

WOMEN AND REVOLUTION



Number 2 WALLER PRESS 182

The Newspaper of Revolutionary Women's Liberation

September - October 1971 10¢

SWP-YSA MOVE IN, Same tricks, new territory

SWP-YSA's "Four Principles" of anti-war work have reappeared in a new arena -- women's liberation. In a discussion bulletin/resolution on women's liberation passed at its December, 1970 convention, the leadership of the Young Socialist Alliance (youth group of the Socialist Workers Party) wrote, "Just as in the anti-war movement we will have to be among the best fighters for democracy and non-exclusionism, for mass actions in the streets, and for independence from the ruling class parties."

What does the SWP mean by democracy? A standard definition would be that after full discussion, decisions are reached by majority vote. But the SWP's "democracy" for the women's liberation movement consists in avoiding political discussion, and preventing votes. Their "democracy" prevailed at the statewide women's liberation conference, chaired by YSAer Laura Maggi, in Austin, Texas, last fall. When members of Revolutionary Women of Austin and the Spartacist League presented a motion, the chairman invoked "sisterhood," saying she opposed voting at the conference because "votes are divisive." Reluctantly, she finally allowed the vote, after sharply curtailing discussion for "lack of time." The motion was introduced during one of the two very short plenary sessions, which were otherwise devoted entirely to prepared talks. There was "not enough time" at the two day conference to have more than two questions after each talk. The rest of the time was spent in small workshops which made no decisions or recommendations. The SWP-YSA had helped plan this format which allowed absolutely no decisions to be made by the body, and was largely responsible for making sure that it was followed. They avoided being called undemocratic by not allowing any means for decision-making.

But, as any socialist should know, the women's liberation movement must make political decisions. Decisions are made, either democratically, consciously, and openly, or by cliques behind the scenes. The SWP promotes cliquism. "Let the women who are interested decide," they say, and they call a committee meeting. They, of course, are interested, attend the meetings, and make the decisions. Instead of encouraging the masses of women to sit back while the "political women" deal with the political questions, all socialists should urge women to concern themselves with the means of their liberation. Women who "aren't interested" in politics are nevertheless making unconscious political decisions. Even the decision to do nothing is a political decision which supports the status quo and puts more power into the hands of political opportunists. Women must realize that their own liberation hangs in the balance if the decisions made are incorrect. We should fight to bring these questions to them, and to guarantee their rights to voice their opinions and decide their actions. This means normal motions, lengthy discussions, and votes at conferences and other meetings.

What does the SWP mean by non-exclusionism? They say, "The oppression of women affects every woman, and to cut off any group of women from full participation in the movement means that the movement cannot grow into the kind of mass movement necessary to win its demands. The strength of any coalition will be based on its ability to represent the authority of radical women's groups, conservative women's groups, campus women's groups, high school women, lesbians, women from political parties, from trade unions, and independent women." In this statement and others, the SWP-YSA's "non-exclusionism" clearly means unity across class lines. In a society torn by class conflict, no program can appeal to all women, bourgeois, proletarian, conservative, liberal, and revolutionary, and "represent their authority." As socialists we want to win over the working class and other oppressed groups to a complete and specific program to end women's oppression, i.e. to abolish family restrictions, and to abolish discrimination against women in education and on the job. We assume that not everyone will be attracted to this fight -- bourgeois or conservative women, as such, will not be. As individuals, some will be won away from their class backgrounds and their bourgeois politics, but no revolutionary (i.e. effective) coalitions will be formed that include bourgeois or conservative women's groups (including those of the bourgeois political parties) -- those groups which currently uphold the vital institutions which oppress women now. Only a clearly defined working class program can represent the oppressed and those who support their struggle.

Revolutionary socialists understand that political agreement on a working-class program automatically excludes anti-working-class elements. Revolutionary non-exclusionism, too, is based on such agreement -- anyone who agrees with the program will be admitted, regardless of other political differences. Obviously, if the program is incomplete, i.e. artificially dissected into separate demands, anti-working-class elements, actually a fundamental variance with the goals of women's liberation, can creep in through the back door, claiming agreement.

The real meaning of the SWP's "non-exclusionism" was demonstrated at the Texas Abortion Coalition conference last January 30 in Austin. After hours of

speeches which presented the reformist view that the state legislature should be lobbied to pass an improved abortion law, SWP members refused to allow even one speaker from the Spartacist League or from Revolutionary Women of Austin to present a socialist view of the abortion fight. Perhaps they were afraid it would alienate the state senators and representatives who had been cordially invited to attend the conference. As usual, the reds were excluded, while the bourgeois politicians were fawned over!

The SWP does have a reason for invoking "non-exclusionism," besides that of keeping their right-wing friends around to appreciate them. Their undemocratic behavior strengthens the anti-communist attitudes of many women's liberationists and has put them in a very shaky position. They are accused of being sneaky, subversive, and manipulative. Unfortunately, their behavior often warrants the suspicions. The SWP does not present its politics honestly and openly within the women's liberation movement. Last fall at the women's liberation conference in Austin, they conspicuously avoided commenting on many of the vehemently anti-communist statements made in the prepared talks delivered to the body. The only presentation on women and the economy was crudely feminist, blaming women's economic exploitation on the "male-economy," rather than on capitalism. But the SWP never said a word, even when challenged on this point in print. Instead, by doing much of the organizing, they worked themselves into positions of secondary responsibility for this and other conferences. Despite attempts like this to gain leadership by virtue of a great display of energy, rather than through gaining the trust of women's liberationists for their political ideas, feminists and others still want to throw them out. The feminists

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CHILD CARE TAKING THE INITIATIVE

In November 1972, the California Child Care Initiative Committee (CCCIC) will attempt to place a provision on the ballot amending the California Constitution to provide for free, quality, twenty-four hour child care, parent-staff controlled, and funded by the state.

The need for such a statewide service is obvious. Increasing inflation has led a greater number of women to seek work outside the home and an ever increasing number of unmarried and divorced mothers also need to work to support themselves and their children. Many women, perhaps influenced by the women's liberation movement, are abandoning their traditional roles in the family to seek participation in general social production. Many of these women need centers to care for their children. The educational system of this country, with its emphasis on mass, uniform teaching, rather than quality teaching, fails to develop the individual child's potential. The feeling of the CCCIC is that "learning takes place throughout life and that children have a basic right to the richest kinds of experiences that we have to offer so that they may develop to their fullest potentialities." Although a child care program cannot provide many of these experiences, it can alleviate some of the problems now facing people -- minorities, low-income and welfare groups,

and especially women -- and, what is more important, it can raise such questions as: Why doesn't the State take responsibility for the welfare of its children? Why aren't presently existing centers really filling the needs of the parents and children? What kind of social system would be willing and able to provide adequate care for all children? The facts, as taken from the United States Department of Labor study and from "California Women 1970-1971" -- The Report of the Governor's Advisory Commission on the status of women speak for themselves. The need for a comprehensive child care plan is real and apparent. California women represent 35% of the state's labor force. As of 1970, 1.17 million working women had children under sixteen and 410,000 had children under six, and the figures have increased. One in ten families in California is headed by a woman.

