

SOCIALIST-FEMINISM: WHY IT DOESN'T WORK

Written by

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I. INTRODUCTION

We are a group of less than ten women who have been doing political study together for about a year. We began as a group of women who were all working in The Berkeley*Oakland Women's Union (BOWU) and wanted a place to discuss our questions about BOWU. We agreed from the beginning that we would be looking to Marx, Lenin, Mao and other scientific socialists for our answers. We all left BOWU as it was ending, through the summer and fall of 1976, and took in two new study group members who had never been in BOWU. Except for one of us, those who were in BOWU were there for a limited time. But with only one exception, all of us have done extended practice with Socialist-Feminist organizations in other parts of the country.

This paper is an attempt to articulate why we have all come to agree that Socialist-Feminism in general, and BOWU as an example, takes an incorrect approach to moving the working class revolution forward and transforming this society to one that is socialist. Many of the criticisms apply as well to bourgeois, radical, and lesbian feminism.

We want to make it clear that it is not individuals in BOWU that we see ourselves in contradiction with, but rather it is Socialist-Feminism that we are critical of.

II. THE ISSUE OF CLASS

A. BACKGROUNDS

As BOWU developed, the issue of "class" became increasingly important. Though we agree that this increased concern was a progressive step, in our opinion it was incorrect in its focus. From the beginning the focus was people's backgrounds. The Working Class Caucus membership was based on background. In general when people were asked to define themselves in terms of "class" it was their background that was the issue. By questioning "class" in these terms, the issue was made strictly personal. At the end, the Working Class Caucus, and others, spoke of changing the class composition of BOWU. In "Working Class Caucus: Summary of Summer Discussions (1976)" they said;

"We see BOWU as a predominantly white organization of women from middle class backgrounds, seriously limited in its practice and perspective because of its composition." (emphasis ours)

We agree that BOWU's practice and perspective were seriously limited. But the limits were not most importantly who was in the organization, but rather the lack of a scientific analysis of how to make a working class revolution. If the final proposal to mechanically change the composition of BOWU had succeeded, it is not possible that even an organization of women with varied backgrounds could move the revolution forward without a scientific (not just personal) understanding of class issues.

We agree that our backgrounds have affected us all deeply. Our experiences in the world are dramatically different depending on how we grew up, and this does affect our current attitudes. But learning to "deal" with our class differences, and having an awareness of class, though important, is not class struggle. What is primary to class struggle is not one's background (over which we have no control), but one's class

stand; that is one's current politics and attitudes. In order to engage in class struggle it is essential to have working class politics. It is not essential to have grown up in the working class. The revolution will be made by the working class, and it's allies, the oppressed nationalities. People from other classes who take up the struggle of the working class will also participate.

Seeing background as the primary issue in defining class alliances is too one-sided and simplified. It doesn't take into account that under capitalism the working class and its culture has been permeated with bourgeois ideas and values. In fact, some working class people act as class collaborators, unwittingly or not. It doesn't take into account that some true allies for the working class will have grown up in other classes.

Seeing background as primary further implies that dealing with our interpersonal differences, and learning not to "oppress" each other is class struggle. This is not to say that arrogant, self righteous or patronizing attitudes should be tolerated. On the contrary, we must always be working hard to challenge and support each other to change such attitudes. But in fact, struggling to improve our interpersonal relations will do nothing to change the basic structure of this society.

BOWU is not the first or only place that this confusion exists. In the women's movement in general trying to deal with the class bias within the women's movement itself gets mistaken for class struggle.

B. CLASS STRUGGLE

What then is "class struggle" and why is the question of class so critical, in fact primary, in making revolution?

Marxism teaches that in each historical period there exists a ruling class that owns the means of production, and profits from the rent or sale of things produced by others. In our period the means of production are the warehouses,

equipment, factories, etc., which are owned by the capitalists (the bourgeoisie). Those who produce the goods that the ruling class profits from are in constant conflict with the ruling class, for they are not receiving the full value of their labor. The workers don't receive the full value of what they produce, but rather the wage determined by the capitalists. Surplus value is that amount produced by the workers above what is paid to them. The capitalists take the rest.

