

# SPARTACIST

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## AMERICA FACES CRISIS

The U.S. bourgeoisie is facing a widespread and deepening political and economic crisis. All sections of society are polarizing ever more widely and bourgeois "law and order" is threatened on many fronts—outraged students, militant workers, racial violence, etc. The American economy is faced with the seemingly impossible situation of a stock market crash and growing unemployment combined with runaway inflation. This situation, considered a contradiction in terms by bourgeois economists, was predicted by the Spartacist League exactly a year ago. In "Development and Tactics of the SL" (August 1969), we foresaw "the likelihood of an economic downturn in early 1970. Such a downturn may slow down, but not end, the current inflation." The major cause underlying the present economic instability is the Viet Nam war, which is no longer an adjustable economic factor fitting neatly into the "government sector" of "defense" spending, military stockpiles, etc., but has mushroomed to unmanageable proportions.

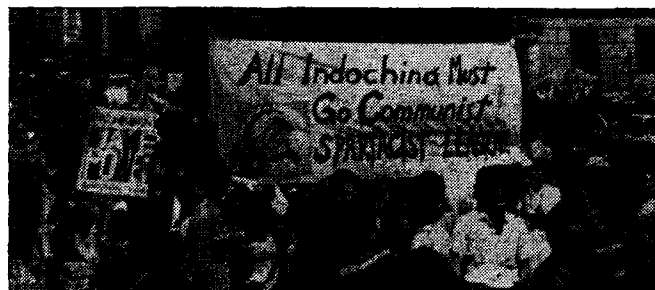
The liberal capitalists and their politicians are now raising a hue and cry in favor of wage-price controls to bring the economy back to "health." But the "health" of the economy is by no means identical to the well-being of its working people. For example, a controlled high rate of unemployment is considered essential to economic "health." The purpose of wage-price controls is ultimately to enable American imperialism to continue the brutal Viet Nam war and "stabilize" the status quo. Their effect is to hold down the living standards of the workers by restricting wage raises—including those of the most oppressed whose present wages are miserably insufficient to provide a decent life (and whom the same liberals always invoke in painting themselves as "friends of the people")—and to provide yet another ideological justification for the bosses' constant struggle to deprive the workers of the *right to strike*, to defend their own living standards instead of relying on "their friends" in government.

The economic situation combined with the Cambodian invasion and the massacres of students in Ohio and Mississippi (and now Kansas) provided renewed impetus to the anti-war movement, which had been slowly running itself into the ground with endless liberal-pacifist demonstrations. A rift has opened up in the labor movement, extending even up to prominent union officials, between the Meanyite "hawks" and the "progressives." The latter are rapidly becoming integrated into the middle-class anti-war movement on the basis of the same old tired liberal politics. At the same time

student radicals, having tried everything else from pacifism to street "confrontations," have willy-nilly rediscovered workers. These young radicals, and militant rank and file workers, provide the *objective* basis for the development of anti-war activity based on *class consciousness*. But in the absence of principled leadership, the entry of the union bureaucrats into the anti-war movement will simply provide a vehicle to bring the anti-war activists back to the old "lesser evil" Democratic Party trap which most of them had rejected years before. The "progressive" union bureaucrats are not and cannot be the basis of a class-conscious anti-war strategy; their role within their own unions is to fight militancy and blunt consciousness by tying the labor movement to "establishment" politics and the capitalist state. The anti-war misleaders embrace their labor faker brothers in the hope they can serve this same function for the anti-war movement.

### Pop Front Conference

The June conference in Cleveland of the Student Mobilization Committee, captive anti-war front group of



### OUR SLOGAN Won Militants' Cheers.

the Socialist Workers Party-Young Socialist Alliance, should have served to convince even the most naive that the anti-war movement will not purge itself of its unprincipled Popular Front nature of its own accord. The conference, run with an iron hand by the SMC leadership, continued implacable in its sellout orientation. The SMC prides itself on its "independence" from the capitalist political parties; yet it voted down the proposal to cease including liberal pro-imperialist politicians in its anti-war rallies and reacted with horror and disbelief to the SDS motion to expand the anti-Agnew picket to include a protest against Cleveland's liberal Black mayor, Stokes, a Democrat. There is no such thing as "independence" without a class basis; classless organization  
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zations and politics in a class society must inevitably be filled by class content: either clearly proletarian or bourgeois by default. The SMC's belated response to the increasing awareness of the need for workers' anti-war struggle was to fall right into the "progressive" trap. The SMC put forward accommodation to the sellout union bureaucrats as the way to reach workers. A working-class anti-war strategy must be based not on the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" but on a *class-struggle program*. Needless to say, proposals for such a program were rejected; the conference voted down motions for workers' political strikes against the war and for a political party of the working class, raised by Spartacist League supporters.

The responsibility for the SMC's wretched line lies, of course, at the door of the ex-Trotskyist SWP, whose youth group, the YSA, has grown over the past few years and is now the largest nation-wide "socialist" youth organization. The SWP-YSA plays the political role earlier perfected by the Communist Party and its successive front groups—class collaboration with a "socialist" cover. They pride themselves on being the main builders of a Pop Front anti-war movement and in recent years they have learned to play to perfection the role of cement between would-be radicals and liberal bourgeois fakers by subordinating politics in the name of "unity," a unity *across class lines*. Because of their Trotskyist past, they seek to pass off their anti-war coalition as a "united front." But the precondition for a united front, as Trotsky made clear, is a break—in form and content—from the bourgeois parties, not a bloc with a section of them!

Best known for their political sellouts and organizational maneuvering in the anti-war movement, these ex-Trotskyists function similarly in other arenas. In Atlanta the YSA was a main organizational force in building a "Rally Against Repression" for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Rev. Martin Luther King's old pacifist civil rights group, at which the prominent speaker was Senator McGovern. As might be expected, no representatives of any "socialist" organization, including the SWP-YSA, were permitted to speak. At a time when vigorous, principled leadership could mobilize more people than ever before behind a class-struggle perspective, the so-called "socialists" of the SWP-YSA, and the SMC, only know how to push class collaboration.

### Old Garbage in New Pails

The "Rank and File National Conference" held the weekend of 26 June in Chicago was a gross demonstration of the nature of the so-called "progressive" trade union bureaucracies who manipulate their memberships in the interests of the bosses and their politicians. The conference, run by the Communist Party, was no more than a vehicle for left-talking "leaders" to play power politics in the unions and the Democratic Party by covering themselves with "rank and file" rhetoric. In reality, the rank and file had as little control over the conference as they have in their unions. The leadership even went so far as to shut off the microphones whenever militant speakers were too sharply critical of the bureaucrats and their conservative, sellout policies. At the conference, representatives of several groups—

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## An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

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including Workers Action, the Workers Power Caucus, International Socialists and Spartacist League—put forward four oppositional motions: for internal democracy and minority rights at the conference; for militant rank and file control of the unions—no compromise with "progressive" bureaucrats; for a working-class political party based on class struggle; for immediate labor political action on the basis of these demands. Their statement was endorsed by militants from the CWA, NMU, SEIU and District 65.

### SDS Crumbles

The Progressive Labor-based section of SDS which emerged from the original SDS split as the left wing is visibly crumbling. Largely bypassed by the spontaneous upsurge of student outrage following the Cambodia-Kent State events, SDS has done nothing to provide political direction. The organization has moved sharply to the right in an attempt to be "less sectarian" and appear more like the same old student radicals we all remember from the days of a flourishing if politically nebulous New Left. The PL-SDS cadres who once chanted "Power to the Workers" at the original SDS split now intone "Power to the People" and enthuse about "third world" movements, like any RYMer. While still refusing to let *left* oppositionists such as the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus in SDS be represented at SDS actions (e.g., the SDS rally at Cleveland) or in *New Left Notes*, they went so far as to invite Mike Klonsky—the absolute worst of the old "National Collective" which split from SDS a year ago—to speak at an SDS rally in the Bay Area.

For its own petty factional advantage, PL-SDS has seemingly indefinitely postponed the scheduled SDS convention, traditionally held in June. (This year more than ever, a June convention, which could have brought into SDS the newly-radicalized students who found themselves involved in the student strikes following Cambodia-Kent State, was urgently needed if the present decline of SDS was to be combatted.) The reason most likely is that by postponing the convention, any new forces could immediately be channeled into PL's semi-private activity, the traditional summer Work-In, and be worked on by PLers and not exposed to the other

political tendencies which would be present at a convention until they had been "hardened up" in private. The fact that while PL might recruit some this way, many other potential SDSers would have already dispersed for the summer or lost interest in the meantime was apparently not of interest to the SDS leadership. PL's current serious internal difficulties may also be a factor in the postponement. The split of PL founding leader Bill Epton (apparently now on a rightward course) may be only the tip of the iceberg.

The Work-In project itself leaves much to be desired. Its stated purpose is to get students to take summer jobs in working-class occupations in order to "learn from workers" and lend their support to workers' demands. This year, as every year, PL explicitly rejects any consideration of a *political program* for their Work-In project, explaining it would be "elitist" for students to seek to bring their ideas to workers. In this view, the working class is seen as essentially passive, so that presumably "someday," when a communist vanguard will seek to win workers to its program, the workers will be receptive irrespective of what political spectrum they face today. Certainly the political conquest of the working class cannot be accomplished merely by summertime colonizing of SDS students, but this does not mean *nothing* can be done. The working class is not a homogeneous mass of non-political people; there are individual militant workers whom SDS could contact politically; there are radical young workers who could be recruited to a radical youth organization. And for the dedicated SDS members who spend their summers in the Work-In project, much more would be learned by the experience—even if not very successful—of learning how to discuss socialist politics with workers, learning how to agitate in unions, than can be passively picked up in repose.

### Politics or Pugilism?

Coincident with this pattern of conduct inside SDS, and partly as a response to lack of success generally, has been a turn on the part of PL-SDS to the anti-war movement. SDS contingents have intervened in local SMC conferences, and in the recent Cleveland conference, with excellent motions aimed at exposing the SMC's class collaboration line: no liberal politicians or bosses at anti-war rallies, no Democrats and Republicans. Their interventions could have been immeasurably

strengthened by a *program*—such as workers' anti-war strikes—to counterpose to the SMC's reliance on demonstrations, bourgeois politician and union misleaders. However, at the same time as PL-SDS puts forward a generally correct political struggle against the SMC's wretched opportunism, their Stalinist side threatens to destroy the effect of all opposition to the Pop Front. Recently in the Boston area PL and SDS cadres have indulged in shameful displays of gangsterism within the movement, physically attacking YSAers and SMCers. These hooligan tactics are a reflection of PL's internal difficulties and SDS's decline and are an attempt to harden up their own people by drawing the lines in blood. Their chief result as regards the YSA-SMC is to drive potential left-wingers back into the arms of their leadership and smother incipient political cleavages in bonds of organizational loyalty and elementary solidarity. The proposition that left opposition to the SMC equals Stalinist gangsterism is a gift of immeasurable value to the SMC leadership.