There are 125,000 licensed child care facilities in existence in the state, meeting the needs of only one out of eight children. The existing bills available to grant funds to supply the need for centers are meeting continual opposition from Reagan and other key people. The largest program, that of the Children's

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Bolsheviks on Women's Liberation...p4

OUR PROGRAM

in brief

I - FAMILY II - EDUCATION III - PRODUCTION

I - THE FAMILY

1. Free Quality Health Care For All.
2. Free Abortion and Birth Control on Demand.
3. Maternity and Paternity Benefits - Free prenatal, maternity, and post-natal care; maternity and paternity leaves with no loss in pay.
4. Child Care - Free, 24-hour quality child care facilities under the control of the parents and staff, for all children, with all expenses borne by the employer or State.
5. The Socialization of Household Duties.
6. Adequate Housing.
7. An End to Marriage Restrictions.
8. Free, Immediate Divorce - No Alimony.
9. Freedom for Children and Youth - the legal age of adulthood lowered to 16, with free housing, food and a stipend provided by the State during school years for those young people who do not wish to remain at home; no job discrimination on the basis of age; no legal illegitimacy.
10. Sexual Freedom - end legal and social discrimination against homosexuals; end the legal persecution of prostitutes.

II - EDUCATION

1. Free and Equal Voluntary Education.
2. An End to Tracking By Sex, Race and Class.
3. Worker-Student-Teacher Control of Schools.
4. An Expanded Curriculum - the struggles of women, minority and labor to be written back into history.

III - SUPER-EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN WORKERS

1. Equal Pay for Equal Work.
2. Equal Access to All Job Categories.
3. The Organization of Workers in Unions.
4. The Building of Militant Caucuses - based on a class-struggle political program and not on sex or race.
5. Training at Full Pay.
6. A Shorter Work Week With No Loss in Pay.
7. A Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours/No Wage Controls.
8. A More Equalized Wage System - Raise basic job rates to lessen wage differences.
9. Equal Benefits for Temporary and Part-Time Workers.
10. The Extension of Protective Legislation - extended to cover all workers -- not just women.
11. The Formation of a Workers' Party.
12. Workers' Control of Industry.
13. Labor Strikes Against the Indochinese War.

(For our complete program, see issue #1 or write to us.)

Women and Revolution

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Revolutionary Women's Liberation
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Address: P.O. Box 40663
San Francisco, Calif. 94140
Telephone: (415)848-3029
Published by Revolutionary Women of
the Bay Area
Signed articles do not necessarily reflect
the views of the editors.



IT AIN'T HE, BABE

The issue of the exclusion of men from Women's Liberation is one of the hottest issues in the movement. For most women the issue is not a question, but a statement -- "We do not want them!" Generally, the rationales have been that men are the enemy, that their presence causes women to be relegated to an inferior position, that women must develop on their own, that men are not really concerned with the oppression of women, and that men could not really understand the problems of women anyway because they are not women.

If men are not concerned with women's oppression (and many are not), it is legitimate to say that we do not want them in our movement. The other rationales, however, must be questioned. The premise that men are the enemy is a simplistic response to the general attitude of chauvinism which infects the whole of society. It is true that most men are infected to some extent with chauvinist attitudes because they, like women, are products of their society. Many, many women in our society have the same attitudes regarding male superiority that men have and constantly reinforce those attitudes in everyday actions. The oppression of women has a social character and chauvinist attitudes and ideas flow from and help sustain that oppression. While the black question is not always a good analogy, in this instance it can be applied. Racism within the working class does exist, but it exists not because whites are inherently evil, but rather because whites are a product of a racist and chauvinist society. Women who are conscious of their oppression and the reasons, origins, and results of it must, of course, realize that the reactions of men in society are



also a result of that society; men are not chauvinist at birth. This, of course, does not mean that women should excuse the chauvinist conduct of men. It merely means that one must recognize that the problem is fundamentally social and not sexual and that some men can become conscious and dedicated fighters for women's liberation.

The idea that the mere presence of males relegates women to an inferior

role is dangerous. It reinforces attitudes that women really are inferior and accepts the status quo as unchanging and unchangeable. It is also a gross insult to all women who are actively engaged in struggle alongside men and who do so on an equal basis. A lot of women's groups even exclude other women who are in any way affiliated with "male dominated organizations." While "male dominated organizations" do exist, a clear distinction must be made between those which are totally chauvinist and have no working class perspective and those which are deeply involved in struggling for the liberation of all people. To accuse women of being automatically submissive in the presence of males is to reinforce the idea that women have no original ideas, no minds of their own, no aggressiveness, no individuality. While it is true that men often comprise the majority in political organizations, this is no proof that the organizations are "male-dominated." Even the Bolshevik Party had a majority of men, but it nevertheless maintained sexual equality within its ranks and struggled ceaselessly against the special oppression of women and their super exploitation, making many revolutionary changes in the roles that women played in the new society.

Women must develop as individuals and as social and political beings and, therefore, must become involved in women's liberation and in working class struggles. Sexual isolation removes women from larger social struggles and tends to develop a distorted world-view. To really break out of the stifling role that society forces on them and to effectively struggle for liberation, women must, at some

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LETTERS

Editor:

In the review of Laing's *Politics of Experience* entitled "Does Your Family Drive You Crazy," you correctly point out Laing's insights into the irrationality of the society in which we live and the subsequent individual madness brought on, to a large extent, by the destructive institution of the family. I agree with the conclusions of your article and feel that Laing, if read with a critical eye, can do much to further one's awareness and understanding of certain socially induced aspects of the relationships between people. However, I am concerned with the lack of any mention in your article of Laing's weak points in the *Politics of Experience*.

Much of the "new left" has made a hero of Laing and has followed his unfortunate advice. In *Politics of Experience*, Laing stresses the necessity for each person to take a journey into the depths of his own mind and there discover the supposed answers to the world's problems. While this could seem to be a benign suggestion (if it did not pose as a political method), it has become fatal as the majority of the new left movement, the women's liberation movement included, is in agreement with this sort of subjective view of life. It is widely felt amongst new-lefters that if everyone (even if individual capitalists, such as Rockefeller, or how about George Wallace) made such a journey, that the horrible insane world would be made sane, as simply as that. The good will of all women and men would triumph and an automatic end to either the irrational destructiveness of capitalism or capitalism itself (depending on "how you see it") would come about. Unfortunately, this view has also encouraged the drug culture, which also puts a high premium on subjective existence; "your own head is where it's at." One can pretend forever that she/he has mastered the forces of destruction, or whatever, in her/his own head and still capitalism will exist. This means that the destructiveness of

capitalism will also exist, as it is a vital part of this system -- it won't be drugged or dreamed out of existence. It is our alienation from production which creates the basis of our alienation from ourselves and from one another and good will won't give the means of production to those who produce. Only by taking over the means of production from the capitalist, or owning class will the working, or producing, class get it and by doing so, lay the basis for meaningful, sane, non-exploitative relationships between people.

