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March 7, 1977

TO ORGANIZERS AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are three additional resolutions that are being discussed in preparation for the April 21-24 national conference of the National Organization for Women (NOW).

The Feeley resolution calls for a fall national march in response to the attacks on women's rights. The political motivation for this march is along the same lines as that of the Fraenzl-Rutherford resolution, but Feeley's proposal separates out the question of a national action. The NOW resolutions committee has requested that Feeley combine her resolution with Fraenzl's and Rutherford's. However, all three authors wish to keep the two proposals separate. Feeley will ask for a separate vote on her action proposal by the conference delegates, since there will be many NOW members who support the idea of a fall action, but may not support all the points raised in the Fraenzl-Rutherford proposal.

The "Resolution on Economic Priority Issues for the Second Decade," submitted by the NOW Labor and Poverty task forces, raises many important issues facing working women. While we would not agree with everything in the resolution, its general thrust is to orient NOW toward women in the work force. Thus it can stimulate valuable discussion in local NOW chapters around the need to reach out to working women and look for allies in the organized labor movement. The main weakness of this resolution is its lack of concrete proposals for how to combat the attacks on pregnancy rights, equal pay, or affirmative action. Chapters may want to submit amendments to this resolution to strengthen it in this regard.

The third proposal--"Proposal for Political Action Committee Feasibility Project"-- is being circulated by Eleanor Smeal, chairone of the NOW national board. Smeal is also running for NOW president. This resolution has not been formally submitted to the conference, but it is being widely discussed in western Pennsylvania and was the main perspective counterposed to the Fraenzl-Rutherford proposal at the recent New Jersey NOW conference (see Feb. 18 Militant). A resolution embodying these general ideas may be submitted in some form.

The Smeal proposal, couched in the language of a "feasibility study," is designed to deepen NOW's support to and involvement in the Democratic party. It calls for changing NOW "from a pressure group to a power group" and lays out a strategy of participation in elections to do this. Smeal makes it clear that NOW will participate in the elections to win, meaning that it will support candidates of the Democratic or Republican parties.

Discussion around the Smeal proposal in local NOW chapters can help clarify the two counterposed perspectives before the NOW conference. Smeal's perspective is to rely on Democratic party politicians, while Fraenzl and Rutherford are calling for a radical shift in NOW's orientation, toward working-class women and women of the oppressed nationalities, mobilizing their power to defeat the current attacks on women's rights.

NOW has set up a national "Second Decade" committee to discuss perspectives for the organization as it enters its second ten years. Local "Second Decade" committees are supposed to be established as well. The "Second Decade" committee will give a report at the national conference during the point on the agenda set aside for resolutions. Wherever these committees exist in local chapters, they should discuss the Fraenzl-Rutherford resolution, which offers a clear political strategy for NOW's second decade.

With only five weeks remaining until the national NOW conference April 21-24, pre-conference discussions are beginning in many local NOW chapters. These discussions have been uneven around the country.

Some chapters, such as the newly formed Salt Lake City chapter, have scheduled a series of meetings leading up to the convention, where members will exchange views on the different resolutions submitted to the conference. Other chapters are mailing copies of the resolutions to all their members, or printing them in the local newsletter, so everyone will be well-informed once the discussion starts. In some cities, NOW chapters are holding "program nights" on the issues facing Black women, or other subjects, which can also stimulate discussion.

In some chapters, local leaders of NOW have resisted the idea of a political discussion before the conference. Some chapters have already elected their delegates, without any discussion at all. Despite this, it is important in these chapters to press for discussion before the conference, and to explain to NOW members the need for such a discussion both in local chapters and at the conference.

The organization of the conference itself has hampered

the ability of local chapters to do this. While more than six resolutions have been formally submitted to the conference, none of these has been distributed nationally to the membership yet. The Do It NOW newsletter, NOW's monthly paper, plans to run only three-to-four-line summaries of each proposal, which is totally inadequate. In a letter they have sent to the signers of their resolution, Clare Fraenzl and Rhonda Rutherford have urged the signers to write to Do It NOW, requesting that all resolutions be printed in full. Chapters may also want to write directly to the head of the resolutions committee, asking for copies of all resolutions. The address of the Do It NOW newsletter is 214 Dewey St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15218. The resolutions committee is chaired by Nancy Knaak, Box 844, Lakeland, Minn. 55043.

