



TIME

The Emerging European Woman

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The Emerging European Woman

"We want to break the isolation of the traditional family. Why do Svend Erik and I have to have the same friends? Why can't girls have girl friends? Men have male friends? I know couples where I dig the male, but could I go see him?"

—Ruth Sperling, 32
Danish radio journalist

"Separation is unreal. The odds are so much on the man's side. If my husband chooses, any nonrelated male who spends the night in my house could be the cause of an adultery accusation, and I would lose my child. So what can we do for the rest of our lives?"

—Maria Carmen, 27
Spanish high school teacher

"I am free, but in my character I will never be free. I know our mothers had large families, and I know why we are not supposed to and, therefore, we don't. But is society better? Are children healthier? Are women more satisfied?"

—Kerstin Grünberger, 32
Swedish television production aide

Three European women, three different lives. But each life is resonant with questions, and the questions run deep. A half-century ago, a baffled Sigmund Freud wrote: "The great question that has never been answered and which I have not been able to answer, despite my 30 years of research into the feminine soul, is 'What does a woman want?'"

In today's Europe, it is the women themselves who are asking the questions. "We are challenging ourselves against ourselves, about ourselves," says a young Swedish journalist and mother. "It is like arguing with your own echo." Adds bestselling English novelist Evelyn Anthony: "All sorts of former unmentionables are now flying across the lunch table." The talk is of the woman's role in the family, of her place in the working world, of her relationship to men and to other women, of her control over the creation of her life. "There are other ways of living than the way in

which you were raised," says a young businesswoman and mother in Copenhagen. "Life can be very good if you open your eyes." What she and many like her are looking for, notes one feminine activist is "a humanitarian emancipation" of women.

The restlessness, the inner turmoil, the vague longing for emancipation have both sociological and economic roots. Women in all European countries have been moving into the working force in increasing numbers, but they are neither paid as much as men nor advanced as rapidly. Only a handful ever reach positions of power in government, business, or the professions, and when they do advance into formerly closed areas—for example, political bureaucracy—they often find that it is like moving into neighborhoods that the present residents no longer want to occupy. "The obsolete institutions are being taken over by women," says Nor-

wegian Sociologist Harriet Holter. Moreover, European women are often regarded as a reserve labor force to be recruited when the economy requires and sent home when male employment is in jeopardy. "They have stopped using immigrant labor and turned to us," says Swedish Journalist Birgitta Lagerstrom. "We are their new migrant workers."

What makes the situation particularly painful now is that the crushing pressures of inflation are forcing more women to take on



Portraits of liberation. Below: A pro-abortion demonstration in Paris.



the classic "dual burden" of children and job whether they want to or not. No country in Europe has enough day-care centers, and in most countries there are still strong social pressures on women to care for their own homes and families. "Public opinion now stresses the psychological or moral significance of the woman's presence in the home," says French Sociologist Evelyne Sullerot, 50, "when in fact her economic contribution no longer justifies it." With their loyalty painfully split, most women tend to slight their careers in favor of their families. "You are a prisoner of your child," says Bonn Secretary Barbute Köning. "I don't want to make my career at the expense of my child."

The same attitudes linger on in supposedly liberated Scandinavia. Hanne Reintoft, 40, a Communist member of the Danish Parliament, wryly admits that she sends her son to school each day with a sandwich, even though he does not want to take his lunch—just so that people will not say she is too busy to care for her children. "We want to be liberated," says Norwegian Film Actress Liv Ullmann, 36, "but we also have to fight something inside ourselves. All these guilt feelings—I am still burdened with this conscience about my kitchen, my house, my pantry. I cannot sit with a neighbor

PER KJARBYE



woman drinking coffee and talking of a film I made in California; she just sees that the house is still cluttered, there is dust on the furniture, and I'm not baking the bread."

The sad truth is that although women in Europe are achieving legal equality, they have not broken through to genuine social and economic equality with men in even the most advanced countries. With far longer life expectancies than their grandmothers had, they are increasingly forced to ponder what their roles in society will be when their child-rearing days are over. Yet they remain unequipped by either family training or education to take the initiative and move into positions of leadership. Nor can they turn backward: the Western ideal of home and family life was largely created around the European woman, but to many its rigid confines are no longer sustaining or even supportable.

Small wonder that European women are confused about their roles. Says Belgian Socialist Leader Irène Petry: "We have determined the different roles of men and women, and we are afraid of emancipation from those stereotypes. We do not have a 'feminine problem.' We have a problem of concepts, of prejudices and, ultimately, of economic power. Once women achieve economic equality with men the injustices will disappear." She adds: "We know where we are, and we know how we got here—but we do not know where we are going."

