

On Proletarian Feminism

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What I aim to talk to you about today is how as Communists, and therefore as Marxist-Leninist-Maoists, principally Maoists (MLMs), we must approach the question of women's emancipation and, more broadly, of ending all patriarchal oppression.

A quick note on word choice: As I use the term "woman," whom I'm mostly referring to are the people who face a certain type of oppression. Not everyone I'll be talking about when I say "woman" identifies as a woman, and not everyone who identifies as a woman faces what I'm talking about. Not everyone who faces it is assigned female at birth (AFAB), and some AFAB people don't face it. I am going to use the term "woman" to discuss neither anatomy nor identity, but what oppression someone faces.

The origin of patriarchy

So first I'm going to talk about the origin of patriarchy, because understanding this is essential to understanding everything else.

The initial situation

Before the rise of class society, there was a nonhierarchical,

non-oppressive division of labor based more or less around reproductive anatomy, where those who could bear children collected food near the settlement and looked after the children at home, while those who could not went hunting and collected food that was further away from the settlement.

There were very few restrictions on sexual partners. You were “born married” to a specific group of people, and there were no restrictions or prohibitions on having romantic/sexual relationships with anyone in that group you were married to.

Only the mother of a child was certain, and anyone whom the woman was allowed to have a sexual relationship with was considered a child’s father, and children were considered to be members of the mother’s family group, not the father’s family group. Women lived with their extended families, including their brothers. This fact meant that women had equal power to any man in romantic relationships, because although sometimes a man would move into a woman’s home, if he didn’t pull his weight around the house or if he otherwise caused problems, the woman would be able to kick him out with the help of her brothers and the rest of her family.

Because production was at subsistence level with no meaningful surplus, everyone had to work, and no possibility of exploitation existed, and so no division into classes was possible. There was violence between tribes and periodic capture of slaves after battles, but slaves were not particularly useful because the productive infrastructure didn’t exist that allowed people to produce surplus meaningfully beyond

that which was necessary for their own reproduction, so they were at most incorporated into the tribe without much consequence one way or another.

At this point there was no private property. Certain things were owned and inherited, though: There were inherited ceremonial titles passed down by family. Also, land was allotted to individuals by the tribe to be worked, but it was fundamentally something the tribe had final say over, not the individual. And someone could own a set of tools to accomplish some task that they were relatively specialized in, and when they died, that individual's family would inherit their possessions. But a man's possessions at this point were never inherited by his own biological children. Those who would inherit from a man were his brothers and sisters, his sister's children, and the children of his aunts.

Changes

In time, gradual changes occurred. Probably the most profound change was that the family structure began to narrow. That is to say, the set of people whom an individual was permitted by morals and customs to have romantic/sexual relationships began to shrink. This narrowing of options occurred through the emergence of a series of increasingly restrictive incest taboos.

First, children were forbidden from sexual relationships directly with their parents (that is, sons with their mothers, fathers with their daughters, and really any relationships "across" generations). Later, children from the same mother were forbidden to have sexual relationships with each

other, and then, later, extending from there, relationships were forbidden between first and then second cousins. It should be said that these changes disproportionately restricted women's choice of partner, because men were never barred from taking enslaved concubines from wars with other tribes.

When it comes to what force drove this process of change, that's a very important question. Engels agrees with the U.S. anthropologist Lewis Morgan, whose work Marx and Engels drew on to write *Origin of the Family*, that this was a question of genetic natural selection.

Engels writes that "the tribes among whom inbreeding was restricted . . . were bound to develop more quickly and more fully than those among whom marriage between brothers and sisters remained the rule and the law." It's very important to draw out a more universal principle from what he's saying here: all things being equal, there are certain cultural policies a tribe can adopt that increase the "fitness" of the tribe, or its power to compete for resources, and tribes that adopt these policies will tend to outcompete and destroy tribes that do not adopt them. Thus, with time, it will be more and more true that the remaining existing tribes and societies are ones that have adopted these policies. However, Engels is also very clear that once incest (in all the senses that we understand that term today) was no longer occurring, natural selection according to genetic fitness was no longer a force for changing the family structure, and it was not incest taboos that drove the further changes in the family structure that were still to come.

Other changes were occurring during this time as well. As new productive methods were developed (e.g., cattle-breeding, metalworking, weaving, and agriculture), a few things happened. People began to specialize more in certain specific types of production, increasing the cultural attention paid to inheritance and the continuity of specific economic tasks from one generation to the next.

Most importantly, these new productive methods allowed each hour of labor to be much more efficient. This meant that any captured slaves could begin to contribute to the accumulation of surplus for the individual who controlled them. This meant that after battles, the victors began to intentionally keep and enslave those they had captured instead of, as had often happened before, just killing them.

All the most productive new methods (for instance, cattle-driven plowing) were on the men's side of the division of labor. And since it was possible to make slaves produce surplus, there was much more concern that the slaves who were captured through warfare should go under the control of the specific man who had captured them rather than simply being incorporated into the tribe.

And finally, because land could now be used to produce a surplus, the question of who was allowed to use and control which land became more important, and having an incontestable right to use it became a more urgent concern.

Political-economic effects of those changes

Because of the uneven control over slave power (and control of other resources such as cattle and land) from one man to the next, a differentiation of wealth among individuals steadily arose. Since the surplus was all being accumulated through men's activities, and that surplus was therefore under men's control, women began to have less and less say in the issues that were the main concern of the tribe, namely, the handling and consequences of the growing surplus in some individuals' hands.

At this point, a man's immediate children still could not inherit any of the surplus he controlled—it still went to his family through his mother. However, it had also become much easier because of the narrowed partner options to tell which specific man was the father of which children.

At this point, there was one more “jump” to a new family type left to occur—to what Engels calls the “modern” or “monogamous” family, where the only acceptable sex occurs in a marriage between one man and one woman, a marriage that only the man can dissolve, and in which it is at last a man's own biological children who inherit the surplus he controls. The explanation from Engels for why this jump to the monogamous family occurred is that it resulted from men wanting to favor their own children. This undoubtedly played a part in it, but this doesn't seem to offer a fully historical-materialist explanation. Engels never says it, but there's an implication overall in *Origin of* another explanation that is more fully historical-materialist.

As Alexandra Kollontai puts it, the adoption of the monogamous family, “prevent[ed] the wealth that had been accumulated from being scattered amongst a vast number of ‘heirs’” (“Prostitution”). This change meant that compared to tribes that didn’t adopt this family type, tribes that did adopt it had individuals whose wealth was much more concentrated. And this in turn meant that the tribes that adopted it had production that was more centralized, and therefore more efficient and specialized. These tribes that adopted it could also therefore wage war in a more sophisticated way, with a larger number of better-armed and more specialized soldiers.

