

RADICAL WOMEN MANIFESTO:

Theory, Program, & Structure

Radical Women Publications
Seattle, Washington

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THEORY, PROGRAM AND STRUCTURE

Revised April, 1973

I. PREAMBLE

Introduction:

The status of women in the United States is as much one of second-class citizenship now as it was fifty years ago, before the vote for women was first won.

American capitalism has proven itself incapable of providing the most elementary democratic rights for women. Instead, the system increasingly depends on the exploitation of women for its very economic survival.

Today, we are still discriminated against in jobs and professions, education, legal status, social freedoms, political life, and family/sexual roles. We are oppressed as a sex and for our sexuality, extremely exploited as workers, and triply oppressed as minority women workers. And this discrimination, despite years of a mass national women's movement, is accelerating daily!

RADICAL WOMEN is an organization of political radicals dedicated to exposing, resisting, and eliminating the inequities of women's existence. But in order to accomplish this task of insuring survival for an entire sex, we must simultaneously address ourselves to the social and material source of sexism: the capitalist form of production and distribution of products, characterized by intrinsic class, race, sex, ethnic and caste struggles. So when we work for the revolutionary transformation of capitalism into a socialist society, we work for a world where ALL people may enjoy the right of full humanity and freedom from poverty, war, racism, sexism, and repression.

We believe, therefore, that liberation of women is inter-related with all the burning injustices that define capitalism. We cannot isolate our struggle by creating a single-issue movement that ignores the multifaceted reality of women's oppression. We comprise at least half of every stratum of the exploited and are part of every struggle for freedom. We experience in life the commonality among all forms of subjugation and their common

origin--the insatiable demands of Capital for profits. All oppressed groups are fighting a common enemy and we must build a movement that can bring the separate struggles together because it is only in unifying that we become strong.

RADICAL WOMEN further believes that the oppression of women is a first-priority political, legal, and economic question. Women's role in the political leadership is decisive to the outcome of all the separate movements, and we are accordingly destined to play a vanguard part in the general movement for revolutionary social change.

We believe that solidarity and mutual aid of all the oppressed are necessary for the genuine liberation of any one sector; that either we are all free, or none of us is free. Only the unity of Black, Chicano, Native American, and Asian American liberation fighters, the working class, the youth resistance, the women's movement, sexual minorities, the GI movement, prisoners, the aged, and all those repressed by capitalism can free us from our collective oppression. Nevertheless, we cannot and will not acquiesce to male chauvinism in the guise of an unreal "class unity" or "ethnic group unity" or "peace movement unity" or any other kind of unity that denies the special exploitation of women workers, and ignores the distinctive oppression of women as an entire sex.

"Unity" that is not based on respect for the different levels of oppression within society is arrogant, false, and eventually self-defeating. Blind "unity" perpetuates the caste differences between the privileged and unprivileged workers, and tends to emphasize the demands of the more fortunate workers at the expense of the greater needs of the most exploited.

"Unity" at OUR expense is not unity at all, but perpetuation of women's subordination under a pretentious and hypocritical label.

As political radicals, we organize towards and anticipate a revolutionary new America, re-born free.

As women, we organize towards and anticipate a new historical level of human relations based on equality and mutual respect.

As RADICAL WOMEN, we understand and promulgate the concept that THE WOMAN QUESTION IS A DECISIVE ISSUE IN THE UNFOLDING OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, because the special and peculiar exploitation of women in the United States has created a specially oppressed sex whose potential for revolt and capacity of leadership are second to none.

The current leadership of the women's movement is largely student, professional, middle-class, and white. But the movement was founded by radicals, and its future leadership will emerge from the vast ranks of militant women from the working class and from ethnic and sexual minorities.

These women are doubly-exploited and triply-exploited; they come into direct and daily conflict with bosses on the job, and with racists and sexists on every level of life. They develop a keener awareness and consciousness of the triple nature of oppression--class, race, and sex--than is possible for most white, non-working, middle-class women.

The raw battle for sheer survival in the everyday world of imperialist America has equipped minority women, women workers, and lesbians with a talent for discipline and respect for theory because the life of the ghetto woman, the working mother, and the independent woman depends upon clear-headedness, self-control, and organization. They accordingly demand these qualities in any movement that claims to be mature and realistic and they have no patience for idlers, triflers, coquettes, leeches, and self-seekers within the movement. They have the least to lose and the most to gain in changing capitalism. They are radicalized and tempered by their actual victimization in life, rather than through intellectual choice. Within them exists the inner dynamics that is indispensable to a movement that must challenge the pinnacles of the bourgeois state and ultimately seize the power itself, on behalf of all the humiliated and outcast.

It is precisely such women who are still studying and watching "women's lib" with mingled interest and suspicion--those women who join nothing lightly but are ready to devote their lives completely when they do commit--who are destined for eventual leadership of the entire movement. And it is the historic responsibility of the movement today to make an ideological connection to these women, a connection that always exists in the real world of jobs and worker-minority communities, where women must fight together and in the course of those battles find solidarity and comradeship.

Our struggle for women's emancipation is not an easy one. The changes needed to free women from the bondage of inferior economic and social status involve a prolonged conflict, an endeavor that is met with great hostility and resistance at every step of the way. And the resistance is two-fold: from outside enemies, as well as from within the movement itself, fraught with its own contradictions and inconsistencies.

RADICAL WOMEN knows that the women's movement will have ups and downs, and that only a firm grasp of social theory and organizational principles can provide the ballast to weather the storms ahead. "Radical Women Manifesto--Theory, Program and

Structure" is our guideline for achieving that equilibrium amidst the chaos and corruption of the society around us, a guideline firmly grounded in women's historical past--in our beginning as an oppressed sex.

The Origins of Oppression

In interpreting the origins of the oppression of women, we believe that Engel's anthropological evidence, historical view, and socio-economic analysis provide the most scientific approach. He proves, in his classic work, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (based on Morgan's research with American Indians) that the first division into oppressed and oppressor occurred between male and female as a result of the change-over from communal ownership and female-reckoned descent into private property and the patriarchy. This strikes us as the most logically consistent and historically self-evident explanation of our own past.

The battle of the sexes is ascribed not to any inherent evil in one gender, but to the inexorable development of technology (the forces of production) and the corresponding upheavals in culture and family formations that followed.

To Engels and to Marx, his co-thinker, styles in family and sex relations are variegated, historical and transitory rather than biological, cultural or psychological absolutes. The form of the family is determined ultimately by economics and by property relationships. The family accordingly changes throughout history as social systems replace each other.