At the same time as PL is purposely diffusing and toning down its politics in SDS in the attempt to attract more people on an ever lower political level, they continue to tighten up SDS organizationally and turn it into virtually a PL youth group instead of the non-exclusionist organization it claims to be. That PL and its followers are not "loyal" to SDS unless they totally control it is shown by their wrecking tactics in the Merritt College students strike, where they blocked with Black Nationalists in red-baiting and woman-baiting an RMC member, and the walkout of their contingent from the recent SDS South-Central regional conference in Memphis when they were outvoted by RMC supporters.

The Black Panther Party continues in its Stalinist degeneration. Recent issues of their paper threatened PL in Boston with violence if they didn't stop distributing PL literature in the Black ghetto, and reported the expulsion of a Panther woman for the "crime" of requesting an abortion. All those left-wing tendencies which opportunistically refrained from any criticism of the popular Panthers—until their Stalinism, male chauvinism and exclusionist practices toward organizations to their left became a scandal—share the blame for the Panthers' continuing rightward course.

### For Class Struggle

America faces political crisis—not the final crisis of capitalism, i.e. revolution or the advent of fascism—but a deep-going loss of confidence in the credibility and effectiveness of the bourgeois "establishment." A period of heightened struggle is on the horizon, necessitating vigorous Marxist intervention to channel the rising discontent and lead it politically toward working-class action against the bosses and their state. Without class consciousness and revolutionary organization and direction, the oppressed and exploited may find themselves fighting in futile or even counterposed directions—witness the hopelessly reformist and impotent anti-war movement being confronted by chauvinistic New York construction workers who view their problems as the fault of the Blacks and the students. The situation, although confused and contradictory, is open and rapidly moving and cries for intervention by Marxists armed with a program capable of re-directing the misalignments, discrediting the dupes and stooges of the ruling class and organizing the militants into the most powerful assault on the status quo possible in many years. ■

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## RMC Newsletter

The Revolutionary Marxist Caucus is the left opposition in SDS fighting for a militant socialist policy, in contrast to the narrow social work approach of the SDS leadership. Rejecting campus parochialism, we seek to build SDS as a non-exclusionist youth organization which can intervene in major social struggles with a class-conscious program: a break with the capitalist parties and formation of a workers' party; labor strikes against U.S. imperialism; defense of all left groups against repression; for a class analysis of sexual and racial oppression.

RMC c/o Mark Tishman, Box 454, Cooper Sta.,  
New York, N.Y. 10003

# Terrorism and Communism

"We are bound, naturally, by ties of open moral solidarity to Grynspan and not to his 'democratic' jailers, or the Stalinist slanderers, who need Grynspan's corpse to prop up, even if only partially and indirectly, the verdicts of Moscow's justice. . . .

"People come cheap who are capable only of fulminating against injustice and bestiality. But those who, like Grynspan, are able to act as well as conceive, sacrificing their own lives if need be, are the precious leaven of mankind."

—L. Trotsky, "For Grynspan," February 1939

While this country's recent rightward drift has not as yet exploded into the anti-communist hysteria of the Cold War-McCarthy period, there has been a growing apprehension among radicals that the atmosphere of repression, skillfully manipulated by bourgeois demagogues, will not easily or lightly be dissipated. Judging from that earlier period, we can expect a section of the left to respond to the repression by "conservatizing" itself—toning down its propaganda and emasculating its politics, throwing itself into a paranoid posture and attempting to convince the public that it is really perfectly respectable. The Panthers' "United Front Against Fascism" Conference showed this tendency: their militant and sometimes adventurist policies having drawn to them the full brunt of hysterical, murderous reaction, the Panthers sought to protect themselves by flirting with political subordination to left-talking politicians, white-guilt liberals and the Communist Party. That this strategy is incapable of defending the movement is shown by the continuing nationwide repression against the Panther leadership and cadres.

## New Left Evolution

Such "conservatizing" of the left has happened before. Indeed, what used to be called the "New Left" originated in large part out of a healthy revulsion against what the young radicals properly excoriated as a betrayal: the conservative, de-revolutionized Communist Party. Nor has this been confined to the Stalinist side of the fence. The ex-Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party demonstrated their panic-stricken lack of revolutionary fiber with their telegram of "condolences" to the widow Kennedy at the time of the 1963 assassination in Dallas (cf. SPARTACIST #1 for a review of the left press' reaction) and have in the years since become merely a left-talking, reformist formation of the same genre as the CP. Now, some of the same "New Left" activists, frustrated by the seeming omnipotence

of the forces of repression and despairing of the potential of the working class or the organizations which profess to speak in its name, have turned to a policy of individual activism, attempting to substitute their own dedication for a conscious working-class movement. This has resulted in recent months in a wave of threats, bombings and sabotage intended to terrorize the ruling class and the bourgeois state.

The roots of this mood, whose most prominent exponent apart from some individuals marginally connected to the Black Panthers is the Weatherman grouping, can be traced to both the old "New Left" and to pacifism. Weatherman is quite incapable of explaining *how* its confrontations and street actions can precipitate any change in the present relationship of social forces. Rather, their tactics are directed toward demonstrating their hatred of this society and their commitment to destroy it; thus they strike out, largely at symbols, in the only way they can imagine. The pacifists call this middle-class ethical, apolitical approach to political questions "bearing moral witness," but no matter what it is called it merely demonstrates the activists' lack of a political program. In its essence it constitutes a denial of Leninism, which is a projection of *the road to power* for the working class, a programmatic guide to action whose purpose is not to embody subjective satisfactions but to rip capitalist society up by the roots and substitute workers' control of a new social order.

The left-wing terrorists are, then, an integral part of the radical movement whose orientation is dramatically counterposed to that of revolutionary socialism. They are objectively anti-Leninist, destructive and self-destructive. Like any other radical but not genuinely Marxist grouping (the CP, SWP, Workers League, Progressive Labor) they are no more than this. But it is necessary to understand also that *they are no less*. The response of the vast majority of the ostensibly revolutionary organizations to the terrorists has been frighteningly lacking in basic solidarist impulse, a complex of outright gutlessness and infantile sectarianism which bodes ill for the left's ability to fight back by political means against ruling-class repression.

## Another CP Sellout

As might be expected, the Communist Party stands at the forefront of the left's distorted reaction. Writing in the 15 April issue of the *Daily World* Charlene Mitchell, CP presidential candidate in the 1968 national elections,

quotes Lenin as the alleged authority for the CP's vicious attitude toward the confrontationists in an article "Terror and Armed Battle Play into Nixon's Hands." Mrs. Mitchell quotes Lenin:

"Is there not the danger of rupturing the contact between the revolutionary organizations and the disunited masses of the discontented, the protesting, and the disposed to struggle, who are weak precisely because they are disunited? Yet it is this contact that is the sole guarantee of our success."

Expanding on this, Mrs. Mitchell repudiates terror tactics and counterposes the proposals of the CP-controlled Emergency Conference to Defend the Right of the Black Panther Party to Exist. She writes:

"The proposals of the Emergency Conference that tens of thousands of people demonstrate in New Haven for the freedom of Black Panther leader Bobby Seale and that one million signatures on petitions demanding a stop to U.S. genocidal practices be presented to the United Nations, will if realized, be a tremendous advance of the struggle for black liberation, peace and human dignity."

Elsewhere in her article she argues against so-called "retaliation" by Black people, stating that self-defense *invariably* is useless or dangerous. This carries the unstated corollary that the oppressed must rely on racist cops, liberal politicians, the Democratic Party and the bourgeois courts. It should be clear from Mitchell's article that "terror and armed battle" play not so much into "Nixon's hands" as into the hands of the CP and other sellouts, revisionists, opportunists and fakers who point to the "excesses" of a section of the radical movement as a foil to preach pacifism, social peace and *faith in the U.N.*! It is precisely the 40-year history of betrayals by social patriots and liberal lackeys like the CP which has driven the radical youth, in revulsion, to impatiently abandon Marxism along with the fake-Marxists.

## Lenin on Terrorism

Mrs. Mitchell has, along with all the rest, the colossal effrontery to claim communist authority for this wretched betrayal; she drags in the icon of Lenin as a stick to beat Weatherman! But what Lenin in reality thought about terrorism does not so easily blend into the CP recipe for supporting liberalism. So Mrs. Mitchell does not bother pointing out that what she has quoted was ripped out of context in order to diametrically twist the meaning. In the *same paragraph* (from "Where to Begin?") as the quoted excerpt, Lenin in

1901 had said:

"In principle we have never rejected, and cannot reject, terror. Terror is one of the forms of military action that may be perfectly suitable or even essential at a definite juncture in the battle, given a definite state of the troops and the existence of definite conditions. . . . [But we] declare emphatically that under the present conditions such a means of struggle is inopportune and unsuitable; that it diverts the most active fighters from their real task, the task which is most important from the standpoint of the interests of the movement as a whole; and that it disorganizes the forces, not of the government, but the revolution."

Further, the lines immediately following Mrs. Mitchell's quote hardly reinforce her view:

"Far be it from us to deny the significance of heroic individual blows, but it is our duty to sound a vigorous warning against becoming infatuated with terror, against taking it to be the chief and basic means of struggle, as so many people strongly incline to do at present. Terror can never be a regular military operation; at best it can only serve as one of the methods employed in a decisive assault."

The spirit of what Lenin really thought about heroic individualism is a million miles removed from the "peaceful coexistence with capitalism" road offered militants by the CP. It is not Lenin preaching social peace, warning against self-defense, trotting out cute hints that violence serves the capitalists, organizing phony and pointless petitions to that decomposing gimcrack of pious bourgeois unity, the U.N. Lenin clearly opposes terrorism from a *strategic* point of view; it is wrong in the long run because outside a revolutionary situation it is only one more *diversion* from political struggle. Lenin opposes left-wing terrorism because *it is not revolutionary enough*. As against individualistic diversions he offers not mealy-mouthed platitudes or liberalism but the construction and organization of the revolutionary party. Lenin's thought, in its context, would have served Mitchell admirably as a polemic against adventurism—if that was really what she wanted. But she was forced to truncate and distort Lenin's statement because honest consideration of what Lenin wrote shows he opposed isolated acts of terrorism from a *revolutionary*, not a "respectable" standpoint. The pious liberals whom Mrs. Mitchell fears will be alienated by terrorism would certainly be equally horrified by Leninism!