Therefore, in the same way that, all things being equal, adopting incest taboos conferred a competitive advantage on whichever tribes adopted them, so too did adopting the monogamous family confer a competitive advantage on any tribe that did so. This is not to say that the adoption of this family type was good for the well-being of most of the individuals in the tribe, but rather that tribes who adopted this family model would tend to outcompete and destroy tribes that had not. Thus, a type of “natural selection,” based on the advantages some tribes had of more concentrated wealth and therefore more centralized production and other competitive advantages, eventually led to a situation where most remaining existing tribes and societies had adopted the monogamous family.

Now, the way that this natural selection operated is through the explanation Engels offered: all things being equal, the tribes that happened to have a culture of strong concern with paternity and special attention to men’s biological chil-

dren would tend to adopt this family model, and therefore gain these advantages in production and warfare, and thereby outcompete tribes that had not. What this meant in essence is that there was a selective advantage for tribes to adopt cultures where men were raised to be more and more concerned about paternity, and in which it was normal and customary for a man to seek to maintain an all-around control over his wife, in order to make sure that she was not having any partners other than him, so that all the children she had were without a doubt his.

As Engels puts it, the monogamous family “is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of undisputed paternity; such paternity is demanded because these children are later to come into their father’s property as his natural heirs.” Engels says that this marked “the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took control in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude. She became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children.”

The origin of the family and private property

The adoption of the monogamous family, then, marks a qualitative rupture with all previous society. It is the origin of the private family as we know it today, of private property, and in that same moment the qualitative emergence of patriarchy. And we see that this process occurred because it meant that power and wealth were not being dispersed after each generation, but instead could accumulate more and more in the hands of single individuals and families with each generation, and therefore, again, the tribes that

adopted this family type became more powerful than the tribes that did not.

There are just a couple of other points in Engels that are worth noting to underline this point. He writes, "For the knight or baron, as for the prince of the land himself, marriage is a political act, an opportunity to increase power by new alliances; the interest of the house must be decisive, not the wishes of an individual" (Origin, emphasis added). And, "Among all . . . ruling classes[,] matrimony remained . . . a matter of convenience which was arranged by the parents" (Origin).

It should be emphasized that this political character to the ruling-class understanding of marriage has not diminished in any significant degree in capitalism. When someone who is born to a bourgeois family takes a romantic partner, their family almost without exception pays very close attention, exerting pressure, positive or negative, based on their perception of the suitability of the person as a potential spouse for incorporation into the family and therefore to join in controlling the family's political power and inheritance. This is especially acute when the potential partner is not bourgeois, or when the person choosing a spouse is a bourgeois woman, because she is expected to marry a man, whom the custom of marriage grants primary power in their marriage.

Bearing this in mind, we arrive here at what Marxism, Mariategui, and the Women's Movement (MMWM) calls the "fundamental thesis of Marxism about the woman question":

“The condition of women is sustained in property relations, in the form of ownership exercised over the means of production and in the productive relations arising from them . . . The oppression attached to the female condition has as its roots the formation, appearance and development of the right to ownership over the means of production.”

In other words: The fundamental reason patriarchy exists at any given time is because private property exists. Private property depends on patriarchy, and therefore sustains it. And furthermore, the specific form that patriarchy takes at any given time is based on the specific form that private property takes—that is, whether it is the slave, feudal, or capitalist, mode of production, as well as on what specific demands are at that time being placed on that mode of production (for instance, the customs governing acceptable forms of the family were significantly altered in the U.S while the country was mobilized to produce for and fight in World War II).

From this we can draw out a crucial principle that has continued to apply long after the founding moment of private property, and which will in fact apply until the very end of class society: Because the social-economic unit of the private family is a prerequisite for private property, and because therefore private property’s stability depends on the private family’s stability, wherever there are political-economic forces seeking to stabilize class society (including those that continually reproduce liberal/bourgeois democracy) or to renew or strengthen it (as in fascist movements or in the counterrevolutionary coups that restored capitalism in the Soviet Union and China), those forces al-

ways manifest in part in the form of patriarchal ideas and movements. That is, patriarchy is not simply an incidental, conditional phenomenon in class society—not a useful-but-inessential holdover from the founding moments of private property—but instead an intrinsic component of private property that it continually breeds and which we will never find it without.

This is fundamental to understand. MMWM points out that an alternative view that is pushed by some people who call themselves Marxists is that the fundamental reason patriarchy exists is to get women to undertake reproductive labor. This theory would imply that we can solve patriarchy simply by reforming culture, because it doesn't understand the problem to be built into private property.

Patriarchy under capitalism

In every mode of production we find patriarchy accomplishing at least that one, same, most fundamental task: ensuring that the private family exists in order for there to be a political-economic unit in which a ruling-class family's wealth and power can be stored and passed along indefinitely.

We also always find it accomplishing other tasks. But we find it accomplishing those tasks using the tools that developed in order to accomplish that original, fundamental task.

In capitalism, besides that fundamental task, patriarchy also accomplishes these other tasks:

- It helps reproduce the working class as cheaply as possible because women (and people perceived to be feminine) are made to do unpaid reproductive labor in the home (and various other places).

- It allows women (and to some extent people perceived to be feminine) to be extra-exploited as an extra-oppressed section of the population. Women and people perceived to be feminine are driven toward extra-exploited waged reproductive labor and also toward the more menial end of productive/distributive labor.

- It also exploits the labor of LGBT people by making it hard for them to find work, housing, and so on, and therefore more desperate and willing to work at lower wages and in worse conditions.

- And it politically weakens the masses, sustaining a contradiction among the masses that not infrequently turns into an antagonistic contradiction.

[In the interests of keeping things short, an explanation about the overall structure of patriarchal oppression, including LGBT oppression, was removed from this point. But the basic analysis that was to be put forward was identical to the one put forward by Stonewall Militant Front—ATX in their pieces “2018: A New Year, a New Us” and “Omissions and Corrections to the Stonewall Militant Front Announcement.”]

Only communism can solve this problem

Having said all that, what, then, is the Communist method of destroying women's oppression, and by extension all patriarchal oppression? The essence of the problem is that private property cannot exist without the private family, and the existence of the private family requires the subjugation of women, which in capitalism further entails all other patriarchal oppression as well. So we see that in order to completely end patriarchal oppression, we must completely abolish private ownership of the means of production. Our analysis is therefore that private property is the fundamental problem, and patriarchy is a subordinate aspect that sustains private property.

