



NEWSLETTER OF THE COMMITTEE OF WOMEN FOR PROGRESS

issue no. 16 January 25, 1980

MATERNITY LEAVE 2 YEARS OF STRUGGLE!

By now many of us would have known that the maternity leave law was passed in the International Year of the Child 1979. After two years of hard struggle by the progressive and communist women in the CWP and the progressive women in the PNPM with the support of organizations such as IWCA, NUWT, VOUCH etc., despite the opposition of the IMF, Gleaner, Jamaica Employers' Federation and the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce.

This law gives every working woman over 18 years of age 3 months maternity leave - 2 months with pay and one without, after one year's continuous service. Whether nurse, teacher, helper, whether married or unmarried; part time, casual or temporary, all are eligible for the right. No longer can a woman lose her job, seniority or be demoted because of pregnancy.

We in CWP call on the Government to implement an education program to teach women their rights under the law.

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EDITORIAL

Once again the IMF is tightening the screws. Once again the IMF is showing the Jamaican people its true colours. The IMF is again making their usual demands but this time greater demands. The IMF is demanding new conditions if the Government is to continue receiving IMF money following the failure of the December test.

What is the guiding principle behind what the IMF demands? Despite the fact that hospitals report a shortage in drugs and sometimes even food; despite the fact that 70% of young women between 16-24 are unemployed; despite the fact that 70% of our population earn under \$50 per week - despite all these the IMF claims that the people are consuming too much, that the people love too much money.

The people's consumption level must be cut says the IMF. You know how hard we have to work to make ends meet and that everything is so tight on the pockets. Both the poor and the middle class know

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how times are hard, yet the IMF says we are consuming too much and living too good. So how does the IMF plan to solve the problem?

By making more demands to hurt the people; to cut our so called high consumption. Therefore the IMF is demanding more price increases, more lay-offs and cutback in the youth budget.

While on the other hand the local friends of the IMF, (represented in the PSOJ) are threatening their own lay-offs and calling for a government of "best brains."

The CWP supports the approach as outlined by the General Secretary of the WPJ. This approach says that if the budget must be cut, then the Govt. should cut the waste in the public sector. CUT WASTE, NOT JOBS! Waste can be cut through stopping allowances to board personnel; stopping the payment of gas to top civil servants; cutting down of the usage of telephones in Government offices; monitoring the usage of supplies and materials etc.

We also support calls to put a stop to the foreign leakages that continue.

The CWP calls on all well thinking Jamaicans to support the calls to "CUT WASTE, NOT JOBS; CUT HIGH PROFITS NOT JOBS!!"

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Sisters be vigilant and see to it that the law is implemented!

This victory will help to end years of discrimination against women, and is an inspiration to struggle harder in unity for benefits for the people.

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Any problems with Maternity leave?? - Contact JCWR at
922-3902

CONGRATULATIONS ! YOUNG PIONEER MOVEMENT

The Young Pioneer Movement has congratulated the Joint Committee for Women's Rights (JCWR) on the successful maternity leave struggle.

Congratulations were made by Kinsasha Kirkwood on the behalf of the youth movement at the CWP general meeting recently.

Replying on behalf of the JCWR, Dacia Brown said that the struggle had been strengthened by the support of the young ones.

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The CWP MEETS AGAIN on FEB. 8th at 60 ARNOLD RD. commencing 5:30

BEST BRAINS ? BEST RACKETEERS!

In a letter to that organization, The CWP responds to the PSOJ's call for an "administration for national unity.":

Any proposal that seeks to take the decision-making power out of the hands of the elected representatives of the people and to transfer this power to so-called unelected best brains, strikes at the very heart of the democratic traditions of the people and must be viewed in light of our experiences.

What has been our experiences as women, mothers and consumers, with the best brains represented in the businesses and firms which your organization represents?

- 1) Your best brained retailers sell imported gaberdine used as uniform cloth for children at a mark up range of 125% - 196%. Your best brained retailers buy local tusore poplin, the best local cloth for uniform material at a factory price of \$3.63 and yet sell it to mothers of this country at \$5.00 - \$7.35, making a mark up range of 38% - 102%.
- 2) Many of your distributors hoard the vital goods for the poor, like milk and soap in expectation of increased prices and increased profits.
- 3) Some of your managers deduct NIS payments from the worker's salaries and do not remit it to the Government so depriving the country of needed revenue and depriving workers from benefits.
- 4) Some of the best brains in your organization fight against the smallest increase for workers, while some like you, Mr. Alexander, earn over 150 times what the average worker earns.
- 5) Some of your members continue to discriminate against the employment of women and recently fought against the Maternity Leave Law, saying that until their machines breed women, they would not pay Maternity Leave!
- 6) Many of your members prefer to lay off workers, women and men, at the earliest sign of difficulties instead of cutting down on their profits.

Surely, with this record, we could not support your organization's presence in the government and would have to seriously question the motive behind your proposal.

GRENADIAN REVOLUTION TREMENDOUS STRIDES



Brother Vincent Noel of the New Jewel Movement in the People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) recently met in a rap session with CWP sisters.

His talk dealt with the Grenadian revolution, and the tremendous strides the PRG has made in the past ten months:

So far the PRG has created more than 1,000 new jobs mostly in the agroindustry. Agricultural skills of all farmers are being upgraded and more than fifty young farmers are receiving specialised training.

In addition a number of government farms have been set up and 20 miles of feeder roads have been built or repaired to enable small farmers to better transport their crops to the market.

A total of 109 students have received scholarships to go to university in Cuba, Tanzania, Kenya and UWT this year. Secondary school scholarships have been increased by 56 and fees reduced by 33% to \$25 per term. Children receive a hot lunch daily in primary schools and all children under 5 years receive free milk.

Grenadian women have also been benefiting from the revolution. Equal pay for equal work has been established by the PRG, and job victimization and the sexual exploitation of women in return for jobs have been abolished. In addition all pregnant women receive free milk.

Health services have also been improved and the PRG has been able to attract Grenadian doctors and nurses to return home to help build their country.

TIPS FROM CWP IN THE CONSUMER STRUGGLE

Still looking for diaries?
Compare prices carefully.

Thinnest Sta-Rite desk diary
with smooth cover selling at:

Lane's Supermarket, Liguanea-

\$6.40

Times Store, Liguanea 4.70

Sangster's Bookstore,

The Mall

4.60

Lane is also selling the same
diary with a rough inferior cover at \$3.10.

Health Struggle Intensity

The Women's Health Action Committee (WHAC), comprising the women of the Workers Party Newlands/Naggo Head branch, the CWP and the Newlands and Naggo Head Community Council, will be having a panel discussion on the health problems in the area, at the Naggo Head Primary School on Jan. 27 at 5 p.m.

The WHAC has been pressing for a health clinic in the area to provide services for mothers and children who are forced to travel many miles to receive medical care.

Printed and published by the
Committee of Women for Progress
P.O. Box 277, Meadowbridge P.A.