

# MARXISM, MARIÁTEGUI, AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

PEOPLE'S WOMEN'S MOVEMENT



Prairie Fire Publishing



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# I.

## WORDS TO THE REISSUE

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, Mariátegui, 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**

## II.

### 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 popular women's movement can only be built and developed from the standpoint of the working-class, rooted in Marxism, and as part of the popular movement upon which women's emancipation depends. Therefore, a popular 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<sup>1</sup> 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,

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<sup>1</sup>Amauta — Leader, a term used to refer to José Carlos Mariátegui. — *PPF*

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, Mariátegui, 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**