

# PR.S.U.-F.F.M. STATEMENT ON I.W.W.D.

3

The following presentation includes the key points of the speech given by the February First Movement and the Puerto Rican Student Union at the forum for International Working Women's Day held in NYC on March 5, 1976.

Brothers, sisters and revolutionary-minded people, the Puerto Rican Student Union and the February First Movement welcome you to this forum tonight to commemorate International Working Women's Day. The PRSU and the FFM have united as fraternal revolutionary student organizations to present this joint statement on how we see the significance of IWWD and how we understand the women's movement (as inseparable from the working class movement) in relationship to the party building motion. We also will reflect on the development of the AIC for IWWD ((Anti-Imperialist Coalition for IWWD) and the significance of the sharp struggles that unfolded within the Coalition.

"IWWD originated in NYC in 1908 when women garment workers demonstrated and battled for better working conditions, shorter hours, benefits, and higher wages. It was a heroic life and death struggle against the exploitation of capitalism when women workers were attacked and beaten by the police." (Party Building and the Woman Question)

IWWD is a day of profound significance to the oppressed masses and working people the world over. Historically, working women have participated in the struggle against capitalist exploitation, fighting not only for the democratic rights of women but participating in the struggle to overthrow capitalism. We have seen women participate in the historic Bolshevik revolution, the first socialist revolution. Women have defended their countries against fascist aggression in World War II, helped free China and Albania from imperialist domination and struggled to defeat superpower control in Laos, Cambodia, Angola and Mozambique. These heroic sisters have proven that women can be thoroughgoing revolutionary fighters. Furthermore, they have verified the fact that we cannot wage a struggle against imperialism without asserting the role of women as a decisive force. Working class women are part of the international proletariat whose historic mission it is to violently overthrow the domination of capital, smash the state apparatus and establish on its ruins a dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and all their running dogs. The struggle of women therefore, is a component part of proletarian revolution, revolution being the ultimate means by which women can achieve liberation.

All these things point to the fact that women's liberation is in essence a class question because it is tied to the task of overthrowing bourgeois rule. This is where we differ with bourgeois feminists who view contradictions in society arising from the differences between men and women. This idealist viewpoint denies class differences among women, lumping Rose Kennedy, "Happy" Rockefeller and Indira Gandhi as equally oppressed as Harriet Tubman, Lolita Lebron and Madame Binh. The line that N.O.W. (National Organization of Women) and other bourgeois feminists push is to deal with the capitalist system through reforms.

An example of this is the E.R.A. which would only give partial concessions to working class women (such as equal pay for equal work) but in general, it would take away hard earned rights won by the working class for working women. We must defeat all revisionist and opportunist lines on the women question. Revisionists distort the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. With their idealist viewpoint, they turn things upside down and aid the bourgeoisie as well. Revisionists like the CP-USA and the PSP talk about equality in vague terms and don't raise the question of Soviet social imperialism. They, in fact, peddle the Soviet revisionists' bourgeois line that women with "a loving heart" and "gentle hands" must actively support "peace." We must break with revisionists and opportunists of all shades,

who reduce IWWD to a mere holiday and say that the women's struggle amounts to a question of "equality" and that Congress will assure us this equality by passing legislation.

As revolutionary-minded students we must respond to Lenin's call to students that we should unite with a definite political trend in the communist movement, and we must apply it to today. Coming from the work of genuine communists (in particular RWL and PRRWO) in our organizations, we have been deepening our understanding of the key link being political line, and the two simultaneous tactics - unite Marxist-Leninists and win the advanced to communism. We have taken on the serious study of all these questions, struggled with erroneous and opportunist lines in the student movement and within our organizations. PRSU and FFM have gone to a higher level and have been struggling to raise this clarity on the campuses as well as drawing clear lines of demarcation with opportunism. Our understanding of the woman question is linked with the line struggles that are taking the student movement to a higher level. The student movement is an ally of the working class movement and should be subordinated to it. Revolutionary students should seek out the guidance and political leadership of the communist movement, the genuine wing being those communist organizations that have grown out of the working class movements, grown from the steel to steel struggle with opportunists and sham organizations, and who, in the main, are upholding correct political lines based on the ideology of the proletariat - Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought.

Our participation in the AIC for IWWD deepened our understanding of the woman question in relationship to the party building motion and provided us with valuable lessons on the seriousness of right opportunism on party building. For example, when genuine forces entered the Coalition, the revisionists, the trotskyites, the social feminists and even lesbians infected the Coalition like a disease, raising demands like "equal rights for lesbians" and demanding that men not speak.

(Editor's note: WVO, flowing from their revisionist position of unity of action with revisionists, invited these bourgeois forces into the Coalition. This conciliation with the bourgeoisie on the question could be traced to WVO's participation in the Socialist Feminist Conference, an eclectic mish mosh with a large concentration of anti-communist forces. WVO failed to take up a sharp struggle with them. Instead, they called on the PRRWO and RWL and the Revolutionary Bloc to come to their aid. Once we intensified the struggle and broke with this treacherous, motley crew, the WVO criticized us for ultra-leftism and dogmatism, totally concealing their right opportunist errors of class collaboration.)

WVO did shallow criticism and self-criticism for their right errors, i.e., they said that they conciliated to the right due to organizational weaknesses, that their cadres weren't trained or oriented enough on the relationship between party building and the woman question. They also raised that "we must wage a battle on two fronts" (with left and right opportunism) negating which was principal - right opportunism. In not taking it to their line on party building, they failed to disclose the ideological and social basis of their errors. Their philistine attitude towards struggle reflected in their bourgeois maneuvering and hegemonistic tactics to squash line struggle, (their favorite tactic was parliamentary voting). When the line struggle hit them squarely, WVO claimed that "to raise party building is left," and that we had to get down on the work for IWWD. PRSU and FFM have to deepen our analysis on WVO, we must bring it back to our membership and to the student movement as a whole, the role that WVO played in this IWWD Coalition - the fact that WVO, in shying away from the struggle, actually walked out.

Higher levels of unities were forged in the struggle against opportunism as we purged ourselves

Cont. on pg. 8



# PRSU FFM

Cont. from pg. 3

of opportunists. The struggles in the AIC were sharp around putting propaganda as the chief form of activity, and theory as principal which puts politics in command as the key link to party building. All these things are required to combat the historical belittlement of theory in the U.S., in a period where the menace of fascism must be fought and a genuine party must be built.

FFM and PRSU commend the leading example of the PRRWO, RWL and the Revolutionary Bloc, who in implementing the two simultaneous tactics, accelerated the uniting of Marxists-Leninists and definitely winning over the advanced on the basis of their correct political line and principled struggle.

In conclusion, the PRSU and FFM commemorate IWWD and pay tribute to the rich history of class struggle that women have played internationally and in the U.S., and in upholding the demands of the AIC for IWWD, we see the woman question as a class question and a component part of proletarian revolution.