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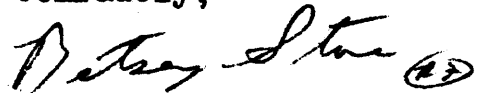
TO ALL SWP NC MEMBERS, ORGANIZERS, AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The following is a report on our women's liberation activities in three areas: (1) The national abortion action campaign; (2) The SWP election campaign and the National Women's Political Caucus; and (3) The Women's Contingent for November 6.

The contents of the report should be made available to comrades in the branches, most importantly to women's liberation directors and members of women's liberation, campaign, and antiwar fractions. Some branches may want to summarize sections of the report at branch or fraction meetings.

Comradely,



Betsey Stone
SWP Women's Liberation Director

National Campaign to Repeal Abortion Laws

The recent National Coordinating Committee meeting of the Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC), attended by over 100 women, reflected the degree to which WONAAC has established itself as a viable coalition, and the potential which WONAAC has for organizing masses of women in struggle. The progress reports to the NCC showed that very broad endorsement has already been achieved for November 20. WONAAC offices have been set up in many areas, and office staffs include women from a wide variety of groups and political backgrounds. A growing number of women are involved in building the abortion campaign on a day to day basis. Many of the women who gave reports at the NCC were women newly involved in the campaign. Several of them were important figures in the women's liberation movement in their areas.

At the NCC meeting, a number of decisions were made: (1) to hold the next NCC meeting on October 30 in Washington D.C., and to make this the last NCC meeting before November 20; (2) to set up a women's commission for the study of abortion which would hold hearings in the period leading up to the November 20 action; (3) to begin negotiations on a march route with Washington police and to begin to contact and arrange for speakers; (4) to launch a national campaign to raise much needed funds for WONAAC.

During the same weekend that the WONAAC NCC was meeting in Detroit, a number of representatives of WONAAC attended the national conference of the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws (NARAL) held in Washington D.C. NARAL is an established, well-known group which concentrates on legislative action. It is significant that NARAL has now endorsed November 20, and that many important figures in the abortion movement endorsed WONAAC during the NARAL conference.

One significant aspect of the NARAL convention was the debate that went on between those forces who support abortion repeal because they consider abortion basically a "population" issue, and those who support it because they are for the basic right of a woman to choose. The fact that a wing of NARAL now feels compelled to look at abortion as a women's liberation issue shows the impact of WONAAC on the abortion struggle. The delegation to the conference from Pittsburgh, for example, decided it wanted to concentrate its energies from now on in building WONAAC, specifically because WONAAC clearly puts forward the concept of the right of a woman to choose. The decision of these Pittsburgh women is reflective of the fact that WONAAC is becoming known as the organization which fights for the rights of women, and which is oriented toward building a mass movement including women's liberation forces.

Key Tasks for Building November 20

1. FINANCES The financial report given to the NCC showed that WONAAC is over \$9,000 in debt. Much preliminary work has been done to raise the funds needed, but what has been collected thus

far from adequate. During the next weeks, a concentrated campaign must be waged both from the national office and the areas around the country to raise money. With the preliminary press coverage which WONAAC has received, the greatly expanded endorsement list, and the many contacts which have been made, WONAAC is now in the position to raise the large sums needed to wage a successful campaign.

At the NCC, each area was urged to try to collect money not only for their local coalitions, but for the national WONAAC offices as well. Ways that this can be done include calling and visiting people who might be willing to contribute, sending out fund letters signed by individuals who would be respected by potential donors, sponsoring of meetings for well-known individuals with the proceeds going to the coalition, honorariums for coalition speakers, button sales, fund pitches at all meetings sponsored by the coalitions, and the collection of money at literature tables.

It is important for all those working on the campaign to be conscious of the need for funds, and to be constantly on the alert for ways to collect money. All literature sent out by the coalitions should include an appeal for funds, even if it is simply a line or a box which people can check indicating the amount of money they are willing to donate.

2. PRESS WORK. The first important breakthroughs have been made in the press, and there is every indication that as WONAAC becomes established, it will be able to get significant press coverage. Establishing a relationship between WONAAC and sympathetic female-- and male--reporters is very important. Such reporters will often be willing to do special feature articles on the campaign, as well as picking up on WONAAC news releases and press conferences. Newspaper ads asking for money and calling on people to demonstrate November 20 are also important.