The tentative agenda for the conference also reflects this problem. Workshops, entertainment, and the election of national officers are all scheduled before the discussion of resolutions, which will not occur until the last day, April 24. This order of discussion threatens to leave political discussion until the very end of the conference, when time will be short and many women will have left. A more rational agenda would set aside plenty of time right at the start for debate on resolutions (both in workshops and plenaries), followed by the election of officers. Selection of the new national leadership of NOW is an important task of the delegates, one that should be based on the course of action the conference has already decided upon.

The Militant is an important forum for this NOW discussion. To maximize its usefulness the Militant needs articles on the discussions in local NOW chapters as part of its coverage of this debate. One example is the story on the racist affirmative action study published by the Twin Cities NOW chapter (see Feb. 25 Militant). Ideas for articles focusing on the key issues being debated in other NOW chapters should be discussed with the Militant.

Comradely,



Cindy Jaquith  
Women's Liberation Work  
Director

## Feeley Resolution

Since our last NOW national conference we have witnessed increasing attacks on all the rights the feminist movement has fought for, from legal, safe abortion to maternity rights and child care. Statistics reveal the continued high unemployment and underemployment of women and the widening wage differential. Projections indicate the the vast majority of all women's work will continue to be dead end. The ERA sits bottled up in state legislatures, with only one victory over the last two years. And the current economic crisis has curtailed the social services women--especially women who are the heads of households, Black, Hispanic and poor women--desperately need.

Attacks like the Hyde Amendment, which would cut off Medicaid funds for 300,000 women needing abortion each year, cutbacks of the already meager child-care facilities, and the government's slashing of affirmative action programs, as in California's Bakke decision, must not go unanswered. If the voices of spirited and angry women, and those who support our rights, are not heard, the reactionary enemies of our movement will only be encouraged in their drive against women's rights.

In 1975 NOW, the most powerful women's liberation organization in the country, took the lead in organizing supporters of women's rights into a massive demonstration for the ERA--May 16, the Springfield, Illinois March for Equal Rights. This national demonstration was seen by millions through the broad television, radio and newspaper coverage it received. We got our message across loud and clear that women want equal rights now. We succeeded in involving important contingents from trade unions, women's groups, the Black movement and the campuses. And through building this action we were also able to build and strengthen many NOW chapters.

Today the intensified attacks on our rights have encouraged women to organize against these attacks. In many cities, especially around the fourth anniversary of the Supreme Court decision (January 22), NOW chapters initiated and/or participated in speak-outs, picket lines and demonstrations. The New York teach-in, featuring Dr. Kenneth Edelin, Kate Millett and Betty Friedan, was clearly counterposed on the national networks to the Washington, D.C. anti-abortion demonstration. That teach-in was a coalition effort, supported by several NOW chapters.

We need to strengthen and deepen our visible campaigns for women's rights, and that is why a national demonstration becomes crucial. We can only say "no" to the anti-abortion forces, to the opponents of child care, to the enemies of affirmative action, to the STOP-ERA forces by launching nationally-coordinated activity. And, as a matter of fact, coming back from May 16th everyone understood the need to "put our marching shoes on," to take other, and bigger, ERA Freedom trains.

I propose that the NOW national convention resolve to call for local actions around August 26th, the anniversary of women's suffrage, throughout the country. These actions will be the building block to a national march on Washington, D.C., to take place in the fall of 1977. Such a two-pronged effort would be the

Feeley Resolution/2

most effective way of demonstrating our determination to fight against these attacks and extend the gains we have already won. It would enable NOW to expand its influence and build important links with the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican movements, the students, and the labor movement. Passing this proposal will make building this march a central priority on a national scale. We would seek to build the largest possible coalition of NOW chapters, other feminist and civil liberties organizations, campus groups, labor unions and any other organizations committed to ending the secondary status of women. The united power of the women's movement is our strength. Sisterhood is powerful!

