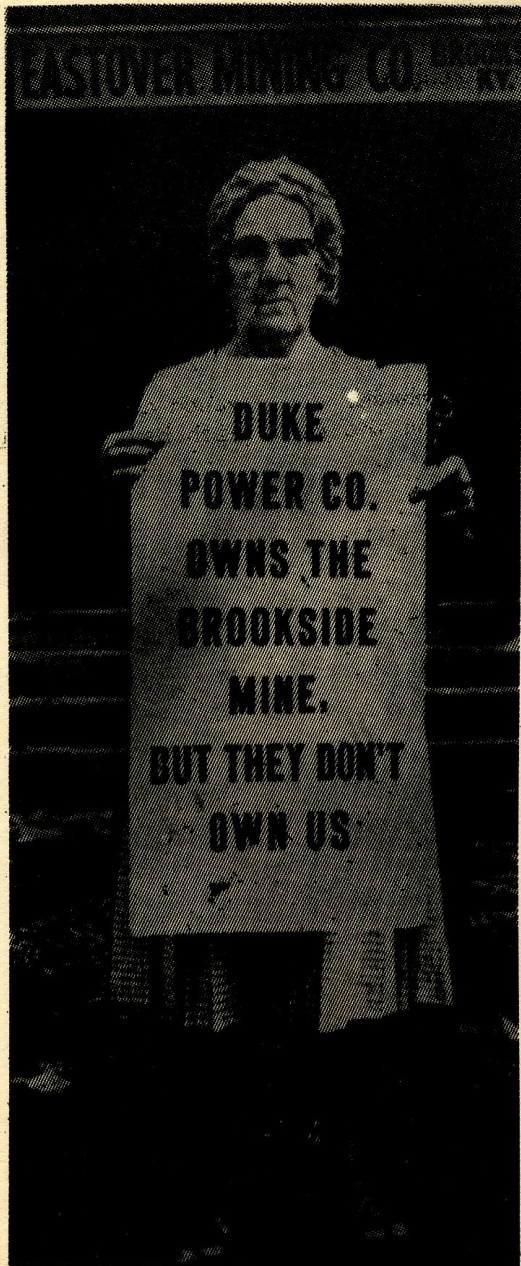


I.S. Women's Bulletin

May 1977



You take a scab
and you kill it,
and you put it in a skillet,
and fry it up golden brown.
That's union cooking,
and it's mighty fine....

Brookside Women's Club song

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Women's Commission

Women's Coverage in Workers Power

Local Caucus Reports

Atlanta

Bay Area

Cleveland

New York/New Jersey

Detroit

Pittsburgh

Material For Educational Discussion on Independent Organization of Women

women's Liberation-Lynn Jones

Speech by Clara Zetkin (see below)

Brookside Women's Club

Outline for Discussion

Industrial Fraction Reports

UAW

Teamsters

Steel

Note: I messed up when laying out the Zetkin speech. The speech actually begins on the second page and then continues on the page which has the title running sideways. Sorry about that. Margaret

April 29, 1977

Update From Women's Commission

A report from the Women's Commission was included in the Bulletin sent out two weeks ago. This is an update and an explanation of some of the contents of this Bulletin.

Education on the Independent Organization of Women

One of the major sections of this Bulletin is material to be used for the mandated discussion on Independent Organization of Women. We want to explain how we intend this material to be used and how we hope the discussion will take place in each caucus and branch. First, we want to emphasize that we believe that this is an important discussion for every branch. We have not held the discussion for several years, and have recruited women in each branch since then. Even women who are particularly interested in women's issues have not heard the theoretical and historical bases for our position in support of the independent organization of women, within the class and within the party. It is clear that IS activity of the past couple of years indicates that at best we have not acted on our position, or at worst that many of our members do not understand it. It is important that men be part of this education. We propose that the discussion take place first in the caucus where it be divided into two sessions so that it can be more thorough, and then be given as a one session branch educational which hopefully will include contacts as well as members.

In this Bulletin you will find an outline of what we feel should be covered in this discussion. This outline is fairly detailed and intended to be an aid for the women who actually give the presentations. The outline also includes suggested readings. We have also included three pieces for all women to read as part of the education. The Lynn Jones document is intended to be an overview of the whole topic. The Clara Zetkin piece is intended to be a historical document on the independent organization of women. The articles on the Brookside Women's Club are a particularly colorful example of women organizing and transforming themselves in struggle. We hope that the discussions will draw from many more concrete examples; struggles from your area, examples from WP articles, examples from rank and file papers, or maybe even examples from movies like Salt of the Earth, etc which might be shown as part of the education.

Study Groups on Black Women

We mentioned the beginnings of study groups in the last report. We find ourselves having difficulty coming up with outlines and suggested readings for the groups since we have so little background and experience in this area. As a result, several Commission members will actually begin the group in Detroit including other members, Red Tiders, and contacts, and as we move ahead we will develop the outlines for use in other areas. Those caucuses which are interested in beginning such groups will probably receive materials within the next month or two.

Womens Council

We originally had intended the first women's council meeting to be held in June. But we are now proposing that it be postponed until late August after the Workers' Conference. The main reason for postponing the meeting is that we want the meeting to be a working meeting, where real decisions are made based on the women's work going on, with the intention of moving this work ahead. We are still in the process of beginning work in this area. Most of the industrial fractions are only now beginning to develop perspectives for their women's work. We are still trying to develop campaigns which

can draw other women into external work, but this is proving to be extremely difficult. By August we expect to have real work to evaluate. We expect that this work will indicate to us where our weaknesses lie, what specific kinds of materials we need to develop for national use, etc.

Union Maids

We are planning to buy a copy of Union Maids. The film costs \$425 which is very high. The Commission will be coming up with suggestions for how caucuses can use it to educate, recruit, develop a periphery, etc. We expect that it will be used by caucuses, individuals, the RT, rank and file groups, etc. When we actually receive it we will let people know and send out further suggestions. Incidentally, we will be charging a nominal fee (very nominal) so that we can raise enough money to pay for this film and then go on to purchase others. So start thinking of ways to use it in your area.

In sisterhood,

Margaret, for the Women's Commission

WORKERS' POWER WOMEN'S COVERAGE

Everyone is glad to see women's coverage in the paper again. But it needs to be improved. The main problem is that too much of it is coming from Detroit. Comrades in other cities have to start writing for the paper, which is part of making it useful for our work.

The Commission recommends that the convenor of each women's caucus take the responsibility for coverage in her branch. This does not mean that one comrade should write all the coverage herself. Rather, the convenor will be responsible for organizing the coverage.

What do we want covered?

1. Obviously, events that we participate in. Demonstrations, women's caucus meetings, and so on. Take a roll of film, write a story, and send it in. (Use express mail if needed to get it in by Monday or Tuesday.) We have received some of this type of coverage (Gary, Bay Area, Pitts most notably), but it's not consistent.

2. Comrades in industry should be thinking about more creative ways to use the paper. Even if you do not have time to do an article, suggest it to me or your caucus convenor. This might be an interview with a co-worker that would illustrate some of the problems women face on the job--or some of the victories that women win. Or take up an issue that is of importance to women you are working with. Here is an example of an excellent and creative idea that Candy had: a question and answer article dealing with the things men bring up about maternity benefits. (Like, won't women just stay home and have babies, paid for by the company) This should be appearing in the paper soon.

3. Convenors should watch their local papers for women's news. Sometimes articles can be written purely from clippings, sometimes it takes more leg work. For example, I wrote an article from clippings about a court decision in Michigan that would require birth control clinics to inform the parents of minors before giving out birth control. Another article I wrote about maternity benefits for teachers in Michigan I first noticed in the Detroit Free Press, but interviewed the teacher involved myself. Not everyone has the time for this kind of writing, but it can be useful to your work--you can use your status as WP reporter to meet people.

Convenors should make it a practice to send in clippings to the center, either as suggestions for articles, or just to broaden our knowledge.

4. Reviews. Comrades should start using the reviews page to discuss women's issues. Candy (again) wrote a review of the Hite Report, for example. Someone should do a review of "All That Glitters" in a city where it has started. The WP staff cannot read everything. Use the letters page, too, to get smaller incidents into the paper and to encourage contacts to use the paper.

Other ideas we've had for women's coverage:

1. A four-part series on our basic women's liberation politics will begin in a month or so. It will be run under the logo: Socialist Women Talk About Women's Liberation (or something). Comrades should think about using this series either as a class with new members, or with contacts.

2. Carolyn (Cleve) will be in charge of historical articles on revolutionary women and women's struggles.

3. I want to start doing some research about other things that affect women--like lead poisoning.

4. We are looking for someone who would be interested in researching the right-wing women's movement--what it does, who pays for it, why it is growing. If you are interested in doing this, give me a call. (I have some articles to get you started).

Elissa Clarke

The Atlanta women's caucus now has four members. Sarah, the convenor, is unemployed, Sally is working as a clerk in a hardware store, Pam works at a public hospital organized by AFSCME, and Lynne is unemployed, although she has prospects of getting a job with a city-funded gardening project which would be headquartered at the Atlanta SCLC where she used to work.

No one in Atlanta has yet gotten a priority job and our branch right now is organized as a Southern Africa campaign branch. Most of the women in our periphery we have met through our S. Africa work - film showings and picket lines against South African sardines. We now face the task of making them contacts of the IS as well as of the SALC.

Bernadette - from S. Africa, has been in the U.S. several years, is now a substitute teacher. She works with us in the SALC when a particular activity interests her, and spoke for us on I.W.D. about Women under Apartheid.

Edwina - Bernadette's sister. She has just had a baby and so has been less active.

Gail - a student at the Atlanta Street Academy, an alternative education school.

She has turned out to our sardine pickets and is working on the ZANU shoe campaign.

Reba - Gail's aunt. She has come to a sardine picket line.

Sharon - a journalism student at Atlanta University who has come to several SALC activities and sometimes brings her friends. She will be gone for the summer.

Matilda - a high school teacher who used to work for SCLC. She came to our IWD dinner but has not come to anything since.

Willie - used to work in a grocery store, now unemployed. She came to our IWD dinner but we haven't been able to get her involved in SALC yet. She may be out of town for the summer.

Betty - a nurse about 26 years old who works at Pam's hospital. She is part of the rank and file group there, seems quite interested in SALC but has been unable to get actively involved so far due to work schedules.

These women are all black. They have all seen WP but do not know too much about the IS yet. The women's caucus has had some difficulty trying to think of programs to invite them to which can bridge the gap between the South Africa work and the rest of IS politics. We've decided our next event will be a film, as this will probably be more attractive than a talk. We're trying to get Salt of the Earth, which we thought would be good because it ties racism and sexism in with workers' struggles. We will have a living room showing sometime in May.