#### SWP Red-Baiting

The central weakness of groups like Weatherman is that, while its adherents are *subjectively* revolutionary, objectively they lack even the rudiments of a revolutionary program. However

the revisionists deny them even the subjective intent. In this regard, the response of the Socialist Workers Party-Young Socialist Alliance is similar to the CP's. After nearly a year of exotica-baiting and heaping ridicule on Weatherman (cf. "You Don't Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows—or Anything Else" in the October 1969 *Young Socialist*) the SWP has finally surfaced a hard, definitive position: George Novack's "Marxism vs. Neo-Anarchist Terrorism" in the June 1970 *International Socialist Review*. Despite its title the article has nothing in common with Marxism; the view it states is qualitatively indistinguishable from the CPUSA.

The Novack article is replete with dabs and pieces of "Marxist" scholarship: some passing references to Russian revolutionary history, Lenin's struggles against the Narodniki, quotes from Trotsky, and the like. Unlike Lenin and Trotsky, however, who howevermuch fighting against a deterioration of struggle resulting in individual violence nevertheless indicated a sympathetic understanding of its sources, Novack's statement is one more component in the SWP's iconization of Trotsky—doing with him what the CP does with Lenin. Thus, an isolated instance—in this case Trotsky's pamphlet *The Kirov Assassination*—is singled out from a welter of possibilities as the *sine qua non* of Trotskyism. This conveys a general impression which is radically different from the general thrust of Trotsky's attitude, while the corpus as a whole is allowed to moulder quietly in the archives.

The facts surrounding the Kirov assassination are these: Kirov, a leading functionary who was one of Stalin's associates, was assassinated by Nicholaiev in 1934, in surroundings which are still unclear, although it is now believed the GPU was heavily implicated. The assassination gave Stalin a pretext, immediately recognized by Trotsky, to frame up former oppositionists still in the Soviet Union. This began the big blood purges which, over the next half-dozen years, resulted in the root-and-branch extermination of all those individuals remaining of Lenin's Bolshevik party.

Throughout the whole of *The Kirov Assassination* Trotsky is attempting to *deflect* the axe poised over the neck of the Soviet oppositionists, to head off the clearly intended blood purges. Already, by the time Trotsky set out to write his pamphlet, fifteen members of the so-called "anti-soviet" group headed by Zinoviev had been arrested in connection with the Kirov affair. It was manifest—and this was later to become one of the central props for the staged trials—that in the shooting of Kirov an excuse had presented itself for the physical liquidation of oppositionists, something heretofore lacking. It was

clear that a myth was being promulgated: Stalin was seeking to establish Nicholaiev as, in Trotsky's words, "the terrorist agent of an internal opposition in the party." It is to *destroy* this official myth, to hold up to the ridicule of the world the Stalinist lie that the old Bolsheviks wanted to sabotage and destroy the Soviet Union, that Trotsky finds it imperative at this time to heavily and repetitively underscore those components of Marxists' hostility to terrorism. To single out the writings of this period, as Novack does, in order to imply such was the sum total of Trotsky's views on the subject, is disingenuous, deliberately misleading, and on a par with the Stalinist iconography that what Lenin wrote in heated polemic against Trotsky in 1912 represented for all time, undying and unchangeable, his full panoply of views on the man. By so doing, Novack in effect suppressed Trotsky's full views on terrorism.

#### Trotsky on Terrorism

For example, in February 1939 Trotsky wrote a polemic against the opening of the French trial in which the accused, Herschel Grynzspan, was being tried for shooting a Nazi official in the German Embassy in Paris late in 1938. Trotsky wrote "For Grynzspan: Against the Fascist Pogrom Gangs and Stalinist Scoundrels," from which the following passages are taken:

"... We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road. Our sympathy becomes intensified because Grynzspan is not a political militant but an inexperienced youth, almost a boy, whose only counsellor was a feeling of indignation. To tear Grynzspan out of the hands of capitalist justice, which is capable of chopping off his head to further serve capitalist diplomacy, is the elementary, immediate task of the international working class!"

"In the moral sense, although not for his mode of action, Grynzspan may serve as an example for every young revolutionist. Our open moral solidarity with Grynzspan gives us an added right to say to all the other would-be Grynzspans, to all those capable of self-sacrifice in the struggle against despotism and bestiality: seek another road! Not the lone avenger can free the oppressed, but only a great revolutionary movement of the masses which will leave no remnant of the entire structure of class exploitation, national oppression and racial persecution."

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## ... TERROR

Needless to say, there is not a whisper of a word like this anywhere in Novack. This is only consistent: Novack's organization has given up any hope for proletarian revolution and today deliberately blocks the development of revolutionary consciousness, seeking to tie would-be radicals to the labor bureaucrats and the liberal bourgeoisie. When Novack writes that "terrorism is petty-bourgeois liberalism temporarily gone berserk" the only response can be that Novack is Pabloist revisionism going out with a sigh and a whimper, arm in arm with the "sane" liberals.

Further, this same SWP which so one-sidedly condemns the small, isolated, harassed left-wing terrorists here as if they were not even part of the movement also abandons Trotskyism from another angle. It is noteworthy that in those countries where guerillaism and other non-proletarian strategies are most prevalent (e.g. Latin America) the SWP and its international collaborators capitulate to their popularity. One hears *nothing* from the SWP and its associates about Lenin's polemics against the Narodniki, about the necessity to counterpose a proletarian strategy and program to guerillaism and anarchism *there*, precisely where the ideological battle against petty-bourgeois terrorism is most necessary. In fact it is the vociferously anti-terrorist SWP which seemingly owns the import license and patents of vicarious Guevarism.

### "Police Agents"?

As if the SWP-CP disavowal of Marxism were not enough, an atrocity similar in kind was presented by the Progressive Labor-supported SDS. A leaflet advertising an SDS anti-war demonstration on April 15 ("SDS: Mass Action Not Mad Bombings") ends with this harangue:

**"We see the way forward as winning masses of students to ally with working people to attack the problems that most people in this country face. We absolutely condemn and have nothing to do with terrorist bombings that only attack and intimidate the people!"**

This is all askew. Whatever the consequences of bomb-throwing, these are *not* "mad bombings" by mentally disturbed people but *political* acts, however ineffective or even dangerous to the movement. It is a gross deception—for people calling themselves radicals—to pretend otherwise. Those courageous, individualistic, disoriented radicals came to their politics in a context—the absence of a strong, truly Leninist revolutionary vanguard party. Had such a party existed, or had the various left tendencies been more interested in laying the roots for one rather than chasing after every petty-bourgeois will-o'-the-wisp ("peace now," Black National-

ism, draft resistance, student power, etc.) many of the current Weathermen would have become dedicated pro-working-class revolutionaries.

Another SDS statement went even further. Regarding the RYM confrontations around the country, culminating in the Chicago actions last fall, a national press release by SDS dated 2 October (reprinted in *New Left Notes'* Moratorium supplement) called the RYM demonstrators cops outright!

**"These actions were all the work of a group of police agents and hate-the-people lunatics who walked out of the SDS at the June Convention. . . . The bankers and big business men who run the country are using this clique (led by Mark Rudd) for two purposes. First, to divert people so they won't fight back anymore. Second, to discredit SDS and radical ideas in general. This group's 'Days of Rage' planned for Chicago, Oct. 8-11 is a police trap. . . ."**

This disgusting red-baiting can have only one consequence: it disarms the movement in the face of vicious repression aimed at destroying the left. Obviously, the most vocal, thorn-in-the-side confrontationists and terrorists will come first; then, after public opinion has been suitably prepared by the first repressions, all the rest. If there is one thing to be learned from the gutless behavior of the CP during the witchhunt it is that going "respectable" only disarms the left's *supporters*; the bourgeoisie will not be confused in the

least.

It is the responsibility of the ostensible revolutionaries to come to grips with wrong, faulty ideas and defeat them politically—in Trotsky's words, to help them "choose another road"—not to stand by with a "hands off" attitude hoping the cops will purge them from the movement.

### Defend the Movement!

What will really aid the movement in fighting repression is not sanctimonious fingerwagging à la Novack or pretended virginity, but vigorous *defense* of those persecuted by the government. For the PL-led SDS to argue that recent violence was aimed against "the people" again denies the political motivation of the activists, who sincerely thought blowing up large corporation offices and police stations was fighting the bourgeoisie. Such actions are indeed naive: they deny the potency of the armed might of the state and the strength of most people's legalistic illusions. It is necessary to explain to would-be terrorists that they are substituting the excitement of courageous individual actions for a much harder task—the radicalization of the American working class. But SDS is more interested in explaining it "has nothing to do with" terroristic activities. Legal defense of all radical activists victimized by the bourgeois state is necessary not only to protect the movement as a whole but also to establish the authority

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of the revolutionary left to set the Weatherman followers straight. Individualistic, programless tactics must be politically exposed and counterposed to a Leninist strategy. But all the quotes in the world from Lenin will not convince the radical confrontationists when they appear in the mouths of those who prove themselves more concerned with their own "respectability" than with principled defense of repression's victims.

Through its hypocrisy, PL has managed to hang itself in an exquisite contradiction. It has recently indulged itself in a series of gangster attacks on other radical groups (primarily the SMC and SWP-YSA) in the Boston area. As a point of principle they have resolutely refused to join with other organizations (whom they label "counter-revolutionary") in common struggles against exclusionism and beatings of other organizations on the left. Yet they are quick to repudiate and label as cops any section of the movement which proposes violence against the bourgeoisie. PL-SDS would appear to operate under the general slogan, Violence Within the Workers Movement, But Hands Off the Bourgeoisie! It is not a position calculated to bring much clarity to the necessary political struggle with individualistic-oriented radicals.

PL's shameful conduct toward its political antagonists is symptomatic of the weakness and sectarianism of the left in general. Side by side with the recent fierce intensification of government repression against the left is a catalogue of incidents of right-wing terrorism against radical organizations—threats, beatings, bombings and even murder. Not only legal defense against the government but also physical *self-defense* against the right wing is urgently called for. What is needed are *united fronts* of all radical organizations to protect groups and individuals threatened and victimized by the organized right wing. But a radical movement split apart by rampant sectarianism, blatant exclusionism and scandalous gangsterism does not have the consciousness necessary even to defend against a danger which menaces its very existence.

