

opponents, like Virginia Woolf renouncing the Oxbridge library. Still afraid of our own anger, because the opposition has cleverly embodied itself in the person of another woman. . .

Joan McPartlin should have been on that podium, speaking for history.

Linda McVeigh '67, the first woman to fill the huge post of managing editor, should have been on the podium, speaking for the work we are able to do. "She would have been," the *Crimson* president assures us, "except she was eight months pregnant."

"So what if she was eight months pregnant?" I asked.

"The airlines refused to fly her," he replied.

And so we wince and feel isolated.

But one day the picture will be clear enough to enough of us, and women will awake and move.

In its march towards freedom
The working class must cheer on the efforts of
Those women, who, feeling on
Their souls and bodies the
Fetters of the ages have
Arisen to strike them off,
And cheer all the louder if, in its
Hatred of the thraldom and passion
for freedom, the women's
Army forges ahead of the militant Army of labor.

James Connally,

THE RECONQUEST OF IRELAND, 1915

As for the willingness of women to fight for their rights, most union officials will admit that often the most militant fighters on the picket line and in negotiations are women.

— Judy Edelman

WOMEN ON THE JOB, 1970

Men's Liberation

Carol Hanisch

Many forms of reactionary tactics are being used to hold back or stop the women's liberation movement. "Men's liberation" is one of them.

Just consider the name: *men's liberation*. What else can this possibly mean besides the liberation of men from women, especially from the achievements of women's growing power? The term *women's liberation* grew out of the realization that men have more power than women and thus can exploit and oppress us. Therefore we need liberation from that oppression and exploitation. The term *men's liberation* was derived from the term *women's liberation* and thus insinuates that women have power over men. Its very name infers liberation from female domination and is therefore an inversion of fact as well as women's liberation principles.

A look at what some of the leaders of men's liberation are saying shows the anti-woman, anti-women's liberation movement, and anti-radical principles upon which this so-called movement stands (see box). What it really amounts to is just more of the same old male supremacist complaint

that women are really nags and bitches—the power behind the throne—henpecking their men into subservience. The new twist is their attack, sometimes subtle and sometimes not, on the women's liberation movement they usually claim to support.

It is hard to know whether or not men's liberation will become a widely organized movement. There are certainly those—men and women—who are trying to make it one. And there are some disturbing signs it is gaining strength:

- ☞ Men's liberation groups are being set up all around the country. A 1972 *New York Times* article gave sympathetic coverage to the phenomena under the headline: "Men's Lib—Almost Underground, But a Growing Movement." A 1975 *New York Post* story said there are 1,000 such groups and announces the organization of MAN (Men's Awareness Network) and a Men's Awareness Week.
- ☞ Newspapers are reporting integration of previously "women's jobs" as breakthroughs for men's liberation.
- ☞ Several books on the subject have been published including *The Liberated Man* by Warren Farrell and *The Male Machine* by Marc Feigen Fasteau. Farrell, the "movement's" leader, advertises himself as having

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FROM MARC FEIGEN FASTEAU:

Because she (the housewife) has few opportunities to use her capacity to think beyond the exclusively personal and particularized world of home and children, every serious discussion with him (her husband), if she has intense interests outside the domestic sphere, becomes a valued opportunity to express and prove herself. Her conversation may often carry more emotional freight than the subject or her involvement and knowledge of it warrant. One or another cause is seized on and pushed as though it were the answer to the world's problems. In part, this happens because the woman may never have an opportunity to explore this kind of subject beyond the level of general theory. She may have a curious and quick mind and be an avid reader, but the housewife's role does not bring her into the kind of working contact with the real-life complexity of social and political issues that makes one suspicious of easy moral certitudes.

— *THE MALE MACHINE*, 1974

FROM WARREN FARRELL:

Radical women are not a credible source for either the silent majority of the nation or a great majority of college students. . . . much more is needed than the idea of equality to resocialize men. It takes agents such as women who are examples of liberated women. . . .

However, getting women to the point where they even want to resocialize men, when they have learned from the earliest age to want male dominance, is no easy task.

...

. . . the generic name "Women's Liberation Movement" might undergo some scrutiny. "Liberation" connotes liberation from something, and the first thing that seems to come to men's minds is women's liberation from male dominance and from housework, thereby transferring the housework to the man. Both of these goals, when presented in this way, appear to pose a threat to the average man. . . . If the women's liberation movement were presented in terms such as the Human Alternatives Movement, . . . destruction of the man-woman role definitions would be put into practice immediately by use of the word "human" rather than "man" or "woman." It is this goal of humanity which has the potential for uniting the socialist and left elements of the movement with the more conservative elements, for it is the lack of humanity which many socialists find as a major fault of capitalism.