Women's position in society stems directly from their role in social production rather than their biology. Women in the "primitive" collective played an equal role in social production and hence shared an equal status with men. Everyone needed to work to insure the survival of the tribe and consequently each person's contribution was considered valuable to the total community. A sexual division of labor prevailed, but equal prestige was accorded to each group. Women were in charge of the camp, and in the process of carrying out their domestic work, they invented the sciences of medicine, agriculture, and architecture, and created the first poetry and government, as the men generally hunted, fished and tended herds away from the tribal camp. Contrary to Freud, women were the creators and carriers of civilization.

Descent, and the inheritance of personal possessions, were reckoned in the female line. Complete democracy and equalitarian decision-making prevailed among members of the tribe, and each tribe was composed of various core groups, or gentes, organized along matrilineal lines--relations being determined by degree of closeness to the mother and sisters. This hegemony of female-kinship groups over property is the (furiously disputed) matriarchy, the dawn of stable social organization among human beings. Its

existence is proven by a vast body of anthropological evidence, based on artifacts, the evolution of mythology, ancient art and literature, and the continued existence in some tribes, to this day, of vestiges of a system of consanguinity (blood relationships) based on mother-right.

It was the original division of labor that was the source of women's power. But it was that same division of labor that, in the process of developing a surplus in the production of the tribe, gave rise to conflict and the subsequent subjugation of the female sex. As the herds, which were male-tended and therefore male-owned, increased significantly and finally yielded a surplus product over and above the survival needs of the tribe, barter between tribes was replaced by the exchange of products for money, with cattle serving as the first money commodity. Wealth amplified--and men owned it.

Men grew more powerful than women in the tribe and in the family because of their differentiation through wealth. Yet they still could not bequeath their new riches to their own offspring. Their profits, in the mother-right family systems, went to their sisters, to the sister's children. So the men were impelled to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance through the female line, and guarantee their children's paternity by insuring "correctness" of inheritance. In a long term, convulsive process described by Engels as "the world historical defeat of the female sex," men effected a fundamental revolutionary social transformation and seized power.

Primitive communism was supplanted by private property, and mother right was overthrown by father right (patriarchy). A brutal system of political control over women was imposed and eventually crystallized with the invention of the State to serve as the ultimate repressive authority. The monogamous family unit emerged as a vicious mechanism devised for the perpetuation of private property through the mandatory sexual fidelity of the wife.

Women became degraded by virtue of their new economic inferiority and dependence into chattel. Along with cattle, slaves, and children, they were privately owned, had no civil rights, and were used for breeding, and providing sexual and domestic services. This enforced monogamy of the wife soon became codified in law, as the state emerged to protect the interest of the new male ruling class. Life-and-death powers were assigned to husbands. And the inevitable corollaries of monogamy--prostitution and adultery--flourished. Soon, women were being bought, sold, and traded in the market place.

With the victory of private property over communal property, the production of goods became divided between social production of commodities for the market, and individual, private domestic labor for the family--the latter performed through the unpaid work of women. This dichotomy between the public and private

character of labor is the actual economic basis of the titanic conflict between men and women. The sexual power politics that expresses this fundamental difference in the economic position of males and females is the inevitable manifestation of the deep-rooted contradiction in social function. The contradiction between private and public labor has been enormously intensified by modern industrial capitalism and by a determined merchandising of female monogamy and the joys of housewifery. Freudianism, systematized into the mystique of "biology is destiny", provided the pseudo-scientific umbrella for the sexual sell. And women grew up denied, distorted, or deranged--acculturated into a schizoid and insipid role.

To Engels, as an historical materialist, the "lower the development of labor, and the more limited also the wealth of society, the more the social order is found to be dominated by kinship groups". As productivity under the matriarchy soars, and wealth and then classes ensue, "the old society founded on kinship groups is broken up. In its place appears a new society in which the system of the family is completely dominated by the system of property, and in which there now freely develop those class antagonisms and class struggles that have hitherto formed the content of all WRITTEN history".

In the vast scale of time, such institutions as the nuclear family, private property, and the State are relatively new developments that have been historically conditioned and necessitated by leaps in technology. But today, says Engels, "We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of classes has not only ceased to be a necessity, but becomes a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they once arose".

Engels is sometimes criticized for parochialism for a viewpoint that relates only to white Western Europe. Nothing could be further from the truth. Engels' historical and materialist method encompasses the general contours of human development on a global scale from pre-historic times through recorded history. His work is replete with examples from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the heart of his methodology is precisely his internationalism: Marxists never approach human history in terms of racial or national differences which are not scientific but rather social categories seen through the funnel of natural resources, technology, and economics--the "mode of production".

Where the form of the family, or the form of government, differ from the bourgeois/monogamous family and the state of the ruling class prevalent in western capitalism, the reason is to be found in the different organization of production and distribution of wealth. In the colonial countries, among American Indians, wherever communal and collectivized societies exist, matriarchal family relations and democratic decision-making are strikingly evident. Variations exist, depending on the degree to which the colonial power found adaptation to bourgeois mores and institutions.

Indeed, "African Socialism" and "American Indian Communalism" are the historical roots and the theoretical norm for modern socialism which harmonizes the liberty, comradery, and equality of primitive communism with an advanced technology and science. It is the mothers of dark skin of this planet who have embodied through the ages the proud and elevated position of women which was our beginning.

WOMEN UNDER CAPITALISM

With the hegemony of patriarchy, the degraded position of women was intensified. Since then, states Engels, the subser-vice of women has gradually been "palliated and glazed over, and sometimes clothed in milder form, but in no sense has it been abolished." The sexism described by Engels has actually become intensified as monopoly capitalism has mushroomed. The compulsion of capitalism for profit has come to "completely dominate the system of the family" (Engels) and of human relations generally, bringing class, sex, and race discrimination to its most widespread, sophisticated, and entrenched stage of development. Marriage and the family, under capitalism have not changed since the beginning of Greek patriarchal monogamy. However, the isolation of the private household, and the social and cultural reinforcements of women's inferior status, have become more complex. Marriage is still a contract governing money relations and insuring paternity. And, as Engels said, "within the family, the husband is the bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat."

The industrial revolution and the emergence of modern capitalism did engender one major advance for women: the re-entry of women into the arena of social, paid commodity production. The advent of female and child labor in the 19th century involved a cataclysmic change in the role of women in the economy. But this revolutionary change was absorbed by the system and turned to the advantage of patriarchal private property and the State. While a few women managed to become economically independent, and many women became emancipated in their habits and attitudes, for the vast majority of women in the labor force, their work skills and advancement opportunities were compromised by the unchanged, decreed female role of breeding, sexual service, and private domestic labor. So the re-entry of women into social production simply doubled women's labor and duplicated, on the job front, the discrimination against them in the home. The unpaid labor of women at home, and women's traditional service role are used to justify lower wages and secondary service jobs--as maids, waitresses, laundry workers, secretaries, garment workers, nurses, and prostitutes. The wife does not have the earning power of the husband, and is often expected to both work and keep house and care for the children. So even where formal legal and economic equality exists, says Engels, "the modern family is founded on the open or concealed domestic slavery of the wife, and modern society is a mass composed of these individual families as its molecules."