Laing has many brilliant insights and, certainly, the work he has done is valuable, but he undermines his own ideas by not carrying them through to a revolutionary conclusion. Anything other than being an active participant in a revolutionary group with a working class program for struggle is avoiding the real issue (and postponing the fight). Capitalism needs to be destroyed by the class that produces the wealth whereby the capitalists survive -- the working class. It is the capitalist mode of production that lies at the heart of our alienation and insanity and which must change; then will all people define themselves and others differently.

Yours in the struggle for Socialism,

Judy K., Boston

Although I don't believe that Laing intends to suggest that a journey into the depths of one's mind holds the answer to the world's problems, I agree that he certainly contributes to the popularity of this subjective perspective by his failure to pose any alternative to this "sick" society which he so accurately analyzes or, to provide any program for struggling against it. The free, genuinely loving relationships that Laing sets forth as models will be possible only in a classless society where equality, rather than domination, is the norm -- and revolution is the only way to get there.

Dale Ross

CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIALISM

The socialist revolution will not be an unconscious event, performed by robot-like agents of an inevitable historical process. The socialist revolution will be achieved by serious people who are conscious of the oppressiveness of capitalist society, and who are determined to work for a new type of society, a communist society organized to liberate, rather than to oppress, the masses.

We believe that under communism the full potentialities for human freedom and consciousness can be explored. Under capitalism, the most that can be achieved in the realm of consciousness -- besides occasional liberating insights -- is awareness of social oppression (including sexual oppression), determination to destroy the root of that oppression, and revolutionary organization to achieve this.

The women's liberation movement is progressive in that it has made many women realize their economic and psychological oppression. Whereas some of these women decide to work for alleviation of their oppression under capitalism the others see that capitalism itself is the culprit, and they become socialists or anarchists, seeking radical changes in our society. The next level of consciousness has not been reached: there is as yet no revolutionary nationwide women's organization. Such an organization is an immediate necessity, but it will not emerge spontaneously from the depths of the present movement: it must be fought for by revolutionaries within the movement.

This is what we have continuously pointed out in our propaganda aimed at

the Austin women's liberation movement. We have criticized the obsession with small "rap" groups, because these groups have concentrated almost exclusively on curing the psychological deformities produced in women by their oppression. Our point is that women, like men, are whole entities, and their capacity for psychological well-being and sexual expression are only a part of their total capacities. To be socially effective in battling their oppressors, women must call on their other capacities; they must not devote themselves totally to exploring the realm of the psyche, but must also function actively in the realm of politics -- specifically, revolutionary politics.

It is difficult to fight the myth that "small groups raise consciousness," because sometimes such groups do produce beneficial results in individuals. However, more often these groups are used as a substitute for political discussion: while the masses of women, sheltered in their rap groups, are delving into their egos, behind-the-scenes leaders (and misleaders) are determining the actual politics of the women's movement.

Two good examples of this process are the state-wide women's conference held here last fall, and, more recently, the abortion conference. There were no general discussions among all the women as to speakers, topics, or the formats of these conferences. All this was decided by unelected committees composed of women already interested in politics; for example, the YSA played the key organizing role in both conferences. While the majority of women were meeting, as usual, in their small "consciousness-raising" groups, political decisions were being made by a small minority, and no attempt was made by these more politically-minded women to stimulate interest and broader participation in these decisions. As a result, the conferences were dull, repetitive, dominated by reformist politics, bureaucratically run, and ineffective. No motions from the floor, no general discussions were permitted, at the abortion conference, YSA'ers flatly denied the request of a Spartacist member to speak briefly on abortion reform, as none of the other speakers had dealt adequately with the political aspects of the issue.

Admittedly, there are some political leaders of women's liberation who are sincere about the movement and who, in helping to organize these conferences, did not see anything wrong in deciding, in advance, the political tone of the conference. They did not feel they were being manipulative because they do not see revolutionary politics as the key force for liberation; they are willing to go along with reformist politics, or even no politics, because they regard political decision-making as a chore which should be left to those women who are more interested in it. The idea that political consciousness is less important than personal liberation is a very wrong one, because it opens the way for professional opportunists like the YSA to impose their brand of reformist politics on the movement.

Our idea of an effective women's organization is one in which political consciousness raising takes definite precedence. We want to engage in discussions about our revolutionary program for the women's struggle, and how that struggle can be linked to those of other oppressed groups, through the building of a Leninist vanguard party. Women can play an important leadership role in the socialist revolution if they devote themselves now to building political consciousness.

Revolutionary Women
of Austin ●

SF WOMEN'S LIBERATION -- FEMINISM OR SOCIALISM

For the fourth time in the last two years or so, San Francisco Women's Liberation has made an attempt to set up a group to discuss and begin to formulate politics. This time around, the attempt may lead to some constructive thinking.

As in the past, political discussions were blocked at an early stage by irreconcilable differences between the women who identified themselves as "feminists" and those who did not. While feminism was never adequately defined during this series of discussions, three criteria for general agreement were presented by the women who called themselves feminists. These were: 1) that the sexual distinction is the fundamental distinction between human beings, 2) that the orientation of Women's Liberation should be to all women equally, regardless of class, and 3) that the formulation of a political program is not the correct approach for building the women's movement. The two major differences between this discussion series and previous ones were that a polarization between feminists and socialists took place much more rapidly and sharply than ever before and that the feminists were not, as in the past, the overwhelming majority; in fact, they were a minority.

The most outspoken and articulate of the feminists effectively obstructed any sort of meaningful political discussion for several weeks by raising continual and unfounded charges that the socialists were not really part of the women's movement, did not really feel their politics in their gut, were representatives of male-dominated organizations, had closed minds, manipulated other women in the room, and so on.

The socialists who attended were

members of Spartacist League, I.S., and Y.S.A., as well as a few women who identified themselves as socialists, but were not affiliated with any organized tendency. Many socialists had been active in Women's Liberation for several years, and quite a few pointed out that they had arrived at socialism through Women's Liberation. The one member of YSA dropped out during the most intense period of the debate and, in retrospect, it seems clear that she had no other alternative. In typical YSA fashion, she had claimed to be both a socialist and a feminist and had tried her very best not to alienate anyone. The unexpectedly rapid escalation of struggle between socialists and feminists seemed quite literally to pull her apart -- at the last meeting she attended, she was on the verge of tears. Finally, she simply disappeared. If the polarization of socialists and feminists in San Francisco is, as we believe, the prelude to a similar polarization in Women's Liberation throughout the country, it will be interesting to observe the response of SWP-YSA. Will they all be torn apart by their own contradictions and vanish? More likely, they will have to land on one side or the other.