European women might have a clearer sense of priorities and goals if they were as highly organized as the women's movement in the U.S. But women's lib groups in Europe have never developed great strength—in Italy they are called "the generals without an army"—and the ones that exist have more modest, pragmatic aims than militant American groups. The feminist demands are for legal abortion, more day-care centers and equal pay for equal work. Their style is different too. Feminism in Europe is less shrill than it is in America and far less anti-man: "The battle is not taken into the bedroom here," remarks French Author Ingrid Carlander dryly.

Nor do European feminists expect the rapid and revolutionary changes that their American counterparts look for—perhaps because Europeans know how often and how arduously the problems have been confronted in the past. The modern French housewife is, after all, a descendant of those Jacobin militants who published incendiary daily newspapers of political feminism during the revolution. She is also descended from that pioneer feminist figure Olympe de Gouges, who published her *Declaration of the Rights of Women* in 1791 and two years later died under the guillotine because of her militant views. The Dutch had their Wilhelmina Drucker, a 19th century leader for women's suffrage, and the English a whole host of crusading women, starting with

the isolated figure of Mary Astell and her *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* of 1694. The systematic fight for female rights is often said to have begun with Olympe de Gouges and with England's Mary Wollstonecraft, who gave vent to her bitter grievances in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792.* But in fact there has always been a vanguard of women in Europe fighting entrenched male privilege. Medieval France, for example, had its "courts of love," a running series of Socratic debates, presided over by women, concerned mainly with matters of love and gallantry. Though these courts remained in session for 300 years, their impact, alas, was insubstantial, but they were no less serious for all that. A typical question for discussion: Is it possible for married people to love one another? Answer: No, because marriage implies obligation and true love must be free.

To speak of the status of the European woman is of course to greatly simplify, for that woman has many faces. Across great tracts of civilization the old ideal of the woman as homemaker still largely prevails—particularly on those solid and big-dimensional plains of European rural and communal life that stretch from Cornwall to Cognac and the broad farming valleys of Norway. The voices of change are most often heard in and near the cities, and even there national differences of accent and emphasis are great. There are countries that offer every inducement to marriage and child-bearing, for example, and countries where marriage is all but legislated out of existence. There are countries like Belgium and The Netherlands that have produced fiery feminist leaders but whose entrenched bourgeois societies have been virtually untouched by the rumblings of change. There are political anachronisms like Switzerland, whose women just three years ago voted in a national election for the first time. There is the anomaly of the countries of Eastern Europe, where women's rights are scrupulously respected in theory, while men rule the society and reap the rewards. In the Soviet Union, women have legally achieved virtually everything that European militants are fighting for, but their condition is even

*A brilliant, restless and supremely willful young woman, Wollstonecraft, born in 1759, had almost no formal education but was intellectually molded by members of Britain's democratically minded Reformer movement. In tones of controlled outrage, she argued in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* that the menial and domestic status of women squandered their intellectual capabilities and predicted that sexual equality would prevail in the "better world" to come. Though she coined the phrase legal prostitution as a description of marriage and advocated chastity except for reproductive sex, she had a passionate love affair with an American ne'er-do-well in France, bore an illegitimate daughter and ultimately married Philosopher William Godwin. She died at 38 as the result of complications following the birth of her second daughter, Mary, who herself won even more lasting fame as an author (*Frankenstein*) and wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley.

worse than in the West. Some 80% of Russian women in the childbearing age group have both full-time jobs and families. Care of the home in a society that gives low priorities to such consumer goods and labor-saving devices as washing machines is often a backbreaking burden. Furthermore, in practice, the peaks of the professions and politics are barred to women. The lesson would seem to be that legislation is not liberation. "Equality for the Soviet woman," says one expert, "means not equality of opportunity but equal access to hard labor."

Nevertheless, questions that are asked in Stockholm strike an answering echo in Rome: whatever their backgrounds, European women increasingly share a common search for identity and role. To ask what they are like is to ask after the health and well-being of their countries.

Scandinavia

Scandinavia is supposed to be a mecca for liberated women, and in many ways it is. In Sweden alone, women's earnings amount to 84.8% of what men make. Authorities, moreover, are so resolutely determined to abolish traditional sex roles that the accidental appearance in a textbook of a woman in an apron waving goodbye to her husband who was leaving for work created a public uproar. In Denmark, the government three years ago stopped all Danish entries in beauty contests, regarding them as sexual exploitations of women. Even in conservative little Finland the women have taught the men to abandon the humiliating practice of offering their seats on crowded public transport. But for all that, women's gains in Scandinavia are often more apparent than real.

