



"Women of the Paris Commune" engraving of the period.

PWOC RESOLUTION on the FORMATION of a WOMEN'S LIBERATION COMMISSION

Women in our society face a special oppression stemming from the practice and ideology of male supremacy. Furthermore, it is clear that the capitalist class benefits directly from sexism -- and these benefits range all the way from the very tangible low wages for women workers to the harder to measure but even more important division created within the working class.

The oppression of women in our society will be ended only when capitalism is replaced by socialism. However, the ongoing struggle against sexism must necessarily be a major part in our general movement to build a working class conscious of its revolutionary tasks.

Communists must play the leading role in developing the struggle against sexism, and we must deal with both the subjective and the objective factors developing from the fact that women have been systematically excluded from socialized production.

Objectively women are discriminated against on the job, in the broad economic and political life of the nation, and in the home. On the subjective level both men and women have been bound by the restrictive conditioning of male supremacist ideology. Each level must be challenged by the growing workers' movement.

At the PWOC Plenum in 1974 the organization criticized itself for the general inadequacy in our struggle against sexism and for the undeveloped nature of our work among women. Since that time, we have made several positive steps. We are much further on the way to developing a position paper on the Woman Question, we have had an excellent educational on our theoretical approach to the Woman Question, and in general our educational work on the question has progressed.

Our work in CLUW was commendable, our recruitment of women has been at a higher ratio, and the struggle against sexism within the organization has been at a higher level. Heightened consciousness within the cells has led to constructive criticism and self-criticism sessions.

The major weakness of our work is that it has remained haphazard and uneven. The work has lacked centralization. Our progress has not been consolidated organizationally and the severe weaknesses which remain have not been given sufficient attention by the leading bodies of our organization.

In order to help the Executive Committee in its task of centralizing and leading the struggle against sexism it is hereby resolved to form a Women's Liberation Commission, to be chaired by a member of the Executive Committee. The Commission will serve the Executive Committee by developing the concrete application of our line on the Woman Question. The Commission will have the special responsibility of overseeing the organization's work among women and the struggle against sexism in the entire organization, making sure that our line is correctly applied within and outside the organization.

The Commission will also have the responsibility of developing programmatic suggestions and initiating projects which will then be carried on by the various organizational bodies. The Commission is authorized to act only on policy already established by the Executive Committee or the PWOC as a whole, and it is responsible to utilize and respect the existing organizational hierarchy. The Commission will at all times be directly accountable to the Executive Committee and will follow its leadership in the development of its work.

The Commission will be appointed by the Executive Committee. As much as possible, the Commission will be drawn from all different parts of the organization in order to be in close touch with the problems developing from all aspects of our work. The Commission will be composed of cadre who are sufficiently advanced to provide leadership to the entire organization and shall include both men and women.

The Women's Liberation Commission is a distinctly communist form, clearly different from the petty-bourgeois "women's caucus." The structure and role of the commission is determined by our understanding of the nature of the oppression of women and of the approach needed to correct it.

The liberation of women and the development of a class strong because of its conscious unity is a priority for the proletariat as a whole, male and female. The struggle cannot be compartmentalized, but rather must be made an integral part of all the work we do. All leading cadre must insure constant progress in this area of work within their domains. The Commission for the Liberation of Women will be a tremendous aid to our cadre in carrying out their responsibility.

The caucus, on the other hand, is a form which necessarily leads to a fragmented and divisive approach to the struggle against sexism. Because it bypasses duly established organizational authority it creates a separate center no longer responsible or responsive to regular channels.

Furthermore, the caucus form separates the struggle against sexism from the ongoing work of the organization. The struggle ceases to be the responsibility of every cadre and becomes the exclusive concern of the women in the organization. The caucus form cannot help but perpetuate the sexual division within the class. The Women's Liberation Commission is aimed at developing the united struggle against the oppression of women.

The Commission will aid the EC in developing the following areas of our work in the struggle against sexism:

- 1) **Theoretical work.** *Developing our position paper on the Woman Question and our program for the struggle against sexism.*
- 2) **Guidance of our work among women in the trade unions.** *Addressing problems of our concentration and work within the shops.*
- 3) **Guidance of our work within the democratic movement for Women's Liberation.**
- 4) **Special attention to national minority women who face the double burden of racism and sexism.**
- 5) **Recruitment of women.** *Attention to the particular aspects of recruitment: workers, housewives, wives of male recruits, etc.*
- 6) **Special attention to the training of women in order to deal with the handicap of having been isolated and kept in a backward position within the society.** *Special attention must be given to the training of women in order to develop leadership among women cadre.*
- 7) **Educational work.** *Education on the Woman Question must be pursued on all levels within the organization and in our outreach work, workers' forums, etc. Our propaganda must reflect our understanding of the importance of the struggle against sexism.*
- 8) **Campaign against sexism.** *There must be a constant struggle against mistaken ideology, prejudices, and habits which maintain an oppressive hold upon women.*