After six meetings, the feminists, who had accused the socialists of having closed minds, stated openly that they did not want to discuss anything with socialists -- that they did not want the socialists there at all. Some said they would return only if they were guaranteed that no socialist ideas would be discussed. When no such guarantee was forthcoming, they began to talk about splitting. The socialists and the "uncommitted" women urged them to meet separately if they wanted, but also to continue meeting with the group as a

whole, but they would not be persuaded. At the eighth meeting they walked out.

There were many women who were neither socialists nor feminists and who would have profited by an ongoing dialogue between the two groups. Some of them were new to the movement and seemed at first somewhat bewildered by the arguments. As the weeks went by, though, most of them began to understand the situation very well. They pointed out that despite the feminists' accusations, it was they who dominated the discussions and would not listen to an opposing view. They correctly perceived that many feminists, while hiding behind the facade of "no developed politics, only our gut-level feelings as women," had very carefully articulated politics which they were attempting to impose on the group. At the split, the majority of the women voted to continue meeting with the socialists. Even one of the feminists speculated that she might consider discussing politics with the socialists "at some time in the future," but the others stated emphatically that they would never be interested in discussing politics with socialists.

The remaining women are continuing to meet and, since the departure of the feminist group, we have begun to discuss political questions. While we all regret having to forego the stimulating discussions that sharp differences of opinion would have engendered, our greater homogeneity should make it possible for us to examine more carefully some of the social and political questions confronting the women's movement today and to begin to delineate the kind of political structure around which women will unite to fight for liberation. ●

BOLSHEVIKS ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION

It has been observed that those who do not study history are condemned to repeat it. We study history and, since we are revolutionary women, we study with special interest the history of the women in the leadership of the first and only working class revolution -- Bolshevism.

Our research has been fascinating and we have found that in many key areas the women's movement today is, indeed, repeating history. The questions of socialism, feminism, and male exclusion, the question of an independent women's movement and of whether a revolutionary program will alienate some sisters -- all these questions and others which are being hotly debated in Women's Liberation today have been debated before.

In the next several issues, "Women and Revolution" will publish some of the important documents of the Bolshevik period dealing with these questions. We begin with Part I of "Work Among Women" which is taken from "Decisions of the Third Congress of the Communist International" which was held at Moscow in July, 1921.

The argument bases itself on the posi-

tion, with which we agree, that women can never be liberated under capitalism and that we must, therefore, join in the only kind of struggle that can overthrow capitalism -- the united struggle of the international working class.

In contrast to the view currently popular among many feminists that "only women can liberate women, only blacks can liberate blacks, only homosexuals can liberate homosexuals, etc.," the document points out that the problems and the tasks of all sectors of the working class are fundamentally the same. Instead of undermining our strength through division, we must unite to struggle against the system that oppresses and exploits us all.

In this struggle, the line that must be drawn is not one of sex, but of class. In sharp opposition to the contention that "all women are sisters," the Bolsheviks correctly argued that class collaboration in the woman's movement undermines the power of the proletariat and thus delays the advent both of communism and of the ultimate liberation of women.

unhesitating tactics outlined by the Third International. The most fundamental and immediate goal determining the methods of work and the line of struggle for the proletariat of both sexes, must be the dictatorship of labour.

As the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat is the vital question before the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, and the construction of Communism is the important task of those countries where the dictatorship is already in the hands of the workers, the Third Congress of the Communist International maintains that the conquest of power by the proletariat, as well as the achievement of Communism in those countries where the capitalist state has already been overthrown, can be realised only with the active participation of the wide masses of the proletariat and semi-proletarian women.

On the other hand the Congress once more calls the attention of all women to the fact that without the support of the Communist parties in all the tasks and undertakings leading to the liberation and enfranchisement of the women, this task is practically impossible of achievement.

2) The interest of the working class, especially at the present moment, imperatively demands the recruiting of women into the organised ranks of the proletariat, fighting for Communism.

The economic ruin throughout the world is becoming more acute and more unbearable to the entire city and country poor. Before the working class of the bourgeois-capitalist countries the question of the social revolution rises more and more clearly, and before the working class of Soviet Russia the question of reconstructing the public economy of the land on a new Communist basis becomes more and more vital. Both these tasks will be more easily realised, the more active and the more conscious and willing the participation of the women.

3) Wherever the question of the taking of power arises, the Communist parties must consider the great danger to the revolution represented by the inert, unformed masses of women workers, housewives, employees, peasant women, not liberated from the influence of the bourgeois church and bourgeois superstitions, and not connected in some way or other with the great liberating movement of Communism. Unless the masses of women of the East and West are drawn into this movement, they inevitably become the stronghold of the bourgeoisie and the object of counter-revolutionary propaganda. The experience of the revolution in Hungary, where the ignorance of the masses of women played such a pitiful part, should serve, in this case, as a warning for the proletariat of all other countries entering upon the road of social revolution.

On the other hand, the experience of the Soviet Republic showed in practice how important the participation of the women workers and peasants has been in the civil war in the defence of the Republic, as well as in all other activities of the Soviet construction. Facts have proven the importance of the part which the women workers and peasants have already played in the Soviet Republic in the organisation of defence, strengthening the rear; the struggle against desertion, and against all sorts of counter-revolution, sabotage, etc. The experience of the Workers' Republic must serve as a lesson to all other countries.

Hence, the direct task of the Communist parties: to spread the influence of the Communist Party to the widest circles of the women population of their countries within the Party; organising a special party body and applying special methods: appealing to the women outside of it, to free them from the influence of the bourgeoisie and the compromising parties, and educating them to be real fighters for Communism, and therefore for the complete enfranchisement of the women.

4) Putting before the Communist Parties of the East and West the direct task of extending the activity of the Party among the women proletariat, the Third Congress of the Comintern declares also to the women of the entire world that their emancipation from age-long slavery and inequality depends upon the victory of Communism.

What Communism offers to the women, the bourgeois women's movement will never afford her. So long as the power of capitalism and private property continue to exist, the emancipation of woman from subservience to her husband cannot proceed further than her right to dispose of her property and earnings, as she sees fit, and also to decide on equal terms with her husband the destiny of their children.

