

# *Women's Liberation through Working Class Revolution*

Anarchists recognise that all women suffer oppression. **We oppose sexism wherever it exists.**

However, **class differentiates the experience of sexism.** Wealthy women have access to maids, lawyers etc. which enables them to “buy” their way out of a lot of the misery that ordinary working class women face. Conversely, it is working and poor women who face the brunt of women's oppression.

Given that capitalism and the State are the key sources of women's oppression, real freedom for women requires a revolution against these structures of oppression.

Since women in the ruling class benefit from capitalism and the State, and from the super-exploitation of working class and poor women that these structures utilise, they are incapable of challenging the root source of women's oppression. Therefore we do not call for an alliance of “all women” against sexism, we realise that, strange as it may seem, some women (the ruling class women) have an objective interest in the preservation of the structures that cause sexism (capitalism and the State).

Only the working class and poor can defeat capitalism and the State because only these classes do not exploit (we are productive), only these classes have no vested interests in the current system, and because only these classes have the power and organising ability to do so (we can organise against the ruling class at the point of production). This means that it is only the *class struggle* that can ultimately defeat sexism. It is not multi-class “women's movements”. Although the class struggle against capitalism and the State is in the interests of all working class and poor people in any case (these systems exploit, impoverish, dominate



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and humiliate them), women have an *additional* reason to fight this battle: capitalism and the State's usual oppressions are compounded by the special oppression of women that these systems inevitably produce.

It follows from the above that the real allies of working class and poor women in the fight against sexism are working class and poor men, and not women of the upper class. These men do not have an interest in the perpetuation of women's oppression- it is in fact directly against their interests. Working class and poor women benefit from this sort of alliance because it strengthens their overall struggle, because it helps to prevent their issues from being isolated and ghettoised.

This sort of unity in action requires that two things happen: one, that issues and demands are raised that are in the interests of all workers, both men and women; and, two, that special attention is paid to women's specific issues in order to strengthen unity, prevent the marginalisation of these issues, and consistently fight against all oppression. It is precisely because you cannot mobilise all working class and poor people without raising issues that are relevant to *all sections* of the workers and the poor, that women's issues are not something optional that can just be tacked onto the struggle, but a central plank of a successful workers movement. Thus, the working class and the poor can only be mobilised and united for battle and victory if this is on the basis of a consistent fight against capitalism, the state and *all* forms of oppression.

Consequently, it is clear that the struggle for women's freedom requires a class struggle by the workers and the poor. And, in turn, the class struggle can only be successful if it is at the same time a struggle against women's oppression.

We thus disagree with those feminists who think that all you have to do is for women to become bosses and politicians to achieve equality. We want to destroy the existing structures of domination and exploitation. The struggle for women's liberation is the struggle against capitalism and the state. And it is both a struggle against sexist institutions (like capitalism) and sexist ideas (as internalised or accepted by both men and women); both are essential to the success of the revolution and the realisation of its full potential.

Extract from ***Fighting for Women's Freedom*** by the Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front. Read full version online at: [www.zabalaza.net](http://www.zabalaza.net)

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