



# SPECIAL EDITION!



The Political Paper of the COMMUNIST LABOR PARTY of the U.S.A.

## PEOPLE'S TRIBUNE

"The Communist's ideal should not be a trade-union secretary, but a tribune of the people, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression." Lenin



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# INTERNATIONAL

# WOMEN'S DAY

Unemployment is nearing the "official" 10% level, war in the Middle East is pending, undocumented workers are being deported, and the attacks against the Negro People are increasing. Of what significance is International Women's Day and the struggle for the equality of women at this time?

The militant struggle of women has been waged for the right to education, the right to own property, the right to vote and the right to unionize. And as of 1908, when thousands of women paraded the streets and went on strike in New York City, March 8, International Women's Day was named in commemoration of all working class women who have fought for their democratic rights.

Despite the arduous years of struggle for women's rights, their position has fared little. Women constitute 45% of the work force and yet unemployment amongst women is at least 48% higher than for men. Though 49% of national minority women are workers compared to 44% of Anglo-American women, unemployment among national minority women workers is 1/3 greater. Women in general and national minority women in particular are the last hired and the first fired. Equal work? Yes, but the wages of women as of 1973 were \$4,181.00 a year, whereas those for men were \$8,850.00 per year. And only 25% of all women are organized into unions. Why?

Is it the "inability" of women to perform as well as men that forces them into this bottom rung position? Of course not. As Sojourner Truth, a former Negro slave and stalwart fighter for the Underground Railroad and the Women's struggles stated: "...Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man can head me -- and ain't I a woman..." This certainly expressed the sentiments historically of many a woman who in order to live was forced to work for 12-16 hours a day for a measly 37¢ a day. It also expresses the sentiments of many a bourgeois and petty bourgeois woman who were barred from educational institutions, pursuit of scientific professions and the vote. Women of all classes in capitalist society are victims of male supremacy. The oppression of women across class lines serves as a handmaiden to the exploitation of the entire working class. It turns one section of the class against another and diverts the struggle from the capitalist class, the cause of all the working class' misery.

In the 1790's, the women's movement centered in the industrial North amongst Anglo-American petty bourgeois and bourgeois women because the number of women in the work force was minimal. At this time, women fought for a voice in the church and for their right to an education. Women trudged the icy streets of New England and faced the sting of ostracism, begging for funds to establish schools for young girls. Many a woman, like Myrtilla Miner faced the threat of death for establishing schools to teach Negro women in the North. Years of struggle and iron will bore fruit. By 1837, not only had Oberlin College opened its doors to women, but women's colleges were blossoming in New England.

The development of capitalism led to western expansion and the invention of the spinning jenny. Thus, a new cheap source of labor was needed. The exclusion of women from politics, their lack of education, and supposed instability as year round workers was justification for the dirt cheap wages. This influx of women gave greater impetus to the women's movement and at the same time threatened the jobs of the proletarian men. Women's involvement in social production piqued their social awareness, previously dulled by the confines of the home. No longer could women be so easily put-off with the male supremacist ideology of their inherent inferiority. Proletarian women's early successes at organization and unionization were few and limited by the conservative leadership of many "influential" women who were rallied to the cause of the working woman.

The women's movement joined forces with the surging abolitionist movement of the mid 1800's. Northern industrial capitalism could not develop to capacity if held back by slavery in the agricultural South. This laid the conditions for the bourgeoisie in the North to take up the banner for "democracy" -- freedom of the slaves. This democratic platform set the stage for the women's movement to leap forward. Ostracized from the men's abolitionist societies, the women established their own, led by such women as Sarah and Angelina Grimke and former

slave Harriet Tubman, conductor of the Underground Railroad. Polarization over the question of slavery between the North and the South became more acute, and reflected itself in more repression in the South and a broader struggle for democracy in the North.

The Civil War drew thousands of women into the labor force, further politicized them and thereby upped the ante of the women's movement and linked its struggles with the struggles of the working class as a whole.

With the freedom of the Negro people from slavery, the continued struggle for democracy reached a new level. The granting of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments raised rancor within the women's movement. The Anglo-American petty bourgeois leadership vacillated and split over whether to support the 14th Amendment which omitted women and enfranchised the Negro men. Opposition to such a question, brands these certain sections of the women's movement.

