

Hedy's corner

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★ HEDY'S CORNER

My series of "Old Times" has to be shelved in favour of a very much more up-to-date topic, a similar one as currently in New Zealand: "Women's Place in Society."

The Swiss newspaper "Tagesanzeiger", of April 30th, 74 discusses this topic. The Swiss Commission of UNESCO was asked to present a study on this matter and it was worked out and tabulated by the Institute of Sociology of the University of Zurich, who published a book containing its findings.

The investigation was built upon questionnaire results, completed by 629 single women and 629 married women and their husbands, as well as by statistics. The conclusion of this report is, in its broadest sense formulated thus: "For women, as yet, the family is the most important sphere, it is therefore deemed equally necessary to strengthen the position of the woman within the family as much as the single woman." Referring to the position of women within the community it is shown that they are not as well represented and at a disadvantage compared with men.

1. In important social areas, especially in education, economy and politics, women are insufficiently represented, or not at all.
2. For woman a different kind of criterion is valid than for man. She earns less for an equal job and at the same time a higher qualification is demanded. Salaries are between a quarter and a third lower.
3. In educating girls certain school subjects are dealt with more superficially.
4. With married women it is preponderantly the husband who decides on important issues, although sometimes to the detriment of the wife.

Subjectively, this discrimination does not register very much with Swiss women. They accept their position or even do not realise it, as is shown from many of the answers in the questionnaire. In other words: the problems are more real than the consciousness thereof.

To close this gap women have to combine more and associate themselves with available institutions; but first of all existing inertia and discrimination has to be overcome within their own ranks as well as their inferiority complex. Only after this is accomplished can women alter their lot.

The book mentioned above is published by Verlag Huber, Frauenfeld. It has 300 pages. A condensed version can be obtained (90 pages) from the Bundeskanzlei, Bern.

—Condensed from "Tagesanzeiger", April 30, 1974.