

JUNE '68
USA

voice of the women's liberation movement

Sexual Service System?

by Fran Rominski

Although there is a multitude of summer projects springing up around the country, one of the most exciting seems to be Summer of Support. Briefly, Summer of Support is a program aimed at establishing coffee houses outside army bases in the nearby towns. The coffee houses are seen as "cultural antidotes or alternatives to the militaristic, drab, occasionally violent army town environment." The coffee houses will be staffed by movement people but are not designed to organize soldiers; rather, to provide soldiers with a resource institution through which they might organize themselves, when they are ready.

However, the coffee house idea presents some frightful possibilities for women. From the inception of the idea it has been considered important to have women staffing the coffee houses. The reason stated is that guys will open up more easily to women, who would be warm and sympathetic listeners. (The reason deduced by many women is that they would be valuable attractions.) The prospectus on the program lists women as one of the commodities to be brought along for the celebration of the G.I.'s return home-- "...those who have successfully served the soldiers' interests

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Cuban Women

#2

by Mary Nelson

(Mary Nelson recently returned from a three-week visit to Cuba.)

"What difference has the revolution made in your life?" I was speaking to a Cuban woman walking out to the fields where she does her voluntary agricultural work. She folded her work gloves into the pocket of her militia trousers and smiled. "Before, the black people couldn't go to the beaches, but now we can go wherever we want. The second change is that, before, women couldn't do anything, we didn't have any right. Now men and women work together; we are all revolutionary companeros."

One afternoon in Havana I had a long chat with a young woman. She is a buyer for chemicals for one of the ministries, is active in the Women's Federation, and helps support a family of her own. "We have heard a lot about the New Man Cuba is creating," I said. "Who is the New Woman?"

"Like the New Man, she develops her abilities so that she can contribute as much as possible to the collective effort. The New Woman is a fully productive companera."

These two conversations reveal some of the changes the revolution has brought in the lives of Cuban women.

Before the revolution in 1959, few Cuban women were employed. The rural labor force worked for wages, and very few had land for subsistence farming. Women could not work in the fields or factories because the level of unemployment was chronically at a crisis level, even for men. So there was little a woman could

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The VOICE of the WOMEN's LIBERATION MOVEMENT is a national newsletter put together by the Chicago women's groups. It is printed as often as material, time and money permit.

For this newsletter to be a valid reflection of the radical women's movement, it is essential that women from

write!

all over the country send in articles, drawings, jokes, cartoons. No one has the time or money to hound you for it — just write and send it today to Hilda Ignatin, 1545 N. Claremont, Chicago, Ill. 60622

COFEE HOUSES (cont. from p. 1)

by demanding peace should now come to army towns with music, women, and support to help effect and celebrate the G. I.'s quick transition to civilian life."

These are the descriptions of the roles which Summer of Support is asking women to fulfill. The roles are traditional, passive and, in the case of the latter, degrading. They come out of the chauvinist movement which, if allowed, apparently would not be ashamed to have its counterpart to Johnson's fleet of sexual conscripts for the Saigon and American troops in Vietnam.

That the movement is chauvinist, that it is oblivious to the oppressive roles it forces on women, and that it is so unabashed as to list women as a commodity in its literature is not all that new in the movement. The question at

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Women's roles & racism

by Kathy Kearny

Working class women on the Northwest side of Chicago were the subject of a recent Daily News article. They were mothers involved in the anti-busing movement, and their remarks quoted in the article revealed the way their status as women had influenced and formed their racism.

The women discussed how they believed most of their tax money was being misused to support A. D. C. mothers: "I hear those women have a different guy every night and we pay for it!" one snapped. "Yeah," another sighed and added with a giggle, "while we sit home."

While this illustrates misinformation of tax expenditures and the welfare system, it also reveals the results of exploitation and the second class role of women in this society.

