

PLATFORM

Radical Women's platform is the living application of our theory to ever-expanding areas of involvement. Our theory guides our evaluation of new situations as they develop. Intervention in the feminist, people of color, queer, and labor movements constantly tests and proves our socialist feminist analysis and enriches and expands our stands on the issues.

As socialist feminists, we know that the majority of the demands we raise can, at best, be realized only partially or temporarily under capitalism. We strive to win even these incomplete but urgently needed reforms to make it possible for women to struggle and survive. In addition, the fight for reforms is a profoundly radicalizing experience. Women who take up the collective battle for their needs learn how to organize effectively and, at the same time, to see capitalism's inability to provide a solution. Our platform is based on the Trotskyist concept of transitional demands — demands that arise from everyday necessity and cry out for solution, but can never be fully realized under capitalism — and for this reason, they expose the rotting system.

Our platform reflects the wide spectrum of issues that Radical Women has taken up over the years, though it cannot begin to be a complete list of all the stands we take as we intervene in the ever-changing struggles of oppressed people all over the world.

LEGAL RIGHTS

Throughout most of the world, women are not recognized under the law as equals with men. Current laws and judicial interpretations are sexist. For example, after a century and a half of struggle, the U.S. Constitution still lacks a federal Equal Rights Amendment and thus provides no nationwide legal foundation for women's equality.

The law should protect human life and liberty above private property, but under capitalism the reverse is true. The just and democratic recognition of the rights of women is sacrificed for capital's need to perpetuate the institution of the nuclear family, along with the subordination of wives to their husbands. The resulting second-class status of women is enforced through legislation, the courts and government policy.

WE DEMAND:

- Unconditional equal treatment under non-sexist law for all women regardless of age, marital status, disability, health, race, sexual orientation, size and weight, immigration status, political ideology, lifestyle, or income level.
- Equal legal recognition of all forms of consenting relationships, marriage and domestic partnerships, including those of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people. No preferential tax treatment based on marital status. The unqualified right of married women to keep their own names and independent legal identities. Divorce granted on the grounds of incompatibility and incontestable by either party. Child custody and community property disputes resolved free of charge by a qualified, non-adversarial and publicly funded family commission composed of professionals and lay people acceptable to both parents. Removal of divorce and child custody issues from the adversarial court system. The right of women and children to legal separation from their families.
- Preservation and extension of civil liberties to protect our right to dissent, including freedom of speech, association

and assembly, and the right to privacy in all spheres — particularly on the job, where civil rights are routinely suppressed.

ECONOMIC EQUALITY

The reentry of women into the world of paid work on every level and on an equal footing with men is the essential lever for achieving social equality. Yet the economic crisis of capitalism deals its heaviest blows to women. Economic dependence, whether on men or on welfare, is in fundamental contradiction to freedom and independence. Women face constant prejudice in financial transactions because of our supposed “emotionalism” and consequent “instability” and also because many women are not paid enough to independently qualify for many economic transactions. To control our lives, we must control our own livelihood.

WE DEMAND:

- Affirmative action and seniority protection in employment and promotion. Separate seniority lists by race and/or sex in job classifications where women and people of color are underemployed. Legally enforceable quotas to guarantee equal access to all job classifications for women, people of color and ethnic minorities.
- Equal pay for equal or comparable work as a right of women, people of color, disabled, old, young and immigrant workers.
- Free 24-hour, industry- and government-funded, community-controlled childcare centers on or near the job, with educational, recreational and medical facilities for children.
- Paid leave for pregnancy, new baby care and major illness without loss of benefits, seniority or job status.
- Safe working conditions for everyone. Eradication of dangerous work environments that affect disproportionate numbers of women, especially women of color and immi-

grants. An end to using unsafe conditions as an excuse to exclude women from certain areas of employment. The right of all workers to withdraw their labor, with full pay, from any hazardous work environment or practice until the problem is rectified.

- Unlimited employer-funded sick leave at full pay. Employer-paid, comprehensive health insurance for both full- and part-time workers where healthcare is not yet nationalized. Employer-funded domestic partnership benefits.
- Nationalization of failing industries under workers' control.
- Corporate- and government-sponsored retraining and placement at no loss in pay for injured workers and those laid off by plant closures, automation, or speedup.
- Equal access for women to apprenticeships in the trades. Affirmative action training programs in nontraditional trades. An end to harassment and physical attacks on women in the trades.
- Full employment instituted through a sliding scale of hours with the length of the working day uniformly reduced until there is work for everyone paid at the rate of a full day's union wage.
- Regular, automatic wage increases to fully match increases in the cost of living.

WOMEN AND UNIONS

Women workers and unionists are key to a revitalized labor movement. As the lowest paid workers, our struggles against discrimination and for our rights bring fresh dynamism to the labor movement.