This is not in the least to say that the answer is therefore "ignore women's oppression until after the revolution." We are dialectical materialists—we understand that in order to abolish private property, we will at every point also have to combat patriarchy. But it does mean that fundamentally, our strategy for addressing patriarchy must be subordinate to our strategy for abolishing private property. We will not accomplish either task unless our strategy is guided by this understanding of the relationship between the two.

As Anuradha Ghandy discussed, all previous philosophical trends in feminism have failed to understand this question. The first schools of feminist thought did not seriously consider class difference among women, and overall assumed that all women had common interests. We must be utterly clear: bourgeois women and working-class wom-

en have opposing and irreconcilable interests. What promotes the interests of bourgeois women directly harms the interests of working-class women. And by that same token, there is no way for an oppressed-nation woman's interests to be met if she joins up with a "feminist" project that advances the goals of imperialism. Proletarian feminism means staunchly insisting that what promotes the interests of working-class women is struggling for a proletarian dictatorship over bourgeois men and women, to use revolutionary violence to destroy the bourgeoisie as a political force and destroy the political-economic soil it grows out of. To be clear, this means the only true feminism requires revolutionary proletarian class violence against bourgeois women.

To speak on a much more practical and concrete level, we know that ending private property requires the strategy of Protracted People's War, both here and everywhere on earth. Therefore, the type of feminism we will uphold, defend, and apply must be what maximally supports the construction of the Maoist Party, whose central task will then be the preparation for and initiation of Protracted People's War (PPW).

We recognize that as women are an oppressed group within the masses, we cannot simply treat the question of mobilizing women exactly the same as that of mobilizing men. So even more concretely, the question before us is, what special policies must guide our work in the process of mobilizing the women of the masses, and especially working-class women, to take up this task?

Parvati, who was a member of the central committee of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) during their PPW, underlines the importance of this question, saying, “Wherever the PW [People’s War] is flourishing . . . women’s issues have been given due importance” (Interview to People’s March [hereafter IPM]).

In order to answer this question, first it will be useful to take a very close look at women’s oppression and what effects it has on women.

The character of women’s oppression

To get into this, first, some quotes. First, I want to return to a quote from Engels, because what he says here is crucial. He says that with the beginning of patriarchy, “Woman . . . became the slave of [man’s] lust and a mere instrument for the production of children. This degraded position of the woman . . . has gradually been palliated and glozed over, and sometimes clothed in a milder form; in no sense has it been abolished” (Origin, emphasis added).

This is crucial. He says (a) that women’s position is like that of a slave, or an instrument (something that is in the complete possession of someone and under their control in an absolute way), and he says that (b) the character of women’s position at its most fundamental has not changed. Let me put forward a few other quotes.

Marx:

- "The family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband." (German Ideology, emphasis added)

- "The modern individual 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." (Origin, emphasis added)

- "In order to make certain of the wife's fidelity and therefore of the paternity of the children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights." (Origin, emphasis added)

In 1919, Lenin wrote that woman "continues to be a domestic slave, because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery." ("A Great Beginning," emphasis added)

Now, this is not to say that women's oppression is always literally the same thing as slavery, but it's also important to not take lightly what these great Marxists are saying, because they always chose their words carefully.

First, let's focus again on the central reason patriarchy exists: to control women in order to ensure that they go into the power not of some group of people in general but of one individual, and what is expected is that each woman will give birth and that it will indisputably be that man's child and no one else's. This means that the oppression over women is

not most fundamentally to accomplish some specific tasks, but actually to create a total power to restrict any and all of her activities. This is different from class or national oppression, which are about getting someone to produce surplus value. They are not about total control of a person's entire body, their entire life, in order to produce a political-economic unit, the family, that allows value to accumulate in the first place.

How is this goal of total control achieved? Through virtually every means of social control available.

At its deepest, the control is achieved ideologically. And in fact, where racist pseudoscience has been made relatively more unacceptable among most of the masses in the United States, pseudoscience about men and women continues to this day to have an incredibly wide circulation. And what's more, the pseudoscience is bound up with religion and ideas about morality. The ideology that oppresses women is very sophisticated, very elaborate and subtle. It has been being refined for more than ten thousand years.

What is the ideology? It says that according to science and the laws of nature, it is unnatural for women to have an interest in becoming physically strong, psychologically and emotionally ready and willing to wield violence, and trained to be able to do so. It further says that they are bad at these things even if they decide to go against nature and attempt to take them up. And it further says that what is natural for women is embodying a set of traits that work directly contrary to their ability to wield violence skillfully and effectively: it says that what is natural and morally correct

for women is that they are always patient (that is, that they refuse to engage in any aggression, even verbal), always sweet, always gentle, always accommodating, naturally interested in hobbies that are low-intensity and low-energy. It says that what they desire and what is natural for women is to submit to one man and only one man and to serve his interests and obey him. It says that most important for women is to be beautiful, that it is natural for them to focus heavily on the desirability of their bodies. And furthermore the beauty standards they are expected to conform to put them in clothing that cannot withstand any kind of physical exertion or rough-and-tumble activity. One way or another, it controls women's diets strictly and says what it is right for them to eat or not eat—and these demands are definitely not based on what might allow them to become strong. It says that women are naturally not good at problem-solving, or leadership, or more complex mental tasks. And, not to get too far into the the flip side of the coin, but it says that it is natural and good for men to want to control a woman utterly, and unnatural and pathetic for them to not want to, thereby enlisting half the human race into maintaining this control.

Most oppressed-nation women experience a variety of qualitatively more intense aspects of this experience, all of which again have the effect of reducing their ability or willingness to use violence. Some are more overtly coercive and dehumanizing (which is common for Black and indigenous women), where others are qualitatively more intense versions of the fetishization as naturally servile and desiring to please. Often it is some combination of these.

And on top of that, even if women decide to try to become able to skillfully and effectively wield violence, they meet a society and a State that works against them, threatens them, and uses brutality to try to discourage them. When they are not obviously already under the possession of a man, they are openly and degradingly solicited on the street by other men who want to possess them. If they push against the standards that demand they be powerless and servile, they are frequently rejected from social spaces, not welcome in support institutions like churches, and disproportionately cannot access resources from a sexist State, sexist employers, sexist landlords, sexist salespeople, and so on. And the more a sphere of society allows someone to wield violence effectively, the starker the patriarchal chauvinism and patriarchal violence is in those spaces.