Capitalists, indeed, have the best of two worlds: women fulfill the traditional functions in the home, raising children, cleaning, cooking, washing, serving, and packing the husband's lunch so that he can go off to his daily wage exploitation. All this labor is extracted at no expense to the system whatsoever. And precisely because women perform this mass of domestic labor for free, and are considered as slave or cheap labor, they are similarly underpaid and exploited as workers in social production.

It is clear that the capitalist system could not function without the patriarchal nuclear family. The cost to capitalism of equitably paying for both women's domestic labor and women's currently underpaid work in the larger work force would render profit-making impossible.

Yet, the contemporary family is collapsing. One out of three marriages end in divorce, and millions of children are being alienated from their parents. Irresponsible females, or rebellious youth, or both, are usually blamed for this. But the real reason, the materialist root of the phenomenon, is the domination of property relations over human needs, resulting in totalitarian power relations within the family. The family is an economic unit, the cell-form of the highly developed class structure of the total society: where the man is the boss over the woman, crudely or subtly, and both parents dominate the children. All are forced to live together so that property can be acquired and transmitted in a capitalist fashion and as in the larger arena of social production, the class struggle is bound to erupt on the domestic scene within the heart of the family itself. The oppressed members of the family grow increasingly alienated, or hostile, and finally erupt and depart. We have embarked upon the era of drop-out youth and drop-out wives on a massive scale. The drug culture, the "youth" culture, the sexual revolution, and the women's liberation movement are all products in part of the disintegration of the American family.

The contemporary family, moreover, is not only reactionary, unfair, and artificial, it is anti-social. It isolates women from society and from each other, and tends to compete with social organizations for the time and attention of the father and children. As a private detached institution, it breeds an anti-political individualism and non-intervention into social affairs. Working-class families under capitalism have always been far more mobile, far less cemented, than the middle-class family. Among the working class, and the poor in general, no significant property is accumulated, so no material basis exists to require force of inheritance laws. And where the wife works as well, male supremacy tends to wither. A breadwinner can choose her sexual partners and life style. Divorce or separation has been relatively common in the proletarian family since World War II.

Engels foresaw this disintegration of monogamy among the proletariat. "Now that large scale industry has taken the wife out of the home, onto the labor market and into the factory," he wrote, "and made her often the breadwinner of the family, no basis for any kind of male supremacy is left in the proletarian household--except for the brutality towards women that has spread since the introduction of mongamy." And, says Marx, in Capital, "However terrible and disgusting the dissolution, under the capitalist system, of the old family ties may appear, nevertheless, modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between sexes Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both the sexes and all ages, must necessarily, under suitable conditions, become a source of humane development; although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalistic form, where the laborer exists for the process of production, and not the process of production for the laborer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery." Engels concludes his analysis of capitalism, "The peculiar character of the supremacy of husband over wife in the modern family, the necessity of creating real social equality between them, and the way to do it, will only be seen in the clear light of day when both possess legally complete equality of rights. Then it will be plain that the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry and that this in turn demands the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society."

"Full freedom of marriage," states Engels, "can only therefore be generally established when the abolition of capitalist production and of property relations created by it has removed all the accompanying economic considerations which still exert such a powerful influence on the choice of a marriage partner, and on the nature of the relationship itself. For then, and only then, there is no other motive left except mutual inclination."

WOMEN IN AMERICA

Nowhere in the world are the contradictions between what is humane and what is economically necessary more acute than in the United States, because it is here that capitalism is most technologically advanced, and most dependent on the cheap labor of women and minorities to sustain its profits.

The American economy has arrived at its position of supreme power of the capitalist world by a historically unique combination of economic developments. Just as the subjugation of women was the essential element in devising the private property system and its expansion into capitalism and then imperialism, so the brutal massacre of the Native Americans along with the institution of

black slavery in the United States provided the economic head-start that allowed American capitalism to outstrip the rest of the world in the accumulation of land, capital, and technology and productive power.

Slavery, like the monogamous family, was a basically economic institution, which prevailed until it became a hindrance to production and industrial development. Without those 200 years of legal slavery, and the exploitation of black people since emancipation, and without the ever-expanded abuse of women's labor, the United States would never have achieved its super-power status. We must never forget that both American Indian society and the bulk of the African societies from which slaves were lured, kidnapped, or captured, were tribal or confederate matrilineal nations that were communal in their social structure-- and it was this heritage that the white American, Yankee and Southerner alike, corrupted and smashed in their mania for land, for cheap labor, and for profits. The Black family was ripped apart, the Native American family was poisoned by venereal disease and alcohol and the women of both peoples were systematically degraded and crushed to the social level of virtual untouchables--the lowest of the low. Genocide against entire peoples, and venal sadism against the female sex, is the true story of American civilization. Minority people and women still comprise the pool of cheap labor that makes the super-profits of a few white men possible. For minority women, this has meant triple exploitation: as workers, as ethnic minorities, and as women.

The heritage of slavery, racism, and sexism is a deep-rooted stereotype of blacks and women which is used to "justify" our second-class status. We are depicted as dependent, incapable of reasoned thought, intuitive, child-like, cheerfully content, and devoid of any ambition for social achievement or change in our lot. And here, again, black women are doubly victimized, as blacks and as women--seen as biologically inferior on both counts. Black women suffer both sexual and racial servitude in their relations with white male America.

In its insatiable lust for expanding profits, U.S. capitalism not only degrades, dehumanizes, and fosters stereotypes, but proceeds to profit from the stereotype-images themselves. The exploitation of women's bodies as sexual-sells for everything from toothpaste to computers is stock in trade for all industries. This prevalence of women as sex objects not only reinforces the artificial, vapid, and alluring image of white women, but invents a grossly false standard of beauty which further insults women of other ethnic groups. The image of the lesbian as the sexually frustrated, sick, and embittered man-hater has been used to split the feminist movement apart and the stepinfetichit image of blacks perpetrated by the entertainment industry for generations perpetuates racial discrimination and prevents blacks and whites from merging forces and working together against their common exploiters.

The result of race and sex discrimination in the context of capitalist society is a working class that is crippled in its fight against wage exploitation by (1) its own internal racism and sexism, and (2) the constant competition for dwindling jobs and status. Furthermore, the ethnic freedom movements are divided by sexism and some segments of the women's movement itself harbors racist attitudes as well as the dregs of sexism in its attitudes towards lesbians.

Only the clear-sighted grasp of the theoretical truth that in unity there is strength will provide the mechanism for solidarity and victory. And it is the women who are mandated by their particular socio-economic position to serve as the vanguard battalion which will find the road to forging this solidarity. We will find it because we must, and because nobody else needs fundamental social change as much as we, American women of all races and sexual orientations, need it to survive.