WE DEMAND:

- Full equality for women in union membership and leadership functions. The leadership of unions should reflect the membership in terms of race, sex, and languages spoken. Union-sponsored apprenticeship programs with affirma-

tive action hiring and training.

- Aggressive campaigns by unions to organize the traditionally unorganized sectors of labor, which are primarily women and people of color. The labor movement must fight for equality for all workers, address social issues, and prioritize the demands of women, people of color, immigrants, and lesbians and gays.
- Union democracy: the right of union members to decide the goals and priorities of their unions through full discussion and majority vote. Free speech within our unions, including the right of radicals to be heard.
- Militant labor action, including general strikes, in solidarity against government and business attacks on any sector of the labor movement. Solidarity actions with workers of other countries against the union-busting multinationals. Replace protectionist consumer campaigns with "Buy Union" campaigns.
- An anti-capitalist labor party to act as an independent political voice for labor and put an end to the union bureaucracy's perennial alliance with the pro-capitalist parties.
- End AFL-CIO support for the American Institute for Free Labor Development and other CIA fronts which crush independent unions in the Third World.

BIOLOGICAL SELF-DETERMINATION

Under capitalism, women are considered the property of men, the church and the state. To gain control over our lives, we must take back our minds and bodies.

Our sexuality is for us alone to determine; we must define ourselves. Fundamental to the liberation of women is our right as free individuals to exercise control over our own bodies based on our own judgment, free from economic or social coercion. Bearing and nurturing children is only one part of a woman's life. Children should not be our private responsibility nor should we be forced into childbearing.

WE DEMAND:

- No state interference with a woman's reproductive decisions or with her decisions during pregnancy.
- Readily available birth control information and the distribution of free, safe contraceptives to all who request them, regardless of age. Development and promotion of safe, reliable birth control for men as well as women.
- No forced sterilization or "consent" obtained under pressure or in the absence of full information and understanding of consequences. No experiments on women without their knowledge and informed, uncoerced agreement. Stop the reproductive genocide against indigenous and colonized nations, people of color, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. Stop "population control" programs used by imperialism to perpetrate genocide in Third World countries.
- Free, safe and accessible abortion on demand for any woman, including women under the age of 18, without notification or approval of parents, the father, or the courts. Legal and medical recognition that a woman's life and livelihood take precedence over a fetus.
- An end to the double standard of sexual morality. The right of married women to extramarital sexual relations free from the atrocious label of "adultery." The right of unmarried women of all sexual orientations to enjoy sexual self-expression and free sex lives, untrammelled by social and religious prejudice and vicious regulatory laws.
- Nationalization of companies that develop new reproductive technology to ensure it will be controlled by and used for women, not against us. Reproductive technology should be introduced only after approval by women. Ban profit-making agencies in the surrogate-mother industry. Recognize the rights of surrogate mothers as workers. A surrogate mother should have the same right to change her mind and keep her child as a mother who puts her

baby up for adoption.

- Free, quality prenatal care and childbirth services.
- Mandatory non-sexist and non-homophobic sex education for all students of all ages.

QUALITY HEALTHCARE

We should not be forced to place our mental and physical health in the hands of an insensitive, for-profit medical system that is enriched by our illness. First-rate healthcare is a basic human right.

WE DEMAND:

- Quality, informative, preventive, and rehabilitative healthcare for all at no charge.
- Nationalization of all sectors of the medical industry — including pharmaceuticals, insurance, and home care services — and place them under the control of healthcare workers and users of medical services. Union wages for all healthcare workers.
- The right to free, quality mental health treatment, without pressure to conform to traditional sex roles or heterosexuality. Stop "therapy" aimed at subverting women's rebellion and keeping us in "our place" through harmful drugs, shock treatment and other forms of social control. End the brutalization of women by the psychiatric profession and by racist, sexist psychological testing.
- Comprehensive funding for unbiased research, prevention, and treatment of diseases that affect women and other oppressed people. No exploitive use of women as medical "guinea pigs," which has been especially common with women of color and in Third World nations. An end to the practice of using studies composed solely of white men to develop medical treatments for diseases that affect everyone.
- Full funding for research, treatment, cure and prevention

of AIDS. Make all trial drugs free and available to all AIDS/HIV-positive patients — including women, who are now routinely excluded from test protocols — on an informed, voluntary basis. Free, voluntary, anonymous HIV testing; no forced testing. No quarantine of AIDS and HIV-positive people. Housing, childcare, medical care, counseling, and a guaranteed income to people with AIDS. Free, culturally appropriate safer sex education and materials for all ages. No discrimination against people with AIDS or HIV.

