



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Revolutionary feminism

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November 30, 2020



Lizz Toledo at rally against police brutality and racist murders in Atlanta on May 29.

Following is a talk prepared by Lizz Toledo of Mujeres en Lucha/Women in Struggle and the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido for the Women's Assembly at the European Forum, Nov. 24, 2020.

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Dear Comrades: Revolutionary greetings from Mujeres en Lucha/Women in Struggle and the Socialist Unity Party/Partido de Socialismo Unido in the USA.

It is difficult to separate the women's struggle from any other struggle since all the struggles are intricately connected because our oppression, whether it is racism, homophobia, transphobia or sexism, stems from the class struggle, or the fight to end capitalism and imperialism.

Anti-racist work is women's work, The leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement are women. Women have been in the frontlines fighting for an end to police brutality by demanding the abolition of police and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, because it is precisely our Black, Brown and Indigenous children that are being murdered by these racist systems. It is our children who are being held in cages by ICE and separated from their mothers even as their mothers breast feed them. It is our Indigenous children everywhere in the world that are being murdered for defending their land.

Fighting for the rights of LGBTQ2S people is women's work. Homophobia and transphobia are the tools of the capitalist system to keep us in our place. By forcing us to accept labels and rules that say, "This is the only normal way to be a woman" or "This is the only normal way to be a man". This also works to keep us divided and fighting each other, while the bankers and the bosses line their pockets with the profits from our blood and sweat.

And, of course, the fight against the oppression of women is not only women's work but it is the work of all revolutionaries no matter the gender.

Revolutionary feminism is the struggle against sexual and domestic gender violence. It is the fight against forced sterilization and forced birth control or abortion for poor women of color. It is a continuous struggle for women and trans women to have dominion over our bodies and our lives.

We all have been raised with many backward ideas about race, gender and sexual identity. We all have to continue to check ourselves and each other when any of these evils rears its ugly head.

I think one of the biggest gains in the fight for the liberation of women today is the unity in the movement. Women, men, young, old, gay, straight, trans, Black, Brown, Indigenous and white, all standing with each other, protecting and defending each other, fighting for the liberation of the proletariat. If we are to achieve this goal we must continue to stay united. Keeping our eye on the true enemy: capitalism and imperialism.

COVID-19 and gender disparities

Comrades: I want to now focus on how COVID-19 has worsened long-standing gender inequalities. Women are more likely than men to work in service occupations, including domestic work, restaurant service, retail, tourism, and hospitality, that require face-to-face interactions and have been hard-hit by layoffs. For these jobs, teleworking is not an option. Women workers are largely represented in frontline jobs, which are the ones most often deemed “essential” and require people to work in-person.

In addition women have been harder hit by pandemic-related job losses than men.

The pandemic recession has hit women especially hard for three reasons:

1. Massive job losses in service industries and other occupations where we are disproportionately represented;
2. Sex discrimination that makes us more likely to be laid off; and
3. We tend to bear more responsibility for pandemic-related challenges to family health, school closures, and other disruptions.

These pressures have resulted in many women leaving the workforce altogether. The

drop was particularly steep for Latina women, whose participation rate fell by 5.1%, and Black women, whose rate dropped by 4.0%.

Transgender women are always in a precarious position, but the COVID-19 pandemic has made them particularly vulnerable. According to research from University of California-Los Angeles, transgender women are at a higher risk for COVID-19 for several reasons. They are more likely to be low-income, with 47.7% of transgender people living below 200% of the official U.S. poverty line. They are also significantly more likely to suffer from asthma and HIV, conditions that put people at higher risk of mortality if they contract COVID-19. And they experience high barriers to receiving health care.

The pandemic has also hit transgender people especially hard economically. A poll from the Human Rights Campaign shows that as of June 2020, some 54% of transgender people had experienced reduced work hours — more than double the 23% of the total U.S. workforce. Twenty-seven percent of transgender people had experienced pay cuts, compared to just 7% of the U.S. workforce. And 19% had become unemployed due to the pandemic, a significantly larger share than the general population.

The gender poverty Line

The gender poverty gap has widened over the past 50 years. But COVID has made poverty a particularly acute problem for women of color, affecting 21.4% of Black women, 18.7% of Latinas, and 22.8% of Native American women, compared to the national poverty rate for white women of 7.0%.

Transgender economic gaps

Transgender people experience poverty at double the rate of the general population, and transgender people of color experience even higher rates. The unemployment

rate triples among transgender people in comparison to that of the general population. The unemployment rate is even higher for Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Middle Eastern and multi-racial transgender people.

Black, Latinx and Indigenous people infected with Covid-19 are about four times more likely to be hospitalized than others, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control(CDC)

People of color have been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The number of COVID-19 cases among Black and Latinx children and across all ages is higher than other groups. Black and Latinx people infected with the virus also died at disproportionately higher rates over the summer. In addition, due to poverty and healthcare disparities communities of color, including Latinx, African Americans and Indigenous peoples, are often uninsured and have higher rates of conditions like hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, which can lead to more severe reactions to COVID-19.

The fight continues

While workers and specifically women and trans workers made some gains prior to the pandemic, gender based economic oppression and sexual and domestic gender violence has worsened. COVID-19 has set us back years. But we must continue to push forward, demanding an end to a system that puts profits before people. A system that has allowed a pandemic to kill over 250,000 people in the U.S. alone. Revolutionary feminism is the fight for poor women and poor trans people of color to have a livable wage or an income. It is defending our right to make decisions about our lives and our bodies, whether this means keeping our babies and having the resources to raise healthy children or having full access to health care, including medications and surgery to transition if that's what we choose. We choose when and if we have babies, we choose in what body we want to live our lives, we choose a life free of sexual and domestic violence, we choose who we love, we choose liberation

for all. This is what true choice is about and this is true revolutionary feminism.

Women and trans people living in the belly of the capitalist imperialist beast will be in the frontlines, led, of course, by women and trans people of color. United we will give the final blow to this decaying system and build a world where every life is valued and protected. Where people are more important than profits.