REFORM OR REVOLUTION

The origin and depth of our oppression as women implies the solution. In the subjugation sweepstakes, we win; we are the oldest, the largest, the most international, and the most persistently oppressed group of human beings in history. Only titanic social upheaval, with a revolutionary scope unprecedented in human history, can turn the imperialist male supremacist system upside down, restore humanity to economic democracy, and then begin to reconstruct the contours of sexual politics after 5000 years of deformity and counterrevolution.

Sexism is not simply a cancerous growth within the capitalist body. It is the body: it defines and motivates and energizes the body. The roots of sexism, the arena for sexism, and the continuous need for sexism--all lie in the confines of capitalism. The mandate for revolutionary feminists is to transform the birthplace of sexism, the private property system into its opposite and only enemy, socialism, the graveyard of sexism. The bourgeois father of male supremacy must be overthrown and replaced by the matriarchal democracy of socialist economics and a human culture.

For black men and women, whose exploitation has been the central and distinctive feature of U.S. capitalism, its overthrow is logically in order. For the ethnic minorities, the cause and effect relationship between race and historical discrimination, and capitalism is likewise clear. And for women of all races and sexual orientations, the intrinsic connection between sexism and capitalism should be unmistakable. The origins of oppression go back through history to the beginnings of private property and the profound division between private, domestic labor and social, paid labor. Therefore, real equality for women demands not only the death of capitalism and all systems of private property, but the corresponding eradication

of the state-enforced bourgeois monogamous family, the mechanism that perpetuates oppression.

Our freedom can only be achieved under a communally organized, non-profit, cooperative society, where once again goods and services will be nationalized, i.e. owned and produced by all and allocated for common human use. Private ownership of industrial plants and products, and the political power this engenders, must go. The absurd conflict between the "individual" and "society" will then vanish, because they will actually be interdependent, and all children of all races and both sexes will grow up in a world of sharing what the earth and human talent can provide--free from poverty, war, racism, and sexism.

This kind of world has a name which is socialism, of international scope, made feasible by the crucial involvement of the United States and its giant-sized technology. The American Revolution is the key to lasting fundamental change anywhere else in the world.

In spite of the basic and obvious connection between sexism and capitalism, many women militants and movement spokespeople proclaim the imminence of a fundamental reform of sexist malpractices within the system, a reform that will render revolutionary politics irrelevant. We believe they are simply and catastrophically wrong. They ignore the origins of our subjugation, preferring to view male supremacy as an accidental vestige of past culture that will easily be obliterated before the onslaught of their indignation, legislative pressure, legal reform and "reasonable" demands. But their view that equality for women is only just now possible because of advances in technology that have made physical size and strength largely unimportant is, in effect, an admission that women were incapable of functioning on an equal basis before the advent of modern technology, and this is anthropological nonsense.

They refuse to seriously dissect the causes of sexism, because the result of analysis is precisely to gravitate towards radical politics. And, as professionals, or comfortable but dissatisfied housewives, or potential "successes," these women fear and loathe radicalism and the loss of respectability far more than they hate sexism. They dare not jeopardize their status, incomes, and prospects. This is all understandable enough, because women have a hard enough time as it is just surviving, and the labor of winning reforms is vital to us all. But to attempt to corral the mass women's movement inside the Democratic Party can only frustrate, confuse, and demoralize the movement, in a manner similar to what happened with the turn to suffrage as the panacea in the early part of the century. It is absurd and self-defeating to promise women full equality through the good graces of the very two capitalist parties whose survival depends precisely on the capitalist class and its exploitation of women on every level of life. WHEN WILL WE EVER STOP LOVING OUR MASTERS AND JOINING OUR ENEMIES???

It is also outrageous when this sector of the movement resorts to red-baiting and witch-hunting against radical women because of our socialist ideology and accordingly different militant stance and self-determination and often relatively unconventional lifestyles.

Other sectors of the women's movement simply reject politics, all politics, as corrupt, "male-dominated," and a deviation from "pure" feminism. To seek power, they say, is only to imitate men's quest for power, and women must somehow maintain the moral purity that our own powerlessness has supposedly inculcated in us.

To them we submit that the question of power--power over our own lives and political and economic power in society--is the central issue of women's liberation, and to ignore it is tantamount to refusing to struggle against what oppresses us.

It is not power itself that is evil; the problem is the centralization of power in the hands of a few who exploit the rest of us, and the only solution to that problem is to wrest their power away from them by building a mass revolutionary movement capable of seizing that power, and giving it back to the broad masses of working people.

Still other women agree with the radicals that socialism should be, or is preferable to capitalism, but are sincerely skeptical about the probabilities of achieving it. They see the quest for socialism as Utopian, and prefer to spend their energies on more short-range goals. But in this country, reforms are few and far between, and achieved only after herculean effort. And if the reform movement itself does not become radicalized and continue to put on pressure, the reform will only degenerate and create a host of new abuses in its wake. Nothing, in fact, is less realistic, reasonable, moderate, or feasible than the Utopian dream of winning sex equality inside this system.

Yet, the worst trap for serious women, outside of reformist illusions, is cynicism about the tremendous potential of their very own sisters to remake the world--to take the white male, capitalist bull by his vicious horns and slay him, because there is no other alternative and because we can do it. Our prospects are as limitless as our spirit and determination. Women must learn to believe in the power of women.

FEMINISM: CLASS STRUGGLE OR SEX STRUGGLE

The "radical feminists" have decreed that, contrary to Engels, women's oppression was an inevitable result of what they describe as our physical inferiority--our smaller size and lesser physical prowess. Women, they say, were historically oppressed by men

because men were bigger and stronger and could push women around, and because, women, by virtue of their child-bearing function, were slaves of their own biology. Shulamith Firestone, in The Dialectics of Sex, describes in detail the supposed agonies of women in primitive child-bearing, and women's constant death and disease due to our inferior biology. This historical variation of Freud's spurious "biology is destiny" holds that the conflicts between men and women are innate, and that male supremacy is and always has been the fundamental problem of human society, surpassing class and race in depth and historical importance. The quest for power is seen by radical feminists as an inevitable male trait, rather than a relatively recent social phenomenon developing out of the economic needs of private property relations.

Equality for women, they contend, is only now possible due to birth control and cybernetics. Only by abolishing our child-bearing function can we be free, they say, thus implying that our child-bearing functions do, in fact, make us inferior to men.

What is needed, they say, is a pitched battle with men, all men, for control of society. The real revolution, to them, is the sex revolution, in which women will simply overthrow male control of the system--regardless of what the character of the system might be.