- Stop the breast cancer epidemic with comprehensive funding for education, research, treatment, cure and prevention. Make all trial drugs free and available. Clean up environmental contributors to cancer. Make state-of-the-art, low-radiation mammography available to all women at no cost. Make all forms of treatment and detection — traditional and nontraditional — available at no cost to breast cancer patients. Breast cancer education for all young women through the schools. Housing, childcare, medical care, counseling, and a guaranteed income for *all* cancer patients.
- Legalize all drugs under community control to take away drug dealers' profits, lower the cost and, therefore, reduce crimes committed to finance drug habits. Allow regulation of drug quality. Provide free, sterile needles and no-cost, stigma-free, accessible, voluntary treatment programs for addicts and alcoholics. Establish universal, culturally aware educational programs to help prevent drug addiction. No forced drug testing.
- The right to make informed decisions about our own healthcare, including the choice of legal guardian, if needed. The right to choose or refuse medical treatment, regardless of pregnancy status. The right to die and the legal right to assisted suicide.
- Full civil rights for people in nursing homes and mental health institutions.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Within the hierarchy of the nuclear family, children are at the bottom, with no control over their lives, minds or bodies. They receive the harshest blows from the stress, conflict and disintegration of the nuclear family under capitalism, yet have no escape from it. Class society deprives children of their legal, social, economic and political rights through often capricious laws and social mores that take no account of a child's individual and constantly expanding capabilities. Children are the future of humanity, and therefore society as a whole must assume responsibility for the young: to provide for their needs, protect them where they are vulnerable, socialize and educate them, and open the prison door of the nuclear family. Children should be guaranteed freedom from oppressive family relations and their parents should be liberated from the sole and isolated responsibility for child-rearing.

WE DEMAND:

- The right of children to be respected as capable human beings who can participate in society to the fullest extent of their experience and abilities.
- Free, quality, community-controlled industry- and government-funded childcare centers staffed by professionally trained personnel at union wages and conditions, open 24 hours a day to all children regardless of their social status or the parents' reasons for bringing the children there.
- Guaranteed quality living conditions for children, including full and free access to medical, dental and mental health care, housing, clothing and a nutritious diet. Free breakfast, lunch, and dinner programs for all low-income school children, regardless of immigration status.
- Full protection of children from physical and psychological abuse and sexual coercion, molestation or exploitation by any institution or individual, including parents. Courts and social welfare agencies must make protecting a child from an abusive parent a higher priority than trying to "keep

the family together.” End the practice of ignoring or discounting children’s testimony about sexual abuse and of scapegoating mothers who are unable to provide sufficient care and protection due to economic or social factors beyond their command. Community control of all agencies charged to act as children’s advocates or protectors.

- Recognition of children’s right to be sexually active on their own terms and at their own pace.
- Governmental responsibility and allocation of resources at no cost for children with special problems such as AIDS, disabilities, homelessness, and drug or alcohol dependence.
- Implement educational programs to teach parents, teachers and childcare workers how to guide very young children to express themselves through non-sexist play.
- End poverty as a cause for giving children up for adoption. Stop adoption profiteering. Babies shouldn’t be brokered.
- The right of young people to organize on their own behalf.
- Stop police harassment and race-profiling of youth.

EDUCATION

Women are doubly discriminated against in education. First, we are denied equal opportunity in the free choice of fields of academic study as a result of cultural conditioning and closed doors. Second, our own history as a sex is ridiculed and/or ignored in the prevailing curricula.

WE DEMAND:

- Equal opportunity in all academic fields and in professional, service and industrial training schools. Equal funding for women’s and men’s sports. An end to race and sex bias in testing. Women and people of color should be represented on all school admissions committees.
- Elimination of stereotyping in educational materials and instruction. Diverse faculty, including women, people of color, and lesbians and gays, at all grade levels. Lesbians, gays, transgendered people, and leftists should have the

right to teach, free of harassment or discrimination.

- Free, quality, multilingual, multicultural education for all, from primary through college levels in an atmosphere of civil liberties and respect for dissidence and nonconformity. An end to the elitist, ivory-tower separation of universities from the communities of oppressed people.
- Access at all educational levels to curricula that represent the full spectrum of human endeavor, including the often omitted areas of creative and performing arts, languages, sex education and the true history of all the exploited and oppressed. End corporate control of curricula and research. The establishment and funding of women’s studies, ethnic studies, sexual minority studies, and labor studies departments with teachers qualified to explore and teach the history of oppression and resistance. Required courses in these fields regardless of academic major.
- Expose the cultural-religious myths that claim women’s “inferior nature” is scientifically based on biology, sociology, psychology and social anthropology. An international campaign against sexist ideology in the schools.
- Paid living expenses for all students. Free bilingual, multicultural childcare on every campus.
- Accelerated and transitional courses, and waivers on standard entrance qualifications, for women returning to school after years away from it.
- Community/teacher/parent/student control of the schools. Administrators and principals should carry out policies established by the community, not dictate to students and teachers.
- The right to privacy, free speech and association, and the right to organize for teachers and students at all grade levels. Outlaw corporal punishment in the schools.
- Full funding for literacy campaigns in both majority and minority languages. Guarantee every person the right to learn to read and write in the languages of their choice.