Dianne Feeley  
ERA Subcommittee Chair,  
NOW New York

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN

Resolution on ECONOMIC PRIORITY ISSUES for the SECOND DECADE

Submitted by the Labor and Poverty Task Forces

- Whereas, certain basic legislative and economic changes and Programs must be understood and won through tremendous grassroots support before women can fully and equally participate in this economy and society;
- Whereas, after 10 years of feminist effort on affirmative action the wage gap continues to widen, the latest figures showing that in 1955 men's earnings exceeded women's by 56% and in 1974 they exceeded ours by 75%;
- Whereas, occupational segregation has grown worse over the past 10 years as the majority of increases in labor force participation have been in female dominated occupations;
- Whereas, the primary solution to the oppression of occupational segregation is to raise the status and wages of currently female dominated occupations;
- Whereas, union women in clerical, operative and service jobs make 20% to 25% more in wages than non-union women, and 10% to 20% more in blue collar jobs, as well as receiving more benefits and job security which in sum give them a 70% advantage;
- Whereas, in spite of this 88% of all women workers are unorganized with no protection under collective bargaining agreements;
- Whereas, women continue to enter the work force in unprecedented numbers and a recent survey of female high school seniors revealed that only 5% wanted to forego the job market to be full time wives and mothers;
- Whereas, the current economic priorities of this country coupled with the job market as it is now structured do not allow room for all of us, therefore our unemployment rate is chronically at least 2% higher than that of men, while for minority and older women it is twice as high, and women make up over 60% of all discouraged workers;
- Whereas, although women make up 40% of the total work force there is still no national network of child care centers, and furthermore, during this recession thousands of child care centers were cut off from funds and closed,;
- Whereas, incidents of female-headed families continues to rise and in 1969 15% of all poor families were headed by a woman while now 45% of all poor families are female headed;
- Whereas, the current welfare and unemployment compensation system does not provide for survival needs and deprives people of human dignity and constitutes a national disgrace;
- Whereas, minority women, older women, gay and young women are hardest hit by all of the above;
- Whereas, the National Organization for Women believes that the opportunity for decent economic survival is a basic human right and a preliminary necessity to human freedom dignity and the development of one's potential;

Therefore, be it resolved, that as the National Organization for Women moves into the 2nd Decade we will set priority on developing short and long range strategy for education and action on the following economic issues;

1. Organizing into collective bargaining units - that we explore how unions and the labor movement have been the primary fighting force for workers rights, that we widely disseminate information on the benefits of unionization to women, and through various means stimulate organizing among ourselves and through the union movement;
2. Overturning the Bennett Amendment - that we support the Campaign to End Discrimination Against Pregnant Workers and any other viable vehicle or strategy to eliminate the Bennett amendment which will make it possible to sue under Title VII for equal pay of comparable value - the benefits of which could effect millions of women workers and be a major step toward closing the wage gap;
3. Full Employment - that we develop a network of conscious and articulate feminists who understand the underlying basic necessity for full employment for the realization of feminist goals, worker and minority rights and basic human dignity - that we disseminate this information and prepare to join with others in the upcoming fight for the obviously justified demand that in the most affluent country in the world "everyone who is willing and able to work has a right to a job at decent wages."
4. Child Care - that we develop short and long range strategy toward the achievement of a national network of child care centers with special emphasis on strategy to counteract the severe ~~and~~ and deceitful grassroots backlash which was mounted against the Mondale-Brademas Child Care and Family Services bill in 1976 - and that we also emphasize the formation of an alliance with other concerned people and organizations;
5. Guaranteed Minimum Income - that we begin to prepare and develop the feminist perspective and strategy for the upcoming battle to replace the welfare system with a guaranteed minimum income program which is the only comprehensive and visionary solution to the cruel and vicious poverty and oppression of human dignity suffered by millions of women, children, minority persons and older Americans in this wealthy nation;
6. Domestic and International Redistribution of Economic Wealth and Resources - that we recognize that the accomplishment of the above priorities will require a shift in domestic priorities and some redistribution of income and resources - that we examine the ramifications of this with a commitment to democratic freedom as well as to economic justice and equal opportunity - and that we expose the dangers of current extreme and unnecessary inequities, not only to women, children, minorities and older Americans, but to the future peace and survival of the world.