The branch is also holding frequent social events such as picnics and parties as a means of getting to know our contacts better and talking to them about politics. Our contacts are almost all new, so we are still finding out which ones may be seriously interested and recruitable.

The branch began WP sales in the community last week, and we met several women this way who may become contacts.

Most of the work of the women in the branch has been building the Southern Africa campaign. Lynne, who used to be on the SCLC staff, still works with them on some activities unrelated to the S. Af. work. Her ties with the SCLC have been very helpful to us in getting to know Atlanta city politics and building support for the SALC.

Pam continues to be active in her AFSCME local and in the small rank and file group she helped start. The problem with the group is that it is dominated by women from an independent left group who have been in the hospital a long time and who tend to block all our proposals for moving the group forward. For instance, they refuse to put out a rank and file newsletter of any sort. The group is small and consists mostly of white radicals in a hospital in which the large majority of employees are black. Their current project is a petition protesting the hospital's new policy of charging patients in advance in order to save money. This policy

Atlanta, cont.

means that many patients will be turned away and will have no where to go to get medical treatment. The petition reveals where some of the hospital's budget is spent - on limousines and magazine subscriptions for the board of directors.

Our perspective for the work at this time is for Pam to concentrate less on trying to make the rank and file group real, and instead to try to bring the people she meets to the SALC. This is what we are trying with Betty, the nurse mentioned above. This seems the best way for Pam to build her credibility and base, particularly since there has been some race-baiting of the women in the rank and file group. People who become involved in the South Africa work may later be willing to work with us on trade union issues.

We have found no local organization in Atlanta working on the maternity benefits issue. There are also no Georgia laws relating to maternity benefits, so the only ones in effect are the federal laws.

We also checked to see if there were any abortion rights groups and found GARAL (Georgia Abortion Rights Action League) the local affiliate of NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League). They are currently involved in a letter-writing campaign to the legislature, but in the past have done some picketing at the Catholic Arch Diocese and the Federal Bldg. on the issue of medicaid payments for abortion. The group consists mostly of health - care professionals. We are now on their mailing list and will keep in touch with any future developments. According to GARAL, the Right to Life movement is pretty weak in Atlanta.

The Atlanta women's caucus commends the women's commission for the vast improvement in women's coverage in Workers' Power. We are keeping a scrapbook, of WP articles and pictures about women to show our contacts - an idea we got from a women's caucus bulletin some time ago. The women we have shown it to like it alot.

BAY AREA WOMEN'S CAUCUS REPORT

1. External Activities

The success of the February women's conference (see evaluation) has shown us that women in the area are receptive to our politics. Therefore, for the next month or for however long it takes, we will be gathering information on various women-related issues and activities in the Bay Area. We hope to get involved in some of these external activities (outlined below) and meet and hopefully recruit other political women.

UPS Demonstration

On April 30th, UPS will be having an 'open house' at the San Bruno Hub for the public (mostly employers who use UPS). This event marks the first public relations effort by the Big Brown Machine. Local groups, including TDU, Union WAGE, Cannery Workers Committee, Committee to Reform Local 70, and perhaps Clerks County (SEIU), will be staging a picket line demonstration in front of the hub. Inside, people will be asking embarrassing questions of UPS officials. The demands of the demonstration are:

1. No discrimination in hiring
2. No harassment on the job
3. No forced overtime
4. Stop contract violations

The women's caucus will participate in the demonstration; we will be calling women we have met and get them to participate through Union WAGE. In addition, a woman reporter and photographer will cover the event for WP.

Maternity and Pregnancy Disability Demands in Contracts

In the aftermath of the women's conference, we will be doing some investigation into local contract campaigns about maternity and pregnancy disability demands. Some of this investigation will involve looking into the National Coalition to End Discrimination Against Pregnant Women and the Coalition for Medical Rights of Women. With Union WAGE, we are currently passing around a UE petition supporting new legislation to reverse the recent Supreme Court decision.

Union WAGE

Under new leadership, Union WAGE has been moving away from their concept of dual unionism. Both San Francisco and East Bay WAGE chapters are in the process of being reactivated. They have started a resource center for the women's community and have begun to assist with various local struggles. We want to maintain friendly and working relationships with the WAGE chapters. Union WAGE is a perfect way to bring up women's issues in our work. For example, when workers at a local courier service demanded the right to ten-minute breaks during the workday, WAGE participated in a dual picket line with TDU; when WAGE requested a \$10 donation from supporters, TDU women took the opportunity to talk about the need for an independent working women's organization. TDU voted to donate the money. We will be attending WAGE meetings now and then to keep in touch with activities and WAGE women.

Bakke Coalition Work

In 1976, the California Supreme Court ruled that Alan Bakke, a 34 year old white engineer, had been discriminated against when he was denied admission to the University of California, Davis Medical School in 1973 and 1974. Bakke had contended that students less qualified than himself were admitted under a special admissions program which allows 16 out of 100 openings to go for students from "disadvantaged" backgrounds (i.e., minorities). The University of California Regents have appealed the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court which will hear the case in Fall 1977. If this decision is upheld, it will have the following implications:

1. Special admissions programs could be dismantled nationwide.
2. "Reverse racial discrimination" would be justified as a legal concept
3. Affirmative action and other programs designed to increase minority access to jobs and education would be challenged. Similarly, affirmative action for women would be challenged.

Groups in the Bay Area have joined to form a coalition to fight the Bakke Decision nationally. On April 23-24, a Western Regional Conference by the coalition will be held in Berkeley. We hope to attend this conference, and later become involved in the coalition. In conjunction with WAGE, we want to emphasize how the Bakke Decision will affect women. Already in California, we have seen the influence of the Bakke Decision on the hiring of women into various non-traditional jobs. For instance, recently, the California Supreme Court ruled that the State Department of Corrections could not give special preference to hiring minority or women guards and other personnel. The court used its own decision on Bakke as a precedent.

2. Internal Activities

Educationals

Women have recently expressed the desire to move on from the basic topics of the importance of women organizing independently etc. to others. Some ideas for topics:

a. Educationals on women

Black Women -- the problems of women's liberation and black women
Currents in Feminist Thought

Being a Political Woman -- Integrating the personal and political

b. Other educationals

Religion and Marxism

Violence -- When to Use It

Armed violence vs. economic power

Terrorist violence -- our position

Violence against women -- self-defence movement from feminist point of view

Educationals will be held in the evening with dessert and coffee. Our aim will be to politically educate and bring out periphery closer as well as to educate ourselves. Women in the caucus have taken on topics to research for these educationals.

Women's Caucus Steering Committee

A steering committee of three women is currently functioning as the exec of the women's caucus. The committee will meet twice a month, the caucus once a month.

In general, there is a good spirit in our caucus meetings. When we were planning the conference, we had political discussions in the caucus on topics which were to be raised at the conference. Women felt good about these discussions which enabled them to prepare and develop politics in a supportive group. This kind of discussion and development will be one of the main focuses of our future caucus meetings.

CLEVELAND WOMEN'S CAUCUS REPORT

The Cleveland women's caucus has been inactive since early in the faction fight. We lost four of our seven women members, including our caucus convenor. Since Carole has been heavily involved in TDU and RF work, and Sandy is x RF organizer, we couldn't pull things together during the fight or in the month after the Convention. But we're now getting reinforcements from other branches, and things are beginning to move again. Mary has just moved here and is beginning to function as Women's Caucus convenor. She and Carolyn will concentrate on rebuilding the caucus, consolidating our woman periphery, and maintaining contact with the Women's Commission and WP.

We have a fair number of women contacts around us, though some of them are long snots: contacts from our IBF work and USW work, wives of friends of male IS members, RF members (mostly white), relatives and friends of black RF members. The biggest problem is that there is only one industrialized female IS member (in phone). So it will be hard to relate our women's work to external arenas for some time to come. We need to work hard on recruiting the few women around us who are in Steel or IBT.

We are beginning to plan for a women's dinner, to be held in the next couple of weeks. It will be informal, designed to get our scattered contacts together, with a short talk about reasons for having a women's caucus and discussion of future activities. We have to find ways of focusing activities to bring together our mixed groups of contacts and some activities to appeal to specific groups of them. We also have to begin doing consistent individual contact work--visiting and making sure women get WP.

The RF Women's Caucus is holding its first dinner meeting on Saturday, April 30. There are now 5 women members and about 10 contacts. The dinner will be mostly social, designed to get black and white RF'ers and contacts to mix. It's also a first step in getting women, especially the black women, to see that they have an important role in the Red Tide. The discussion will be on sexism and will focus on problems that affect young women, especially parents and relationships with men. The caucus will also talk about how to deal with sexism in the Red Tide itself. RF women from Detroit and the IS Women's Commissioner will be thereto give some help coming out of their own RF Women's Caucus discussions. Most of the Cleveland RF women and contacts are excited about the meeting.

We have n't been able to discover any local organizing going on around the maternity benefits issue. NOW seems to be counting on legislative lobbying in Washington rather than on nationwide organizing.

Ohio laws covering pregnant workers (post supreme court ruling in Gilbert case): EEOC and Ohio Civil Rights Commission will file charges and pregnant workers are protected in the event of --

- 1) Refusals to hire, train, assign or promote pregnant women or women of childbearing age;
- 2) Mandatory leaves for predetermined time periods (e.g. the phone co. used to stipulate a 6-month leave and when it had to begin);
- 3) Dismissals of pregnant workers;
- 4) Denials of re-employment rights following a leave of absence for pregnancy;
- 5) Denials of unemployment benefits for pregnant workers;
- 6) Denials of seniority or longevity credits to women who have worked less than a stated time;
- 8) Denial of disability or medical benefits for illness or disability unrelated to pregnancy or childbirth, whether or not they occur during pregnancy, childbirth, recovery from childbirth or the period of leave for maternity.

New York - New Jersey Caucus

Our women's caucus has met altogether only once since the convention, but our members are busy with both branch and external work.

On Sunday, March 20, the women in the New York-New Jersey area caucus held a brunch for Sheila A. and her new baby, Rebecca Judith. We presented the baby with a new car seat, and the new mother with bagels, cheese and coffee. We also promised, now that baby schedules have to be taken into consideration and for similar reasons, to hold a discussion on The Family and the I.S. sometime soon.

Within the district, members are involved primarily in Southern Africa work and UPS (teacher work is temporarily at a halt). New York 1 (CWA) has just recruited 7 new members who live in the South Bronx. Unfortunately, none of these new members are women, but several of men have wives or girlfriends that have come to our study groups, a recent party, and will probably come to our Mayday picnic. We realize we need a perspective on how to relate to these women, who seem to be relatively unpolitical, but we are not yet sure how to go about building relationships with them. The feeling of Ilene (S. Africa fraction convener) is that a study group such as Women under Apartheid, or even a dinner discussion series would be premature at this time. Suggestions from women in other branches would be very appreciated.