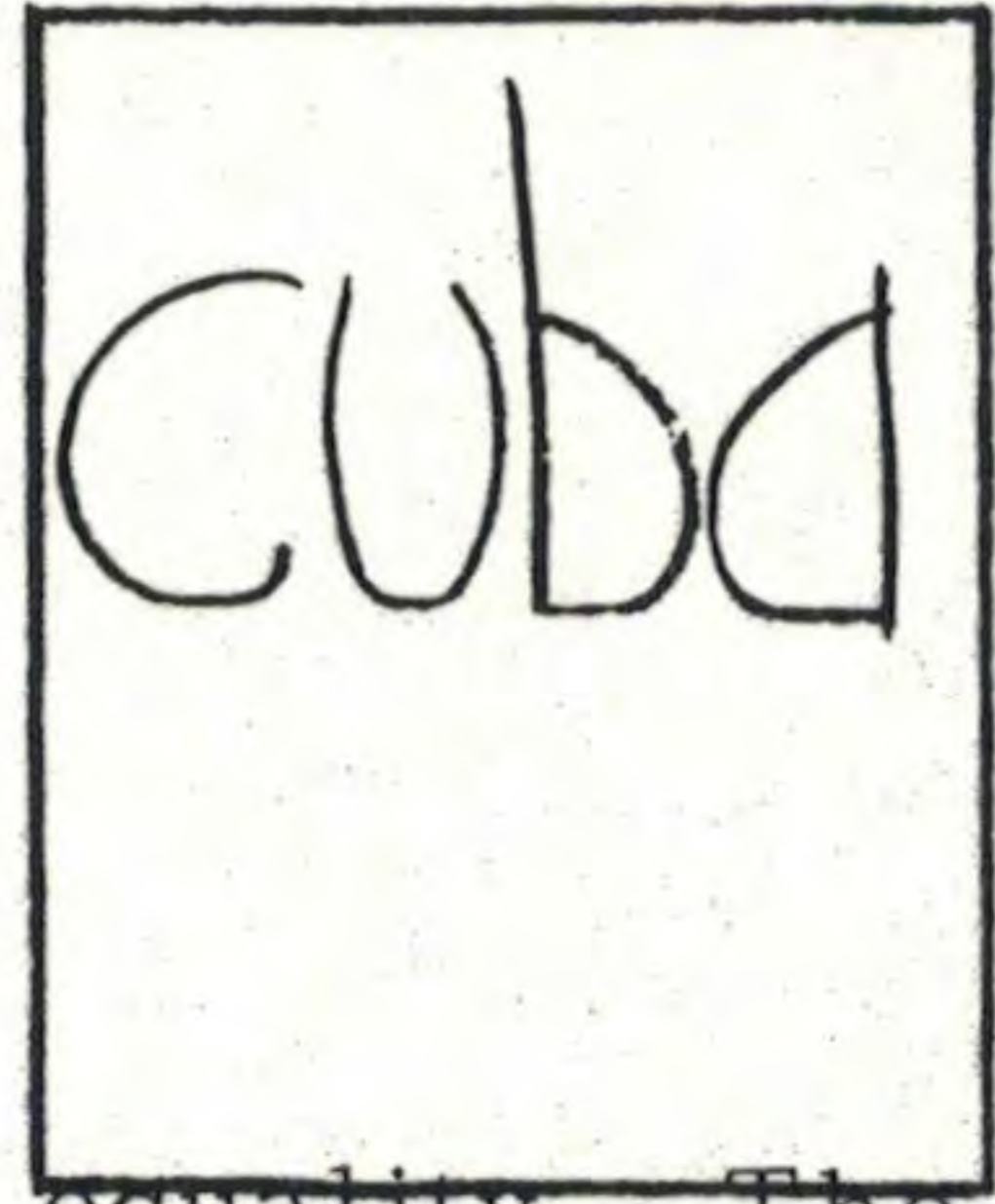
White America is imbued with racist, supremecist attitudes; white people are both beneficiaries and victims of their racism. To be white in America means that one benefits from better schools, enjoys the fruits of job discrimination against other races, and has the psychological advantage of thinking oneself superior. As a victimizing process, racism, reflects the need for one exploited group to feel superior — the most efficient means of maintaining a "divided house" and a secure domain for the ruling class. Recent history provides adequate examples of how white workers lost their battles because their racism was stronger or more valuable to them than was their workers' movement.

