

Political groups manipulated women's conference

TORONTO (CUP) - A concoction of Marxist hairsplitting, rhetoric, and frustration scarred the women's conference held recently in Toronto.

Quite a few of the participating women, who were of all ages and backgrounds, became alienated as certain political groups manipulated the conference and turned discussion sessions into hot-tempered debates on the necessity of linking feminism to socialism. Booming and hissing was a common occurrence.

The three Trotskyist groups present, Young Socialist-League for socialist Action, the Revolutionary marxist Group, and the Spartacist League from the USA, provoked a general fray with ideological fists flying and angry processions to the microphone.

Although each of these promotes different interpretations of the particulars of the proletarian revolution, they all place the women's liberation movement in the broader context of class struggle. They contend that the

feminist movement will not be viable within a capitalist society which thrives on keeping some groups subjugated. In their analysis, the powers to be overthrown are the capitalist institutions which keep both men and women entrenched in alienating labor.

Much opposition was directed at the Spartacists, who tried to dominate several sessions. They believed that there were "important differences" between feminism and socialism. Feminism

leads to an alliance with the bourgeoisie, they claimed, whereas socialism leads to a union with the working class, the ultimate holders of social power.

However, at least two other discernible groups opposed these Trotskyist perspectives.

The moderate reformist group called for change through the legislation within the social system.

The Resurgent Feminists, a radical lesbian group, espoused the position that women must struggle for a completely female society. Even Dr. Henry Morgentaler, the symbol of the pro-legalization of abortion group, was not exempt from their wrath. "Men everywhere at all times are the enemy. All males thrive on the oppression of women."

As well as neglecting "to forget individual differences and struggle for agreed-upon issues" as one speaker had instructed the participants, the conference was also characterized by a certain

"flea market" atmosphere. The almost evangelical fervor of political organizations to grab more members ('application forms are available at the back of the room, sisters') was strikingly evident as tables piled with literature and buttons choked the hallways.

Despite its lack of energetic decision making, the conference did manage to pass several resolutions which will be submitted to its sponsor, the Ontario Federation of Students (OFS). However, if last year repeats itself, OFS will accept the list and then quietly file it away in its do-nothing cabinet.

The conference endorsed the right of all to free and easy access to contraception information and devices regardless of age or marital status. It also called for the immediate repeal of all abortion laws.


Zambian president threatens to resign

LUSAKA (CUP) - President Kenneth Kaunda has threatened to resign in five years if "Zambians do not control their excessive drinking habits."

"I refuse to lead a nation of drunkards. I don't want to be part and parcel of a nation of drunkards," he told a stunned audience of political officials recently.

Kaunda, who broke down several times during his speech, warned: "If in five years you don't change, then you are voting me out of the country's leadership. I would rather die than accept the responsibility of a drunken nation."

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