Marxism, Mariátegui, and the Women's Movement[*†]

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru

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Second Edition

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Words to the Re-edition

The intensification of the class struggle in the 1960s gave new impetus to the development of the Women's Movement in the country, a situation similar to what was happening internationally. The current decade clearly shows that the issue of women's emancipation has become one of the important topics of political struggle. The coming years will further emphasize the importance of women in the major battles that lie ahead.

The year 1975 has been declared by the United Nations as the "International Women's Year" and in the country as the "Year of the Peruvian Woman." Thus, this year will be particularly important for the politicization, mobilization, and organization of women, a task in which bureaucratic and democratic lines will fiercely compete to organize women corporately and for the benefit of the exploiting classes, or democratically to serve the people, respectively.

In this context and perspective, in December of last year, the women's organizations that, under the banner of Fully Resuming Mariátegui's Path, have been fighting for years to politicize, mobilize, and organize the women of our nation, came together. Thus, the National Coordinating Committee of the People's Women's Movement has emerged, marking a new stage in the development of the struggle of women in the country: the People's Women's Movement has entered the stage of national organization.

One of the tasks of this Committee is to promote and, to start, it reissues the work *MARXISM, MARIATEGUI, AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT,* which was published a year ago by the People's Women's Center of Lima, and all 5,000 copies are completely sold out. In this way, we contribute to the indispensable and increasingly urgent ideological and political construction of the ongoing women's movement. And in doing so, we start from the firm conviction that only by applying and developing the line established by Mariátegui on the emancipation of women in our country can we build a true people's movement as part of our people's struggle, a struggle that has fought, is fighting, and will continue to fight for its liberation.

With this publication, we initiate our *EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN EDITIONS,* a series that will primarily serve to address the various ideological, political, and organizational problems posed by the construction of a people's women's organization. The necessity and urgency of this are evident, especially considering the little attention paid to the organizational problems of the masses in the country.

National Coordinating Committee of the People's Women's Movement

Introduction

The problem of women, that of women's emancipation viewed from a Marxist perspective, is gaining increasing importance every day. One example is the agreement by the United Nations to celebrate the International Women's Year in 1975. There are also numerous publications circulating on this topic, and what is even more significant is the growing mobilization of women around the world.

In our country as well, the mobilization of women has been gaining momentum for years. One of its manifestations is the proliferation of organizations, as well as the noticeable and increasing interest in women's issues expressed through publications and propaganda. The increased participation of women in the process of production and the intensification of class struggle in the country undoubtedly pose the central problem of politicizing women as an indispensable part of the revolutionary progress of our people. This becomes even more important when we remember the words of the great Lenin: "the success of a revolution depends on how much the women take part in it."

Thus, today in our homeland, the theses of José Carlos Mariátegui resonate urgently for us. "In our time, the life of a society cannot be studied without investigating and analyzing its foundation: the organization of the family, the situation of women." And foreseeing the future of the women's movement: "Sensitive men of the era should not and cannot feel estranged or indifferent to this movement. The woman question is a part of the human question." Let us keep these words in mind if we want to be "sensitive men of the era," if we want to serve the national-democratic revolutionary process in which our people are engaged and still awaiting realization. By avoiding comfortable indifference, facile criticism, or negating attacks, which are rooted in profound misunderstanding, and by supporting the mobilization of Peruvian women, we will truly serve the people and their revolution, which only they themselves can fulfill.

Given these circumstances, a question arises: what kind of women's movement should be promoted and supported? This question is of vital importance when one considers the loud endorsement and dissemination of bourgeois feminism. The answer is clear and specific: a true people's women's

movement can only be built and developed from the standpoint of the working class, rooted in Marxism, and as part of the people's movement upon which women's emancipation depends. Therefore, a people's women's movement can only emerge by being grounded in Marxism-Leninism, which in our country means being based on the ideas of Mariátegui. In conclusion, the development of the women's movement in Peru depends on reclaiming the path of Mariátegui, embracing the politics that revolve around women's emancipation, and engaging in this ideological-political struggle as part of the debate to place Mariátegui's ideas at the forefront of our People's movement. By doing so, we will be shielded from bourgeois feminism and divisions that pit women against men, which fracture organizations and divide the masses. Therefore, only by adhering to Mariátegui's politics of women's emancipation, it will be possible to create women's organizations and women's sections within mass organizations, as the Amauta indicated for labor unions, in order to strengthen and develop the organizations of the masses and serve the united struggle of the people.

Within this framework, the PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S CENTER operates, and as its actions prove, it strives (aware of the urgent need to politicize Peruvian women, who have been left behind due to oppressive social conditions stemming from our semi-feudal and semi-colonial status) and fights for the creation and development of a PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S MOVEMENT in Peru. This task requires persistent and dedicated action, making it a rallying cry for the work in which the CENTER, along with other similar organizations from different parts of the country, is engaged. In summary, the conception of this Movement we serve is simply as a movement generated by the proletariat within the female masses, characterized by its adherence to Mariátegui, operating as a mass organization, and adhering to democratic centralism.

The PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S CENTER, confident in the collective task it undertakes and aware of the need for ideological and political construction of the PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S MOVEMENT it strives for, publishes this work, *MARXISM, MARIATEGUI, AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT,* as a contribution to the analysis, debate, and establishment of the foundations for the genuine process of politicization, mobilization, and organization of Peruvian women that is underway. It is certain that the debate is open to those who wish to discuss clearly and openly, and that the masses listen to those who affirm rather than those who simply deny, as Mariátegui taught. Although the road ahead is long, there will be no guiding light unless we rely

on a clear and defined policy regarding women's emancipation. For us and for Peruvian women in general, there can be no other path than to reclaim and develop Mariátegui's legacy.

According to the spirit that motivates us, and if we manage to promote controversy from the position of the proletariat, serving the politicization of Peruvian women, our effort will be well committed and rewarded abundantly. Furthermore, the dissemination of proletarian ideas is never lost, no matter how much time separates the harvest from the sowing, as Lenin said. We adhere to this with faith in Peruvian women and in our people.

People's Women's Center

Marxism, Mariátegui, and the Women's Movement

1 The Woman Question and Marxism

The woman question is an important question for the people's struggle and its importance is greater today because actions are intensifying which tend to mobilize women; a necessary and fruitful mobilization from the working class viewpoint and in the service of the masses of the people, but which promoted by and for the benefit of the exploiting classes, acts as an element which divides and fetters the people's struggle.

In this new period of politicization of the masses of women in which we now evolve, with its base in a greater economic participation by women in the country, it is indispensable to pay serious attention to the woman question as regards study and research, political incorporation and consistent organizing work. A task which demands keeping in mind Mariátegui's thesis which teaches that: "WOMEN, LIKE MEN, ARE REACTIONARIES, CENTRISTS OR REVOLUTIONARIES, THEY CANNOT THEREFORE ALL FIGHT THE SAME BATTLE SIDE BY SIDE. IN TODAY'S HUMAN PANORAMA CLASS DIFFERENTIATES THE INDIVIDUAL MORE THAN SEX." That way, from the beginning, the need to understand the woman question scientifically doubtlessly demands that we start from the Marxist concept of the working class

1.1 The theory of women as "deficient feminine nature"

Through the centuries the exploiting classes have sustained and imposed the pseudo-theory of the "deficient feminine nature," that has served to justify the oppression which up to now women experience in societies in which exploitation continues to prevail. That way, the Jewish men's prayer: "Blessed be God, our Lord and Lord of all the worlds, for not having made me a woman" and conformity by the Jewish women who pray "Blessed be the Lord who has created me according to his will," clearly express the contempt the ancient world had for the woman's condition. These ideas also predominated in Greek slave society; the famous Pythagoras said "There is a good principle which has created order, light and man and there is a bad principle which has created chaos, darkness and woman;" and even the great philosopher Aristotle pronounced: "the female is female by virtue of certain qualitative fault," and "the character of women suffers from a natural defect."

These proposals passed on to the final period of Roman slave society and to the Middle Ages, the contempt for woman intensifying in Christian thinkers by imputing her with being the source of sin and the waiting room of hell. Tertulian claimed "Woman you are the door of the devil. You have persuaded him whom the devil did not dare to attack frontally. By your fault the son of God had to die; you should always go dressed in mourning and rags"; and Augustine of Hipona "The woman is a beast who is neither firm nor stable." While these condemned, others passed sentence on feminine inferiority and obedience; thus Paul of Tarsus, the apostle, preached "Man was not taken from woman but woman from man;" and "Just as the church is subject to Christ, let woman be submitted in all things to her husband." And hundreds of years later, in the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas followed with similar preaching: "Man is the head of the woman, just as Christ is the head of man" and "It is a fact that woman is destined to live under the authority of man and that she has no authority by herself."

The understanding of the feminine condition did not progress much with the development of capitalism, since while Candorcet pointed out its social root when he said: "It has been said that women... lack a sense of justice, and that they obeyed their feelings rather than their conscience... that difference has been caused by education and social existence, not by nature," and the great materialist Diderot wrote: "I feel sorry for you women" and "in all

customs the cruelty of civil laws joined the cruelty of nature against women. They have been treated as imbeciles"; Rousseau, advanced ideologist of the French Revolution insisted: "All education of women must be relative to that of men... Woman is made to yield to man and endure his injustices." This bourgeois position is carried on to the age of imperialism, becoming more reactionary as time goes on; which, joined to Christian positions, and reiterating old theses sanctioned through John 23: "God and nature have given women various chores which perfect and complement the chores entrusted to men."

