

Women's Organizations In the Struggle for Peace

The proceedings of the recent 15th National Convention of the Communist Party are now being published in pamphlet and book form. Because the Daily Worker considers these proceedings of the greatest importance to the American people, and particularly to the workers, both Communist and non-Communist, we are printing sections of the major Convention reports.

By Claudia Jones

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IN OVER 60 LANDS, forming a strong sector of the world camp of peace democracy and socialism, women are organized in huge federations for peace, security and defense of their children. Led by the Women's International Democratic Federation, the activities of these millions of peace loving, anti-fascist women serve to inspire American women to emulate these powerful struggles of their sisters for equality, a happy life for all children, and above all, for a lasting peace.

This new phenomenon — of world wide identification and sisterhood of women—grew out of the years of boundless suffering by women under fascism and during the anti-fascist war. Women, in the technically advanced countries, suffered outrageous degradation. They learned and experienced the lot of their sisters in the colonial and imperialist oppressed countries.

Coupled with this was the uprooting of all bourgeois-democratic relationships involving women, the extermination of whole families and generations of families. It was these and other costly experiences that gave rise to the new determination of women throughout the world that never again would they allow the use of their sons for the imperialist slaughter of other nations and peoples.

Impelling these developments is the leadership of the world camp of peace and democracy and Socialism by a workers' state—the Socialist Soviet Union, which has exemplified in life its concern for the well being and full equality of women and full protection of children, in all spheres. The world shaking example of free Soviet womanhood, the new freedom achieved by the liberated women in the lands of the European Democracies who move toward Socialism, the historic strides in the elimination of the feudal bondage, as a result of the Chinese People's Revolution, formerly expressed by millions of down-trodden women of China—all are decisive contributing factors explaining why there now exists a powerful international anti-fascist, anti-imperialist women's movement.

AMERICAN WOMEN bear a heavy responsibility to the

millions of our anti-fascist sisters in the world camp of peace, precisely because the threat to world peace stems from the imperialists of our land. The repeated appeals to American women from the embattled mothers of Greece, Franco Spain and the Marshall-plan saddled countries are staunch reminders of the responsibilities women in the United States bear to the world struggle for peace and anti-fascism.

The pro-fascist Department of Justice attacks last year against the international fraternization of women should lead us to conclude that we face a great responsibility, in the sphere of work among women, to the high principles of proletarian internationalism. In great measure, our meeting of that responsibility depends on the support given by labor-progressives, led by our vanguard Party, the Communist Party to the emerging women's peace movement. Through such support, the struggle for the equality of women will merge with the general class struggle of the working class which understands and defends the needs and demands of the masses of women. Support to the peace struggles of women in our country will thereby also help to bring in line with world developments, based on American experience, a new advance in women's status in our country.

Comrade Hall properly stressed the necessity for our Party to help nurture, support and encourage the development of such a movement. Already existing in our land is a progressive peace center of women which should be seen in relationship to the whole perspective of winning and organizing women for peace.

THE AMERICAN WOMEN FOR PEACE represents the center of coalescing women's peace sentiment, composed of broad peace forces who have identified themselves with a specific women's peace movement.

Though not all-inclusive of the peace forces among women, this center is already playing a signal role in the country. It has led three major actions for peace—on the anniversary of Hiroshima, on UN Founding Day, and on November 28, when Truman brazenly announced he was considering use of the A-bomb in Korea and Manchuria. On that day, over 2500 women, on 36 hours' notice, appeared before the UN demanding the outlawing of the A-bomb and the ending of the inhuman Korean adventure.

Here, the splendid initiative and leadership of this women's peace center was clearly demonstrated. One should note that this activity has not gone unnoticed by the world camp of peace. The returned women delegates to the World Peace Congress tell audiences everywhere they speak, that the first toast by Soviet Peace Chairman Tikhonov, given on their visit to the land of Socialism, was to the delegation of women who went to UN on its founding day, "who got there before the men did."

The regularly issued News-Brief of the Women's International Democratic Federation reported the November 28th women's peace action with the observation that this "was the first news to reach them" of the world wide outraged protests of women against Truman's madness. In quite a different vein, Eleanor Roosevelt was forced to state demagogically, despite her red-baiting adjectives, that the November 28 UN women's delegation "spoke the yearning in the hearts of every women in the land for peace."