The most definite aim of the feminists -- to grant the vote to the women -- under the regime of bourgeois parliamentarism, does not solve the question of the actual equalisation of women, especially of those of the dispossessed classes. This has been clearly demonstrated by the experience of the working women in those capitalist countries where the bourgeoisie has formally recognised the equality of the sexes. The right to vote does not remove the prime cause of women's enslavement in the family and in society. The substitution of the church marriage by civil marriage does not in the least alleviate the situation. The dependence of the proletarian woman upon the capitalist and upon her husband as the economic mainstay of the family remains just the same. The absence of adequate laws to safeguard motherhood and infancy and the lack of proper social education render entirely impossible the equalisation of women's position in matrimonial relations. As a matter of fact, nothing that can be done under the capitalist order will furnish the key to the solution of the problem of the relationship of the sexes.

Only under Communism, not merely the formal, but the actual equalisation of women will be achieved. Then woman will be the rightful owner, on a par with all the members of the working class, of the means of production and distribution. She will participate in the management of industry and she will assume an equal responsibility for the well-being of society.

In other words, only by overthrowing the system of exploitation of man by man, and by supplanting the capitalist mode of production by the Communist organisation of industry will the full emancipation of woman be achieved. Only Communism affords the conditions which are necessary in order that the natural functions of woman -- motherhood -- should not come into conflict with her social obligations and hinder her creative work for the benefit of society. On the contrary, Communism will facilitate the most harmonious and diversified development of a healthy and beautiful personality that is indissolubly bound together with the whole life and activities of the entire society. Communism should be the aim of all women who are fighting for complete emancipation and real freedom.

But Communism is also the final aim of the proletariat. Consequently the struggle of the working women for this aim must be carried on in the interests of both, under a united leadership and control, as "one and indivisible" to the entire world movement of the revolutionary proletariat.

5) The Third Congress of the Comintern confirms the basic proposition of revolutionary Marxism, i.e., that there is no "specific woman question" and no "specific women's movement," and, that every sort of alliance of working women with bourgeois feminism, as well as any support by the women workers of the treacherous tactics of the social-compromisers and opportunists leads to the undermining of the forces of the proletariat, delaying thereby the triumph of the social revolution and the advent of Communism, and thus also postponing the great hour of women's ultimate liberation.

continued next page

METHODS OF WORK AMONG THE WOMEN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

1. The Third Congress of the Comintern in conjunction with the Second International Women's Congress confirms the decision of the First and Second Congresses on the necessity for increasing the work of all the Communist parties of the East and West among proletarian women. The masses of women workers must be educated in the spirit of Communism and so drawn into the struggle for Soviet Power and into the construction of the Soviet Labour Republic. In all countries the working classes, and consequently the women workers, are faced with the problem of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The capitalist economic system has got into a blind alley, for there is no room for the further development of industrial forces within that system. The general impoverishment of the workers, the impotence of the bourgeoisie to revive production, the development of speculative enterprises, the decay in the production system, unemployment, the fluctuation of prices out of keeping with wages -- all this leads inevitably to the deepening of the class struggle in all countries. This struggle is to decide who shall conduct, administer, and organise production, and upon what system that should be done -- whether it should be in the hands of a clique of bourgeois exploiters, and be carried on, on the principles of capitalism and private property, or in the hands of the producing class and carried on, on a Communist basis.

The newly-rising class, the class of producers, must in accordance with the laws of economic production, take the productive apparatus in its own hands, and set up new forms of public economy. Only in such a way will it be possible to create the necessary impetus for the development of the economic forces to the maximum and for the removal of the anarchy of capitalist production.

So long as the power of government is in the hands of the bourgeois class, the proletariat has no power to organise production. No reforms, no measures, carried out by the democratic or socialistic governments of the bourgeois countries are able to save the situation. They cannot alleviate the unbearable sufferings of the working women and working men, sufferings which are due to the disorganisation of the capitalist system of production, and which are going to last as long as the power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Only by seizing the power of government will the proletariat be able to take hold of the means of production, and thus secure the possibility of directing the economic development in the interests of the toilers.

In order to hasten the hour of the decisive conflict between the proletariat and the degenerating bourgeois world, the working class must adhere to the firm and



First All-Russian Conference of Working Women and Peasant Women in Moscow - 1918. Delegates to the Conference march toward Convention Hall.
PAGE 4 WOMEN AND REVOLUTION

HOW TO FIGHT MA BELL

The following report was submitted by a sister in the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) of the Communications Workers of America, as telephone workers across the country were preparing to go out on strike. WOMEN AND REVOLUTION endorsed the program of the Militant Action Caucus, which included demands for an end to job discrimination against women, free child care and cafeterias for all telephone workers, and fully paid maternity leaves for women workers. Further information regarding the MAC and the recent strike may be obtained by writing to:

Militant Action Caucus of CWA
P.O. Box 6241
Albany, California 94706

(see also WOMEN AND REVOLUTION #1, May-June, 1971)

As the days pass, phone workers grow more and more angry as we realize that Joe Beirne, the International President of CWA, is only playing games with our union and our jobs. Our contract with Pacific Telephone and that of about twenty other of the Bell system companies expired on April 30th and yet the leadership kept putting off the strike which the membership demanded, giving the company almost three months more to fortify itself against the strike. The members realize that the strike will be sold out just as the one in 1968 was sold out.

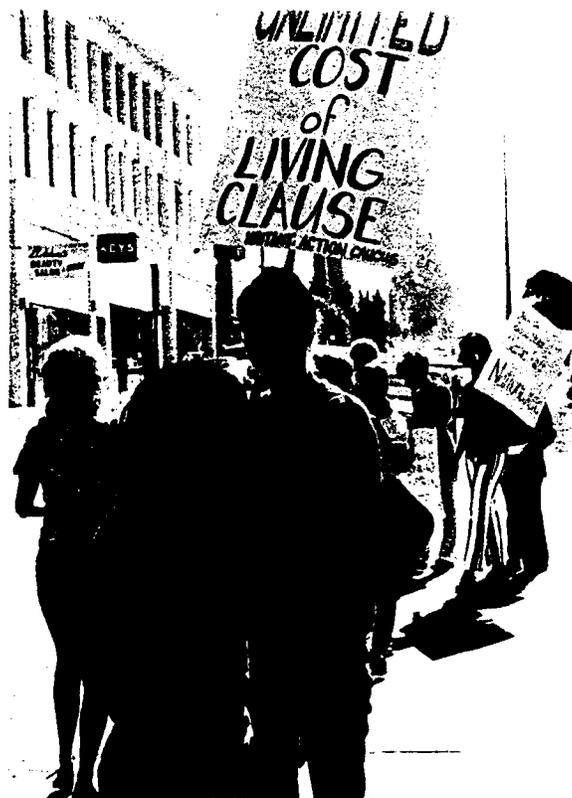
Many militant phone workers are seeking a way out. Many think that quitting CWA and joining the Teamsters is the way to escape the sell-out. The Teamsters may be able to get their members better benefits, yet the Teamster membership is basically in the same position as we are in CWA. Their leadership controls the union with an iron hand and continues to sell out its members, too.