That way we see how throughout time the exploiting classes have preached the "deficient feminine nature." Sustaining themselves in idealist concepts they have reiterated the existence of a "feminine nature" independent of social conditions, which is part of the anti-scientific "human nature" thesis; but this so-called "feminine nature," eternal and invariable essence, is also called "deficient" to show that the condition of women and their oppression and patronage is the result of their "natural inferiority compared to man." With this pseudo-theory it is intended to maintain and "justify" the submission of women.

Finally, it is convenient to point out that even an outstanding materialist thinker like Democritus had prejudices with respect to women ("A woman familiar with logic: a fearful thing"; "Woman is much more prone than the male to think evil"). And that the defense of women is based in metaphysical or religious arguments (Eve means life and Adam means land; created after man, woman was finished better than him). Even the bourgeoisie, when it was a revolutionary class, only conceived of women in reference to men, not as independent beings.

1.2 The Development of Capitalism and the Women's Movement

The development of capitalism will incorporate women into labor, providing the basis and conditions for her to develop; that way, with their incorporation into the productive process, women will have the chance of more directly joining the class struggle and combative action. Capitalism carried out the bourgeois revolutions and in this forge, the feminine masses, especially working women, advanced.

The French Revolution: the most advanced one of those led by the bour-

geoisie, was a great nourishment for women's action. Women got mobilized together with the masses, and participating in the civic clubs, they developed revolutionary actions. In these struggles they organized a "Society of Revolutionary and Republican women," and through Olimpia de Gouges, in 1789 they demanded a "Declaration of the Rights of Woman" and created newspapers like "The Impatient" to demand improvements in their condition. In the development of the revolutionary process women won the suppression of the rights of the first born male and the abolition of the masculine privileges, and they also obtained equal rights of succession with males and achieved divorce. Their militant participation rendered some fruits.

But once the great revolutionary push was halted, women were denied access to the political clubs, their politicization was suppressed and they saw themselves blamed and urged to return to the home, they were told: "Since when have women been allowed to renounce their sex and become men? Nature has told woman: be a woman. Your chores are to tend to infants, the details of the home and the diverse challenges of motherhood." Even more, with bourgeois reorganization initiated by Napoleon, with the Civil Code, a married woman returned to be subject to patronage, falling under her husband's domain in her person and goods; she is denied the questioning of paternity. Married women, like prostitutes, lose their civil rights, and they are denied divorce and the right to transfer their properties.

In the French Revolution we can already see clearly how the advance of women and their setbacks are linked to the advances and setbacks of the people and the revolution. This is an important lesson: The identity of interests of the women's movement and the people's struggle, how the former is part of the latter.

Also this bourgeois revolution shows how the ideas about women follow a process similar to the political process; once the revolutionary upsurge was fought and halted, reactionary ideas re-emerged about women. Bonald maintained: "Man is to woman as woman is to child"; Comte, considered the "father of sociology," proposed that femininity is a sort of continued infancy and that this biological infancy is expressed as intellectual weakness; Balzac wrote: "The destiny of women and their only glory is to make the hearts of men beat. The woman is a property acquired by contract, a mobile personal property, because the possession is worth a title; in all, speaking properly, woman is but an annex to man." All this reactionary ideology is synthesized in the following words by Napoleon: "Nature wanted for women to be our slaves... They are our property...; woman is but a machine to

produce children"; a character for whom feminine life should be oriented by "Kitchen, Church, Children," a slogan endorsed by Hitler in this century. (20th Century)

The French Revolution raised its three principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and promised justice and to meet the demands of the people. Very soon it showed its limits and that its principled declarations were but formal declarations, at the same time its class interests were counterpoised to those of the masses; misery, hunger and injustice kept on prevailing, except under new forms. Against such an order of things the utopians launched themselves with a sharp and demolishing criticism although, due to historic conditions, they could not reach the root of the evil. Utopian socialists also condemned the condition of women under capitalism. Fourier, representing this position, pointed out: "The change of an historical age can always be determined by the progress of women... the degree of emancipation of woman constitutes the natural path for general emancipation."

Confronted with this great assertion it's worth counterpoising the thought of the anarchist Proudhon about women, and keep in mind his ideas when there are attempts today to propagate anarchism to the four winds, presenting them as examples of revolutionary vision and consequence. Proudhon maintained that woman was inferior to man physically, intellectually and morally, and that represented together numerically, women have a value of $\frac{8}{27}$ the value of man. So for this hero a woman represents less than a third of the value of a man; which is but an expression of the petty-bourgeois thought of its author, a root common to all anarchists.

Throughout the 19th century, with their increasing incorporation into the productive process, women continued to develop their struggle for their own demands joining the workers' unions and revolutionary movements of the proletariat. An example of this participation was Luisa Michel, a fighter at the Paris Commune of 1871. But the women's movement in general oriented itself towards suffragism, to the struggle to get the right to vote for women, in pursuit of the false idea that in getting the vote and parliamentary positions their rights would be respected; that way feminist actions were channeled towards parliamentary cretinism. However it is good to remember that the vote was not achieved for free but that during the last century and the start of this century women fought openly and determinedly to get it. The struggle for the feminine vote and its achievement show once more that, while this indeed was a conquest, it is not the means allowing a genuine transformation of the condition of women.

The 20th century implies a greater development of the women's economic action, women workers increase massively, as well as women employees, to whom are added strong contingents of professionals; women enter into all fields of activity. In this process world wars have great importance because they incorporated millions of women into the economy to substitute for the men mobilized to the front. All this pushed the mobilization, organization and politicization of women; and starting from the 1950s the women's struggle starts again with greater force, amplified in the 1960s with great perspectives for the future.

In conclusion, through the economic incorporation of women, capitalism set the basis for their economic autonomy; but capitalism by itself is not capable of giving formal legal equality to women; in no way can it emancipate them; this has been proven throughout the history of the bourgeoisie, a class which even in its most advanced revolution, the French Revolution of the 18th century, could not go further than a merely formal declaration of rights. Further on, the later development of the bourgeois revolutionary processes and the 20th century show not only that the bourgeoisie is incapable emancipating the masses of women, but with the development of imperialism the bourgeois concept as regards the feminine condition becomes more reactionary as time goes on and in fact confirms the social, economic, political and ideological oppression of women, even if it disguises and paints it in a myriad of ways.

1.3 Marxism and the Emancipation of Women

Marxism, the ideology of the working class, conceives the human being as a set of social relations that change as a function of the social process. Thus, Marxism is absolutely opposed to the thesis of "human nature" as an eternal, immutable reality outside the frame of social conditions; this thesis belongs to idealism and reaction. The Marxist position also implies the overcoming of mechanical materialism (of the old materialists, before Marx and Engels) who were incapable of understanding the historical social character of the human being as a transformer of reality, so irrationally it had to rely on metaphysical or spiritual conditions, such as the case of Feuerbach.

Just as Marxism considers the human being as a concrete reality historically generated by society, it does not accept either the thesis of "feminine nature," which is but a complement of the so-called "human nature" and therefore a reiteration that woman has an eternal and unchanging nature;

aggravated, as we saw, because what idealism and reaction understand by "feminine nature" is a "deficient and inferior nature" compared to man.

For Marxism, women, as much as men, are but a set of social relations, historically adapted and changing as a function of the changes of society in its development process. Woman then is a social product, and her transformation demands the transformation of society.

When Marxism focuses on the woman question, therefore, it does so from a materialist and dialectical viewpoint, from a scientific conception which indeed allows a complete understanding. In the study, research and understanding of women and their condition, Marxism treats the woman question with respect to property, family and State, since throughout history the condition and historical place of women is intimately linked to those three factors.

An extraordinary example of concrete analysis of the woman question, from this viewpoint, is seen in Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, by F. Engels, who, pointing to the substitution of mother right by father right as the start of the submission of women, wrote:

> "Thus, the riches, as they went on increasing, on one hand provided man with a more important position than woman in the family, and on the other planted in him the idea of taking advantage of this importance to modify the established order of inheritance for the benefit of his children... That revolution—one of the most profound humanity has known—had no need to touch even one of the living members of the gens. All its members could go on being what they had been up to then. It merely sufficed to say that in the future the descendants of the male line would remain in the gens, but those of the female line would leave it, going to the gens of their father. That way maternal affiliation and inheritance by mother right were abolished, replaced by masculine affiliation and inheritance by father right. We know nothing of how this revolution took place in the cultured peoples, since it took place in prehistoric times... The overthrowing of mother right was THE GREAT HISTORIC DEFEAT OF THE FEMALE SEX THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. Man also grabbed the reigns of the house; woman saw herself degraded, turned into a servant, into the slave of man's lasciviousness, in a mere instrument of reproduction."

This paragraph by Engels sets the fundamental thesis of Marxism about the woman question: the condition of women is sustained in property relations, in the form of ownership exercised over the means of production and in the productive relations arising from them. This thesis of Marxism is extremely important because it establishes that the oppression attached to the female condition has as its roots the formation, appearance and development of the right to ownership over the means of production, and therefore that its emancipation is linked to the destruction of said right. It is indispensable, in order to have a Marxist understanding of the woman question, to start from this great thesis, and more than ever today when supposed revolutionaries and even self-proclaimed Marxists pretend to have feminine oppression arising not from the formation and appearance of private property but from the simple division of labor as a function of sex which had attributed less important chores to women than those of men, reducing her to the sphere of the home. This proposal, despite all the propaganda and efforts to present it as revolutionary, is but the substitution for the Marxist position on the emancipation of women, with bourgeois proposals which in essence are but variations of the supposed immutable "feminine nature."