This is slackened or relieved in some ways in many cases, but what I'm trying to point out is that this is the substance of the oppression, even if there is less of this substance for many people in many places. The fact is, virtually no woman on earth can avoid dealing with a significant amount of oppression of this type for long. Even bourgeois women face this substance of oppression, including the abuse, sexual violence, beauty standards, ideological conditioning, and countless other aspects of it—again, all having the effect of driving her fundamentally into the total control of one individual man, whose right to own her—and build a family upon her—society recognizes and upholds.

So the point, then, is that in almost every conceivable way, in almost every conceivable space, in almost every conceivable moment, the ability to wield violence effectively is stripped

from women, not just overtly but as subtly and thoroughly as it's possible to imagine. This is done so effectively that it seems to most people, even to countless women, to just be the nature of women. It is not only discouraged, but in fact small rewards are given to women who run as far away from wielding violence as possible. This is the character of women's oppression.

What proletarian feminism must be

I take the time to get into all this because if we acknowledge that this is the oppression women face because class society in any form demands it, then the type of feminism that seeks to completely undo class society must also seek to completely reverse the effects of every aspect of this oppression, not just eventually but immediately, and in an all-around way. And so—not to put too fine a point on it—we must see that a central aspect of proletarian feminism must be understanding the question of violence in the emancipation of women.

In addition to that, we inherit from previous Marxists that there are two dialectically related aspects to the struggle for women's emancipation. The first of these is politicization. As MMWM says, "For Marxism yesterday like today the politicization of women is the key issue in her emancipation." The second is carrying out certain economic transformations. Engels writes, "The first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry, and . . . this in turn demands the abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society." (Origin)

So then, in turn, I'll address these aspects of women's emancipation and discuss the role of violence in each. To start, let's consider the question of politicization and how violence fits into this.

Politicization

Let me say directly: we can make a major start in making proletarian feminism what it truly needs to be by upholding the principle of promoting women reclaiming violence. This policy should be applied immediately and at all times.

What this policy means is seeking to psychologically and emotionally transform the women of the working class and the rest of the masses so that they become eager to acquire the ability to use violence effectively; to promote women becoming physically fit and strong, healthy, masters of their own bodies; to promote women learning and practicing martial arts, prepared to resist violence and carry it out against the enemies of the people; and to organize women into military or proto-military units in view of building toward Protracted People's War. And in this process, it also means turning the violence around, to understanding the central importance of violence or the threat of violence in dealing with abusers and all those who rob women of the willingness and ability to effectively wield violence.

How does this play into politicization? Well, we know that women's oppression is not just a type of control in order to produce this or that labor, but a more deep and total control: a type of control over bodies and over whole lives. We know that such a control can be obtained only by sub-

jugating almost every aspect of women's minds, right down to muscle memory, with violence and the threat of violence. And as part of the oppression they face, women are of course greatly discouraged from studying political and philosophical questions, and certainly from having uncompromising political analyses and stances. They are taught that they are ill-suited to it, and face negative reactions when they take it up anyway.

As Marxists, we know that it is only through struggle that people can be truly transformed, so we should conclude that people who have reclaimed violence, who feel strong in their bodies, who have literally used violence against fascists and violent patriarchal abusers, will also feel more capable of voicing bold thoughts, pushing against the current, and taking up vigorous struggle against incorrect lines—in short, more capable of “ruthless criticism of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be” (Marx).

In direct action, women are asserting themselves and moving beyond asking or hoping, to enter the stage as political actors directly intervening in history, to resist or seize through direct force. This is where the deepest psychological transformation takes place. Gonzalo writes that “war . . . steels people, permits us to imbue ourselves more deeply with our ideology, and forge iron-like cadre who dare to challenge death, to snatch the laurels of victory from the clutches of death” (“Interview”). Only such a policy of reclaiming and wielding violence against class and gender enemies can begin to substantially materially repeal the psycho-

logical effects of that violent indoctrination that suppresses women's politicization.

And beyond what our theory tells us, we also see this borne out in history, objectively, again and again. If we look at the People's Wars right now, and at all past armed struggles for communism, what do we see about the women in these historic struggles? We see women completely transformed. We know that the women we see in these struggles are women as they truly are, women who have begun to break the shackles of patriarchy on their lives and their minds, and shatter the lies about women's nature that patriarchy perpetuates.

To quote MMWM, "Parallel with the construction of a new society the new woman will be emerging who will be 'substantially different from the one formed by the now declining civilization.' These new women will be forged in the revolutionary crucible and will place the old type of woman deformed by the old exploitative system in the back room of history."

To further underline this point, I'll quote Parvati. She actually wrote a great deal about women's participation in the PPW in Nepal. What she has to say bears out this argument:

"The PLA [People's Liberation Army] has not only transformed women in essence but also in form. Basically, it has given meaning, value, respect, and dignity not only to their lives but to their deaths as well. For too long they have been taken for granted. For too long they have been bearing private and public violence silently. Today hooligans, goondas,

and womanisers can't dare to come near Maoist women, unless accompanied by armed reactionary forces. It has turned insecure women to insurgents. In form it has totally [transformed their clothing from] feudal frills to functional unisex dress. Today she is not only conscious of her ideological development but also her physical development. . . . The PLA has not only helped her break the four walls of her house, but it has also stretched her reach to the four corners of the country. It has transformed her from anonymous domestic slave to a very visible rebellious professional fighter. Earlier she had no idea of time, slogging from dawn to dusk (even past midnight); today she is recording time while planting time bombs. . . . From a god-fearing woman she has transformed into a fierce woman! In the past her ears burned for gossip, today, she is craning her neck to hear local FM, national, and international news in the radio. . . .”

“Fighting on the strength of ideology and using warfare skills, her body language has changed into that of a very confident, smart, dignified woman. From an illiterate woman she has become literate with an enriched vocabulary of ideological and military terminologies. Today she has become philosophical about life and death as the two sides of the same coin, defining them in terms of necessity and chance and so on. She understands dialectics in terms of seeing positive in negative, and vice versa. She understands the laws of contradiction in terms of identifying principal (enemies) and secondary (enemies), she knows how to judge things relatively, in contradiction, and in leaps and bounds. . . .”

