

Suzanne X

WOMEN AND GEOGRAPHY NEWSLETTER

No. 4. SUMMER 1981.

WOMEN AND GEOGRAPHY GROUP COLLECTIVE MEETING :

This was held in London on Sunday June 21st. Six people attended; Sophie Bowlby (Reading), Jo Foord (Kent), Jane Lewis (QMC), Suzanne MacKenzie (Sussex), Janet Momsen (Newcastle), and Linda Peake (Reading). The meeting lasted all day and discussion covered a wide range of issues and problems. The major 'points of discussion' and subsequent decisions arrived at are set out below;

i). GROUP'S STATUS :

With the refusal of the Women and Geography Group's (W&G) application for status as a 'Study Group' it was agreed that the group should continue with its meetings and activities on an informal working-group basis. It was also agreed that we should reapply for 'Study Group' status next year.

ii). ELECTION OF WOMEN TO COUNCIL :

It was generally agreed that this is very important for the group - decisions about nominations will be made in the near future.

iii). LINKS WITH OTHER GROUPS :

Janet Momsen (Newcastle) agreed to notify the CSWG of the AAG of our existence as a group. Newsletter 'swaps' were suggested as an important way of keeping in touch with each others activities. Suzanne MacKenzie (Sussex) is returning to Canada in the Autumn and has agreed to be our link there. Jane Lewis (QMC) will try to keep both the USC and the W&G Group informed of each others activities; this is particularly important given the recent 'clash' of the USC and the W&G Group in the 1982 IBG conference timetable and the considerable overlap in the membership of both groups.

iv). PROBLEMS OF COMMUNICATION :

Linda Peake (Reading) brought the question of the groups position to other geographers to the forefront of the discussion. Suzanne MacKenzie (Sussex) also raised the important issue of the problems experienced by undergraduates interested in writing dissertations/essays on women and geography. These two points emphasised the need to provide a research directory. It was further suggested that a letter be drawn up and sent to all departments. The letter should state the groups aims and stress the supportive, research contact role of the group inviting anyone to contact us for further information. A notice will also be sent out to all departments specifically for undergraduate notice boards.

v). RESEARCH :

The register request at the end of Newsletter 3 had a poor return rate. Despite this it was agreed to repeat the tear-off slip in this issue as another attempt to improve communications.

Full minutes of this meeting are available from J. Foord, 28 Hornby House, Clayton Street, London SE11.

DAY-MEETING :

A day-meeting has been organised for Saturday Sept. 26th. at the Geog. Dept., University College London. The title 'PERSPECTIVES ON FEMINISM AND GEOGRAPHY' was confirmed. The proposed programme is as follows, all sessions are to be followed by general discussion;

AM : Theory and Method (outlining the debate so far)

PM : Areas for Research (short synopses of areas where feminist work has been or is currently being attempted with suggestions for future work).

Speakers proposed for the morning session are - Jacki Tivers and Jo Foord with replies from Suzanne MacKenzie and Gail Chester.

Speakers for the afternoon session have not yet been finalised. Proposals to date include - Janet Momsen on development.

Sophie Bowlby on women as consumers and shopping policy.

Vanessa Coupland on women and health care.

Jane Lewis on women and the restructuring of industry.

Any charge made will be for food and drink. Creche facilities would be available if requested - please contact Linda McDowell (Open University) as soon as possible if required. It was also suggested that a fares pool should operate.

ALL WELCOME ; BEGINS AT 11.00 am.

SOUTHAMPTON IBG 1982 :

The title 'The institutionalisation of gender differences' has been agreed. The problem of the timetable 'clash' with the USG (mentioned above) has not been sorted out yet - but we are trying to get around the problem in co-operation with the USG London collective.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS :

- i). Sophie Bowlby's (Reading) follow up to Linda McDowell's (Open University) 'Women in British Geography' study is now underway and results will be available in due course.
- ii). As a result of the confusion expressed at the 1981 IBG conference over the connections between feminism and geography, Sophie Bowlby, Jo Foord and Suzanne MacKenzie have recently finished a paper on the development of feminist theory and its implications for the development of geographic thought. This article is forthcoming in Area (see below 'Publications').
- iii). The Antipode issue on women is still underway - articles to be sent to editorial collective by the end of July.
- iv). Suzanne MacKenzie and Janet Momsen suggested that work on teaching should be a priority and are going to approach the Journal of Geography in Higher Education with a joint paper.