Many in CWA think that by electing a militant leadership the sell-outs will end, but this is not so. No matter how honest and sincere a union official may be, he or she would find it difficult to resist the pressures to sell out exerted by the company and society. Even if these pressures were resisted, union leadership without a revolutionary perspective would be unable to provide for the real needs of the workers. The real solution to the problems of the working class cannot be achieved under the capitalist system. They cannot fight for the real interests of the workers while, at the same time, attempting to maintain this system. Sincere reformist officials (those who want to reform this system) find themselves endlessly begging for just a little more.

We of the Militant Action Caucus know that there is only one way to prevent sell-outs. We must fight for demands that will really change the worker-company relationship. Our program, which states what we stand for and what we intend to fight for, is completely in the interests of the working class. In the struggle for our demands, we demonstrate to our fellow workers that our class interests are totally opposed to those of the ruling class.

There are many militant groups working in the phone company, but the "program" of most of these groups is -- "Everyone who hates AT&T and is tired of the bureaucratic bullshit get together to fight Ma Bell and the union leadership." These groups start out with a lot of enthusiasm and support, but soon fall apart, for they have no idea of where they are going. They raise only simple "bread and butter" demands which could easily be raised by any fairly militant trade union bureaucrat. They fail to draw the line between themselves and the ruling class in this country, which is frequently supported by the union bureaucracy.

We of the MAC do draw this line in our program. We demand and fight for worker-control of our industry. We fight for a labor party based on a militant program like that of the MAC. Workers must no longer support the Democratic and Republican parties, which are the parties of the corporations. We know that for workers to gain real political power they must have a party of their own. We struggle against women's oppression and racism within the phone company and the union. These are two main things used by Big Business to divide workers. In this struggle we point out that union caucuses which are based on race and sex will get nowhere until they unite with all phone workers. We know that the only way to win the struggle against AT&T is to take away its power and gain control of it ourselves. ●



CWA strikers picket with Militant Action Caucus signs.

Bolshevik Women Cont'd

Communism will be achieved not by "united efforts of all women of different classes," but by the united struggle of all the exploited.

In their own interests the masses of proletarian women should support the revolutionary tactics of the Communist Party and take a most active and direct part in all mass-actions and all forms of civil war on a national and international scope.

6. Woman's struggle against her double oppression (capitalism and her home and family subservience), at its highest stage of development, assumes an international character, becoming identified with the struggle of the proletariat of both sexes under the banner of the Third International for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet system.

7. While warning the women workers against entering into any form of alliance and co-operation with the bourgeois feminists, the Third Congress of the Comintern, at the same time, points out to the working women of all countries that to cherish any illusions of the possibility of the proletarian women supporting the Second International or any of the opportunistically inclined elements adhering to it without causing serious damage to the cause of women's emancipation -- will prove infinitely detrimental for the liberating struggle of the proletariat. The women must constantly remember that woman's present-day slavery has grown out of the bourgeois order. In order to put an end to woman's slavery it is necessary to inaugurate the new Communist organization of society.

Any support rendered to the Second and the Second-and-a-Half Internationals hampers the social revolution, delaying the advent of the new order. The more resolutely and uncompromisingly the women masses will turn away from the Second and the Second-and-a-Half Internationals, the more certain will be the triumph of the Social Revolution. It is the sacred duty of all women Communists to condemn those who flinch from the revolutionary tactics of the Comintern. The women ought to remember that the Second International never created and never attempted to create any organ whose task would be to carry on an active struggle for the complete emancipation of woman. The organization of an inter-

national alliance of women socialists was started outside the Second International by the initiative of the men workers themselves. The women socialists who devoted themselves to work among women had neither representation nor a decisive vote in the Second International.

At its first Congress, in 1919, the Third International defined its attitude towards enlisting the support of women in the struggle for the dictatorship. On its initiative, the first conference of women Communists was convened in 1920 and an International Secretariat for work among women was constituted with a permanent representation in the Executive Committee of the Comintern. It is the duty of all class-conscious women workers to break unconditionally with the Second and Second-and-a-Half Internationals and support whole-heartedly the revolutionary tactics of the Comintern.

8. The support of the Comintern by the women workers of all occupations should, first of all, express itself in their willingness to enter into the ranks of the Communist Party of their respective countries. In those countries and parties where the struggle between the Second and Third Internationals has not yet come to a head, it is the duty of the women workers to support, by all means, the party and groups that stand for the Comintern and carry on a relentless warfare against all vacillating and avowedly treacherous elements, irrespective of any authorities holding a different view. The class-conscious women who are striving for emancipation should not remain in any parties which have not joined the Comintern. Those who are opposed to the Third International are the enemies of the emancipation of women.

The place of conscious working women in Eastern and Western countries is under the flag of the Communist International and in the ranks of the Communist Parties of their own countries. All wavering on the part of the working women and the fear to sever connection with the parties of compromise, and the hitherto acknowledged authorities, have a pernicious influence on the satisfactory progress of the great proletarian struggle, which is assuming the nature of an open and relentless civil war on a world scale.

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

CHILD CARE CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

Centers for ages two through twelve, set up during the war years for working mothers, with funding two thirds by the state and one third by parents, has resulted in only 386 children's centers, servicing only 22,000 children. There are waiting lists 50% to 100% beyond capacity. Work Incentive Program (WIN), providing child care services for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) women in the "job training" programs, exists in only four urban centers because the funding of 25% from the parents could not be found (or was not looked for) to match the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's 75%. The cost for full time, good quality care per child is forty dollars per week. In answer to the need for more than one million dollars, Reagan allotted only \$27,000 in the 1971-1972 budget for Children's Centers.



The most recent and blatant example of administration and legal resistance to child care bills is to be found in the case of Assembly Bill 734. This bill provides for child care centers for two year olds and younger to be set up on the University of California Campuses, at the State Colleges, and at the Community Colleges. The intention of the bill is to enable minority, welfare and low-income people, formerly denied higher education because of the need to care for children, the opportunity to continue their education. This education, based on a system of state reimbursements for welfare recipients who use the centers, would ease the demands made on existing centers and enable the poor to receive higher education, which, theoretically, increases their capacity as productive members of society. Outside funds could be donated to the centers, once again lightening the welfare load. Reagan's reaction to the bill embodies the moral condemnation and fossilized attitude which perpetuates

the present oppressive and frustrating system. If one is poor, then one's first obligation is to work, not to attend school; the role of the woman should be in the home, not in school. If anyone should receive education, it should be the husband first. If low-income students do qualify for aid, asks Reagan, why do they not go to the regular, established centers for it? In other words, don't have a baby, lady, unless you're a white middle-class graduate student. Reagan's answer to the problem is to give a license to anyone who desires to open up a center and has twenty-five dollars.