Developing this materialist dialectical starting point, Engels teaches how on this basis the monogamous family was instituted, about which he says: "It was the first form of family not based on natural but on economic conditions, and concretely on the triumph of private property over spontaneously originated, common primitive property." And: "Therefore, monogamy in no way appears in history as a reconciliation between man and woman, and even less as a higher form of marriage. Quite the contrary, it enters the scene under the form of the enslavement of one sex by the other, as the proclamation of a war between the sexes, up to then unknown in prehistory."

After establishing that private property sustains the monogamous family form, which sanctions the oppression of women, Engels establishes the correspondence of the three fundamental forms of marriage with the three great stages of human evolution: savagery and marriage by groups; barbarism and pairing marriage; civilization and monogamy, "with its complements, adultery and prostitution." That way the Marxist classics developed the thesis about the historically variable social condition of woman and her place in society; pointing out how the feminine condition is intimately linked with private property, the family and the State, which is the apparatus that legalizes such relations and imposes and sustains them by force.

This scientific proposition systematized by Engels is a product of the

Marxist analysis of the condition of women throughout history, and the most elementary study fully corroborates the accuracy and actuality of these proposals, which are the foundation and starting point of the working class for the understanding of the woman question. Let's make an historical recount allowing us to illustrate what Engels and the classics set forth.

In the primitive community, with a natural division of labor based on age and sex, men and women developed their lives on a spontaneous equality and participation of women in the social group decisions; later on women were surrounded with respect and consideration, a deferential and even privileged treatment. Once riches began to grow, which heightened the position of men in the family, pushing forward the substitution of father right for mother right, women began to move to the background and their position deteriorated; echoes of this reach the times of the great Greek tragic Aeschillus, who in his work Eumenida, wrote "It is not mother who engenders that which is called her son; she is only the nurse of the embryo deposited in her womb. Who engenders is the father. The woman receives the seed as a foreign depository, and she preserves it if so pleases the gods."

Thus, in Greek slave society the condition of women is that of submission, social inferiority and object of contempt. Of them it is said: "The slave absolutely lacks of the freedom to deliberate; woman has it but in a weak and inefficient manner" (Aristotle); "The best woman is that of whom men speak the least" (Pericles); and the answer by the husband who investigates public affairs "it's not your thing. Shut up lest I hit you... Keep on weaving" (Aristophanes, Lysistrata) What reality is entailed by these words? Women in Greece were kept as perpetual minor; under the power of their tutor, whether the father, the husband, the husband's heir or the State, their lives passed under constant tutelage. They were provided a marriage dowry so they had something on which to live and did not go hungry, and in some cases they were authorized to divorce; for the rest, they were reduced to misogynism in the home and in society under the control of specialized authorities. Women could inherit when there was no direct male heir, in which case she had to marry the oldest relative within the paternal gens; that way she would not inherit directly but was merely a transferor of inheritance; all to preserve the family property.

The condition of women in Rome, also a slave society, allows a better understanding of it as derived from property, the family and the State. After the reign of Tarquinius and once patriarchal right was set up, private property and therefore the family (gens), became the basis of society: women will

remain subject to patrimony and the family. She was excluded from every "virile job," and in public affairs she was "a civil minor"; she is not directly denied inheritance, but is subject to tutelage. On this point said Gaius, the Roman jurist: "Tutelage was established in the interest of the tutors themselves, so the woman of whom they are supposed heirs cannot wrest their willed inheritance from them, nor impoverish it by alienation or debts." The patrimonial root of the tutelage imposed upon women was therefore clearly exposed and established.

After the Twelve Tables, the fact that women belonged to the paternal gens and to the conjugal gens (also strictly for reasons of safeguarding property) generated conflicts which were the basis for the advancement of the Roman "legal emancipation." The "sine manu" marriage appears: her goods remain dependent on her tutors and her husband only acquires rights over her person, and at that shared with the "pater familias," who retains an absolute authority over his daughter. And the domestic tribunal appears, to resolve discrepancies which may arise between father and husband; that way the woman can appeal to her father for disagreements with her husband, and vice versa: "it no longer is the matter of the individual."

On this economic basis (her participation in the inheritance even if tutored), and the conflict between the rights of the paternal and conjugal gens for the woman and her goods, a major participation of Roman women in their society develops, despite the legal restrictions: the "atrium" is set up, the center of the house, which governs work by the slaves, conducts education of the children and influences them until a rather advanced age. She shares the works and problems of her spouse and is considered co-proprietor of his goods. She attends parties and on the street she is given preferential crossing, even by consuls and magistrates. The weight of Roman women in their society is reflected by the figure of Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi.

With Roman social development, the State displaces the contention among the gens and assumes the disputes about women, divorce, adultery, etc., which went to be heard in public tribunals, abolishing the domestic tribunal. Later on, under imperial rule, tutelage on women will be abolished, answering to social and economic demands. Women get a fixed dowry (individual patrimony) which does not return to the agnates (parental relatives) nor belongs to the husband; that way she is given an economic base for her independence and development. By the end of the Republic mothers had been given recognized rights over their children, receiving custody of them due to the father's misconduct or his being placed under tutelage.

Under emperor Marcus Aurelius, in the year 178, a great step is taken in the process of property and family: children are declared heir to their mother in preference to agnates; that way the family is based on a link of consanguinity and the mother emerges as equal to the father before the children, the children also are recognized as children of the wife and, derived from the above, the daughter inherits just as her male siblings.

But while the State "emancipates" women from the family, it submits them to its tutelage and restricts their acts. And simultaneously to the social rise of women, an anti-woman campaign was initiated in Rome invoking their inferiority and invoking their "imbecility and fragility of the sex" to legally reduce them.

In Rome then, socially women had it better than in Greece and acquired respect and even great influence in social life, as shown by the words of Cato: "Everywhere men govern women, and we, who govern all men, are governed by our women." Roman history has outstanding exalted women, from the Sabines, through Lucretia and Virginia to Cornelia. Criticisms of women, not as women but as contemporaries, developed by the end of the First and Second centuries of our era; in this way Juvenal reproaches them: lasciviousness, gluttony, to dedicate themselves to manly occupations and their passion for hunting and sports.

Roman society recognized some rights of women, especially the right to property, but did not open to them civil activities and much less public affairs, activities which they developed "illegally" and in a restricted way; for that reason Roman matrons ("having lost their ancient virtues") tended to seek other fields in which to employ their energies.

In the decline of slavery and the development of feudalism, to consider the feminine situation one must keep in mind the influence of Christianity and the Germanic contribution. Christianity contributed quite a bit to the oppression of women; among the fathers of the church there is a definite demeaning of women, whom they consider inferior, servants of men and sources of evil. To what has been said let's add the condemnation by St. John Chrisostomus, a saint of the Catholic Church: "No savage beast is as damaging as woman." Under this influence the advances reached under Roman legislation are at first mitigated and later on denied.

Germanic societies based on war gave women a secondary situation due to their smaller physical strength; however they were respected and had rights which made them an associate of their spouse. Let's remember that on this subject Tacitus wrote: "in peace and in war she shares his luck; she lives

with him and dies with him.“

Christianity and Germanicism influenced the condition of women under feudalism. Women were in a situation of absolute dependence with respect to the father and husband; by the times of king Clovis “the mundium weighs over her during all her life.” Women developed their lives completely submitted to the feudal lord, although protected by the laws “as property of man and mother of children”; her value increases with fertility, being worth triple the value of a free man, a value she loses when she can no longer bear offspring: woman is a reproductive womb.

As happened in Rome, also under feudalism we see an evolution in the condition of women, in function of the curbing of feudal powers and the increase of royal powers: the mundium is transferred from the lords to the king; the mundium becomes a burden for the tutor, yet the submission by tutelage is kept.

At the convulsive times when feudalism was formed the condition of women was uncertain; since the rights to sovereignty and property, public and private, were not well specified, the condition of women was changing and heightened or lowered according to social contingencies.

First they were denied private rights, because women had no public rights. Until the 11th century force and arms impose order and sustain property directly: to jurists, a fiefdom “is a land possessed with charge of military service” and women could not have feudal right since they could not defend it with arms nor render military service. When fiefdoms turn into patrimonies and are inheritable (according to Germanic norms women could also inherit), feminine succession is admitted; but this does not improve their condition: woman is just an instrument through whom dominion is transferred, as in Greece.

Feudal property is not familial as in Rome, but of the sovereign, of the lord, and women too belong to the lord; it is him who chooses her husband. As it was written, “an heiress is a land and a castle: suitors contended to dispute that prize, and often the young woman is only 12 years old, or younger, when her father or lord gives her as prize to any baron.” The woman needs a lord who “protects” her and her rights; thus a Duchess of Burgundy proclaimed to the king: “My husband has just died, but what good is mourning...? Find me a husband who is powerful, because I much need him to defend my lands.” In this form her spouse had great marital power over the woman, whom he treated without consideration, mistreating her, beating her, etc. and whose only obligation was to “punish her reasonably,”

the same some codes required today to correct children.

The prevailing warlike conception made the medieval knight pay more attention to his horses than to his wife, and the lords preached: "damned be the knight that seeks advice from a woman when he should participate in a tourney." While women were commanded: "get into your apartments, painted and gilded; sit in the shade, drink, eat, weave, tint the silk, but bother not of our affairs. Our affairs are to fight with sword and steel. Silence!" That is how the medieval world of the lords demeaned and cast their women away.

