

# Women plan action

by Art Neumann

The struggle for women's rights is against the class system, not between sexes. That is the socialist view, expressed by Canadian feminist Linda Meissenheimer in a Students' Union-Young Socialist forum before 70 persons in SUB Friday.

Meissenheimer, also editor of the Young Socialist newspaper, said Marx rejected the view that women's lives are biologically determined. Based on this view, the limitations imposed on women are not justified.

"The roots of oppression are social," she added.

Control of society--coming from the upper class--is best affected through control of the family, the prime unit of social organization. Early anthropologists, said Meissenheimer, such as Tyler and Morgan. They maintained that humanity is not a diverse collection of cultures, but that it has evolved from primitive to present levels, along a sort of Darwinian social evolution.

Primitive society honoured its women for their very real contributions of child-bearing

and rearing. They were social leaders, for they were also food gatherers, providing a more reliable source of food than the hunting males. Women organized themselves into groups in the fields, allowing for better role fulfillment.

"There was no strife between sexes," said Meissenheimer. Such division of labour led to cooperation.

Moreover, all property was shared, and everyone contributed to it. The exploitation, sexism and racism of today began with private ownership, she said.

She linked the downfall of women to the rise of the patriarchy, the acquisition of private property, and the separation of women and children from the mainstream of society.

The patriarchal family of today must bear up under hardships for which there was once communal help, like sickness and poverty. Such a system benefits the capitalists, she said.

Poor families struggle in vain; children are taught to be obedient. It is a self-perpetuating system, and has become the

basic form of social organization.

Thus women are confined to the home, trained from birth to accept the role of childbearing and housekeeping. They are forced to be dependent on fathers and later to remain dependent on husbands for economic security.

"They are excluded from playing a productive role," she said.

By understanding the source of oppression, and by organizing the many divided and isolated groups, women can work out a common strategy, Meissenheimer said.

Thousands of women are willing to struggle, she said, and despite the difficulties of isolation and class differences, it is possible to unite all women.

Women can "become involved in campaigns," she said. Such action would result in other women becoming involved. It will develop confidence in themselves and their interests.

And they will learn how they are being oppressed, she said, and direct the struggle against a basic reorganization of society.



ROBIN MANN  
Arts III,  
ARTS REP.

The most important task of the arts rep is to keep in contact with the student body. Contact through clubs, organizations, fraternities and conversation is needed. The feedback from students enables the rep to present student views to the council.

As a councillor, I would be able to bring the views and grievances of the students to the attention of the student council.

Students can become involved in the student government by active participation in student activities. Involvement in clubs and organizations will bring them in contact with the student government.

## Council moves to Lister Hall

The U of A Students' Council is trying to involve the students in the decision making process by holding meetings in places conducive to public participation.

The first such meeting will be held in Lister Hall's banquet room, Wednesday at 7 p.m.

If you didn't know by now, students are welcome to attend council meetings and express their opinions in a special question period held near the start of every meeting, so that you don't have to sit through the whole thing.

During the meeting, groups

or individual students can submit briefs to council. The agenda covers anything from reports of various committees to the by-laws affecting the students.

Meetings are usually held in University Hall, which holds 140, and the idea of having meetings at Lister Hall is being tried on an experimental basis.

VP Academic, Pat Delaney feels that the Lister Hall meetings will encourage more student participation.

If politics is the way you get your jollies, Lister Hall is the place to be tomorrow night.



BLYTH NUTTALL  
Ed. PD/AD,  
ED. REP.

From a personal point of view, I would fulfill my obligations as a councillor; prepare for meetings, take an active part in debate and serve on the various committees which deal with student affairs. From a policy point of view, I see the SU role of representing the economic interests (fees, students assistance and so on) of students as the most important task of student government. I will press the council to take strong public stands and sponsor and circulate petitions to sway government on such issues as extending the grant part of student loans, not increasing fees, etc.

To bring progressive student opinion, as I am best able to assess it, to the formulation of SU policy.

By bringing up issues which are of more direct concern to students (issues like holding the line on fees) and making myself readily available to listen to the suggestions and concerns of Ed. students on these and other issues.

### Young Socialist slate



HENRY MALTA  
Arts III,  
ARTS REP.

We think the role of Students' Council should be to take up the struggles for social change. It should throw its resources behind some of these struggles. We feel there are several key issues. One is the defence of Dr. Morgentaler. We've seen the tremendous support for abortion law repeal. Two years ago a referendum held by Students' Union voted 80 per cent in favour of repealing the abortion laws.

One task facing the students' council is to defend Morgentaler, bring in speakers and give money to the campaign.

Another question is the ban of political groups from SUB.

We think it's a threat to students' rights. It's an intolerable situation.

Other issues are the overthrow of Allende in Chile. There, students are being massacred and factories razed to the ground. Students' Council should bring in speakers and build a united defence. Another



SHIELA MAWSON  
Arts IV,  
ED. REP.

is the cutbacks in education spending. We say that one of the main tasks is to fight for education as a right. Corporations should pay for education.

Students' Council should play a leading role in these struggles, actively building and supporting them. An example of such a campaign would be the recent teachers' strike in Quebec, where student organizers supported the strike.

We don't think the university is an ivory tower in society. The university is organized for people at the top. Look at the Board of Governors.

This university isn't set up to involve students in the decision-making process.

The proposed National Union of Students has to be democratic and open its meetings to students. It could play a valuable role in leading students, who have shown an interest in a social action.



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