



# Gender

Men and women are biologically different, but socially equal.

Any differences that are attributed to men or to women that are not biological are called "Gender".

Discrimination between people on grounds of gender is wrong.

Opposition to gender-discrimination is a "human rights" matter that may be dealt with by law.

Women's concerns as women go beyond opposition to gender-discrimination.

Women should organise as women so as to become a free-willing collective subject that can act positively, and do more than just restore prescribed human rights.

Women organised democratically as women, and especially as working women, can be a revolutionary force. It is this revolutionary force of women that the communists need to bring into being.

The establishment of "gender desks" is not sufficient for revolutionary purposes. These may partially restore equal (bourgeois) rights to bourgeois women, but they will not succeed in the task of mobilising proletarian women for the overthrow of capitalism, which is the only full emancipation available to them.



[Lindsey German](#) in 2009

# Patriarchy

In South Africa, in 2012, “Patriarchy” theory is orthodox. It is politically correct, and government ministers and trade union leaders feel free to denounce patriarchy without fear of contradiction. Patriarchy doctrine says that men have an innate prejudice against women that causes them to treat women badly. This contradicts the other principal orthodoxy related to women, which is Gender theory.

To say that men have an innate prejudice is to attribute to men a characteristic that is not biological. Hence, patriarchy doctrine is prejudice. It is gender bias. Patriarchy doctrine is sexism.

Lindsey German, renowned leader of the peace movement in Britain, and convenor of the **Stop the War Coalition**, rejected patriarchy theory more than 30 years ago. German focuses on the kind of patriarchy-theory that holds that all men benefit from the oppression of all women, where this is taken as natural, or given.

Lindsey German sets quotations from Karl Marx against these ideas to show that they are not compatible with history. She shows how the modern conditions of women were not inevitable but arose in the circumstances of capitalism.

*“I would argue therefore that not only do men not benefit from women’s work in the family (rather the capitalist system as a whole benefits), but also that it is not true that men and capital are conspiring to stop women having access to economic production,”* says German.

*“The question the theorists of patriarchy have to answer is this – if capital and men are indeed in alliance why are women not being thrown out of work and replaced by unemployed miners, steelworkers and dockers?”* asks German.

German concludes: *“Theories of patriarchy are not in fact theories of women’s liberation. Instead of starting with an assessment of the material position of women in capitalist society, they start with crude biological assessments of the positions of men and women. They point no way forward for women’s liberation.”*

And asks: *“Why then have they become so popular?”*

German point out that patriarchy-theory **“demands theoretical correctness from the few while accepting inaction by the many.”** This is exactly the situation in South Africa today, more than 30 years after German wrote her essay.

In the end, only the abolition of class division can do away with the oppression of and discrimination against women. It is those women who would rather not think about class who are the ones who make patriarchy-theory popular.

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## **From V I Lenin, 1919:**

In words, bourgeois democracy promises equality and liberty. In fact, not a single bourgeois republic, not even the most advanced one, has given the feminine half of the human race either full legal equality with men or freedom from the guardianship and oppression of men.

Bourgeois democracy is democracy of pompous phrases, solemn words, exuberant promises and the high-sounding slogans of freedom and equality. But, in fact, it screens the non-freedom and inferiority of women, the non-freedom and inferiority of the toilers and exploited.

Down with this contemptible fraud! There cannot be, nor is there, nor will there ever be "equality" between the oppressed and the oppressors, between the exploited and the exploiters. There cannot be, nor is there nor will there ever be real "freedom" as long as there is no freedom for women from the privileges which the law grants to men, as long as there is no freedom for the workers from the yoke of capital, and no freedom for the toiling peasants from the yoke of the capitalists, landlords and merchants.

Let the liars and hypocrites, the dull-witted and blind, the bourgeois and their supporters hoodwink the people with talk about freedom in general, about equality in general, about democracy in general.

We say to the workers and peasants: Tear the masks from the faces of these liars, open the eyes of these blind ones. Ask them:

“Equality between what sex and what other sex?

“Between what nation and what other nation?

“*Between what class and what other class?*

“Freedom from what yoke, or from the yoke of what class? Freedom for what class?”