...

If his wife is interesting when he does come home rather than whining about the rising cost of meat, his preference for "the boys" will decrease accordingly. As society encourages a pattern of independently fulfilled women, the very phenomenon of the need to get away from the whining and nagging wife will decrease.

...

Children who are now also a victim of the nagging and frustrated woman add to the lack of freedom man has to enjoy his home.

...

If a woman has her own life and destiny to control, she will not be as likely to feel the need to control her husband.

...

The woman's independence frees the man from the pettiness of a wife hoping all day that her idea for a new bathroom design will meet with his approval. . . .

...

A woman who is self-sufficient enables a man to conduct a more honest relationship with her. . . . The husband is not saddled with the tremendous guilt feelings he frequently has now of "leaving her with nothing" when she has "given the best years" to him.

— *WOMEN'S ROLE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY*, 1970

Men may be even *more* restricted in their identity as *human* beings. — *THE LIBERATED MAN*, 1974

While women complain that they are sex objects, men have been locked into being success objects—which is even worse, because it kills.

— *NEW YORK POST* (9/26/75)

organized more than 150 men's and "mixed" consciousness-raising groups and as being "the Men's Movement's equivalent of Greer and Friedan."

☞ On the left, *WIN* magazine came out with a special issue devoted to men's liberation.

☞ The Swedish Information Service of the Swedish Consulate General stated that the sex role equality question has become a central issue on the Swedish political scene (news release 3/75) but the emphasis was again on men. It announced a panel discussing the "newly awakened interest in changing the traditional role of men. The necessity to humanize the man's role in the family and society is reflected in the Swedish theme for the International Woman's Year—'the right to be human.'"

☞ In socialist Czechoslovakia where there is not even a women's liberation movement, a satire weekly started a new feature page on "men's liberation" (*New York Times*): "The tongue-in-cheek page is to be a regular feature and plans to offer advice on how to deal with the burdens put upon men by their liberated women." The *Times* report continues, "In a poem entitled 'Plaint,' a wronged male bemoans how as a bachelor he lived like a king and with everything brought to him right under his nose. And the beer flowing like water. Three months after marriage he had nothing left. 'I can no longer attend soccer, my pockets are empty, we are saving, cigarettes have forsaken my lips,' runs a stanza, 'and then came children, diapers and the voice of my wife, 'iron your shirt, wash the floor, and do the dishes.'" This is what I hear day in, day out. Naturally, living thus I wish for our page. Let this page for men help all Czech males.'"

The prospect of men's liberation becoming a full-fledged reactionary movement must be taken seriously. The most obvious objection to it is one that even NOW, which organized the "First National Conference on the Masculine Mystique" in 1974, worries about. It is that men's liberation is beginning to push women's liberation into the background. As Cyndy Heimel observed in describing a picketing action of a Playboy Club by the NOW-sponsored conference on the "Masculine Mystique," "The media was rampant. The entire membership of NOW would have to parade down Fifth Avenue stark naked to get this kind of coverage."

In addition to forcing women's liberation into a backseat, men's liberation lets men off the hook and gives them an excuse to cop out of any effort to combat male supremacy in themselves and in society. As a male participant wrote following the conference:

There was a feeling that a men's liberation movement can be more than just a 'men's auxiliary to the women's movement.' In other words, we began to see that there were larger tasks than getting men to

abandon the roles of power and privilege which oppress women . . . I got the feeling that it was possible for us to step beyond guilt and look at the ways in which our male roles are grievously oppressive to us as men. (David Hoffman, TCB 6/7/74)

Child care is a good example of what is to be abandoned for the sake of these "larger tasks." The conference organizers did not provide child care and were annoyed when this "petty" issue was brought up. Apparently women were supposed to look after the children while men were holding their "liberation conference," a return to pre-women's liberation days.

The conference call itself was enough to make any feminist's blood boil, if not run cold:

Men have been willing to work on the problems of Blacks, Chicanos, women and Soviet Jews, but never before for ourselves.

This mimicry of feminist ideas might be funny if what lies behind this new "movement" were not so serious. For these are *not* two legitimate movements vying for media coverage and people's time, energy, money, and sympathy. If that were true, then ways would have to be found for them to work together. But men's liberation is and always has been an illegitimate, reactionary, phoney issue. It is reactionary in the true sense of the word: a reaction to the past and possible future gains of the women's liberation movement, a political backlash against the progress of women, against the equalizing of power between men and women.

