



# Half the World

by Claudia Jones

A SPECIAL ASSET of numerous women (and likewise men) is their ability to distinguish "temporary courtship" from lasting interest in themselves and in the welfare of those they love.

But this mature skill will have to be learned afresh and deepened in the coming days and months, particularly since the masses of women are the "sudden" recipients of a flood of articles, speeches and efforts wooing them in a special way.

Typical of this approach was the article entitled "Under One Roof" in Charm magazine for November. Supposedly signed by "nine million working wives" to "nine million working husbands (and those who will be some day)"—the article seeks to convince its readers that we are in a "social revolution" insofar as women's role in society is concerned. It "crusades" for "men's understanding" of women's special problems as workers and mothers; of the need "for special services for working mothers," etc. It rails against concepts that these can be solved by a "battle of the sexes" approach.



So far so good.

But one immediately discerns that here is no revolutionary change in the thinking of bourgeois ideologists. A revealing paragraph in the article says that all this is necessary to attain the goals proposed in Truman's dictatorial national emergency decree of drafting millions of women for total war production.

**NOWHERE DOES** the article in Charm magazine (nor do we expect it to, as a result both of its sponsorship and its appeal) deal with the problems of the exploited garment, food, packing-house, farm equipment women workers—mothers and wives. These millions of women, one half of whom are economic heads of families who, above all, need equal pay for equal work. They must also meet the growing high cost of living, resulting from the war profits being coined by the Wall Street bosses.

Nowhere does the article emphasize the special problems of Negro women in industry South and North, the millions of Negro women domestic workers, who recently won the begrudging status of "workers" in the new social security regulations, but who have lost nearly all the gains achieved in industry seven to eight years ago.

Of course these women workers are not in the thoughts of bourgeois ideologists who consider that women work to "fritter away" their time, or for creative endeavor (a right of all women)—but not as a matter of necessity.

**YET THESE SPECIAL** problems of the woman worker are urgent of solution for the 18,000,000 women in industry. If anything can be salvaged from this Charm article it is the title "Under One Roof."

These new problems now face the trade unions "under one roof" of the growing war economy, and must be viewed as a special responsibility if we are to enlist these decisive strata of women in the active fight for peace.

These problems were especially recognized and a new emphasis was put on the fight for women's equality and peace struggle at the recent 15th National Convention of the Communist Party, in all reports and speeches in the special panel on work among women, and throughout its deliberations.

Gus Hall, national secretary of the Communist Party, emphasized that "the masses of American women are a special target of American imperialism's ruthless war drive." Singling out the exploited women workers, Hall stated: "The thesis seems to be that women have no right to work in peacetime in basic industry, but a duty to work when war threatens." He called on trade unions to "take the initiative and fight for the demands of the women workers; to guarantee their integration in the unions, eliminate the age-old wage differentials and secure equal pay for equal work, and to take special measures to protect the rights of the triply-exploited Negro women workers." In addition, he concluded, "there must be a resolute struggle to win special social services for the women workers such as day nurseries for working mothers, and a struggle for promotion of women trade unionists to posts of union leadership."

Space does not permit to detail further remarks.

It was not accidental either that quite in an opposite vein from the false charmers of the masses of women, Hall paid tribute to the masses of women (mothers, wives of workers, farm, members of mass organizations, middle class consumers), peace fighters, especially in the "emergence of a distinct women's peace movement," and their role in defense of children and democratic rights.

**IT IS TO ACCELERATE** this unprecedented ferment among the women masses for peace and social progress to root these struggles among working Negro women, to extend their work for peace, building of peace committees, and above all extending the movement to Bring the Boys Home and to End the Korean War, that the discussion addressed itself on work among women.

It is to this type of leadership that American women will look to increasingly for it is a leadership which does not cynically toy with women's feelings and problems, but one which opens up the path to peace and life for their children, to dissolving the male supremacist tissue of lies and anti-women prejudices, to a future of peace and happiness for themselves and their families.