#### Wohlforth Amok

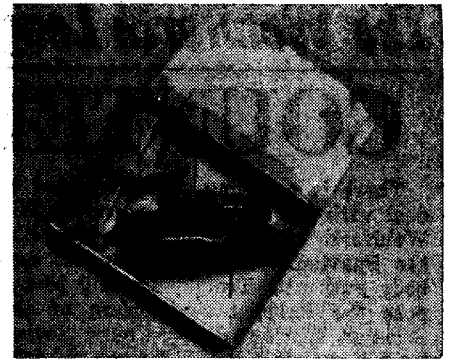
Whenever swinish behavior over and above the norm is to be found on the left, it is a certainty that Wohlforth's Workers League will be there in full wallow. Their characterization of the terrorists was perhaps inevitable; they refer to Weatherman as "... this proto-fascist group of declassed hoodlums." (*Bulletin*, 6 Oct., 1969) It should suffice to say that Wohlforth, as a premature anti-proto-fascist, again places himself on the wrong side of the class line. But the difficulty for Wohlforth

only begins here. Another passage in the same editorial states "... the Panthers are nothing more than a black reflection of Rudd." Since a socialist group is hardly in the habit of supporting or defending fascists, "proto-" or otherwise, obviously they would refuse to defend Weatherman. But the WL has elsewhere (29 July 1969 *Bulletin*) argued that it is a *class* issue to defend the Panthers! According to the Wohlforthites, then, defense of the Black Weathermen (Panthers) is a class issue, whereas defense of the (white) Weathermen would mean support to the class enemy! What this gobbledygook really means is that it is opportunism alone which makes the *Bulletin* come out to defend the Panthers.

But the Wohlforthites are only a grosser example of the acute contradiction which affects the CP, SWP, SDS and PL. All of them defend the Panthers. And none of them state any solidarity at all with groups like Weatherman. Where lies the difference? The Panthers are a large organization, they are Black, and they are *popular* with large segments of the left-liberal bourgeoisie. The Weathermen are small, white and unpopular. The former is supported, the latter not. And the difference is unbridled opportunism. Nothing more.

As with the Panthers, it is the class duty of all radicals and militants to defend Weatherman. Class issues are not dependent upon what is currently popular with the liberals. One may disagree with "outbreaks" tactically; one is bound to advise militants—including Black militants—against adventurism. But this much must be clear: once the battle has been joined, we have a side—the side of the oppressed, outraged and exploited (ghetto "rioters" against the cops, strikers against scabs, the Panthers and Chicago "Conspiracy" against bourgeois "justice") against the ruling class and its state.

In this connection, Marxists would do well to recall Marx's own stand at the time of the Paris Commune. He analyzed the class antagonisms of French society and understood that the emerging French proletariat did not yet have the social force to hold power and rule in its own right, and therefore the Paris Commune rising could be no more than a heroic, tragic episode whose fulfillment could come only later on in another historical epoch. But Marx also understood that his side in this struggle was the side of the embattled French working class and that he would not stand on the sidelines denouncing equally the futile rebellion of the workers and the murderous bourgeois reaction. The Marxists of today must similarly understand that we cannot be neutral or noncommittal in the face of confrontations between the bourgeois



REUBEN'S BOMB: Ultra-rightist mock-up mailed to Texas comrade.

state and those who seek, no matter how gropingly, to struggle against it. In this one respect the ill-advised super-militancy of the Weatherman followers can be likened to the spontaneous, inchoate outbursts of rage against the system and the cops on the part of Black people in the ghettos. Fully though we understand that these Black rebellions cannot, in the absence of a conscious and united proletarian revolution, succeed in overthrowing the capitalist state, we must nonetheless recognize that on the most elemental level of solidarity and defense we stand with the oppressed against their exploiters.

The real crime vis-a-vis terror politics and heroic individualism is that it allows the revolutionary energies of some of the movement's most talented, dedicated people to be channeled into futile and self-destructive actions. It is our job to seek to redirect these energies into genuinely revolutionary directions.

#### For a Vanguard Party

To terrorist diversions, Lenin counterposed the vanguard party:

"... the immediate task of our party is not to summon all available forces for the attack right now, but to call for the formation of a revolutionary organization capable of uniting all forces and guiding the movement in actual practice and not in name only, that is, an organization ready at any time to support every protest and every outbreak and use it to build up and consolidate the fighting forces suitable for the decisive struggle."

The kind of organization envisioned by Lenin does not now exist in this country, but only some rotting corpses of its former aspirants or pretenders. These serve only to repel genuine revolutionary impulses so that some youth turn in despair toward methods of combatting the bourgeois order "by the deed." To revolutionaries who might be inclined toward such methods we say "seek another road": the construction of the Leninist combat party which can lead the working class in smashing the capitalist order and the bourgeois state. ■

## The Wohlforth League:

# COUNTERFEIT TROTSKYISTS

There is a strong objective need to deal with the Workers League of Tim Wohlforth at this time. The WL, like the Spartacist League, claims to embody authentic Trotskyism and to oppose the Pabloist revisionism of the Socialist Workers Party-Young Socialist Alliance (SWP-YSA) from the left. But the WL by its many indefensible, anti-Trotskyist positions, actions and gyrations helps to stabilize the YSA on its rightward course by serving as a ready-made "horrible example" for the Pabloist leadership and hardens in anti-Trotskyism young militants who take the WL as good coin. We have written at length in the past about the opportunistic course and conduct of the Wohlforth group and have documented its origin and development extensively in *Marxist Bulletins*. This article will therefore center on some of the more significant recent extensions of the WL's course.

The WL for its part has been devoting an extravagant amount of space to us in recent weeks in its organ, the *Bulletin*. We want to defer consideration of the Wohlforth series, "What is Spartacist?" (which at this writing has reached 5 parts, each 4 pages in length!), which is so full of grotesque misrepresentations, deliberate obscuration and out-and-out lies that our reply must of necessity be detailed and documented at greater length than is suitable here. In addition, we hereby challenge Wohlforth, as we have many times in the past, to a *public debate* on the history of our two groups and their political differences. We must say, however, that we do not expect it at this late date; the Wohlforth group has never dared to emerge from the security of its own organ to combat us politically on neutral ground.

But leaving aside definitive treatment of the Wohlforth "What is Spartacist?" series, his characterizations of the SL are absurd on the face of it. We are portrayed as selling out simultaneously to every left current under the sun—the SWP, Stalinism, Black Nationalism, the International Socialists, Lynn Marcus, Posadas, etc.—while carrying on throughout our additional task as "the fingerman for the world capitalists." The sellouts attributed to us are so all-sided that one is left only a pattern of conduct so incomprehensible as to recall the absurd and contradictory accusations leveled by Stalin against the Trotskyist "counter-revolutionary wreckers" in the 1930's. The WL's substitution of slanderous nonsense for polemical criticism is inte-

grally related to the same pattern of conduct they undertake elsewhere.

"Only the Workers League . . ."

To a casual *Bulletin* reader the immediately striking quality of the WL is its strident sectarianism. They sneer at women's liberation as non-proletarian and boast, "The Workers League is proud of the role it has played in relationship to SDS. We have had absolutely nothing to do with that mess." (*Bulletin*, 14 July 1969) As if isolation from the ideological battles of this country's most radical youth were something to be proud of! They blow their own horn even at the expense of destroying their credibility; thus reporting a trade union conference where several tendencies (including the SL) called for a political party of labor, or an anti-war protest where several tendencies (including the SL) demanded military victory to the NLF side, characteristically the *Bulletin* will complacently state that "Only the Workers League" called for the labor party demand, or Viet Cong victory, or what have you. But within this sectarian framework, the striking quality of actual political work by the WL is gross, even childish, opportunism.

### Cops and Bosses Do Not a Labor Party Make

Most *Bulletin* trade union reportage is based solely on a hasty reading of the *New York Times*, not on WL union involvement. The WL's real union work is concentrated almost exclusively in the New York white collar field, where they have several leading supporters. Their conduct here is archtypical of all their practices. Against even the qualms of local union officials, the WL supporters have insisted on supporting and upgrading as "fellow workers" the despised welfare guards whose main appetite is to get the legal right to carry guns, the better to intimidate and attack the desperately abused welfare recipients. These are the same guards who have helped to physically break a series of welfare workers' strikes. The WL supporters even defend the "right" of welfare directors—i.e. high-level management—to be members of the union and even run for union office! The 13 July *Bulletin* also solidarizes with the grievances of campus cops, whose job it is to "protect" campus property against radical students and "outside agitators." Behind the WL pro-cop line stands the most fundamental reformist belief. To support the cops' aims of better pay and better conditions (e.g. guns) to do better their job of oppressing all but society's property owners, of enforcing capitalist "law and order,"

is a fundamental betrayal of a class line. Cops are not workers—no more than Army generals or FBI informers, who also work for wages. We want neither hungry cops nor well-fed cops, but their replacement by workers' voluntary patrols, drawn from union members, welfare clients, students, etc., to protect not the bosses' order but the masses. The WL position shows they are in favor, not only of the racist and murderous status quo, but even of the racist murderers.

On the Black question itself, the WL has swallowed its earlier appetites to conciliate the SWP's Black Nationalism and, under the tutelage of Healy, adopted a position which caters to white racism. In the name of the very real need for working-class unity, the WL adamantly concludes that "Black Caucuses Are Reactionary" (headline from 21 April 1969 *Bulletin*) regardless of the circumstances of the particular Black workers or the program of the given caucus. But it is not just racial consciousness that cuts across class unity; it is *racial oppression*. The WL demands class unity on a *reactionary* basis and tells Black workers they must wait to struggle against their exploitation and oppression until the consciousness of all workers reaches the same level. This entirely belies the whole thrust of Trotsky's concept of transitional organizations.

### "Hard Hat" Conciliation

What this cops-bosses-whites accommodation adds up to is gross conciliation to the "hard hat" mood of conservatized sections of the labor movement. This conciliation is not new to the Workers League. When two years ago they launched their "Trade Unionists for a Labor Party" the essence was already there. The TULP 5-point platform deliberately omitted any reference to *either* racial oppression or the Viet Nam war, and the *Bulletin* (18 December 1967) explicitly defended these omissions when SLers protested that these questions were central to the class interests of workers. In a similarly opportunist manner, the WL's West Coast supporters walked out of the Bay Area "Committee for a Labor Party" over the CLP's principled opposition to militants relying on the bourgeois courts to fight union bureaucrats.

At the recent Chicago "Rank and File" union conference the WL representatives, in refusing to sign the SL oppositional statement, finally admitted that we each mean a different thing when we call for a labor party. The WL looks towards pressuring the existing union bureaucracy on their present



basis to build a labor party, a purely anti-Trotskyist, reformist approach. A political party representing the interests of workers can only be built on the struggle against the treacherous labor "leaders" and for the Trotskyist program. The cynics of the WL would have us think that more backward workers and ambitious bureaucrats will be the driving force to politically counterpose labor to the capitalist class. A party such as TULP's projected formation which did not fight racism and imperialism is a far cry from the labor party which Trotskyists have always fought for.