The 13th century saw the development of a movement of literary women, which traveling from south to north increased their prestige; the same one which was linked to chivalry, love and the intense Marianism of that era. It did not modify it deeply, as S. de Beauvoir said in The Second Sex, a book in which abundant information about the history of women is found; useful data, of course, aside from the existentialist concepts of its author, since it is not ideas which fundamentally change the condition of women, but the economic basis sustaining it. When the fiefdom goes from a right based on military service to an economic obligation, we see an improvement in the condition of women, since they are perfectly capable of fulfilling a monetary obligation; that way the seignorial right to marry his vassals is suppressed and women's tutelage is extinguished.

In this way, whether single or widowed, women have the same rights as men; in possessing a fiefdom she governs it and fulfills its administrative duties and even commands its defense, participating in battles. But feudal society, like all those based on exploitation, requires the submission of women in marriage, and marital power survives: "the husband is the tutor of the wife," is preached; or as Beauvoir said: "As soon as marriage was consummated, the goods of one and the other are common by virtue of the marriage," justifying marital tutelage.

In feudal society, as in others ruled by exploiters, slavery or capitalism, what has been described about the condition of women has governed and governs; but we must highlight that only in the condition of poor women can we see a different and softer condition in the face of marital power; the root of this situation must be seen in the economic participation by women of the popular classes and in the absence of great riches.

The development of capitalism takes feudalism to its decomposition, a situation which impresses its marks on the condition of women, as we have seen already. It suffices to emphasize that in the beginning and development

of the burgs, women took part in the election of deputies to the General States; which shows feminine political participation, as well as the existence of rights over family goods, since the husband could not alienate real properties without the consent of the wife. However, absolutist legislation will soon fetter these norms to fight off the diffusion of the bad bourgeois example.

This historical exposition exemplifies the thesis by Engels and the classics on the social roots of the condition of women and its relationship to property, family and State, it helps us to understand its certainty and see its actuality more clearly. All this carries us to a conclusion, the need to firmly adhere to the working class positions and apply them to understand the woman question, participate in its solution, and reject, constantly and decisively, the distortions of Marxist theses on the subject and the so-called superior developments which are but attempts to substitute bourgeois ideas for proletarian concepts on this front, to disorient the women's movement on the march.

Having exposed the social condition of women and the historical outline of its development linked to property, family and State, what remains is to treat the question of the emancipation of women from a Marxist viewpoint.

Marxism fundamentally holds that the development of machinery incorporates women, as well as children, into the productive process, thereby multiplying the number of hands to be exploited, destroying the working class family, physically degenerating women and materially and morally sinking them into the miseries of exploitation.

Analyzing women and children at work Karl Marx wrote: "In so far as machinery dispenses with muscular power, it becomes a means of employing laborers of slight muscular strength, and those whose bodily development is incomplete, but whose limbs are all the more supple. The labor of women and children was, therefore, the first cry of the capitalist application of machinery. That mighty substitute for labour and labourers was forthwith changed into a means for increasing the number of wage-labourers by enrolling, under the direct sway of capital, every member of the woman's family, without distinction of age or sex. Compulsory work for the capitalist usurped the place, not only of the children's play, but also of free labour at home within moderate limits for the support of the family."

"The value of labour-power was determined, not only by labour-time necessary to maintain the individual adult laborer, but also by that necessary to maintain his family. Machinery, by throwing every member of that family on to the labour-market, spreads the values of the man's labour-power over

his whole family. It thus depreciates his labour-power..." Thus we see, that machinery, while augmenting the human material that forms the principal object of capital's exploiting power, at the same time raises the degree of exploitation.

"By opening the factory doors to women and children, making them flock in great numbers to the combined ranks of the working class, machinery finally breaks down the resistance of the male worker to this, despite the despotism of capital within manufacturing."[1]

Continuing his masterful analysis, Marx himself describes to us how capitalism uses even the virtues and obligations of women for its advantage: "Mr. E., manufacturer, told me how in his textile mills he employed exclusively women, preferably married ones, and above all those who had at home a family living from or depending on her salary, since these were much more active and zealous than single women; besides, the need to procure sustenance to their families forced them to work harder. In this way, the virtues characterizing women are turned against them: all the purity and sweetness of their character are turned into instruments of torture and slavery." [2]

But just as by incorporating women into production capitalism increased exploitation, simultaneously with this process it provides the material basis for women to struggle and demand their rights, and it's a starting point for the struggle for their emancipation; since as Engels taught in Origin...: "The freeing of women demands as a first condition the reincorporation of the entire female sex into social industry, which in turn requires that the individual family no longer be society's economic unite." And evidently capitalism, with its own future interests, set the basis for the future emancipation of women, as well as creating the class that will destroy it as it develops: the proletariat.

On the other hand, their economic participation and the development of the class struggle pushes forward the POLITICIZATION OF WOMEN. We already highlighted how the French Revolution pushed forward the political and organizational development of women and how, by uniting them, mobilizing them and forcing them to fight, it set the basis for the women's movement; we also saw how women's demands were reached through the rise of revolution, and how their rights were abolished and their conquests swept away when the revolutionary process was fettered and thrown back.

[1] *Capital,* Volume I, pp. 394-395. Economic Culture Fund, 1966.

[2] Note 57 of above quoted volume and edition of Capital, p. 331.

However, with all the positive aspects that the incorporation of women into the French Revolution had, the resulting politicization of women was but elementary, restricted and very small compared to the major advance represented by the politicization of women by the working classes. What does this politicization imply? When capitalism massively incorporates women into the economic process, it wrest them away from inside of the home, to attract them mostly to factory exploitation, making industrial workers out of them; that way women are forged and developed as an integral part of the most advanced and latest class in history; women initiate their radical process of politicization through their incorporation into the workers' union struggle (the great change implied by this is observed concretely in our country by the transformation seen in women workers, peasants and teachers of Peru, amidst the union struggle). A woman arrives at more advanced forms of organization, which goes on building her up and shaping her ideologically for the proletarian concepts, and finally she arrives at superior forms of struggle and political organization by incorporating herself, through her best representatives, into the ranks of the Party of the working class, to serve the people in all forms and fronts of struggle organized and led by the working class through its political vanguard. This politicization process which only the proletariat is capable of producing and the new type of women fighters it generates has materialized in the many glorious women fighters whose names are recorded in history: Luisa Michel, N. Krupskaya, Rosa Luxemburg, Liu Ju-lan and others whose memory the people and the proletariat keep.

For Marxism yesterday like today the politicization of women is the key issue in her emancipation, and the classics dedicated special attention to it. Marx taught: "Anyone who knows something of history knows that the great social changes are impossible without the women's ferment. Social progress can be measured exactly by the social position of the weak sex."[3] And to Lenin the participation of women was more much urgent and important to the revolution:

"The experience of all the liberation movements confirms that the success of the revolution depends on the degree in which women participate."

Thus the development of the class struggle and its ever greater sharpening, within the specific social conditions of the revolutionary struggle under conditions of imperialism, sets forth and demands more decisively the politicization of women; that is why Lenin himself, in the middle of World War I

[3]Letter to Kugelmann, 1856.

and foreseeing future battles for the working class which required preparedness, called to fight for: "17. Abolition of any and all limitations without exception to the political rights of women in comparison to men. Explaining to the masses the special urgency of this transformation at moments in which the war and scarcity disquiet the masses of people and awaken interest in and attention to politics particularly among women." And he proposed, "it is necessary that we fully develop systematic work among these feminine masses. We must educate those women we have managed to wrest away from passivity, we must recruit them and arm them for the struggle, not just the proletarian women who work in the factories or toil in the home, but also the peasant women, the women in the various layers of the petty-bourgeoisie. They too are victims of capitalism." With those words Lenin demanded the politicization of women, the struggle for demanding their political rights, the need to explain to the masses the urgency of politically incorporating women, the need of working together with them, to educate them, organize them and prepare them for all forms of struggle; finally, he emphasized orienting themselves towards working women; but without forgetting the importance of peasant women and remembering the various classes or layers of women being exploited, since all of them could and should be mobilized for the people's struggle.

From the above we see how the politicization of women was proposed by Marxism from its beginnings, considering women's struggles as being in solidarity with the struggles of the working class; that is why last century Bebel said that "woman and the worker have in common their condition as oppressed," and why the Socialist Congress of 1879 proclaimed the equality of the sexes and the need to struggle for it, reiterating the solidarity of the revolutionary women's movement and the working class struggle. Or as China proclaims today, following Mao Zedong's thesis: "The emancipation of women is an integral part of the liberation of the proletariat."[4]

This brings us to consider HOW CAN THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN BE ACHIEVED?

Investigating capitalist society and societies in general where exploitation and oppression prevail, Engels verified that misery, inequality and submission exist among men, and emphasizing the woman question he pointed out, "The state of affairs with respect to the equality of men and women is no better than their legal inequality, which we have inherited from prior social condi-

[4]Peking Review, No. 10, 1972.

tions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of women." And he continued "Women cannot be emancipated unless they assume a large socially measurable role in production and are only tied insignificantly by domestic work. And this has only been possible with modern industry, which not only admits feminine labor in a large scale but fatally demands it."

This assertion by Engels, taken out of context and unrelated to similar ones from Origin... helps some people, pseudo-Marxists and distorters of Marxism, stretching his ideas, to claim that the mere participation of women in the economic process is sufficient for their emancipation. Engels proposed that the incorporation of women into production was a condition, that it is a base upon which women act in favor of their emancipation, and that this demands to socially end domestic work which absorbs and annihilates women, which to Engels implies destroying private ownership of the means of production and developing large-scale production based on the social ownership of the productive means. We repeat that it is good to be very clear about this thesis by Engels, because today some attempt to hide themselves in this classic to distort the Marxist position on the woman question and preach, for the sake of the exploiting classes, on the plain and simple participation of women in the economic process, hiding the root of women's oppression which is private ownership and sidestepping large-scale social production based on destroying private property of the means of production.