The working class is that class of people, women and men, who only survive by selling their labor power to others and receiving wages in return. They have no access to the means of production. Women are part of the working class in two situations. On the one hand many women hold working class jobs outside the home. On the other, women do the work of recreating the labor force and sustaining the labor power of family members. These women, even if they are not paid directly, are actually "paid" by an unmarked part of the wage earner's pay check. So housewives are part of the working class if the wage earners they support are in the class, because they participate in the production of surplus value. In this country the working class is obviously a huge class, the numerical majority of all people. Most oppressed nationalities are working class by virtue of their position in the work force.

The issue of class and class struggle is important not simply because working class people have been "more oppressed" by class bias in their daily lives. Rather, class is important because of exploitation of the working class, the taking of surplus value by the ruling class. (For fuller explanation of the difference between exploitation and oppression, see page 11). Indeed, ruling class power is dependent upon the surplus value that the ruling class takes from the working class. The working class is directly in conflict with the

capitalists in that daily, surplus value is taken from their labor. The working class are the producers of society, and by withholding their labor they are able to prevent the capitalists from obtaining surplus value. Additionally, the labor of the working class is usually socialized (many people working together to make each product) and generally uses the most advanced technology. Because of this, the working class is uniquely able to use their labor, knowledge, and experience to build a new socialist society.

There is a third class called the petit (little) bourgeoisie. This group is composed partly of professionals, who have skills and access to money that allow them the option of setting up their own businesses. This group also includes small business owners. Many professionals or small business owners employ at least one other person. In addition, the petit bourgeoisie includes some people in managerial positions (particularly in large businesses) who align themselves with the ruling class, working in the interest of the business against the workers' best interests. In a revolutionary situation the petit bourgeoisie will vacillate; at times the class will support the proletariat, at other times it will fight against the revolutionary ranks in alliance with the bourgeoisie.

In the period of slavery the ruling class were the slaveholders; the exploited, the slaves. In feudal times the ruling class was the landed aristocracy; the peasants the exploited. Today the ruling class is the capitalists, while the working class (or proletariat) is the class from which they draw their wealth.

We are now in the stage of capitalism called Imperialism. In this stage, the monopoly capitalists go beyond the exploitation of people in their own countries and they exploit people in countries they control around the world. This provides the material basis for an alliance between oppressed nationalities

around the world and the working class at home in order to defeat the capitalist class.

For women in this period, imperialism means being steadily drawn into the labor force as a supply of cheap labor. In the U.S., since 1900 the number of women workers has increased until now women are 44% of the work force. This influx of women was not caused by a "Women's Movement" but rather by the need for cheap labor at "home" by the monopoly capitalists, and economic need on the part of the women. Women have taken jobs out of economic necessity, but are mostly forced into very low-paying ones.

When we use the term "class struggle" we are talking about the struggle in each period of history between the rulers and the exploited. In each period it was this struggle between classes, not individual acts, that moved history forward. In the stage of Imperialism, resistance at home by the working class, oppressed nationalities, and women, and resistance by oppressed nations outside the U.S. close in on the bourgeoisie-- class struggle intensifies. It is the victory of the working class in alliance with oppressed nationalities over the capitalist class that will result in bringing about socialism, for socialism is the stage where the working class has control over the means of production.

We define "class consciousness" not just as an awareness of class differences, but as an understanding of the crucial part the working class plays in the struggle toward socialism. Taking a "working class stand" means identifying with, and fighting for, the victory of the working class in this struggle.

C. WOMEN AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

1. WOMEN'S OPPRESSION AND EXPLOITATION

Women's oppression and exploitation are linked to her position in the paid labor force and in the family. In the labor force, women are super-exploited as low-paid, unskilled workers and are used by the ruling class to keep wages down and undercut other workers. In the family women primarily do the work of maintaining the present work force and reproducing and rearing the next. Women's work of cooking, cleaning, etc., is necessary to maintain society. However, women can't survive economically just from the work they do in the home. Women must get part of another worker's wages, go out and earn a wage of their own, or be supported by welfare.

Although over 40% of all women in the U.S. are in the paid labor force, capitalist ideology maintains that women's primary role is as wife and mother and that women who work outside the home do so not as "breadwinners" but for "pin money". This ideology facilitates the economic exploitation of women which is so important to capitalism. Defining women as weak, nurturing, dependent, and as working for pin-money makes it easier to track women into low-paying, unskilled or semi-skilled "women's work".