Most recently, the WL has committed yet another betrayal in the labor movement. In that same white collar union, when a coalition of liberals, Black Nationalists and right-wing Stalinists emerged to oppose the incumbent union leadership, the WL supporters called for a vote to this slate in the runoff on the grounds that when it was elected it would prove to be no better than the incumbents! (27 April 1970 *Bulletin*) Their rationale was that they wanted them elected to expose them in office before those who had illusions. This argument, one of the standard Leninist arguments explaining critical support to e.g. the British Labour Party against the Tories, has precisely *no meaning* here, for it rests upon the existence of a *class difference* between the contenders. No doubt many union militants did have illusions about the hustlers of the more left-talking slate, just as many anti-war militants had illusions about McCarthy or Kennedy. But Trotskyists do not play "lesser evil" politics unless there is a real, i.e. *class* difference between the alternatives, like Labour vs. Tory. The WL was just maneuvering in the two-bit game of union politics, for the sheer organizational advantage of telling their followers they held the "balance of power" at the cost of any claim to principle.

#### SWP and PL—A Conflict of Appetites

In 1967 the WL, which had appetites toward the Maoist Progressive Labor Party (PL), offered a defense of PLers who, in a fit of anti-Trotskyism, physically assaulted SWPers distributing election literature at a rally: "they [PL] are not incorrect in assuming that these are people who are scabbing on the Chinese Revolution. Their hostility is quite understandable." (*Bulletin*, 25 September 1967) The WL, for petty factional advantage, thus justified gangsterism instead of political debate within the radical movement. (Somewhat later, in a typical WL somersault, they declared themselves gung-ho for the self-same SWP election campaign they had denounced.) Now, following recent incidents of PL violence against SWP-YSAers in Boston, the WL piously avails itself of all the principled ar-

guments against gangsterism and exclusionism within the movement. In their appetites toward the YSA, they praise themselves to the skies as the defenders of free speech on the left, hoping nobody will remember their earlier shameful conduct.

That the WL's attitude toward exclusionism and gangsterism is determined not by principle but by appetite is further shown by their conduct at the Cleveland conference of the Student Mobilization Committee, run of course by the YSA. When the PL-SDSers were suppressed and justifiably raised a clamor against the bureaucratic manipulations of the conference leadership, the WL solidarized with the YSA (on the grounds of "Stalinism vs. Trotskyism") and denounced the victims for their unruly conduct. And this despite the fact that the criticism of the PL-SDS contingent was from the left and in the main correct, in opposition to the overwhelmingly class collaborationist nature of the SMC! It makes no sense at all for the WL to pose its behavior as "Stalinism vs. Trotskyism" when the essence of Stalinism, as of all anti-Marxist revisionism, is the subordination of the interests of the working class to *alien class forces*—precisely the role of the SMC in the anti-war movement, precisely that which the PL forces, for all their deficiencies, are correct in opposing.

Of a piece with this conduct is the 15 June *Bulletin*, which comes out for Mao and Sihanouk (the "patriotic prince") in Indochina. It might be thought that this line is just a continuation of their "Red Guards," "Arab Revolution" line and their soft, anti-Trotskyist attitude toward Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Cong. But given the WL's long-term pattern of making international principles of out minuscule factional appetites, their real aim is evidently to rally round Bill Epton and other PL dissidents who believe PL goes too far to the left in criticizing Sihanouk and, by implication, the Chinese government. To be sure, PL has deep contradictions—and these, flowing from their Stalinist heritage, are, without resolution, ultimately decisive in disqualifying them as a revolutionary tendency—but the WL is seeking to embarrass PL for one of its strengths, a strength which tends to isolate PL from more orthodox Maoists. Thus the *Bulletin* has recently made much of PL's expulsion of Bill Epton, one of its founders, but in the process has suppressed half of the Epton group's case against PL. Along with a catalogue of PL organizational atrocities, no doubt most of them accurate in the main, Epton berated PL for its criticism of Sihanouk and its polemics against "Marxist-Leninist" parties and "liberation movements." Thus, for petty factional reasons the WL has again falsified, ne-

glecting to point out that the main political thrust of the Epton document is criticism of PL *from the right*.

#### The Sherwood Affair, Or How to Defend the Indefensible

The 5 June 1967 *Bulletin* carried a front-page editorial entitled "No Individual Cop Outs" presenting there the standard Leninist position, which we hold, that anti-war militants must not evade military service by individual draft resistance which ensures their isolation from the mass of working-class conscripts. Well and good. But the WL was willing to betray this principle the first time the opportunity presented itself, in the person of one Robert Hartley Sherwood (who had earlier left the SL by signing one of the usual wretched pacifist-Stalinist-SWP popular front "peace" calls). On his way through New York, Sherwood joined the WL, then continued to Canada to avoid the draft. There he acquired the status of a landed immigrant and became the WL spokesman there. Such an action, while fully legal, was a gross betrayal of the WL's public stand. The SL publicly pointed out the rotten opportunism of the WL, and they gritted their teeth, until they found an out. The Canadian authorities found an omission in Sherwood's papers and for a brief period threatened to deport him. The WL immediately declared that we had deliberately "fingered" him by our exposure of their rotten private turnabout, stating in an article entitled "Spartacist Aids Rulers": "We state unequivocally that the Spartacist League acts as the fingerman for the world capitalists." (*Bulletin*, 2 December 1968) However outrageous, such a serious accusation must be dealt with.

The WL's inability to pass up the recruitment of one (badly tarnished) member, just because of one major Leninist principle, could not be ignored. And like the WL, the Stalinists have often sought to retreat behind charges of "red-baiting" inside unions when Trotskyists exposed them for their sellouts, but despite these anguished guilty cries the necessity to call the CP to account for its betrayals remained.

While Sherwood's legal case was still pending (and after the WL had made its scandalous accusation) the SL, in keeping with our principled policy of defending all radicals against ruling-class repression whatever our political differences, sent the WL-Sherwood defense committee an official statement of support and a \$10 donation. And the WL of course readily accepted the money! Thus either the WL knowingly accepted money from "police agents" or else they acknowledge that their accusation was of course a vicious, baseless slander.

The pattern here is a very simple  
(Continued Next Page)

## ... WOHLFORTH

repetition of that of their mentor Gerry Healy in England, when he had an opponent (Ernie Tate of the SWP-affiliated United Secretariat) beaten, then compounded his outrageous conduct by threatening to take Tate to the bourgeois courts for protesting. To further justify themselves, the Healyites then escalated this to a general defense of their using the courts against opponents and union bureaucrats ("IC Statement on Tate Allegation," February 1967). (This reliance on the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state is cut from the same cloth as, but is more self-serving than, the SWP's 1963 call for U.S. troops to the South to protect Black civil rights!) Caught by a public revelation of an overt betrayal of principle, the WL, like Healy, tried to take refuge in deepening the worst consequences and implications of their action, seeking to silence us and playing right into the hands of the Stalinists, who have sought to slander the Trotskyists as police agents since before the Moscow Trials.

Characterization of the conduct of the WL is not exhausted by noting its ever-increasing opportunism in a sectarian shell. The opportunism itself contains two characteristic parallel streaks: 1) working both sides of the street at the same time (e.g. "Only the WL has fought for the victory of the Viet Cong" while denying the war is an issue of interest to TULP); 2) complete 180° reversals in line even every few months (e.g. conciliating the SWP, then PL's beating of SWPers, then back again). The deep-seated contempt of Healy-Wohlforth for their followers, and their mockery of any semblance of Marxism, has been seen before. Comrade Lenin's term for such people was *political bandits*.

### Internationalism

To be sure, under pressure a knowledgeable WL cadre might be forced to admit the factual and essential truth of

everything we have written about his organization and still be unperturbed. When all else fails, the WL always invokes its crowning glory—its "internationalism." The argument runs something like this: We are part of the Fourth International and you are not; the IC is lineally descended from Trotsky himself; its core, the British Socialist Labour League, has a daily paper; we have never opposed Gerry Healy on any subject; you oppose the IC and are therefore anti-internationalists, petty-bourgeois American chauvinists who refuse to subordinate yourselves to international discipline. Thus our not-so-hypothetical WL member, armed on a micro-scale with the same assurance of a Stalinist apparatchnik in the Comintern, asserts as self-evident exactly that which experience disproves: namely, that international connections are the only proof, and are sufficient proof, of internationalism.

But organizational loyalty to the Healy-Banda group (and their politically far superior but internationally quiescent French allies, the Lambert group) simply evades the struggle which we of the SL face: to rebuild the Fourth International through a complex process of splits and fusions among existing "Trotskyist" groups combined with intervention into the working-class struggle directly. The Healyites simply despaired of the outcome of such a struggle, and contented themselves with being big fish in small ponds, in setting up the IC as yet another competing spurious "Fourth International" like the United Secretariat and numerous others.

Factually pivotal to the spurious nature of the Healyite assertions are two points from the London 1966 IC Conference, from which we were expelled on the transparent organizational pretext that comrade Robertson, a member of the Spartacist delegation, refused to satisfactorily apologize for having missed a session of the Conference without prior permission. But comrade Robertson *did* offer, not a groveling admis-

sion of petty-bourgeois American nationalism, but a genuine apology for genuine ignorance of an alleged, unannounced "rule" (which was of course never applied to other delegates who had missed sessions), thus exposing the Healyites' fraudulent, calculated aim to create a servile U.S. appendage. To make absolutely unambiguous the real character of the Healy "apology" campaign—to which he devoted the main attention of 1½ days of a 4-day international gathering!—we are reprinting below comrade Robertson's complete final statement to the IC Conference:

"Comrades: We believe that it is a violation of Leninist practice to demand that a comrade affirm to his comrades what he does not believe. I have in substance said several times that if I had known of the rule I would certainly have abided by it. I wish to assure the comrades that my action was in no way intended to constitute a violation of the procedures governing the conduct of individuals participating in the Conference. However, this has been deemed not good enough. Instead, in the guise of discipline, the Spartacist organization has been subjected to a series of slanderous attacks, despite our basic political agreement on the necessity of the fight against revisionism. This is an attempt to substitute for international democratic centralism for the American section a mechanism not of consciousness and discipline but of fear and obedience. Hence an incident without significance of an unintentional violation of protocol has been uniquely singled out and inflated into an accusation of petty-bourgeois arrogance and American imperial chauvinism. If the comrades go ahead to exclude us from this Conference, we ask only what we have asked before—study of our documents, including our present draft on U.S. work before you now, and our work over the next months and years. We will do the same, and a unification of the proper Trotskyist forces will be achieved, despite this tragic setback."

And these are the words of a supposed arrogant petty-bourgeois nationalist!

That the Healyites found this statement manifestly unacceptable and excluded the Spartacist delegation from the Conference forthwith shows that they were seeking not a recognition of supposed rules but a cringing demonstration of organizational and political subservience.