And the racism of these white working class women is characterized not only by their class attitudes, but also by the additional oppression of their sex, as illustrated in the article.

Their backgrounds showed a clear picture of the society's exploitation of them as women (i. e., they quit school to marry, worked at poorly-paying jobs to pay for their homes, etc.). Their own opinions of their lives? They describe them as dull, drab, nothing but work.

do except produce children.

Now there is so much work to be done in Cuba--new lands to be cultivated, factories to be built, classes to be taught--that anyone who can work is a treasure. Women are valuable people because the whole country needs them, not just because men like them.



The Women's Federation does not crusade to establish the emancipation or equality of women. Instead, its main function is to implement government work policies which operate on the assumption of equality. The Federation organizes voluntary work brigades, helps unemployed women find jobs, and trains students going into the fields. It also runs excellent day nurseries for pre-school children during work hours.

A strict division of labor is maintained in Cuba under the direction of the men: men drive tractors and cut the cane, while women roll cigars, run the nurseries, and plant coffee. (It is true that cane cutting is too difficult for most women, but driving a tractor is not. Why should there be no men in the nurseries?)

These exclusionary practices may be a source of conflict in the future, but they are not now.

Women are by no means restricted to low status jobs. Before, professional women were mainly teachers. Now, a third of the new teacher trainees are men, while nearly half of the medical students are women. In the sugar mill we visited, one of the ten or fifteen foremen was a woman. In the Faculty of Technology at the University a third of the students are women. There were virtually none before. Women are also active in local block clubs, the militia, and the Party; many are judges in the Popular Courts.

Although the work relationships between men and women have changed very rapidly, sexual relationships are changing more slowly. Women have been trained for a long time to judge their worth by how well they can please men as sexual objects. (Cuban fashion magazines are very much like our own) In Havana, around hotels particularly, there was no shortage of women wearing high heels, tight skirts, no girdles and shiny cloth, in the standard Latin "sexy" style. Many women have not yet discovered that they are already valuable; there is no need to wear those

uncomfortable shoes any more. And the Cuban men I watched responded to the traditional flirtations in traditional ways, maintaining the women's dependence on approval from men.

Marriage is not being eliminated. Cuban young people marry at a fairly early age--17 to 19--and are producing children prolifically. Contraceptives are available but aren't as popular as they are here, for a couple of reasons. First, the island is under-populated, a result of a century of uprisings and police retaliation. Second, mothers needn't choose between having children and continuing their public lives because of the nursery system run by the Women's Federation.

