Sisters Tell It Like it is

Liberation News Service

1970

(OFF OUR BACKS / Liberation News Service)

Editor's note: Women's Liberation in Washington, D.C., was invited to testify before the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments May 5 to present their position on the Equal Rights Amendment before Congress. Three women spoke, identifying themselves as Sarah Grimke, Emma Goldman and Angelina Grimke, 3 radical feminists from "herstory." In the middle of their testimony they set a Senate precedent by turning their backs on the Senators to face the 150 sisters who comprised the audience. The following is their address to the people.

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Our talk with the people begins now. At best they offer women equal jobs with equal pay under this amendment. But we know that that is only an equal right to be exploited in the market economy which is based on profit and not human needs. It means that there is still no right for women to be paid, at all, for the work done in the home, which is the woman's responsibility whether she has outside employment or not.

They offer us equal access to higher education. We know that this is an equal opportunity to be shot and slaughtered on campus.

The amendment will place equal responsibility on men and women for alimony, divorce, and child custody. But it does not deal with the reason for failed marriages—the nuclear family, an isolated unit of wife, husband and perhaps children. The nuclear family is largely incapable of meeting human needs, for the society takes no responsibility for children. We, all of us—men and women—have a responsibility for the children of our society. We are working on alternatives to the nuclear family. We are experimenting with new forms of communal and cooperative living. We are working to provide free, 24-hour-a-day, community-controlled child care.

The amendment will give us equal Social Security benefits. But what use are equal Social Security benefits in a country where all the necessities of life—food, clothing, housing—cost money, and inflation is wildly out of control?

The health industry makes over two and a half billion dollars a year in profits after taxes, while most of our people cannot afford to be sick or old. We are working for free health care, safe contraception and abortion on demand.

They offer us an equal chance to kill and to die for US imperialism. We oppose the draft for both men and women. But like our sisters in Vietnam and Cambodia, we will fight for the liberation of oppressed peoples wherever we are.

They offer us equal representation on juries and equal criminal penalties within a totally corrupt and repressive judicial system. So-called justice for Panther women in New Haven means being held without bail in solitary confinement, being pregnant without medical care and giving birth under armed guard,

and having a baby taken away by the state against the will of the mother and used as a bribe for false testimony.

Constitutional amendments will not make any difference to these things. Only revolutionary change can meet the demands women are making today.

FREE OUR SISTERS. FREE OURSELVES ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE.

For the man who's in control

by The Women's News Co-op

He's got her right where he wants her—at his feet, between his legs. He can't help it if he's irresistible. It's the male fantasy of having a beautiful woman clinging to his leg while he looks away disinterestedly.

And she, poor weak thing, has supposedly lost all sense of herself while she delights in resting her head against his strong thigh. The image put forth has a thousand variations, but all on the same theme—the slave, the subject, the concubine, the maid, the vessel, the one who gets fucked.

Ads like this fill the pages of the mass media. Capitalism, here in the form of Thane sportswear, makes appeals to male supremacy in order to sell its products. By projecting the "ideal" man for women to desire, it encourages them to identify with the man in the picture—"the one with authority"—who just happens to be wearing a Thane sportshirt.

But women are beginning to reject sitting at the feet of those plastic macho men. They're beginning to stand up and challenge the whole male supremacy concept, in the media and everywhere else it exists in our society.

One may predict with confidence that sexist ads like this one, which dehumanize Women, have a limited future.

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