“Thus the PLA has enabled village women to be more confident, conscious, and composed women than educated urban women! Indeed, women in the PLA are found to be more forward than women in the United Front organizations of the Party. The rate of transformation in the PLA is so fast that women hesitate to leave this field when their health problems or reproductive functions [necessitate for them to be] transferred to other fields. It has expanded her sphere of activity from uterus to universality. It has steeled her physically as well as mentally, making her more objective-minded and detached for fulfilling the rigorous life of combat. From an ignored woman she has become an authority. All these remind one of Com. Lenin’s saying that war brings transformation in 10 days what usually takes 10 years in normal time.” (“Women’s Participation in People’s Army” [hereafter WPPA])

She also writes, “Marriage [at a certain point was] a patriarchal left institution for producing good efficient wives for the male communist leaders at the cost of losing women cadres in the communist movement. . . . You would get fresh groups of women repeatedly coming and then vanishing. This vicious cycle got asunder with the initiation of People’s War in the year 1996. It unleashed the fury of women so far locked in legal and trivial struggle” (IPM).

On the other hand, after the People’s War in Nepal collapsed short of victory due to the betrayal of its leadership, we can read that women’s participation in political life also stagnated and declined:

“Women are politically and ideologically quite strong, but maybe they are not so active now as they were in the People’s War, as this is a transitional period. . . . In the past the party has made concrete plans to increase the number of women in the central leadership. But these days it has not been making concrete efforts on this question. . . . We must admit that the party has not managed something concrete as in the past to bring women into the central leadership. It is a sad fact that some women whole-timer comrades have returned home, but not in a big number.” (“Interview with Comrade Jayapuri”)

There is no question, then, that this process of promoting women reclaiming violence is a critical aspect of promoting the politicization of women and in cultivating women leaders in all our organizations, including at the highest levels.

Economic transformation

To get into the economic aspect, we can turn again to Engels. In *Origin*, he writes that the Communist policy for abolishing women’s oppression is as follows: “Private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair; society looks after all children alike, whether they are legitimate or not.”

Furthermore, as already referenced, Engels also says that “the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry.” An aspect that should be further highlighted here, however, is that it is not enough to simply incorporate women into some in-

dustry. The fact is, in the United States and countless other places, there has already been extensive incorporation of women into waged work. However, it is critical to observe that there are certain areas of waged work that are disproportionately inaccessible to women. Thus, we should add to Engels's formulation that we should also seek to ensure that women are incorporated into every single aspect of public industry to an equal degree as men.

Thus we see that the two aspects of these necessary economic transformation are the socialization (that is, spreading responsibility for the task out to all the rest of society) of all domestic labor and reproductive labor (including raising and caring for children), and the incorporation of all women equally into all industries without exception.

At this point it is critical to observe that if these policies are critical to the emancipation of women in communism, then rather than simply wait to apply them until after the whole world has entered the dictatorship of the proletariat, we must begin to implement them immediately!

The question remains about what role violence, and especially promoting women's reclamation of violence, plays in the process of these economic transformations. We find the answer to this question if we turn to the universal law of revolutionary violence. As the Military Line of the Communist Party of Peru explains, "violence is the midwife of history," and "without revolutionary violence one class cannot replace another, an old order cannot be overthrown to create a new one." We are talking about policies that require deep changes to the relations of production even now, be-

fore People's War has been initiated—changes that involve the dislocation of the ruling class's order everywhere red power extends. For this reason, we should expect violence to confront this project at more or less every turn.

We can in fact expect two different kinds of violence here: The primary type that we should expect to encounter is bourgeois violence against the project, and for several reasons. For one, women's private, unwaged performance of reproductive labor is an essential part of maximizing the profits of the bourgeoisie. When this process inevitably begins to cut into their profits, we can expect retaliatory violence. Another reason the bourgeoisie will retaliate, of course, is simply that they are deeply, unalterably sexist. While some members of the bourgeoisie are happy to put on a façade of feminism in the form of bourgeois feminism, when we seek to fully incorporate women into every part of public industry and destroy unwaged reproductive labor, we can expect to come face to face with other members of the bourgeoisie who will not be reluctant to use whatever patriarchal violence they can think of in hopes of restoring the status quo.

The secondary type of violence that we should expect to encounter is from other members of the masses, of course especially men. Although patriarchy stands directly against the interests of the working class, that does not change the fact that we find patriarchal chauvinism spread broadly and deeply throughout the masses. Even now, while there is no pressure, stress, and conflict resulting from these necessary large-scale economic transformations, the contradiction between working-class men and women can and not uncom-

monly does turn antagonistic. Policies that include women into the public sphere and help pull them out of the private family will remove any petty control men in these families may have over women. In an elaboration of a crucial component of what Engels calls making women “slaves of lust,” we observe the following in our position paper “Condemned to Win”: “Workers have no control over their own lives, but a deceptive feeling of actual power is sold to working-class men in the form of control over the conventional family and sometimes other women in their lives. This illusion gives ‘meaning’ to a meaningless existence, to a life they live in service to the capitalist class while having their labor stripped away from them. It is nothing but a poisoned carrot on a stick controlled by the class enemy. Women are treated like dogs, awarded to men the way a pet is given to an unruly child, reproducing class relationships in a microcosm.”

For this reason, we can expect that these policies (both the politicization aspect and the economic transformation aspect) that remove men’s ability to turn to this poisoned reward will inevitably see retaliation against the women who are being relieved of this form of oppression, in an attempt to return them to their subordinate position.

We should also expect to see violence from working-class men in previously male-dominated economic spheres against the women who enter into them—and also as we wage campaigns to get men to abandon their chauvinism and take up an ever more even share of the unwaged reproductive labor, especially in the home.

And this is certainly a far from complete list of all the ways that such violence will emerge in response to these policies of economic transformation.

The benefits for politicization resulting from these economic transformations should be fairly clear: since women at present are spending such an immense amount of their time undertaking unwaged reproductive labor, socializing this secluded labor plays a critical role in giving women more energy and enough free hours in the day to take up all the tasks necessary for their politicization. It will also, of course, have a directly politicizing effect on women as they take up forms of work that have been previously denied to them, changing their consciousness as all changes to social being inevitably do.

On the flip side, we should also see that the changes that result from politicization will also be crucial in this task, in emboldening women to take up this profound struggle of seeking, in every way we can find, an equal standing with proletarian men in the relations of production. And within this context, it will be priceless to promote the policy of women reclaiming violence in order to allow each individual woman to more effectively resist both the types of violence that they will face as they embark on this struggle, as well as to promote collective preparation for and responses to this violence on the part of teams of militarized women.