Under bourgeois feminism, the rejection of the wife/mother and seeing work outside the home as being liberation does little or nothing to stop women from being forced into low-paying jobs. It does serve to mask the economic need of working class women as "self-realization." Women are also used as a reserve pool of cheap labor to be called upon in time of crisis (e.g., war) or when capitalists increase their profits by paying women workers less than they would have to pay men for the same job. Thus, when women do enter the labor market the system can exploit working-class women and reap greater surplus value.

In addition, these women experience a particularly burdensome "double shift" working both inside and outside the home. The lack of socialized laundries, kitchens, dining halls, and childcare mean that working class families must individualistically handle the responsibilities of home and childcare. Because of male chauvinist ideas which defines domestic work as women's work, and because many households are headed by women, these responsibilities fall most heavily on women.

It is in the interest of the working-class women to end this system which exploits them on the job and perpetuates the status of women as workers in the home. It is in the interest of the proletariat to abolish women's oppression and exploitation, for any divisions and inequalities within the working class weaken the strength of the class as a whole and undermines the building of socialism.

Socialism will end the economic exploitation of all workers, allow women to enter the labor force on a truly equal basis with men (as full employment will be a reality), and socialize work of the home so that it no longer falls only to women. With these material changes, socialism will also provide a basis for combatting male chauvinist ideas. Thus, a socialist revolution is needed to destroy the economic, and ultimately, the ideological barriers to women's full and equal participation in society.

The situation in China provides us with an example of what can be done after a socialist revolution. Some of the most successful and widespread community facilities which have been established there are those for childcare. These include nursing rooms for the youngest babies, nurseries for children from 18 months, and kindergartens for ages three-and-a-half to seven years.

Local neighborhood service shops are also a common feature in urban China. They were established by city, neighborhood, or residents' organizations and the Women's Federation to serve

working housewives, Their services, which are varied, include laundry, tailoring, mending, household repairs and other odd jobs.

Socialization of the work involved in maintaining a home and raising children makes it possible for both parents to work without the quality of their homes suffering. In this way working mothers and single parents are not forced to work a "double day".

2. WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

In the struggle to bring about women's full and equal participation in society, we believe that mass women's organizations can be revolutionary forms, provided that they are taking leadership from a Marxist-Leninist party or Marxist-Leninists. This does not mean that the special concerns of working class women will be ignored. Rather it means that women's struggles will be coordinated with, receive guidance from, and indeed be part of the overall class struggle. Mass women's organizations taking leadership from a party existed in the early 20th century throughout Europe and in the United States and Canada. They still exist under the leadership of the Party in such socialist countries as China and Albania. In The Emancipation of Women, Lenin writes:

We want no separate organizations of Communist women! She who is a Communist belongs to the Party, just as he who is a Communist. They have the same rights and duties...However...the Party must have organs--working groups, commissions, committees, sections or whatever else they may be called--with the specific purpose of rousing the broad masses of women, bringing them into contact with the Party...we must have our own groups to work among them, special methods of agitation and special forms of organization. (pp. 110-111)

We believe that a separate organization of women is and will be needed as long as women continue to face particular oppression. Teng Ying-chao, Vice Chairperson of the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, says: "They (women) are still in need of organizations of their own which will unite their forces, give expression to their aspirations, protect their rights and interests..and supervise the implementation of the policy and decrees regarding the equality of men and women." (The Women's Movement in China, Elizabeth Croll, p. 17)

III. BOWU MADE "SEXISM" PRIMARY

A. IMPLICIT IN THEORY AND CONCRETE IN PRACTICE

Within Socialist-Feminism, there were many political debates about the issue of primary contradiction. It is our position that Socialist-Feminism does not define a primary contradiction in theory, but in practice "sexism" becomes the primary contradiction.

At this point we would like to briefly explain what is meant by primary contradiction. In any problem there are many contradictions. Only one of them can be primary. By primary we mean the key contradiction. All other contradictions hinge on the one that is primary. The idea that women's oppression pre-dates class society and therefore is primary is erroneous. Primary does not mean first or even most obvious. It is the contradiction that must be identified and resolved before all other subordinate contradictions can be satisfactorily solved.

The Thursday Night Writing Group concludes that Socialist-Feminism "rejects the primary contradiction in theory and accepts sexism as the primary contradiction in practice." (BOWU Newsletter, April 1975 (sic) 1976.