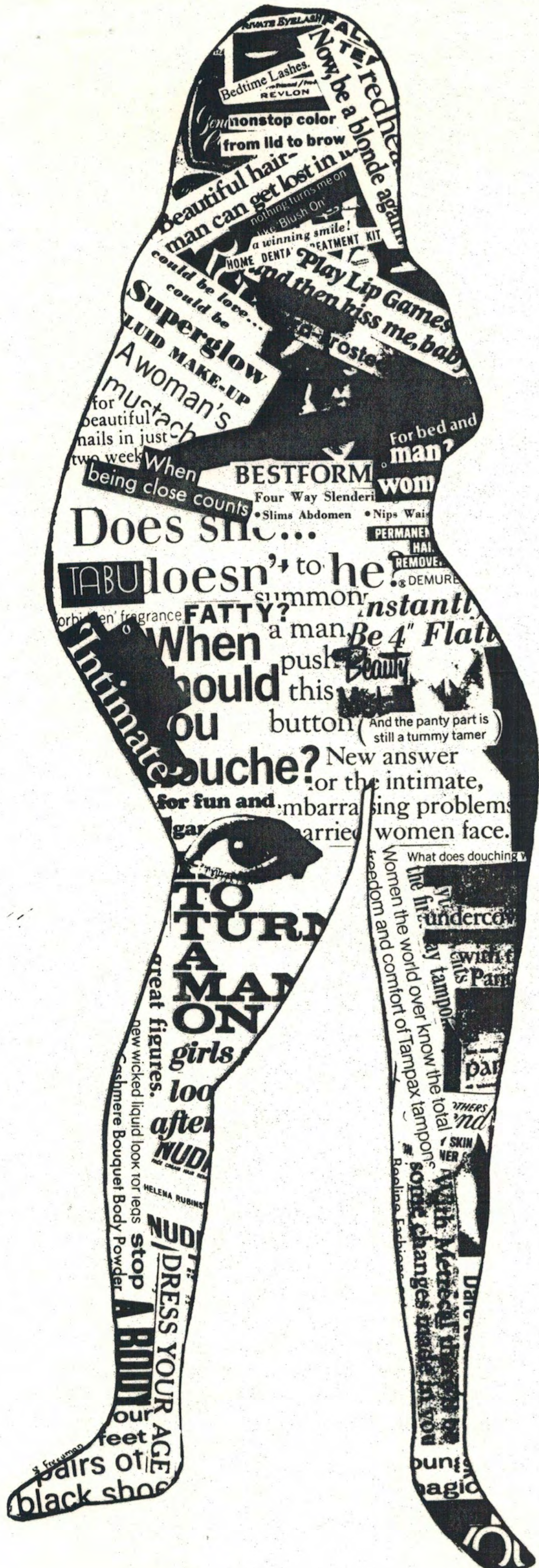
However, marriages are dissolved more often and more easily than before. The revolution often separates couples for several months or years while one partner is sent to a distant part of the island to do voluntary work, teach, or go to school. It is becoming more common, according to one of our guides for each to find a new partner until the old arrangement can be resumed. Sometimes the new partner is preferred and the previous marriage is dissolved.

Changes in women's roles in Cuba--in the value of being female--are closely related to changes in the Cubans' concept of the ideal person. I suspect that as the ideal of the New Socialist Man (consistent, hard-working and cooperative) comes to replace the ideal of the Guerillero (adventuresome,

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Nat'l CONFERENCE?

There have been numerous suggestions, ever since last summer, that a national radical women's meeting be called. The Chicago women's coordinating committee is interested in knowing what women all over the country think. Do you want a conference? If so, when, where, and how would you like to see it organized? Send your opinion to Conference, c/o Hilda Ignatin, 1545 N. Claremont, Chicago, Ill. 60622. We will try to let you know more in the next newsletter.



and
they
left
no
part
untouched

dear john:

women for peace - yes!
women's liberation - no!

Dear John:

I've always been a good provider. We have a lovely home in the suburbs and my wife has an unlimited charge account at Marshal Field's. I've always encouraged her to take night courses in art history and French cooking, so you can see I'm in favor of improving her mind.

She joined the League of Women Voters and I nodded my approval. She even started picketing with Women for Peace and I said yes. I agreed that it was good for women to question their government as long as dinner was on time and my shirts were ironed. However, now she's gone too far. She talked to this radical who convinced her that she ought to define herself, and some nonsense about liberating herself.

Now I believe in humoring women, but I'm sick of TV dinners and wrinkled collars. Can I convince her true happiness is found in a well-done cheese souffle?

Larry Liberal

Dear L. L.,

Your wife has obviously lost confidence in your manhood since she seeks fulfillment elsewhere. You must try to convince her that it is exciting to be part of your world— have you tried MAN TAN?

my chick used to
be a great help...

Dear John,

I used to be a movement bureaucrat and do city wide co-ordinating. My chick was always with me and a great help since I don't type, and she was much better on the phone asking for money and favors. Then I decided that in order to be more effective I should broaden my experience. I decided to organize a working class neighborhood. Fortunately, my chick had no political disagreements with me so she came along. For a while we were doing great. My chick would go into a local bar and start up conversations with some of the guys. Then I would come in shortly

after and join in, talking political stuff.