Whoever speaks of politics, of democracy, of liberty, of equality, of socialism, and does not at the same time *ask* these questions, does not put them in the foreground, does not fight against concealing, hushing up and glossing over these questions, is one of the worst enemies of the toilers, is a wolf in sheep's clothing, is a bitter opponent of the workers and peasants, is a servant of the landlords, tsars, capitalists.

In the course of two years Soviet power in one of the most backward countries of Europe did more to emancipate women and to make their status equal to that of the "strong" sex than all the advanced, enlightened, "democratic" republics of the world did in the course of 130 years.

Enlightenment, culture, civilisation, liberty--in all capitalist, bourgeois republics of the world all these fine words are combined with extremely infamous, disgustingly filthy and brutally coarse laws in which woman is treated as an inferior being, laws dealing with marriage rights and divorce, with the inferior status of a child born out of wedlock as compared with that of a "legitimate" child, laws granting privileges to men, laws that are humiliating and insulting to women.

The yoke of capital, the tyranny of "sacred private property", the despotism of philistine stupidity, the greed of petty proprietors --these are the things that prevented the most democratic bourgeois republics from infringing upon those filthy and infamous laws. The Soviet Republic, the republic of workers and peasants, promptly wiped out these laws and left not a stone in the structure of bourgeois fraud and bourgeois hypocrisy.

Down with this fraud! Down with the liars who are talking of freedom and equality *for all*, while there is an oppressed sex, while there are oppressor classes, while there is private ownership of capital, of shares, while there are the well-fed with their surplus of bread who keep the hungry in bondage. Not freedom for all, not equality for all, but a *fight* against the oppressors and exploiters, the *abolition of every possibility* of oppression and exploitation-that is our slogan!

**Freedom and equality for the oppressed sex!**

# Structure and Structurelessness

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## From the PWM web site:

### Character of the Women's Movement:

- Organic - not a formal structure;

### What is the Women's Movement?

After extensive discussions, as the ANCWL and Alliance partners we have agreed that a Women's Movement is a broad front of women's organisations, grassroots organisations of all kinds, feminist oriented groups, researchers, faith based organisations, traditional healers, women involved in policy formulation and programmes.

### PWMSA Background

The Progressive Women's Movement of South Africa (PWMSA) is a Not-for-Profit Organisation registration number 051-728-NPO, launched in Bloemfontein on the 8th August 2006... The Movement was launched to create a broad front for development for the women of South Africa - one that would enable women to speak with one voice to address their concerns using a single platform of action irrespective of race, class, religion, political and social standing.

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## Blade Nzimande, Umsebenzi Online, 15 February 2006:

The struggle for women's emancipation is increasingly being 'BEE'd'. It is for this reason that our media is dominated mainly by glossy magazines of top women, and about the advancement of women in senior managerial ranks and those cutting BEE deals in the capitalist economy.

In the process, the struggles of ordinary working class and poor women in both the urban and rural areas tend to take a back-seat. The heroic and exemplary struggles of these women, in the trade unions, in the stokvels, in burial societies, in street trading, and the progress or otherwise these women are making, do not feature in much of the public discourse.

As a result of the increasing elitist co-option of the progressive women's agenda, the discourses and perspectives on many issues fundamental to women (abuse,

rape, exploitation, discrimination, etc) are increasingly being dominated by 'liberal' and 'post-modernist' perspectives that do not adequately reflect the concerns of ordinary working and poor women. Where these concerns are raised within these elitist and liberal perspectives, they tend to be patronising towards ordinary women, and approached in a manner that their plight can only be addressed by middle class women 'activists', 'delivered from above', but not led by the working class and poor women themselves.

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## **From "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," by Jo Freeman, 1973:**

### **FORMAL AND INFORMAL STRUCTURES**

Contrary to what we would like to believe, there is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people of whatever nature that comes together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible; it may vary over time; it may evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power and resources over the members of the group. But it will be formed regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved. The very fact that we are individuals, with different talents, predispositions, and backgrounds makes this inevitable. Only if we refused to relate or interact on any basis whatsoever could we approximate structurelessness -- and that is not the nature of a human group.

This means that to strive for a structureless group is as useful, and as deceptive, as to aim at an "objective" news story, "value-free" social science, or a "free" economy. A "*laissez faire*" group is about as realistic as a "*laissez faire*" society; the idea becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others. This hegemony can be so easily established because the idea of "structurelessness" does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones.