We also hear from Parvati that promoting women's reclamation of violence advances our theoretical understanding of women's oppression generally, which will inevitably allow us to more deftly handle these economic transformations:

“The people’s army is one arena where there is a fast rate of transformation. The rate of changes in tactics, mobility and flexibility makes it the centre of contradiction, possibilities and transformation. In fact, most of the contradictions related to gender relations and women’s development get quickly reflected in the PLA. Solving these contradictions will in the long run solve contradictions in other fields too.”
(WPPA)

Other important aspects of women’s reclamation of violence

Before moving on to talk about how other specific, more immediate questions should be handled when it comes to mobilizing women to build the Maoist Party, I’d like to just draw on Parvati’s writings a little bit more to drive home the central importance of promoting women’s reclamation of violence for the purposes of revolution. Though much of what she is describing here is the value of women’s incorporation into the PLA, we should expect the same effects from incorporating women into the embryo of the People’s Army we are concentrically building around the embryo of the Party.

For one, it enhances mass work, which must be undertaken mainly through the People’s Army:

“Strategic participation of women in the PLA has not only made it wholesome, but it has also lent a more mass character to the army by making it multi-functional, multi-character, thus making it truly the people’s army in appearance as

well as in essence. The infusion of women in the PLA has made it easier to expand its activities from fighting to organizing and engaging in productive activities. It has brought gentleness and compassionate feelings to rigorous combatant life. Above all, it has smashed the masculine image of the fighting force. [Women's] input has facilitated the PLA to swim smoothly in the sea of the masses by acting as a barometer to check the temperature of the water so that the PLA can sail through smoothly." (WPPA)

It also has all kinds of benefits for, and solves all kinds of problems in, the People's Army:

"Women's participation has made the fighting force more tenacious, disciplined, and high-cultured and more focused. In the field it has been generally found that where men combatants gave up, women continued to fight, and where men left their weapons, women combatants clutched their guns even in the most adverse circumstances, and where men faltered in the face of the enemy's torture, women resisted even at the cost of torture and death. It was also found that where men hesitated to go on offensive assault, women were found to go for it without looking for excuses. They seldom refused the task given; they would always give it a try. Also, during setbacks, it was women who showed more patience and sense of composure, while men tended to feel restless and irritated. Their sense of commitments and hard work have helped in shedding the go-easy attitude amongst the men combatants. Their involvement has also had a self-cleansing effect on the PLA, as drinking, gambling, cheap entertainments, and womanizing cannot go hand in hand with men's participation in war. It also boosts

men's morale in the PLA while it demoralizes the enemy's army. Lastly, [women's] infusion into the PLA makes the PLA a more gender-friendly and class-conscious force. This gets further reinforced when their women combatants are brutally tortured, raped, and killed by the reactionary force.” (WPPA)

It also promotes a more deep and thoroughgoing militarization of the masses, thereby strengthening and accelerating the People's War. And for that reason and others it also strengthens cultural revolution to more fiercely attack and prevent capitalist restoration once socialism is won:

“[Militarizing the masses can help prevent] the revolutionary state [and] the revolutionary people's army [from becoming] degenerated, bureaucratized, and alienated from the masses. . . . It is here that women combatants' input becomes strategic. With women being the largest oppressed, all-encompassing, all-permeating group and social engineer of all households, they can facilitate militarizing the masses, as they have better connectivity with the people. And because they are the last oppressed group to be liberated, they will always actively fight to make continuous revolution till their own liberation is realized and guaranteed. Hence, their input in the PLA will not only hasten revolution, but it will also hasten the process of continuous revolution.” (WPPA)

Promoting this conception of proletarian feminism

As we promote this understanding of proletarian feminism,

we should do so in conjunction with deep criticisms of all other conceptions of women and all other tendencies of feminism.

One of the foremost points to make is to insist that communism alone has offered us scientific information on the way forward for women. Because it isn't just that our theory tells us that what MMWM calls the "theory of deficient femininity" is false—it's also that the historical experiences of the People's Wars prove that there is nothing to the claims about the inherent weakness of women, or the idea that women are by nature unsuited to taking up and wielding violence. In fact it is only by spreading lies about past and current People's Wars, or by concealing them entirely, that anyone can deny the truth about women. We have to study, learn from, and uphold the facts from historical and ongoing People's Wars repeatedly and loudly until the truth they show is undeniable.

I'm not going to retread all the ground in Ghandy's "Philosophical Trends," but one of the most important points she makes is how every single other trend in feminism seeks to, as MMWM puts it, separate "the feminine masses from [proletarian leadership] and . . . oppose the development of the women's movement under the leadership and guide of the working class." But something can also be added to Ghandy's analysis of these other trends by more deeply examining them in the particular light of where they stand on promoting women reclaiming violence.

With some of these tendencies, their failure is more obvious—but the truth is, not one of them is serious about this

question. The closest that we see is a lifestylist feminism that is more interested in the question of how individual women studying martial arts or taking up physical activity can help their own personal bourgeois success. But ultimately, we need to emphasize the question of power.

When we talk about power, we must reject conventional ideas of some kind of woman-specific power, “feminine wiles” being used to manipulate people. We must assert that we mean real power, power that does not leave the question open for dispute—power that settles the question decisively, power that an abusive man can do nothing about, so that patriarchal abuse is practically impossible to carry out and terrifying to think of the consequences of. We have to relentlessly denounce how disgusting and hateful the feminism of the bourgeoisie is, which calls on women to dull their oppression by getting rich walking on the backs of working-class women, all while lying to those women that this aggressive selfishness will help them someday. We have to insist on how poisonous the countless variants of the feminism of the petty bourgeoisie are, telling women they should be ashamed and embarrassed for wanting to retaliate against abuse with decisive organized violence, or glorifying and even worshipping the submission that has been imposed on them, or setting off an identity-reductionist rat race that tends toward dividing each oppressed person against every other. We have to stress how, by offering women anything other than power, these other forms of feminism are treasonous.

We should observe that anarchist feminism, because anarchism seeks “worker control” instead of socialization

of the means of production, does not break with private ownership of the means of production, and therefore can never uproot patriarchy. What's more, whether they do so wittingly or not, we find anarchists everywhere promoting bourgeois lies about revolutionary Communist history, discouraging people from more closely studying the history of the People's Wars, which are the historic apexes of feminist struggle. The economic base of this ideology is the petty bourgeoisie, and like everything else petty-bourgeois, it maintains an idealist and individualistic perspective on the world that is wholly incapable of a dialectical materialist analysis of patriarchy, and can never organize anyone for a revolution that can truly destroy global capitalism and therefore patriarchy.