In their confusion of biology for history and psychology for culture, "radical feminists" ignore the economic foundations of women's historic exploitation and oppression, claiming that no economic system can guarantee equality for women, because no economic system can guarantee changes in the attitudes and culture of male chauvinism.

Fortunately, the "radical feminists" are wrong--wrong in their historical analysis, and wrong in their conclusions. The facts are that women are and always have been more adaptable and more capable of survival than men, and that the relationship between child-bearing, physical strength, and oppression is a development that is an effect of private property and the evils of an economic system. The key to emancipation for women is given to us by the very history of women in primitive communes where modern value judgements on childbirth and physical size were unheard of, and where equality was determined by women's equal status in the productive labor force of the society. THIS IS STILL THE CASE, AND THAT IS WHY FOR MODERN WOMEN, SOCIALISM, NOT CYBERNETICS, IS THE ROAD TO EQUALITY, BECAUSE ONLY SOCIALISM CAN ONCE AGAIN BRING WOMEN BACK INTO EQUALITY IN SOCIAL PRODUCTION, AND THUS, TO FULL SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND PERSONAL EQUALITY.

WOMEN AND SOCIALISM

Women are the majority of this country, and the majority of the world's population. And we constitute not only an absolute majority, but at least half of every ethnic grouping and every class.

We are the majority of the old and the young: we are the majority of the poor. We are the doubly oppressed half of every oppressed minority, as well as the most economically exploited of American workers. We are potentially the greatest social and political force in the world, because we have the least economic, political, and social stake in the status quo, and the most pressing need for revolutionary social change. **THE NEED AND STRENGTH OF WOMEN IS THE REALITY THAT MUST DICTATE OUR TACTICS.**

Feminism--women's rights--is inseparable from socialism. Capitalism cannot eradicate sexism--or racism or poverty or war or wage exploitation--without killing itself. Recognizing this, oppressed people grope for a socialist solution, and socialism can only come about through revolutionary politics, through a fiercely independent political party of working class and all the other wretched of the earth.

But feminism is not IDENTICAL to socialism. Socialism is a way of re-organizing production, redistributing wealth, and redefining state power in such a manner that the exploiters are expropriated and the workers gain the hegemony so that a new era of cultural freedom and human emancipation may flourish on this earth. Feminism, like all struggles for liberation from a specific type of bondage is a reason for socialism, a catalyst to organize for socialism, and a benefit of socialism. At the same time, feminism is decisive to socialism. Where male supremacy functions, there socialism does not, because socialism, by definition, connotes a higher form of human relations than can possibly exist under capitalism. Initially, primitive communism and feminism interconnected: society was delineated by their integration. Today, feminism as a movement exists. Real, undegenerated, international socialism exists also as a movement (socialism in one country is a contradiction in terms). But separation, even a contradiction, prevails between the two movements, and women radicals must strive to re-mold them into their primal unity, but on a higher historical/cultural level. The inflammatory question "Which is first?" is just inflammatory and not a real question. Feminism and socialism are related inextricably. It is the strategic part to the whole. Authentic socialism and principled feminism are consistent, interdependent, and harmonious at every point.

Revolutionary feminism demands the direct intervention of women into the class struggle. Women must use job action and political organization as a means of gaining reforms necessary for survival. It is only by our direct intervention that the

labor movement, radical movements, ethnic/racial movements, and sexual minority movement can be pressured to come to grips with our issues, which are also their issues. On the other hand, we must work to radicalize the feminist movement and educate them to the multi-issue nature of our movement, which means to teach it the need to make common cause with working women, the working class, and revolutionary politics.

There is clearly no point in hiding our ideology in order to "bring women along slowly," as though they were stumbling sheep. We must orient towards socialism NOW, given the present high level of awareness and intense interest of women in the United States and given the simple fact that the socialist alternative is the only solution which makes sense for women. It embodies a goal that is catalytic and momentous enough to mobilize the most serious women and to convey dedication and durability to them. The leadership that comes from such strength and dedication, ultimately, is capable of mobilizing, in turn, the great masses when they grow ready to move as a whole.

Women don't need extended bridges into radical politics. To keep telling them that they do is not only dishonest, but infantilizing and paralyzing. These "bridges" become detention centers where forward motion is deliberately prevented. Women are kept from the fullest understanding of the political implications of their own oppression by a manipulative and elitest political leadership who use the mass movement for recruiting individuals with "potential." Meanwhile, the movement itself is abandoned to endless action on an opportunistic treadmill that goes nowhere. These coalitions based on lowest common-denominator threads are cobwebs that constantly dissolve and break. They are really an insult to women, even when other women, innocently or deliberately, foment them.

After years of listening to feminist social engineers obsessed with bridge building to the masses, Radical Women can only wonder where all these "new women" are now. Many, unfortunately, have dropped out of the movement demoralized by the futility they experienced because no one offered them an alternative. They came into the movement radicalized by their experience as women, as lesbians, or as both, only to find a political leadership that was unwilling or unable to address itself to that experience with a correspondingly radical alternative. That initial burst of energy that we all experience when we first gain a feminist consciousness must be tempered with theory and organization to withstand the long and difficult struggle ahead. And it is the opportunism of a political leadership that does not recognize that the female experience itself is profoundly radicalizing which hold back the movement by not providing the revolutionary doctrine to illuminate the root causes of our oppression, indicate the solutions and offer a directional strategy and realistic guideline to tactics that can help us achieve full liberation.

The truth is that in women of all ages and colors lies a vast potential for revolutionary strength and leadership, at a time in history when strength and leadership are most urgently needed. For women to do less than assume this leadership, on our own behalf, and in our own interests as women, workers, as ethnic minorities, as minority sexualities, would be to hold back the revolutionary movement and prolong not only our own suffering, but the suffering of oppressed people all over the world.

The future of humanity depends on OUR commitment to taking the responsibility for leading the struggle to transform the capitalist system into a socialist democracy for all. Women--socialism--internationalism--these are interconnected in theory and in life.

II. PLATFORM

I. Legal Rights

American women are not recognized in law as equals with men. The law is sexist, and judicial interpretations are sexist. Until the Federal ERA is passed, nothing whatsoever exists in the United States Constitution to guarantee women's equal rights. Single or divorced women face constant prejudice and discrimination in every area of business transactions: renting or buying housing; credit accounts and loans; auto and home insurance; etc., all justified in part by women's supposed "emotionalism" and consequent instability, and, in part, because women are not paid enough to "qualify" for many financial transactions.

We demand:

A. Unconditionally equal treatment under the law for all women regardless of age, marital status, race, sexual orientation, and income level.

B. Complete overhaul of marriage and divorce laws, allowing for legal co-habitation and for divorce granted on the single grounds of incompatibility which would be incontestable by either party. Contested child custody and community property disputes should be resolved by a qualified family commission composed of professionals and laywomen acceptable to both parents. No lawyer should be involved in any aspect of divorce or child custody and no fees should be charged.

