



WORKERS' INSTITUTE OF MARXISM-LENINISM- MAO TSETUNG THOUGHT

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'Practise Marxism, and not revisionism.'—Chairman Mao

Celebrate International Women's Day:

LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY

TRADITION OF WOMEN

THE WORLD OVER!

(Statement issued by the Women's Commission of the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, March 5, 1978)

March 8, the International Women's Day, is a day celebrated by hundreds of millions of women the world over. It gives expression to their unity and solidarity with one another in their common struggle for equality and emancipation and the struggle of all mankind to build a just society and a bright new world of socialism. The working women, together with countless numbers of oppressed masses, have participated actively throughout history ever since the emergence of the private property system, particularly in the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the stifling shackles imposed upon them by the capitalist, imperialist and feudal ruling classes and their enslaving ideology and culture. Therefore, March 8 is also a day when revolutionary women pay their tribute to their forerunners for their heroic resistance and sacrifices in the course of struggle. We in the Women's Commission of the Workers' Institute of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought on this occasion extend our most profound revolutionary greetings and salute to the revolutionary women fighters the world over, in particular the great Chinese women who have written glorious pages in the annals of history and who continue to uphold the bright red banner of the Great October Socialist Revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, today ably implemented by beloved Chairman Hua Kuo-feng. We are filled with joy and pride when we review the crimson path transversed by our fellow women throughout history.

The great revolutionary teachers have always regarded the question of women's emancipation as an important question and a component part of the emancipation of the proletariat. For example, Marx pointed out that the degree of freedom in any society can be measured by the degree of freedom enjoyed by the women in that society. Lenin who led the great October Socialist Revolution summed up the experience of struggle throughout history by pointing out that "the

UPHOLD PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

experience of all liberation movements has shown that the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it." Beloved Chairman Mao Tsetung, inheriting and defending this communist tradition, paid great attention to the important role of women in struggle pointing out: "Women comprise one half of the population. The economic status of working women and the fact of their being specially oppressed prove not only that women urgently need revolution but also that they are a decisive force in the success or failure of the revolution."

To understand the present we must grasp the past so that we can better infer the future. It is extremely important for the women's movement to be imbued with the historic lessons written in blood by our martyrs, especially since the establishment of the Paris Commune in 1871 till today. What they bear out, as will be seen from the facts that follow, is the profound truth that the destiny of women in any country is closely linked with the entire nation and people. As such, women's emancipation is a component part of the cause of the liberation of the proletariat, and it would be out of the question without the victory of the proletarian revolution, just as the proletarian revolution requires the participation of women in it. The rebellion of the Paris workers who seized Paris from March 18 to May 28, 1871 and established the Paris Commune is an immortal landmark in the history of the working and oppressed people of the world. This fact, however, is very much hidden from the people. It was the first time in history that the broad masses of workers established their own political power with arms in hand. The women worked hard and fought devotedly at the barricades, together with fellow men, against the reactionary French and Prussian troops sent to suppress them. The sight of women fighting evoked utter frenzy from the ruling classes of Europe. "The Times" of Britain said in horror: "If the French nation were composed of nothing but women, what a terrible nation it would be!" Marx, on the other hand hailed the women Communards and paid glowing tribute to them in these words: ". . . The real Parisian women showed again at the surface - heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity" (i.e. like women warriors of ancient times). One outstanding representative and a capable leader of the Paris Commune was Louis Michel, a member of the First International led by Marx. Another heroine is Elizabeth Dmitrieff. William Foster, an American revolutionary, has this to say about them: "Behind the barricades, in the bloody struggle and in the spectacular political trials which followed it (Paris Commune) the women Communards especially covered themselves with glory. Louis Michel and Elizabeth Dmitrieff were but two noted fighters among thousands of heroines. Before the court, Michel proudly declared, 'I belong entirely to the revolution and I wish to accept the responsibility for all my deeds.' Convicted, she spent ten years in prison exile." Though the Paris Commune was short-lived its important lessons were summed up by Marx to arm the international proletariat. Profoundly guided by that, Lenin led the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917 and successfully established the workers' and peasants' state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. The working men and women rallied behind the leadership of the Bolshevik Party in their thousands and millions and threw themselves into the thick of struggle for the seizure of power, in the civil war that ensued engendered by the European bourgeoisie, and against the British imperialist led armed intervention into Soviet Russia by 14 countries. Lenin appraised very highly the role of Russian women in this crucial period. He said: "In Petrograd, here in Moscow, and in other cities and industrial centres, proletarian women showed up splendidly during the revolution. We would not have won without them, or hardly. That is my opinion. What courage they showed and how courageous they still are! Imagine the suffering and privation they are enduring. But they are holding out because they want to defend the Soviets, because they want freedom and communism. Yes, our working women are magnificent class fighters. They are worthy of admiration and love."