It must also be said that proletarian feminism can be taken up only by those who have broken with "October Road" insurrectionism, which seeks to wait until some special moment to take up in earnest even the first steps of militarization and violent struggle. By forever putting off advancing the struggle for a moment that will never come, the insurrectionist theory perpetually stagnates the movement as a whole by denying the possibility and necessity of learning how to wage violent class struggle by waging violent class struggle. And it therefore also leaves women in particular no way to take up these violent struggles that are wholly necessary to advance women's transformation and emancipation.

Cultivating women's leadership

Parvati has more than a few helpful grounding principles in cultivating women's leadership that we should study. The most basic principle here is that "the question of developing women communist leaders cannot be left to chance, they need to be consciously nurtured, cultivated and safeguarded." ("The Question of Women's Leadership in People's War in Nepal")

She also says that there are two ways of understanding proletarian feminism within the overall struggle: some people want to uphold and implement proletarian feminism only tactically, but she argues we must uphold and implement it strategically. She writes,

"Let me tell you one example of how to understand the attitude of communists toward women in the communist movement. One section considers their participation as having strategic importance and women as constituting a basic revolutionary class. They are willing to accept and guarantee special rights for women and hence strive to transform the structure of the Party, the women, and gender relations based on this principle. There is another section that may agree with this in principle, but in practice they see women as a secondary force, relegating them to a mere practical necessity when it comes to mobilizing the masses. With such people, any changes that they try to bring to the organisational structure, to women, or to gender relations will be only cosmetic, formal, and skin-deep." (IPM)

Parvati's works are excellent in describing more of the specifics of their context, much of which can be creatively applied to ours. One example of applying the principle of being strategic rather than tactical about the inclusion of women would be to allocate additional time devoted solely to politicizing and training women in particular, above and beyond the time allotted for general political education and training.

Making the Communist movement an easier place for women to enter and thrive in

Obviously combatting patriarchal chauvinism will be a continuous necessity, including paying attention to who is taking up which types of tasks to ensure that (all things being equal) certain tasks aren't disproportionately falling on (or being denied to) women, ensuring women are not being spoken over, and so on. We live in a patriarchal society that has affected us all in profound ways, and so we should expect this to be an ongoing task. And we should also expect that it is likely that sooner or later more pronounced problems will arise that will require special, more intensive rectification campaigns.

Investigating abuse

Mackivism and abuse within our organizations are some of the more acute manifestations of patriarchy that we'll encounter, and we must be ready and willing to carry out principled investigations of accusations of abuse, and then act on the conclusions of these investigations in a princi-

pled way. Although of course every situation has its own difficulties and complexities, we can put forward certain general principles:

In order to provide leadership when an investigation becomes necessary, we should not simply leave things entirely in the hands of mass members but instead address the question within our collective to struggle out details about how best to handle the investigation, in order to provide guidance to those carrying it out. At the same time, the primary organization that a person is a member of should be the organization taking point on the investigation. At first only the leadership of any organization that is involved or affected needs to know about it. And a person who is accused should immediately be suspended from all work until the investigation can be completed.

Such an investigation should be carried out by getting all the facts possible, and also weighing them in the context of a person's history, especially if they've had similar problems in their romantic/sexual relationships in the past. We should consider whether their trajectory is one of them getting worse, or simply of them repeating an existing error. Also possible, if someone commits egregious abuse that is starkly inconsistent with their known past behavior, we should be especially concerned, because at that point there is a real question of whether a person has been hiding deeper malicious tendencies.

Ideally, a more permanent committee should be developed consisting of people who have great practice in this regard, who are patient and understanding, and who are also highly

skilled at looking at each and every angle, digging things up, and really getting all the details.

When we conclude that someone has in fact been abusive, the way that we move forward from that point depends on a few factors, including whether it was overtly violent or not and whether it was malicious or not. Beyond that, the perpetrator's response to a conclusion that abuse occurred will also play a role—whether or not they are truly willing to voluntarily submit to the judgment and demands of the adjudicating organization plays a role in how the case can be handled.

And one final principle is that the extent to which our movement is capable of bringing violence to bear on someone determines how we can move forward—the more power we have, the more severe the cases we will be able to seek rectification for. At other times, sometimes the best we will be able to accomplish is to protect our organizations and the masses from abusers.

On prostitution

Finally, we must have a position on prostitution that fully accords with and promotes our efforts to mobilize the masses of women to build the Maoist Party.

The patriarchal nature of the problem

We know that those we find in prostitution are disproportionately barred from political-economic resources in soci-

ety, such as good jobs and housing, and people who face a higher likelihood of being kicked out of their families and communities—specifically, women and LGBT people, and of course disproportionately oppressed-nation people. According to Kollontai, the other factor is that women (and men) have “been conditioned by centuries of education to expect [that it is acceptable for men to trade] material favours . . . in return for sexual favours [from women]” (“Prostitution”). Prostitution is therefore of course a specific problem of women’s oppression and patriarchy generally.

Political-economic analysis of prostitution

To quote the Revolutionary Communist Party (Canada) (PCR-RCP):

“Prostitution is not the ordinary sale of labor power; it is not about labor exploitation of a person, but the absolute exploitation of a person. Prostitution is not the sale and consumption of sexual services: what is sold and consumed, it is the direct domination over a person. It is this domination that is the use value of the commodity ‘prostitute,’ while for wage labor in general, dominance is rather a condition that allows the exploitation of the labor force. What the sex industry showcases and brings to the market is not only the sexual body, but also, and especially sexist violence: Prostitution being the most complete expression of this violence. (Annex 2, “A Struggle for the Safeguard of Revolutionary Proletarian Feminism” [hereafter Annex 2])

Thus we say that in class terms there are no proletarian prostitutes. Prostitutes are either slaves or semiproletarians.

Prostitutes in the condition of sex slavery, which is the relationship between a pimp and his victim, cannot change pimps just because they want to without facing the potential of a violent attack. Those who are semiproletarian are those who are principally proletarian who are forced by lack of access to proletarian work to supplement their incomes.

We also analyze that there is a large overlap between prostitutes and the lumpenproletariat. Prostitutes are often not only compelled by violence but also by drug addiction, which has made them unemployable elsewhere, sometimes exactly because of pimps addicting women to drugs.

Thus we conclude that there is no such thing as a “sex worker.”

By way of elaborating, we point out that there is a difference prostitutes and petty sex capitalists (who are petty-bourgeois). People in this situation have ownership over the means of production (for instance the camera), have the ability to set their own rates, choose their customers, set their own conditions of work, and so on. These are the conditions that some people in the sex trade experience, such as many porn stars, cam girls, and so on. This class position should be understood as at least part of the material base for the “sex work is work” postmodernist arguments so often heard.