Similarly "*laissez faire*" philosophy did not prevent the economically powerful from establishing control over wages, prices, and distribution of goods; it only prevented the government from doing so. Thus structurelessness becomes a way of masking power, and within the women's movement is usually most strongly advocated by those who are the most powerful (whether they are conscious of their power or not). As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few and awareness of power is limited to those who know the rules. Those who do not know the rules and are not chosen for initiation must remain in confusion, or suffer from paranoid delusions that something is happening of which they are not quite aware.

**For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a given group and to participate in its activities the structure must be explicit, not implicit.** The rules of decision-making must be open and available to everyone, and this can happen only if they are formalized. This is not to say that formalization of a structure of a group will destroy the informal structure. It usually doesn't. But it does hinder the informal structure from having predominant control and makes available some means of attacking it if the people involved are not at least responsible to the needs of the group at large.

"Structurelessness" is organizationally impossible. We cannot decide whether to have a structured or structureless group, only whether or not to have a formally structured one. Therefore the word will not be used any longer except to refer to the idea it represents. Unstructured will refer to those groups which have not been deliberately structured in a particular manner. Structured will refer to those which have.

A Structured group always has formal structure, and may also have an informal, or covert, structure. It is this informal structure, particularly in Unstructured groups, which forms the basis for elites.

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## **Socialist Victory Only With Proletarian Woman**

Clara Zetkin's speech at the Party Congress of the Social Democratic Party of Germany at Gotha on 16 October 1896 sets the theme which will provide the backbone of this ten-part course. Says Zetkin:

*"The granting of political equality to women does not change the actual balance of power. The proletarian woman ends up in the proletarian, the bourgeois woman in the bourgeois camp. We must not let ourselves be fooled by Socialist trends in the bourgeois women's movement which last only as long as bourgeois women feel oppressed."*

*"We must not conduct special women's propaganda, but Socialist agitation among women."*

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## **Lenin, 1917**

If we do not draw women into public activity, into the militia, into political life; if we do not tear women away from the deadening atmosphere of household and kitchen; then it is impossible to secure real freedom, it is impossible even to build democracy, let alone socialism.

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## **Alexandra Kollontai, 1909:**

However apparently radical the demands of the feminists, one must not lose sight of the fact that the feminists cannot, on account of their class position, fight for that fundamental transformation of the contemporary economic and social structure of society without which the liberation of women cannot be complete.

If in certain circumstances the short-term tasks of women of all classes coincide, the final aims of the two camps, which in the long term determine the direction of the movement and the tactics to be used, differ sharply. While for the feminists the achievement of equal rights with men in the framework of the contemporary capitalist world represents a sufficiently concrete end in itself, equal rights at the present time are, for the proletarian women, only a means of advancing the struggle against the economic slavery of the working class. The feminists see men as the main enemy, for men have unjustly seized all rights and privileges for themselves, leaving women only chains and duties. For them a victory is won when a prerogative previously enjoyed exclusively by the male sex is conceded to the 'fair sex'.

Proletarian women have a different attitude. They do not see men as the enemy and the oppressor; on the contrary, they think of men as their comrades, who share with them the drudgery of the daily round and fight with them for a better future. The woman and her male comrade are enslaved by the same social conditions; the same hated chains of capitalism oppress their will and deprive them of the joys and charms of life. It is true that several specific aspects of the contemporary system lie with double weight upon women, as it is also true that the conditions of hired labour sometimes turn working women into competitors and rivals to men. But in these unfavourable situations, the working class knows who is guilty.

The working woman is first and foremost a member of the working class.

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# Women's Charter

Adopted at the Founding Conference of the Federation of South African Women  
Johannesburg, 17 April 1954<sup>(1)</sup>

**Preamble:** We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indians, European and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.

**A Single Society:** We women do not form a society separate from the men. There is only one society, and it is made up of both women and men. As women we share the problems and anxieties of our men, and join hands with them to remove social evils and obstacles to progress.

**Test of Civilisation:** The level of civilisation which any society has reached can be measured by the degree of freedom that its members enjoy. The status of women is a test of civilisation. Measured by that standard, South Africa must be considered low in the scale of civilised nations.

**Women's Lot:** We women share with our menfolk the cares and anxieties imposed by poverty and its evils. As wives and mothers, it falls upon us to make small wages stretch a long way. It is we who feel the cries of our children when they are hungry and sick. It is our lot to keep and care for the homes that are too small, broken and dirty to be kept clean. We know the burden of looking after children and land when our husbands are away in the mines, on the farms, and in the towns earning our daily bread.