In the period leading to and during the Second World War, when the fascist hordes of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo reared their ugly heads, Comrade Stalin called upon the people of the world to wage an anti-fascist patriotic war to defeat the fascists. This international united front led by Comrade Stalin and the then socialist Soviet Union was backed up by the powerful Soviet Red Army, together with partisan guerrilla forces in countries like France, Greece, Italy, Albania, Eastern Europe etc. as well as the peoples of China, Korea, Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia, Burma, Ethiopia and so on. Hundreds of millions of men, women, old and young, turned their sorrows at the fascists' atrocities into bitter hatred for fascism and made tremendous contributions in defeating the "mighty" fascist forces, depicting the invincibility of people, men and women, led by communists.

The Chinese revolution followed the path of the October Revolution. From 1921, with the birth of the Communist Party of China led by beloved Chairman Mao, till liberation in 1949 the long protracted people's war traversed a most tortuous and glorious path, without parallel in history. The Long March itself is an amazing feat of endurance and human will power that conquered every difficulty. The sagas of the Chinese revolution are indeed awe-inspiring and immortal. In the Chinese people's struggle against U.S.-backed Chiang Kai-shek clique and the Japanese fascists the Chinese women rose to their feet and made an indelible imprint on Chinese and world revolutionary history by their devoted contributions. In the course of struggle many shed their blood, sacrificed their dear ones and gave their own lives when necessary for

the dignity and liberation of their motherland. Comrade Teng Ying-chao (widow of Prime Minister Chou En-lai) is an outstanding example of a woman comrade who has been actively participant in revolutionary struggles ever since she was a student in the early part of this century. She is today a Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress as well as a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. Of particular importance is the inspiring and exemplary role of Comrade Yang Kai-hui (Chairman Mao's wife) who heroically laid down her young life in 1930 in the jail of the fascist Chiang Kai-shek criminals. Under the conditions of white terror perpetrated by Chiang Kai-shek she had been carrying out underground activities to organise the people, regardless of personal danger and the danger to the lives of her 3 children and her mother, whilst Chairman Mao had left with the revolutionary army for Ching-kangshan to establish the first revolutionary base area in the countryside. In the jail under severe torture she refused to renounce Chairman Mao or to divulge secrets and with full confidence in the correct leadership of Chairman Mao and the sure triumph of the revolution she gave up her life. Although Chiang Ching, one of the 'Gang of Four' in China had tried to cover up her heroic deeds, Comrade Yang Kai-hui will forever remain immortal.

In the post Second World War period we saw the powerful movements for independence and national liberation bursting out in the former colonies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Various countries have won their independence, some of them like Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, have already won national liberation, whilst some of them, for example, Malaya, Palestine, Dhofar, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Chile, Bolivia etc. still continue their heroic struggles. The attention of the world was particularly focused on the national liberation movement of the Vietnamese people who have fought for many years against imperialist aggression: they fought the Japanese fascists in the Second World War, they defeated the French colonialists in 1954, then defeated the U.S. aggressors in 1975 in unity with the other Indo-Chinese people in Cambodia and Laos. A small and weak Vietnamese nation vividly showed the invincibility of people's war. The ordinary citizens - the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, old and young, men and women gave the U.S. a thorough trouncing which broke the back of the U.S. economy and the morale of the U.S. troops. It also woke up the whole world to the evil crimes of U.S. imperialism. The Vietnamese women were to be seen in every front of the struggle: in the regular army, the local guerrilla units, the agricultural and industrial fronts, the hospitals, schools and even in road and bridge construction. The names of some of the heroines can be cited: Nguyen Thi Dinh, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the South Vietnam National Liberation Armed Forces; Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Viet Nam; Ta Thi Que, outstanding guerrilla combatant.

In May 1948, the Anglo-U.S. imperialists and their zionist stooges usurped Palestine and created the zionist Israeli state in its place, denying the national rights of the Palestinian Arabs and made two million of them refugees. The Palestinian refugees have refused to be cowed by that and have persisted in their efforts to regain their homeland. Many Palestinian women and girls have shed their traditional feudal customs and joined the guerrilla units operating right under the nose of the zionists. Old mothers who have lost their husbands in the revolution have sent their sons and daughters to carry on the struggle. Such ardent spirit to regain their national dignity deserves all our respect and applause. One of the women martyrs is Shadia Abu Ghazala, a 19-years-old guerrilla combatant who died in action in 1968. Inspired by her example many Palestinian girls, whilst carrying her coffin in Nablus, declared: "We are all Shadias! We are all Shadias!" Shadia was one of the refugees who went to live in Nablus. When Nablus too became occupied territory she could not bear to continue her studies and left the University in Cairo to join "Al Fatah", the Palestine National Liberation Front.