We agree with this conclusion and believe that the implicit position that "sexism" is the primary contradiction is a major obstacle to Socialist-Feminism's development of revolutionary practice. Much of the failure of BOWU and the confusion and frustration experienced by BOWU members came from this basic error of Socialist-Feminist theory. Because Socialist-Feminism is generally very vague, it is hard to define and document its theoretical position. This vagueness is a manifestation of Socialist-Feminism's lack of theoretical development and refusal to take a stand on the issue of primary contradiction, both in theory and practice.

BOWU Principles of Unity state: "Our own liberation is contingent on the liberation of all, and that such liberation requires the elimination of the causes of oppression..." This statement recognizes the fact that the liberation of women cannot take place in isolation from the elimination of all oppression. But there is no clarity as to whether or not there is one root or determining contradiction. The elimination of the "causes of oppression" can not take place until you have recognized and eliminated the primary contradiction, class.

There is a difference between exploitation and oppression. Exploitation refers to the stealing of surplus value from the working class by the ruling class. Exploitation is the base of class society and the key element in class struggle. Oppression refers to the many ways the ruling class keeps down sectors of the other classes, including the working class. For example, all women are oppressed by this society's tacit acceptance of rape. BOWU and Socialist-Feminism confuse these terms. This legitimizes putting primary importance on the oppression of women, instead of placing class exploitation as primary.

The theoretical rejection of class as the primary contradiction leads Socialist-Feminism (and BOWU in particular) to the erroneous conclusion that male chauvinism is the main form of oppression which women in this society experience. BOWU Principles of Unity said: "We form a women's union in recognition that sexism shapes our lives." "We are autonomous because we are oppressed as women by sexism." Focusing on "sexism" as primary leads to making certain assumptions about all women who do not agree with this assessment and who do not come to Socialist-Feminism for political guidance. It is implicitly or explicitly assumed that these women are lacking in sufficient consciousness of their oppression as women or are lacking the courage to openly fight women's oppression. We would maintain that male chauvinism is not the main form of oppression which many women of the working class and oppressed nationalities in this society experience, although it may be the most obvious experience of daily oppression for bourgeois and petit-bourgeois women. The fact that Socialist-Feminism failed to attract women of the working class and oppressed nationalities in large numbers reflects the inappropriateness and irrelevancy of Socialist-Feminist analysis and strategy to their lives.

In general within BOWU little emphasis was given to the scientific development of political positions. The Principles of Unity called for a concrete theoretical analysis and strategy but the actual attempts to systematically and scientifically develop such a program were token at best. There was little organized commitment to carrying through serious study in BOWU and there was a strong tendency to see our own experience as sufficient. This is summed up in the concluding statement of the Principles of Unity--"out of our experience we can create a revolution in this country." (emphasis added)

B. REALATIONSHIP TO OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES

Within BOWU, it is widely recognized that BOWU was not succeeding in reaching women of different oppressed nationalities, either in terms of political alliances around common struggles or in terms of BOWU membership. Generally, recognition of this reality received two responses. On the one hand, people would question whether or not BOWU should "recruit" women of oppressed nationalities. On the other hand, many women accepted the fact that BOWU was a mostly white organization, and relegated the question of organizing or working with, or for, oppressed nationalities to a very low priority.

Many BOWU members confronted the fact that women of oppressed nationalities would only be drawn to BOWU if the political work of the organization reflected a theoretical understanding of the issues facing these women and their communities. However, from our experience there was no discussion within BOWU of the relationship between women's oppression and exploitation, national oppression, and class exploitation in the lives of oppressed nationality peoples, nor of strategies for scientifically fighting national and sex divisions as part of class struggle. Rather, BOWU members frequently fell into the trap of examining their own racism, using this important task as a substitute for political analysis.

There were efforts, such as those of the Stop Forced Sterilization Group or the Title Twenty Group, to work with oppressed nationalities. However, lacking a clear theoretical basis, these attempts (particularly that of SFSG) produced little besides frustration and the sense that such work "lacked a base in the Third World community."

A specific example comes from the experience of some of us in the Stop Forced Sterilization Group (SFSG). The SFSG recognized that sterilization is an issue that affects both women of the working class and oppressed nationalities. But in meetings, the agendas would include various things (like relationship to BOWU, relationships with each other, "evaluation", "check-in", etc.). For a period of several weeks, the discussion of actual work and analysis and strategy was put aside when there was not enough time, and the other items on the agenda were discussed. Feelings often took precedence (that is, feelings about group process) and political discussion got consistently shortchanged. In a sense, what became primary were the relationships of the women to each other.

