

parliamentary politics, the practical need to win the votes of men--especially working class men--attached to the patriarchal family shunted aside theoretical commitments to women's rights. Marilyn Boxer draws the broadest conclusion: "In a historical situation. . . in which the socialist party chose in practice to support the bourgeois state, there was no chance it would work for radical change in the lives of women who, through their role in the family, were seen to be the sinews which held the body politic together." Ingrun Lafleur, in "Five Socialist Women: Traditionalist Conflicts and Socialist Visions in Austria, 1893-1934," has a more nuanced view. She argues that the Austrian socialist women's movement obtained the first endorsement by a political party of legal, free abortion and birth control (1926) because the Social Democratic Party had to emphasize personal and cultural issues to combat the "massive influence" of the Church. This and other essays in Socialist Women indicate that more attention should be paid to the particular political and cultural setting to understand the socialists' positions on feminism.

Engel's study of four Russians, Lafleur's five Austrians, Boxer's six Frenchwomen, and Quataert's eight S.P.D. women hint that working class and peasant women came to socialist feminism for different reasons than bourgeois or aristocratic women. Despite the editors' claims, though,

the book focuses on upper class socialist feminists. Much more must be done on working class socialist feminists and on working class women's attitudes toward socialist feminism. Boxer does speculate that socialist feminists' failure to push for concrete reforms--other than so-called protective labour legislation--may have lost them the support of working women. Her speculation deserves further, more specific study.

In general, this pioneering collection opens up new lines of inquiry for the specialist without losing its suitability as an introduction to socialist feminism.

Mary Lynn McDougall
Simon Fraser University

**Honest Womanhood: Feminism,
Feminity and Class Consciousness
Among Toronto Working Women,
1893-1914** WAYNE ROBERTS, Toronto:
New Hogtown Press, 1976, Pp. 60

Honest Womanhood is a resourceful package of information that allows the reader to see exactly how far women

have come in achieving equal status, rights and conditions in the work force. By pointing to the shortcomings of the past, the reader has the chance to examine the present and focus on the achievements in recent decades.

The study of women in labour in Ontario is not a new topic. In 1891, Jean Scott, a known critic of women in the labour force attributed the failure of women's trade unions to many factors, such as inexperience, and lack of social mobility. Yet she stated that the main problem was that the motivation in hiring women was that an employer was not required to pay a woman as much as he was a male worker. This idea presented a discriminatory situation of which the stigma has lingered to surface in many feminist labour issues today.

Wayne Roberts has touched on many aspects of working women dealing with domestic servants, secretaries, waitresses, teachers and factory "girls." In each area, he writes in detail, not only presenting the 'horror' stories, but also revealing the difficulties in organizing working women. Roberts describes the conditions of the work-poor pay, long hours, lack of promotion, little or no benefits and tedium which seemed to repeat themselves with regularity. He paints a well-researched picture of the plainly disgusting situation in which women were expected to produce and the struggle they endured to free themselves.

"Honest Womanhood" was a term coined by the Working Women's Protective Association and evokes the feeling of femininity, self-respect, a need for dignity and a sense of pride in good work. These were important values for the women who used them to find a place for themselves in the work force. Since their awareness of themselves was much like our own, we can only look at the desperation of their situation and marvel at what they accomplished in spite of it all.

Joy Parks,
Iroquois, Ontario

The Secret Oppression, Sexual Harassment of Working Women.

CONSTANCE BACKHOUSE and LEAH COHEN, Toronto: Macmillan, 1978, Pp. 206

Like the concern in recent years with abortion on demand and rape, "sexual harassment" has become a rallying point for the North American women's movement. Backhouse and Cohen define sexual harassment as "any sexually oriented practice that endangers a woman's job--that undermines her job