Three of our members are also working on projects relating to women, though not directly as IS or women's caucus work. We thought we would mention them in this report for information purposes.

Kathy, the newest member of NY 2, is a co-coordinator of a lesbian mothers defense fund. This is a counseling service for lesbian mothers who are being challenged about keeping their children. The project focuses on posing alternatives--how to get lawyers, what are past legal precedents, how not to be sold out by lawyers, even if radical or feminist, who may be well-intentioned, but are not knowledgeable or at ease with specifically lesbian custody cases.

Florence will be part of a panel discussion on Women and the UAW at the annual New York URPE History Conference on April 30. (URPE is the Union of Radical Political Economics). Presentations will include material on the women's auxiliaries during the 1930's sitdowns; the company and union discrimination and layoffs that threw women out of autowork in 1945; and the current situations in rank-and-file work, superseniority, Fremont, etc.

A third New Yorker, Nancy, is involved in a study on battered wives. There is a new shelter for battered wives and their children that has just opened in Brooklyn, and Nancy and some colleagues are trying to raise funds to study who gets battered and what can be done about it.

For the next few months, we hope to get to know the new members in the district better, and to involve their friends and family around Southern Africa and other IS and women's caucus activities. Hopefully, by the next Women's Bulletin, we will have more concrete perspectives for the Women's Caucus as a whole.

submitted by Florence D.

DETROIT WOMEN'S CAUCUS REPORT

BASIC EDUCATION SERIES

In Detroit, as in most of our branches, we have women with ~~xx~~ different levels of understanding of our politics on women's oppression and liberation. The women who we recruited after the early 70's never got the basic education which most of us learned during the women's movement. The Red Tide women who are Red Tide cadre, and the ones who had to ~~xxxx~~ begin the Women's caucus in the Red Tide had not gotten this education either. To take care of this problem we had a four part class series for IS women and Red Tide women cadre.

The four topics covered were: The Nuclear Family, Women as Workers, Independent Organization of Women, and the Nature of Oppression of Black Women (this last class was a good introductory class and provides a good basis for us beginning a study group on the topic of black ~~xx~~ women.) The series were very successful and everyone was sorry when they were over. They moved the development of women in the district ahead.

Several things made the series successful. First, we did not try to make the series into a whole caucus affair. That meant we were not trying to meet the interests and needs of the women in the whole district. The classes were an excellent mix of theory and concrete experience of women. The talks were about 20 minutes long and in each case they were carefully planned to cover the important theoretical points in an interesting way, bringing in the life experiences of the women taking the class. The task of giving the classes was divided among several IS women. Elissa coordinated the series and gave the presentation on the nuclear family and part of the presentation on black women. She was present at all the classes ~~xx~~ to provide continuity and make the important relationships between the ~~xx~~ topics. Margaret and Val gave the other presentations.

Several good things are resulting from the series. Elissa is using the classes as the basis for an educational series for Workers' Power on our politics of women. The Red Tide cadre who took the class are now giving the classes in the Red Tide women's caucus followed by educationals in the Red Tide meetings.

STUDY GROUP ON BLACK WOMEN

We are going to start a study group on black women. The study group will be made up of IS women, Red Tide women and women contacts. Once again this will be handled as a ~~xx~~ sub-group of the Caucus open to interested women. After a while we will be ready to give educationals to the whole caucus. We will begin by discussing various questions of Black women under slavery, the Black family, (How it survived slavery and how it exists now). We are going to be using theoretical ~~xxx~~ books, biographies, records, magazine articles and a variety of other materials in the group. The Women's Commission intends this group to be a testing ground, and intends to encourage other caucuses to begin similar groups based on our experience.

WOMEN'S CAUCUS MEETING

We held a ~~xxxx~~ post-convention dinner meeting of the Detroit women's caucus on the weekend of the first CC. Through the faction fight period we had learned that many people were beginning to meet and work with women in their political

more---

detroit report/2

work. The purpose of the meeting was to find out who these women were, and what assistance comrades needed to make them into contacts and bring ~~xxx~~ contacts closer. Anne of IBT women's group wanted more District wide events to bring the TDU women to. Red Tide women reported they had recently formed a women's caucus and are fighting sexism within the RT. Two atuo women are coming in contact with women now, one with a possible women's caucus, the other with an already formed women's caucus but it is in a slate-formation headed by a militant who is expected to go pro-administration. These "contacts"xx are too tentative to make plans for yet. The community work is still too new to have real contacts yet either. But over all we are beginning to meet women. We may start dinner discussions again, only this time only selected people would come. When everyone has to attend in a district this size, it is impossible to do.

MOTHERS DAY

The Detroit district has begun a series of informal "socialist ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ discussions" on alternate Sunday nites. People bring wine etc and a presentation is given on a hot topic. The first one was "polics and Religion" a big success. The third one will be sponsored by the women's caucus and will be on "Child-raising Under Capitalism". It will be held in observnace of Mothers Day but not on Mothers day. We will have 3 presenters: A teazcher, and two parents (mothers), one on a more specific topic of children at home, discipline t etc, and the other more general, how capitalism makes it hard to raise kids. Men will be invited.

Report from Pittsburgh

Research on Maternity - In Pa. pregnant workers

Under this act, employers are required to treat pregnant workers as they would any other temporary disability. However, an employer has recently appealed this ruling on pregnancy with the court. Fighting this appeal along with the Pa. Commission on Women, is CLUW, NOW, AIA-CEO Women's Rights Committee and ACLU, among others. The Pa. Women's Commission seems very active - right after the Supreme Court decision, it organized a meeting of 43 national women's groups which resulted in the Coalition to End Discrimination Against Pregnant Workers. This group is pushing for federal legislation under Title VII to prohibit discrimination because of pregnancy. Right now, nothing else is being initiated locally as far as we know.

Abortion- ACLU here and nationally is working on the Reproductive Freedom Project which is an attack on the Hyde amendment. ACLU tells us that amendment would carry here since Pa has a Catholic legislature. There have been constant attempts to get such legislation in Pa. No word on other group's activity yet.

Other items of interest - there is a short, free film called "Why Not a Woman?" that shows women in non-traditional jobs - it's been shown on TV here to push for hiring women in better jobs. It could be used along with a feature film by the women's caucuses. Try your library or write PA. Commission for Women, 512 Finance Bldg., Harrisburg, Pa. 17128.

\$5 million is being used to sponsor women's conferences in every state this year so any caucus has time to participate or at least get info on women's activities that may come out of it, contact your state women's commission.

Caucus Members - Rita is a teamster, recently elected steward, is getting well known in her local, the largest in the city. She has a suit against her company for discrimination. She is in the process of deciding whether to take the case - if it is refused this week, a TDU lawyer will take it up. It's a class action suit and the women plan to call a press conference and make use of the publicity.

Marilyn is waiting for jobs in 2 priorities and may have to file suit to get results, having taken all sorts of bullshit. She is selling WP in the community where she knows many people, having grown up with them or gone to the same schools and is working on the S.Africa campaign.

Kathy - works in the P.O. and recently became steward. Maggie just got into Steel. Jeff and Candy are in steel in the same workplace and the leaders of the rank and file group, SSU. They have a long list of contacts which include a lot of women. Steffi is working with a group of wives who began picketing their husbands' mill after the sellout contract.

Lenny is convenor of the caucus. She's a teamster in a plant that has 35 TDU members, however, there are no other women which she's working to correct. The prospect of a strike in 2 weeks means a possibility of getting wives more involved by asking them to do an informational leaflet in front of the big stores that carry this product.

Contacts - Toni is a black woman and a social worker in the process of joining. She will be working on the S. Africa campaign and is doing the Basic Ed. Series.

Eleanor is black, is a steward in a laundry whom we have been working with over a period of 6 months. She periodically sells WP at work, helped us set up a Last Grave showing in her community, and we hope to have her do the next one in her home. She came to a TDU meeting with her brother in law and was very impressed.

Debbie is a mine worker in W.Va. who because of the distance is peripheral but interested. We did an interview in WP when her mine went out for her when she got fired, she calls us for help and she plans to come up for an all day women's workshop in May.

Pat works in steel, has worked on SSU since it's beginning in Oct., has attended several branch or fraction meetings.

Linda is a black woman interested in S.Africa, comes to community fraction and whom we want to draw closer through the S.Africa work.

Sue and Pat are teamster wives, both help with Horses' Mouth and helped with the wives' group. Sue organized a showing of Last Grave mostly for miners (anarchists) and teamsters and she is collecting for the shoe drive.

These are the most active contracts, but there is a much larger periphery now than ever before including women in steel, RT potentials through community work and some

from where Rita works.

Our periphery divides into 2 groups - industrial contracts and non-industrial - that is wives or people met through community work. Our perspective is to aim at each group with a different activity. For the first group we are planning a day long work shop in May on the problems of organizing in our workplaces. Doreen is coming from Chicago, since we expect to aim primarily at steel women. The program isn't worked out but basically we'll have two sessions, probably one on sexism and racism and the role of socialists in leading struggles, and one on organizing skills and problems - rank and file papers, building caucuses fighting the union, etc. - dinner and possibly a film in the evening.

For our other group, we will be having an educational or evening to discuss the role of the family under capitalism, not worked out yet. Work is going really well - we need help on following all the leads and contacts.

ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION -- By Lynn Jones

Hopefully, the entire organization agrees that the liberation of women requires socialist revolution and that no working class seizure of state power can successfully transform the society into a socialist one without securing women's liberation. But agreement on these fundamentals is not enough. An absolutely clear understanding of the woman question is a necessity for any revolutionary organization because the oppression of women in capitalist society is inalterably bound up with the oppression of the entire working class. To misunderstand the nature of women's oppression is to misunderstand the nature of all oppression under capitalism. To misunderstand the relationship between the struggle for women's liberation and the struggle for socialism is to misunderstand the nature of working class revolution.

Women's Special Oppression

Women are oppressed as a sex. Because of their special oppression as a sex, all women, regardless of their class position, are afflicted by social prejudice. All women are deemed inferior, "second class" citizens because of woman's role as the bearer of children, because of biology. Revolutionaries attempt to instill within women a consciousness of their special oppression. We understand that only revolutionary socialism can end woman's oppression, and that, therefore, winning women to the struggle against their own oppression is one step toward winning women to the struggle for socialism.

As civilization arose women were limited to certain types of labor in society because of their role in reproduction. It was not possible, for example, for women to participate in long hunting trips. Children are nursed in primitive societies for a lengthy period. During nursing it is equally impossible for a woman to separate herself from her child or for her child to endure the rigors of a hunting party. Thus, a division of labor between women and men arose with the very beginnings of civilization. Women became responsible for the care of children and the communal household and for gathering certain types of food. Men were responsible for hunting and other such activities. Although this division of labor between women and men did lay the basis for the oppression of women, it was not necessarily in and of itself for women. Even though it was true that women were limited to certain types of labor, there was no reason for the labor of women to be regarded as inferior to that of men. The labor of both women and men was equally necessary to the maintenance of society.