C. THE GAY QUESTION

Another way BOWU put women's oppression first was the prevailing attitude that lesbianism itself was progressive or even revolutionary. Several reasons were given to support that being gay was more progressive than being heterosexual. "Gay people and especially lesbians are more oppressed than heterosexuals." (Newsletter, Summer 1975). This is a simplistic view. It depends on which heterosexuals you are talking about. That gay men and lesbians are oppressed is true, but "more oppressed" depends on your class position and nationality. For instance, is a white lesbian woman with no children more oppressed than a black heterosexual woman on welfare with children? Is this welfare mother less oppressed than the white lesbian because she's heterosexual? Certainly not.

It is important here to talk about the relationship between oppression and being revolutionary. Being oppressed does not

in and of itself make you a revolutionary. It's in your interest, but it does not give you the correct analysis for defeating that oppression. If this were true, then making a revolution would be easy. All oppressed people would automatically know how to defeat their oppressor. It is obvious that this is not the case. By the mere fact of being gay, people will not necessarily hold a revolutionary class perspective; they will not necessarily align themselves with the working class to build Socialism. In any case, putting the emphasis on oppression rather than exploitation overlooks the historical revolutionary potential of the working class.

Another idea often voiced was that lesbians are permanent rather than temporary workers, and therefore see themselves as workers because they are not supported by a man. This is also simplistic. What about all the women who are heads of households and do not receive the benefit of a man's wage, such as working mothers who support themselves and their children? The idea that all heterosexual women are supported by men plays into the ideology that women "only work for pin money". This idea also ignores single heterosexual women who support themselves. What about working class women who, with their husbands, support their family, where both wages are critical to their survival? Lesbians are not the only women who do not benefit from a man's wage. Here also you have to look at which class of people and therefore what wage you are talking about. Bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women and their children who are totally supported by their husband's good wage, are not the same as working class women who work together with their husbands to support their families. When speaking of "reaping the benefit of a man's wage" you have to look at which man and what wage.

Another commonly held view in BOWU was that lesbians and gay men break down sex roles and the nuclear family. People

who hold this view see the oppressive aspects for women in the sex roles of the family structure as the main problem, and believe that if you smash the nuclear family you have threatened capitalism. This is a one-sided view of the nuclear family. If it were true, why is the ruling class so bent on destroying the families of national minorities and the working poor? Because in many ways the family structure eases the harshness of the survival struggle. In fact, the deterioration of the nuclear family is being caused by many factors such as the need under imperialism to draw more women into the work force, and pressures on an individual family to financially provide for all its members' needs (medical, educational, clothing, etc.), while holding up the family as the only place that personal/emotional needs of alienated workers can be met.

We recognize that women and gay people are oppressed by an ideology that reinforces sex roles, heterosexuality, and gay people's invisibility. Currently the democratic rights of gays are being threatened in attacks from reactionary forces. We support and participate in the struggles of gay people to protect their rights and end their oppression. Yet in BOWU, the lack of a broader class perspective led to an inflexible approach to fighting gay oppression. It took precedence over many other righteous struggles and thereby became primary. It was not seen in a context of the fight against all oppression and exploitation. Particularly in coalition work this was apparent.

One example is BOWU's refusal to endorse the July 26, 1975 Solidarity with Cuba Day (see Newsletter, Summer 1975). It is notable that in the letter the Planning Committee calls for "the unity of gay liberation and women's liberation in our fight against sexism." The "fight against sexism" is once again primary. Also in the July 4th, 1976 event, only two

leaflets were distributed by BOWU: one to women and the other to lesbians. A third example is that of one BOWU member who wrote a letter in response to widespread claims that she had voted for an anti-gay proposition in a National Lawyers Guild meeting (Newsletter, Summer 1975). Her position was that it would not be correct to withdraw from an event or coalition in all cases if gay slogans or placards were not permitted. It was her contention that other ways of struggling within the group could be more effective. Many members of BOWU saw this as an anti-gay position. Once again, gay oppression was made into a primary issue.

It is important to recognize that no one, gay or straight, is inherently revolutionary. A lesbian or homosexual is revolutionary by the act of engaging in class struggle, and aligning with the working class. This means that any person, regardless of sexual orientation, can become a class-conscious revolutionary. Neither heterosexual nor homosexual relationships are inherently progressive or reactionary.