Fully paid study leave to acquire these skills.

- Raise the levels of teachers' salaries and school funding through taxing corporations.

POLITICS

Winning the right to vote was a progressive gain for women, but it has not given us political equality. Capitalist parties court women's votes either by championing the "virtues" of the nuclear family and traditional values, or by presenting themselves as advocates for women's rights and equality. But no capitalist parties can genuinely fight for or achieve full women's rights because they are all dedicated to a system that reaps huge profits from women's inferior status.

Women, people of color, sexual minorities and working people should support only socialist or anti-capitalist labor candidates and build a workingclass party to take independent political action in our own interests. Only such a party will enable us to break the confines of the bourgeois state and create in its stead a new, egalitarian, socialist society.

WE DEMAND:

- The right to equal participation in political life and all social, political and economic leadership functions.
- The democratic right for all oppressed groups within any organization to form caucuses.
- Responsible action in the interests of their sex by all women legislators.
- Equal access to the ballot, media time, and financial resources for minor parties.

PEOPLE OF COLOR, NATIONAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES AND INDIGENOUS NATIONS

The same system that oppresses women is responsible for the subjugation of people of color, indigenous people and ethnic minorities. We are all used to make profits for capitalism. The entire movement must learn that we *cannot* achieve

meaningful unity by pandering to the most privileged elements of the struggle or by allowing homophobia or anti-Semitism to divide us.

Women of color and national/ethnic minority women experience the most intense forms of oppression because they are discriminated against on three counts — their ethnicity, their sex and their class. Lesbians of color face homophobia as well. They embody and reflect the needs of all oppressed people. No one will achieve true equality until lesbians of color are free and equal.

The leadership role of women of color, indigenous women and national/ethnic minority women is decisive to the coming revolution. They have the most to gain and the least to lose from the destruction of the private property system. It is their seriousness and dedication, born of years of struggle against the racist and sexist ruling class, that will provide the energy and direction towards unity and eventual liberation.

WE DEMAND:

- An end to all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination: social, legal, political, cultural, linguistic, and economic. Equal participation for everyone in all aspects of society.
- Affirmative action in hiring, promotion and educational opportunities for all people of color and ethnic minorities, particularly women.
- Overturn all immigration laws which limit admission of people of color, discriminate against both undocumented workers and citizens of color, and pit native workers against immigrants — who are actually allies in the fight against the capitalists. Open all borders for free movement internationally.
- An end to both overt and indirect denial of voting rights to people of color, ethnic minorities and immigrants. Mandatory multilingual ballots, voting materials and campaign information.
- Immediate cessation of police brutality and racist harass-

ment, terrorism, and murder of people of color and ethnic minorities. Establish elected, community-controlled police review boards, independent of the police, with power to discipline and fire cops who harass, brutalize and murder people of color, youth, queers, workers and women. The police are the armed agents of the ruling class and are incapable of policing themselves.

- Self-determination for all oppressed and indigenous nations, including Native Americans, Australian Aborigines, Maoris, the Kanaks of New Caledonia, Kurds, Puerto Ricans, and Palestinians.
- An end to racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-Semitic violence and scapegoating.
- End all language discrimination. All state institutions must be fully multilingual.

SEXUAL MINORITIES

Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered people, and transvestites suffer extreme bias because their lives are a direct threat to the “sanctity” of the nuclear family. With the advent of the AIDS crisis, the hysterical scapegoating of gays has triggered a sharp rise in discrimination and violence aimed at all sexual minorities.

All oppressed people must embrace the demands of sexual minorities for total liberation in order for any of us to gain our freedom. Lesbians face the most intense forms of sexism and lesbians of color have the additional burden of racism. The life experience of surviving a brutally oppressive and hostile society has produced among lesbians a large number of independent, strong and capable women. In these women lies a vast potential for dedicated feminist leadership that can provide strength to the whole movement.

WE DEMAND:

- An end to the social, political, moral, legal and economic discrimination against lesbians and all sexual minorities.

Enactment of comprehensive legislation to outlaw discrimination against sexual minorities.

- An immediate halt to police harassment, brutality and murder of sexual minorities.
- The right of sexual minorities to care for and raise their children and to be adoptive or foster parents. No discrimination based on sexual orientation, marital status or race against adults who want to adopt children.
- Reversal of immigration laws which refuse entry to sexual minority persons or anyone who has or is suspected of having AIDS.
- An end to the vicious and destructive portrayal of sexual minorities by the media. The image of lesbians as sick, vicious man-haters is consistently used to divide the feminist movement. We denounce such lies and smear tactics.
- Equal access for sexual minorities and independent women to medical benefits, insurance, and paid leave for bereavement and major illnesses. Domestic partner laws that allow all people — gay *and* straight — to claim benefits for all self-defined family relationships. Protect the privacy rights of domestic partners.
- An end to anti-sodomy laws and all other laws that limit consenting sexual practices.