3. REACH OUT. Because the abortion law repeal movement is a new movement, it is especially important not to have any preconceived ideas about who will, or will not, be willing to support the campaign. Many different milieus and types of organizations should be contacted, including those which have not up to this time been involved actively in any kind of protest movement.

There are certain areas where we will want to concentrate our attention. These include the campuses--both high school and college--the unions, and Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Asian organizations. In building for November 20, it must be remembered that consciousness on the question of abortion is not yet as great as is consciousness on the question of the Vietnam war. Even on the campuses, there are many people who must be won over to support the right of abortion, and activities should be directed at this. Some of the most successful events thus far have been debates with right-wingers over the abortion issue.

Some of the strongest supporters of the campaign in many areas are Black and Chicano women. Some of these are well-known figures in their areas. A group called Black Women United to

Repeal Abortion Laws has been formed in Detroit to help build November 20, and in New York, a Black, Puerto Rican and Asian Women United for Abortion Law Repeal is being formed. In other areas, Black and Chicano women are involved as individuals in building the campaign. The success that WONAAC has already had in signing up union officials as endorsers and in enthusing women unionists about the campaign shows that this is also an important area of work.

In contacting the various groups and individuals who want to support the campaign, it is important to concentrate on three key building activities in the coming period: 1. Selling of bus tickets to Washington and San Francisco; 2. Distribution of buttons and other literature, including mass leafleting; 3. The sending of WONAAC speakers to as many groups as possible, to urge them to get involved in the campaign.

Opponents of WONAAC

Attacks against WONAAC have continued both from the right wing of the women's liberation movement, and the sectarians of the ultraleft, although important inroads have been made in counteracting the influences of these groupings. The WISE women continue to meet together in several cities, concentrating mainly on "educational" activities such as forums giving their views on the present stage of the women's liberation movement. The International Socialists have published a rather lengthy pamphlet reporting on the national abortion conference, which concentrates on attacking the role of the SWP.

In the months since the abortion conference, more active opposition to WONAAC has come from some of the right-wing leaders of both the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Organization of Women. This opposition was reflected at the national convention of NOW, held in Los Angeles last summer.

At the NOW convention, a section of the NOW leadership, including some of the most conscious reformists, launched a red-baiting attack on the SWP, and attempted to discredit WONAAC through such red-baiting. Because of this, the SWP was one of the main topics of discussion at the NOW convention, despite the fact that there was only one SWP delegate there. The NOW leaders who launched this attack did so for a number of reasons. First, they want to orient NOW toward working within the National Women's Political Caucus, and they know that the SWP is the one group in the country who will most vociferously oppose the orientation of the caucus toward support to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Secondly, they see WONAAC as a competitor to their orientation toward electoral action and do not want to set precedents of building mass demonstrations around clear-cut demands that many liberal candidates will not support.

Those women who opposed WONAAC at the NOW conference concentrated their attention on two workshops--the workshop on political action and the one on reproduction and its control. In the political action workshop, they introduced a motion condemning the SWP

for attempting to "divide and exploit the feminist movement for their own goals and purposes," which was passed. After the vote in this workshop, many of the same women went to the workshop on reproduction and gave support to a motion, against support to WONAAC, which was passed there. In the plenary, when the red-baiting motion against the SWP was introduced, a number of women from different areas of the country spoke against it, and it was voted down. Because the reformist leaders lost on this motion, they decided not to take up the motion against WONAAC, fearing that this might also fail.

In the period since the NOW convention, many of these NOW leaders have continued their attempts to sabotage WONAAC through various means--by trying to keep various chapters from endorsing it, by encouraging NOW groups to schedule other activities on November 20, etc. At the same time, there is tremendous sentiment on the part of the ranks of NOW in favor of building November 20. A number of NOW chapters, including the Cleveland, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Berkeley, Albuquerque, Nashville, and Portland chapters have already endorsed, and many NOW leaders, including Betty Friedan, have also endorsed. At the NOW convention itself, 100 of the 600 NOW members present endorsed the coalition.

