US Labor Women Reform Internationalism and the Legacy of 1919

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Article Review

Just after the World War in 1919, women from about nineteen countries and three continents met in Washington, DC, to discuss matters regarding the rights of women's labour across the world. The purpose of the meeting was to propose ideas about how women's conditions can be improved by working as labourers in a variety of work settings. Women who choose to work go through various hardships. They take care of their families and work at the same time. Despite the huge burden, they still are paid less than their male colleagues.

Thus, the meeting took place where women's labour rights reformers met to discuss women's rights to work as labourers. The actual goal of the meeting was to increase and upgrade the standard of living for women labourers. The meeting consisted of about two hundred women who discussed the rights of women workers and how working conditions could be improved for them. Social movements were already happening in Asia and Europe. Looking at the worse conditions of working women, mainly in the United States, a joint federation was formed to improve working conditions for women. The name of the federation was the International Federation for Working Women. The federation worked hard to observe the issues and problems of working women and to take the initiative to rectify or address those issues. Much research has been done about how working men's conditions can be improved. Lots of researchers, mainly laborer scholars and historians, have focused their ideas related to improving conditions for the working-men category. Scholars who wrote about women's internationalism also ignored non-elite women working in the labour force. They have focused mostly on elite and upper-class women involved in civil rights or other political movements. Working women, mainly from the labour class, have received the least attention from scholars, researchers, and historians.

A league was formed in 1993 to help women workers improve their working conditions and to force employers to provide equal rights to working women. Wage differences were also highlighted by the league. The league was formed in the United States. It was formed after being inspired by the British Women's Federation. The league worked hard to fight for working women's rights. The league, for the very first time in the history of the United States, brought together elite women and working women. Both elite and working women worked together to first fight for the rights of women employed in the labour force. They joined hands on the same platform to struggle for the rights of working women in

the labour force. However, the league faced several issues. The league itself was not free from racial, religious and class differences. Only those women who had worked as women unionists and had been in the top positions could hold executive positions. Thus, class differences still prevailed in the leagues. Despite these issues and differences, the league was still able to get a huge membership from working women and the labour class, along with immigrant working women. The league was formed in the progressive era. This league was known as the National Women's Trade Union League or NWTUL.

The National Women's Trade Union League was not only a league that focused on issues of women working in the United States. It became a league that focused on working women's issues throughout the world. The league started issuing a monthly journal. The name of the journal was Life and Labour. The journal was sent to different countries around the world, including India, China, Japan, Russia, and other countries. The journal consisted of news about labour movements going on throughout the world. The journal designated a column to combine news about the international world. This column was known as near and far. The column contained news about the world and the labour force located in different parts of the world.

The National Women's Trade Union League worked in close collaboration with British women to fight for working women's rights. In the beginning, there was no formal meeting. Both American and British women exchanged letters, publications, and other such material to throw light on women's issues. The league also worked closely with German union representatives. German delegates visited the United Nations and talked about working women's conditions. However, when the United States declared war on Germany, the league worked hard to improve the conditions of women, particularly those employed in the armed forces.

A conference was organized by Robins in 1919, and an address was made to the Women's Congress. The address was attended by about two hundred participants from twelve countries. The address discussed the rights of women, particularly in the labour force. In the same year, the Women's Congress passed a resolution on women's rights and labour standards for working women. Various issues were covered in the resolution. The resolution included forty hours of working time for women labourers in a week. The resolution recommended an eight-hour shift per day. Equal wages, benefits, maternity and child benefits, the minimum age for labour and other such issues were highlighted in the resolution. The resolution was a success in declaring equal rights for women labourers.

During the period from 1970 to 1980, there was again a trend towards feminist movements that engaged many women from the labour force to fight for equal rights for working women. Global women's movements emerged, and many women participated in these movements to raise their voices for women's rights, especially for those who work in different work settings along with men, yet are not paid and benefited in the same way as men.

The article presents valuable information regarding how movements for women's rights emerged, what leagues and groups were formed to raise their voices for women's rights and how women's

rights were fought for by these groups. The history is presented in chronological order. The article provides a clear history focusing on major movements that took place across the globe to fight for working women's rights. I believe that the article has presented the history of how various movements and leagues emerged to support equal rights for women but has failed to capture the struggle of women, particularly in this field, to fight for feminism. The article provides a history and does not provide any evidence about why feminist movements emerged and what caused women to raise their voices.

The text does not provide convincing ideas or opinions about why women engaged themselves in leagues and other groups to fight for working women's rights. It's just history in chronological order. The article does demonstrate the difficulties and hardships that women had to go through before raising their voices for working women's rights, but it does not provide any evidence or event that reflects why working women should be treated equally to men in the workplace. The article only focuses on the formation of various global and local groups, conferences and addresses that were made in history to support women's rights. The article should have presented views about why women deserve a position equal to men. The article should also have highlighted specific laws that emerged as a result of these movements and what their different clauses were. The article focuses on events around World War 1 and fails to focus on issues beyond that. To make it more convincing, the article could have included the working conditions of women in the present era as compared to previous times (Cobble).

Works Cited

Cobble, Dorothy Sue. "A Higher "Standard of Life" for the World: U.S. Labor Women's Reform Internationalism and the Legacies of 1919." The Journal of American History (2014): 1052-1085.