Sweden, embarked on the most ambitious social-engineering program of all, has succeeded in making marriage unpopular; single mothers are given such priority for housing and day-care centers and various social benefits that many couples feel there are more advantages to not getting married. There are even fewer inducements for holding a marriage together. "Most of our friends are just amazed that we are staying together," says a young Stockholm wife. "They either do not understand why we bother, or they think we are crazy." Last year the number of legal separations and divorces nearly equaled the number of weddings.

In a country where the government refers to women who do not hold jobs as "luxury housewives" and pays for either maternity or paternity leave after a birth, depending on which parent wants to care for the infant, changes in life-styles are inevitable. Child Psychologist Birgit Ahlen, 35, for example, is raising two adopted South Korean orphans rather than have children of her own. She does not miss the presence of a man. "It is a mental strain to have

too many relationships," she says. "I have no energy at the end of a weekend with my kids, but at least I don't have to take care of a man. Men and children do not need to go together." Some observers, however, think that the very freedom of choice in Sweden creates its own tensions. "There is tremendous stress," says Sweden's distinguished sociologist Birgitta Linner (*Sex and Society*). "There is a great deal of freedom, there are lots of demands, and it is hell for most women." Conservative Party Leader Kerstin Plym Forshell, 27, thinks that it is hell for most men too.

"My own boss is obsessed with the idea that I am going to take his job away," she says, "and that I will find ways not usually available to men to do it."

Norway is a different case entirely. The closely held customs of the farming valleys still apply throughout much of the country, even in cities like Oslo and Bergen, and many Norwegian women are still cut to the pattern of an old rural description of them—"flowers sitting on the windowsill waiting to be watered." Until recently, a smaller percentage of Norwegian women worked outside the home than in almost any other country in Europe. Now they are bestirring themselves. "Ten years ago, I never knew what they thought," says Oslo's Kari Vangsnes, 50, director of Norway's Council on Equal Status for Women. "Now at

the prime representatives of what the Danes sometimes call "the new understanding." She defines it—somewhat vaguely—in her bestselling book *Deliver Us from Love*: "The constant and faithful love between two people in a marriage has begun moving to another level. It includes a net of other people, but it doesn't exclude loving one man, even if that creates problems. One must be prepared to go to all the borderlines, to know what part is biology and what part cultural conditioning. What can we change, what can we be faithful to?" Not many Danes are prepared to go to all

MELLOUL—SYGMA



Top: Françoise Giroud at press conference. Above: Margaret Wilkins in her grocery store. Right: Norwegian Actress Liv Ullmann.



least they are standing up and speaking out."

The Danes, with neither the traditional constraints of the Norwegians nor the anxieties of the Swedes, are perhaps the most uninhibited people in Scandinavia. The women have a free-spirited confidence that is still rare in Europe. Author Suzanne Brögger, 29, is one of



women remain underpaid, underrepresented and largely barred from the positions of power. "We know much about liberation," says Swedish Activist Agneta Cloarec, 41. "But we are not liberated ourselves."

France

French women may finally be no freer than most women in Europe. But they have a double consolation: they are appreciated within their homes, and they move in masculine society with an ease that other women might envy. There is a reason for the sexual integration of French society, says Françoise Giroud, 59, the new state secretary of women's affairs: "France is one of the rare countries where men and women like each other, not just for the purposes of love but also for ordinary living." Happiness for a Frenchman, notes Evelyn Sullerot, is "not his club, his dog and his gun. It is a good meal with women. For women, happiness is to be with men." In today's France, women are trying to reconcile the privileges they enjoy in the "state within a state" that is the French family with the demands of a career. They succeed in varying degrees. For some women, work is just a sideline, and the family remains supreme. "Michèle," a working French wife (who declines to give her full name), describes her attachment to family this way: "Everything is so stable. My husband always says to me, 'I am so grateful to you because you never give me any problems.' There is this submission, but we want it that way." Says Novelist and Playwright Paule Lafeuille of the woman's relationship to man: "If this thing you submit yourself to is toward a greater you, it is liberation, not slavery."

Not every French woman sees it that way. "I was married at 21," says a Paris psychiatrist. "My husband told me everything I was to do, and I was very happy with that for years. But then one day I asked myself, 'Where am I?' My husband is very happy with a nice, beautiful wife, home and children, but I am afraid I can't find my way with him." Nevertheless, she does not leave because she finds the social pressures to hold the family together are too great to combat. "I have to live with my life," she says. "Women are afraid of being alone."