C. Married women should be able to keep their own names and their own independent legal identity.

II. For Biological Self-Determination

Under capitalism, women's minds and bodies are considered the property of men. To gain control over our lives we must take back our minds and bodies. We will no longer place our mental and physical health in the hands of the insensitive and sexist health care system. We refuse to submit our sexuality to the scrutiny of our oppressors.

We demand:

A. The availability of free birth control information and the distribution of pills or devices to all who request them.

B. No forced sterilization or experiments on women without their knowledge and consent.

C. Free abortion on demand to any woman who requests one, including women under the age of 18.

D. The human right of all women to good, informative, preventive and free health care.

E. The human right to free and adequate mental health care without the debilitating and dehumanizing pressure to conform to traditional female sex roles.

F. An end to the double standard of sexual morality in all facets of life. Our sexuality and our nature is for us to determine; we define ourselves. Fundamental to the liberation of women is our right as free individuals to exercise control over our own bodies on the basis of our own judgement.

G. The right of married women to extra-marital sexual relations free from the criminal sanction of "adultery."

H. The human right of unmarried women to enjoy sexual self-expression and free sex lives, untrammelled by the furious pressure of social prejudice and vicious regulatory laws.

III. Rights of Children

The bearing and nurturance of children is only one part of a woman's total life activity, and children should not be her private responsibility alone. Society itself must assume responsibility for its young in order to socialize them and allow the parents a greater degree of personal liberty. The individual mother-love and obsession with children forced on today's mothers are disastrous for everyone involved.

We demand:

A. Free child life centers staffed by professionally trained personnel and aides, open 24 hours a day to all children regardless of the social status of their parents or the reasons for bringing the children there.

B. Free medical and dental care for all children.

C. Open and equalitarian education that includes instruction on real history, the creative and performing arts, and sex education, in an atmosphere of civil liberties for all viewpoints and respect for dissidence and non-conformity.

D. An end to curriculum that perpetuates stereotyped sex roles.

IV. Education

Women are doubly discriminated against in this area. Not only are we denied equal opportunity in the free choice of academic fields of study as a result of cultural conditioning and occupational closed doors, but our own history as a sex is ridiculed and/or ignored in the prevailing curriculum.

We demand:

- A. Equal opportunity in all academic fields and all skills; training schools for professional, service, and industrial occupations.
- B. An end to special educational requirements for each sex, i.e. Home Economics, Family Living, Grooming, etc., for women, and industrial craft skills for men only.
- C. Free education for all, at all levels, and free nursery schools and day care on every campus.
- D. Teaching of the truth about the struggle for women's emancipation and its interactions with other struggles for human rights.
- E. An expose of the biological-cultural-religious myths about women's "nature" which purport to be "scientifically" based on psychoanalysis, functionalism in sociology, and social anthropology, and a national campaign against male chauvinist ideology in the schools.
- F. Ample government stipends to women students who must support families.
- G. Accelerated courses and waivers on standard entrance qualifications for women returning to school after years away from it.

V. Economic Equality

The re-entry of women into the world of work on every level and on an equal footing with men is the essential lever for the achievement of social equality. Economic dependence, on men or on welfare, is fundamentally contradictory to freedom and independence. To control our own lives, we must control our own livelihood.

We demand:

- A. Affirmative action in employment and promotion.
- B. The right to enter all unions, participate fully in training and apprenticeship programs, and leadership functions.
- C. Equal pay for equal work.
- D. Free, 24 hour child life centers on or near the job, with educational, recreational and medical facilities.
- E. Paid pregnancy leave without loss of benefits, seniority and job status.

VI. Politics

Winning the vote has not given women equality in political life. In the mainstream of American political life, women still function in special "ladies auxiliaries" whose function is subordinate to and supportive of male politicians. Women who do enter political life are constantly treated as little more than legislative decorations and novelties, and seen as threatening competition by their male colleagues.

The radical movement has been little better in this respect. The emergence of the dynamic black women leaders in the South was brutally suppressed by movement men, and the vast potential of both black and white women for leadership repressed and/or ignored by the entire movement.

We demand:

A. The right to equal participation in political life and equality in leadership functions.

B. An immediate end to male chauvinist practices and habits among both the ethnic-minority and white radicals. The hypocrisy and ultimate futility of organizations espousing freedom while they practice un-democracy is self-evident; a revolutionary movement for freedom must be led by free and equalitarian organizations if it is to be viable to the masses it seeks to organize, and if it hopes to establish a society based on its own principles.

C. We demand of women legislators that they act responsibly in the interests of their sex.

D. Independent political action of women, minorities, sexual minorities, and working people organized around the needs of the most oppressed.

VII. Racial and Ethnic Minorities

The same system that oppresses women is responsible for the subjugation of racial and ethnic minorities. We are all used as cheap grist for the profit-making mills of American Capital.

Minority women experience the most intense forms of oppression because they are discriminated against on three counts--their race, their sex and their class. They embody and reflect the needs of all oppressed people. And as such, none of us will achieve true equality until minority women are free and equal.

The leadership role of minority women is decisive to the coming revolutionary period. They have the most to gain and the least to lose from the destruction of American capital. It is their seriousness and dedication born out of years of struggle against the racist and sexist ruling class that will provide the dynamic and direction towards unity and eventual liberation.

We demand:

- A. An end to all forms of social, legal, political and economic race discrimination.
- B. Affirmative action in hiring, promotional and educational opportunities for all ethnic and racial minority peoples.
- C. An end to racism in the white radical movements. For too long the ethnic minority movements have been asked to ignore their specific concerns and rally around the demands of the "working class" which is defined as white-male trade unionists. The entire movement must realize that we cannot achieve a meaningful unity by pandering to the most privileged and reactionary elements of the struggle. Rather, we must unite around the demands of the most oppressed and, in so doing, meet the demands of all of us.

VIII. Welfare Mothers

The limited opportunities offered women in this society have forced many to become dependent upon welfare for their economic survival. This is particularly the case for minority women who, because of their race and sex, have little if any opportunity to go to school or find a decent paying job. Welfare breeds passivity and dependency, alienating women from the work experiences that build strength and self-sufficiency. If women are ever to achieve equality, they must be afforded the opportunity for training and economic independence.

We demand:

- A. Guaranteed annual wage to women in particular and all people in general.
- B. Immediate cessation of the forced work fare programs that use economic intimidation to force women to work for sub-standard wages in jobs not of their own choosing. Women are being used as a cheap pool of labor to break the labor movement and produce super-profits for big business.
- C. Equal access to training programs in all occupational areas rather than just in the stereotypical "woman's" fields.
- D. Fair grievance procedures with free legal support to all welfare recipients.
- E. Free, 24 hour quality child care with transportation and three full meals provided.

