

# Equal Rights Questionnaire in Great Britain

In 1980, **The National Labour Women's Committee in Great Britain** conducted a survey on women's rights which gave the following results:

1. The notion that a "woman's place is in the home" was rejected by over 75% of the respondents who represented women's groupings, women's councils and other women's organizations.

2. Sixty five percent of the Labour Women said that women should not be expected to stay at home even when they have young children.

3. A third of women respondents wanted to be free to choose whether to work or not and without any feelings of guilt.

4. Forty three percent said that wages for housework was a bad concept, a reactionary demand which perpetuates the idea that a woman's place is in the home and which would institutionalize motherhood. Fifteen replies out of 117 indicated support for the concept, 8 of which felt that some allowance could be paid through the tax system.

5. Regarding the question whether attitudes of men towards sharing of domestic duties is changing, nearly 40% answered in the affirmative. About 17% felt that this process was a slow one and not fast enough.

6. The questions on women and marriage came with varied results. Over 50% of the replies stated their acceptance of a continuation of more flexible forms of relationships, pointing out that the traditional marriage patterns discriminate against women in the tax system, benefits, etc. On the other hand it would appear that traditional marriage is still viewed by many as providing the best environment for child rearing and giving stability.

7. Women and work: Over 80% expected women to be in paid employment throughout their working

lives. Over 90% thought that there should be freedom of choice to work for either spouse.

8. Women and education: There was a general agreement on the necessity of encouraging girls "to go in for science and technology at all levels from birth to university." The traditional attitudes of society to the role of women was seen as a major obstacle by nearly a quarter of the responses. It was important "to teach boys and girls that marriage was not the be all and end all but part of life."

9. Portrayal of women in the media: Over 90% of the replies agreed that the media showed prejudice against women.

10. Almost 100% of the respondents called for the equalization of the retirement age for men and women.

The Annual Conference held in 1980 by the Labour Party confirmed the demands and suggestions representing the majority of respondents to the aforementioned questionnaire. Of the 40 recommendations formulated by the Conference members, the following are to be noted:

1. Career teaching and advice should be improved to give girls information and guidance on training and careers available in science and technology.

2. A full programme of adult education should be available at a reasonable cost.

3. Women in the Party should be actively involved in the campaign for peace and disarmament.

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