But lately, my chick has started hanging around grocery stores. If she does come in to a bar, she just talks to the women and doesn't help me get to know the guys. Now that's the important issue, the way she is messing up our organizing. But also she's talking about women's liberation stuff and refuses to cook all the time (although she's the better cook) and insists I learn to type.

How can I get her back to using her best talents in everyday tasks and being a good organizer?

Disorganized

Dear Disorganized,

Perhaps you could analyze women's liberation as counter-revolutionary and re-enlist her support. If you do come up with such an analysis, please send me a copy as I have many readers with similar problems.

hard to groove
while chick raps...

Dear John,

last night these beautiful people came over and we all got stoned out of our minds. grooving this way out music and I was lying on my chick's lap touching her body. this guy Ethan and I were grooving each other's minds. like we were really on the same wave length... CAN YOU DIG IT?... And suddenly this freakout started to happen. my chick started to rap and wouldn't stop... I don't even know what she was saying man all I know is here was my chick rapping man and she sat up and like she wasn't my chick anymore. like she was far away. like she was tuned in to herself more than to me. like man I groove on independent chicks and all but. like I'm her man and it was really nice lying on her lap. so we had this fight, and she called me an m. c. give me some words man... I'm up tight

Freaked Out

Dear Freaked,

I hear that drugs are liable to cause very unusual occurrences. Women sometimes get upset by some little thing that happens around the house. Perhaps the rapping your chick did was a way of getting your attention because she feels insecure. Tell her you think she's great and she'll probably be o k.

John Magnus Fallus

salt ^{of} the earth

by Amy Kesselman

In both its content and the way it was produced, this film by a group of people blacklisted in the McCarthy era has many meanings for us in the Movement. It is symbolic of the fact that repression can never be totally realized; that somehow, people find ways to continue working for the things that are important to them.

This group of film-makers knew that they had something to say that wasn't being said by Hollywood. They wanted to tell a story of working people and their struggle for dignity. But as they were making the film, freed from the confines of the bourgeois film industry, they learned something else. They found that if a movie was to tell the story of people, the people themselves must be involved in its direction, acting and writing. So, the members of Local 890 of the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union (expelled from the CIO in the early fifties), the heroes of the film, were involved in every aspect of its production.

The message of this movie, according to its script writer, is "the indivisibility of equality." It is the story of the struggle of Mexican-American miners for equality with "Anglo" miners and of the struggle of their women for equality with men. As the heroine put it, "I want to rise and push everything with me as I go."

This movie is real; painfully real to those of us who are women and who know the agony of being treated as trivial by the men in the Movement to which we have dedicated ourselves, a Movement pledged to build a society where every human being has dignity.

For women the message was clear; men will treat women as equals when women organize, become a vital part of struggles, and unceasingly demand to be treated as human beings.

I am unsure how men react to the movie. Their comments indicate an attempt to escape from it: "Latin American men really treat their women bad," one said. "It was a movie about unions, not women," protested another. Most men sat silently at those points in the film when the women were cheering wildly. These men will not be changed by a film. It is up to us to change them.

from Chicago

by Sarah Boyte

Approximately fifty members of the five Chicago radical women's groups met on Saturday, May 18, 1968, to hold a city-wide conference. The main purposes of the conference were to create and strengthen ties among groups and individuals, to generate a heightened sense of common history and purpose, and to provoke imaginative programmatic ideas and plans. In other words, the conference was an early step in the process of movement building.

The plan of the day-long conference included the following: an historical analysis of women's movements in the U. S., and impressionistic sketch of the women's liberation movement in Vietnam, workshops on "our identity as a movement", followed by a general meeting and workshop reports, and workshops on various program and action project ideas.