Foreseeing this distortion, as in other cases, the classics analyzed the problem of whether the incorporation of women to the productive process, which capitalism began, was capable of making men and women truly equal. The concise and powerful answer was given once more by Mao Zedong in the 1950s: "TRUE EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IN THE PROCESS OF THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY."

Lenin researched the situation of women in bourgeois society and compared it with how it was under the dictatorship of the proletariat; an analysis which led him to establish: "From remote times, the representatives of all the movements of liberation in western Europe, not for decades, but during centuries, proposed the abolition of these antiquated laws and demanded the legal equality of women and men, but no democratic European State, not even the most advanced republics, have managed to achieve this, because wherever capitalism exists, wherever private ownership of the factories is maintained, wherever the power of capital is maintained, men go on enjoying

privileges."

"From the first months of its existence, Soviet power, as the power of workers, realized the most decisive and radical legislative change with respect to women. In the Soviet Republic no stone was left unturned which kept women in a position of dependence. I am referring precisely to those laws which used the dependent situation of women in a special way, making her victim of the inequality of rights and often even of humiliations, that is to say laws on divorce, on natural children and on the right of women to sue the father in court to support the child."[5]

From this comparative analysis the conclusion is taken that only the revolution which places the working class in power in alliance with the peasantry is capable of sanctioning the true judicial legal equality between men and women, and even further, of enforcing it. However, as Lenin himself taught, this true legal equality initiated by the revolution is but the beginning of a protracted struggle for the full and complete equality in life of men and women: "However, the more we rid ourselves of the burden of old bourgeois laws and institutions, the more clearly we see that we have barely cleared the terrain for construction, yet construction itself has not begun."

"The woman continues to be a slave of the home, despite all the liberating laws, because she is overburdened, oppressed, stupefied, humiliated by the menial domestic tasks, which make her a cook and a nurse, which waste her activity in an absurdly unproductive, menial, irritating, stupefying and tedious labor. The phrase emancipation of women will only begin for real in the country at the time the mass struggle begins (led by the proletariat already owning the power of the State) against this petty home economy, or more precisely, when their mass transformation begins in a large-scale socialist economy."[6]

Thus Lenin and Mao Zedong answered the anticipated opportunist distortions and pseudo-developments of Marxism which today attempts to distort the theses of Engels and confuse the working class position on the woman question.

Marxism conceives the struggle for the emancipation of women as a protracted but victorious struggle: "This is a protracted struggle, which requires a radical transformation of the social technique and of customs. But this

[5]Tasks of the Women Workers in the Soviet Republic.

[6]A Great Initiative

struggle will end with the full victory of communism."[7]

The above, in essence, shows there is an identity of struggle between the revolutionary women's movement and the working class struggle for building a new society; and, besides, it helps to understand the sense of Lenin's words calling women workers to develop the institutions and means which the revolution placed at their disposal: "We say that the emancipation of workers must be the work of the workers themselves and likewise THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN WORKERS MUST BE THE WORK OF WOMEN WORKERS THEMSELVES."[8]

These are the central theses of Marxism on the emancipation, politicization and the condition of women; positions which we prefer to transcribe for the most by quotations from the classics, because these positions are not sufficiently known, and besides that because they were masterfully and concisely expressed by the authors themselves, which relieves us from the task of pretending to give them new editing, more so after seeing their full and complete actuality. On the other hand, the distortions of the Marxist positions attempted today on the woman question also demand the dissemination of the words of the classics themselves.

Finally, it is indispensable, even if only in passing, to make note that Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao Zedong set forth the thesis of the emancipation of women and not that of women's liberation, as can be appreciated from the cited quotations. On this particular, it suffices to say that the analysis of the condition of woman through history shows her as subject to tutelage and in a situation of submission with respect to the male, which makes woman a being who, while belonging to the same class as her husband or the man she has a relationship with, finds herself in a situation of inferiority with respect to him, an inferiority which the laws bless, sanctify and impose. Consistent with this situation of undervaluing throughout history we see the need to demand her rights to achieve a formal equality with man under capitalism, and how only the revolutionary struggle under the leadership of the proletariat is capable of setting up and fulfilling a genuine legal equality of men and women, though, as we saw, plentiful equality in life, as Lenin said, will develop as large-scale socialist production develops. These simple observations show the certainty of the thesis on women's emancipation conceived as part of the liberation of the proletariat. While the thesis of women's liberation historically surfaces

[7]Lenin, On the Occasion of International Working Women's Day.

[8]The Tasks...

as a bourgeois thesis, hidden at the bottom of which is the counterpoising of men and women due to sex and camouflaging the root of the oppression of women; today we see how women's liberation is exposed more each day as bourgeois feminism, which aims at dividing the people's movement by separating the feminine masses from it and seeking mainly to oppose the development of the women's movement under the leadership and guide of the working class.

2 Mariátegui and the Woman Question

50 years ago Mariátegui, with his sharp historical foresight, perceived the importance of the woman question in the country and its perspective ("The first feminist quivers are latent in Peru..."); he devoted two of his works to this question, *Woman and Politics* and *Feminist Demands,* besides many other contributions found in his writings. It is indispensable to go back ourselves to this source, because in it we will find the position of the Peruvian working class with respect to the Woman question; even more, because this problem is a little known and researched aspect of Mariátegui's work.

José Carlos Mariátegui taught us: "In our times life in society cannot be studied without investigating and analyzing its causes: the organization of the family, the condition of the woman;" and researching the nascent Peruvian feminist movement he said: "Men who are sensible to the great emotions of our times cannot and should not feel themselves out of place or indifferent to this movement. The woman question is part of the human question."

So let's keep in mind that from the beginning of its political emergence the working class of this country paid attention to the situation of women, establishing through its great representative their position with respect to women, as well as offering fighting support to women's struggles, as shown by the solidarity of textile workers and drivers with the women workers of A. Field Co. in 1926.

What was the women's development which attracted such accurate attention? The condition of women in the country suffered a noticeable change especially in this century and more specifically after the two world wars. While the condition of peasant women changed more slowly, that of her sisters turned workers and professionals experienced more rapid and profound changes. Evidently the presence of women in our society has been conquering

positions ever more widely.

Last century the action and literary work of Clorinda Matto de Turner, Mercedes Cabello de Carbonera and Margarita Praxedes Muñoz, highlighted the feminine presence over a background of millions of peasants, workers and other women who, while anonymous, were subject to harsh social repression of feudal roots. The Peruvian woman of the 19th Century had minimal access to education, and when she was allowed to attend secondary education, the educational norms followed would establish for her a watered down curriculum comparable to the last primary grade for males plus some of the secondary school courses these would follow. The abandonment of feminine schooling is clearly shown by the fact that, while there were private institutions which tended or prepared students to enter the university, it was not until 1928 that the National Women's School of Lima opened its doors in Lima; up to then there was no such school of its kind in the capital city. It's good to notice how by the end of last century some women educators worried about the education of women, proposing its renewal: it demands overcoming the erroneous concept of "educating them only for marriage, which leads one to think such is their only purpose in life," that their education must not be in the hands of nuns, who having abandoned the world are not in a position of forming good women, and that we need to end the misconception that the single or married woman who works outside the home degenerates socially; at the same time they demand and create new educational centers. Teresa Gonzalez de Fanning was outstanding in this aspect.

Similarly college education was closed to them, their presence at the University is not noticed until the 1890s, and it wasn't until 1908 that women were authorized to enter and seek a degree at the University and exercise the professions. The demeaning of women and their social outcasting is thus clearly seen in education. However with the 20th century transformations, women see an increase in their possibilities to pursue studies and work as professionals, most of them finding work as teachers. Only after World War II is a diversification of women's careers seen. University graduates, whom early in the century could be counted with the fingers of the hand, almost reach the current 30% of college graduates of the country.

But what really would imply a profound, radical and far reaching change is the incorporation of women into factory production. The proletarianization of the Peruvian woman began this century hand in hand with the introduction of machinery and the development of bureaucrat-capitalism. We see in our environment with its specific conditions, the situation described

by Marx and which we quoted above, with the productive incorporation of women as workers, the process of proletarian politicization opens up to the feminine masses of Peru. The participation of women in worker's unions begins, women join the struggle for salaries, the eight hour workday and working conditions; they participate in people's struggles together with other workers in actions against the high cost of living and price increases, which develops their ideological understanding, and finally the women of the country amidst revolutionary combat, become political militants of the working class.

The process of the political development of the Peruvian woman, parallel to their incorporation into labor, provided significant gains to the country's class struggle in the first third of this century, among which milestones we must highlight the struggle for the eight hour workday by agricultural workers at Huaral, Barranca, Pativilca and Huacho, in which five female workers offered their lives in 1916, sealing with their blood their adherence to their class. Just as we highlight their participation in momentous actions against rising prices and the high cost of living in May of 1919, actions in which women workers organized a Women's Committee so as to channel their supportive actions and agreed "To make a call to all women, without distinction of classes, to cooperate with their action to the defense of the rights of Peruvian women"; in this great struggle women faced police forces at their meeting on the 25th, during which, after overcoming the bloody police repression, they proclaimed the following conclusions:

> "The women of Lima, surrounding towns and peasants met in great public meeting on Sunday 25 May 1919 at Neptune Park, having considered:
>
> That it is not possible to further tolerate the situation of misery to which the high cost of subsistence goods and residential rents and all of life's necessities have reduced the people; that Peruvian women, as well as women in all civilized countries, have understood their mission to intervene in the resolution of the economic and social problems affecting them;
>
> Have agreed:
>
> 1. To make as their own the conclusions of the people's meeting at the Alameda de los Descalzos on May 4th.
> 2. In case those conclusions are not accepted, to declare a general women's strike in all branches of industry, leaving the

> date to the discretion of the Men's Committee for Diminishing the Cost of Subsistence"[9]

Another chapter in this history of women's struggle was waged by Socorro Rojo against the persecution, repression, imprisonment and blood politics unleashed by the dictatorship of Sanchez Cerror defending the rights and liberties of the people, especially the proletariat.