Men's liberation has received quite a lot of support from women who consider themselves feminists. NOW spent \$1000 for its Masculine Mystique Conference while most feminist projects go without funds (although recently NOW discontinued its Masculine Mystique Task Force).

There are various reasons for this support:

The Sex Role Theory of Oppression. For those who define the root of women's oppression as "sex roles" rather than male domination, all-male consciousness raising groups make a certain amount of sense. These groups started out, after all, claiming to change *men*, to make men less oppressive to women by helping them abandon their male "roles." Perhaps there are some men in these groups who have made some changes, but as a result of the general pressure from women organizing in great numbers, not as a result of these groups.

Wishful Thinking. It would be nice if men could educate each other's male supremacy away. But what goes on in these groups is not in women's favor. How could it be! When bosses get together to talk about their employees, their intent is not to find ways to share equally their profits and ownership with their employees. They may discuss means of appeasing disgruntled workers. This, in fact, is what is at the heart of men's lib groups. They are a breeding

ground for updating male supremacist theory and strategy for "handling" the growing feminist movement.

The Fairness Doctrine. Liberal feminists often feel in order to be "fair" they must encourage all-male groups if they belong to all-female groups. This results from failure to see that men have a stake in continuing the oppression of women, that as a privileged group they will cling to their privileges rather than give them up, and that all-male groups are a means to doing just that. The purpose of all-female women's liberation consciousness-raising groups was to be out of the earshot of the oppressor. It was intended as a means for the oppressed to organize against the oppressor, not as a means to help the oppressor hang onto his privileges. All-male groups are more of the same segregation that women's liberation all-female groups exist to put an end to.

Fear. Of being called "manhaters" or "female chauvinists." Men often attack women who stand against men's liberation groups or male caucuses. I have experienced this myself in objecting to a male caucus in an organization I worked in. From the raucous laughter that came from the meeting and the reports of it from one of the men more sympathetic to my position, I shouldn't have been the only woman who objected. Many women have been annoyed by men's liberation but have been willing to tolerate it—to let men "do their thing." Women need to see men's liberation for what it is—and stop helping it and start fighting it.

Men Are Oppressed Too. Women feel sorry for men. They can see that men's lives leave something to be desired, too, but they honestly don't see or avoid admitting that the real reason is not women or the "masculine mystique" but things like job boredom and insecurity, lousy and expensive health care, inflation, pollution, a rough time from the boss, housing problems, e.g. the problems of working people that make women's lives miserable, too. These are problems that need to be attacked by men and women working together, not in all-male groups (see "An Experience with Worker Consciousness-Raising").

Looking closely at a few major issues that men's liberation concerns itself with is very revealing. For instance, all the hullabaloo about how men are "conditioned" not to cry. This earthshattering issue is top priority to every men's liberationist and his women followers. *If* crying is really something that one turns on and off and *if* men cry less than women, then it's because men have something to gain by withholding their feelings, withholding valuable information so that they can control the situation. He who controls the truth controls. Men's concern with this "feelings" business is actually a ploy for women's support and sympathy which works because women are aware that men withhold their feelings, even if they are not aware of *why*. This bit of truth in the issue makes it a good cover-up for more dangerous issues, one of which is homosexuality.

Men's liberationists always bring up "confronting their own

feelings about men" by which they mean homosexuality. Male homosexuality is an extension of the reactionary club (meaning both group and weapon). The growth of gay liberation carries contempt for women to the ultimate: total segregation. The desire of men to "explore their homosexuality" really means encouraging the possibility of homosexuality as a reaction against feminist demands. This is the reason the movement for "gay rights" received much more support only after women's liberation became a mass movement.

Another major issue is the attempt by men to drop out of the work force and put their women to work supporting them. Men don't like their jobs, don't like the rat race, and don't like having a boss. That's what all the whining about being a "success symbol" or "success object" is really all about. Well, women don't like those things either, especially since they get paid 40% less than men for working, generally have more boring jobs, and rarely are even allowed to be "successful." But for women working is usually the only way to achieve some equality and power in the family, in their relationship with men, some independence. A man can quit work and pretty much still remain the master of his household, gaining for himself a lot of free time since the work he does doesn't come close to what his wife or lover does. In most cases, she's still doing more than her share of the housework in addition to wifework and her job. Instead of fighting to make his job better, to end the rat race, and to get rid of bosses, he sends his woman to work—not much different from the old practice of buying a substitute for the draft, or even pimping. And all in the name of breaking down "role stereotypes" or some such nonsense.