The "identity" workshops dealt with such questions as, How does the women's movement relate to the larger movement? How can we build a broad women's movement? Throughout the day, the need for historical research, and for women to do more writing, was brought up. Also discussed was the problem of analyzing women as an oppressed group, and the class differences in women's oppression.

There was some difference of opinion on priorities, with some favoring action projects (such as organizing university students and employees to demand a day-care center for their kids) now, and others feeling more research and discussion should precede any action. No conclusions were reached, and the dialogue will continue.

Reactions to the conference varied. Many of the negative reactions served to point up the limits of a one-day conference—e. g. too little time to relax and make friends resulted in people talking mostly to those they already knew. Many tired people left at 5:00 though the conference was planned to last until 8:00. Nevertheless, Chicago women have gotten together, and the experience has encouraged us to plan for continuing city-wide programs as a base for a more cohesive women's movement.

In the hospital
they moved systematically
down the rows of babies
checking.
and on me finding
lack of the male
tied into my mind
the roadmap lined with pink.

I learned to walk
along its path
feet not heeding
the brown terrain
of actual and uncharted
earth.

Enduring alike
hardships and the pretty --
eyes straight ahead
between tall flowered hedges
watered with advertising,
watered with fear,
to the ultimate
plastic cartoon
of a lying fairy-tale's end
covering the horizon
overcoming the whole sky
at the end of the road marked—
childhood.

—Jean Tepperman

Women's history & more...

The Chicago women's coordinating committee has planned a series of forums. The purposes of the forums are: 1) to encourage deeper study of subjects such as the history of women's movements, and the treatment of women by the social sciences; 2) to give women knowledge of these aspects of women's roles; 3) to provide a chance for women in the different groups to meet regularly, and 4) to reach new women.

The first forum will be: "Women in the Labor Movement since 1920" and will be held July 12 at 925 Diversey. Subsequent forums will be held every six weeks. For more information, call Amy Kesselman, 764, 4399.

readings

- A Position Paper on Radical Women in the Professions; or, Up from Ridicule/ Marlene Dixon
 - Towards a Radical Women's Movement/ Marilyn Salzman Webb
 - Women in the Radical Movement: A Reply to Ramparts/ Evelyn Goldfield with Heather Booth and Sue Munaker
 - The Look is You: Towards a Strategy for Radical Women/ Naomi Jaffe & Bernadine Dohrn
 - Some aspects of the Situation of South Vietnam's Women & Children Under the U. S. Puppet Regime/ a document of the South Vietnam Women's Liberation Union
- 35¢ each or 10 for \$2.50

COFFEE HOUSES (cont. from p. 2)

hand is whether women should participate in a program which comes fully garnished with these attitudes.

One of the Chicago women's groups spent some time considering this project. At first, our attitude toward the coffee houses was mostly violent opposition. We sent a few women in the group to visit the coffee house in Waynesville, Missouri. What they discovered was encouraging. Women working in the coffee house were able to relate to G. I.'s on many levels, their roles were not strictly defined, and they shared equally with men in running the coffee house. The chauvinism and oppression they met came from individuals and was not built into the institution itself.

These impressions caused us to conclude that the coffee house project could be non-oppressive to women provided that co-ed staffs were maintained and women participated fully in all decision making. We are not ignoring the fact that we have been treated as objects in the planning of this project. What we had to be certain about was that the movement's chauvinism was not being institutionalized into a summer project. Fortunately, this does not seem to be happening.

What this project shows is that the movement remains as chauvinist as any other part of society. Its commitment to fight oppression does not extend to fighting oppression of women; in fact, the movement is more than willing to oppress, use and manipulate women as it chooses. We learn again that women will never be free, respected human beings until there is a strong women's movement which defines and demands the rights of women both in the movement and the society at large



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CUBA (cont. from p 3)

independent, aggressive), men will find it less difficult to accept women as partners. Fortunately, there is so much that needs to be done that women can lead full lives now and needn't wait for men to accept them.

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Handwritten notes:
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Kathy