The other factual point is that the Conference itself admitted with reference to the relations between the British and French IC groups (the IC's only significant sections) that "the only method of arriving at decisions that remains possible at present is the principle of unanimity." This admission that the IC *does not have* international democratic centralism means that the IC as an organized body is essentially

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was now Pabloist and must be fought from within the party. To Wohlforth, this characterization could mean only one thing: we were in the way and had to be gotten rid of—first from the common faction, then out of the party. For the Healyites could conceive of only two possible courses of action. Either the United Secretariat would reunify with the IC and Wohlforth and his minions would continue to play the role of left cover and party policeman for Dobbs and Co., or the fight would be over and they would split. Healy's recent revealing turn-about toward the Pabloists shows the same false dichotomy: either conciliate the Pabloist leadership or else declare the fight over. Principled struggle is their excluded middle.

**Incompatible**

Faced with such a history, the much-vaunted "Marxist method" that Wohlforth teaches his members is of necessity a profound cynicism which cannot but erode and destroy the backbone of those who start out by seeking revolution and end up following Wohlforth ever deeper into the mire. A cadre which learns to cover up the embarrassing old opportunism while embracing the new, to proclaim "Only the Workers League . . ." in defiance of self-evident realities, to excuse the 180° shifts in line by reference to the frequency of the *Bulletin*, cannot, whatever its intentions, build consciousness and make a revolution. Thus even when the formal political positions of the WL and the SL have closely impinged, as they have at times in the past, the cadres of our two organizations are fundamentally incompatible; we have been educated in two different schools, the one in cynicism, the other in Trotskyism.

The example of the Healy-Wohlforth grouping provides an important lesson. Even the most revolutionary ideas of our epoch—Trotskyism—in the hands of a corrupted counterfeiter like Wohlforth lead straight to an organization like WL. And that is why we are compelled to mercilessly expose, combat and destroy such a trend in the working-class movement. Nothing less than the construction of an authentic revolutionary vanguard in the citadel of imperialism hinges on the outcome. ■

**WOHLFORTH EXPOSED: Bulletin slanders us as "fingerman for the world capitalists" then takes money from us three weeks later!**

*illusory*. Its real nature is a bloc between two national groupings. It is not an International at all, "Fourth" or otherwise!

But the Wohlforthite travesty on internationalism goes even further. The WL prides itself on its loyalty to the Healy leadership. Typical of their cynical attitude toward political questions, the WL tendency has *never* fought for its political positions even *inside* the IC. For example, at one point virtually every member of the Wohlforth cadre held a position akin to ours on Cuba—that Cuba is a deformed workers state, not a capitalist state, as Healy asserts—yet they never for an instant opposed Healy on that or any other point. What kind of "internationalist" joyfully embraces a "discipline" which is not mutually binding on all sections, which is not based on democratic centralism, in an "International" where the only proof of internationalism is renunciation in principle and in advance of all political differences? This is the "internationalism" of Lovestone and Browder toward the Stalinized Comintern, not of Trotskyists.

**The Unspeakable  
In Pursuit of the Inedible**

One principal real reason for our expulsion from the 1966 IC Conference was our assertion that the anti-revisionist forces in the Trotskyist movement had not yet done very well in smashing Pabloism organizationally, and that a further process of splits and fusions would have to take place before the political lines would be clear. The IC, however, asserted that the victory over Pabloism had been definitively won and the continuity of the Fourth International on a revolutionary basis assured.

But, four years later, the self-same Healy, representing a badly degenerated IC, has now come to the United Secretariat with a proposal for common political discussion and common work, hopefully to result in a "joint international conference"! What can one say? In the four years the Pabloists in their substance have gone from bad to worse, but the IC (with Wohlforth trailing behind with an article of oh-so-

comradely criticism of the SWP in the 20 July *Bulletin*) proposes unity! What is apparently really happening is—as we insisted in 1966, and before, and after—that some individuals and groupings in the United Secretariat formation have, in the light of events and experience, begun to *genuinely* move left in opposition to the United Secretariat leadership. And Healy, in a clumsy effort to ingratiate himself with these forces, commits the grossly unprincipled act of authenticating and bolstering the Trotskyist credentials of the whole Pabloist gang—Frank, Mandel, Maitan, Hansen—by a "unity maneuver, after years of declaring them already defeated and committing even provocation and violence against their organizations.

Healy will certainly not succeed in his wooden maneuver. But what we have before us is a pristine example of *why* political differentiation along clear lines has not taken place among alleged Trotskyists over the last 20 years. Anyone who believed Healy's unity protestations would have to conclude that there is indeed a "family of Trotskyism," as centrists have long suggested, and that the questions separating erstwhile Trotskyists into their separate organizations are not decisive. This only deepens the confusion which has served to retard political polarization and the rebirth of a real Fourth International. Thank you, Gerry Healy.

Healy applied the same method to the 1963 fight inside the SWP. Our comrades correctly saw that the party had become a rightward-moving *centrist* organization whose central leadership

**MARXIST BULLETIN NO. 9 (Part II)**  
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## ... WOMEN

(Continued from Page 16)

access to the bearer of his children. Hence, the institution of marriage emerges. The bourgeois family is the main social institution of women's oppression.

At the very beginning of the industrial revolution women and children formed the bulk of the industrial proletariat. The reasons for this are well established. Women and children were cheap, unskilled, docile labor used by the rising capitalists to batter down the wages of men (usually more highly paid) and to destroy the craft industries employing (relatively) highly paid male artisans. Workers with large families were often given preference by the early capitalists who, as a matter of fact, often compelled the worker to require his entire family to work in the factory or lose his job.

The bourgeoisie of this period actually devised ideological apologia for female and child labor. The limitation of female and child labor (by, e.g., the Factory Acts in Britain) represented concessions wrested by the working class from capital. The progressive withdrawal of this super-exploited labor from the factory system compelled the capitalists to employ machinery instead if they wished to remain in business.

The destruction of the traditional family by the employment of women and children in production creates the possibility of founding the relationship between the sexes on a new economic basis. But the spontaneous way this employment developed with the rise of capital was, to quote Marx, "a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery" which the advanced sections of the working class fought. The kernel of this contradiction is that under capitalism the family remains—because there is no other socio-economic institution to replace it.

The bourgeoisie and its theorists tinkered with the old institutions in order to fit them better into the new industrial capitalism. In the age of disintegrating feudalism, before the capitalists had accumulated much experience in running their own system, some of them even toyed with very radical ideas regarding the state, family and religion. They soon learned, however, that whether they themselves liked conventional family life or not, or whether they believed in God or not, the institutions of religion and the family were indispensable for inculcating the required docility, submissiveness, respect for authority and superstition in the working class. The bourgeoisie learned to pay public obeisance to the ideals of religion and the family whether they personally believed in them or not. When economically necessary, the capitalist

class will tolerate and even encourage female and child labor—but without allowing the development of institutions to replace the family.

Although individual families were destroyed—and are being destroyed—by capitalism, the family as an institution was not hurt, as it rises or falls with the existence of private property. When economic considerations permitted, the ruling class periodically initiated campaigns, through the media and the churches, to get women back into the home. This tendency reached a peak of brutal chauvinism and cynical barbarism with the Nazi slogan, "Kinder, Küche, Kirche," which portrays the woman deluded by religion and as breeder, babysitter and cook. "The family that prays together stays together": both religion and the family are bourgeois institutions of false consciousness.

Women and children left the process of production, not chiefly because the capitalists feared for the nuclear family and forced them out, but in large part because under capitalism no substitute for the family is available. The domestic labor performed by the housewife has no exchange value, and the family is socially necessary to maintain the working class. Women who do work outside the home are not freed from the role of domestic slave; they merely have one responsibility added to another.

In the present period, a period of capitalism in decay, there simply are not enough jobs to go around. Women, because of the domestic role they of necessity (under capitalism) must more or less fulfill, are on the fringes of the reserve army of the working class. When they are needed in production (such as World War II) the capitalists have no compunctions about the sanctity of hearth and home, and will gladly hire them to do "men's" work and will just as gladly drop them from production when they are no longer needed. (An unemployed male ex-soldier would be a far greater threat to the bourgeois order than the more docile women unemployed workers.)

The hollow satisfactions of male supremacy within the home oppress both the men and the women and encourage false consciousness (male chauvinism). The working man learns to direct his anger and frustrations against his wife, rather than against the bosses. He is told that he is the boss in his own home ("a man's home is his castle"). Thus, the family as an economic and social institution is a shackle on the consciousness of the men workers as well as that of women.

### A "Separate" Revolution?

Many women's liberation activists understand that the destruction of capitalism is necessary, not only to the overthrow of the oppression of women but also to the abolition of war, racism and

exploitation. But they contend a "separate" women's revolution is necessary to abolish sexual oppression. Some supposedly Marxist organizations, most prominently the International Socialists, play down their socialist convictions and concede the point that a socialist revolution would not "automatically" liberate women. To say this shows no understanding of what a revolution means in terms of consciousness. A socialist revolution does not "automatically" liberate anyone, because it is not an automatic process. These empiricists look at the working class as it is, filled with male chauvinist backwardness, and imagine that these backward workers will be the motive force of socialist revolution. The working class will indeed be the class which liberates society from capitalism, but not the class as it is now, filled with male chauvinist, racist, religious and patriotic illusions. It is precisely the task of the revolutionaries to replace these illusions by class consciousness, an awareness that such backward prejudices divide the working class and keep it from struggling against its real enemies.

### The Russian Revolution

Women who maintain the necessity of a "separate" women's revolution point to the Bolshevik Revolution as an example of a class revolution which did not liberate women. This is a very important question. A closer examination of the Russian Revolution shows precisely that the revolution was such a

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## WOMEN'S LIBERATION— REVOLUTION— THE CLASS STRUGGLE

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powerful force for women's liberation that it required a counter-revolution, which placed political power in the hands of a usurping nationalist bureaucracy, to reverse the process. Excellent documentation of the role of women under Russian revolutionary society and under the counter-revolutionary Stalin is provided in Dale Ross Rubenstein's article "How the Russian Revolution Failed Women" (available from the Socialist Workshop, 376-A Dolores Street, San Francisco).