The laws in France are changing, but they still tend to favor men. The husband as a matter of course administers his wife's property, for example, and he can be convicted of adultery only if he moves his mistress into the house, whereas adultery under any circumstances is an offense for the woman. Women now make up 38% of the French work force, but they have largely been

confined to the unskilled lower ranks or traditional women's jobs. Perhaps because of the French tradition of female intellectual achievement, a slightly higher percentage of French women are in senior staff jobs than in other European countries. Nevertheless, the French woman who tries to enter the closed professional world of men encounters the same resistance she would elsewhere. Solange Troisier, 55, is one of France's most eminent gynecologists and fifth in a line of doctors. It required five attempts before she could qualify as an intern in the Paris hospital system. "It wasn't hatred," she says now. "It was just the old indifference to women because it wasn't done." The problem for her, as for other French women, was to know how far to go in challenging a society that both honors and inhibits them.

Britain

English women are in some ways the photographic negative of the French. They are afflicted, says Evelyn Anthony, with "the biggest inferiority complex in the world: the English woman has always suffered from an intrinsic lack of taste, which comes from a lack of sexual confidence, which comes directly from the Englishman. We must be the only race in the world for whom a term of endearment is 'old girl.'" England remains a male citadel: London still exudes the comfortably secure scent of leather and saddle soap; boys are still raised in schools preparing them for men's colleges, from which they will take their rightful place in men's board rooms and men's clubs.

In such a land, it is not easy for a woman to make her way. Before she became a success with bestselling novels (*The Malaspiga Exit*, *The Tamarin Seed*), Evelyn Anthony, now 47, concealed what she was doing from virtually everybody. She took her first pen name, Anthony Evelyn (her married name is Mrs. Ward Thomas), to hide from her husband the fact that she was writing and from her publishers the fact that she was a woman. "The attitude toward a woman with a career," she recalls, "was downright resentful." That attitude, in turn, has made many women their own worst enemies. Says Eleanor MacDonald, director of a London employment bureau campaigning for more women executives: "Among girls, the big enemy is the timidity bred into them." She tells of advertising for a woman to fill a post at a salary of \$8,400 a year. She received no bids, but when the job was re-advertised at \$3,360, the applications poured in.

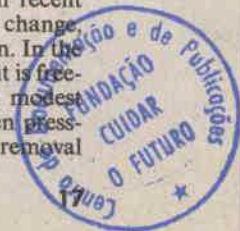
Things are improving somewhat. The flurry of female activity in recent years has led to some legislative change, including an equal-pay provision. In the absence of abortion as an issue (it is freely available in England), the modest women's lib movement has been pressing for job opportunities and a removal



Top: French Sociologist Evelyn Sullerot. Bottom: Birgit Ahlen with her adopted Korean children.

the borderlines, but the "marriage without papers," where the two partners often share in housework, cooking and baby care, is now an accepted part of Danish life. As in Sweden, freedom is the keynote in Denmark. "Anyone who lives with me has to put up with my freedom," says Justice Minister Nathalie Lind, 55. "We have really left behind the women's groups. We have now come so far that we can be accepted as people who have learned to compete as men and be women too. We can be lovely—and serious."

What is most striking in Denmark, and in much of Scandinavia, is that changes in manners, mores and even laws have had little effect on the basic status of women: overall, Scandinavian



A Gallery of Notable Women

MARINA CICOGNA: Restless Patrician

Italian Countess Marina Cicogna has crammed enough living into her 37 years to fill several *romanzi*. Born to wealth and privilege, she dropped out of America's Sarah Lawrence College during her sophomore year and embarked on a glorious, decade-long plunge into the international *dolce vita*. Then, following a near fatal automobile accident, she entered the film industry and produced nine movies, including the searing anti-Establishment classic *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion*.

"In Italy, a woman always has to be protected and squired around by a man," she complains. But Cicogna is the first to concede that family influence had a lot to do with her business success. The company for which she worked while producing most of her films, including *Investigation*, was controlled, at the time, by her mother. As a result, Cicogna admits laconically, "people listened when I had something to say."