In the struggles referred to, besides the politicization of women, or more strictly, as index of a correct perspective, it must be highlighted that in them the feminine masses waged their actions intimately united to the people's interests, which are their own, and in direct unity with and support for the struggles of the working class, which is their class.

In synthesis, the road traveled by Peruvian women in this century and the final part of last century is marked by their widespread incorporation into production and under bureaucrat-capitalism pushed forward by North American imperialism and by their increased access to education, especially at the university. These are the bases on which the first feminist impetuses of the country will hatch, a phenomenon which Mariátegui described as follows:

> "Feminism has not made its appearance in Peru artificially or arbitrarily. It has appeared as result of the new forms of intellectual and manual labor of women. The women with true feminist affiliations are those women who work, the women who study. The feminist idea prospers among women in intellectual jobs and in manual jobs: professors, university students, workers. It finds a propitious environment for its development in the university classrooms, which attract more Peruvian women every day; and in the workers' unions, where factory women enroll and organize with the same rights and the same duties as the men. Besides this, we have the feminism of dilettantes, a little pedantic and a little mundane. For feminists of this kind, feminism is a mere literary exercise, merely a fashionable sport."[10]

It is on this basis that Mariátegui elaborated the position of the Peruvian proletariat on the woman question, by establishing the general line to follow

[9] Martinez de la Torre, Notes for the Marxist Interpretation of the Social History of Peru, Volume I, Lima 1947.

[10] *Feminist Demands.*

on this matter for whomever wants to develop from a Marxist viewpoint. Let's see the basic problems from this position:

2.1 The Situation of Women

The starting point of the study of the woman question from the viewpoint of the Peruvian proletariat, demands to keep in mind that Mariátegui represents in the country the application of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism to the material conditions of a backwards and oppressed country, an application which leads him to scientifically present the semi-feudal and semi-colonial character of our society, in the midst of which a national-democratic revolution has developed since 1928 through a long and sinuous process whose higher stage is still pending. This is the substance and guidance of Mariátegui's thought; and starting from these considerations we must treat all the problems and policies he established, among them what is relevant to the woman question.

Thus Mariátegui starts from the semi-feudal and semi-colonial character of Peruvian society to judge the situation of women. This in itself rejects from the outset the obsolete theory of "feminine nature," conceiving of women in a situation or condition derived from the structure of society in which they function and emphasizing the dynamic, changing character of women's situation, he points out the transforming role work has on the condition of women with respect to social status and ideas about them. The following paragraph expresses this and other points well:

"But if bourgeois democracy has not realized feminism, it has involuntarily created the conditions and moral and material premises for its realization. It has valued women as a productive element, as an economic factor, by making more intensive and extensive use of their work each day. Work radically changes the mind and the spirit of women. Women acquire, by virtue of their work a new concept of themselves. In ancient times society destined women to marriage and idleness or menial work. Today it fates them, above all, to work. This fact has changed and elevated the position of women in life." So it remains clear, for the Peruvian proletariat, that it is society which imparts women their condition and not some mischievous nature; that the feminine condition is a changing one and that it is work which is imparting a great leap in the position and concept of women. This is the Mariáteguist starting point, at the same time it charges against the biological determinist reduction of women to simple reproducers, and goes against the rose colored

myths which treacherously help to maintain their oppression: "the defense of the poetry of the home in reality is a defense of the serfdom of women. Far from ennobling and dignifying the role of women, it diminishes and reduces it. The woman is more than a mother and a female, just as man is more than a male."[11]

Developing the thesis of the social root of the feminine condition, Mariátegui sets out the difference between Latin and Saxon women, establishing the causal connection between feudal background and temperament and differences in each woman: "The Latin woman lives more prudently, with less passion. She does not have that urge for truth. Especially the Spanish woman is very cautious and practical." Waldo Frank, precisely, defined her with admirable accuracy: "The Spanish woman—he wrote—is a pragmatist in love. She considers love as a means of creating children for heaven. Nowhere in Europe is there a less sensual, less amorous woman. As a girl she is pretty; fresh hope colors her cheeks and enlarges her black eyes. To her, marriage is the highest state to which she can aspire. Once married, this innate coquettishness of spring disappears like a season in her: in a moment she turns judicious, fat and maternal."[12]

What was said about the Spanish woman naturally extends to Latin American women and among them those in this country, and it shows that the feminine mentality generated by the ancient and present feudal background is still not overcome. But besides this, analyzing the relations between imperialism and the oppressed countries of America, Mariátegui highlights the alienating mentality which Yankee domination impresses on feminine mentality: "The limeña [native of Lima—Trans.] bourgeoisie fraternizes with the Yankee capitalists, and even with their lower employees, at the Country Club, at tennis and on the streets. The Yankee can marry, without any inconvenience of race or religion, the creole señorita, and she feels no scruples of nationality or culture by preferring marriage with an individual of the invading race. And neither does the middle class girl feel any scruples in this respect. The huachafita who is able to trap a Yankee employed by the Grace Corporation or the Foundation does it with the satisfaction of having elevated her social condition."[13]

Thus typifying the feminine condition in our society as serfdom of women,

[11] The last two paragraphs belong to *Feminist Demands.*

[12] *Signs and Works,* Waldo Frank's Rahab.

[13] Imperialist Viewpoint.

the semi-feudal and semi-colonial background which is its root is established, discarding all interpretation sustained by the supposed "deficient feminine nature."

On this basis Mariátegui goes on to the material analysis of Peruvian women belonging to the different classes; he masterfully depicts working women: "if the masses of youth are so cruelly exploited, proletarian women suffer equal or worse exploitation. Up to very recently the proletarian woman had her labor limited to domestic activities at home. With advancing industrialization, she enters the competition in the factory, shop, enterprise, etc... Thus we see her in textile factories, cracker factories, laundries, container and cardboard box factories, soaps, etc., where she performs the same work as the male worker, from operating the machinery, to the most menial job, always earning 40% to 60% less than the male. At the same time that women train themselves to do industrial jobs, they penetrate also into the activities of the office, commercial houses, etc., always competing with men and to the great benefit of the industrial enterprises, which get a noticeable reduction in salaries and immediate increase in profits. In agriculture and mining we find proletarian women in frank competition with men, and wherever we may look we find large numbers of exploited women, rendering their services in all sorts of activities... In the process of our social struggles, the proletariat has had to set forth specific demands for their defense. Textile unions, which up to now have shown the greatest interest in this question, though not exclusively so, have gone on strike more than once with the object of forcing compliance with regulations which, specified by law, the capitalists simply refuse to implement; we have some capitalists (such as the 'friend' of the worker Mr. Tizon y Bueno) who have not hesitated to consider as an 'offense' the fact that a woman worker was pregnant, for which 'offense' she has been terminated so as to avoid complying with what the law stipulates. At the cracker factory, the exploitation of women is vile."[14]

Is this a valid description? Yes; in essence the workers' situation remains the same: the widest exploitation in ever more branches of industry, which in some of them is truly horrifying; the use of female labor so as to lower salaries, based on their salaries being lower than those paid to men; non-fulfillment of laws protecting women and hidden anti-worker positions by the

[14]Manifesto of the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers [CGTP] to the working class of the country. The Woman Question; a document edited under Mariátegui's leadership.

false "friend" of the proletariat. Also very current is the need to support the achievements of the women workers.

Similarly Mariátegui goes on to review the condition of indigenous peasant women, of whom he says that together with their children they are obligated "to render gratuitous services to the proprietors and their families, as well as to authorities"; their miserable condition and social placement has a root: latifundia and serfdom.

As regards the petty-bourgeoisie, besides pointing out the tribulations of the women of this class, the analysis of primary school teachers helps Mariátegui to establish how the social mean, the nearness to the people and their dedication to full time teaching modifies their attitude and spirits opening them up so in within can be shown "easily the ideals of the forgers of a new social State," since: "None of their interests has anything in common with the capitalist regime. Her life, her poverty, her work, fuses her to the proletarian masses." He proposes addressing them since "in their ranks the vanguard will recruit more and better elements."

2.2 Historical Background of the Women's Struggle

As we saw, for Mariátegui industrialization incorporates woman into work and through this it transforms her condition and her spirit. He points out, like the classics, the double situation implied: "When woman advances on the road of her emancipation over a bourgeois democratic terrain, in exchange this fact provides the capitalist with cheap labor and at the same time a serious competitor to the male worker."[15] On the other hand, pointing out that the French Revolution included some elements of the feminist movement, he vindicates the figure of Babeuf, leader of the egalitarians, whom he considers "an asserter of feminist demands" and of whom he quotes the following lucid words: "do not impose silence on this sex which does not deserve to be disdained... If you do not count on women for anything in your republic, you will make lovers of monarchy out of them" and "this sex that the tyranny of men has always wanted to annul, this sex which has never been useless in the revolutions."

