

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014
February 4, 1977

TO ORGANIZERS AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

The enclosed resolution outlining a strategy for defending women's rights is being circulated in the National Organization for Women (NOW) by its co-authors, Clare Fraenzl and Rhonda Rutherford of the Philadelphia NOW chapter. They plan to submit this resolution to the national convention of NOW in April for discussion and adoption.

The Do It NOW Newsletter, NOW's national publication, has announced a deadline of February 15 for submitting convention resolutions. At this time Fraenzl and Rutherford are seeking additional initial co-signers of the resolution from NOW leaders and activists throughout the country before the February 15 deadline.

SWP and YSA members who belong to NOW will want to make their top priority gaining signers of the resolution in time for submission to the Do It NOW Newsletter.

Of course, supporters of the resolution will continue circulating it and seeking more signers after February 15, but initial signers are needed now.

As signers are obtained, the information should be telephoned immediately to Cindy Jaquith, Andrea Morell, or Olga Rodríguez at the SWP national office.

A note on the form of the resolution: The NOW national office requires that all resolutions be limited in length to one typewritten page. They will accept as an appendix lengthy motivation. For this reason, the enclosed materials are in two parts: one, the actual resolution on one page, and the other a lengthy presentation of the ideas in the resolution to help make them clearer.

Comradely,



Cindy Jaquith
SWP Women's Liberation
Director

-RESOLUTION-

The November 1975 defeat of state ERAs in New York and New Jersey signaled the beginning of a vicious assault on the gains won by women in the late '60s and early '70s. In recent months the attacks against us escalated dramatically: abortion rights, affirmative action plans, child care, maternity benefits, and the ERA have been dealt severe setbacks.

These attacks hit hardest at working women, especially Blacks, Chicanas, Puerto Ricans, Asians, and Native Americans. It is these sisters who suffer the most from losses of Medicaid funding for abortion or pregnancy disability benefits. In fact, the attacks are aimed at dividing women along economic and racial lines. Afraid to take a powerful, united women's movement head on, the enemies of women's liberation hope to pit more privileged women against poorer women, employed against unemployed, organized against unorganized. We must recognize this as a deadly trap for the women's movement and reject it.

NOW needs to discuss and develop a strategy for uniting women and our supporters to fight back on a local, state, and national level. The purpose of this resolution is to present ideas for such a strategy.

1. NOW must make its main priority defense of the rights of our Black, Chicana, Puerto Rican, Asian, Native American, and working sisters, rights that are in jeopardy today. These sisters are bearing the brunt of the recent attacks, but the rights of all women are in grave danger.

We need to pay special attention to defense of abortion rights, affirmative action gains, maternity benefits, child care, and ratification of the ERA. Forced sterilization schemes must be vigorously opposed.

Special efforts must be made to mobilize working women and women who are victims of discrimination because of race or nationality. These women have the greatest stake in this fight and we should seek to bring them into NOW by the thousands. They are looking for allies and a way to fight back. NOW chapters should work to bring them into our ranks. Aid should be given to those Task Forces trying to reach out to Black, Chicana, Puerto Rican, Asian, Native American and working women.

2. We must launch a campaign to counter the attacks on women's rights that includes rallies, picket lines, speak-outs, and other public, visible events. Where it is possible, NOW chapters should help involve labor unions, civil rights, student, and other groups in these activities around mutually agreed upon goals.

3. The April NOW conference should issue a call for a national demonstration, like the one held May 16 for the ERA, around all these issues. We should attempt to draw together the broadest possible spectrum of forces to build a show of unity and strength.

4. Historically it is through our own independent movement that women have progressed. We marched, picketed, and spoke out to win the right to vote and legal abortion. Today, as the recent attacks have shown, we cannot sit back and rely on either of the two governing parties, the Democrats or Republicans, to "give" us our long overdue rights. We must build a powerful, united, independent movement of women and supporters of our rights to win our liberation.

Clare Fraenzl, Philadelphia NOW Vice-President for Liaison

Rhonda Rutherford, Philadelphia NOW member