

sexism in schools

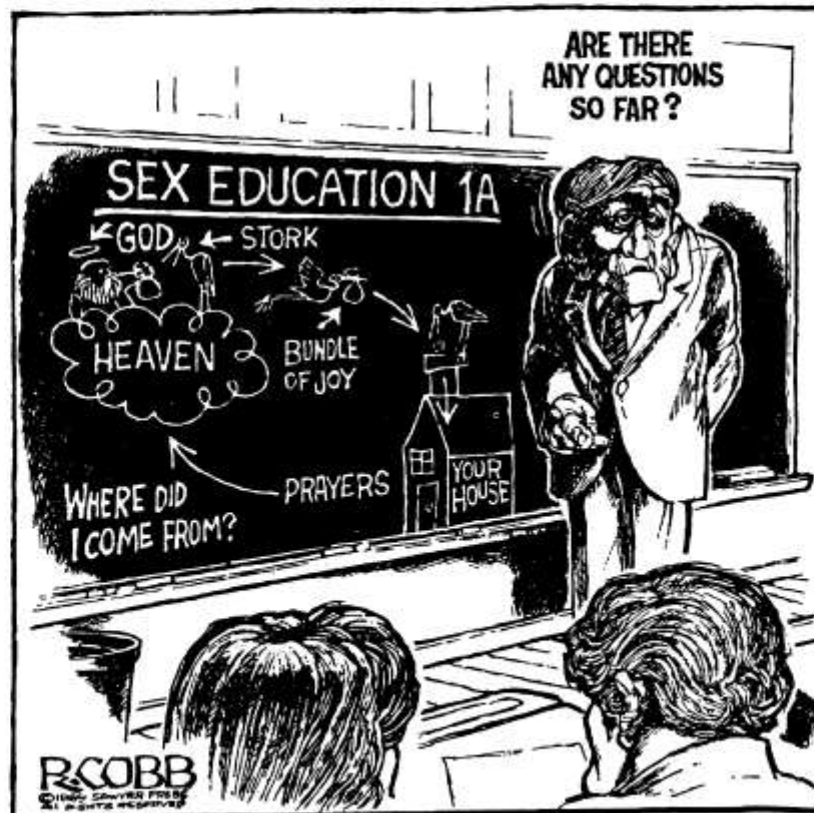
Over the last few weeks you would have read a great deal about Women's Liberation. Our ideas and the content of our pamphlets have not been published- The big stink shows that this society isn't going to give the information it has about sex to the girls themselves. What has been said in the main, is based on distortion, emotionalism, ignorance and hysteria. What are these people (powerful men in the press, in government and in schools) so frightened of? Partly they are afraid of anything unknown, of anything they can't immediately understand and label. But mainly they are frightened of any threat to their power, especially if the threat comes from women. Women have always been subservient to men. This is because ours in a sexist society.

But the lack of sex education is only one of the ways we are put down by the people who control us. They not only keep us in the dark about our bodies and what we could do with them (we are all told what NOT to do with them) but they also control our minds to a very great extent.

All these values are very obvious in the way girls are treated at school. School discipline depends on everyone behaving in the same way, on conformity. Certainly this applies to boys but it is especially true of the way it is demanded that girls behave. Girls' uniforms in most cases include many unnecessary items - thick stockings, regulation shoes, gloves in summer, high collars, ties, special skirt lengths, prescribed hair styles. Have you ever seen a boy wearing a pair of gloves?

School is where you learn things. But what are you taught and WHY?
JOBS?

Boys do academic courses, women commercial!



Handsome is as handsome does	TRUE	FALSE
All girls think there is something wrong with their looks	TRUE	FALSE
Honesty is the best policy	TRUE	FALSE
It's a wise woman who knows when to shut up	TRUE	FALSE
Boys prefer girls to be natural	TRUE	FALSE
All females look better made-up	TRUE	FALSE
It's good to have definite opinions	TRUE	FALSE
A real woman wants to look up to her man	TRUE	FALSE
Office work is worthwhile	TRUE	FALSE
80% of shorthand/typists are men	TRUE	FALSE
All boys want to marry a virgin	TRUE	FALSE
All girls want to marry a virgin	TRUE	FALSE
Women are expected to compete with each other over men	TRUE	FALSE
Boys discuss each other's clothes all the time	TRUE	FALSE
Ignorance is bliss	TRUE	FALSE
One-third of Australian marriages are shot-gun	TRUE	FALSE

DEMAND EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

WOMEN ARE PAID 40% - 100% LESS THAN MEN

Except for very few women (token women) girls are prepared by their education for jobs that are poorly paid and/or are as dull as dishwater. This deadly combination discourages young women from being too serious about their jobs (noone can get too involved in chopping up a pineapple day after day, or work up

enthusiasm over controlling a typewriter or even a room full of typewriters, a fact recognised by the male when he gave up typing and handed it over to women in 1910). Any woman with sense will yearn for the one escape offered - marriage. However cleaning house, cooking, etc. is also a job; her basic rate of pay is board and keep and pocket money; and housework is also as dull as dishwater.

WOMEN MUST BAND TOGETHER

Sexism is discrimination on the basis of sex, it's like racism. In the eyes of the world the most important thing about a black person, no matter who he is or what he's done, is his colour. Similarly, a woman, no matter who or what she is, cannot escape being confined to narrowing ideas of femininity, womanliness, and being a 'lady'. Her life is based on her looks, her desire for a master, her ability to attract a buyer (a husband), and not on her independence.

Propaganda about the wonders of 'womanhood' - chastity, passivity, purity, self-denial, turn women into second-class citizens. They must centre their lives around their husband's lives. Not that there is anything fundamentally wrong with the ideas of self-denial for the sake of others - but many women, instead of living full lives become martyrs. This self punishment is glorified as 'true womanhood'.

But sexism doesn't just exist in schools and the society as a whole. It operates between girls who naturally undervalue themselves and are more sensitive to criticism. Girls first learn to feel inadequate and look down on others who are in competition with them for boys and clothes. Been to the discos lately? Girls tend to grade other girls as 'good girls' or 'fallen women'. This labelling process operates in a reverse way among boys who call girls either the 'good sorts' or the 'prudes'. Companionship with boys is always shadowed by the sexual market. Jealousy between girls, dishonest flirting with boys means that virtually all relationships for young women are subject to artificiality and distrustfulness.

The existence of sexism has always been ignored because it goes to the root of how men and women treat each other. All the important areas of our society (government, business, personal relationships) are run by men. They may not always use this power cruelly, but so long as it exists women will be trapped in

their inferior role. The only way to overcome the problem is for women to band together as friends and fight the issue out as a political problem. HOW YOU LIVE AFFECTS OTHERS ; YOUR LIFE IS POLITICAL.

Discuss whether your courses and sports are sexist, how much freedom girls have compared to boys, why so much emphasis is placed on uniform regulations.

Start your own Women's Liberation group.

Come to Women's Liberation meetings, first Thursday each month at U.A.W. Rooms 459 Ann Street, BRISBANE.

Write to Women's Liberation.

This pamphlet was written with the help of girls from several high schools. The drawings below are from a group of high-school women in Boston, U.S.A.