PROPOSAL FOR  
POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE  
FEASIBILITY PROJECT

Pennsylvania NOW and NOW in general must change its posture from a pressure group to a power group. A power group simply means an organization that has the ability to do, to perform, and to produce. Currently we must pressure those who pressure those who pressure those...etc. who decide. To get nearer the fulcrum of decision making in the political arena, we must begin to explore the possibility of developing a NOW feminist "political machine" -- a political machine which can elect and defeat candidates of its own choosing on the basis of its own platform. To initiate the building of such a machine much preliminary work must be done. The project herein proposed is primarily research and analysis -- the necessary foundation for sound decision making.

A thorough knowledge of existing election laws, the formation of a political action committee, analysis of voting patterns, analysis of past and current power structures, establishing procedures and ground rules for such matters as screening candidates in targeted areas, establishing training courses for all types of campaign personnel are all initial steps. To be independent and strong we must be allowed to develop all necessary avenues of power. Political power with careful organization and planning is accessible. Let us in 1977 embark upon the exploration of the use of this tool.

1. Educate NOW members to philosophy of power group/political machine
  - a. Articles in Pennsylvania NOW magazine
  - b. Special interest meetings at state board meetings (philosophical)
  - c. Suggested reading on power and politics
2. Research
  - a. Election laws -- what are they and do they help or hinder us?
    - (1) Federal
    - (2) State
    - (3) Political party rules
  - b. Legalities of political action committees
    - (1) Federal laws and requirements
    - (2) State laws and requirements
    - (3) Benefits and limitations of political action committees
    - (4) Experience of other political action committees
      - (a) Unions and professional organizations
      - (b) California NOW PAC
  - c. Political machines and the rule of corruption
  - d. Targeting areas where success is possible
    - (1) Which levels of government or political party
    - (2) Which geographic districts or demographic areas
    - (3) Compile legislative records to determine voting patterns of officials
    - (4) Examine election contests to determine swing districts
    - (5) Where and when should we use negative campaigning?
    - (6) What is a manageable campaign in terms of
      - (a) Money
      - (b) Personnel
      - (c) Expertise
      - (d) Time
  - e. Analysis of current and past power structures in Pennsylvania
  - f. Alliances

3. Establish procedures/ground rules for political action committee
  - a. Guidelines for candidates
    - (1) Screening
    - (2) Recruiting
    - (3) Supporting
    - (4) Rewards for workers
  - b. What constitutes support?
  - c. Disciplinary rules and procedures
  - d. What do we expect from candidates in return?
4. Issues and goals
  - a. Prioritize issues
    - (1) Develop platform
    - (2) Position papers
  - b. Develop long-range goals and plan
    - (1) Legislation
    - (2) Administrative rules such as IRS and Social Security
    - (3) Election rules
5. Campaigns
  - a. Identify politically experienced people and resources
    - (1) Within NOW
      - (a) Pennsylvania NOW magazine tearoff
      - (b) Survey of chapters
      - (c) Experience of California NOW PAC
      - (d) Other states and National
    - (2) Outside NOW
      - (a) Survey of politically active feminists
      - (b) Elected female officials
      - (c) Women's Political Caucus
      - (d) League of Women Voters
      - (e) Groups doing research on women and politics (such as Rutgers)
  - b. Develop specific campaign strategies and techniques
    - (1) DNC campaign manual
    - (2) Study of targeted districts in terms of effective campaign strategy
  - c. Train campaign workers
    - (1) Workshops/courses
    - (2) Informational packet
    - (3) System of consultants

PROPOSED BUDGET

1. Statewide communication (4 leadership mailings)	\$130.00
2. Worksession communication and materials	120.00
3. Materials and resources	<u>150.00</u>
TOTAL	\$400.00