In sum, we see the struggle against gay oppression as important within the context of class struggle, but not as primary. Gay oppression affects us all, as does any oppression. "Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases, without exception, of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse no matter what class is effected." (Lenin, What is to Be Done, emphasis his).

IV. CONCLUSION

A. The Need for a Party

We have come to understand through our practice and the study of social movements that a socialist revolution can not

be successfully carried out through spontaneous uprisings or through many separately planned struggles. What is needed to successfully defeat the system of capitalism is for all the many struggles against oppression to be coordinated with the class struggle of the proletariat and led in a systematic, scientific, broad-seeing, and centralized way. This has been the common experience of countries such as China, Albania, and Viet Nam. Successful socialist revolutions have been led in these countries by a Communist Party.

The enemy is organized. They are older and have established a great arsenal of defense (advanced technological warfare, army, police, tools of propaganda). Their ideology is widespread and deeply affects us all. Monopoly capitalism is an entire system, so it must be fought systematically. There must be an over-all strategy that will come from the Party. If we leap from issue to issue letting tactics, rather than an over-all plan, determine our next move, or if we fight only one part of the system (e.g., women's oppression), we make it easy for the bourgeoisie to co-opt or repress us. This does not lead to revolution.

Without consistent and conscious Communist leadership, progressive ideas and insights into the capitalist system can also be readily co-opted. For example, the idea that "the personal is political" is a progressive one when it is used to mean that one's personal experience is controlled by the political and economic forces of this society. In this sense, "the personal is political" has the potential to be a revolutionary tool. However, without this larger political understanding, the idea has become distorted into the notion that political work should take personal experiences of oppression as its primary focus. When this happens, it becomes something serviceable to the bourgeoisie.

Lenin explains that in a capitalist society unless there is a strong force presenting working class ideology (ideas that serve the working class) people will naturally gravitate towards bourgeois ideology. Bourgeois ideology is the path of least resistance--it is taught in our schools, in our homes, at our jobs. Without a strong party providing working class leadership, bourgeois ideology will prevail.

But with organized strategy behind single issue struggles, they could be turned into important steps in the attack on the bourgeoisie. This does not mean that to fight back against specific oppressions without a plan is useless. And of course, we can see objectively that reforms, temporary gains, have been made without Marxist-Leninist leadership. But what it means is that as conscious revolutionaries we want to see, in an objective way (using scientific socialism), how to most effectively work towards ending the present system and building a new.

We are not just trying to overthrow capitalism, but to set up a new society-- socialism. This further brings out the need for a unified Communist Party to lead in socialist construction and to ensure that the bourgeoisie will not rise again. Strong, unified socialist leadership after the revolution is called the dictatorship of the proletariat. This would be established and led by the Communist Party of the working class in alliance with the oppressed nationalities.

From the conditions of their lives, people in general have a knowledge of what is happening---that is, that medical care is bad, big corporations expand without regard for people, food is grown without our health in mind, the family cannot serve basic needs, wages are low but someone's making big money, etc. The leap from these specifics to a political consciousness can take many different directions: retreat into mysticism, the development of fascist ideas, seeing everything as absurd or hopeless, or becoming class conscious.

Earlier in this paper we talked about "taking a working class stand" and using scientific socialism to guide revolutionary struggle. Scientific socialism can only be developed by concretely applying an understanding of history and the historical position of the working class to the concrete conditions at hand. The ruling class hopes to keep class consciousness and scientific socialism from the working class, knowing that the working class can only go so far without it. Those who are armed with scientific socialism however can analyze the collective experience of the working class and the whole of capitalist society. Equipped with this knowledge, the working class can go beyond demands for better working conditions to demands for a revamping of the entire society. We need a Communist Party to transmit scientific socialism to the working class in an organized and consistent manner.

B. Meanwhile...

Our group is not sufficiently developed or unified to lay out a comprehensive plan for what we think women who were involved in Socialist-Feminism should be doing now. Indeed we think this is an extremely difficult question. We attribute our lack of understanding of "what next" in part to the fact that there is no genuine Communist Party to give leadership.

However general and limited, we would like to propose that women 1) study the works of Marx, Lenin, Mao and other scientific socialists; 2) become involved in mass practice that Marxist-Leninists are involved in as well, including mass women's organizations; and 3) put their understanding of women's oppression into a larger class perspective and work to develop a scientific analysis of the woman question that can move towards revolution.