

“conventional thesis.” The argument of this thesis is that since men are the breadwinners, unemployment is primarily a male problem. A related argument is presented by the “new-category-of-workers thesis” which assumes that “the maquiladoras have mobilized a new category of workers who would not otherwise work for wages.” In challenging these two theses, Tiano refines the arguments made in earlier works.

The authors of *Women Workers and Global Restructuring* show how women in the different parts of the world participate in the global economy. By defining women’s work as an integral part of the global economy they make an important contribution to our understanding of how women’s work has been hidden behind concepts formulated by classical economy.

THE UNFINISHED REVOLUTION: THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN TWELVE COUNTRIES

Doris Anderson. Toronto: Doubleday, 1991.

By *Shelagh Wilkinson*

Doris Anderson is superbly qualified to write this book. She has been part of the current Women’s movement in Canada since—even before—its inception. She is that rare person: a leader and a worker. In fact, when she was President of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, it was her courage in defying the Minister (Responsible for us Women and to whom she reported) that was the catalyst for the Counter Conference on February 14, 1981. Her act of defiance united women, bringing over a thousand of us, from all over Canada, to the Parliament in Ottawa. An action that empowered women to lobby for the inclusion of an equality clause in the Constitution and WIN. And now she has combined her skill as a writer and her knowledge of our category as second class citizens to write a book that will be used in the classroom as we teach Women’s Studies.

This is a book that provides a unique overview of the status of women in twelve countries (ten in Europe plus Canada and

the United States). It is historic in scope, looking back and assessing the last twenty-five years as women have negotiated for equality in Europe—that cradle of civilization and justice—and in the ‘new world’ (to which they fled thinking ‘freedom’). But it is also current, and here lies the strength of the text. Anderson is grounded in the facts of each society she visits; she asks the same set of questions of each group of women she meets, and she keeps those questions close to the real concerns of all women.

The direction of her enquiry follows from the formulation of five sets of questions clustered under the general headings of: day care, the workforce, the safety of women, the accessibility factor (in top-ranking jobs, cabinet and government positions, academic institutions, the judiciary) and finally, how does the life of a ‘common woman’ in each of these societies compare to the life her mother lived a generation earlier? Each category is of prime importance to us as women and Anderson does not clutter the text with paralyzing statistics or bewildering graphs. Instead the prose is lucid, the compassion of the observer is never far from the text, each insight we gain is sifted through a political consciousness honed to the personal.

Because Anderson has had hands on experience working with government legislation she also has a keen nose for loop-holes. She recognizes a great sounding title (for a Committee, a person, an Office or a Conference) and she is quick to assess the efficacy (and to denounce the hypocrisy) of these ‘sops’ that are thrown to women at regular intervals—internationally. Not much gets past this observer. On the other hand she is quick to note and praise those countries that have made real efforts and changes in maternity (parental) leave legislation, in day care issues and in equality enforcement in the workplace.

It is the juxtapositioning of the facts that make for interesting reading, we get an overview of things that we suspected and then Anderson fills this in with the data that she has gathered from the women living and working in the country under discussion. She finds the quality of child care provided by France to be high and the wage-gap between women and men in Sweden to be only ten per cent... the

lowest in the world. But these are not given as disconnected pieces of information. For instance the topic of child care in France also provides us with the history of the fight (under a Conservative government and in a Catholic country) of French women for legislated abortion rights. And inter-faced with the facts about each of the countries are interviews with, or rather stories about (because Anderson has obviously turned her interviewing into “A day in the life of...” the women and men who are the workers and the parents negotiating the process of this quiet revolution for equality. This method of interweaving what could be duller, factual, material with ‘stories’ about the way people live, and how they cope with the system under which they find themselves, makes for interesting reading. I found myself reading the book right through, and that’s rare for non-fiction. The aspect of the book that I found most delightful is the way in which Anderson the traveller enjoys the human stories that unfold around her. The old man on the Paris Metro consoling the much younger woman and the Indian “married lady” who feels so obviously superior to Anderson who is dining alone.

This is not a book for graduate school or for researchers who demand more facts and a rigorous analysis, but it will serve well for introductory courses in Women’s Studies and for a comparison of the situation of women in Canada to those of other countries. Anderson knows the Canadian scene and her political judgement is dead-on. The Canadian material, naturally, is the strongest section of the book but this is also material that is available elsewhere. What is not easy to find is the information about maternity leave in Spain... do women there have the same, better, worse, conditions than women in Belgium? And what about the situation for women in both countries compared to Canada? For too long we have depended on text books from south of the border to inform us not only about the United States but also about the rest of the world—and sometimes even about ourselves! Doris Anderson has provided us with a sound book that is also readable, a rare double header in academia. She tells me that it will be out in paperback in ’93—that is good news for those of us who will want to include it on the reading list for first year courses.