As civilization developed a surplus of goods above that required to simply maintain society was accumulated, and the first surplus was domesticated animals. Men, because they were the hunters, controlled the surplus in society. Men, through their role as hunters attained a monopoly over the means of violence and their control of weaponry guaranteed their control of society.

Private ownership of property arose, based on the creation of surplus goods, and it was men who owned the private property because it was men who controlled the surplus. Now the question of inheritance became important. It

became important that the private property belonging to a man be passed on to offspring that were actually his and not those of some other male. The mating habits of women had to be controlled -- women must not be allowed to mate freely with different males as they saw fit. And children must come to be regarded as the offspring of men, not women. The ancient right of women, the mother-right, the idea that children are related by blood to their mother and not to their father, must be destroyed. Women, whose labor as gatherers has already become subordinate in the society, must now be forced into a subordinate position within the family as well. The labor of women as mothers and housewives must be denigrated. Men must establish their hegemony over women in every way -- women must become oppressed as a sex.

To justify the oppression of women an ideology is created, the ideology of male superiority. This ideology, sexism, maintains that women are innately inferior to men because of their role in reproduction. It maintains that women are not only less strong than men, but that they are less intelligent as well. It maintains that the subordination of women is natural because men are aggressive and dominating by nature, whereas women are passive and submissive by nature. Women naturally crave their "protected" -- that, is, subordinate -- position in society. And on and on; women are inferior to men by nature in every respect.

Women Under Capitalism

When capitalism arises, women are excluded from public, social production and confined to private, domestic labor because women are already oppressed as a sex. Woman's life remains one of servitude to the individual family. The nuclear family is the primary economic unit of capitalism. In it women bear the new generation of wage laborers and maintain the current generation, aid in the discipline of male workers, and socialize children -- to name only a few of women's functions. But the labor of women continues to be deemed less important than that of men. Under the new system of wage labor, the public, social labor of men is paid, while the private, domestic labor of women as mothers and housewives is unpaid. Economic independence is denied to women in a society where the possession of money is everything.

Further, women's oppression as a sex does not cease when some women do enter into social production. That some women secure jobs and even professional careers does not alter the position of women as a whole in society for the great mass of women remain private, domestic laborers.

Even those women who do enter into social production cannot escape their special oppression, of course, for the jobs that are open to women are still primarily defined in terms of woman's role as mother and housewife. Nursing, teaching, sewing, waitressing, -- these are the jobs deemed suitable for women. And because women's work is defined as inferior work, women's jobs are more poorly paid than men's. Even when women do the same work as men, they

are paid less for their work is defined as having less value than that of men. Thus, women's special oppression as a sex allows women to be super-exploited as workers.

Moreover, the working woman finds herself forced to maintain two full-time jobs, one paid and one unpaid, for by and large the society offers no alternative to the nuclear family. After 8, 10, or 12 hours of public, social production, the working woman comes home to another day's labor as mother and housewife.

And finally, women's oppression as a sex is institutionalized under capitalism. All of society's institutions are geared to the maintenance of women's subordination. From birth women are taught to accept their oppressed position in society as the natural position of women.

The special oppression of women as a sex existed prior to the rise of capitalism. Women were already regarded as the inferior sex, were already subject to social prejudice. Women's work was already regarded as inferior work. But the rise of capitalism changes the nature of women's special oppression. Now the economic basis for women's oppression becomes the exclusion of women from public, social labor. The nuclear family becomes the economic unit of capitalism. Within the nuclear family, the oppression of women becomes institutionalized, for woman's private, domestic labor is unpaid. The special oppression of women now gives rise to the super-exploitation of women as workers. Women's special oppression is institutionalized and the pre-capitalist ideology of sexism is reinterpreted to fit the needs of the new society.

Women's Liberation and Socialism

The economic basis, the material basis, for women's special oppression under capitalism is the exclusion of women from social production. Therefore, women must secure the right to enter into social production fully and freely in order to gain their liberation. The right to enter fully and freely into social production has become a necessary prerequisite for women's liberation. Working class revolution can, of course, establish that necessary prerequisite. It can destroy the economic basis for women's special oppression.

Does this mean that working class revolution alone guarantees the liberation of women? No, it does not. To argue that it does is to argue the worst kind of economic reductionism. To argue so is to argue that the political and social liberation of women flows automatically from the economic transformation of society. To secure liberation women must win a host of other gains as well.

To begin with, the nuclear family must be abolished as the economic unit in society and housework and childcare must be socialized. So long as the individual, nuclear family remains the primary economic unit of society, so long as the responsibility for housework and childcare continues to be deemed the responsibility of individuals in society, it is ludicrous to speak of women's liberation. The best that could possibly be won without securing these latter demands is a situation in which men and women are equally oppressed; that is, a situation in which the individuals of both sexes are equally re-

responsible for raising children and maintaining the household. More conceivable is a situation in which women remain responsible for childcare and housework, a situation in which women are not really free to enter into social production at all. Thus, for us to speak of a socialist revolution establishing the right for women to enter fully and freely into social production, for us to speak of a socialist revolution that destroys the economic basis of women's oppression; we must necessarily speak of a socialist revolution that abolishes the nuclear family as the economic unit of society and a socialist revolution that socializes housework and childcare. The call for the abolition of the family and the demand for socialization of housework and childcare become, of necessity, a part of the program of any revolution that can truly lay claim to liberating women.

In other words, for a socialist revolution to speak of liberating women, for it to speak of destroying the economic basis for women's oppression, it must state as a part of its program for revolution its intention of destroying the nuclear family as the economic unit of society. That does not mean that the revolution must say that tomorrow it will declare the nuclear family illegal. It does mean that the revolution must have as a part of its immediate tasks offering an alternative to the nuclear family -- it must offer a choice.

But even this is not nearly enough to insure the liberation of women. How is it insured that the subordination of women will be fought in its every aspect under the workers' state that revolutionaries strive to create? Only by ensuring that women secure every democratic right. The struggle for women's liberation must include the struggle for full democracy. In his article "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed up," Lenin states it very well:

"... It is impossible to abolish national (or any other political) oppression under capitalism, since this requires the abolition of classes, i.e., the introduction of socialism. But while being based on economics, socialism cannot be reduced to economics alone. A foundation -- socialist production -- is essential for the abolition of national oppression, but this foundation must also carry a democratically organized state, a democratic army, etc. By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the possibility of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes reality "only" -- "only": -- with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres (emphases his) . . ." (The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, pp. 116-117).

In order for the working class to succeed in creating a socialist society the struggle to establish full democracy must be an integral part of the struggle for socialist revolution. Again, Lenin states it best:

"The socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front, but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e., on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It would be a radical mistake to think that the struggle for democracy was capable of diverting the proletariat from the socialist revolution or of hiding, overshadowing it, etc. On the contrary, in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent and revolu-

tionary struggle for democracy," ("The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination (Theses)," Ibid., p. 99).

Lenin also points out, absolutely correctly, that every other struggle must be subordinated to the struggle for state power when the seizure of state power is the task immediately before the working class. But prior to that time the struggle for democracy is a question of supreme importance to the working class, for it is necessary for the working class to wage that struggle with the greatest consistency precisely in order to prepare itself to rule society.

It is impossible to achieve the liberation of women under capitalism. Women's liberation must mean, if it is to mean anything at all, that every aspect of women's oppression is abolished. But the great majority of women in capitalist society are doubly oppressed. The great majority of women are oppressed not only as members of the female sex, but also as members of the working class. It is this, the double oppression of women workers, combined with their super-exploitation, that points in the direction of revolutionary socialism, for revolutionary socialism is the only possible solution to both their oppression as women and their oppression and exploitation as workers. Thus the liberation of women requires a socialist transformation of society. The end of women's oppression requires an end to all oppression.

By the same token, the liberation of women is necessary to the achievement of socialism. Socialism means, by definition, that every individual in society is guaranteed his or her fullest possible development as a human being. Thus, a society that hinders the development of women in any way, that does not insure the fullest possible development of each and every woman as a human being, cannot be a socialist society. The struggle for socialism includes of necessity the struggle for women's liberation.

The Necessity for Independent Organizations

But, as we have already pointed out, the economic transformation of society to socialist relations of production does not automatically guarantee the liberation of women. The struggle must go beyond the establishment of socialist production both to insure the liberation of women and to create a socialist society. The program for socialist revolution must therefore, as we have shown, include the call for the abolition of the nuclear family as the economic unit of society, the demand for the socialization of childcare and housework -- the demand for full democracy for women. The question is how to insure that that actually happens. Women have been the victims of the ideology of male superiority, sexism, for century upon century. That ideology pervades every aspect of capitalist society, every institution of capitalist society. And, of course it pervades the consciousness of the working class itself and even that of women. How is the working class rid of its sexist consciousness? How is the working class won to the struggle for women's liberation?

Do we rely on good sentiments, good intentions, on the part of the working class? Obviously not. Do we believe that the working class will simply take the word of the revolutionary party that women's liberation is necessary to the creation of socialism? Again, obviously not. Do we believe that the

working class will arrive at the intellectual conclusion that a socialist society cannot exclude 50% of its population from state power? Yet again, obviously not. (And even if we did accept this last proposition, what would that say about the position of blacks, gays, and other oppressed groups under the new workers' state?)

A mass movement of women struggling around demands of special importance to women and demanding that the entire working class support those struggles, a movement forcefully raising the question of women's liberation to the entire class, is the key to raising working class consciousness on the woman question. By both demanding working class support for its own struggles and offering its support to the working class as a whole in the struggle against capital, such a movement will prove in practice the relationship between the struggle for women's liberation and the struggle for working class power. The working class must win every conceivable ally to its cause. A mass women's movement, by presenting itself as one such ally, can win the working class to support the struggle for women's liberation. Such a movement also wins new allies for the working class because it also proves the relationship between the struggle for women's liberation and the struggle of the working class against its oppression and exploitation to both working class women and women outside the class. Thus, such a women's movement continually recruits to the struggle for socialism as well as to the struggle for women's liberation.

A women's movement, to be successful, must be part of a movement of the working class as a whole, must be based inside the working class. But a women's movement must also be independent. This statement obviously does not mean independent of class. It means, rather, independent organizationally -- a movement that makes its own decisions and creates its own organizations. The independence of the women's movement is necessary to ensure that the struggle for women's liberation is pressed forward, even when the entire class is not yet ready to support that struggle.