We know what it is to keep family life going in pondokkies and shanties, or in overcrowded one-room apartments. We know the bitterness of children taken to lawless ways, of daughters becoming unmarried mothers whilst still at school, of boys and girls growing up without education, training or jobs at a living wage.

**Poor and Rich:** These are evils that need not exist. They exist because the society in which we live is divided into poor and rich, into non-European and European. They exist because there are privileges for the few, discrimination and harsh treatment for the many. We women have stood and will stand shoulder to shoulder with our menfolk in a common struggle against poverty, race and class discrimination, and the evils of the colourbar.

**National Liberation:** As members of the National Liberatory movements and Trade Unions, in and through our various organisations, we march forward with our men in the struggle for liberation and the defence of the working people. We pledge ourselves to keep high the banner of equality, fraternity and liberty. As women there rests upon us also the burden of removing from our society all the social differences developed in past times between men and women, which have the effect of keeping our sex in a position of inferiority and subordination.

**Equality for Women:** We resolve to struggle for the removal of laws and customs that deny African women the right to own, inherit or alienate property. We resolve to work for a change in the laws of marriage such as are found amongst our African, Malay and Indian people, which have the effect of placing wives in the position of legal subjection to husbands, and giving husbands the power to dispose of wives' property and earnings, and dictate to them in all matters affecting them and their children.

We recognise that the women are treated as minors by these marriage and property laws because of ancient and revered traditions and customs which had their origin in the antiquity of the people and no doubt served purposes of great value in bygone times.

There was a time in the African society when every woman reaching marriageable stage was assured of a husband, home, land and security.

Then husbands and wives with their children belonged to families and clans that supplied most of their own material needs and were largely self-sufficient. Men and women were partners in a compact and closely integrated family unit.

**Women who Labour:** Those conditions have gone. The tribal and kinship society to which they belonged has been destroyed as a result of the loss of tribal land, migration of men away from the tribal home, the growth of towns and industries, and the rise of a great body of wage-earners on the farms and in the urban areas, who depend wholly or mainly on wages for a livelihood.

Thousands of African women, like Indians, Coloured and European women, are employed today in factories, homes, offices, shops, on farms, in professions as nurses, teachers and the like. As unmarried women, widows or divorcees they have to fend for themselves, often without the assistance of a male relative. Many of them are responsible not only for their own livelihood but also that of their children.

Large numbers of women today are in fact the sole breadwinners and heads of their families.

**Forever Minors:** Nevertheless, the laws and practices derived from an earlier and different state of society are still applied to them. They are responsible for their own person and their children. Yet the law seeks to enforce upon them the status of a minor.

Not only are African, Coloured and Indian women denied political rights, but they are also in many parts of the Union denied the same status as men in such matters as the right to enter into contracts, to own and dispose of property, and to exercise guardianship over their children.

**Obstacle to Progress:** The law has lagged behind the development of society; it no longer corresponds to the actual social and economic position of women. The law has become an obstacle to progress of the women, and therefore a brake on the whole of society.

This intolerable condition would not be allowed to continue were it not for the refusal of a large section of our menfolk to concede to us women the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves.

We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and in practice.

**Need for Education:** We also recognise that large numbers of our womenfolk continue to be bound by traditional practices and conventions, and fail to realise that these have become obsolete and a brake on progress. It is our duty and privilege to enlist all women in our struggle for emancipation and to bring to them all realisation of the intimate relationship that exists between their status of inferiority as women and the inferior status to which their people are subjected by discriminatory laws and colour prejudices.

It is our intention to carry out a nation-wide programme of education that will bring home to the men and women of all national groups the realisation that freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we women are kept in bondage.

**An Appeal:** We women appeal to all progressive organisations, to members of the great National Liberatory movements, to the trade unions and working class organisations, to the churches, educational and welfare organisations, to all progressive men and women who have the interests of the people at heart, to join with us in this great and noble endeavour.