The projected demands of the CCCIC seem to be in accord with our position as stated in our program in regard to child care. They call for social, as well as personal, responsibility for children, free child care centers, twenty-four hour care (since many women work at night), parent-staff control, and for expenses to be borne by the State or by corporations. They appear to agree with us that parent-staff control is a basic right and is the only way to make sure that people will have the kind of centers they really need. This does not mean co-operative child care centers, which parents take turns staffing, because many working women do not have the time to contribute. CCCIC correctly points out that the care of children, as well as their education, is a responsibility of the State. The kind of centers they are now discussing will benefit the children by exposing them to a wider variety of experiences. They intend to finance the centers by a tax on the gross receipts of corporations, after removing the present 7% ceiling on corporation taxes by means of a constitutional initiative.

Despite this apparent agreement, however, important differences in perspective exist between the CCCIC and Revolutionary Women of the Bay Area. The CCCIC has not yet extended its ideas on child care to their logical conclusion and while correctly placing the responsibility for child care and education on the State, they do not explicitly link the State with such other responsibilities as health care and household duties. Moreover, many of them still maintain that the nuclear family, which we view as a pillar of this oppressive capitalist system, is a viable unit.

An analysis of the CCCIC's position at this time also reveals several potential compromises which, once made, would be in opposition to our thinking. The nuclear family is a bulwark of the capitalist State and free child care is a threat to that bulwark. The CCCIC will, therefore, find a great deal of resistance to its program. Since many people in CCCIC view child care as an end in itself, rather than as one demand in a program designed to achieve the liberation of all workers, there will be a great temptation for them to make compromises in order to gain even minor concessions from the government.

One area of possible compromise exists in the idea of Agency. They wish either to create a new overriding agency, which will coordinate the work of all centers while ensuring that all decisions affecting the centers have the consent of local parent-staff boards, or to incorporate a new agency into the already existing governmental centers. The problem with the latter idea is that the by-laws of these centers contain no provision for parent-staff control, and amending the by-laws is no easily accomplished task.



Another area of complication lies within the educational branch of the CCCIC in its proposal to set up six different kinds of care: 1) infant care, 2) pre-school care, 3) extended care for ages six to fourteen after school, 4) drop-in care in large complexes, such as shopping centers, 5) sick care for convalescing children, and 6) shift care for night workers. Much organization and money is necessary to ensure the success of a plan which attempts to further consistent and on-going high quality education. Where will this money be sought?

At their first state-wide convention this month, CCCIC confirmed their original proposals. Another convention is planned for September.

Our task at this point is to give them our support and aid while struggling for the adoption of our program and pointing out that if the centers are not free or are not parent-staff controlled or are not 24-hour, then they will not solve the problem for vast numbers of women. We also want to use the conventions and the issue of child care as an educational vehicle to point out the inability of reform to deal with basic social needs and the necessity of adopting a revolutionary perspective. ●



SWP-YSA CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

know that the SWP women have ideas, however carefully concealed, that they don't agree with. But they have never heard the SWP's arguments for many of its positions. They want to prevent the SWP, in its behind-the-scenes manipulation, from leading the movement in a direction they may not like.

The feminists' approach to the issue of movement democracy is fundamentally wrong. They incorrectly attack the whole socialist movement for the acts of the SWP and they fail to understand that not even the SWP should be excluded from women's liberation work. What is really needed is not arbitrary exclusion, but rigorous democracy combined with political, programmatic clarification. The struggles that will be necessary for this clarification to take place must occur in an atmosphere free of purges. The majority must decide its views; but minorities must be allowed to argue their positions and carry out their own work unhampered. This sort of discussion is not only stimulating, but absolutely necessary if the movement is ever to be united around a solid program.

The SWP-YSA defense against the feminist's attempts to kick them out has been poor. They try to minimize their political differences with the feminists by claiming to be both feminists and socialists. Feminist was once the term socialists used to describe women's liberationists. But over a period of 50 years the term has come to mean one who believes the fundamental division in society is between men and women, and who strives for the supremacy of women.

Socialists believe that the fundamental division in society is between social classes; between those who own the means of production and those who do not. We explain women's oppression by the development of class society. The victory of the proletariat in the class struggle and the abolition of class society can lay the foundation for a society in which women's oppression (as well as other forms of oppression) has no place.

The socialist and feminist views are clearly counterposed. Just as Lenin, who once proudly called himself a Social Democrat, would have recoiled at being called that after the betrayals of "Social Democracy," so Clara Zetkin would not call herself a feminist today.

Despite the fact that the SWP accepts the terminology of the feminist movement, like "sisterhood," which implies not merely the solidarity of oppressed women, but also their alienation from proletarian males, their brothers; despite the fact that the SWP believes that only women can deal with the tasks of women's liberation;

despite the fact that the SWP goes along with the feminists uncritically at many crucial junctures, they continue to define themselves as socialists and are unable to explain away this fundamental contradiction between their "feminism" and their proclaimed "socialism."

The most conspicuous example of exclusionism exhibited by many groups, including the SWP-YSA has been the consistent refusal to allow men to participate in the movement, except occasionally in a subservient manner. Men can do the baby-sitting, can cook the dinner at women's liberation conferences, can assume the role that we, as women, know is rotten and servile, but they cannot contribute in any other way. Exclusionism on a sexual, rather than a political, basis is irrational and caters to the bourgeois attempt to limit the movement to purely sexual and personal issues. This is not to say that all men should be allowed to participate in the work at all times; disrupters should be dealt with decisively; some women may need all-women's groups in which to build up self-confidence; some contact work may be successful only when done by women. But those men who can demonstrate their serious support, should be welcomed. The participation of even a small number of such men will not only be valuable in itself, but will be essential to winning over sectors of the male working class to support of women's demands.

On the question of male exclusion, the SWP says: "Both the coalitions and women's liberation groups must maintain the structure of all-women's organizations. The decisions and strategy of the women's liberation movement can only be formulated by women, since we alone experience the form of oppression we are trying to end." This is equivalent to saying that only the Vietnamese can formulate the decisions and strategy for communist revolution in Vietnam, that a communist international, and indeed all revolutionaries who dwell outside the borders of Vietnam, should butt out where they don't belong. Though the SWP-YSA opposes the support of males in any important political manner in the women's movement, they are often charged with being members of a "male dominated organization." The SWP women complain that this does not give them very much credit for being able to hold their own in a mixed organization. But they tacitly acknowledge the validity of the charge when they exclude men from women's liberation meetings on the grounds that men can't decide on women's issues. The contradiction lies in the fact that SWP women are members of a "democratic centralist organization" (at least by their own lights), bound by discipline to follow its decisions, and that these decisions, even on women's liberation, are made partly by men, whom they claim are incompetents on this subject!

swp-ysa cont'd. FROM P.6

What the SWP-YSA describes as the "principle of the mass action strategy" is actually the tactic of the mass march. Their sloppy use of terminology is distinctly un-Marxist. Their elevation of a tactic first to the level of strategy, and then to the level of principle, reveals a paucity of program. They pragmatically fill in the gaping holes in their program with cherished tactics. Unfortunately, just as mass marches have had little effect on the ruling class' pursuit of imperialist victory in Vietnam, so can we expect that they will have little effect on ending the oppression of women.