TO EXPAND THE UNITY of women for peace, we must reject concepts which deny the need for a distinct women's peace center on the grounds that we need a "broader movement and broader forces." These arguments come especially from those who stand on the side-

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lines, criticizing what exists under the guise that the peace center is not yet all-inclusive, while doing nothing to reach those "broader forces." On the other hand is the argument that the peace center is not "militant enough", not sufficiently advanced. This argument reflects a failure to understand that the level of the present activity of this peace center, which is not anti-imperialist or even anti-fascist but an expression of the general peace strivings of women is in keeping with their present level of experience. It will reach a higher level of understanding and militancy as it expands its activity and especially as it organizes peace committees below, of women from the decisive working class strata. We cannot substitute our own desires for militancy for a broad peace movement, as some of our comrades and advanced progressives sometimes seek to do artificially. If we do that, we will be militant by ourselves.

Precisely because this women's peace center views its task not only as one of serving as a center of women's peace activities on a minimum united front basis, but also for stimulating and organizing women's peace committees on a community level, it merits the wholehearted support of Communist and progressive women. Issuance of a splendid regular monthly Bulletin by AWP, the *Peacemaker*, for \$1 a year is a splendid vehicle for exchange of experiences of women in the fight for peace. It can serve as an organ which links the women's movement to other developments and trends in the broad labor and people's peace movement. Progressive women everywhere should subscribe to this organ as a major means of assisting its work.

In addition, Communist and progressive women everywhere must give leadership to women in their communities, and their organizations on such issues as the terror-creating atomic air raid drills, the inadequate school

appropriations, the skyrocketing prices, higher taxes, etc. and other such issues which affect the women and their families. These issues in many instances, can serve as the starting point for involving women in broader peace activities.

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IN OUR EFFORTS to help build a peace movement of women, we must once and for all overcome the gap between the influence of the triply oppressed Negro women, expressed in their own mass organizations and in the Negro peoples movement generally, and their role in the organized peace movement. We must multiply a thousand fold the leadership of Negro women in the fight for peace.

In examining our work in the building of peace committees, our great weakness, second only to that of building women's peace committees in working class areas, is the failure to establish peace committees among Negro women. Can it be claimed that Negro women feel less strongly about peace than do other sections of women? The facts contradict this absurdity. As the wife of William McGee played an outstanding role in the fight against the rising terror and intensified oppression of Negro citizens at home, so it was the wife of Lt. Leon Gilbert whose initiative broke the case of her court-martialed officer husband. It was her rousing appeal to the country that fired the women which won a stay in execution and now demand his complete exoneration from the shameful Truman 20-year sentence!

The outstanding peace heroines of the Stockholm Peace Petition were Negro women—Molly Lucas of Illinois and Jackie Clack of California—who were sent as delegates to the Warsaw Peace Congress and had the opportunity to visit the USSR. In Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Boston's South End, Philadelphia's 4th Ward, and similar areas, thousands of signatures of Negro mothers and wives were affixed to the world wide petition which called for outlawing as war criminals atomaniacs who first used the bomb.

In all peace delegations of women, almost one-third were Negro women. Why then is there no commensurate movement of Negro women for peace?

Contributing to this state of affairs no doubt was the white chauvinist hesitation to raise the Negro question in the broad labor and people's peace movement particularly in the context of America's imperialist aggression against the colored peoples of Asia. Additional reasons may be found in the continued efforts of Negro reformists and bourgeois nationalists to sell the Negro people the idea that this is "their war"; in the whipping up of false jingoistic moods of contempt even among Negro troops for their Korean brothers; and in reaction's veiled flattery of Negro troops based on chauvinist contempt for the lives and welfare of Negro soldiers.

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NOW, MORE than ever, the Negro people understand the full significance of U.S. military aggression in Korea. They see in the bloody massacre of the people of Korea an extension of the foul white supremacy oppression and contempt for the Negro people to the colored people of all of Asia. It is therefore possible to organize the broadest type of peace activities among the Negro people, and particularly among Negro women. This is necessary in the self-interest of the Negro people. And the merger of this anti-imperialist current with the broader labor, people's, women's and youth peace movements, will greatly strengthen the peace camp as a whole.

In the growing anger of Negro mothers against military lynching by court-martial in the embittered recognition of Negro mothers and wives that their fighting husbands and sons are dying for a cause that is not their own lies the key to arouse and organize their sentiment for peace. In such activity, a new understanding will arise; they will begin not only to question, as they are already doing, why their sons are expendable, but why it is necessary to fight at all in Korea—why it is necessary to fight in any far-off lands.

Mrs. McGee

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