## **Our Aims**

We declare the following aims:

This organisation is formed for the purpose of uniting women in common action for the removal of all political, legal, economic and social disabilities. We shall strive for women to obtain:

1. The right to vote and to be elected to all State bodies, without restriction or discrimination.
2. The right to full opportunities for employment with equal pay and possibilities of promotion in all spheres of work.
3. Equal rights with men in relation to property, marriage and children, and for the removal of all laws and customs that deny women such equal rights.
4. For the development of every child through free compulsory education for all; for the protection of mother and child through maternity homes, welfare clinics, crèches and nursery schools, in countryside and towns; through proper homes for all, and through the provision of water, light, transport, sanitation, and other amenities of modern civilisation.
5. For the removal of all laws that restrict free movement, that prevent or hinder the right of free association and activity in democratic organisations, and the right to participate in the work of these organisations.
6. To build and strengthen women's sections in the National Liberatory movements, the organisation of women in trade unions, and through the peoples' varied organisation.
7. To cooperate with all other organisations that have similar aims in South Africa as well as throughout the world.
8. To strive for permanent peace throughout the world.

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<sup>1</sup> The Charter expressed the philosophy and aims of the newly established Federation of South African Women (FSAW). It was adopted at the inaugural conference and included in the final report of the conference.

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## **Course: No Woman, No Revolution**

**14041, Women's Charter, FEDSAW Founding Conference, 1954**

1548 words

## Inequality, Poverty and Unemployment - The Impact on Women

**By Jenny Schreiner, member of the 13th Congress Central Committee**

As we mark women's month to commemorate the role that women have played in the national democratic revolution, it is time to take stock of the livelihoods of working class women in South Africa. The daily experiences of working class women are a measure of how far a society has gone in achieving a society based on promotion of human rights for all. It is time to ask ourselves what is necessary in society for the emancipation of women to be realised and what conditions are necessary in society for this to be achieved.

We are proud, and rightly so, every August of the anti-sexist, anti-discrimination and pro-equality South African Constitution, the bedrock of our democracy. The significance of this for women, across the classes, should not be under-estimated. The rights protected in the Constitution are rights that all women can claim, but they are not yet rights that all women, particularly working class women, are living. The equality in law and rights does not automatically translate into equality in access to jobs, resources, and protection. As Lenin said:

*"Where there are landlords, capitalists and merchants, there can be no equality between women and men in law. Where there are no landlords, capitalist and merchants, where the government of the toilers is building a new life without these exploiters, there equality between men and women exists in law. But that is not enough. It is a far cry from equality in law to equality in life. We want women workers to achieve equality with men workers not only in law, but in life as well. For this, it is essential that women workers take an ever increasing part in the administration of public enterprises and in the administration of the state."*

Lenin, 1920 *To the Working Women*

When we ask "Can the constitution enable our advance towards women's emancipation?" we should answer that the constitution on its own cannot advance struggle. It is a product of struggle on the terrain of the Constitutional Assembly at a particular point in our history. Unless we combine the protection that the Constitution provides with organisation and struggle around the relevant clauses of

the Constitution, it cannot advance our struggle. The interpretation of the Constitution is not only defined in the Constitutional Court. It is also defined in the course of mass campaigning and organising around the content of the Constitution.

Unemployment, inequality and poverty, issues that affect working class families in urban, peri-urban and rural areas, have a particular impact on the women in these families, more so given the historical legacy of colonialism of a special type on most working class families. Women bear the direct burden of themselves not having jobs or being marginalised in the job market, having low income and facing high prices, of carrying the burden of work in the home, of not having access to land, credit and finance. These working class women also feel the result of their husbands, brothers' and fathers' unemployment, of their husbands', brothers, and fathers' difficulty in putting food on the table, and their frustration at unequal access and resources. Often the burden of unemployment and poverty result in drinking and in aggression, often with women and girl children as the victims. The Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities has recently said "A life of abuse, discrimination and violation of human rights remain the harsh reality for the majority of the women in our country" (Women's Month Speech August 2012). Domestic violence is a reality that must be addressed.

Economic thought for a long time identified the central problem of women's oppression as the lack of integration of women into the economy, and particularly into the formal economy. It is neither the lack of integration nor merely the form of integration of women that is the issue. The actual problem is that the terms of economic participation for women and men are different. Principally, the form of men's participation is premised on the relative exclusion of women, and women's location within the domestic sphere. The family unit is an economic premise that provides capital with cheap reproduction of labour. Put simply, capitalist profit depends on hidden domestic labour, performed predominantly by women and girl children. Unpaid work by women both in home and in agricultural work makes enormous contribution to the economy which is seldom recognised. The material base of women's emancipation has to be in the integration of women into the economy without gender discrimination, the equalising of the gender division of labour within the household and addressing social and political gender equity.