Regarding these arguments, we should point out that they are a liberal viewpoint found almost solely in imperialist-country “leftist” movements. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) in “Prostitution Is Sexual Violence” document

how legalization intensifies the global trade in sex slaves. Not only is it simply incorrect from a political-economic perspective to refer to prostitutes as “sex workers,” but it is actively reactionary: doing so clouds our understanding of the reality of the sex industry and conflates the terror and brutality inflicted on the majority of these individuals in the United States and worldwide as being “no different from any other type of work.”

Prostitution reproduces patriarchy

It should further be pointed out that the ongoing existence of prostitution also constantly reproduces patriarchal ideology. As Kollontai writes, “a man who buys the favours of a woman does not see her as a comrade or as a person with equal rights. He sees the woman as dependent upon himself and as an unequal creature of a lower order who is of less worth to the workers’ state. The contempt he has for the prostitute, whose favours he has bought, affects his attitude to all women” (“Prostitution”).

Policies that follow

From this we draw out the following positions: The policies of unionization or struggling for legalization or “regulation” are counterrevolutionary. Our policy must be to organize in order to help people exit from prostitution. We affirm this for the following reasons:

- As the majority of prostitutes are in a condition of slavery, it is absurd to simply seek to change some aspects of their enslaved condition.

- It is necessary as part of properly mobilizing women for PPW. It is economically necessary as part of bringing women into proletarian public industry, as prostitution is not proletarian. It is necessary for revolutionary politicization as well, because prostitution forces women into material experiences of submission and subservience, thus working directly against the psychological process of reclaiming violence in an all-around way. Parvati describes the effects of escaping prostitution in the context of PPW: "The PW has given them the powerful alternative to live for humanity. Rather than killing themselves every night, they now have the opportunity to show that they too can be socially useful, responsible and live a dignified life and have a dignified death." (IPM)

- As PCR-RCP write, any "sex worker unions" and "abolitionist" organizations operating in our context seek to impose "a liberal political leadership on the proletarian women, as well as . . . reformist political hegemony" (Annex 2).

- Finally, the fact that so many prostitutes are lumpenproletarian also compromises any union organizing strategy. No union could manage to organize even actual workers when many are hardcore addicted to drugs without first getting them clean. Ignoring this fact necessarily also leads to a gross neglect for the security of the revolutionary forces.

Our policy must also include the following:

- To attack and drive out pimps, traffickers, and johns.
- To conduct agitprop against the specific aspects of class

and patriarchal relations that drive people into prostitution.

- To oppose what is legally called regulation. So-called regulation in an imperialist world only deepens the oppression of women and young children worldwide. It is our duty as anti-imperialists to work against this outcome.

- We would also be open to supporting certain policies that do not act as “regulation” but nevertheless thwart the bourgeoisie’s worst attacks on the people, for instance opposing prison time (which is hardly rehabilitative) as a legal sentence for prostitution.

Immediate tasks

As a way of concluding, I’ll propose some important tasks for the near future:

- To organize study within our collectives on proletarian feminism—especially of Parvati’s work on women’s participation in Protracted People’s War and Party life—and then struggle toward unity on the question and release a more refined theoretical document on this question. After we’ve done so, to produce and spread popular statements of the theory.

- To form revolutionary women’s organizations to focus on both politicization and economic transformation for women, including by facilitating and women reclaiming violence. The work of such organizations would also include attacking the bourgeoisie’s efforts to promote sexual objec-

tification and all other aspects of patriarchal thinking (e.g., beauty contests, pornography); cultural campaigns against sexism among the masses; and protracted struggle to break apart or win leadership within all other women's organizations in order to conquer hegemony—and related to that, seeking to reclaim International Working Women's Day and other women's cultural institutions for genuine proletarian feminism. Critically, we must understand that this organization also works to ensure that women are being fully incorporated into all other possible areas of struggle.

- Within our collectives, we should also consider forming what Parvati calls “women's departments . . . directly under the [leading body]. . . . This department is basically a think-tank. . . . It acts as a bridge between the front and the Party” (IPM). In essence its task is to see to the strategic incorporation of women into the revolution at every level.

Some words on whom it makes sense for revolutionary women's organizations/departments/caucuses (as opposed to more general revolutionary feminist organizations) to allow as members: It would be deeply incorrect to say that these organizations should open membership only to any and all people who are AFAB, and no one else, as not all AFAB people face women's oppression. However, it would also be a mistake to open it to any and all people who identify as women, or to exclude any and all people who identify as some gender other than woman—this must be our position because as materialists we know that identity as a woman does not automatically lead to oppression as a woman, and oppression as a woman cannot be thwarted by someone's identity alone. How to draw more decisive poli-

cies within these boundaries is a difficult question that will have to be sorted out by such an organization itself. A good working principle might be to ask not whether an individual always faces women's distinct oppression nor whether they have faced it ever but whether they currently face it regularly, even if they do not face it a majority of the time. Such regular experience may be enough to allow for the unique social consciousness that would make a person's participation in the democratic life of such a grouping coherent. What constitutes regularity and how to be the judge of whether or not someone is actually experiencing distinctly women's oppression is something such an organization will have to sort out through ongoing practice and struggle. It may be helpful, before any such revolutionary organization exclusively for women is founded, for the women cadres across our movement to discuss these questions at length with the intention of struggling for unity around a set of coherent and workable principles and guidelines on which such organizations can be founded, with the understanding that they will be improved through the living operation and struggle of such organizations so long as MLM continues to guide their practice.

- Promote the study of women's experiences in current and historical Protracted People's Wars to prove beyond any question that the ruling ideology's ideas about women are dogshit and that all other feminisms are inadequate and, wittingly or not, treasonous. The fact is, anti-Communism is anti-woman. As part of this task, we should release and promote popular propaganda on the objective and historic truths of these experiences when it comes to women's emancipation.

- Finally, to form LGBT organizations along the lines of Stonewall Militant Front—ATX. As part of this, emphasize the mutual support that must exist between the LGBT struggle and the struggle for women's emancipation, with the former struggle being overall subordinated to the latter struggle. Also as part of this task, emphasize the total, existential danger that the ongoing worldwide rise of fascism poses to LGBT people, putting into popular language the lessons of history about the high point of LGBT struggle in Germany in the 1930s being utterly liquidated, and how we see that only a People's Army and Protracted People's War can ensure these horrors aren't repeated.

—Red Guards Austin, January 2018