IX. Lesbianism

Any woman who refuses to submit to the chains of monogamy and the accompanying "feminine mystique" is charged with moral perversion, psychological derangement and hopeless inadequacy. This is particularly the case for lesbians who have gone so far as to prefer women rather than men.

Lesbians have suffered under tremendous moral, legal, economic, social and political sanctions for refusing to accept the oppressive norms of society. They face the most intense forms of sexism and until they have achieved the right to self-determination, no woman will be free.

The life experiences of lesbians who have survived by their own wits against a brutally oppressive and hostile society has produced a large number of independent, strong, and capable women. Within these women lies a vast potential for dedicated and resourceful feminist leadership that can provide energy and strength to the movement as a whole.

We demand:

A. An end to the social, political, moral, legal, and economic discrimination against lesbians.

B. An end to the vicious and destructive portrayal of lesbians by the media. The image of lesbians as sick and depraved is consistently used to divide the movement. We must be insistent in our denouncement of such tactics and resist the social and cultural oppression they produce.

C. An immediate halt to police harassment.

D. The right of lesbian mothers to care for and raise their children.

E. The right of women to care for other women free from the moral and psychological intimidation of an uptight, male-dominated society.

F. The recognition on the part of the feminist movement that the oppression of lesbians is a concern of all women.

X. Older Women

The plight of older women in our society is an accumulation and intensification of the discrimination and exploitation faced by women throughout our lives. All the self-righteous testimonials about "Mom" and "apple pie" cannot hide the fact that women over 65 are the poorest sector in the United States. The hard work and poverty endured by women while we are younger results only in more poverty and social isolation when we are older. The inadequate wages women earn while working yield correspondingly inadequate Social Security benefits leaving us stranded in the face of increasing costs of health care and the general increase in the cost of living. What little social recognition given women for our domestic and reproductive services is withdrawn after menopause and we are coldly discarded by the rest of society as having outlived our function. The dehumanizing poverty and isolation suffered by older women is an insult to all women and a crucial component of our struggle for liberation.

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

We demand:

- A. A guaranteed annual wage to all retired people in general and to retired women in particular.
- B. Free medical care.
- C. Free transportation.
- D. Free, well-staffed nursing homes that provide quality care rather than custodial care.
- E. The right of women to a useful and productive life regardless of their age.

XI. Young Women

Young women in this society are doubly oppressed because of their sex and their age. They are prisoners of their families and their education. They are subjected to brutal sex-role socialization designed to limit their abilities, restrict their opportunities and destroy their sense of self-worth. They are denied the basic right of self-determination. Their sex marks them for oppression and their age renders them defenseless against it. Under capitalism, they are objects to be used as their parent/owners see fit. Their struggle against the confines of the nuclear family is essential to the liberation of all women.

We demand:

- A. The right of young women to determine their own roles, their own sexuality and their own direction free from the sexist authority of their families and their schools.
- B. Free abortion and contraceptives to all women regardless of their age.
- C. The establishment of collective homes where young women can live and grow with their peers and adult sympathizers if they choose to leave their families.
- D. An immediate halt to the social intimidation and institutionalization of young women for their sexual activities.

XII. For Legalization of Prostitution

Prostitution is a basic corollary of bourgeois monogamy, middle-class morality and puritanism. Given the establishment's necessity for the maintenance of the male-dominated monogamous marriage system, and the ethic that all sex outside marriage is illicit, prostitution will continue to exist until marriage practices and moral values are revolutionized.

Again, women are the victims--lacking job training, skills, or education, women become prostitutes, and as prostitutes, face overwhelming economic, legal, and moral oppression. The illegality of their trade leaves them open to the super-exploitation of their parasitic bosses, the pimps; they are constantly harassed and abused by the police and the courts, and middle-class ethics labels them as the lowest of criminals.

We demand:

- A. The immediate and unconditional legalization of prostitution.
- B. The right of prostitutes to control their own earnings, free from the parasitism of pimps.
- C. The right of prostitutes to police protection.
- D. Free medical care and check-ups for prostitutes as they desire them.

XIII. Rape

Women experience violence every day of their lives. Our minds and our bodies are continually subjected to the arbitrary and often ruthless whims of the men who hold power over us--our bosses, our husbands, our fathers, our co-workers. Rape is an extension of that male prerogative. Any woman is fair game to any man. All of our lives we are trained to present ourselves as sexual objects and then when we are raped and protest it to the authorities, our socialization is thrown back at us and we are accused of having asked for it. The insensitive treatment of victims of rape by the police, by the medical profession and by the courts stems from that same rapist mentality--only this time it is hidden behind a smokescreen of officialdom and sanctioned by the state. The fact is that power is in the hands of men and it depends upon the violent and inhumane exploitation of women to sustain itself. We can free ourselves from that violence only by joining together, seizing the power and building a society where no one's survival depends upon the violence done to another.

We demand:

- A. The right to walk the streets alone without being in fear for our lives.

B. Full police protection of rape victims and the immediate investigation of all reported rapes.

C. The prosecution of all rapists with the burden of proof placed in the hands of the authorities, not the victim.

D. Free, sympathetic health care for all rape victims who should not be subjected to the self-righteous moral indignation of a society that created the problem in the first place.

XIV. The Media and the Culture

Radio, television, and the press all regurgitate a daily sickness of prejudice against women. Women are portrayed as stupid, frivolous, inept fools, manipulating seductresses, or simple-minded sex-objects. We are used to sell anything and everything by virtue of our "sales appeal."

Male chauvinism has become ingrained in the American culture; most men accept and live by it automatically, and most women do likewise, despite their obvious confusion, frustration and misery.

We demand:

A. That the media cease and desist from imposing upon the American public and most particularly American children, this sick and distorted image of women and women's roles.

B. That advertisers stop using women as sexual salesmen for their products.

C. That the media present serious coverage of the struggle for women's rights on all levels.

* * * * *

Women constitute the most subjugated stratum of every oppressed sector of the class. We know from our daily struggle to survive the most intense forms of racism, sexism and wage exploitation. Our demands incorporate the needs of all the poor, disadvantaged, and exploited. Our banner and our movement signal a new age for revolutionary struggle. Out of the momentum and leadership of women throughout the world will arise a new society based on the needs of people, not profit--where freedom, equality and social justice will prevail.

III. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PRINCIPLES

Radical Women is a serious, democratic and structured organization.

Our structural format is a direct product of our need for solidarity in the face of oppression, of our positive program for the liberation of our sex, and our contention that women's liberation is a decisive issue in the general movement for a revolutionary America.

The women's movement, to exist, to survive, and to be taken seriously, must serve as a model of the dynamic inter-relationship between the freedom of the individual and the collective function of the group as a whole. This imposes upon us a responsibility for insuring complete democratic rights and disciplined organizational practices within our own movement. We view democracy and structure not as contradictions, but as complementary and interconnected.