An independent women's movement is necessary to ensure that women's demands and needs are taken seriously by the working class as a whole in the struggle under capitalism. But the role of an independent women's movement does not end with working class revolution. The independent organization of women must be continued and spread following revolution to ensure that the struggle for women's liberation continues to be a part of the struggle to create a new, socialist society. Only on the basis of the most persistent struggle, pressed on by women themselves, even in the face of the most obstinate resistance, can the working class rid itself and all of society of the all-pervasive sexist ideology and ensure that every aspect of women's oppression is ended.

An independent women's movement has a role to play with regard to the revolutionary party (and to revolutionary organizations in general) as well. It spurs the party on. By always pressing the woman question before the party, by always insisting on its importance, an independent women's movement maintains an unflagging interest in the woman question inside the party as well as inside the working class as a whole. (For example, few would deny that most revolutionary groups in the US were very poor on the woman question prior to the birth of the radical women's movement of the 1960's. It was the women's movement, always pushing the woman question to the fore, that forced

revolutionary organizations to re-discuss the woman question and develop new, more sophisticated theories about women's oppression, its relationship to capitalism, its relationship to the struggle for socialism, that had been the case with revolutionary organizations previously.) By the same token, the independent organization of women within the revolutionary party is necessary to ensure that the party devotes the fullest possible attention to the woman question -- to the development of theory, to the pursuit of work in women's organizations, to the development of women comrades, and so on.

Clara Zetkin made to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in November 1922. At the time she was the German representative on the Executive Committee of the International, and General Secretary of the International Women's Secretariat.

The Fourth Congress took place at a time of retrenchment in the face of attacks on the employing class, or the defeat of the revolutionary wave that swept Europe at the end of the first world war. The United Front and mass work were now the strategies that were necessary.

Although the historical circumstances are very different today, the arguments Zetkin raises are still valid because the question of how to reach and organise working class women is once again the agenda.

In the forty years from the early 1920's to the 1960's, with the almost complete oppression of revolutionary socialist ideas, in the atmosphere created by Stalinism the idea of fighting for an end to women's oppression and actively seeking to organise women had no success. Only with the outbreaks of 1968, the explosion of the student movement, and the enormous possibilities that opened up for revolutionary organisations, did the women's movement begin to develop again.

But revolutionary socialists shied away from the debate. They argued against involvement in the women's movement, seeing it as middle-class rather than developing a strategy for intervening in and organising among working-class women. Now women are in the front line of attack in the economic crisis, and with thousands of men angry at the prospect of unemployment, being denied equal pay and equal jobs, demonstrating in huge numbers against the cuts and closures, socialists are to find a way of linking them towards revolutionary ideas.

Nothing is inevitably lost in shortening an extremely long speech. But the substance of the argument is here. The central argument which Clara Zetkin raised is as relevant as it was in 1922.

organizing working women — Clara Zetkin

1922

secured for us the sympathy and adherence of large masses of women. It was presented, not as a women's question, but as a political question of the proletariat.

We fully realise the importance of spirited and thorough work in the trade unions and co-operatives. In order to carry on energetic and systematic work in these two fields, it is necessary that we gain influence over large sections of women, and recruit them for the struggle. This we shall do by influencing working women through their trade unions, and proletarian and petty bourgeois housewives through the co-operative movement. However, I want to point out that in our work we must not raise false illusions. We must, on the contrary, do our utmost to destroy the illusion that the trade union movement and co-operative movements within the capitalist system are capable of bringing about legislation for the benefit of the proletariat and of destroying the foundations of capitalism. However useful and indispensable the work of trade unions and co-operatives they cannot undermine the overthrow of capitalism.

The conditions are especially favourable for rallying also non-proletarian women around the banner of Communism. The capitalist decay has created in Great Britain, in Germany and other bourgeois states a large new class of new rich as well as a large class of new poor. The middle class is being proletarianised. Consequently the exigencies of life are pulling at the heart strings as well as the purse strings of many women who hitherto had a terribly secure and happy existence under the capitalist system. Many professional women, especially the intellectuals, such as teachers, civil servants and office employees of all kinds are getting rebellious and are pressed into the struggle against capitalism. Comrades, we must take advantage of the ferment in these women's circles and fan their resigned hopelessness into a flame of indignation that will lead to revolutionary consciousness and action.

What about the conditions that can make this possible? I have already mentioned what pitiless inroads present day conditions make into the lives of millions of women, causing many of them to awaken from their torpor. All that has hampered us previously, the political backwardness and the indifference of women in general, can, under the pressure of unbearable suffering, bring adult women into the Communist camp. Their mentality is less affected by the false and deceptive watchword of the Social Democratic reformists, or the bourgeois reformers. Their mentality is frequently like a blank sheet, so we shall subsequently find it easier to bring the hitherto indifferent female masses into our struggle without the preliminary transition through suffrage, pacifist and other reformist organisations. However, I want to sound a note of warning. We must not be too sanguine and expect that the women will join immediately in the struggle for our final aims, but we may depend on them in our defensive struggle against the general offensive of the bourgeoisie.

organise women. They have established Unions of sympathising women. These unions are not only preparatory training centres for entry into the Communist Party, but are also effective rallying points for the attraction of the female masses to all the activities and actions of the Party. Our Italian women comrades have begun to follow this example. They have also established groups of sympathising women, including women who are still loath to enter political parties, or attend political meetings. The example must not only receive the recognition of all those who do Communist work among women in all countries, but must also be followed.

Comrades, are the Communist women within the sections of the International endowed with the consciousness, the will and the energy required for this work among the female masses? We must not conceal the fact that the women as well as the men Communists (for on the whole we are not worse, or more stupid than you are), frequently lack the necessary fundamental, theoretical and practical training. The backwardness and weakness of the women in the political movement only reflects the backwardness and the weakness in the Communist ranks in general. It is of the greatest importance to overcome as quickly as possible the lack of training and weakness of those who are to carry out the Communist work among the female proletariat. Therefore I enjoin you all to take care that the Communist women within your ranks are individually made responsible for the carrying out of the practical tasks of the Party. See to it that they have all the educational opportunities possible. Comrades, the fundamental and practical training of women into valuable Communist workers in the Communist struggle is part of your own educational work, and is an important and indispensable prerequisite for your success.

All the signs of the times show us that society is objectively ripe, nay even over-ripe for the overthrow of capitalism. But we have had no proof that the will of the proletariat, the will of the class destined to be the grave-digger of the capitalist order is ripe in the historical sense of the word. But Comrades, this historic situation is like an alpine landscape in which the gigantic masses of snow repose on the mountain tops for centuries, seemingly impervious to sun, rain or storm. But despite appearances they are undermined, they have grown soft and are 'ripe' to be hurled down. Perhaps the beating of a little bird's wings will be enough to move this avalanche which will bury the valleys under its weight. We do not know how soon we, men and women, will be faced with the world revolution. Therefore, we must not lose a single hour, nay, let a single minute pass without working for the world revolution. World revolution does not only mean world destruction and the destruction of capitalism. It also means world construction and the creation of Communism. Let us get our inspiration from the real meaning of the word: let us be ready, and let us make the masses ready, in order

Comrades, before I begin my report on the activities of the International Women's Secretariat and the development of Communist activity among women, allow me a few short remarks. They are necessary because our work is still misunderstood not only by our opponents but even by our own comrades. This is with some the remains of an old view, and with others it is wilful prejudice because they do not sympathise with our cause and even partly oppose it.

The International Women's Secretariat is a branch of the Executive of the Comintern. It conducts its activity not only in constant co-operation with the Executive, but under its immediate leadership. What we usually designate the Communist Womens Movement is not an independent womens movement. It exists for systematic Communist propaganda among women. This has a double purpose: First, to incorporate within the national sections of the Comintern those women who are already filled with the Communist ideal, making them conscious coworkers in the activity of those sections. Second, to win over to the Communist ideal the indifferent women and draw them into the struggles of the proletariat. The masses of working women should be mobilised for these fights. There is no work in the Party, no struggle of the movement in any country in which we women do not regard it as our first duty to participate. Moreover, we desire to take our place in the Communist Parties and in the International where the work is hardest and the bullets fly thickest, without shunning the most menial, most modest every-day work.

One thing has become apparent: we require special organs to carry on the Communist work of organisation and education among women and to make it a part of the life of the Party. Communist agitation among women is not only a women's task, it is the task of the whole Communist Party of each country, of the Communist International. To accomplish our purpose it is necessary to set up party organs, Womens' Secretariats, Womens' Departments, or whatever we may call them, to carry on this work.

Of course we do not deny the possibility that some strong personality, man or woman, might be able to do the same work in some local or district organisation. But however much we may admit such individual accomplishments in the Party, we must ask ourselves how much greater the benefits would have been if instead of the work of a single individual we had the co-operation of many forces. United action by many towards a common goal must be our slogan in the Party, in the International, and in our work with women.

As a matter of expediency, of practical division of labour, women are usually the best fitted to take part in the special organs for Communist work among women. We cannot escape the fact that the large masses of the women live and work to-day under special conditions. That is why, in general, women usually find the best and quickest method of approach to the working woman to begin Communist propaganda. Just as we Communist women consider it as our right

and duty to take part in every activity in the Party—from the most modest work of distributing leaflets to the final, tremendous, decisive fight—just as we would regard it as an insult to be considered unworthy of taking part in the great historical life of the Party and the Communist International, so do we not exclude any man from taking part in the special Communist work among women.

During the last year we have had evidence of the good and the bad sides of Communist work among women. We have seen the good sides in those countries where the Communist sections of the International have created bodies, as in Bulgaria and Germany where the Womens' Secretariats have carried on the work of organising the educating the women Communists, mobilising the working women, and led them into the social struggle. In those countries, the Communist Womens' movement has become one of the strong points of the general life of the Party. In those countries we have many women members and militants in the Party and still larger masses of women as comrades-in-arms outside the Party.

Let me give you a few examples of the bad effects of the lack of special organs for work among women in Communist parties. Whenever there are no Womens' Secretariats or similar bodies, we have observed a falling off in the participation of women in the life of the Communist Party and the withdrawal of the feminine proletariat from the struggle of their class. In Poland, the Party has refused until now to set up special bodies for work among women. The Party was content to allow women to fight in its ranks, and participate in strikes and mass movements. However, we are beginning to realise that this is not sufficient to permeate to the feminine proletariat with the Communist ideal. The last elections to the Diet have proved that reaction finds its strongest support among the ignorant masses of women who have not yet been permeated by Communism. This should never happen again.

In England, organisation for conducting systematic agitation among the feminine proletariat is altogether lacking. The Communist Party of Great Britain excused itself by its weakness, and has continually refused or postponed the setting up of a special body for systematic agitation among women. All the exhortation of the International Women's Secretariat have been in vain. No Womens' Secretariat has been established: the only thing that has been done is the appointment of a women comrade as general Party agitator. Our women comrades have organised various meetings for the political education of the Communist women out of their own feeble numbers. These meetings have achieved such good results that the establishment of similar meetings must be encouraged by the Communist Party.

