

Woman's Liberation

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Contemporary society is not rooted only in workers' slavery: this society throws women into slavery as well. The capitalist regime disenfranchises not only a single class: this regime led the entire human sex, female, into the same position. Capitalist pressure is not experienced solely by one grade of contemporary society, but to the same extent, and in some respects even more, by the entire half of humankind.

All of this is true irrespective of their social position. Women are brought into economic dependence upon men everywhere; at every place – with a partial exception of certain countries not worthy of mention – they are politically disenfranchised and at every place, they are kept in mental and moral misery. A woman is a slave everywhere, in the house, in the state, and the society.

Hence, – and we are not talking about individual exceptions, which are very rare – their intelligence and their entire psychology are everywhere uniform. All of them are distanced or more precisely excluded from social life. They are prevented from participating in the cultural development of humankind. They stand far from the results of modern thought, without perception and understanding of various social currents, political struggles, events that excite the whole world and intellectual, moral or social movements that rock the entire society in its foundations. In short, they stand without perception and understanding of life. Regardless of their social status, they all look the same: the only difference being in their attire. And that terrible material, moral, and mental misery into which today's society has thrown the entire female race is by no means second to the misery of the working class. Today's society has not had enough of monopolizing culture for the capitalist class exclusively; it went one step further

in monopolizing that culture for a vanishing part of mankind. This fact alone is the best example of how this much-lauded capitalist culture itself stands on glass legs. Nothing like this fact can make a man more revolted against today's society than the fact that, in addition to the desperate position in which it threw and maintains the proletariat, it has also made an entire noble half of humanity into a mental and moral misery and a horrible cultural anachronism.

But no matter how miserable and desperate the position of women is, it is far from hopeless. This is best exemplified in the fact that women, rather than sinking more and more, do the contrary. They accelerate their energetic fight. At the earliest stage, women's movement for liberation and emancipation takes the form of a struggle for the right for women to be educated at the same places where men are educated and to be in a position to occupy the same posts as men such as teachers, professors, doctors, judges, lawyers, etc. The bourgeoisie is inclined to see those requests as the essence of the women's movement and to consider that fulfilment of those requests exhausts women's aspiration for emancipation. We not only have nothing against those requests but, on the contrary, we support them most energetically. All of this is the indisputable right of a woman, who has proven so many times until now that she is up to the most demanding professions and up to the hardest actions. However, all of that is only a very tiny part of what a woman needs and is looking for to free herself from the slavery in which she is and to become equal to a man. In today's society, there are an insignificant number of women who have the opportunity to study for any of these higher professions. Hence the demand: that women can also be doctors, professors, judges, etc. is of value only to a handful of women. This demand is more consequential for a profession itself and is as such of professional character. The women's issue is far from being exhausted by the realization of these demands and is instead only touched upon by it.

The fact that this demand has more of a professional character, that it is not triggering a revolution in the general position of women and does not encroach into the capitalist privileges as such, this demand of theirs does not face any substantial resistance except reactionary, stupid traditions and the miserable and egoistic hatred of professional competitors. Rulers of today's society are therefore quick and willing to meet it. The destiny of the demand that women should be equal to men, both in private-legal and political terms, is completely different. This demand is meeting with the most energetic resistance. Resistance to this demand is much less the result of unconscious traditional prejudice and much more the result of consciously understood class interest. That is quite natural. When women become equal to men in private-legal terms then man, and primarily the bourgeois, loses a rich and

completely submissive object of exploitation. The Bourgeois does not exploit the workers only; in a private-legal sense, he also exploits his wife. Yet another demand for equality of men and women in terms of political rights are even more dangerous for capitalism and today's society. Just by giving women political rights capitalism would in a pen stroke double the army of its gravediggers. That would be the result of the mere fact that the vast majority of women are proletarian women, who have just as much interest in fighting capitalism as their husbands, brothers, and fathers, if not more. That is why the bourgeoisie rises most energetically and unanimously against this demand; and of all the parties, Social Democracy is the only one that included this request in its program.

However, without the realization of this demand, there can be no talk of any emancipation of women. All other rights given to women are just a trick, a poor, very cheap gift that today's society gives women just to deceive them. Private-legal and, especially, political equality of a woman with a man is the only elevator for her intellectual, moral, holistic rise from the darkness and misery in which she finds herself today. However, the proletariat and the working class are the only ones that have an interest in realizing that demand. That is why their party, Social Democracy, is not only the most sincere but also the only one fighting for the realization of that magnificent demand for the emancipation of women in general.

It is in the working class, after all, that there are the most realistic conditions for emphasizing that demand and for fighting for its realization. Capitalism has already equated a male worker with a female worker in the economic aspect. It is quite logical then that the proletariat strives to give legal form to the fact of equality of women and men and the independence of women from men. It is in the proletarian class that women have the best conditions, interests, and opportunities to fight for their liberation alongside men. Her complete liberation does not even consist only of full political equality with man in today's society. As a woman, the proletarian cannot possibly be satisfied with capitalism. To be sure, capitalism equated her with a man in a material sense. But the only real existing form of equality between women and men – and the only one that can be – in today's society is the equality of slaves and the right of women to be brutally exploited like men. Even the political equality of women, if it were to be realized in today's society, would do little to change the desperate economically servile position in which she finds herself today. Hence, if a woman strives for the equality of free and happy beings, alongside a man she must fight for the abolition of the regime of economic slavery. Fight against the regime that is more oppressive for humanity than the regime of feudal and Roman slavery. A woman must fight for the abolition of capitalism and the realization of socialism.

And so, concerning the political and private-legal equalization of women with men in the present, as well as with a view on women's complete liberation and enabling well-rounded development in the future, the women's question is closely intertwined with the proletarian question. The women's question is closely intertwined with the social question. This question is only an essential part of the proletariat's grandiose emancipation struggle, and the liberation of workers means the liberation of women at the same time.

Our party included that issue in the fifth point of its program ('repeal of all laws that do injustice to women in public and private law relations with men' - ed.). But, until now, it has not yet managed to develop a particular practical action in this regard. Encouraged by the work of the International Women's Conference in Copenhagen, our party also begins work on this imposing and noble cause. Tomorrow's assembly should be the first decisive step in that direction. We sure hope that success will not be missed!