The Bolsheviks in their revolutionary agitation campaigned ceaselessly for the rights of women. Upon coming to power, they immediately set about to insure women free and equal status in Soviet society. Women won full political

and legal rights. The revolutionary state also attempted to destroy the traditional family and replace its petty housekeeping functions with voluntary collective institutions. Enlightened legislation concerning marriage, divorce, illegitimacy and abortion contrasted strikingly with the traditional backward peasant attitudes toward women. Alexandra Kollantai described the hopes of the new regime—freedom and equality:

*"On the ruins of the former family, we shall soon see a new form rising which will involve altogether different relations between men and women, and which will be a union of affection and comradeship, a union of two equal members of the communist society, both of them free, both of them independent, both of them workers. No more domestic 'servitude' for women. No more inequality within the family."*

#### Stalinist Degeneration

The Stalinist counter-revolution which wiped out the old Bolsheviks, stripped the soviets of power and made a travesty of internationalism, applied its reactionary fist to the position of women. Whereas the revolutionary regime demanded that all its citizens be free to participate in all aspects of social life, the Stalinists glorified the full-time housewife who fulfilled her "mission" by caring for home and family. The Marxist belief in the eventual withering away of the traditional family was replaced by attempts to bolster the family and enhance parental authority. Divorce was made much more difficult and abortion was illegalized. In 1943, co-education was abolished in favor of separate education designed to "strengthen our primary social unit, the socialist family, on the basis of full development of the characteristics of masculinity and femininity in the father and mother, as heads of the family with equal rights." The purpose of education was defined as developing "boys who will be good fathers and manly fighters for the socialist homeland, and girls who will be intelligent mothers competent to rear the new generation." Just as Stalin was willing to use Great Russian chauvinism against national minorities, praise the Orthodox Church and foster anti-Semitism, so he found that the backward Russian family created a base for his bureaucratic and authoritarian aims. Even when private property had been legally abolished, the institution of the family served as a tool of the bureaucracy in the degeneration of the Russian revolution. It is vital that women's liberationists today understand that it was not "socialism," but *Stalinism*, that failed women.

The family unit represents a division of social labor far older than capitalism, dating back to the division of labor between men and women. As such, the

family will require more than the abolition of capitalism in and of itself before it is superseded by a freer system of relations between men and women. The overthrow of the capitalist state is essential to the liberation of individuals from the narrowness, authoritarianism and sexual inequality inherent in family life. But this task will not be fully accomplished until class distinctions and their vestiges have been eradicated in the achievement of a classless society. This also holds true for other features of all class societies—aspects not peculiar to capitalism, such as the need for a state power, the existence of a certain amount of religious superstition, what Marx called "the idiocy of rural life," etc. The ideology of male chauvinism is pervasive and its subtle overtones will not be wholly purged from individuals shaped by capitalism even by a cataclysmic social revolution. But it is a far cry from this observation to the conclusion—based on those so-called "Marxist" societies which perpetuate oppressive institutions and rely on the survival of the family to suppress consciousness and render the masses subservient to the parasitic bureaucracies—that women's liberation requires a "separate" revolution.

These countries—like Russia, where the deepening social gains of a proletarian revolution were cut short by the failure to extend the revolution internationally and the coming to power of a repressive Stalinist bureaucracy, or China and Cuba, which eradicated capitalism under a petty-bourgeois leadership, in the absence of a conscious proletariat acting for itself, and upon a heritage of economic backwardness and colonial oppression—require far more than a supplemental women's revolution. What is required for the Sino-Soviet states is the building of a proletarian revolutionary vanguard to oust the parasitic, nationalist bureaucracies, replace political control by an elite with democratic government by the working people and establish a revolutionary internationalist foreign policy. Only from this context can a society based on *consciousness*—which needs the greatest imaginable atmosphere of freedom for its citizens rather than continued institutional ideological shackles on their bodies and minds—eradicate the bourgeois family and enable women to take their rightful place as free and equal participants in all aspects of social life.

#### For a Class Perspective!

In the advanced capitalist nations—the U.S., Western Europe, Japan, etc.—ruled by a rich, militarily powerful and cohesive ruling class, only the working class has the potential to abolish capitalism. Many women's liberationists feel the problem with earlier women's movements and women activists was that they involved themselves with

"other people's" issues and allowed their own oppression to be considered secondary. Women's liberation activists point to the participation of militant women in the abolitionist movement and the subordination of the struggle for women's suffrage to the fight for Black suffrage, and resolve to "do their own thing" and dedicate themselves to women's liberation above all. But regardless of how strongly these women feel their own oppression, the class question is the decisive issue in class society. Additional, compounding oppression—of nationalities, racial minorities, women, etc.—cannot be solved except in a class context. Any movement for social liberation which fails to identify itself with the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class is doomed to be beset by utopianism, crackpotism, liberal illusions and, ultimately, irrelevance or co-optation by the ruling class.

It is not a question of demanding that women recognize their problems as less important or resign themselves to "Uncle Tom" status. Absolutely no quarter must be given to puritanical or male chauvinist ideas or practices in the revolutionary movement, not just in deference to militant women but because concessions to false consciousness destroy the integrity of any movement and render it impotent as a revolutionary vehicle.

By entering the spectrum of multi-issue radical politics, women do not sell out their own struggle. On the contrary, it is only by developing revolutionary class consciousness that the women's struggle can be advanced. There is a place for a separate transitional organization to fight women's oppression, organize women whose introduction to radicalism is the issue of sexual oppression, and insure women in a male chauvinist society the protection of their interests. The development of consciousness is not a uniform process and specially oppressed groupings in society need separate transitional organizations of struggle. A women's transitional organization must reject classless illusions and replace the provincialism inherent in separatism with an understanding of the need for a class-based, combined and unified assault on capitalism. Such an organization must be linked to the class struggle through a commitment to the struggle of the exploited working class and through the participation and political leadership of a revolutionary proletarian vanguard which transcends the current radical fragmentation into separatist "interest groups" by a capacity to unite the forces of the oppressed and exploited in concerted struggle.

The present women's liberation movement includes both radical women and women whose orientation is basically liberal and middle-class. The focus of

(Continued Next Page)

## ... WOMEN

many women seems to be mainly the social and personal problems of middle-class, college-educated women. Groups such as the National Organization of Women (NOW) embody a legalistic and merely liberal reformist approach to sexual oppression as manifested by the media's portrayal of women and by sexual discrimination in middle-class careers. The experience of the problems of middle-class women may provide a valid starting point for radicalization, but a movement which adopts a liberal, middle-class approach is doomed to sterility and failure.

The women's liberation movement must adopt a *working-class* orientation. This involves not only a recognition of the need for class consciousness but, concretely, an effort to draw working-class women into the women's liberation movement through an understanding of the role of sexual oppression as a bulwark of capitalist rule.

### Women as Workers

The economic aspects of the inferior position of women in our society provide the most immediate benefits to capitalism. Whenever capital needs to draw women out into the labor force, it has been able to use the ideology of male superiority to justify the super-exploitation of women workers—that is, women being paid less for doing the same work as the men.

The assumption is that the woman's main role is that of tender mother; hence, she is forced to take care of her children, even if they are unwanted, even when she is divorced. Any woman who wants more out of life is termed "unnatural" or "unfit". The lie is pushed that women are fit only for domestic chores and that therefore their labor is not worth as much as the labor of men.

Women make up one third of the American labor force, but the wages of the full-time working woman average only 60% of those of the average male working full-time. The non-white working woman, suffering under a double load of exploitation and oppression, must indeed be the most victimized category in American capitalist society. In itself, the lower average income of women workers roughly indicates the degree of their oppression, not their super-exploitation relative to working men. (They might—and do—take home less money because they are concentrated in less productive jobs.) But women, even more than other oppressed groups such as Black male workers, frequently receive less for work *identical* to that performed by more highly paid men. In addition to suffering oppression and discrimination, working women are super-exploited in the literal and technical sense of the term. In Brit-

ain, where unions have calculated that wages would increase 11% if women received the same pay as men, equal pay for equal work has become a major union demand. In the U.S., a related process of awakening is going on.

Male chauvinism has made many women workers passive in accepting their lower wages and generally poorer working conditions. Many women are convinced that it isn't "ladylike" or "feminine" to be really militant, that political activity is only for men, that the picket line is too dangerous a place for women. These attitudes must be fought. Radicals should encourage militancy among women workers and relate women's oppression to the oppression and alienation that all workers experience under capitalism. Thus, women's liberation has an important role to play in the struggles of the working class. Further, situations sometimes arise where the women—because they are more oppressed by poor working conditions, low wages and speed-up—are more militant than the men. Women are not pale, fragile, helpless creatures; as workers engaged in industrial production, they can wield workers' power!

### Enter the "Marxists"

It is the responsibility of all serious Marxists to intervene in the women's liberation movement with an analysis and program which can provide the polarization and political direction which can win militant women to Marxism. However, the participation of such groups without such a program can only serve as a brake on the movement and reinforce the worst fears of serious women militants toward what is presented as Marxism.

The Socialist Workers Party-Young Socialist Alliance (SWP-YSA) provides, as usual, the perfect example of non-Marxist tail-ending. Their propaganda and interventions into women's liberation conferences have been utterly devoid of programmatic content or class criteria. They have once again transgressed the principle that must be the cornerstone of all intervention into mass movements—the need for a working-class orientation. An official SWP-YSA position paper distributed at a New York "Congress to Unite Women" paralleled their role in the anti-war movement, where they provide the left cover for a block between anti-war youth and liberal politicians. It stated:

*"The women's liberation movement must be open to all women, no matter what their political beliefs in order for it to become the most massive and have the best chance to win the struggles it carries out."*

Does the YSA really believe *all* women belong in the movement? How about Jackie Kennedy, then? They proudly call for "non-exclusion" of the class enemy,

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### Part I

## Basic Documents of The Spartacist League

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and even for a separate women's political party.

In women's liberation groups and conferences, YSA women have permitted themselves to be horribly red-baited as "man-dominated" and "stooges" because of their membership in an organization which includes men. Instead of challenging the male chauvinist premise underlying such an accusation—that women are so inferior they could not help being politically dominated by the men in their organization—the YSA women remain silent or make excuses; one replied, yes it's a serious problem but we're working on it. The YSA's general unwillingness to present any controversial political positions in broad mass movements is also compounded by a special problem in the women's liberation arena. The SWP-YSA view of the solution to all social struggles is separatism—Black Nationalism and "community control." When any social group demands liberation the YSA, regardless of the material possibilities, cries "self-determination." The logical extension of this position toward the problem of sexual oppression is the demand, raised by some women, for lesbian communes and even a separate women's state. The YSA, which has a policy of driving any known homosexuals out of its organization, is far too staid and respectable to trumpet the call for lesbian communes! Hence their women's liberation intervention remains abstract and programless in propaganda as well as in practice.

The International Socialism group gives a high priority to women's liberation work. Their propaganda is often correct but is flawed by their premise that a socialist revolution is not sufficient for women's liberation, as if imagining that this country's proletarian revolution will take a Stalinist form and will somehow manage to defeat capitalism in the heart of world imperialism without any increase in social consciousness in the masses. Their women's liberation intervention is focused through the "IS Women's Caucus." If the "Women's Caucus" decides the line for the women's liberation arena, one wonders whether IS women are excluded from decisions involving, for example, policy toward an all-male trade union or work among draftees in the U.S. Army. The other interpretation of



the role of the "Women's Caucus" is equally disturbing. If the "Women's Caucus" is not the body empowered to make policy, then it is no more than a sop to IS women, encouraging them to pursue "women's work."