And balancing the contribution made by the French Revolution to the emancipation of women he said in Women and Politics:

[15] *Manifesto of the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers [CGTP] to the working class of the country.*

> "The French Revolution, however, inaugurated a regime of political equality for men, not for women. The Rights of Man could have been called rather, the Rights of Males. With the bourgeoisie women ended up much more alienated from politics than with the aristocracy. Bourgeois democracy was an exclusively male democracy. Its development had to end up, however, intensely favorable to the emancipation of women. Capitalist civilization provided women with the means of increasing their capacity and improving their position in life."

Therefore, what the bourgeois class does for women was set accurately: while it is capable of providing conditions for her development, it is incapable of emancipating her. Mariátegui knew this very well: how despite this limitation capitalism, as it develops, opens up for women the doors to various activities, including politics, very especially so in the 20th century, so much that it becomes a symbol of this. Developing this statement, Mariátegui himself vindicates many notable women and points out and demonstrates the contributions many women have made to poetry, to the novel, to the arts in general to the struggle and politics. Thus he teaches us how to judge women of the various classes and celebrities, pointing out their merits and shortcomings and showing what is principal in each individual case and, what is more important, highlighting their contributions to women's advancement.

2.3 Women's Movement

A central point and greatly important today is the Mariáteguist proposal on the general problems of women, with his theses on the women's movement, on which subject three parts are noteworthy: feminism; politicization of women and organization.

With respect to FEMINISM, Mariátegui held that it emerges "neither artificially nor arbitrarily" among us but it corresponds with the incorporation of women into manual and intellectual work; in this viewpoint he highlights mainly that it thrives among women who work outside the home, and points out that the proper environments for the development of the women's movement are the university classrooms and the labor unions. He then sets forth the directive of orienting ourselves towards those fronts so as to push forward the mobilization of women. Although it must be decided that such orientation in no way implies discounting peasant women; since we must remember

that Mariátegui considered the peasant women as the most important class in our process, no doubt peasant women too are a front of mobilization and even more, the main source which the entire women's movement as well as the proletariat want to reach.

In *The Feminist Demands*, Mariátegui proposes the essence of the women's movement: "No one should be surprised that all women do not come together in a single feminist movement. Feminism has, necessarily, several colors, several tendencies. One can distinguish in feminism three fundamental tendencies, three substantive colors: bourgeois feminism, petty-bourgeois feminism and proletarian feminism. Each of these feminisms formulates its demands in a different way. The bourgeois woman solidarizes her feminism with the interests of the conservative class. The proletarian woman consubstantiates her feminism with the faith of the revolutionary multitudes in the future society. The class struggle - historical fact and not theoretical assertion - is reflected on the feminist plane. Women, like men, are reactionary, centrist or revolutionary. They cannot, therefore, fight the same battle together. In the present human landscape, class differentiates individuals more than sex."

This is the essence of our woman question, the class character of the entire women's movement. And we must keep this very much in mind, today more than ever, since once more the organization of women is pushed forward; many groups arise, which in general are silent or hide the class character sustaining them, that is, the class which they serve, and preach a unification of women to demand their rights in opposition to men, as if to serve all women united, without distinction of class, for a supposed social transformation "humanist, Christian and in solidarity" social transformation, going through a few intermediate modalities of unclear or confused class positions. Substantially the problem is to ascertain the class root entailed by each women's group, organism, front or movement, to delimit positions and establish whom they serve, which class they serve, and if they are truly or are not on the side of the people.

These questions take us to a crucial problem: according to whose principles, which class criteria and orientation are we to build a women's movement serving the people? Here Mariátegui's position is brilliant and concise "Feminism, as a pure idea, is essentially revolutionary." And to him, revolutionary essentially meant proletarian; that way the entire people's women's movement which truly wants to serve the people and the revolution, has to be a women's movement adhered to the proletariat, and today in our country adherence to the proletariat means adherence to Mariátegui's thought.

With respect to the POLITICIZATION OF WOMEN. The Marxist classics have always attached great importance to this point, since without it, it is impossible to develop the mobilization and organization of women, and without these women we cannot fight side by side with the proletariat for their own emancipation. Following his great example, the Peruvian working class like Mariátegui has pointed out the importance of the politicization of women, and highlighted that its deficiency or lack thereof serves reaction.

"Women, for the most part, due to their little or no political education, are not a renovating force in contemporary struggles but a reactionary force."[16]

This is sufficiently clear, what we must ask ourselves is this: What does this politicization mean? For the founder of the Communist Party it meant the determined and militant incorporation of women into the class struggle, their mobilization together with the people's interests, their integration into the organizations, individually learning themselves the ideology of the working class, and all this is part of, assessed by and under the leadership of the proletariat. In synthesis, to incorporate women into politics, into class struggle, under the leadership of the working class.

With respect to the ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN. Marxism teaches that in order to face their enemies and struggle for their class interests the proletariat has no other recourse than to organize itself; this principle is applied to the people, who are strong only if organized and therefore also to women, who can only fight successfully when they are organized.

As a "convicted and confessed Marxist" Mariátegui applied these principles creatively. He paid very special attention to organizing the women workers, as is seen in the proposals in the Manifesto of the CGTP referred to above:

> "All this accumulation of 'calamities' weighing on the exploited woman cannot be resolved except by immediate organization. In the same way that unions have to build their youth cadres, they must create their women's sections, where our future women militants will be educated."

Mariátegui showed the same concern when under his guidance the statute of the mentioned Confederation was getting ready to form a Permanent Women's Commission at the Executive Committee level. Unfortunately, these orientations have not been correctly put into practice; it has remained a

[16] Figures and Aspects of Life in the World.

purely bureaucratic union position, called "feminine affairs" or some similar name, when it exits at all, without organically accommodating the women's sections of the unions, thus it remains as a pending task.

Later on, in March 1930, the Communist Party approved the following motion:

> "First. Creating a Provisional Secretariat to organize socialist youth, under immediate control of the Party.
>
> Second. Creating a Provisional Secretariat to organize the working women, under the leadership and control of the Party.
>
> Third. Both secretariats will struggle for the immediate organization of youth of both sexes, for their political and ideological education, as a preparatory stage for their admission to the Party"[17]

Here Mariátegui's thesis is materialized by the need to pay attention to the women's organizations, even at the most advanced political levels; and his position is expressed that the organization of women is, ultimately, the question of organizing them under the leadership and control of the working class and the Party. Such proposals lead us to ask ourselves, about each women's group, organism, front or movement: For which class, how and for what are women organized? And keep in mind that these points can only be satisfactorily resolved, that is, for the class and the people, by adhering ourselves to the working class positions.

These three questions: feminism, politicization of women and organization of women, and the theses which Mariátegui established must be studied and applied consistently, since only that way can an authentic people's women's movement be developed.

2.4 The Emancipation of Women

In this point too, like in the classics, Mariátegui also holds that under capitalism and industrialization "women make advances on the road to their emancipation." However under this system she does not even reach full legal equality. For that reason a consistent feminist movement seeks to go further, and on this road it necessarily has to join the struggle of the proletariat.

[17] Martinez de la Torre, op. cit., Vol. II.

This understanding led the great proletarian thinker of our country to state: "The feminist movement appears solidly identified with the revolutionary movement"; and that although born of liberalism, only with the revolution could feminism be fulfilled:

"Born of a liberal womb, feminism has not yet been able to operate in the capitalist process. It is only now, when the historic path of democracy reaches its end, that woman acquires the political and legal rights of the male. And it was the Russian revolution which explicitly and categorically conferred on women the equality and the liberty which for more than a century, from Babeuf and the egalitarians of the French Revolution, she had in vain clamored for."[18]

And so it is that in parallel with building a new society, that the new emerging woman who will be "substantially different from the one formed by the now declining civilization." These new women will be forged in the revolutionary crucible and will place the old type of woman deformed by the old exploitative system in the dust bin of history, a system which now sinks for the genuine dignifying of women.

> "In the same measure as the socialist system replaces the individualist system, feminine luxuriousness and elegance will decay... Humanity will lose some luxurious mammals; but will gain instead many women. The clothing of the women of the future will be less ostentatious and expensive; but the condition of this new woman will be dignified. And the axis of feminine life will progress from the individual to the social... A woman, in sum, will be less expensive but will be worth more."[19]

Besides these basic ideas Mariátegui takes care of other problems intimately linked to women in particular: divorce, marriage, love, etc.; he treats them with fine irony and takes sharply critical positions on them. However, as a good Marxist he does not center his attention on them until taking them as the principal issue. To do so is to forget the principal struggle and fundamental goal, while spreading confusion and disorienting the revolutionary struggle.

Up to this point we have presented and exposition of the central theses of Mariátegui's thought on the women question, in which we have used plen-

[18] *Feminist Demands*
[19] *Women and Politics.*

tiful quotations for the same reasons we had when dealing with the Marxist positions on the subject.

3 Developing the Women's Movement Following Mariátegui

3.1 Current Relevance of Mariátegui

A conclusion is obvious from what has been said: the theses Mariátegui held on the woman question resulted from the consistent application of Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial society like ours. On this, generally, there is no disagreement and even when there is no open adherence, at least by silence an acceptance of such conclusions is shown. However the question is not whether Mariátegui's thought was a correct application of Marxism to the country, the central issue is: how relevant is his thought to the present? This is a subject on which, while expressing an apparent recognition of Mariátegui and so as not to attack his immense and still growing prestige, some question its current relevance by mentioning that more than 40 years have elapsed and raising, erroneously and treacherously, the need to take into account "the creative development of Marxism in order to surpass it."

