THE WOMAN QUESTION IS A CLASS QUESTION

March 8th is International Working Women's Day. This day commemorates the struggle of women against exploitation and oppression the world over. International Working Women's Day originated in NYC in 1909 when women garment workers demonstrated and fought for better working conditions, shorter hours, benefits, and higher wages.

"During the rise of industry just before WWI—when this country rose from the stage of capitalism to expanding as a world-wide system of imperialism—the sweatshops were filled with thousands of women working under intolerable conditions in basements, broken-down tenements, no ventilation, working as many as 14-20 hours a day. These being the conditions, in NYC's case, where there occurred a tragic fire at the Triangle Waist Co. where 146 women were burned to death. In response to this and other such tragedies and conditions, tens of thousands of organized workers demanding an end to oppressive hired-labor conditions, against child labor, for shorter work days and higher wages.

In “Commemoration of International Women’s Day” (Palante, Vol. 1, No. 10).

We have seen historically that working women in the struggle against the peculiar oppression of women have never divorced the struggle of the working masses into a separate movement but have seen it as part of the overall class struggle, a struggle of the working masses against capitalism. (This has been evidenced, for instance, by the role played by Chicano and Mexican women workers in the struggle for unification against Farah.)

"Women have always been oppressed, but the oppression of women as a major social problem was raised only under capitalism. Forced women to step out of their houses and stand up against sacredness under capitalism, it made a movement of the activity of women who became an object of bloody exploitation. Women being twice oppressed under capitalism, they are more exploited. Under these circumstances the problem of women could not but emerge as one of the main pressing problems of the time."

("The Struggle Against Revisionist Tendentia in the International Women’s Movement," Problems of the Struggle for the Complete Emancipation of Women, State University of Tirana, Albania, 1973)

REVOLUTIONIST AND FEMINIST LINES WITHIN THE WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

The woman’s movement in the U.S. has been led mainly by petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie women. Contrary to the Marxist position that the historical roots of women’s oppression go back to the emergence of private ownership and classes, the woman’s movement has based itself on a feminist character—that is, seeing the principal contradiction as between men and women and not between bourgeoisie and proletariat. This line thus diverted the women’s movement away from the main objective, socialist revolution, which is in the interests of the working class as a whole. The feminism line concludes that the struggle of women is for “equality” with men, glossing over the class question, thus leading to pure reformism (such as support for the PTA, which we will get into further).

The revisionist line, on the other hand, spearheaded by the CPUSA and their puppet, the "CPUSA", have abandoned the Marxist-Leninist principles on the woman question, as they have done on all questions. Their anti-Marxist lines manifested themselves in keeping women away from production and confined to household duties, and by diverting the attention of women away from the struggle against imperialism.

On May 12, 1968, for instance, the "Nedelya," a Soviet weekly, stated that the majority of women should be removed from the production work, that "at the present economic stage it would probably be more reasonable to leave women free at home to look after their children."

They try to justify this by saying that the Soviet economy has greatly raised the family status, so that women should no longer take part in production. The revisionists say that the interest of a woman is to rear children and take care of herself since she is a delicate creature, a symbol of beauty destined to be an "ornament" for man or to mean to fulfill his desires. The revisionists state further that the Soviet economy no longer needs women’s productive ability. They stated in their "Nedelya" magazine: "As may be seen, during the first decade our country demanded the participation of women in production. Today, however, this necessity does not exist."

The Soviet revisionists also try to win women in their country and internationally to the bankrupt theory of "Sowjetism." Claiming that the nature of imperialism has changed and that wars are no longer inevitable, they push the slogans of "peaceful coexistence," "enlarged community," "love for our children," "leave aside what divides us and unite around what unites us." They are trying to cover up and deny the deep contradictions of the present epoch and wipe out all distinction between the oppressed and exploited and the oppressors and exploiters at the same time making their own frantic preparations for war with the U.S. imperialists. Referring to the "CPUSA" which echoes the Soviet revisionist line, we said last year:

"In looking at the line of the CPUSA(N), we have a prime example of the liquidation of the class content of the women’s struggle for democratic rights. In doing this, they negate and want to gloss over the class struggle going on throughout the world, the sharp class antagonisms between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and the struggle of the peoples of the world against U.S. imperialist and Soviet social-imperialism."

("In Commemoration of International Women’s Day," Palante, Vol. 1, No. 1)
within the framework of women's oppression, the triple oppression of oppressed nationality women (class, racial, and sexist). Take unemployment for example. The unemployment rate of women forward by the bourgeoisie in April 1975, for instance, (which we know are estimated) showed the following. The unemployment rate nationalization, (9.4%) to higher than for men (7.4%). The unemployment rate of the oppressed nationality women was 13.5%, almost double that of women in general. Another example: a recent bourgeois study of the Puerto Rican in New York, "A Socio-Economic Profile of Puerto Rican New Yorkers" --July 1975, reports in fact, that the unemployment rate of Puerto Rican women in the labor force has declined sharply. From 1960 to 1970, the citywide rate of women in the labor force moved up to 61% while the rate for Puerto Rican women fell from 38% in 1960 to 27% in 1970. From these facts, we can see the particular exploitation of both white and oppressed nationality women.

In addition, some of the oppressed nationalities have been used as guinea pigs in the area of birth control pills, such as the first birth control pill being tested on Puerto Rican women, Sterilization has been used, extensively in Puerto Rico, leaving one out of every three Puerto Rican women bedridden bearing aged. And we have countless examples of forced sterilization of women in this country, when it wasn't necessary. Forced abortion has been held most specificaly on women of oppressed nationalities, leading to deaths of women and medical problems and could not have abortions.

