecturing on the topic and her book, "Women in China".

There is still strict sexual oppression and great social pressure against divorce, in China, today, said Curtin. Although abortion is supposedly available on demand, only married women can obtain abortions.

Curtin further re-iterated that the CCP doesn't set any shining example on women and women's rights; only about 10 per cent of the party are women.

"Isn't that scandalous for a party that says it stands for the liberation of women?" asked Curtin.

Tsui Yu-Lan, a member of the standing committee of Peking's West City District Industrial Bureau Trade Union, in a "China Reconstructs" magazine article seems to agree with Curtin. She wrote: "Even though equality between men and women is now the law of the land, it doesn't mean we got it right away."

But Curtin pointed out that problems notwithstanding, the women on China have emerged with a new dignity and are no longer looked upon as breeders of male children.

SISTERS ACROSS WATER

She said Canadian women should discuss the problem of their "sisters across the water", not as purely academic discussions, but to draw parallels to the struggle of the Chinese women in their own lives.

She stressed that the Chinese women's liberation movement is "one of the most powerful women's movement in history and their gain should inspire feminists the world over."

Curtin has not been to China and got material for her book from research and secondary information. When asked why she wrote the book without going to China, Curtin said she was a

Trosyksi, and that they were not welcomed with open arms by the Chinese government.

Jerome Ch'en, professor of Chinese and Japanese History at York, disagreed with Curtin's statement that there aren't any women on the central or standing committee.

Ch'en cited Madame Mao as an example of a woman who wields great power, and said that her influence on Mao's thought from 1940 onward can be easily documented.

He also said there were other women in positions of power on the central committee, especially in the middle and lower echelons.

He explained that the military tradition is still strong in the Communist Party, and relatively few women are in power because there were few women who carried rifles in the 22-year fight for power.

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