PUBLICATIONS :

- i). Bowlby, S., Foord, J. & Mackenzie, S. 'Feminism and Geography' forthcoming Area (December).
- ii). Elson, D., & Pearson, R. 'The latest phase of the internationalisation of capital and the implications for women in the Third World' IDS University of Sussex, 1980.
- iii). Hanson, S. & P. 'Gender and Urban activity in Uppsala, Sweden' Geog. Review, July 1980.
- iv). Mackenzie, S. & Rose, D. "Industrial change, the domestic economy + homelife" forthcoming in Anderson, ~~Hudson~~ Duncan + Hudson (ed) Social Geography + Industrial change Academic Press.

* Also available from the authors who would like to promote discussion.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES :

To finalize the arrangements for the day meeting in September a collective meeting is planned for the beginning of August - all will be welcome - information from Jo 582 9200 (01).

COMMENTS :

If you have any suggestions or comments on the projects the collective has undertaken or if you want any further information of the Group's activities please contact the collective via Linda McDowell (OU), Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA.

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION - SOME FEMINIST COMMENTS.....

The vast majority of academic research which has been carried out, both in Great Britain and the United States, on social stratification and mobility, has been characterised by its lack of analysis of women. The following quote from Antony Heath's book, Social Mobility (Fontana, 1981) indicates the present state of affairs,

"Sorokin has virtually nothing to say about women; Lipset and Bendix's international comparisons deal exclusively with the mobility of adult males; Glass had data available on women but analysed only the mobility of men (although Kelsell and Mitchell, 1959, subsequently did report the material); Blau and Duncan, and the Oxford Social Mobility Group restricted themselves to male samples (although also collecting some data on their male respondents' wives and mothers)"

Heath goes on to unearth some interesting comments which illustrate the underlying sexist approach taken in these studies.

"Thus inequalities associated with sex differences are not usefully thought of as components of stratification" (Parkin, Class, Inequality and Political Order 1971 p14) and "Given that women still have to await their liberation from the family it remains the case in capitalist societies that female workers are largely peripheral to the class system....." (Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies 1973 p228)"

Such entrenched views as this however, do serve a purpose in that they bring home to us the sheer size of the task feminists face if the significance of their work is to be realised by academic counterparts. There is general agreement that in the past the labour role of women has been confined to the domestic arena or to part-time waged labour. However, since 1945 there has been a gradual, but none the less significant, change not only in family structure but in women's employment and social status. It is the implications of these facts which have been largely ignored and which make a nonsense of academic research which chooses to ignore them still. With the increasing number of one-parent families and single person households, women can no longer be regarded as being located within the class system solely in relation to their "supposed" dependence on men. This is the most fundamental point which must be scored before work can start on looking at the overall consequences of women's mobility in society and its effects on the class system.

Linda Peake (Reading University)

THE COLLECTIVE ? WHO ARE WE ? WHERE ARE WE ?.....

- Sophie Bowlby - Dept of Geography, University of Reading, Whitenights, Reading, RG62AF
Jo Foord - Urban and Regional Studies Unit, Cornwallis, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NF
Jane Lewis - Dept of Geography, Queen Mary College, Mile End Rd, London E2
Linda McDowell - Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA
Suzanne Mackenzie - Graduate PH., Arts D, Sussex University, Falmer Brighton, BN19QN
Janet Momsen - Dept of Geography, University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8ST
Linda Peake - Dept of Geography, University of Reading, Whitenights, Reading, RG6 2AF.

This is how we stand at the moment - this collective is by no means fixed and we would welcome others as well as helpful hints from those who cannot commit much time.

STOP PRESS:

Some late news was received as this issues was being sent out ; Liason with the Union of Socialist Geographers over the timetable clash at the 1982 IBG Conference has been successful. They have agreed to take an evening session and forego a place in the official timetable. They will have their meeting with Mike Kidron On The State of the World Atlas on the Thursday evening and we will remain on the Friday afternoon. They agreed also that it was most important that we have an official session at the conference this year as our status will be up for review in the spring. Dr Hoyle, the organising sec. of the conference has verbally agreed to this arrangement.

RESEARCH REGISTER : WOMEN AND GEOGRAPHY :

NAME

ADDRESS/PHONE No.

AREAS OF INTEREST/CURRENT RESEARCH (if any):

Do you mind if we send this list to the Women's Research and Resources Centre (WRRRC) for their research register ? YES/NO.

Address should be institutional address where possible.

Please return this to : Linda McDowell, Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. MK7 6AA.