

THE WOMAN QUESTION IS A CLASS QUESTION

I. Contradictions:

- A. There are contradictions in everything. Examples: old and new, up and down, the ruling class and the working class.
- B. Development of contradiction pushes society forward and old society is overtaken by a new society.
- C. Internal contradictions are the main force of change. Inside an egg there is an embryo/chick contradiction and a chick emerges.
- D. Each situation has its own particular contradictions.
- E. A set of contradictions have one main link which is the principal contradiction. In capitalist countries it is between those who make the wealth and those who own the wealth. Another way to say this is the working class and the ruling class.

For women the "contradiction that pushes women's struggle forward is class contradiction, the development of the forces of production under capitalism; they are also a part of relations of production, part of class struggle. The particular contradiction women face under capitalism has to do with their pre-capitalist relationship to production--their production of use value within the nuclear family." Irene Krull

II. Historical Development of the Oppression of Women:

A. Primitive Communalism

1. Principal contradiction is human survival/environment.
2. No surplus, no classes, no private property.
3. Women do most important productive work: kid care, cooking, tending fire, gathering fruit and vegetables.
4. Mother right at this time--lineage can be traced only through mothers.

B. Transformation to Slavery

1. Survival skills improve and there is a surplus: men capture and herd animals (cattle).
2. People are also captured for slaves (chattle)--surplus labor.
3. Surplus products lead to private property for men particularly (since they did hunting and were warriors, mainly they controlled the surplus)
4. Patriarchy and monogamy begin because men need to be assured of their blood line for inheritance in order to pass on their private property (family, familia, means a group of slaves.)
5. New principal contradiction: Class division, masters and slaves
Master Class: men and women
Slave Class: men and women

C. Feudalism

1. Survival skills still improve, advances in agriculture, mining, sciences, social structures.
2. Class Division:
Feudal Landowners (Lords and Ladies): men and women
Serfs: men and women
3. As feudalism dies, principal contradiction arises of newly developing bourgeois class who gain power through money (from exploiting people) rather than religious or nobility blood lines.

D. Capitalism

1. Survival skills improve more all the way around, especially for imperialist countries who not only exploit the workers in their country but workers in other countries too.
2. Class Division:

Bourgeoisie, ruling class, owners of the means of production
men and women

Proletariat, working class, must sell their labor
men and women

3. The Woman Question is a Class Question because women are part of an economic unit. They are unpaid laborers who do most of the support work for male workers and future workers (kids). The ruling class depends on them to do these services because they do not want to pay anyone else to do it.

"The inseparable connection between the social and human position of the woman and private property in the means of production must be strongly sought out." Clara Zetkin, The Woman Question.

III. Conditions for Women Today:

A. Women as unpaid workers in the home.

1. Housewives are in a pre-capitalist economic relationship; they're not paid for their work; they're domestic slaves.

IV. Pre-Conditions for Women's Full Revolutionary Participation:

A. Men and women both must fight sexism and exploitation of women. Men should promote women's leadership and fight against exploitation of women. Women must fight to unite the poor and working classes, both men and women.

B. What steps are needed after socialism for the liberation of women?

1. Breaking up the capitalist superstructure which needs super-exploitation of women and national minorities for perpetuating its power, and depends on exploitation of one group and class by another.
2. Women's full participation in production and administration of social life and struggle and the clearing away of all obstacles to this goal.
3. Transformation of housework and childcare into socialized labor, the responsibility of all.
4. Transformation of all institutions and culture of society into non-exploitative forms.
5. Revolutionary struggle, which includes the necessity for a different relation between sexes.