ELDER WOMEN

The plight of elder women in our society is an intensification of the discrimination and exploitation faced by all women. Self-righteous testimonials about the supposedly revered status of elder women cannot hide the fact that women over 65 are the most impoverished sector of society.

The hard work and poverty endured by young women results only in more poverty and social isolation when they grow old. The inadequate wages of working women yield correspondingly scanty Social Security, medical and retirement benefits, stranding them with increasing healthcare expenses

and the ever-rising cost of living.

What little social recognition is given women for their domestic and reproductive services is withdrawn after child-bearing age and they are coldly discarded by the rest of society as no longer useful. The cruel poverty and isolation suffered by older women are an insult to all women and a crucial component of our struggle for liberation.

Older women are a very important part of the women's movement. Their years of struggle for survival against unremitting oppression have produced a wisdom invaluable to younger women who are just becoming aware of the harsh reality of women's existence. The feminist movement was built by their hard work and dedication and is strengthened by their continued participation and leadership.

WE DEMAND:

- A guaranteed pension at livable union wage for all elders.
- Healthcare that is thorough, respectful, and caring. Free, well-staffed, multicultural, multilingual medical and home care. End dehumanizing custodial care for profit. Provision at no cost of all techniques, personal aid devices, exercise and therapy to promote quality of life. Free, accessible transportation. Nutritious, quality meals delivered to the home at no charge.
- The right to a useful and productive life regardless of age. An end to forced retirement and age discrimination in hiring. Jobs and training for elders who don't wish to retire. Seniority rights and health and safety rules to protect the elder worker.
- Free, quality, elder-controlled social and recreational resources.
- An end to violence and threats of violence against older women.
- An end to media stereotyping of elders — and older women in particular — as childlike, useless and dependent. An end to repressive sexual morality toward older women and men.

YOUNG WOMEN

Young women are doubly oppressed because of their sex and their age. They are prisoners of their families and their education. They are subjected to intense sex-role socialization which limits their abilities, restricts their opportunities and destroys their sense of self-worth. They are denied the basic right to determine the course of their lives. Their sex automatically marks them for oppression, and their youth renders them relatively defenseless against it.

Under capitalism, young women are objects used as their parents/owners see fit. Their struggle against the confines of the nuclear family — and the dynamic leadership they develop as a result — are essential to the liberation of all women.

WE DEMAND:

- The right of young women to develop physically, intellectually, socially, politically and sexually, free from sexist repression in their families, schools and other social institutions. An immediate halt to the intimidation and institutionalization of young women for their sexual activities and their rejection of the passive "feminine role."
- Establishment of collective homes where young people can live and grow with their peers and compatible adults. Legal recognition of young people's right to enter and leave a family or collective household.
- An end to the super-exploitation of youth as cheap labor. Jobs and training for young people, especially youths of color and young women who are doubly and triply discriminated against in the workplace. Equal wages and union protection for young people who choose to work. No sex-role stereotyping in training or employment opportunities.
- A halt to the exploitation and abuse of young women and children by the advertising and pornography industries.
- The right of young women to make their own reproductive decisions, including the right to abortion, and for social and economic support for teenage mothers. Quality edu-

cation and childcare for young mothers who wish to continue their schooling.

DISABLED WOMEN

Disabled people constitute a sizable minority. For example, one-quarter of the U.S. population aged 22 to 64 have some level of physical or mental disability.¹⁹ The three major creators of disabilities — war, unsafe working conditions, and poverty — are directly linked to capitalism. The disabled face discrimination and segregation in all facets of their lives.

Disabled women, in particular, are rendered invisible and socially stigmatized as deformed, helpless, and asexual. Although their sexuality is denied, they are also prime targets of sexual abuse, especially if they are mentally disabled or institutionalized.

Disabled women and men are super-exploited as workers. They are paid far less than other workers or used as free labor. The system forces the disabled into social isolation, thereby reinforcing their second-class status. More money is spent on dependence-oriented programs than on strategies to increase autonomy and self-sufficiency and to allow disabled people to be contributing members of society.

WE DEMAND:

- Complete integration of the disabled into society, including full legal rights and protection from discrimination. Full government and corporate funding to provide state-of-the-art technological aids to all people with disabilities.
- Make transportation, buildings and all public facilities accessible to disabled people. Free transportation.
- Free, quality, nationalized healthcare.
- Nondiscriminatory job training and employment. Affirmative action quotas for employing people with disabilities. Building and tool modifications for disabled people. Jobs at livable union wages. No exemption from the minimum wage for employers of the disabled. Safe and

healthy working conditions for all. Unionize the sweatshops where disabled people are often forced to work. Guaranteed income at union wages for all those who are unable to work.

