

Good Day Care: Getting it, Keeping it, Fighting for it, Kathleen Gallagher Ross, ed., Toronto, Canadian Women's Educational Press, 1978, pp. 223, paperback \$7.95.

Willemina Seywerd



As the title of this book indicates, it is concerned with 'good' day care in Canada, and it is long overdue. Good day care does not occur by itself — reading these articles one understands what good day care is and that it must be fought for.

The book is divided into nine sections dealing with such topics as: what day care means to parents and children; parent, worker, and community control; private-home day care; day-care workers; and resources. The articles cover child-care needs in Metropolitan Toronto, group care in Canada and other countries, alternative forms such as workplace day care or corporate day care, and notes from a day-care worker.

The book favours community-controlled day care, and takes a critical look at many of the existing facilities, which are often far from satisfactory. It wants to make the reader aware of the responsibility of society to provide good day care and a healthy environment for children. The article 'Childrearing as a Social Responsibility' points out that good day care is everyone's concern and argues that those who use it should also control it.

Another article deals with legislation and funding, and states that 'day care services in Canada have been the victim of erratic and generally inadequate policy-making and funding patterns. This has had an undeniable effect on the quantity, quality, and range of services offered.' It goes on to examine the provisions of all the provinces, and concludes that the present situation is far from ideal. The three key elements that need to be emphasized are 'quality, affordability, and accessibility' — a task that may take a long time to accomplish.

The purpose of the book is to serve as a 'practical guide to finding, choosing, and developing good day care'. However, it does much more than that. It raps the conscience of the reader. It shows a dedication and commitment to improved day-care facilities — facilities that are a supportive extension of the family — and it calls for public awareness of day-care issues. It is an important contribution that should not be missed by anyone who has an interest in helping working parents get access to reliable practical day care and in the development of young children in Canada.

The Double Ghetto: Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work, Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1978, pp. 199, paperback \$4.95.

Sybil Shack

The authors of this well-organized and thoroughly documented study of the reasons for the segregation of Canadian women into low-paid, low-status work categories make a strong case for their argument that 'attitudes and ideas are not accidental products of a culture. They are related in part to the organization of society to provide for its basic needs.' In a capitalist, industrial society like ours it is in the interest of established power groups to maintain a pool of low-paid, readily available, reasonably well-educated, but not necessarily highly skilled labour. Women keep that pool filled, as unpaid workers at home and as low-paid, often part-time, workers in the labour force. In both instances they do work the worth of which is unrecognized and which, because of its routine, unchallenging nature, tends to discourage those who do it from developing the will and gaining the experience and skills needed to grasp what few opportunities do exist for moving out of the double ghetto of the book's title.

The Armstrongs examine and put aside biological and ideological factors as major causes of the condition of women. If biology keeps women in low-status work, for example, how was it possible for women during the two world wars to carry on tasks normally performed by men? How is it possible for so many women to hold two full-time jobs, one at home and the other in the labour force? And if ideology is a prime factor in the segregation of women, where do the ideas come from? According to the Armstrongs, 'The research, even that carried out within an idealist framework, clearly indicates that economic and structural factors directly influence and restrict human behaviour and choices.'

Moreover, segregation is self-perpetuating. People are judged by the work they do. Children very early in their lives learn to categorize men and women by their jobs, and by the division of labour between them. It is not surprising that these lessons continue into adult life, and encourage the development and maintenance of gender-specific attitudes and behaviour patterns. The Catch-22, chicken-and-egg nature of women's condition comes through clearly. Status is related to the work one does. Women work largely in low-status, low-paid, service-oriented jobs, closely akin to housework, which is the lowest-ranked of all jobs. So women are regarded as having low status, come to regard themselves and their work as having little value, and tend to accept and remain in unchallenging, low-paid jobs. As their low status contributes to the well-being of the industrialist capitalist society, equality of opportunity and choice become theoretical rather than actual or practical.

In the concluding chapter the Armstrongs explain the growing restlessness of many women and the consequent rise of the women's movement in terms of the contradictions between the essentially unchanged nature during the past thirty years of women's work and status in the labour force, and the changes that have taken place in other aspects of their lives during the same period of time. Married women have gone to work outside the home in increasing numbers and have tasted the pleasures of earning money for their hitherto unrespected, unpaid services. An economy requiring large numbers of cheap but educated workers, a growing family need for more money than the male partner alone could bring in, better health, a longer life-span, fewer children born closer together, a higher level of education have all contributed to the greater employment of women. These changes have also forced upon many women a perception of the injustice inherent in their segregation; and they are