

# Pakistan: Women workers organising to fight

Shazia Shehzad, Lahore Wed, 15/04/2015 - 07:56

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All over the world, it is women who are suffering most both from the aftermath of the economic crisis and from the imperialists' 'War on Terror'. This is because they generally have the responsibility for maintaining the home, despite economic hardship, and because, as women, they are also denied equal rights and opportunities.

A particularly glaring example of how these different aspects of women's oppression interact is the plight of Pakistani women textile workers who work in their own homes. This echoes conditions at the very dawn of industrial capitalism when small time employers cut their costs by forcing workers to provide not only their own workshops but even their own tools. Except that in Pakistan the ultimate employers of these 'homeworkers' are big capitalist corporations who hide behind local 'third party' agents.

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Building the union; women textile workers cannot meet in public, but that has not stopped them organising

Isolated in their own homes, often prevented by social custom from even appearing in public, the women are subjected to every possible coercion and indignity by these agents. But, despite everything, they are starting to fight back. Carefully, and often secretively, they are forming a trade union and they are organising and discussing how to set about fighting for their rights and for acceptable working conditions.

Women comrades of the League's Pakistan section are centrally involved in supporting this work and in extending the range of the fledgling union. They report that the textile workers involved have taken inspiration from the struggles of other women, such as hospital nurses, who have publicly fought for their rights. This shows the potential for the growth not only of trade unionism among women but of a wider, working class women's movement that will play a leading role in transforming the working class as a whole.

Nor will it stop there. When that movement forces itself onto the public stage it will generate a political earthquake whose shockwaves will be felt across the whole of the Middle East and South Asia. Speed the day!

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**Source URL:** <https://fifthinternational.org/content/pakistan-women-workers-organising-fight>

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[1] <https://fifthinternational.org/content/wmn-wrkr>