- Equal education for the disabled, including modified facilities where required. Full funding for programs at all educational levels to teach students with learning disabilities.
- An end to social and media stereotypes which emphasize people's disabilities and ignore their abilities.
- Government funding to provide signing for the hearing impaired at all cultural, educational and political events.
- Training on disabled rights issues for those who work with the public. Eliminate government bureaucracy that hinders the disabled from receiving necessary assistance.

WOMEN AND POVERTY

Limited opportunities have forced many women, especially single mothers, to become dependent upon welfare for their economic survival. This is particularly the case for women of color who, because of racism and sexism, have fewer chances for education and decent paying jobs.

Welfare was fought for and won by the working class to protect its members from the permanent unemployment and poverty that are intrinsic to capitalism. This important gain has been distorted into a system that creates and perpetuates dependency, powerlessness and cynicism, alienating women from the work experiences that build strength and self-sufficiency. If women are ever to achieve equality, they must have training and economic independence.

Instead, even limited welfare benefits are denied to many. In Australia, for example, many single parents are pushed off welfare if suspected of forming a sexual relationship. In the U.S., a rapidly growing number of mothers and homeless people have no welfare benefits to sustain them. The epidemic of extreme poverty and homelessness in advanced capitalist countries is a searing indictment of the system.

WE DEMAND:

- Guaranteed income for all at livable union wage levels.
- Immediate cessation of forced work and “training” programs which use economic intimidation to coerce women to accept undesirable jobs at substandard wages. Such programs use welfare women as a cheap labor pool to break the union movement and produce super-profits for big business.
- Equal access to education and training programs in *all* occupations, not just stereotypical “women’s” fields.
- Fair grievance procedures with free legal support for all welfare recipients. An end to spying on welfare recipients.
- Free, 24-hour, quality childcare with transportation and three full daily meals provided to the children.
- Collectivize housework, cooking and child-rearing as *paid* jobs that are societal, not individual, responsibilities. As long as these socially necessary jobs remain the private responsibility of women in the home, the government should pay wages to those doing this work.
- Government subsidized, quality housing for the poor. Stop housing discrimination against welfare recipients. An end to dangerous and dehumanizing “warehousing” of the homeless in shelters. Nutritious food for all.

WOMEN IN PRISON

Prisons are institutions of social control and inhumane punishment rather than rehabilitation. The accused person’s race, sex, sexuality, political ideology and class often have more bearing on convictions and sentences than does evidence of guilt.

Women, in particular, are often incarcerated for “crimes” of economic desperation or for defending themselves against brutal husbands or boyfriends. While imprisoned, women are subjected to degrading living conditions and physical, psychological and sexual harassment.

WE DEMAND:

- The right to quality, free legal counsel. Stop racism and sexism in sentencing. Eliminate all forms of discrimination against prisoners and ex-prisoners.
- An end to the racist, anti-workingclass, anti-radical death penalty.
- Freedom for all political prisoners. Shut down special control units that use sensory deprivation and are especially employed against political prisoners.
- The right of prisoners to organize on their own behalf, with protection against retaliation.
- Quality healthcare and decent living conditions in prison. An end to medical experimentation and testing on prisoners. No discriminatory sentencing or treatment of prisoners with AIDS or who are HIV-positive. Free condoms and clean syringes for all prisoners.
- Job training and education while in prison, including training for non-traditional trades. An end to the use of prisoners as super-exploited cheap labor. Employment at union wages for prisoners.
- The right of inmates to retain custody of their children and to choose whether to have their children with them in prison. Adequate facilities for children to stay with their mothers. The right of all prisoners to have unmonitored and unlimited visits from friends, relatives and lovers, regardless of sexual orientation or marital status.
- An end to sexual harassment of all prisoners, lesbians and gay men in particular. An end to racist and sexist violence against prisoners. Stop strip searches and prison rapes.

LEGALIZATION OF PROSTITUTION

Prostitution is the inevitable corollary of bourgeois monogamy, middleclass morality and Puritanism. Given the establishment’s need to maintain the male-dominated, monogamous family — and the taboo on sex outside marriage — prostitution will continue to exist until relationships and moral

values are revolutionized.

Again, women are the victims. Lacking job training, skills and education, some women are forced to become prostitutes, a role in which they face overwhelming economic, legal and moral oppression. The illegality of their trade leaves them open to violence from customers, super-exploitation by their parasitic pimp bosses, and constant harassment and abuse by police and courts which treat them as the lowest of criminals.

While we work for an end to capitalism and its merchandising of sex — as prostitution or in any other form — we simultaneously demand protection for maligned and abused sex workers.