The attitude of the Executive of the Communist Party of Great Britain is, in my opinion, not only an outcome of its financial weakness, but partly also to its youth and the

“
Where there's a will there's a way. We have the will to world revolution, therefore we must find the way to reach the masses of the exploited and the enslaved women, whether the historical conditions make it easy or difficult.
”

shortcomings resulting from it. I do not want to submit the Party to severe criticism here. The success of the British Communist Party at the last general election in Great Britain is proof of its strong determination and its practical success. However, this election victory, as well as the political activity and reorganisation which were decided upon, make incumbent on the British Communist Party at a time when from being a small propagandist party, it goes right into the masses, to strive to organise the proletarian women. The British section of the International cannot remain indifferent to the fact that in its country many millions of proletarian women are organised in womens' suffrage societies, womens' trade unions of the old type, in consumers' co-operatives, in the Labour Party and in the Independent Labour Party. It behoves the Communist Party to struggle with all these organisations for the capture of the minds, the hearts, the will power and the actions of the proletarian women. Therefore it will in the long run realise the necessity for the organisation of special organs by means of which it will be able to organise and train the Communist women within the Party, and make the proletarian women outside the Party willing fighters for the interests of their class.

In various countries, the Communist women, under the leadership of their Party, have used every opportunity to awaken the proletarian women and to lead them into the struggle against the capitalist system. Such was the case for instance in Germany in the fight against the so-called Abortion Law, which was used for a far-reaching and successful campaign against bourgeois class rule and the bourgeois State. This campaign

The Brookside Women's Club

This is not an ordinary women's club. It's not for tea parties and bridge games. The women of Harlan County, the wives and daughters of the Brookside miners, have a far more serious purpose. Their club exists to keep scabs out of the Brookside mine, to help win the strike.

The club was organized last September when circuit Judge Byrd Hogg issued an injunction limiting the number of pickets to three at each entrance to the mine. The result was at least 60 scabs crossed the line every day. Fifty women from the area showed up at the picket line and 'persuaded' the scabs not to go in.

As a result of the picketing, and the arrests that followed, the women decided to set up a club. Betty Eldridge, the club's first president, said that "We kept thinking that we had to get together and make some plans in case some other mines struck for our union."

Betty Eldridge recalls, "I was jailed for laying down in the road. One morning they had 75 state policemen. They were going to escort the scabs to work. We women couldn't fight the state police so we just lay down in the road. They took us to jail, so more others of us lay down."

CHILDREN IN JAIL

Nanny Rainey was another member of the club who was arrested in October for picketing. Three of her children - Boyd, age 7, Betty, 6, and the infant, Tabatha - went to jail with her. Immediately the welfare department came in and threatened to take Nanny Rainey's children from her.

Melinda Rainey, 13, the eldest, who has also been on the picket line several times, came to the jail and took care of the children.

These women were convicted and sentenced to 60 days in jail. They are out on appeal.

The last confrontation came on February 23th when the company tried to bring a half dozen more scabs through. In the afternoon a crowd of about 500 strikers and supporters gathered near the entrance of the mine. Melba Strong, Betty Eldridge, Lois Scott, and

Bessie Cornet, all members of the club, received their second contempt sentence and were given 60 days.

The women in the Brookside club are awaiting the results of their trials and arrests.

The children of the strikers get into trouble at school. There are fights between the children of the strikers and the coal operators' kids. One day, the Rainey children showed up at Ages elementary school wearing their United Mine Workers badges. Their teacher ripped them off. Some teachers tell the students that the strikers are lazy men. It's not surprising. Most of the teachers in Harlan are the sons and daughters of coal operators.

One aspect of the strike and the women's club has been the way in which the women are judged. Mary Widener, who was arrested in the fall, said that the judge and Yarbrough's lawyer refused to call them ladies or women, only females. "In other words, we weren't ladies. Ladies don't stand around on picket lines."

Norman Yarbrough, the company president, was asked about the Brookside women. "I wouldn't like to think my wife would do that." "Indecorous" was the word he used to the press to describe the Brookside women.

THREE GENERATIONS OF FIGHTING WOMEN

The fight to bring the union back has brought together three generations of women; in each case, they see themselves anew.

Audie Widener who is 17, talked about how the strike changed women's thinking.

"The women started talking about it, now that the men are having to babysit and do housework, that they ought to be more respectful to the women, now that they know how hard it is to keep house and to take care of the kids. It cracks me up hearing the women out there talking about how they're going to keep their men in line."

Both Audie and her mother are members of the club. Even though her parents didn't want her on the picket line, she went and was arrested for picketing and fighting

scabs. She has been confined to her mother's custody.

Audie works as a waitress in Ackley's cafe in Harlan. And like her father, she is also on strike for union recognition. Audie didn't know too much about unions before the Brookside strike, but "I found out real quick."

For Betty Eldridge, who is in her 40's:

"I wonder if we had ever heard of anything before we went on that picket line. I'm telling you, it's really something. I think I've learned more during this strike about people than I have in all the years of my life put together.

"As far as I'm concerned, I've always been liberated. Some men

think they're gods and that he's given women to be their servants. Some women if they want a quarter they'd have to ask their husbands and he wants to know that they're going to do with it, and if they are going to bring back the change. Me and Joe never had it that way."

And Minnie Lunsford, who's more than 70:

"It's just like school, it's learned us something. We've met people we didn't hardly know existed on the picket line.

"I'm like Betty. If my husband gave me a quarter and asked for change I'd go out and look for a job and make my own."

Brookside Memories: "It Makes Me Boil"

Minnie Lunsford lived in Harlan County forty years ago when J.H. Blair was the sheriff, and she still lives there today. She can point to the place, just above the river near Everts, where the coal operators set up machine guns.

"It was for the miners. If anyone wanted to go to work, to go a scabbin', they could go. But if the miners went to get them, or to turn them back, they would get the machine guns. They were meant to kill and they did kill."

She can also recall the days when coal operators "blew up houses, threw dynamite into the windows, and a good union man would be killed."

"One time," she said, pointing across the valley, "five carloads of gun thugs eased along the highway just over there and over that bridge and shot into that little white house. They meant to kill the whole family."

And one boy was killed. The Music boy. His father, Preacher Music, was the UMW organizer. In Harlan, almost every bend in the road marks a murder.

The machine guns are carefully hidden today, but there are still coal operators and miners in Harlan County. And Minnie Lunsford is still fighting. When Circuit Judge Byrd Hogg, himself a former coal operator, limited pickets to three at each entrance to the Brookside mine, Minnie Lunsford went out with the other women to stop the scabs.

"In the thirties, I saw people suffer, and I suffered enough, seeing my children. You know they didn't go too hungry, but there was a lot of things they needed we couldn't get.

"I suffered in that and saw others suffer more than me. And it makes me boil.

"The coal operators think, 'just anyway to get me a lump of coal. You go in there, with the rock

hanging way up there, you go in there and get that coal out. That coal is all we want.'

"They ain't thinking about the miners' lives, to get back home to their children, maybe to get crushed up, set in a wheel chair the rest of their lives.

"That's what the coal operators think, they don't care. They don't think as much of a miner as a lot 'a people would a dog.

"I'll go anywhere around the mines to get a contract, get a union, have 'em organized and everything, and have 'em peaceful and working and conditions right and everything.

"That's what I enjoy, trying to do something in what you might say my last days. I want to do something to help others grow up here and that's why I really enjoy it and I really like to do what little bit I know how to do.

"Some of 'em tell me, 'Why as old as you are, why do you want to be out on the picket line?'

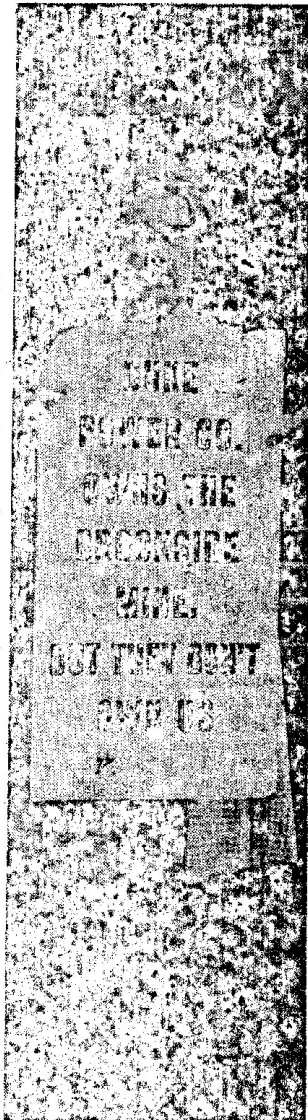
"I said the age and the looks don't count one bit. It's what you feel and what you've got in you, and what you want other people to have.

"My husband and me are up in years. He draws a miner's pension and we've got a good hospital card and all these things and he's worked hard and slaved and has got the black lung. And why shouldn't I feel if I was ninety years old, I'd get out there on that picket line.

"That's how I feel about it. And so many that's not got the card. I'd go, I'd gladly hand mine out and let 'em use it, if they could.

"If they ever get a contract here, or have these mines union organized, then the men would have that. And these young boys growing up.

"If they don't never get that, why, what can they expect when they get old like us. Nothing."



Minnie Lunsford

DISCUSSION OF INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN

The Womens perspective passed at the convention mandated a discussion on our position on independent organization of women. This discussion would take place first in the womens caucuses and then in the branches. For several years our basic position on the independent organization of women went unchallenged. As a result little education took place in this area. Many new women felt incapable of defending our positions to the external world.

In the last year we have begun to develop womens work in most of our priorities. Many questions concerning forms of organization, the relationship of a womens group to the rank and file movement and the revolutionary party have already emerged. The womens commission is proposing the following approach to this internal discussion. Our tasks as revolutionaries are the following

1. bringing women into the struggle
2. demanding that womens struggles be part of general rank and file movement and revolutionary movement
3. building strong womens organizations that will insure the fight against sexism will occur at all levels---rank and file movement, revolutionary party before and after seizure of state power.

To insure that this is part of all the discussions we want to use as many concrete examples of women organizing and its impact on the emerging struggles. Examples are recommended for discussion. There are many more and people giving presentations can provide them. The same is true of readings. We have recommended some key readings for all but those who are more interested should refer to reading list following the notes. We are hoping that as many less developed comrades could give these talks since this is a good way of developing ones confidence and political ability. The discussion can be conducted in two sessions--part I and II in one, and III separately.

- I. What is the nature of womens oppression
 - a. differences between exploitation and oppression--some basic understanding of this is necessary to provide a theoretical understanding of the nature of sexism and the kind of movement required to eradicate it.
 - b. how capitalism has institutionalized womens oppression and the role it plays in the system
 - c. how socialism can eliminate the basis of economic exploitation but will not ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ automatically eliminate sexism

Reading: After much searching and discussion we are recommending Lynn Jones document '73 as basic reading. Our feeling is that it is verly schematic and simplistic but provides a general overview. The scarcity of anything to read points once again to a good basic statement of our thoery of womens liberation.