There is also evidence that men's liberation is opening more women's jobs to men than men's jobs to women (see "New Ways of Keeping Women Out of Paid Labor" by Colette Price). While there is little doubt that total integration of jobs is our goal, the opening of women's jobs to men without a parallel opening of men's jobs to women results in women being left jobless. Men often claim they are going into these jobs to break down sex roles when the growing unemployment rate is the real reason. This makes it appear

MEN'S LIB: WHAT ARE THEY?

If they're just misguided (due probably to guilt), let's set them straight.

If they're homosexuals in disguise, let them "come out" so we can expose them.

If they're male supremacists "speaking softly yet carrying the same big stick," let's fight them.

If they themselves don't know what they are, they should forget it!

— Colette Price

that these men are doing women a favor by taking their jobs. And saves men from coming to grips immediately with the growing economic crisis we are in.

Probably the most despicable thing men's liberationists try to do is "feminize" themselves and other men. Aggressiveness¹ is put down and "passivity" becomes the goal. The very "passivity" that has been forced on women for centuries, and which we really hate, is suddenly glorified by men's liberationists. Actually it is a smoke screen to accuse women who are pursuing feminist goals with gusto of "male

behavior." "You are guilty of the very male behavior we are trying to get rid of in ourselves," they sneer. Such men, playacting at "passivity," are often more of a burden to women than the old fashioned, upfront, domineering male chauvinist pig.

Women don't want to pretend to be weak and passive. And we don't want phoney, weak, passive-acting men any more than we want phoney supermen full of bravado and little else. What women want is for men to be honest. Women want men to be bold—boldly honest, aggressive in their human pursuits. Boldly passionate, sexual and sensual. And women want this for themselves.

It's time men became boldly radical. Daring to go to the root of their own exploitation and seeing that it is not women or "sex roles" or "society" causing their unhappiness, but capitalists and capitalism. It's time men dare to name and fight these, their real exploiters.

Marc Feigen Fasteau in *The Male Machine* goes so far as to suggest "male toughness" was the underlying factor both in Watergate and in U.S. involvement in Vietnam. This seems to be an attempt to sink the U.S. people further into the prevailing morass of mystical psychological searching that prevents a realistic look at the political and economic factors at work. The introduction to this book was written by Gloria Steinem. Check it out.

WHAT MEN'S LIBERATION MEANT TO ME

I recently had an experience I believe throws some light on "men's liberation." I was told the same story from two different points of view: one from a feminist whom I shall call Ann and the other from a woman I shall call Susan who is a believer in "men's liberation."

According to Susan, one evening she and her husband Paul went to visit Ann and her husband Tom. On arriving they found 3 others already there, whom I shall call Joe, Ken and Mary. They were listening to records when the 4 men, who all wanted to dance, began to dance with each other while the 3 women talked and watched. Susan thought this was a wonderful example of "men's liberation" and was overjoyed that the men all felt sure enough of their masculinity and free enough with their bodies to express their feelings in this way. She said that whereas women could dance together, men's roles didn't allow them to show their friendship for each other and that part of women's liberation was that the men would be freed of the restrictions their masculinity and male roles forced on them, and so would be freed to stop oppressing women.

A few months later, in talking to Ann, I heard the same story, but from a different point of view.

It seems of the other 3 visitors, Joe had been a practicing homosexual for years. The woman he was with, Mary, knew this, but wanting a little social life, had consented to come along anyway. Ken, said Ann, was a big baby whose wife, after unsuccessfully trying to make him be responsible, that is get a job so she could stop supporting him during his eternal schooling, had shortly before left him. Thereupon he also had "come out" in other words, had also turned homosexual. Ann's own husband was similar to Ken, and as Ann became more of a feminist he was beginning to feel that marriage was too much responsibility for him. Soon after he left her in order to become a homosexual. As Ann said, it was the ultimate act of male chauvinism: he left her because she wasn't a man.

In the entire group, Susan and her husband Paul were the only ones who didn't know exactly what was going on. Susan and Paul soon after broke up and the other men are awaiting his "coming out."

We used to think that if all women were feminists, men would have to shape up because there wouldn't be anybody for them to play around with. Now we know that as women begin standing up for our rights the men are leaving us to turn to each other. Homosexuality is the ultimate act of male chauvinism, and as the men discover that the marriage contract will no longer provide them with a servant but with an equal, they are losing interest in this arrangement and rejecting women altogether.

What a grim joke all this talk about "men's liberation" is, and if we fall for it, the joke will be on us.

— A Woman