

Sexual Harassment Policy

(approved by the Socialist Resurgence National Committee 9/7/2020)

In the words of the 1979 resolution on women's liberation, 'We have no illusions that sections can be islands of the future socialist society floating in a capitalist morass, or that individual comrades can fully escape the education and conditioning absorbed from the everyday effort to survive in class society... But it is a condition of membership in the Fourth International that the conduct of comrades and sections be in harmony with the principles on which we stand... We strive to create an organization in which language, jokes, personal violence and other acts expressing chauvinist bigotry are not tolerated'.

—International Viewpoint, August 10, 2003.

At the Socialist Resurgence founding convention on December 14, 2019, we voted up an Interim Constitution with this provision:

9) The rights of the oppressed

The organization recognizes that various forms of oppressive social relationships are present in capitalist society and that they act as a block to the unity of the working class in its struggle for socialism. SR therefore views all oppressive behavior such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, domestic violence, or violence between members of the organization as against the interests of the working class. Such behaviors are incompatible with membership in SR.

Any oppressed group has the right to caucus if they feel the necessity. The leadership has a duty to positively facilitate such caucusing. The purpose of such a caucus is to discuss the situation of the particular group and report back to the appropriate level of the organization.

In recognition that as a new organization, we needed policies to promote the development of female and queer leaders in our organization and in organizing spaces where we work, and understanding that we must also continuously improve internal education and disciplinary procedures special to sexual harassment and violence, the Interim Constitution further urged “the formation of a women’s commission to suggest procedures to deal with sexual harassment and assault.” Since then an SR “Womxn’s-Queer Commission,” composed of all female and queer comrades who choose to participate, has been formed and begun meeting.

The commission has taken on a review of serious sexual harassment policies, positions, and procedures drafted by other revolutionary socialist organizations, including those of the Fourth International, Workers Voice/La Voz, the Freedom Socialist Party/Committee for Revolutionary International Regroupment, and the Revolutionary Socialist Network, as part of a process of developing the strongest SR policy document possible. This document is to be presented to the membership for discussion and debate in a written

pre-convention discussion before our 2021 national convention, where it will be voted on by the membership as a whole.

Unfortunately, before our new commission even came into session, SR was faced with a serious incident of sexual abuse. In order to act swiftly, we relied upon our constitutionally-mandated disciplinary procedures, procedures that are based on the experience and policies of the Trotskyist movement in the United States, especially the old Socialist Workers Party before its degeneration. These are laid out in our Interim Constitution in Section 10 on "Discipline." (Attached or above.)

In early June, upon learning of the case of a comrade who had engaged in unsanctioned political activity in a branch that is isolated from the center, the National Committee of SR immediately launched an investigation, which in its initial phases quickly resulted in the resignation of the comrade who had been charged. After his resignation, the investigation went on and revealed a serious and credible charge of sexual abuse by the comrade who had resigned. As soon as evidence of sexual abuse was known to the National Committee, the information was brought to each branch of SR and to a special June 13, 2020 meeting of the full national Socialist Resurgence membership. The latter authorized the continued work of the investigatory body. The investigation lasted for four weeks and involved interviewing 15 members and supporters of SR, as well as mass movement activists from the local area. It reinforced the credibility of the charge of sexual abuse by the comrade who had resigned, instances of sexual harassment leading up to the abuse, as well as failures by the branch leadership to read the warning signs and take appropriate measures to prevent the abuse before it occurred.

During the investigation process, the branch leaders cooperated to see that all of the facts of the matter were available to the National Committee. One leader resigned rather than agree to certain measures that had been asked of them. Another leader accepted the results of a trial that recommended a temporary suspension, followed by a prolonged period of probationary membership.

The incident and investigation revealed to Socialist Resurgence that the relationships between branches and the center needed to be strengthened. Thus, as part of the resolution of this incident, the rest of the branch members were asked to temporarily join another more fully integrated branch where education on proper functioning in regard to sexual harassment in the revolutionary movement could be thoroughly taught, discussed and absorbed.

At a full membership meeting of Socialist Resurgence on July 12, 2020, the facts of the case were reported, the disciplinary measures approved, and lessons examined. A balance sheet on the whole experience will be developed and incorporated into the sexual harassment policy document to be presented by the Women's-Queer Commission in early 2021.