'We Seek Full Equality For Women'

Taking up the struggle of the Suffragists, the Communists have set new tasks, new objeectives in the fight for a new status for women. The special value of Foster's contribution.

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It took a long struggle against the early sweatshops to win these conditions for women workers. Today, the fight for women's rights is severely threatened as legislators try to put over "equal rights" amendments which would whittle down conditions. On the other hand, as the job crisis deepens, women are among the first to be pushed out of industry.

THE LEADING ROLE of the Communist Party in the struggle to emancipate women from male oppression, is one of the proud contributions which our Party of Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party, U.S.A., celebrates on its thirtieth anniversary.

Marxism-Leninism exposes the core of the woman question and shows that the position of women in society is not always and everywhere the same, but derives from woman's relation to the mode of production.

Under capitalism, the inequality of women stems from exploitation of the working class by the capitalist class. But the epxloitation of women cuts across class lines and affects all women. Marxism-Leninism views the woman question as a special question which derives from the economic dependence of women upon men. This economic dependence as Engels wrote over 100 years ago, carries with it the sexual exploitation of women, the placing of woman in the modern bourgeois family, as the "proletariat" of the man, who assumes the role of "bourgeoisie."

Hence, Marxist-Leninists fight to free woman of household drudgery, they fight to win equality for women in all spheres; they recognize that one cannot adequately deal with the woman question or win women for progressive participation unless one takes up the special problems, needs and aspirations of women—as women.

It is this basic principle that has governed the theory and practice of the Communist Party for the last three decades.

As a result, our Party has chalked up a proud record of struggle for the rights of women. American literature has been enhanced by the works of Marxists who investigated the status of women in the U. S. in the '30's. Its record is symbolized in the lives of such outstanding women Communists as Ella Reeve Bloor and Anita Whitney and others who are associated with the fight for women's suffrage, for the rights of the Negro people, for working class emancipation.

Our Party and its leadership helped stimulate the organization of women in the trade unions and helped activize the wives of workers in the great labor organizing drives; built housewives' councils to fight against the high cost of living; taught women through the boycott and other militant actions how to fight for the needs of the family; helped to train and mold women Communist leaders on all levels, working class women inspired by the convictions and ideals of their class—the working class.

A pioneer in the fight for the organization of working class women, our Party was the first to demonstrate to white women and to the working class that the triply-oppressed status of Negro women is a barometer of the staus of all women, and that the fight for the full economic, political, and social equality of the Negro woman is in the vital self-interest of white workers, in the vital interest of the fight to realize equality for all women.

Contribution Of Foster

But it remained for the contribution of William Z. Foster, national chairman of our Party, to sharpen the thinking of the American Communist Party on the woman question. Comrade Foster projected in a deeper way the basic necessity for the working class and its vanguard Party to fight the obstacles to women's equality, evidenced in many anti-woman prejudices, in the prevalent ideology of male superiority fostered by the monopolists imbibed by working class men.



Mother Bloor, veteran Communist leader, and Anita Whitney, women's leader on the West Coast.

The essence of Foster's contribution (see the November, 1948, **Political Affairs**) is that it is necessary to win the masses of American women for the overall struggle against imperialist war and fascism by paying special attention to their problems and by developing special struggles for their economic, political, and social needs. Basing himself upon the Marxist-Leninist tenet that the inequality of women is inherently connected with the exploitation of the working class, Foster called on the Party and the working class to master the Marxist-Leninist theory of the woman question, to improve our practical work on this question, and to correct former errors, errors of commission and omission with regard to this fundamental question.

Foster's special contribution lies in his unique expose of the mask placed on the status of women in every sphere in the U. S. by American imperialism. Comrade Foster exposed the bourgeois lie that women in the U. S. have achieved full equality and that no further rights remain to be won. He shows that the ideological prop used by reactionary propagandists to perpetuate false ideas of women's "inferiority" is to base their anti-social arguments as regards women on all kinds of pseudo-scientific assumptions, particularly in the field of biology

Foster exposed the new twist given to these anti-woman prejudices, which range from male domination of woman in the home to women's "psychological" inferiority, as contained in the steady stream of such reactionary works as **Modern Woman A Lost Sex**, by Dr. Marynia Farnham and Ferdinand Lundberg. These "theories" are designed to divert woman from progressive struggle and to reduce her to the fascist Kinder-Kuche-Kirche level.

Some Tasks of The Communists

Any underestimation of the need for a persistent ideological struggle against all manifestations of masculine superiority must therefore be rooted out. If biology is falsely utilized by the bourgeois ideologists to perpetuate their false notions about women, Communists and progressives must fare boldly into the biological sciences and enhance our ideological struggle against bourgeois ideas and practices of male superiority.

In order to meet the tasks projected for a deeper understanding and mastery of the Marxist-Leninist approach to the woman question a special Party Commission on Theoretical Aspects of Work among Women was established.

Reflecting the great hunger for theory on the woman question on the part of Communists and progressives was the one day Conference on Marxism and the Woman Question held under the auspices of the Jefferson School of Social Science held in June of this year. Nearly 600 women and men attended. Indicative, too, of how the Party is meeting its tasks in this sphere are the numerous cadre schools which have been held to facilitate the training of women for mass work among women, and the training of Communist men on the woman question.

Some 10 Party women's commissions now exist, which, under the leadership and guidance of the Party district organizations, give attention to work among women in the Party and in the mass organizations. It is necessary to utilize the 30th anniversary of our Party to strengthen our mass and Party work and to turn the face of the entire Party toward this question.

The Legacy Of Dimitroff

This is necessary, first, because without mobilization of the masses of women, particularly working class and Negro women, the fight for peace against a third world war will not be successful. American women and their organizations have given indications in varied ways, that they oppose the Atlantic Pact, and are fearful of the implications of the arms pact.

This understanding is necessary, secondly, because of the growing reactionary offensive against the civil rights of the American people, the outstanding examples of which is the indictment and trial of the 12 leaders of our Party before a jury having a majority of women.

Finally, this understanding is necessary because without rooting ourselves among the masses of women, without building the progressive organizations of women, such as the Congress of American Women, Women's Division of the Progressive Party, the Negro women's organizations, etc, and without organizing special struggles for the demands of women, we cannot win the women against the reactionary influences of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, and the bourgeois ideologists.

By successfully mastering our theory of the woman question, organizing masses of American women, and focusing attention primarily on the problems and needs of working class women, our Party can help usher in a new status for American women.

To achieve that end, we must win the women to an ever-active fight against imperialist war and fascism. For, in the words of the great Dimitroff, in his famous report, **The United Front Against Fascism:**

"While fascism exacts most from youth it enslaves women with particular ruthlessness and synicism, playing on the most painful feelings of the mother, the housewife, the single working woman, uncertain of the morrow. Fascism, posing as a benefactor, throws the starving family a few beggarly scraps, trying in this way to stifle the bitterness aroused particularly among the toiling women, by the unprecedented slavery which fascism brings them. . . .

"We must spare no pains to see that the women workers and toilers fight shoulder to shoulder with their class brothers in the ranks of the united working class front and the anti-fascist people's front."

In the sprit of the anti-fascist hero of Leipzig, let us rededicate ourselves to the fight for the complete equality of women.