Progressive Labor and its SDS organization give lip service to women's liberation but in actual fact capitulate to puritanism and male chauvinist backwardness. They have refused to oppose bourgeois marriage and the family, instead insisting that revolutionaries can "make the family a unit for fighting the ruling class." Most of their membership is incapable of defending their position, rooted in puritanism, that the demand for free legal voluntary abortion should be opposed. At the New Haven SDS Convention, PLers repeatedly attacked the demand, raised by Spartacist supporters, as "middle-class"—a transparent absurdity since middle-class women have the money and connections to secure safe abortions while working-class women get butchered for \$25 or have their chances of functioning as political activists cut short by the responsibilities of rearing often unwanted children. Most recently, PL-SDS has come out against birth control, echoing the Black Nationalist argument that the only purpose of birth control is Black genocide. This line of reasoning sees women not as potential revolutionaries themselves but as breeders of (male) revolutionaries. Inside PL, considerable hostility was unleashed by the publication in *Challenge* of a "Women's Column" of recipes and household hints and the assertions by West Coast PL leaders that it is right women should play a subordinate role within the organization.

The role of the Workers League has been to deny the responsibility to fight for Marxism within the women's liberation movement. They have invoked their sometime pseudo-class line and denounced the issue as middle-class. Their leading figure, Tim Wohlforth, at their recent West Coast Educational Conference, denied that women under capitalism are specially oppressed and mocked the movement's participants. This supposedly "proletarian" position completely belies the Leninist approach. Central to Lenin's method was the attempt to reach oppressed strata (e.g. oppressed nationalities as well as women and youth) with an analysis and program linking their oppression to class exploitation. On this basis he fought Rosa Luxemburg on the national question, insisting that class exploitation was the decisive but not the only aspect of oppression in class society. Instead of separating the Bolshevik struggle from the question of oppressed nationalities as did the sectarians he fought to destroy the influence of the reactionary nation-

alists by fighting national oppression from an international proletarian standpoint. Trotsky explicitly recognizes that special forms of oppression—Blacks, women, youth—would require special organizational forms of struggle based on the need to unite with the class-conscious proletariat, linked to the vanguard party through its most conscious cadres. The attitude of Marxists to a women's organization should be determined by its program. The Workers League—which recently proclaimed that cops are part of the working class—has once again shown its utter lack of a class line in politics by refusing to recognize the fight of women against their degradation under capitalism as a legitimate focus of a Marxist vanguard.

#### Program and Organization

Considerable attention in the movement is devoted to the presentation of women—and women's liberation—in the "mass media": the capitalist press, TV, etc. The degrading, patronizing treatment of women through these media is certainly a valid target in exposing and fighting male chauvinist attitudes. But the movement's preoccupation with the "mass media" is also evidence of its organizational weakness. The women's liberation movement, by and large, seems to consider that its main propaganda vehicle—the way ideas about sexual oppression are shaped and disseminated—is the capitalist press rather than its own propaganda. Compared with the large numbers of women interested in and participating in the movement, the volume of regular, externally directed women's liberation propaganda is surprisingly small. The women's liberation movement cannot rely on "the media" to present women's struggles, but must aggressively and effectively present their ideas publicly, especially through a regular press, and seek to win adherents.

The political amorphousness of the present women's liberation movement must be replaced by a commitment to a socialist, working-class program of struggle. Its organizational diffuseness must be transcended by the creation of a non-exclusionist class-conscious wom-

en's liberation organization with a perspective of becoming national in scope. Political consciousness cannot be developed in isolation; small groups and sporadic conferences cannot play the role of an organized group in which the particular local activities and ideological currents can receive a wider hearing and which can direct co-ordinated activity. Political consciousness is built by the open competition of different viewpoints for adherents and by the testing of competing programs in practice. The women's liberation movement must reject spurious unity across class lines in favor of a broad-based radical women's liberation organization with a clear program of struggle.

The following points form the basis for the development of a transitional program for women's liberation.

*For the abolition of family restrictions:*

1. Abolition of abortion laws; each woman must be free to make her own decisions. Free abortions, as part of a demand for free quality medical care for everybody, so poor women will have the same freedom of choice as middle-class women. Freely available birth control devices and information.

2. Free full-time child-care facilities for all children, the expenses to be borne by the employer or the state. Free pre-natal, maternity and post-natal care with no loss in pay for time off.

3. Establishment of free voluntary cafeterias in the factories and other places of work.

4. Divorce at the request of either partner. Abolition of alimony with expenses for children to be paid by the state.

5. Lower the legal age of adulthood to 16. State stipend for schooling or training for any child who wishes to leave home. Free education for all children, with housing, food and stipend. End "sex tracking"—Home Ec for girls, all boys' vocational schools teaching skilled trades. No *loco parentis*. Student-teacher-worker control of all schools and colleges.

*To fight the super-exploitation of women workers:*

6. Full and equal pay for equal work. Equal work: equal access to all job categories. Shorter work week with no loss in pay ("30 for 40") to eliminate unemployment at the capitalists' expense.

*For workers power:*

7. Only the working people of this society can establish a free and humane social order. Class conscious workers and their allies—revolutionary students, militants of the women's and Black and other movements—must fight for the creation of their own political party and establishment of a workers government. ■

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# Toward Women's Liberation

The emergence of a movement for women's liberation has attracted much recent attention. The "mass media" have seized on the outspoken women activists as a natural for building circulation, while radical organizations seek to capitalize on the issue and hastily add "and male chauvinism" to their traditional catalogue of evils. The women's liberation movement itself is loosely organized and ideologically heterogeneous, and differs widely accordingly to locality. Most of its participants have at some point belonged to small informal groups in which the distinction between "personal liberation" and political action is not clearly defined; many who consider themselves part of the movement belong to no group at all. The response to the issue on the part of most multi-issue radical tendencies has paralleled their earlier adaptation to the Black liberation movement—enthusiastic tail-ending in lieu of political polemic and program. For this reason—as well as many other, less justifiable reasons—the women's liberation activists generally view the broader radical movement with contempt compounded by suspicion.

Many of the women who helped to initiate the women's liberation movement had earlier participated in multi-issue radical politics. By and large, they found these groups steeped in male chauvinist (now called "sexist") assumptions and practices; they were second-class citizens whose main contribution was expected to be typing and clerical work rather than creative political leadership. The New Left—which prided itself upon its democracy and libertarian atmosphere—and the Black Nationalists were perhaps the worst offenders in this regard. The women activists' refusal to tolerate systematic degradation in the radical movement is as understandable, and as necessary, as their rebellion against the brutal oppression of capitalist society. But many ideas current among women's liberation militants show a tendency to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Some of the propaganda of the movement shows considerable familiarity with and explicit rejection of Marxist concepts. Just as many young radicals start on the path to anti-communism out of revulsion against the fake "communism" of such organizations as the Communist Party, so many women activists have taken the step of rejecting Marxism as a reaction against the gross male chauvinism of self-styled Marxists. Nothing could be more disastrous to the revolutionary women's struggle.

## Personal Liberation?

Thus many women's liberationists define the basic flaw of the multi-issue

radicals not as bad politics but as politics *itself*. To some, politics by definition equals male power trip. For these women, the goal is not political action but "personal liberation." This view is at best irrational. A main rationale for the small group, in which women discuss personal problems and experiences, is that the participants learn to understand that their "hang-ups" are not unique but are shared by other women. But if this is so—if the individual's guilts and dissatisfactions are rooted in society rather than the fault of the individual woman—then the quest for individual self-liberation cannot be fruitfully pursued in a deforming male chauvinist society. It is a society which must be changed. We who have been raised and shaped in capitalist society can never be truly free; the greatest personal liberation we can attain is creative participation in revolutionary struggle against an oppressive social system. Further, the assumption that the only legitimate ideas about women's liberation must flow entirely from each woman's personal experience denies the importance of history and condemns every movement to repeat past mistakes.

## For Male Participation

It is accepted as axiomatic in the women's liberation movement that participation in the movement is restricted to women. Arguments for this policy vary. Some claim that only women are interested in fighting against women's oppression. Where this is true, it is a sufficient rationale. Others insist that male presence automatically relegates women to an inferior position in an organization. This idea is dangerous because it accepts the male chauvinist premise and assumes that women are really inferior, just as Black separatists seem to fear that whites would automatically dominate any organization. We ask, why? Are men really better? Women militants can and must offer political leadership to women and to men. Certainly a women's liberation organization can legitimately insist on its right to define its own membership. The movement must in any case exclude men who are merely curious, or are just trying to meet women, or seek to wreck the group. But the women's liberation movement should define itself on the basis of politics, not sex (or age, or race, etc.). Women who object to society's stereotyping of them as creatures whose ideas and behavior are determined by their sex ("women are passive," "women instinctively love children," "that's an unladylike idea," etc.) must also allow men the right to consciousness.

## Are Women a "Class"?

The most common rationale for excluding men is at least logical, but wrong. Many women's liberationists define men as "the enemy" and insist that the basic division in society is not class against class but men against women, that women are "a class." From this analysis flow slogans like "Women Unite" and "Sisterhood is Powerful." Women militants argue that all women are oppressed, and thus all women should unite against their oppression. It is certainly true that male chauvinist ideology oppresses all women. Likewise racist ideology oppresses all Black people. There are other kinds of multi-class oppression as well: oppression of nationalities, oppression of youth. But the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class is the decisive axis upon which this society turns. To put it another way, Jackie Kennedy and her maid both suffer oppression as women, but the maid has more in common with her own husband than she has with Jackie Kennedy. Women radicals must not view ruling class women as allies or excuse women bosses or women in government as "tokens" or "stooges." Those women who consciously serve the capitalist order or who profit by the exploitation of the labor of others are our enemies, not our allies.

Many women activists who realize they do not want to unite with Jackie Kennedy still accept the premise that women are a class. They point out, correctly, that male supremacy antedates the advent of capitalist society, and conclude that a women's revolution, not an anti-capitalist revolution, is what is required. A closer examination of this question shows how the oppression of women is rooted, historically and institutionally, in class society.

## The Bourgeois Family

The oppression of women has its roots in the primitive division of labor, which resulted in the social division of man and woman, laying a basis for the later subordination of women. Later on, the class divisions transcended the sexual division and class became the dominant reality of society. In *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* Frederick Engels traces the history of the increasing oppression of women through the various stages of economic development of society, showing that the appearance of private property—the personal acquisition of social surplus—brought with it the need to transfer this property through inheritance. From this flows the need to trace descent; since the male had come to be the property-owner, he is therefore given the right to exclusive sexual

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