II. Necessity of bringing women into the struggle

a. approach to problem

if we do not attract women to the struggle then it will always be inherently sexist

women are attracted to the struggle when it offers them something concrete that they feel offers them a chance to change their lives, rather than the abstraction of womens liberation or socialism

-1. attempt by German Social Democratic Party and Bolsheviks to attract women to the struggle through concrete discussion of their problems as women- as women began to understand their own problems and their relationship to the system at large then they began to be attracted to revolutionary politics

2. early organizing attempts by UAW- women would have played a devastating role in the early days of flint if they had not become involved in the struggle early on. Their position as mothers and wives could have put decisive pressure on their spouses for an early settlement before decisive victory yet they were organized and play key role in winning the strike and establishing the UAW in Flint. Once they were brought in to the struggle they played key role

-3. 60's- womens liberation movement- women joined struggle on basis of understanding something drastically wrong with society's treatment of women. The political upheavals of the 60's made women question their role and how capitalism ~~maintained~~ maintained their oppression. Through the womens movement many women became involved in the broader social movements of the day.

-4 I.S. rank and file work in steel- by organizing women around their specific oppression in the plants as we did in steel we were then able to get women to join in broader rank and file struggle; es with a specific identity and willingness to fight against more general exploitation and oppression

b. How women fighting for their rights advances whole class struggle

1. many people argue that women organizing and fighting for their demands divides the class and that women and other specially oppressed cl groups should wait for their time to come when the class is more organized to raise their demands (several left groups hold this position as well as many workers)

2. struggle will be held back until it is one that can attract women and minorities- can not have rank and file struggles that can begin to challenge management that is racially divided

3. understanding that capitalism has already divided the class- women vs men, black vs. white, old vs young, skilled vs production etc. Managements oldest tactic is divide and rule

4. way to overcome divisions within class is to ensure that all parts of the struggle are taken seriously within context of general struggle. That the fight for equality of women and blacks is part of rank and file movement and that white men understand this and are willing to fight aggressively for equality and special demands. This is difference between success and failure

5. we are not just trade union militants who want to bargain with management to reduce the rate of exploitation but are revolutionaries who understand the dynamics of capitalism and the necessity of a class struggle movement that can challenge the limits of capitalism- rank and file movements that champion struggles of the oppressed change the way participants in struggles view the world leaving them more open to revolutionary politics

Examples- these are some common well known ones that most members have some knowledge of

a. Salt of the Earth- women had to join together to see that their particular demands of sanitation in the community and safe working conditions were part of the fight their husbands were waging. They joined struggle in spite of their husbands ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ who did not understand the importance of unified struggle. The men were won to this through the actions of the women

b. Germany during height of the growth of German Soc. Dem Party- women had to fight for their demands to be taken seriously by the party and the rank and file movement. As they did they strengthened hand of rank and file movement

3. Russia 1917- the numerous struggles of women workers advanced the overall struggle of workers leading to final actions around International Womens Day 1917

d. IBT work- our comrades attempts to bring in special problems of women IBT members and wives has politically strengthened work and has given it a commitment to fighting sexism

The above examples plus many others are worth discussing in overall discussion because each of them makes several points.

Reading- good background is Sheila Rowbotham, Women, Resistance and Revolution, chapters on Germany and Russia

III. Struggle for Womens Liberation and Socialism

or 1. class revolution does not guarantee the liberation of women- to secure liberation women must win a number of gains- (nuclear family as economic unit of society must be abolished, housework and child care socialized etc.

a. necessity of organized struggle within revolutionary movement to insure goals of womens liberation. How is this fought for within revolutionary struggle. The struggle for womens liberation must include struggle for full democratic rights for women at all levels of struggle.

Reading- the best theoretical overview is provided in Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up" Progress Publishers Moscow, 1971. While the discussion is on the national question the concepts are laid out and discussed thoroughly. Question discussed is the relationship between the struggle for national (womens liberation and its relationship to struggle for socialism. It is short and provides important insights.

b. Forms of organization

1. within the rank and file movement- womens caucuses in trade unions, committees, and cross union formations, womens congresses in days of German Social Democratic Party

2. within revolutions-- Genotedel in Russia following revolution- women had to fight for its establishment and its retention- was responsible for many of the advances made in the status of women after 1917

3. within the revolutionary party itself.-- the Bolsheviks advocated commissions within the party to oversee womens work and they were responsible for developing external agitation and relations to the working women and bringing them into the party. Bolsheviks did not advocate internal organization of women within the party to fight for womens liberation in the party. This is important to understand because there is general confusion in U.S. position- advocate the right of self-organization of oppressed groups. Understanding that even within revolutionary party there is existence of sexism and necessity of organized presence to combat sexism; to develop programs for women and develop politically women in the organization.

c. Relationship between womens movement and revolutionary party

1. historically every revolutionary party has had to have a kick from existing womens movement. Even middle class movements have had their impact on revolutionary parties. Germany, Russia and the American left of the 60's are all examples of the development of womens movements that had an impact on revolutionary politics. Existence of movements made revolutionary women bring politics into revolutionary party. Once politics brought in and working class approach worked out women of revolutionary party were able to provide part of leadership of womens movement or develop working class womens movement.

2. inter-relationship between the 2- it is really impossible lay out exact interrelationship. The above is one aspect of it but it is important to keep in mind the dialectical relationship. As womens movement grows it has more and more impact on revolutionary party since there are more and more women who are becoming involved in struggle and growing confident day by day. This includes women in revolutionary party who bring this awareness into party and makes party more conscious of these problems. Party can then take these experiences and provide leadership and move struggle forward.

3. Independent organization- summary of what we mean by this. a movement that is independent organizationally, that can make its own decisions and determined its own forms. It is necessary to raise the struggle even when the rest of the class is not ready to join the fight. It does not mean that it is independent of the class but it is independent organizationally. It is necessary during the revolutionary struggle to insure that womens demands are taken seriously and is just as important in the building of a socialist society to insure that the new society eliminates sexism. And the independent womens movement plays a role with regard to revolutionary party. It constantly raises the struggle pushing the party to to struggle for womens liberation.

General Readings- These are for further reading

~~XX~~

Rowbotham, Women , Resistance and Revolution,
available in paperback

Thonnessen, The Emancipation of Women- The Rise and Decline of
the Womens Movement in German Social Democracy, Pluto Press

Mary Jo Buhle, "Women and the Socialist Party" in From Feminism
to Liberation, Schenkman Co. (hard to find book but worth the
search, paperback)

Celia Emerson, Revolutionary Feminism, historical pamphlet with good
discussion on the Pankhursts and split in womens suffrage movement

Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women, Discussion

with Clara Zetkin- some of the differences in Bolshevik party
are laid out here

Womens Commission Bulletin, May 1973. Included in it are some sections
from 3rd Congress of the Comintern, 1921 on propaganda among women.
These were contributed by Barbara Z and are worth reading.

UAW Report- Enid, for the Auto Fraction

At present our fraction has four women who are working in the plants, one fired, one on maternity leave and one on leave from the organization. For the past several years there has been an ongoing discussion in the fraction about the lack of our womens work in auto. Periodically there would be a session that would end in "we'll we better get something going" but then there would be very little idea of what the road forward was.

All the traditional avenues were investigated and followed though but produced little concrete results. Several years ago we checked into the womens committees in the locals. In locals where they existed they were little more than a training ground for the administration slates. At most locals all these committees engaged in were fund raising events for the local or charity events for the local nursing home or red cross. The UAW womens department runs these committees with a tight hand providing little room for activities that are relevant to women in the plant. In one local we were able to get on the official committee (Local 51) and concluded that the whole thing was a waste of time. The women who joined the committee were content to see it as a charity group. Often they were older than the average women in the plant and had been in the plants for many years and did not face the set of problems the majority of women faced. Attempts to make the committee relevant to women in the plant were met with indifference if not hostility.

In locals where there were no womens committees we tried to get the local administration to set them up in hope of our being able to control or influence them. At Chevy (Local 235) there were some meetings held but the group quickly degenerated into a group of women who were tied to the outgoing local president. When the president was defeated in last years elections so went the womens committee.

When CLUW existed there was little relationship between the Local womens committees and CLUW. There was never any push from the Womens Dept of the UAW to urge local womens committees to be involved in CLUW. While the pages of Solidarity (the UAW newspaper) carried coverage on CLUW local executive boards were hostile to pushing their local women to join and build CLUW.

Solidarity is filled with pages of womens involvement in this or that phase of improving life for women. Support for a bill, a donation to some group, support for womens year projects and a woman vice-president all present the facade of liberalism and concern for women. Beneath the facade there is little that improves the life of the 200,000 female UAW members.

Our problem as builders of the rank and file movement and the I.S. is a simple one? How do we involve women in the struggle at a time there is little motion in the class and when women tend to be more passive than their male counterparts. How do we involve women who are usually the only support for their children and often find themselves putting in 50 or so hours in the plant and have little time for outside activity. And importantly how do we as primarily white women begin to cut through the racial barrier

which is particularly strong when it comes to white women/black women? These are the questions that face us if we are to begin to move forward and attract women. There are no simple answers. The rest of this report will deal with some of the attempts we are making and have made and what we have learned from it.

As our rank and file work progresses and takes root we are now beginning to involve women. During the major layoffs of 1974-5 many women became involved. Several women were active in the UNC unemployed committee and worked in their locals to get the locals to set up committees. When work picked up and people returned to work we were not totally successful in translating this into solid rank and file organization as far as it went in keeping women involved. Here and there one or two women became involved in rank and file groups. At local 51 the United Coalition has 3 women who are leaders of the group (only 1 of whom is in the I.S.). At Chevy we were able to still involve a few women, although not on a consistent level.

When activity was concrete with a particular goal in mind and something on a short term it has been easier to get women involved. The unemployment work attracted women. The Cost of Living demonstration at Chrysler had a number of women who participated.

Where consistent rank and file publications existed there has been coverage on women's issues and general women's liberation coverage. Special seniority rights, child care, harassment and layoffs were among the issues covered. It was this consistent coverage that has now begun to be reflected in our present work.

With the 1976 upturn in the economy there has been steady hiring. New hiring has meant more women going into some of our plants. In many places women are getting the most rotten jobs leaving them more receptive to becoming involved.

All this coupled with the recent attack on women put us in a better position than we have been in years to build serious work among the women in our shops.