Tragedy altered those circumstances drastically, however. Following the suicide in 1971 of her brother Bino, who had also worked for the film company—and had made investments that resulted in heavy financial losses—Cicogna was forced to look elsewhere for backing for her films. She worked for a while for Paramount and Universal studios, but rejected the bureaucracy that went along with the Hollywood big time. Otherwise, financial support has been difficult. "In the Italian business world, women do not count, and if you are the exception you are only proving the rule," Cicogna says. "There is always the suggestion hovering in the air that you have been lucky, that you have to prove yourself again every time." She adds, "I no longer feel that incredible passion for my work that I felt some years ago."

AUDREY WISE: Independence Through Politics

As a child, Audrey Wise voiced such strong opinions about practically everything that friends predicted she might become the secretary to a politician. Indeed she became a secretary, working for more than 20 years as a part-time stenotypist. Now, at 39, she is serving as a Labor M.P. from a middle- and

working-class district in Coventry. Wearing the bright red coat that has become her campaign trademark, Wise won the Labor nomination last February over two other bids, both from men. Two weeks ago, Wise scored a second victory at the polls and seemed firmly established in her political career.

The daughter and granddaughter of active Laborites, Wise has been active in party affairs since she was a teenager. At 18 she married a machinist who worked in an agricultural equipment plant and was also a militant labor organizer. They have two teen-age children, a girl and a boy, both of whom are already involved in Labor Party affairs. "There is every reason for a woman to be a politician," says Wise. "When you want peace, reason, prosperity and fair shares, you want them all the more if you've got a family."

A firm believer in equal opportunity for women, she nonetheless is no champion of the more militant brands of feminism. "I think it is important for women to be independent rather than subservient, but that is a necessary step to something I think is better than either, and that is mutual dependence," she says. "That is the way it is in my family." Moreover, her working-class background has planted doubt that mere employment is the key to independence for women. "There is a certain skepticism among working women because they see the pressures on ordinary men," she says. "Women at home may have to wash nappies, but at least they are seeing a young life unfold."

JULIA DINGWORT-NUSSECK: The Gee-Whiz Effect

When viewers of the Cologne region's WDR television station want the complexities of the latest economic news spelled out to them in plain German, they keep their sets tuned for the appearance of 53-year-old Julia Dingwort-Nusseck. For more than 25 years, first on radio and since 1973 on the nationally broadcast WDR, the stylishly dressed mother of three children has kept audiences abreast of devaluations, inflation rates and other day-to-day developments in the dismal science. Since last November she has also served as editor in chief of her station, the first woman ever to hold that job in West German television.

The daughter of a Hamburg house



painter, Dingwort-Nusseck grew up expecting to earn the university degree that her father's family had been unable to afford for him. He opposed her original choice of studies—law—on the ground that a woman attorney in Nazi Germany would have little chance of success, and the two settled on an economics curriculum as a compromise. While working full-time in radio, she married Carl Wolfgang Dingwort, the owner of a Hamburg printing plant. As long as her children were small, she says, "I went to work with an incredibly bad conscience. But I would have been intolerable if I had not been able to pursue my career."

Dingwort-Nusseck believes that being a woman in a predominantly male field has helped her career in an odd way. "I call it the 'gee-whiz effect,'" she says. "There seems to be a discrepancy between the specialized subject matter of economics and the person presenting it, and this creates astonishment in the audience." A non-activist who takes pride in the fact that she has never pressured for a promotion, Dingwort-Nusseck nonetheless believes that women's lib is a serious cause. "As long as we are still racking our brains about female emancipation, we don't have it," she says. "If we had it, we wouldn't think about it so much."

GISELE HALIMI: Against Phallocracy

Three years ago, a group of France's best-known women decided to protest a law banning abortions by publicizing their own illegal operations. The plan posed a special dilemma for Gisèle Halimi, who herself had had three abortions and was an ardent believer in "the choice of giving life to a child." But she was also a prosperous lawyer who faced

discipline from the French bar association if she admitted having flouted the law. Characteristically, the determined, polemical Halimi, now 47, chose to sign the women's manifesto and challenge the conservative bar. An official reprimand failed to alter her resolve. She is founder and co-president of the women's lib group *Choisir* (to choose), and is today France's leading feminist.

Born in Tunisia to a Jewish mother and Bedouin father, Halimi staged her first successful rebellion at age eight by going on a hunger strike against her as-

real burden of women is having to spend money earned by another person." But with 10,000 women on *Choisir's* membership rolls, she is convinced that the cause of women's lib has passed the point of no return in a "phallogocentric" society. "This calls for not merely a change of economic structures but a genuine cultural revolution, that is, a change of basic relationships between men and women, a change of mentality."