Analyzing this point leads us to review, if only in passing, some of the positions that have been sustained in this country on the woman question. Thus, the notable and contentious thinker don Manuel Gonzales Prada handled this question in his 1904 work *Slaves of the Church,* a work now included in Hours of Struggle. There, while expressing important concepts such as: "We can't know the people well until we have studied the social and legal condition of women," "the moral elevation of man is measured by the concept he has on women: for the ignorant and brutal man, the woman is just a female; for the thinker and cultured man, she is a brain and a heart," "Just as we carry the family name of our father, we carry the moral making of our mother..." "The motive force, the great propellant of societies, does not function noisily at the plaza nor at the revolutionary circle; it works in the home," which help to center our attention on the importance of the woman; on the other hand, he expresses ideas such as "The emancipation of woman, like the freedom of the slave, is not due to Christianity but to Philosophy." "In Protestant nations feminine ascension is taking place so assuredly that

complete emancipation is already foreseen," "Slaves and serfs owe their personal dignity to the efforts of noble and delicate persons, the Catholic woman will only get emancipated by the energetic action of men" and "in the battle of ideas no ally is more powerful than love."

Thus we see that the contribution of Gonzales Prada to the emancipation of women overall positive. He pointed out and denounce the oppression of women, the important role they fulfill and the necessity to resolve the problem and set forth the emancipation of women. Although for him the root of the problem is Catholicism which prevails in women, he believes that it is possible to reach emancipation under capitalism and he centers the problem in the individual; yet his ideas overall represent, a positive contribution, in this and other topics, in studying the problems of women in the country.

And these ideas turn out to be more outstanding when we see nearly 30 years later Jorge Basadre proposing:

> "Gregorio Marañon demanded that the essential role of women is love, while the essential role of men is work... That is why little boys prefer to play with soldiers, symbol of struggle, of effort, an urge to supremacy; while little girls prefer to play with dolls, precociously motherly... By virtue of a command of nature, the charm of the Creole woman, even when not a mestiza, is different from women of other latitudes by a proper flavor like a fruit or vegetable... While, on the other hand the highest superiority of men is in their minds and since the American mind is still determinedly influenced by Europe, the American glory is lost or lessened... A notoriously beautiful women in America can, on the other hand, raise interest anywhere."[20]

If in Basadre the ruling classes speak to us of "feminine nature" whose essence is love, they also in 1940 express themselves through Carlos Miro Quesada Laos as follows:

> "The role of woman in modern life is manifold. These are no longer the times—forever gone—when work was forbidden to her. Quite the contrary. Today woman works in diverse activities... Because she has shown she can act as efficiently as man... She,

[20] *Peru: Problems and Possibilities,* Chapter XI. Here the position is so clearly reactionary that comments are unnecessary.

> therefore, has the duty to study, to prepare herself for the future. And if in these chores women share the duties with men, in others they are, and will always be, better than men. And what happens is that woman contributes to life many things which are innate to her. She has the hands of mother and nurse... That is femininity which, thanks to God, they will never lose, despite the 20th century, of wars and revolutionary theories. The word 'consolation' evokes women... After making man, the Creator... put her at his side to be his mate, to give stimulus and sweeten his life... First she must obey her parents, then her teacher, later on her husband and always duty."[21]

With Basadre the exploiting classes postponed the work of women; with Miro Quesada, having new requirements, they exalt and demand the work of women. But deep down both are based on "feminine nature." But not only in this field do these ideas appear; incorrect positions are also found in writings and magazines which claim to be revolutionary and even Marxist; we read in them concepts like the following: Speaking of the "sense of life," that they participate in "social change," will enable, we understand it's meant women, "to undo their existential problem, since the sense of life would then reside in the profit each individual is able to offer her/his neighbors by way of will and effort." Considering the subject *Women and Society* after attempting to outline Engels' thesis on the development of the family the following is said: "we are possessed of the myth of the inferiority of women. And from that arises the need of liberating women... her liberation can only occur when the socio-economic structure changes with the development of a new society." Thus liberation is highlighted but not its social background, which is kept ambiguous and imprecise, ending up centered on how to regulate "the relationship between sexes in answer to the new ideology. If the women is equal or must be equal to man, the bases of such relationship would be:

(a) To liberate the women from religious alienation...,

(b) To exercise the right to choose her mate without obeying prejudices about masculine initiative...

(c) Not to understand women's liberation as a synonym for free love... and (fortunately!)

[21] *Three Conferences,* Lima 1941.

(d) The woman being equal to man, she must not remain separate from politics by alleging her feminine condition... love, as a starting point for a social change, should be the stimulus for youth (men and women) to struggle to build an egalitarian world without oppression or injustice."

And in publishing the story, *The Tomb of the Unemployed,* a Christmas story which handily spreads the "generosity of women" and the "selfishness of men," a treacherous version of "feminine nature": "Later on the two ghosts became silent, each with its own thoughts. The woman in her past; the man in his future. The woman on what must be done; the man on what needs to be done for him. One with generosity and one with selfishness, always nailed to their foreheads, always wrestling in the depths of their consciences."[22] Evidently the ideas contained in *Mujer,* despite their apparent Marxist and revolutionary posturing, neatly reveal a bourgeois background, in no way do they express a proletarian position on the woman question.

What does this summary show us? The hard, cold truth that the question is by no means the time frame when the positions are presented, nor is the problem "to take into account the creative developments of Marxism," but what is central is the class position on which a proposal is based. We have seen a position prior to Mariátegui, that of Gonzalez Prada, which despite preceding Mariátegui by some 30 years entails many positive elements; as well as a position contemporaneous with Mariátegui, that of Basadre, which is openly reactionary; finally two later positions, 30 years after Mariátegui, that of Miro Quesada, which renovates some criteria but is still reactionary, and that of the magazine Mujer, under Marxist colors, which definitely adheres to bourgeois positions despite it being presented to us as revolutionary and in the service of women's emancipation.

What is the conclusion? As we said, the question is the class character on which a position is based, in this case the position on the woman question. With Mariátegui, the greatest exponent of our working class, the proletarian position on the woman question is established. He set the basis of the proletarian political line on this question and his positions are completely current, on this topic as well as on others dealing with the revolutionary politics of the proletariat in our country. Therefore, developing a people's women's movement demands, today more than ever, a firm and consistent

[22]Magazine *Mujer* number 1 and 2; while having no dates they were printed in the 1960's

adherence to Mariátegui's thought, starting from an acceptance of its current relevance.

3.2 Retaking Mariátegui's Road

The struggle of Peruvian women and of proletarian women has a long tradition, sealed with their blood, for over 50 years. Similarly, women's organizations are long standing; nevertheless, the process of organizing Peruvian women began to expand in the 1960's, forecasting a brilliant perspective, though a long and twisting one.

At present we have a multitude of organizations of varying extension and levels, and what is more important, sprouting old seeds, we already see signs pointing to a genuine people's women's movement. Today we have a National Council of Women with fifty years of existence, nurtured by the decrepit and obsolete theory of "feminine nature," a "Women's Rights Movement" upholding a feminism aimed at liberation from dependence on men; a gamut of organizations being formed which support the current regime for the benefit of its corporativist process, under the orientation and control of Sinamos and under its concept of "participation of women," part of their "fully participatory democracy," which obscures that the root of women's oppression is private property and the subjugation of women that began with it; which, twisting our history and using a lowly and "vulgar materialism" propagandizes that "in 1968 the revolutionary process began that seeks the authentic liberation of women with political equality and active participation," concluding: "We are the ones who must create the various forms of women's organizations," saturated with the sly and underhanded bourgeois feminism. And a National People's Union of Peruvian Women, a right opportunist organization which staged, as usual, a collaborationist apparatus totally devoted to the service of the regime.

This increase and organizational strengthening of the masses of women demands a serious investigation of the woman question and a class analysis of the organizations that exist or are being formed, so the camps can define themselves in order to establish, as in other fields, the two lines on the woman question: The counter-revolutionary line commanded by imperialism and the middle bourgeois, and the revolutionary line whose command and center is the proletariat. That will help the organizational development of the people's women's movement, which of necessity requires its construction to be unleashed amidst the two-line struggle, the expression of the class struggle

and of the similar and conflicting interests of the contending classes. And of course it must not be forgotten that within each line there are variations and differences in operation according to the classes grouped around each line. From there the problem consists of establishing the two contrary lines and, within each one the variations and nuances of the line; establishing which position is in command of each line, and, depending on the class each represents, gives each of the lines in struggle a revolutionary or counter-revolutionary character.

All that's been exposed takes us therefore to the necessity of "retaking Mariátegui's road on the woman question," in order to serve the formation and development of a PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S MOVEMENT conceived as a movement generated by the proletariat among the masses of women, with the following characteristics:

1. Adherence to Mariátegui's thought;
2. Class conscious organization of the masses;
3. Subject to democratic centralism.

The construction of such a MOVEMENT sets forth for us two problems:

1. Ideological-political construction, which necessarily implies providing it with Principles and Programme;
2. Organic construction, which we can serve by forming cores or groups of activists for carrying the Principles and Program to the masses of women—workers, peasants, professionals, university and secondary school students, etc.—They would work toward the politicization of women, mobilizing them through their struggles and organizing them to adhere to the political struggle, in harmony with the orientation and politics of the proletariat.

To conclude this contribution to the study and understanding of the woman question, it is pertinent to transcribe a Declaration of Principles and Programme which for some time has been circulating in our midst, documents which, while emphasizing their character as ongoing projects, can serve as a useful basis for discussion of the ideological-political construction of the ongoing PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.