At Local 51 we have covered women's issues for almost 2 years. Recent articles on maternity leave received a very good reception from the women. During the recent delegate elections many women expressed interest in some kind of meeting or groups to discuss their problems in the plant. At present the idea being floated with other women is a watchdog committee that will deal with sexual harassment and maternity problems that can work ~~with~~ with the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Success or failure of this group depends on activating a core of women that can carry the group beyond the one I.S. woman and has the black women carrying the group. At present we are trying to get this one woman who has been active and wants to start the group to take some responsibility for initiating the first meeting. With the convention coming up in May plans for the first meeting are being delayed.

UAW-3

At Chevy we have also raised many womens issues. In plant 6 where our comrade is a committeewomen she has fought for many womens issues and fought for beetter protection for pregant women. Recently in another plant there has been a group of women who have b been meeting together and working in the local. The group is un- defined. At first it was only black women and then our comrade checked into it and was told wäll you shouldlcome too, Since it is also a womans group. Since the elections in the local the dynamic has changed. ~~XX~~ These women joined together to push some of their friends in the elections, including one man who had a reputation as a militant as a militant prior to the election. Withi his vactory it is clear that he is headed in a sell-out direction. With his rightward moves and these women being tied to him it will probably be rather difficult to work with these women. One idea being floated is joint work in their invividual plants around some womens issues that would not be particularly antagonistic to the local. This would enable us to get some activity which we could beuild out of.

In two places (Boston and New Jersey) our comrades are new and are still feeling their way around. Yet both of their administra- tions are open to activity of women. In New Jersey there is a womens editor for the local paper who has been very open. Our comrade there will be trying to work with her and the head of the shop committee (who is a UICer and a militant with a good reputation). There are many women in this plant . We are enocuaraging our comrade to deevlop her reputation as a womens libber and encourage the local to start a womans committee which we can be active in.

In Boston our comrade has already had an article of women workers published in the local newspaper. In her situation she will best establsih herself as a fighter for womens right in the plant. Recently the plant put on s second shit that has a large per centage of women.

At local 212 our female member is on maternity leave. During the delegate election one of our male comrades who works in a plant that has alarge number of women ran on a 7 point platform, one point being maternity leave and benefits. One of our Locals (51) passed a convention resolution on maternity benefits so it will go to the UAW convention in May.

In Local 869 wher our comrade was just elected vice-president we have net a core if wimen who were active in the campaign. Our comrade after a very breif conversation on this topic beelievs it is possible and will encourage the women there to develpp a caucus in the Progressive slate.

Clearly now for the first time we are taking some steps Clearly now, for the first time we are in a position to build serious womens work in our plants. Where rank and file organization has roots and has developed we are in a better position (51, 235 and 869) to cohere it. Where our comrades are new it will be their reputations as women who stand up for themselves and to the company that will put them in a position that will enable them to be known and become involved in activity in their locals.

IBT WOMEN'S REPORT

(This is a preliminary report. It is incomplete and fragmented, partly because of time problems in developing communication between the Women's Commission and the Teamster Fraction, partly because not all branches have women's work in IBT. Between now and the next Bulletin, the Commission will work both to develop regular communication with the Fraction, and to cooperate with women industrialized in IBT to initiate and maintain consistent women's work there.)

BAY AREA: The women's caucus in IBT Local 278 is planning a UPS demo for April 30 at 12:00 ~~noon~~ noon. Co-sponsors are Union W.A.G.E. and TDU. Issues are harassment, no forced overtime, and violations of the contract, especially of the gross insubordination clause. The Committee in Local 70 is not co-sponsoring, but is "doing its own thing," because it doesn't support affirmative action-----even though the demonstration is not organized specifically around affirmative action. (The Committee is basically the "out bloc" in Local 70, a large Oakland local of 8,000, almost all men.)

The Local 278 women's caucus itself isn't in great shape, but is holding together. Two of the women in it used to be in Vinceremos and got burned. Because of this, they are distrustful of revolutionary groups and of militant action in general. Their attitude is that left groups get working women in trouble through egging them on. Also, the woman who got fired from UPS, and who was a mainstay of the group, is going back to graduate school. This is a problem, but the caucus is still viable.

For more information on Bay Area Teamster women's work, see the Bay Area Women's Caucus report.

PITTSBURGH: 1) A class action suit has been filed in Federal Court, charging that UPS has violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act by harassing women and discriminating against them in hiring. Although the suit has ~~xx~~ a personal aspect, it affects the whole class also. Not much hay has been made out of the suit yet, because it hasn't been publicized yet. That can be done soon.

2) We are also involved at UPS in a fight to get a locker room for women. All the women at that hub are involved in it (7 or 8) The women are using union procedures--putting pressure on the union as well as the company. No results yet, but this is the first issue which has affected all the women.

3) UPS has been hiring part-time women, almost none of whom are making probation. People are noticing this and getting mad about it. The women (some ones who are fighting for a locker room), wrote up a leaflet which was then distributed by both women and men to the rest of the barn. Response was positive. They are building it as a sexist case--sexism by the company against women--and stressing that women have the right to be both full-time and part-time workers. The women have been excited about the locker room issue, and the leaflet has ~~xx~~ reinforced this. Again, they are using union procedures (most contracts have anti-discrimination clauses, so discrimination against women is a contract violation. By using union procedures, you put both the company and the union on the spot.)

4) There is no viable wives' group in Pittsburgh at this point, but a couple of wives are involved in the TDU steering committee and with the

IBT WOMEN'S REPORT (cont.)

newspaper. There are also several Jones Motor Teamster wives who have been the main force behind resistance against speedup there. They leafletted a union meeting, and ~~xx~~ for the first time have ~~xxxx~~ come to the TDU steering committee meeting.

5) For the first time, a couple of women Teamsters are in TDU in Pittsburgh.

6) Two issues which need to be dealt with by the Teamster fraction: affirmative action programs in trucking (Sheila from the Bay Area has been mandated to write something on this), and organizing the unorganized, especially freight clerks. Some clerks are organized; many are not.

DETROIT: For information on the Detroit TDU wives' group, see the Detroit women's caucus report.

FIGHT



UPS Sexism

On Thursday, March 31, UPS fired Linda Soblasky. Linda had worked 14 days on the day sort. A number of supervisors had previously told Linda that they were pleased with her work. Why, then, did the company "let her go"?

THEIR reasons: According to Brad Rice, the part-time supervisor who wanted her out, she couldn't do the work, and she was too likable - too many people liked her.

- The REAL reasons:
- 1) Because Linda is a female. Numerous co-workers state that Linda did the work as well as other rookies. Brad referred to her as "the broad." He would time her unloading when the trucks were not jacked up.
 - 2) Because she knew too many people. Linda knew a number of drivers before coming here. Rather than pretending that she didn't know them, they would say "hi", acknowledging they knew each other. As Brad stated, she was "too likeable." Since when is that a crime?
 - 3) Because she lives in New Stanton. Linda was going to wait until the New Stanton building opened, but was advised by the company that she'd be better off starting in Pittsburgh, then transferring. She drove 40 miles each way, every day, for a part-time job. Many people thought this would be a factor in her favor - that she could be available to go to New Stanton, which many part-timers will not. But the truth is, UPS wants as few of the part-timers as possible to transfer to New Stanton. They want to brainwash a new crew off the street.



One month ago Vicki Love, a black woman from the sunrise sort was fired. The reason? Supervisor Reggie Roach told her she asked too many questions. Again, many co-workers testify that her work was equal to that of other rookies.

The fact is that UPS does not want to hire women. They are only putting them on now due to a pending lawsuit filed by Rita Drapkin. Yet they are using shabby excuses to get rid of these women before they get in the Union.

We protest the grounds on which these workers were fired and believe UPS should be forced to rehire them and make them seniority employees.

REPORT ON WOMEN'S WORK IN STEEL--Sara B.

This will be a brief report on women's work in steel. Because the steel comrades have been very busy lately I am preparing this report based on conversations with members of the fraction. The women's commission has requested that the steel fraction write up a perspective on women's work in steel and it will hopefully be ready in a month.

We have members in steel in three areas: Gary, Clairton, and Cleveland. Of these, our women comrades are at one mill in Gary and at Clairton (in the near future we will probably have openings for women's work by women contacts or members in Cleveland and at the other Gary mill also). All 4 of the IS women have about 1 1/2 years or less seniority.

Hiring of women in steel has occurred mainly within the last 2 years as a result of the consent decree, which also required hiring and advancement of blacks and other minorities. Because women were new to the mills, they faced conditions in the mill that were set up just for men. The washroom campaigns which we initiated both in Gary and Clairton were naturals because there were NO washroom facilities for women. It was an extremely popular issue, it involved a lot of women with us, and it succeeded. But at the same time we found that the campaign burned out many women. Some of the reasons can be attributed to the fact that turns or frequent shift changes are very hard on women (for all the reasons we know, family responsibilities, etc.); we found that it was hard to mobilize women around non-immediate issue and found it hard to translate victory on this issue to an ongoing group or to the Sadlowski campaign; and at least in Gary, the fights within the washroom group between us and the other radicals played a destructive role.

While the consent decree opened up the mills to women, it doesn't guarantee that the women will last on the job. And the bosses have naturally been making it hard for women, saying during probation that they can't do the work. Before the Sadlowski Campaign, we got involved in this problem a bit. A friend, a working class woman in Pittsburgh, has been gathering names of women who have had harassment problems. This area is getting more attention from the Fraction now. It appears that a campaign against women has begun in Clairton in the last few weeks. In Gary, the Women's Caucus which we helped form (official union committee, members appointed) wants to set up orientation groups for new women hires and has gotten permission from the Local to use the Local facilities (this Local is controlled by McBride forces). They will be getting ready for new hires which are expected soon. The approach may be different in Clairton because there isn't a women's caucus there.

A structure of women's caucuses, women's department, does not exist in the USI. An opening for caucuses was created by the Sadlowski campaign, but only in District 31 (Gary, Chicago). The District 31 Women's

Steel-- p. 2

Committee began in January when a luncheon was held. We initiated most of the activities of the District 31 W.C. but it is CP women who have the power to get things into motion (the CP is deeply entrenched in the community, they have members in many unions, or know people in the area and in the Democratic Party). There are also McBride forces in the Committee. We initiated the luncheon as well as a newsletter, and Debby is going to be its editor. The District 31 W.C. got money from the District to help send steelwomen to Washington April 26-27 for the Senate maternity bill hearings. About 30 women went. McBride forces tried to cancel this trip by saying that they would mobilize women to go to Washington in August or Sept. when it is expected that the bill will reach the floor of Congress. Our plans for women's work in Gary are to use the maternity issue and the District Committee's activities on the issue to put us back on the map in the local so as to build a local women's committee. Then the focus will be on the problems of new hires as mentioned earlier.

The maternity issue has been used in Clairton as articles in Steelworkers Stand Up. Other issues that could be brought up might be on health and safety issues as Clairton is a coke mill and has very bad conditions.

The fraction also need to work on building an I.S. presence in the work.