

According to Mrs. McCollum, her husband

Guest Viewpoint

The real heros

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BY MARGE RANDAL

"Her world is her husband, her family, her children, and her home. But where would the greater world be if no one cared to tend the smaller world? We do not find it right when the woman presses into the world of the man. The man upholds the nation as the woman upholds the family. The equal rights of woman consist in the fact that in the realm of life determined by her nature she experience the high esteem that is her due."

The above is a quote from Adolf Hitler in 1934. At that time the Nazi government was planning near-total mobilization of able-bodied men for war. Clearly, many people would also be needed to work in factories and elsewhere. And so women had somehow to be tricked into maintaining the homes of Germany (without pay), even while being forced by law into the market for cheap labor.

There are certain parallels between this historical situation and that to be found in this country today. Women still maintain homes without pay (some of them write to Ann Landers about stealing the grocery money from their husbands' pockets at night), and they are still the largest component of the cheap labor pool in our country. The psychological and verbal trickery aimed at women is still with us, too. Men know that the comfortable complacency of their lives is threatened, now that technology has opened the wider world to women at last. Even in Nazi Germany it was not fashionable to claim intellectual or moral superiority for men. (Indeed, it is always vitally necessary to leave the real basis of male power--physical strength--unnamed.) And so we have everywhere numerous vague appeals to glorious femininity, to beauty, to "la difference" and similar irrelevancies.

At the January meeting of the Clear Lake Personnel Association, a man who was watching the civil rights action of N.O.W. members was overheard to say "My wife is too busy at home to do things like this." Not a word about the justice of N.O.W.'s demands for equal opportunity for women, but only the

implication that it is somehow indecent for women to demand their rights. The best way to keep women down has become to ignore and belittle them. Contempt is coming out into the open at last.

But a lot of people, including some men, find contempt for the weak an unappealing motive. Women are startled and appalled to see contempt at the root of some men's behavior toward them, particularly when the contempt is for the women's being exploited, while the women think they are being "good." And men are repelled to see the contempt of other men toward women whom they themselves respect. Many of us grow tired of roles as exploiter and victim. We would like to be allowed to live as free and generous human beings.

Events in this country in the last two or three years suggest that many men now join women in the belief that a more humane world would result from granting women a full share in the decisions which affect all our lives. Because these men know that economics independence for women is a necessary pre condition to their equal participation, the men are willing to grant women this economic independence. Such men deserve our honor and respect far more than any heroes of the football field, space program or even medical research. Only men who will join the cause of women can now claim to advance the cause of all humanity--our other heroes are still too involved with the preservation of male advantage.

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