

Women's Liberation in Cuba

Fifth Estate Collective
Various Authors

1970

The Federación de Mujeres Cabanas. (Federation of Cuban Women) is the large, popular women's organization of Cuba. The FMC has an immense responsibility: to untie the "other hand"; to liberate the Cuban women from traditional roles. This means overcoming the traditional prejudices, which in Cuba as in all countries, most especially those of semi-feudal and colonial backgrounds, are deeply ingrained and extremely hard to dislodge. The old crippling "Machismo" mentality must be fought by all revolutionary forces.

The Cubans recognize that as long as man is the only bread-winner in the family and his wife the household servant doing his chores and raising the children, she will remain subordinate to him and both their outlooks will reflect this relationship.

To free the women, a network of nurseries and schools capable of seeing to the children's needs has been established all across Cuba. In rural areas, the older children are able to attend boarding schools, returning to their families on weekends. Here, they are fed, clothed, housed, and have all their medical and dental needs taken care of. All that is required for enrollment is parental permission. At one school visited, the oldest teacher was the assistant principal. She was 21. It seemed that everywhere we found this new generation of Cuban women to be in the forefront of the revolution.

An understanding of the situation and the goals of this movement might be gained from a question once posed to Fidel by a young North American girl. Her inquiry ran something like this: "Since the family as an economic unit is no longer necessary because the needs of the children are insured by society as a whole and the parents are encouraged to pursue their own individual courses in life, what reason is there for the family to stay together at all?" Fidel's answer was simple. "Love is the only reason a family should stay together."

The struggle for women's full emancipation is protracted, but the existence and growth of the FMC is a guarantee that it will continue until won.

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Fifth Estate #110, July 23-August 5, 1970

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