



WORKERS WORLD PARTY



From Dorothy Ballan's *Feminism and Marxism* (1971):

“At the dawn of humanity, production was necessarily organized on a social and cooperative basis. [...] here actually was a high degree of social cooperation among all the people in a group which was reflected in the division of labor between men and women. It was the only way for humanity to survive in a hostile environment.”

- In what ways does capitalism operate to undermine this cooperativity?
- How does gender oppression come into play?

“The conversion of social property to private property eventually meant even the conversion of humans to private ownership. [...] This became transformed into its opposite, with marriage and childbearing isolating and insulating women from social production, making her totally dependent on her husband, and reducing her to the role of procreation for inheritance, and to the role of servant for husband.”

- Why/how does the existence of private property necessitate the existence of slavery?
- How does the division of this private property ultimately determine which people are enslaved? What other factors contribute here?
- How does this dynamic uphold the patriarchy?

From Monica Moorehead's “Working-class women's liberation” (2017), in *Every Struggle is a Woman's Struggle*:

“This feminization of labor manifests itself with women workers, especially the most oppressed women, Black, Latinx and Native, being in the forefront of not only economic struggles, but also leading in political struggles. Those range from the Fight for \$15 and a Union movement, to Indigenous water rights at Standing Rock, Black Lives Matter led by Black trans women, and, of course, the struggle for reproductive justice.”

- How has the feminization of the working class further forced women and gender-oppressed people to assume the most emotionally & physically demanding work, while being compensated for it the most poorly?
- How do both capitalism and the patriarchy contribute to this dynamic? How do they interact with/support each other to do so?
- How do the axes of gender, race, and class intersect in the struggle for liberation?
- Historically, what does the tendency of women to spearhead the struggle for progress – in social production & cooperation as discussed by Ballan in *Feminism and Marxism*, and in the fight for economic & political equality– imply about these movements?

“#MeToo campaign has been liberating for so many women who have lived in silence and the deep-seated pain of being sexually assaulted but who now realize they are not alone. This campaign has brought widespread awareness of this war on women. There is no doubt about that.



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But how can any real change be made when the voices of millions of other women haven't been heard because of who they are, due to being marginalized and disenfranchised under capitalism?

They are migrant women who face rape and death daily by the U.S. Border Patrol when forced to flee their homeland due to imperialism. They are Black and Brown single mothers whose bosses threaten their low-wage jobs if they don't succumb to sexual "advances." They are women prisoners, including trans prisoners, who are sexually assaulted daily by brutal guards, or homeless women who face similar fates in shelters. They are young women who are assaulted 15 daily in high schools and on college campuses knowing they can't get any justice because administrations and the police are complicit when these assaults take place."

- In what ways has the #MeToo movement been effective, and in which areas has it failed?
- How does the tendency of white bourgeois feminism to disregard capitalism as a gender-oppressive force undermine both the women's and the workers' movements?
- How does the prevalence of sexual violence intersect with imperialism? Racism? Violence against trans women & gender non-conforming folks? And the prison-industrial complex?

From Pam Parker's "Reparations for African-Americans" (2000), in *Marxism, Reparations, & The Black Freedom Struggle*:

"The bosses argue that anyone can "make it" under capitalism, if they just work hard enough. What people are discovering in record numbers is that this system is not designed for us all to "make it." What it's designed to do is create super-profits and maintain large numbers of "expendable" people, which help toward that end. They have discovered that there is so much wealth in this country, but that this system is not designed to allow the equitable distribution of it. and they're angry!

That's why the question of reparations is so important to the anti-racist struggle. it flies in the face of the bourgeois arguments and it does so shamelessly. People are saying, "no, we're not looking for handouts, we're looking for give-backs, and if they don't come soon they'll be take-backs." The struggle for reparations not only clarifies the reality of racism, but explains how there are still oppressed nations inside the U.S. it's a way to acknowledge that slavery did exist as an economic institution in this country and that the legacy of slavery is still alive."

- How is the false narrative that people, especially poor Black people, can 'make it' under capitalism if they just 'try hard enough' actively damaging?
- How do the specific, current economic and material conditions make the demand for and necessity of reparations more urgent than ever?
- How/why must reparations center Black women and their unique struggle against racism, capitalism, sexism, and other oppressive forces?

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