

Now You See it, Now You Don't...

Another year; another International Women's Day. We really are lucky. A day all to ourselves once every year, rain or shine. And that in addition to the whole year we got back in 1975. Let's see, that means another Women's Year is due in 3950 A.D. Can't wait!

To avoid being accused of reverse discrimination, how about an International Men's Day?

I discussed this possibility with an innocent bystander at Toronto City Hall on March 8th. As we watched the ceremonial burning of a police report on Rape which exonerated the rapist and blamed the raped, my neighbour assured me that an I.M.D. wasn't necessary. There is one day for women and all the rest of the year was for 'Everybody'. I agree. We all know who 'Everybody' is and he doesn't need any special days.

Are there men with imagination enough to glimpse what it means to live in a world where only one day in the year is supposedly dedicated to you and your kind, and all the rest, plainly not to you and your kind? I doubt it. No matter to what minority or oppressed group a man may belong, whether he be tall or short, black or white, strong or weak, gay or straight, right- or left-handed, his life experience as a male precludes that consciousness. Just as those born blind cannot conceive of colours, so the life experience of women will ever remain hidden from men.

However, the reverse is not true. Because men are 'everybody', women know a hell of a lot more about what it is like to be male than vice versa. It's hard indeed *not* to identify with the dominant, the all pervasive, the normative; in short with 'everybody'. We know about men, about their insecurities and weaknesses as well as their aggressive and competitive impulses. Often we are economically dependent on men or at least on male approval. It is understandable that we nurture individual men and shield them from feeling excluded or threatened by any act of ours.

But it's another matter altogether for political women who lay claim to be part of the Women's Movement to let themselves be taken over by male dominated politics.

That is what happened on Saturday March 10th at the International Women's Day Rally and march in Toronto this year. After years of repeated, often outrageous, history of left manipulation of women's groups it still comes as a personal shock and betrayal to see it happen again.

The economic crisis, the very real hard times facing women, give the left another excuse to use our movement to propagate their sectarian aims in their own inimitable way. And what a way! This so-called Women's Day was a dress rehearsal for May Day, just another date on the left's calendar, indistinguishable from any other leftist event. The Rally lacked any feminist content, soft-pedalled Women's Liberation and was unconsciously coy on the subject of lesbians. If I see just one more 'Lesbian-Mother' figure with a bag over her head encouraging feminists to follow the left, I will throw-up! As for the outright anti-woman propaganda which was evident on leaflets and placards, for that there can be no possible excuse. The women who let this happen should consider how they (and we) have been used and abused again in the name of some liberal idea of solidarity. Solidarity at this price is not solidarity at all, it's sell-out. Co-optation is not a monopoly of the dominant system. It works in the so-called revolutionary left, too.

□ Eve Zaremba

From Broadside: Were you at Convocation Hall that day? What did you think of the proceedings? Do you have other examples to offer? Do you think Zaremba is right? What do you think of the left's participation in events such as I.W.D.? Should all events by and in the name of women be approved of uncritically? What's your position on women organising autonomously and in our own interests?

Write and let us know — **Broadside**, P.O. Box 494, Station P, Toronto, M5S 2T1.



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