WE DEMAND:

- The immediate and unconditional legalization of prostitution. By “legalization,” we mean the complete *decriminalization* of prostitution, so that sex workers are not subject to any form of legal harassment, fines, prosecution or regulation. They should instead be defended under the law from violence and intimidation by pimps, cops and customers. The right of prostitutes to police protection.
- Integration of prostitutes into the working class, with basic labor safeguards and the right to unionize. The right of prostitutes to control their own earnings, free from the parasitism of pimps. A guaranteed minimum wage at union standards for prostitutes.
- Free medical care and checkups for prostitutes as they request them.
- The right of prostitutes to have custody of their children.
- End the causes of prostitution: poverty, racism and sexism. Free job training and placement for women who choose to leave prostitution for another profession.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As women, we experience violence every day of our lives. Our minds and our bodies are continually subjected to the ar-

bitrary and often ruthless whims of the men who hold power over us — our bosses, husbands, fathers, co-workers, cops, and government officials.

Rape is an extension of male control, a form of terrorism to keep us in our “place.” Any woman is fair game to any rapist. When we are raped and protest to the authorities, we are accused of having “asked for it.” The insensitive treatment of sexual assault victims by the police, the medical profession, and the courts stems from that same rapist mentality — hidden behind a smoke screen of officialdom and sanctioned by the state.

As an extreme expression of the prevailing “blame-the-victim” attitude, women — especially women of color — who successfully defend themselves against violence are often prosecuted and imprisoned.

Domestic violence has reached epidemic proportions that cut across all class and race lines. Often, police treat marital assault as simply a “spat,” leaving a woman undefended against attacks that can escalate to murder. Economics and the judicial system frequently force a battered wife to return to a deadly situation.

The fact is, the patriarchy *depends* upon the violent and inhumane exploitation of women to maintain dominance. We can free ourselves from violence only by joining together, seizing the power, and building a society free of psychological and physical brutality.

WE DEMAND:

- The right to live freely without fear of sexual insult or attack. The legal right to self-defense against all forms of sexual violence. No sexual harassment on the job.
- Full police and legal protection for victims of rape and domestic violence. Immediate investigation of all reported crimes against women. Balance the legal assumption that the attacker is innocent until proven guilty with a first priority commitment to protect the victim from further abuse

or injury.

- Prosecution of all rapists with the burden of proof placed in the hands of the authorities, not on the victims. Outlaw marital rape. The right of victims of violent crimes to direct their own legal cases if they so choose.
- Free, sympathetic healthcare for all sexual assault victims. Stop subjecting assault victims to self-righteous moral condemnation from a society that created the problem in the first place.
- State-funded shelters for women fleeing domestic violence. Job training and placement for battered women.
- Compensation of rape/violence survivors for lost income, psychiatric counseling, medical care and any other expenses resulting from an attack.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Capitalist globalization is destroying the earth. Living under the reign of a class willing to jeopardize our lives and future generations for quick cash, we are bombarded with chemicals in our food, water and air, and poisons at our job sites, in our homes, and in our communities. Women suffer the worst job conditions, and our bodies may also have special susceptibilities to certain environmental poisons.

Women have led the fight against pesticides, toxic and nuclear wastes, deforestation, and other forms of environmental destruction. Technology in the hands of workers can be used for human progress, but under the ruling class it is used against us.

WE DEMAND:

- Funding and education to preserve and protect the environment and recycle or restore natural resources.
- Open the books of the energy moguls. Nationalize the energy and petrochemical industries under workers' control. Develop safe and abundant energy forms that preserve and improve the global standard of living.

- Immediate shut down of all nuclear plants. Stop the building of nuclear weapons. End dumping of nuclear pollutants and implement community-supervised, safe disposal of existing radioactive waste. Corporations must take full responsibility for re-training and re-employing workers in the nuclear industry.
- Rid the environment and the workplace of murderous pesticides, poisons and hazardous refuse. Full corporate liability for the cost to clean up waste dumps and repair damage to the environment — instead of using workers' tax dollars to clean up the mess.
- An end to all strip mining, especially mining of cancer-causing uranium. An end to the theft of indigenous people's lands for mineral deposits or any other resources.
- Stringently enforced safety and health standards for all workers, particularly those who clean up environmental disasters.
- An end to corporate dumping of garbage and the transfer of hazardous industries to poor communities, Native reservations, and Third World countries. Stringent international standards to stop the industries of imperialist nations from polluting other countries.
- For humane treatment of animals and full protection of endangered species and habitats, including rain forests, tundra and oceans. The survival of animal and plant life is necessary for human progress and should not be pitted against our own well-being.

MEDIA AND CULTURE

Radio, television, video games, the press, and movies all spew out virulent prejudice against women. Women are portrayed as vacuous, frivolous, inept fools, manipulating seductresses, or simple-minded sex objects who love to be violently abused. We are used to sell anything and everything with our "sex appeal."

Male chauvinism is ingrained in contemporary culture.

