

Zasoba I. The American Communist Party and feminism at the beginning of the Cold War (1945-1960)

In this paper, I offer an inquiry into American Marxist feminist activism at the beginning of the Cold War, and its connection to the American Communist Party. Contemporary scholars of critical theory have expressed concern that worldwide progress made in gender equality in the 20th century has not translated into similar advances in economic equality. Those looking for the historical roots of this phenomenon sometimes fault the American women's liberation movement of the 1960's and 1970's for not challenging fundamental capitalist structures. This inquiry extends the scholarly discussion on work done in the area of women's rights to the early years of the Cold War, arguing that the American Communist Party assumed the Soviet Union's position that the Woman's Question would be solved as a result of a workers' revolution. Based on the accounts of American Marxist feminists, and with a look at the American Government's Cold War stance, it could be argued that the American Communist Party's mismanagement of the Woman Question at the beginning of the Cold War, combined with US McCarthy era anti-Soviet policy, helped to ensure that "second-wave" feminism, (while adopting revolutionary rhetoric) would achieve mostly "bourgeois" goals.

Key words: Marxist feminists, Cold War, Communist Party, Woman's Question, "Second Wave" feminism.