The overall struggle for democracy was in full swing. If women were capable of working long hours in heat ridden mills like men and serving the North in the struggle against slavery, then certainly they were entitled to equal pay and a voice in the political affairs of the country. Militant struggles emerged amongst the working class women for union membership, women's unions, shorter hours, better pay, and the vote. In the late 1890's, Gompers of the AFL paid lip service to, but practically ignored the requests of women to unionize. Thus the lack of organization of women workers and the rift in the working class kept women workers in a most deplorable position. In essence, all workers were disarmed. To insure the jobs and decent wages of men and women, it was incumbent on men to support the women in their fight for better wages and unionization.

The economy of the USNA boomed with World War I which brought more women into the ranks of the employed. At the end of the war, women were replaced by returning servicemen. This use of women as a reserve army of unemployed is a famous tactic of divide and conquer.

Come 1920, women were being organized into unions and the 19th Amendment enfranchising women was passed. It was most important for the USNA capitalists to show their "democratic" colors as

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**WOMEN'S DAY**

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they did during the Civil War. They had to counter the enfranchisement of women in the USSR following the great October Revolution. The further proletarianization of women, their involvement in the political affairs of the country -- especially the war -- demanded the recognition of their rights.

During World War II, women in the work force increased by 15%, immediately after the war, this number decreased by 12%. However, the percentage of women in the work force as a whole had reached heights unseen before with the establishment of the USNA as the leading imperialist power.

Years of struggle of women have won them the right to education, property, vote and unionization. The Equal Pay Act of 1964 guaranteed equal pay for men and women for equal work. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteed an end to discrimination based on sex, religion, and nationality and maximum working hours. Yet little has been won. For, how do we account for women's wages as of 1973 being half that of men's, and national minority women's wages almost 2/3 less than the wages of Anglo-American men. Women in general and national minority women in particular are the hardest hit on layoffs based on seniority. And as for pending World War III, the imperialists intend to make good use of the ERA to establish a Volunteer Army of working class women as cannon fodder. We must oppose this counter-revolutionary use of the ERA and demand that it defend the rights of women and fight for their equality by recognizing the physical differences and historically imposed inequalities between men and women.

The struggle for the equality of women is part of the working class struggle against the further impoverishment of the working class caused by the economic crisis and national oppression. The imperialists are forced to intensify the national and sexual divisions in the working class in order to prevent turmoil at home and prepare for imperialist war abroad.

The women's movement has lacked consistent class conscious proletarian leadership. Yet every forward leap made in the women's movement was inseparably tied to the struggle of the Negro People and the overall struggle of the proletariat - 1865 - 1960's - today. The special oppression of women is an aspect of the proletarian revolutionary struggle and cannot be divorced from capitalist exploitation.

In our struggle for the implementation of the CETA program to provide jobs for every worker at the expense of the military budget, to provide good education and health care, we must address ourselves to the special oppression of women as workers and the triple oppression of the national minority women workers. It is the duty of working class men to defend the rights of working class women as their fellow workers and to deny themselves the privilege which helps maintain the exploitation and oppression of the entire class.

It is incumbent upon us to involve ourselves in such working class based organizations as Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) to take an active part in the revolutionary struggle for reforms and insure proletarian class conscious leadership of the women's movement.

To permit such a mighty reserve as the women's movement not to be won over to the cause of Communism, can spell no less than defeat for the proletariat. For only under Socialism can true equality of women be achieved.

**EDUCATION COLUMN**

In the past several years, with the resurgence of the women's movement, the term "male chauvinism" is commonly heard. However, if we examine this term we can only conclude that it is a meaningless and imprecise formulation of the bourgeois ideology of male supremacy.

The ideology of male supremacy is based on the reduction of women to a form of property; the property-owners, the men, thus become dominant in society. On this basis women have historically been deprived of an equal role in society. Their so-called inferiority has provided the bourgeoisie with the necessary basis to pay them lower wages and thus drive down the wages of all workers and divide the working class.

The term "male chauvinism" is a misuse of the term "chauvinism" which specifically refers to the attitude that one's own nation is superior to all other nations. The bourgeoisie does not use the term "male chauvinism" out of ignorance -- any dictionary correctly defines chauvinism. Rather, the term is used to further confuse both the issues of male supremacy and chauvinism.