A truly democratic organization is one in which the membership is the highest decision-making body. Since alliances of independent and non-conformist individuals rarely achieve unanimity on every issue, the membership asserts its will through the medium of the majority vote to decide upon a unified policy for the group. But the vote-taking cannot be meaningfully done short of a free, open and intensive discussion of disputed issues. Only when a full discussion of the issues has taken place openly in a full membership meeting can the vote be taken and the policy decided.

The minority on any issue is entitled to full respect for its views, an open-minded consideration of its position, and the right to request reopening of the discussion on an issue when it feels such discussion is necessary and productive for the organization.

Public unity in action is made possible without violating anyone's individual rights through the medium of a dual-level organizational life: internal and public. Disputed issues still unresolved within the organization are not debated publically. Members, of course, are free to propound personal opinions on issues not directly within the purview of Radical Women's program. Minority opinions cannot be presented as the policy of the organization. Public spokespeople must present the majority views of the organization or the organization is misrepresented and distorted, and the majority deprived of its rights.

Mutual aid and group support are our highest ethic. Cooperative and respectful relations are indispensable if we are to project an undistorted image of our identity and purpose. This tone and approach governs internal discussion, differences, and debates, and can best be characterized as "comradely."

Radical Women aspires to creative democracy, rationality and objectivity. Sensible discipline is based on mutual respect and

ready willingness to experiment, innovate and reconsider every aspect of our program and structure. We consider ourselves a developmental movement in the midst of a changing social order, and we intend to combine the necessity of rules with the flexibility to adapt them to a fluid situation. Full democracy in decision-making and full solidarity in taking care of the organization's business -- this is our organizational norm and standard.

BY-LAWS

I. Membership

General agreement with the program, structure, and by-laws of the organization is the condition for membership. A prospective member will request membership by asking that her name be submitted to the full membership for a vote. Each member is expected to actively participate in the organization's activities and incorporate her politics into her life.

II. Leadership

The membership elects a leadership that is responsive and responsible to it, replaceable by it, and conferred with sufficient authority to function effectively between membership meetings.

A. Executive Committee

The Executive consists of the chief officers and any number of other members, the total size to be determined by the current needs of the organization.

The Executive will work out proposals to the membership on perspectives, policy, tactics, and education and actions; conversely, it will consider all proposals referred to it by the membership.

The Executive is the responsible body between meetings of the membership.

B. Officers

The officers will be the President, Financial Director, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Publicity Director, Membership Co-ordinator, Literature Director, Office Manager, Educational Director, Special Events Coordinator, and any other posts deemed necessary at any time by the membership.

Officers will be elected by majority vote of the membership. Nominations will take place one meeting prior to the election; written notification of the nominating meeting and the election must be sent to all members one week prior to the event.

The President will function as the chief spokeswoman, representative, organizer, and administrator of the organization. She will have final decision on administrative and policy questions involved in the work of the other

officers between meetings, and must approve all activities of a public nature and all matters involving policy that comes up between membership and Executive meetings. The President is the responsible individual between meetings of the Executive.

The Recording Secretary will be responsible for the minutes which record the agenda, decisions, and proposals of the membership meetings and executive committee meetings, maintaining them in an orderly and legible fashion, keeping them available to the officers and membership, and duplicating them in quantity whenever necessary.

The Corresponding Secretary will be responsible for all communication with feminist and social activist groups and individuals on both a national and international scale. She will handle all requests for information and will maintain a current file of feminist and other relevant publications.

The Financial Director will be responsible for banking and accounting for the organization's funds, recording and collecting dues, pledges, donations, and other income, and preparing regular reports and recommendations to the Executive and the membership on the financial status of the organization.

The Membership Director will inform interested women of the procedures and requirements for joining Radical Women. She will be responsible for greeting each new person who comes to a meeting and contacting them afterwards. She will maintain a current mailing and phone list of all members and distribute it regularly to the membership. She will coordinate mailing for all special events.

The Literature Director will be responsible for publishing and displaying Radical Women publications. She will maintain a reference library containing important feminist newspapers, pamphlets, periodicals, position papers and books.

The Office Manager is responsible for the upkeep and functioning of the office. She must keep an adequate amount of office supplies; set and enforce office hours for members, and set up the hall before each meeting.

The Educational Director will co-ordinate the educationals for each meeting. She will work closely with the members giving them assistance in preparing educationals and evaluating their presentation.

The Special Events co-ordinator will work closely with members who are organizing an event or social. She will

provide information, assistance and advice regarding the basics of organizing.

C. Special Posts and Committees

Special assignments and committees may be established and staffed by the President, the Executive Committee and/or the membership. In the case of the first two, these appointments must be subsequently approved by the membership.

III. Terms of Office and Annual Reviews

All terms of office are for one year. Annual reviews will evaluate the work of the past year and set the perspectives for the coming period. Elections will be held at a general membership meeting for the coming period.

Special workshops, conferences, etc. may be scheduled at the discretion of the membership on either public or internal subjects.

IV. Finances

Regular and dependable financing is necessary in order to rationally plan activities and to publish and disseminate our ideas and proposals. The initiation fee will be \$1.00. Dues will be \$2.00 per month for working women and members who can afford it, and \$0.50 per month for unemployed members or those on welfare. Special pledges and assessments may be levied for special needs at the discretion of the membership.

V. Discipline

A member who violates the organization's principle of mutual aid, group support, and solidarity in action constitutes a threat to the morale, seriousness, and stability of the organization. Our effectiveness as an organization working for the liberation of women through the building of a viable women's movement depends upon our consistent and careful adherence to democracy within our organization, and solidarity in the public eye. Individual members who operate in an arbitrary and disruptive fashion or who misrepresent the policy of the organization, will be formally requested to desist from these practices, and the reasons made clear to them. If an individual persists in these violations of solidarity, the membership, by a majority vote, has the right to protect the organization by asking her to leave it.

VI. Ethics and Mutual Responsibilities

Radical Women grew out of the growing feeling among women radicals that an injustice to one was an injury to all, and that solidarity in action, backed up by the power of an organization, would affirm our cause to the radical movement and the general public.

This means that we owe each other mutual respect, loyalty, understanding and support in our united and individual confrontations with male supremacy on every level of life. This further confers upon us the responsibility of distinguishing between real and alleged chauvinism and prejudice and the maturity to conceive and implement effective and functional tactics of resistance, education, and expansion of our roles and rights. Our purpose is not mutual commiseration but the qualitative selection of meaningful issues as the basis for struggle and the achievement of victory.

WHERE TO FIND RADICAL WOMEN

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RADICAL WOMEN PUBLICATIONS

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