**SOFIE HELENE WIGERT:
 Olsen's Determined
 Daughter**

Along with tasteful mahogany antiques and vases of fresh flowers, the office of Sofie Helene Wigert is filled with oil portraits of her male relatives—members of the prominent Olsen fam-

her a millionaire several times over.

Olsen's daughter, now 61, was not always a rebel. Attending school, only through the junior high level, she accepted the role expected of her: to marry and have babies. She and her husband Knut, an actor, raised two children before Wigert undertook her business venture. "Not many women can concentrate on anything else before they have had this happiness and fulfillment," she says. "Women must keep asking themselves, 'Do I have the right to do what I want?'"

Wigert decided that she did—despite family tradition. Turned away by lenders, including the president of an Oslo bank who was also her uncle, Wigert sold nearly everything she owned to buy a single, barely seaworthy cargo ship. "In succeeding years I bought ships and sold them and bought new ones and, in between, ran them," she says. "It is a gambling business, and you need a lot of *teft*—a bit of talent, a feel for timing and a second sense about most things." She estimates that her struggle to succeed was increased by two-thirds because of her sex, but she also thinks the situation is improving. "Education has changed the lives of women, and heavy taxation means that wealth can no longer be taken for granted and passed from one generation to the next. That system, among other things, was used to 'protect' girls and to keep them 'as ladies' at home. The men know this. Most well-to-do fathers are probably more concerned about their daughters' futures now than those of their sons."

BEN MARTIN

SVEN SIMON

DECKER—GAMMA

BJORN ISLAKSEN



Top left: Cicogna on her motor scooter. Above: Wise in London. Above right: Dingwort-Nusseck. Right: Halimi. Lower right: Wigert at her summer house in Tjøme, Norway.

signed household chores. Resisting family insistence that she marry at the customary age of 13, she instead finished high school and then worked her way through the Sorbonne and law school in Paris. Back in Tunisia, the young lawyer championed the cases of independence-minded Arab nationalists who had been arrested by French colonial authorities. She was divorced from her first husband, by whom she had two children, and in 1961 married Claude Faux, a former secretary to Jean-Paul Sartre. They have a ten-year-old son.

"On the whole, I am not very optimistic about the future of the couple," says Halimi. "A couple is good and lasting only if both the woman and the man are free, and neither dominates the other." Recalling scenes in which her mother had to cajole spending money from her father, Halimi maintains that "the

ily, which has run a vast Norwegian shipping empire for generations. If some of the faces seem to be peering down from the wall in stern disapproval, there is a reason: born an Olsen, but prevented by tradition from joining the family company, Wigert established her own successful shipping firm despite the active opposition of her influential relatives. Operating under the triumphant corporate name of Olsen's Daughter, Wigert is the sole owner of five tankers and cargo ships, a fleet that has made

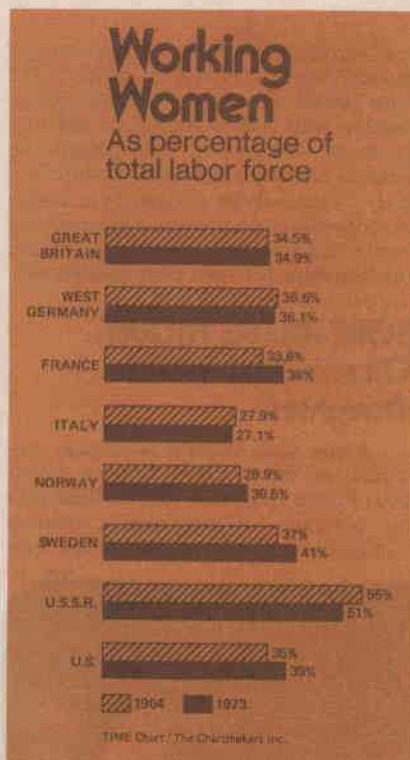
of the distinction between "girls' subjects" and "boys' subjects" at school. Today every British party finds it politic to pay lip service to full sexual equality. But British unions still resist women officials, British politicians still resist women candidates, and British employers still offer women the worst jobs. The job statistics are appalling: British women earn only 55% of what men earn; the number of women in British professional life has only increased from 6% to 8% in the past half-century; only 44 of the 3,281 full professors in British universities are women. It is scarcely surprising that in this male-oriented society, the fledgling feminist movement is splintered and its membership bewildered. "There's a great deal of confused sexuality," says one young activist. "Many women are really puzzled by their feelings."

