

# WE WILL FORGE AHEAD

A FEMINIST'S PERSPECTIVE

by Susan Satterthwaite

Feminism. The word has become a very meaningful and important part of our vocabulary. Just what constitutes a feminist? What does the word feminism mean? Feminism is basically a set of principles which embrace the industrial, political, social, mental and sexual equality of women with men. A feminist is an individual who advocates those principles and who acts in some way to carry on the struggle to ensure equality for all women.

Many individuals unfamiliar with the meaning of feminism hold the mistaken belief that all feminists are a mass of "loud-mouthed"-pole climbing and ditch digging", overly aggressive, "masculine", "uppity" women

who want to become men. But no idea could be further from the truth! These individuals are completely unaware of the many faces of feminism which exist in society today.

Feminists are not just women. Men are feminists, too, and more and more men (and women) are becoming feminists as their consciences are raised concerning the plight of women in our exploitative and sexist culture. With each new individual who joins the fight, the movement gains strength and the march for liberation moves steadily onward. The important thing to remember here is that a feminist is an individual who professes belief in and support for the equality of women with men in all

aspects of life. Feminists range from radical positions, to moderate orientations, to more conservative positions.

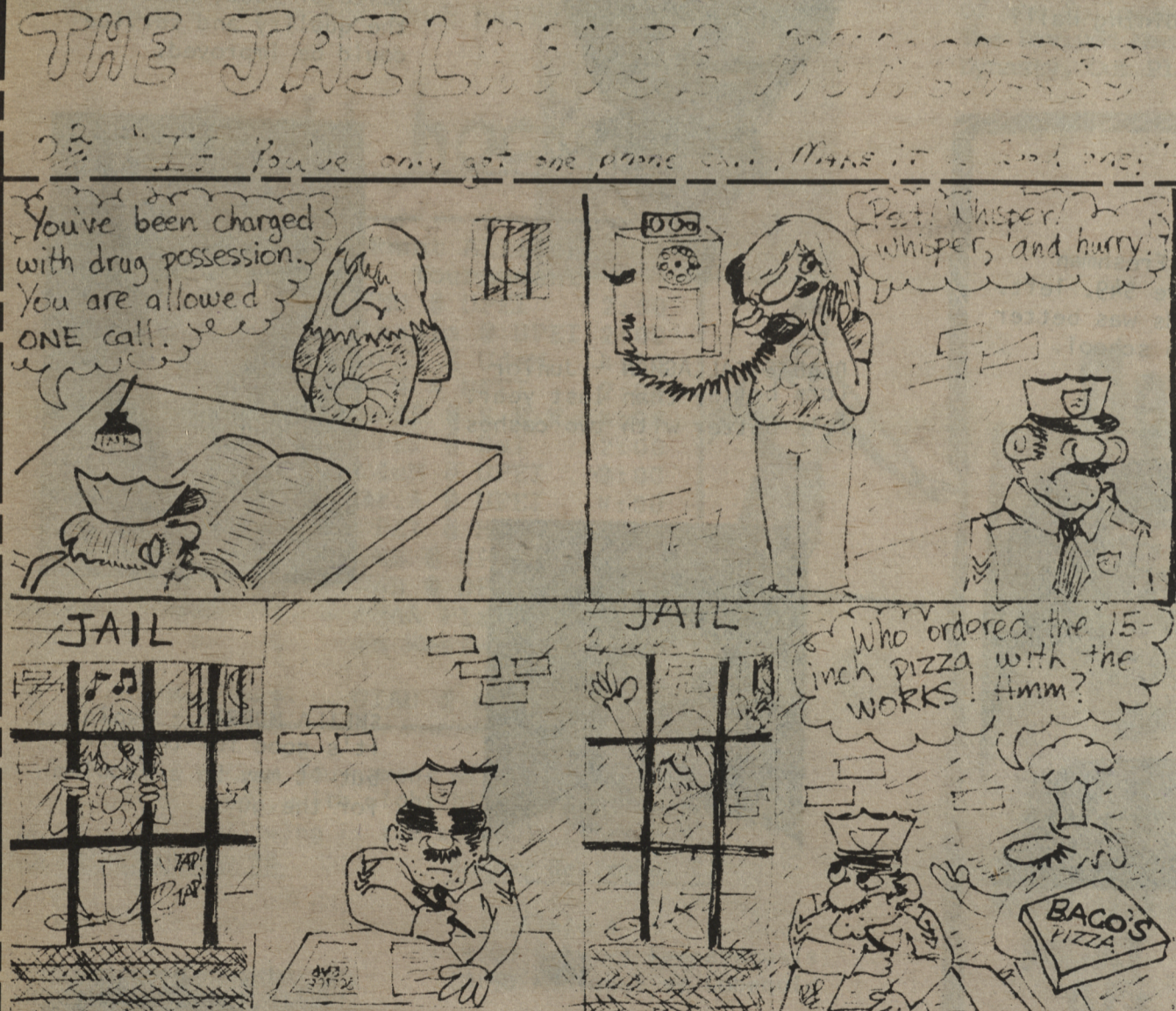
There are leftist feminists who believe the road to equality for women lies in a socialist revolution. There are feminists who are fighting to gain equal rights through established legal and governmental channels (such as the National Organization for Women and Status of Women Canada). There are feminist psychologists, psychiatrists and psychotherapists who help to raise women's own consciences about who they are and their ultimate worth as human beings in a society which, only until a few decades ago, did not even consider women as persons (legislation was passed -both in

the USA and Canada - to give women that status which they were wrongly excluded from).

Some feminists choose to pursue a career, be it in business, politics, education, or whatever, while others choose to be homemakers and enjoy their work (and it is work), but want it to be recognized as one of the many choices that a woman can make for herself and not as the only position women are fit for, are capable of, or were created for. Black feminists fight a two-fold battle against the combined forces of racial and sexist discrimination. (The contemporary Women's Liberation Movement grew out of the civil rights movement of the 1960's and early 1970's).

Women (and men) from all walks of life are joining the fight for liberation and equality of women in all aspects of society. Some are middle class, some are lower middle class, and many are poor (poor women must also fight dual-discrimination resulting from their sex and their low economic status). Some are married, some are not and some don't want to be. Some have children, some do not and some don't want any.

There are many more faces which I do not have room to mention. But as you can see, it is by no means a single concept or a single type of individual who is a feminist. There are many different individuals and groups who advocate numerous methods of working to establish women's equality. There is no one single road to any of the ends. And next week I will be talking about some of those major issues of the feminist movement.



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