

Communist Federation of Britain (ML)

Now Show Us Your Politics

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women's liberation



Now show
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politics!

Though delighted that my article on Women's Liberation, in the November issue of 'Struggle', has caused such controversy, I feel that many of my points have been misrepresented by your correspondents.

The article did NOT preclude the notion, but stressed the vital importance of women organising politically. It did question the premise that women can achieve any worthwhile liberation whilst fighting solely against men, or against social attitudes within a capitalist society. It did question the middle-class composition and appeal of Womens' Liberation Organisations, and therefore their politics.

Yes, women must organise in their place of work, and those one-third of women left at home must organise to be freed from the domestic burdens which enslave them. It is true that women, in common with other special groups under capitalism (black workers for example) are subject to special oppressions. But the struggle against these must not obscure the real enemy - the capitalist society, which by its very contradictory nature ensures that working-class men and women alike are oppressed. Should black workers be organising against their fellow white workers in an attempt for their own liberation? The very idea appears ludicrous, yet it does seem to be an analogous confusion that is adopted by Womens' Liberation. It was even expressed in part of one of the letter letters printed last month -

"It is inevitable that there are

contradictions between men and women, and women are right to join together to examine these conflicts from their own point of view".

What has happened to the class composition of our society? Are we suddenly just a society of men and women? Working class women have very different interests from middle-class women, and the fact that they are both female certainly does not automatically group them together. Women are treated as commodities and as sex-symbols, but what is the man grafting at the factory if he is not a profit producing commodity? And what is the husky-voiced, tall, handsome, Austin-Reed clad, success-at-work image, if it is not a sex-symbol which men are expected to want to attain?

The only way women can successfully fight to change the system is by first and foremost striving to be commun-

ists. For broad front work dealing specifically with women's problems, (though why men should be excluded from campaigning for nursery education for their kids, and realistic abortion facilities, I really don't know) the politics should be based on a correct Marxist-Leninist approach. The aims of this broad front work should be similar to those of other broad front organisations; to help members understand the political reality underlying their everyday lives - and how to fight capitalism. From this will come an understanding of a Marxist-Leninist position, and the development of a revolutionary woman.

Womens' Lib. organisations rightly criticise the advertisements that promise happiness out of a bottle, or from a bra. The basis for a happy life for a greater number of men and women than ever before in history is not a mirage. It will not come from the many delusions of the consumer society, but from the opportunities that the victory of socialism alone will bring. More and more, we need to communicate this view, and further, that the very fight for socialism is in itself a transformation and fulfilment.

Without this perspective, I believe that any Womens' Lib. Organisation is sterile, and subjective, time consuming, and a figure of fun. With this approach, it could help make women into new beings, playing their full part in the fight for a new life.

Perhaps a positive result of these articles might be that the C.F.B. will consider a broad front organisation, specially concerned with women's problems. Meanwhile, in what ways can women usefully direct their efforts? The following are surely a beginning -

Fight for equal wages in your work place.

Take an equal part with men in workers' organisations.

Fight to increase your political understanding.

S.A. (Cambridge).

New Zealand Workers' Song

Capitalist? The hell I am!
Am I for the boss, or am I
for my cobbles, for my wife and kids
or for that gang of robbers?
A cow of a thing to live for that
slob,
giving my guts to get him a few
bob,
ever depending on him and his like
to pass out a job, good God!
Communist?
Too bloody right I am!

To tell you the truth
I don't give a damn
for the boss's crap;
if he tells me to scam
then that'll be Jake
he's got money to make
and I to live my life
so it's war to the knife.
He needs me, I don't need him.
Now just watch the fun begin!

Rewi Alley May 1962.