Most men accept and live by it automatically, as do many women despite their obvious confusion, frustration and misery. At the same time that sexist stereotypes proliferate, real information about our lives is often censored and kept from us.

WE DEMAND:

- End the imposition on the public of sick, distorted and de-meaning media images of women and people of color. Cease perpetuating a standard of skinny, slinky white beauty which blatantly discriminates against women of other body types and colors.
- Stop advertisers from using women and children as sexual sales gimmicks. End the practice of employing images of violence against women as attention-grabbers for products. No more advertising aimed at creating consumerist mentality in children and promoting products harmful to their health or their attitudes about others.
- Provide serious media coverage of the struggle for women's rights and the movements of all oppressed people. An end to censorship of our history and information about women's issues. Free media access for all political viewpoints. Programming that reflects the full diversity of human experience and lifestyles, including people of color and sexual minorities. Abolish stereotypical images of all kinds in the media.
- Eliminate the violent exploitation of women and children by the multi-billion dollar international pornography industry.

THE MILITARY AND THE DRAFT

We oppose a compulsory draft which forces working people to defend imperialism and kill their class sisters and brothers. But we also protest many countries' sexist exclusion of women from the draft.

Women are denied opportunities for military training and suffer sex role stereotyping and economic discrimination in the armed forces. We understand the necessity for women

and other oppressed people to learn military skills for our own self-defense.

WE DEMAND:

- No draft. Not one human life nor any public funds for imperialist war. Where conscription does exist, no sexist exclusion of women from draft registration or the draft.
- An end to bigotry and job discrimination against women, people of color, sexual minorities, and mothers in the military.
- The right of all military personnel to union wages and to organize unions. Training programs and job placement following military service.
- Free, voluntary military training for all.
- Withdrawal of imperialist troops and advisors around the world. Eliminate the military budget and put the money into social services.
- No United States intervention in other countries. Abolish the U.S.-sponsored School of the Americas which trains rightwing death squads and armies on how to crush democracy and popular revolt. Full support to anti-imperialist struggles and the right of all nations to self-determination.

THE RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

We support the right of oppressed people everywhere to defend themselves against violence. Whether the danger is posed by rightwing death squads, repressive police, out-of-control husbands, white supremacists, racist thugs, gay bashers, Nazis or police states, we believe organized community self-defense is a matter of survival and common sense.

We do not advocate "turn-the-other-cheek" martyrdom to people of color under racist assault or to anti-Nazi activists attacked by fascist thugs. We do not counsel *campesinos* in Central America to hand over their weapons to the repressive states that have slaughtered so many of their number. We

support women who defend themselves and their children against rape or assault, sexual minorities who organize defense squads against gay bashers, and workers who protect their picket lines against anti-union scabs.

The question of nonviolence is a tactical issue, not an absolute principle. We do not advocate reckless adventurism or provoke clashes with the cops, Nazis or scabs when there is little to be gained by physical confrontation.

WE DEMAND:

- Legal recognition of oppressed people's right to self-defense, including community-organized mobilization against police brutality, racist and Nazi assaults, attacks on abortion clinics, queer-bashing, strikebreaking raids, and other forms of repressive violence or terrorism.

FOR A UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE RIGHT WING AND FASCISM

The economic crisis of capitalism emboldens the conservative right wing and fascists. Their aim is to preserve profits, whatever the cost. To avoid socialist revolution, the system will resort to full-blown fascism, with its genocidal racism, anti-Semitism, sexism and homophobia. Once in power, fascism crushes all unions and workingclass community organizations and obliterates democratic rights for all the oppressed.

The feminist movement is in the forefront of the battle with the ultra-right, particularly over abortion rights. Feminism is the subject of virulent attacks because it challenges the supremacy of the nuclear family. Conversely, women have the capacity to link every targeted movement into a powerful united front against fascism and the right wing.

A united front by definition has a leadership and program that represent the interests of the working class. When petty-bourgeois or bourgeois organizations hold leadership, a united front is undermined and turned into its opposite: an

opportunist and class collaborationist "people's front." People's fronts act to preserve the status quo. They always acquiesce to the ruling class — the very class which finances and backs the reactionaries.

A movement to defeat fascism has no place for sectarianism, sexism and bigotry. United fronts must be broad-based organizations that reach beyond the organized Left to also include unions, people of color, Jews, feminists, civil libertarians, and sexual minorities.

WE DEMAND:

- Democratically run united front organizations in which members are the decision-makers. Each participating organization retains its own program and agrees to work collaboratively on specific actions against the reactionaries.
- No reliance on the police to defend us from fascists. Self-defense against Nazis and the Klan. Confront the fascists in some fashion with specific tactics determined by the relationship of forces and the degree of self-discipline within our ranks. Do not lead people into adventurist, losing battles.
- Solidarity in action against the reactionaries. An injury to one is an injury to all.



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