TASKS OF COMMUNISTS

The central task of communists is to build a party in this country, a true Bolshevik party that will lead us to the destruction of the bourgeois state and to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the present period, the state line is the key link in party building, that is the application of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the U.S. Our main tactical tasks, which must be carried out simultaneously, have been outlined -- that is, to unite all genuine Marxist-Leninists; to advance over to communism as we hammer out the party's basic line and policies as a whole. We have also outlined the theoretical tasks for this period, that is, a number of burning class questions -- the woman question is one of these.
ANGLA

in exposing the revisionists' attempts to divide and conquer. These efforts have been seen in the Havana Conference, an elaborate scheme, whereby the social imperialists, with the aid of their band of revisionist out-

Angeles, and the Chilean revolution, would call themselves the champions of the liberation struggles in the world, so that they could gain future control over Puerto Rico, just as they have done in Cuba.

Their actions in Angola have been no less treacherous. The social-imperialists have indeed moved off and poured oil on the flames of civil war in Angola. All of the three liberation fronts - the Angolan National Liberation Front, the People's Liberation Movement of Angola and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola - have persevered in arming the Portuguese social-imperialism for years. Up to the time of achieving liberation from Portuguese colonialism, all three groups received direct and indirect support from the international communist and revolutionary movements, as well as support from broad numbers of Third World countries. For example, the People's Republic of China and the Organisation of African Unity. But once liberation from Portuguese social- imperialists was secured, the contradictions that existed between the three liberation fronts had to be considered part of the internal affairs of Angola, to be resolved through unity-struggle-unity. Great steps had been taken towards this end, most notably the Helsinki agreement of March 1975, and the Angolan Constituent Conference (see Part Two, pp. 453-45). The revolutionary-minded people of the world followed the right path of the Angolan Communist Party in China in refusing to single out any one of the liberation movements - another and another, and dropping aid to all three groups. But the slim new light of Moscow promptly began pulling one of the groups as the only revolutionary group, betraying the revolutionary front and shipping in heavy arms, as well as supplying Cuban mercenary troops to the side of the MPLA. Under the cover of "carrying out its internationalism duty," the Soviet revisionists have not the war-torn nation of Angola ahve once more, inviting the masses to their support and even using armed forces of a once - proud revolutionary country, Cuba, as cannon fodder for imperialist war. This has resulted in a temporary split of the Organisation of African Unity and many other forces supporting the national liberation struggle of Angola, thereby weakening for a short time the unity of the Third World around this question.

The U.S. imperialists are no less guilty, trying to lay in the cut, while making empty phrases about "concern" over the Soviet Union's "aggression" policies. The U.S. imperialists have large interests to protect in resource-rich Angola. Corporations such as Gulf must have more to lose when the rascal expatriates the imperialist bloodsuckers. The imperialist state apparatus has been busily at work, trying to maneuver into a position of power. Recent exposures of CIA operatives in Angola are but one example. Foreign corporations have been busily recruiting mercenaries to fight in Angola. The conglomerate Black bourgeoisie has been busily selling their imperialist masters in their dirty war in Angola; this can be seen by OGTH calling on Black army medals, but only those with combat experience, to volunteer to serve the Angola conflicts. The U.S. imperialists have also used this opportunity to bring the infamous racist, apartheid government of South Africa into the fight, supervising recruiting and allocation of South African mercenaries. All of this, while they try to pull the revolutionary-minded people to sleep, reassuring them that Angola will not become another Viet Nam.

SUPERPOWERS OUT OF ANGOLA:

From speech by P. M. MASHEROV, Candidate Member of the Politbureau of the CC CPSU, at the opening ceremony of the International Meeting of Women in Minsk

WOMEN

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struggle over the party's line and program includes opposition to the percy bourgeois feminist women's movement.

We must see the relationship of women to the revolutionary period of party building that we are in. We must expose and defeat opportunists like the GL women, who, at a recent meeting in New York for the building of Working Women's Day coalition, said that "This has nothing to do with party building" to justify their opposition to the burning class questions of the day to be handled by women at the planned rally. They thus echoed the revisionist line of the "CCPSU" on this question. We must train women as leadership. We must draw our women comrades as women through interjecting Marxism-Leninism into the women's movement, hooking up the struggle of women to the overall struggle of the international proletariat against U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism.

The women question is a class question and a component part of the proletarian revolution.

We will not be fooled by this trickle. Our tasks as communists and women comrades are clear: the revolutionary-minded people must be to see the situation in Angola as part of the whole of a new world war, started by the superpowers to redistribute the world in search of market to save their nuclear system. We must also be clear that the danger of fascism in this country, for the Soviet Union already has the nucleus under a fascist, Hitlerian-type rule. We must expose the forces of the superpowers for their open and direct assistance to fascist regimes in our country.

The masses of Angolan people have had too many stumblles and bitter struggles against imperialism in its many forms and formats for the superpowers to succeed in their mangled. The force of the mighty Angolan liberation struggle will wipe these monsters off the face of Angola, and true, lasting unity will be built in the struggle to build a new Angola. We hail the people of Angola for their heroic battles against imperialism and social-imperialism, and we deepen our resolve to learn from them and "dare to struggle, dare to win!"

From speech by P. M. MASHEROV, Candidate Member of the Politbureau of the CC CPSU, at the opening ceremony of the International Meeting of Women in Minsk

"The child is not given enough love and social kindness which is so necessary... The child is not given enough love and social kindness which is so necessary..."