One of the most important tasks which WONAAC will have in the coming period will be to try to involve both NOW and the National Women's Political Caucus in building November 20. As more and more figures in the women's liberation movement begin to give their endorsement, and as the action gets underway it will become harder and harder for reformist leaders to explain to their ranks why they should not support the action.

We should be very aggressive in trying to help involve NOW in building November 20, and we should especially oppose any attempts on the part of anti-WONAAC forces in NOW to set up competitive activities on November 20. If WONAAC supporters talk with them about this, most NOW members will immediately agree that we should work together to build November 20, and they will be opposed to setting up conflicting activities on the same date. In a number of cities, SWPers have been active in NOW, and this is something which should be expanded. In each area there should be at least one person who belongs to NOW, is familiar with its perspectives, and who can help to build NOW's participation in WONAAC.

The SWP Election Campaign and the National Women's Political Caucus

The National Women's Political Caucus has received a great deal of press coverage during the recent period, and there are large numbers of women who have joined it and who have become enthused by the idea of gaining political power through the elections. Literature sent out from the national office of the Political Caucus describes the caucus as a vehicle to "raise women's issues at every election" and to see that women are "fairly represented in elective and appointative political offices."

The caucus is open to women of all political views, regardless of political party, and women who want to set up chapters of

the caucus are urged to contact Democrats, Republicans, members of the Liberal and Conservative parties, Democratic Farmer Laborites, the National Women's Party, the New Democratic Coalition and the Socialist Workers Party. The program of the caucus is not clearly defined, but includes "opposition to all forms of racism and discrimination," and "institutionalized violence and poverty," and support for "civil rights and human dignity."

Although at this stage in the development of the Political Caucus, the organizers have maintained the stance of being open to women of all parties, the basic orientation of their activities is clearly toward the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. We can expect that much of the enthusiasm of the younger, more militant women who have been attracted to the caucus will begin to wane as primaries and the presidential election itself approaches and it becomes more clear that many of the candidates the caucus will be supporting will be liberal Democratic Party males who will not have very good stands on feminist issues.

In building support for the SWP election campaign, we can take advantage of the fact that at this point the Women's Political Caucus presents itself as being open to support for any pro-women candidates, regardless of party. We should talk with women in the caucus about the campaign of Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley and the program they are running on. We can start simply by presenting the idea that the SWP should get a hearing, along with other candidates from other parties. This means that SWP literature should be available, that SWP speakers should be asked to address caucus meetings when other candidates are invited, etc. In doing this we can make use of the "Open Letter from Linda Jenness" and other material which shows that the SWP campaign is a campaign with a consistent feminist program, and also a program which fights racism and war in a truly effective, consistent way. We can talk with these women with the confidence that we can win many of them to support our campaign because we do have the best, most consistent, most inspiring campaign which supports the women's liberation movement. Our campaign can thus help win many of these women away from capitalist politics and support to the Democratic Party in particular.

Another Task in Building the SWP Campaign

Reports on the tour of Linda Jenness show that there is a **very** enthusiastic response from the women who come to hear her to the idea of running a woman for president on a feminist and socialist program. One way which the SWP campaign committee has projected for taking this initial response and using it to build the campaign further is through the vehicle of an ad signed by women supporters of the campaign to appear in newspapers around the time of November 20. If this ad is to be successful, branches around the country should make collection of signatures for the ad a priority campaign activity for the next few weeks. The deadline for signatures is November 1. We need names from every area, which will show the geographical spread of support for the campaign, and we want to include names of women active in many different kinds of groups, including campus groups, unionists, members

of Third World groups, etc. Women's liberation fractions will need to cooperate with the campaign committee on this.

Building the Women's Contingents for November 6

Building activities for the women's liberation contingents on November 6 have begun in most areas. A button is available from the women's contingent in New York which will be appropriate for use nationally. A national mailing to get endorsers is also being sent out, including a leaflet which can be used as a model for leaflets in local areas. Each local area must make up its own leaflets, stickers, etc., with the specific information needed for that area.

The November 6 demonstrations also provide an important opportunity for WONAAC to reach new women. WONAACs in many areas are planning to go to the November 6 demonstrations with WONAAC buttons to sell, with leaflets, with mailing lists, money cans, and huge banners exhorting women to March on Washington and San Francisco on November 20.