Still, English women are more willing to experiment with their lives than they once were. One of the best-known women in England is Margaret Wilkins, 39, who lives above the Reading greengrocers' shop where she works. Last spring more than 6 million viewers eavesdropped on the family's meals and domestic problems, candidly filmed by a BBC crew once a week. Although Mrs. Wilkins has become something of a symbol of English domestic tranquillity, the audience knows that several years ago she ran away from her truck-driver husband to live with another man and have a son by him. She has since returned to the fold and professes to be "quite happy with women as they are. My two daughters are going to have just very ordinary weddings. But that's what living's all about, isn't it?"

West Germany

West German women have never been pioneers in pushing for women's rights, and they are not pioneers today. Although the 10 million women now working outside the home constitute more than a third of the labor force, the civil code still favors female domesticity by forbidding a woman to take a job if it interferes with her housekeeping chores. Says Sociologist Helge Pross: "The women in Germany have a history of always being objects."

The traditional lethargy of the hausfrau was intensified by the Nazi years, when Hitler declared that "it must be possible for a man to put his stamp on every girl," and the party insisted on women's "original vocation as German mothers, as childbearers of future recruits." A majority of West German women still agree that they are inferior. Marianne Arenz, 45, general manager of a Bonn clothing factory, is one of the few women who have made it to the upper tier of management. "I reject total equality for women," she says. "A woman as president of the Bundestag does not cut a good figure. The pitch of her voice is not right. A man has a quick-



er grasp of things, and is not so emotional."

West Germany has fewer day-care centers and kindergartens than almost any other Common Market country, which means that many mothers have to quit work with the arrival of the first child. Says Theresia von Oetzen, 33, part-time vocational teacher and mother of two: "You always have to make compromises, and they are not always pleasant." The hours many working mothers put in—and consider normal—are staggering. Marianne Falkenberg, 37, gets up at 4 a.m. to take the bus for the early shift at Bayer Pharmaceuticals. She gets home at 4:45 p.m., shops, cooks a family meal, washes the dishes, tidies up the apartment and gets clothes ready for the family to wear the next day. "Afterward I like to sit down to watch TV," she says, "but then minutes later I am asleep in my chair."

In some of the younger marriages, husband and wife discuss how household work will be divided up. But this is still rare. "If I ever saw my husband running around the house with a dustcloth in his hand," says the bright young wife of a prominent physician, "I could not go to bed with him any more." Nevertheless, there is a growing restiveness among younger West German women. Occasionally it boils over, as it did in a recent demonstration for an abortion law in which militant women marched shouting "Der Bauch gehört mir" (My belly belongs to me). How far young middle-class women will follow the militants nobody knows. "I think a process of reflection has begun," says Helge Pross, "even though the reflection is not yet the beginning of action."

Italy and Iberia

The look most prized in young Italian film actresses is the one Italians call *casalinga*—the stay-at-home look. That is hardly surprising in a land where the home is a shrine and the reigning mother its patron saint. A woman's whole being in Italy is still defined in terms of the home, and unlike the French woman, she has little real identity outside it. "The woman is free, serene, strong, as long as she complies with the rules of the family," says Rome University Sociologist Franco Ferrarotti. "Outside the family she is a prostitute or the Virgin Mary, but never just a woman." Ferrarotti points out that the honorary title applied to a Mafia chieftain is *mamma santissima*—holiest mother. Nearly 90% of Italian women said in one poll that the happiest day of a lifetime was the day of giving birth to a child. To tide them over the happiest day, the Italian government provides what are probably the most generous maternity benefits in Europe.

At the same time, the Italian woman remains in thrall to the male culture. In rural areas, she may be permitted to accompany her husband on the evening *passaggiata* through the *piazza*, but she is not permitted to join in male conversations. In gleaming Milan skyscrapers, young women office workers still stand aside to let male executives into the elevator first. All this has meant that Italian women, rooted by the gravitational pull of the family but drawn by new freedom, are having an anguishing time finding a modern identity. "It is much more difficult to be modern in this country than it is in other countries," says Journalist Oriana Fallaci. One of the prime difficulties is a shortage of jobs. "In a country where millions of men have had to emigrate because they could not find work," notes Union Leader Anna Vinci, "women are naturally the last to be hired." The percentage of women working in Italy is not increasing but is actually slipping year by year.

Italian society is torpid, but it is not totally inert. One sign of this was the overwhelming support given to the 1970 divorce law in this year's national referendum. Another is that Italian courts are gradually chipping away at the *patria potestà*—the old patriarchal rights descended from Roman law. According to Rome Lawyer Olga Pryor Fioretti, who lived in California with her husband for 15 years, even relations between men and women are evolving. "The Italian woman used to be a subterranean power full of strategies and tricks," she says. "When I came back I was amazed to find husbands and wives had begun to talk to each other as equals."