Chauvinism originated with the modern development of nations. The term is taken from the name of Nicholas Chau-

vin of Rochefort, one of Napoleon's soldiers, who was famous for boasting about the glory and superiority of France.

The main form of chauvinism in the USNA is white chauvinism, which proclaims the superiority of "white" Anglo-Europeans and provides the excuse for the brutal exploitation of the colored nations and peoples of the world. It is a form of social bribery of the Anglo-American people that prevents the unity of the working class. It is thus the principle ideology of aggressive USNA fascism.

Male supremacy is another important part of fascist ideology. The Nazis put forward their program for women in three words -- Kinder, Küche, and Kirche: children, kitchen and church. Today the USNA imperialists push male supremacy at every turn, through movies, T.V., music, etc. Maintaining the oppression of women, creating antagonisms between men and women workers on the basis of sex, is essential to the continued rule of the imperialists. We must fight against the ideology of male supremacy and the oppression of women. No socialist revolution can succeed without the full participation of both working class men and women. In winning its freedom, the proletariat will end all oppression and exploitation.

**FORCED STERILIZATIONS**

Women forced to sign sterilization "consent" forms during the most painful parts of labor and surgical childbirth! Women sterilized and don't even know it! Women sterilized to provide training for doctors! Is this Nazi Germany? Are these atrocities in Vietnam or horror stories of the colonial oppression in the Negro Nation? No! These are cases from big city hospitals in the Anglo-American nation, from Los Angeles County Medical Center to be exact.

Every year about a million and a half women are sterilized in the USNA. Of these, the US government provides funds for up to a quarter of a million operations. The federal government usually very "careful" about where its money goes, keeps virtually no records on these operations and has no effective guidelines for "consent" procedures. This means no one knows exactly how many women are sterilized against their will every year.

Federal guidelines for sterilization of minors and "mental incompetents" written after a suit was filed by the parents of two teenage girls sterilized in Alabama, apply to only .015% of sterilizations. And even these guidelines, legally effective last April, have not even been sent out to hospitals by state agencies. In California, the guidelines are still "under study" in Sacramento.

The federal government's "no strings financial support for sterilization operations gives full play to doctors' white chauvinism and class prejudice to "control" the working class population.

One doctor in South Carolina, the only doctor available to welfare mothers sterilized all his welfare patients when they had their third child. The government investigated his records for only a short period and found he had done 28 such operations in six months. His punishment -- they deprived him of his welfare patients and the \$40,000 a year he has collected every year for this "work".

Whereas the doctor from South Carolina receives barely a slap on the hand for the forced sterilization of many women, Dr. Edelin of Boston, was convicted of manslaughter for performing a legal abortion on a young woman. Since Dr. Edelin is a Negro national minority man, the discrimination involved in this

case is obvious for all to see. Convicted by an all Anglo-American, predominantly Catholic jury, Dr. Edelin didn't have a chance. The prejudicial nature of the state institutions can be seen on all levels. The courts most definitely work only in the interests of the capitalists and work against the interests of the masses of people.

These fascist sterilizations have grown since the government began funding these operations for the working class in 1966. This open "legal" murder of the working class, especially national minorities, is a part of the drive toward fascism.

The capitalists are only willing to maintain a minimal "reserve of labor" on welfare and unemployment insurance so they can keep wages low. The workers, present and future, that they don't need they do away with through starvation, deportations, war, drugs, police murder and sterilization.

If we don't stand up and defend the workers from the colonies and the national minority workers and stop these attacks, the fate of all workers in the USNA will be the same.

We must see how these forced sterilizations are not just attacks women or national minorities. They are an attack against us all. All workers -- not just in women's organizations, but in all public organizations, must raise their voices against these attacks. This means educating men and women about what is going on and what worker's "rights" mean in a capitalist society. It means supporting the struggles of those individuals and organizations which are trying to put a stop to these atrocities, who are demanding prosecution of doctors, hospitals and government agencies involved in them.

The capitalist class has plans for "their" workers to march, divided and disorganized, into the wars and concentration camps they are planning for us. Let us show them we will overcome the divisions they have fostered between us, and march side by side, united and organized, against fascism, murder and war.