One can sing songs of praise for many others: for example, Maimun and Zahura in the national liberation war of the Malayan people against Britain entering its 30th year, this year; Nirmala Krishnamurthy and Sampurna in the armed agrarian revolution in India since 1967; Josina Machel in the struggle of the Mozambican people against the Portuguese colonialists, and many others from Asia, Africa and Latin America. What is common to all of them is the role of the working and oppressed people, including the women, in the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and feudalism to gain genuine national liberation and build socialism, so that they can lay even better conditions for the emancipation of the people, in particular women. This revolutionary tradition of women the world over, however, is totally being underplayed by the bourgeois feminist organisations in the imperialist countries like Britain. They are peddling a-class anti-men lines which do dis-service to the question of the genuine emancipation of the vast majority of the people including women. They do not make a distinction between who our friends are and who the enemies are.

In the 1960s and especially in the 1970s we have witnessed the development of powerful student movements in Western Europe and North America, coupled with tens of millions of working people taking militant actions against the old world of capitalist/imperialist exploitation and oppression. In Britain too, such is the case. Men and women whether they be students, workers, civil servants, hospital workers, teachers, national minorities or old-age pensioners

are all involved in a massive and unprecedented spontaneous upsurge to resist the onslaught of the monopoly-capitalist class which is pushing the burden of the final and devastating crisis of the whole imperialist system on to the broad masses of people who constitute about 95% of the population. The militant 18-month-old strike of the Grunwick workers many of whom are women, and the massive solidarity activities of the broad masses of people is a good case in point. The Hounslow Hospital occupation and the determination of the hospital workers to resist all terror tactics of the fascist state authorities is another demonstration of the militant fight put up by the people.

The women too, are demanding equality in all aspects of society. In particular they are today protesting vehemently against the abuse of women as sex commodities which is at the heart of bourgeois fascist culture, as shown clearly in the militant demonstrations all over Britain in November, last year. They oppose the abuse of women carried out in the name of selling one's body, mind and soul for money to the highest bidder.

The women comrades in the Workers' Institute proudly uphold the heroic revolutionary tradition of women the world over, including Britain. In doing so, a number of our women comrades have been jailed by the British fascist state (an integral part of NATO, led by the U.S.) in the course of our militant struggles to build the new world of socialism. That is our honour. We are deeply inspired by the example of Eleanor Marx, a fine daughter of the great Karl Marx, who integrated herself in the poor working-class community of the East End of London during the 1880s and 90s and dedicated her whole life to organising the unskilled poorer workers. Engels attributes to Eleanor Marx the "epoch-making" occurrence of the first May Day demonstrations and rally in London in 1890 when 200,000 workers, half of them poorer workers participated in it. He also said: "I hold it to be the most important and magnificent in the entire May Day celebration that on May 4, 1890, the English proletariat rousing itself from 40 years of slumber, re-joined the movement of its class. . ." Since 1974, we in the Workers' Institute are also involved in the arduous task of integrating ourselves with the working-class community in and around Brixton, to learn from the oppressed working people and disseminate revolutionary politics among them. Upholding the banner of beloved Chairman Mao, taking international class struggle as the key link and implementing the instructions of beloved Chairman Hua, we are engaged in building the Communist Party in the course of struggle, in the midst of the masses, i. e. in the historic task of building a revolutionary stable base area in the oldest home of the working class - Britain. The powerful mass spontaneous upsurge of the broad masses of people in the imperialist heartlands have merged with the struggle for national liberation and for the establishment of the New International Economic Order in the Third World, and with the socialist revolutionary movement in countries such as China. These three powerful revolutionary torrents in the world, led and influenced by Socialist China, are pounding away at the main enemy of mankind, the two hegemonic superpowers, the United States and the social-imperialist Soviet Union which are being further exposed and isolated by the world's people everyday. There are now 360 million people who are unemployed in the world resulting in 700 million people languishing in poverty. These people are mainly in the Third World. Hence the insistent demand made in the sessions of the U.N. and other conferences by over 120 countries of the world in particular, the Third World, ever since April-May 1974 for the establishment of the New International Economic Order. That is, they demand the abolition of the old imperialist world economic order based on the super-exploitation of raw material producing countries of the Third World. To bring that about the two superpowers must be dismantled, in particular the United States and NATO and in their place establish the new world political order, i. e. the INTERNATIONAL DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT led by the Communist Party of China, with the People's Liberation Army of China as the main pillar and with the support of the International United Front of the people of the whole world. As Chairman Hua has pointed out initial victory has already been won in 1977 and great victory will be won in three years' time for the achievement of this goal. Only thus can the gains of the earth-shaking Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China which had profound influence in liberating women be consolidated and expanded.

History is progressing in a direction favourable to the people of the world whilst unfavourable for the enemies of the people. The future of mankind is indeed very bright. It is the glorious revolutionary tradition of fighting mankind that inspires us to stand in our place and carry out our revolutionary tasks. We cannot afford to ignore the historic lessons written in blood. March 8, the International Women's Day serves as a reminder and a clarion call to follow the path trail-blazed by our predecessors. Let us hold aloft the crimson banner dyed in the blood of martyrs and pledge to carry on the unfinished task of the revolutionaries and build the bright new world of socialism and march on to communism! Only thus can women win final emancipation!