In the working class, according to Pediatrician Elena Giannini Belotti, very little is changing: "Teen-age girls still are given a beating and jailed at

home if they are five minutes late returning home in the evening." But even at that level some surprising things have been happening. There is the celebrated case of a Sicilian girl who was raped and made pregnant but who actually refused to follow the time-honored tradition of going through with a court-ordered "reparatory marriage" with the man who had raped her. Instead, she howled for her rights and ended up marrying the young lawyer who assisted her. "In Sicily," says Oriana Fallaci, "that's like going to the moon on a bicycle."

Italy, of course, is a country with its head in Europe and its torso in the Mediterranean, and its women reflect that odd geographic duality. Spain and Portugal have always belonged to the traditional, hierarchical, family-oriented world of the Italian *mezzogiorno*, where the feminine image at the farthest extreme is of the toiling peasant woman in black. Now, both countries are changing—Portugal more rapidly than Spain. Since the Portuguese revolution a women's liberation movement has taken hold and has been pushing the government for such unheard-of rights as legalized abortion. Women's committees are active in the labor movement and in political parties. A new law permits women to become judges or diplomats for the first time, and the country now has its first woman minister—Lourdes Pintasilgo, Minister of Social Affairs. Nevertheless, Portuguese women are still far from living as freely as many of their sisters do in other countries, and there remains a great gap between the cities and the rural regions, where women are not even allowed to sit at the table with men. Legally, Spanish women are considerably less well off than the women of Portugal. The Spanish husband controls the children and all the wife's business affairs. A Spanish wife cannot open a checking account, buy or sell a house, start a business or obtain a passport without her husband's consent. Says a leading woman lawyer: "*Machismo* is far from dead. The day a girl marries in Spain she is put back into nursery school."

Nevertheless, there are subtle signs of change. Women in Spanish universities are branching out from the arts and letters into such previously sacrosanct male preserves as administration and the sciences. In Madrid, a group of separated women have formed a legal association to battle for their rights in a society where, as one says, a woman living without her husband "is on probation forever." More important than anything they have done is their willingness to talk about subjects that once were taboo. Says one young mother in the group: "Orgasms were not my problem, and I wasn't a slave to the church. My husband's violence eventually drove me out. I now realize I accepted ludicrous orders from him." Another Madrid woman, a 31-year-old antique dealer, reflects on changing mores this way. "Ten years

ago, I lived with my parents and had to be home at 9 p.m. We all went to tea dances in darkened clubs and smooched away from five to eight. Today I have my own flat and travel a lot. My lovers have always been foreign friends. Spanish men of my generation regard Spanish women as eternal virgins; they still want them on a pedestal. They will take you to bed and afterward call you a whore."

Aside from their legal rights—or lack of them—both Spanish and Portuguese women have a great hidden source of strength: like the women of Italy, they are undisputed rulers in the home. Says a Spanish sociologist: "You must remember that for all the apparent restrictions on her, the Spanish woman throughout her life retains the surname she had at birth. Her husband's name always comes second—if at all."

The difference in European women," says a housewife in England, "is European men." The point is crucial. From England to Spain men cling to their prerogatives and privileges with a tenacity that is born partly of fear and partly of blind tradition. Locked into their roles, they too often treat women's ambitions as something to be tolerated rather than encouraged. Moreover, says Italy's Olga Fioretti, "what men will excuse in themselves they will not excuse in a woman." The real hope for women's liberation, she and other activists feel, lies in a change in the attitudes and a checking of male stereotypes. Yet with a wisdom that is peculiarly European, most women are still careful to avoid humiliating or traumatizing their men. "The men," says Belgium's Irène Petry, "need emancipa-

tion every bit as much as the women. And so the questions go on: What does Europe's emerging woman want? What should she be? In the diversity of their backgrounds and the variety of their experiences women each day continue to probe. "There are sometimes questions you wish you hadn't asked yourself," says Jill Lewis, 24, of Cambridge, "but they are unavoidable and there is no going back." The problems are formidable and agonizing, but the process of solution is now under way. As Swedish Artist Ulla Voss-Schrader describes it: "The woman always has two value scales, balancing between being a good housewife and mother and being a professional woman. The potential is that she can have a more positive and richer life than men have ever had."



Right: Mary Wollstonecraft. Below: Fifteenth century tapestry depicting medieval court of love.

