

# **DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS**

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**CL REPORT PROBLEMS OF  
WOMEN AS ORGANIZERS**

## Problems of Women As Organizers in Industry

This paper will attempt to present some of the main problems of female cadre as organizers in industry. Since the bourgeoisie has used the fascist ideology of male supremacy to divide the working class, this oppression and inequality that women face in general cannot help but influence and lay the basis for the problems presented here. This report will be divided into three parts: organizing in the Union, in the shop, and plant caucuses.

In the Union, (in particular U.A.W. and Steelworkers), the reactionary trade union misleaders champion the cause of male supremacy. One way they carry this out is by ignoring the question of women and creating forms of organization inside the Union designed to divert women from the mainstream of the political struggle. For example the Womens' Commission (U.A.W.) within the local of a large auto plant has no political voice and no political struggle. The role of the Womens Commission was to do the catering at the Union banquet, decorating the union hall for Christmas and other parties and other mundane tasks which reinforce the role of women in the kitchen and the nursery. This affects our work because while on the one hand, this could have been a good in-road to the trade union struggle, it offered no avenue for going deeper into the class struggle with political work.

Further, a female cadre raised the Watergate resolution, overwhelmingly united with and accepted by the rank and file as well as the union officials. At this point, the President extolled the cadre to the heights, saying how exceptional she was and that she would be an asset to the union. This tactic served to isolate her from the rank and file, it was an attempt to get her on the "President's team", to hush her up. But, on the other hand (and this is the main tactic used) when a woman cadre or advanced woman worker wants to struggle, the President of whoever is presiding will deliberately not call on her. He will call on a man even though he may raise as many struggles. A clear example of this is that since the Watergate resolution has been raised, the same female cadre is either the last to be recognized or totally ignored.

### In The Shops

One of the basic problems that has to be dealt with is the organization of forces inside the shop. Again, in making every factory our fortress the principal aspect faced by women cadre is male supremacy. Concretely the problems divide into 1) Organizing men 2) Organizing women 3) White chauvinism, particularly because the majority of the women involved are national minorities. In general while it is our specific duty to raise the political consciousness of the class as a whole, we face problems that are particular to men than those of women.

For example, in dealing with women we find that in general they aren't active in discussing political matters (current events, etc.) and because of their political backwardness they tend to shun away from being politically active. Both objectively because of ties to the domestic situation (i.e., principal supporter of the household) or subjectively because of male supremacy their political and intellectual growth is stunted.

In dealing with men also because of male supremacy the women cadre are not seen as possible political leaders and are therefore many times isolated from political discussions as a whole, (Example: Talk among themselves by male workers talking to women only about petty matters) which can lead to and has in fact leads to passivity on the part of the cadre. But on the other hand women who do struggle are faced with being branded as a "women libbers" and get comments like "you women always complain" or "you wanted womens' lib, now you got it so take the consequences." And you don't necessarily have to be talking about the oppression of women. Also in organizing men comes the problem of establishing a political relationship as the principle aspect. Even though social relationships play an important part, we have to struggle that a political relationship between a male and female doesn't end up just social. For example, one cadre had established a political contact and had been making progress but also wanted to establish a social relationship. Soon the desire for a social relationship by the contact took the principal aspect resulting in the withering away of the political struggle and constant harrassment of the cadre. Thus a split resulted and the loss of a contact.

On chauvinism, we find that in particular since the majority of the women cadre are national minorities with the exception of one, we are faced with white chauvinism which hampers the organizing of anglo-american men and women. It manifests itself concretely as privileges given to both anglo-american men and women, such as in the case of two pregnant women one afro-american and the other Negro national minority. The anglo-american woman bushed a broom and rested 4 hours out of the day while the Negro national minority women had to work standing up and bending over picking up ten pound pieces continuously. This ideology is the principal prop of USNA imperialism and a desperate struggle has to be waged to secure the leadership of the advanced section of the proletariat. You can't struggle against white chauvinism unless it is connected with the political struggle of workers in general. Only in that way will the national minorities and especially the anglo-american workers see the concrete divisions and weakening of the class from white chauvinism.

### Organizing in Plant Caucuses

The problems of caucus work are two-fold, both ideological and practical. For the most part the struggle has to be waged against male supremacy, white chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism, not only to inject consciousness in the political struggles but to insure the cohesion of the group.

There is a tendency for some of the men to try and run the show and lay the base for the women to fall back into passivity. Also all secretarial tasks are left up to women while the men make decisions. A vast majority of the times discussion points made by women are not valid and are sometimes repeated exactly by a male member only to be held as a brilliant idea. We could go on but it would only further emphasize the need to demand recognition and leadership of the women. The need to raise the political consciousness of both men and women so both can see the need for uniting on correct political ideology.

These are some problems of organizing as women cadre in industry. The following will be a brief summation of the experiences and solutions we have acquired during the last year.

The problems of women organizing the working class in the factories both large and small is indispensible from the problems and methods of organizing in general. From this point of view it is necessary for us to redouble our education in general and in particular to master "Letter to a Comrade," Lenin "On Trade Unions" and other theoretical works by the masters.

Based on the experience we have acquired, we propose the following solutions for us in particular and all comrades in general:

(a) On the question of union work it is necessary to be honest and consistent, particularly in the use of leaflets as a prerequisite for gaining the confidence of the class.

(b) On the question of the struggle against male supremacy, white chauvinism, and for the emancipation of women, we must take the leadership, be politically active, and especially guard against passivity and fight for the unity of the class.

(c) On the question of the "left" deviation, we must unite in order to struggle and educate and ground ourselves to understand the urgent needs of the class so as not to run ahead.

In summing up, women cadre have to guard against syndicalism, organizing women just because they are women themselves, as their main strategy. This was one of our principal errors. A plan of strategy has to be worked out taking into account condition, time and place. And above all, women cadre have to take up the whole of the struggle of the class. The woman question is just a part of the class struggle. We as communists have to raise every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, violence and abuse. Only then can we raise the banner of "workers and oppressed people of the world unite," advance the cause of the proletariat, and build a multi-national independent communist party.