For women, much as the family is a place of romance, love, motherhood, and security, the household is also a site of oppression. Women should not be conceptualised as dependent members of a household unit, which is what political economy has assumed to be the basic unit of society. The family, the household, the domestic unit is usually understood as a hierarchy with a man at top, with all resources pooled and common interests of the family expressed by the male household head. The extent of female headed households in South Africa is very

marked and has been found across time, and is a phenomenon which is not being reversed in South Africa.

We have correctly identified the community as a site of patriarchy, but we must not lose sight of the fact that patriarchy and unequal gender relations are prevalent in all sites of struggle and must be tackled. Historically for the majority of women, access to housing has been largely through a relationship with a man. While access is a Constitutional right that women can demand, it is certainly not the case that the right to access to resources and services is one that has been realised for the majority of working class women. The dependence of women is not yet challenged.

Unless the liberation movement puts the household and family relations under the microscope, the oppressive implications for women in the workplace and in social life will remain unchanged. Work and activity outside the home is premised on an inequality between men and women defined by their household or domestic responsibilities. Capitalism and patriarchal oppression are premised on the unpaid domestic labour of the women at home and yet our Constitution and our approach to gender empowerment have the expectation that women outside of the home should deliver in the same way as men on uneven terrain. We have said that the struggle for women's emancipation is a struggle within a struggle and one that touches both the personal and the political.

In 1996, we asked the question "What are the prospects for gender transformation in South Africa?" and said the following:

*"South Africa has within it both the seeds of gender transformation and the seeds of entrenched gender oppression. The neo-liberal option or the modernising route of the democratic transition permit a kind of solution to racial and gender oppression. It can make the upper strata of society more representative in terms of race and gender. But along with this goes a widening of the socio-economic gap between women of the middle and bourgeois classes and those of the working class. Ultimately oppressive gender relations remain entrenched.*

*"The challenge of the Party and the left is to ensure that the gains made in the constitutional struggles, and in the structures of government, do not only benefit the elite women, but empower working class and poor women in rural and urban areas. The seeds of transformation can liberate the lives of working class women. Which seeds eventually become rooted and nurtured depends on strategy and struggle based on the correct understanding of the interconnection between oppressive gender social relations and women's oppression. Such strategy and struggle must go along with the appropriate organisational forms to carry out the objectives. Without this, neither the emancipation of women nor the transformation of society to a non-gender-*

*oppressive socialist formation will be realisable. When we ask why some socialist states have failed, we must include the extent to which the lack of gender transformation placed brakes on democratising and socialising society."*

Gender Challenges and Organising For Socialism - Part One  
By Jenny Schreiner, for NUM/SACP Spring School, November 1996

Alexandra Kollontai identified that the social basis of women's oppression lies in class relations and private ownership of the means of production and appropriation. She discussed whether there was a basis for a cross-class women's movement. She argued that working class women will more easily identify in struggle alongside their working class menfolk than to side with bourgeois women against men. This is an important issue for the Party to engage with, particularly in the context of the Progressive Women's Movement. It should be clear that the hegemony of the working class and its organisation in all sites of struggle is weakened if working class women are excluded from that organisation. However it is equally important for working class women to assert working class leadership of the progressive women's forces in society and form allies amongst the multi-class strata in the liberation movement. The experience of relative discrimination by women across classes provides a unique opportunity for women of the middle classes to be mobilised in support of working class women's interests, and thereby become aware of working class issues.

In conclusion, the answer on what is necessary in society for the emancipation of women to be realised and what conditions are necessary in society for this to be achieved is that it is only where the means of production are socialised, where power is in the hands of the working class, with women of this class fully empowered at home, in the community and in the economy, that women can be truly freed. Equally to quote Lenin again:

*"The proletariat cannot achieve complete freedom unless it achieves complete freedom for women."*

Lenin 1920 *To the Working Women.*

**Asikhulume!**

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From: <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=3715#redpen>

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**Course: No Woman, No Revolution**

**14101, Schreiner, Umsebenzi Online, Impact on Women, 2012**

1696 words