What the SWP-YSA left out of its "mass action strategy" was the class analysis of society. For instance, it is not true that "When women decide the war should end, the war will end." (Slogan of the SWP-endorsed United Women's Contingent, April 24 anti-war march). The majority of women have already decided they want it ended. But if women merely walk down the street carrying signs, no matter how great their numbers, they will be ignored as they have been in the past. The class struggle is not determined simply by the will of the masses, but by the conscious application of their collective power!

Under capitalism, the modern form of class society which is responsible for the continuing exploitation and oppression of women, the greatest power that we, or any oppressed group, have for wresting concessions from the ruling class and ultimately freeing ourselves from bourgeois domination, is the power of the organized working class.

More evidence of the SWP's drift away from a class analysis is contained in the following statements: The SWP maintains that the demands of the August 26, 1970, Women's Strike Coalition demonstrations were good because they "lay the blame for the continued oppression of women squarely on the government, where it belongs." In another place, they say: "The main criterion for these demands is that they must be able to bring new layers of women into direct political confrontation with their main oppressor -- the U.S. government." To the SWP, the U.S. government is primarily responsible for women's oppression, rather than the agency of the ruling class in enforcing that oppression. The blame for women's oppression actually belongs squarely on the bourgeoisie. The SWP's misconception logically leads them to aim their program at influencing the current personnel of bourgeois government, rather than at over-throwing the bourgeoisie, smashing its state, and instituting a worker's democracy.

As a substitute for the mobilization of the working class, the SWP-YSA attempts mass marches and parliamentary lobbying. These tactics belie the SWP's occasional formal expressions of Trotskyist confidence in the working class, and spell out their actual confidence in classless pressure-group politics. To the SWP, a show of sentiment equals a show of force -- all we must do to end the war, win abortion law repeal, win all of women's rights, is to let the government know our feelings by having a peaceful demonstration. According to the SWP, "mass actions" "can win concrete victories for women" and "pose a direct challenge to the right and ability of the ruling class to continue its oppression of women." The challenge that such demonstrations may pose is indirect and abstract at best. If one believes that demonstrations can win concrete demands, then one must believe that the ruling class takes heed of the expressed desires of the workers. In fact, the ruling class only concedes when it is forced to.

An example of this reformist, pressure group approach was the Texas Abortion Coalition conference and march in Austin, Texas, Jan. 30, 1971. The SWP-YSA endorsed it, helped organize it, and participated in it enthusiastically. The purpose of the conference and march was to promote an "improved" abortion law, one with few restrictions, but, nevertheless, a law which through the interference of the State, singled out abortion from all other types of medical care. To even participate in the conference and march was to tacitly approve this interference!

Even to the SWP-YSA, this demand was less than minimal -- their own publications say that they demand the repeal of all abortion laws, free abortion on demand. SWP members were visibly and vocally dismayed at seeing our leaflet "No Lobbying -- Defeat All Abortion Laws!" Their own criticisms of TAC's unprincipled stance were confined to preconference meetings. There was nothing except the SWP's opportunism preventing them from carrying separate signs for the repeal of all abortion laws, which would have differentiated them from the other marchers and made the correct, principled point.

One SWP member commented publicly on the failure of the march to attain its goal, saying that it was really a shame that the legislators hadn't been in their offices so the women could have talked with them. In reality, it is a shame, in fact an abomination, that an ostensibly Trotskyist group would condone an action in which an oppressed group begged for bourgeois politicians to give them, please, something which they would not even want if they got! We should also keep in mind the SWP-YSA enthusiasm for the New York Women's Strike Coalition march last August, where Bella Abzug, the Democratic Party's token women's liberationist, had her say from the platform. This all gives a very hollow ring to the SWP's claims to be fighting for independence from the ruling class parties!

The SWP-YSA has seized upon the abortion issue as the primary focus of its women's liberation work. Numerous articles in its publications have been devoted to this subject. The abortion right is real and important -- this is a much needed reform which many women feel very strongly about. It is one in which the reactionary position of the Catholic church can be exposed. It emphasizes one aspect of the rotten nature of class society, in which total responsibility for a child is placed upon its mother, regardless of her desire to have the child in the first place. It is one demand that, with others, must be won in order to free women from the legal restrictions of the nuclear family, and to transform the necessary functions of the family from personal to social responsibilities.

However, this demand is basically a reformist demand. It is one which the ruling class could grant with relative ease -- ~~abortion~~ ~~restrictions~~ are not basic to the maintenance of the nuclear family as an institution, but rather a subsidiary prop. Many bourgeois countries have already abandoned abortion restrictions. The liberal wing of the U.S. bourgeoisie wants to abandon them. But the SWP says, "The fact that opponents of women's liberation have made abortion the central focus of their counter-attack on the women's movement emphasizes the importance of this issue." In fact, the SWP's exaggerated concern with this one demand emphasizes its inability to deal with any but reformist demands.

The fact that the U.S. ruling class has not granted this reform is not a sign of its fundamental importance, but of the weakness of the movement currently behind it. The ruling class seizes upon such weakness to demonstrate its own strength. In this period, in which the bourgeoisie is tightening the screws of repression, it is especially important that revolutionists do not falsely inflate the size or success of any proletarian movement, but that they prepare the proletariat to show its real strength. The SWP does exactly the opposite. The gains in this struggle have been minimal, and have been eaten away almost as fast as they have been made. By continually praising the "successes" of the abortion struggle as examples of what the women's liberation movement can do, they invite cynicism and demoralization.

The duty of revolutionists with regard to women's demands is twofold: 1) to lead the struggle into its most productive channels, by gaining workers' support and by tactics such as work stoppages to force action; and 2) to take women's liberation demands out of isolation, by linking them to other demands of the socialist program.

The SWP-YSA's single-issuism in the anti-war movement is infamous. In the women's liberation struggle, the equivalent is "women's-issuism." The demands they raise in the women's arena against racism and imperialism are still primarily women's demands. Concrete programmatic demands to combat racial oppression, sexual oppression, and class oppression, demands to open up jobs and education to people regardless of race or sex, demands to provide more jobs for everyone, should be raised at every opportunity. The fact that so many demands do logically fit the struggles of many oppressed groups is a great boon -- it helps us get the solidarity we need from the rest of the oppressed. It is also a big fat hint that we are all in the same struggle. None of our demands should be at the expense of any of the oppressed, only at the expense of our oppressors. It is the business of socialists to lead women to an understanding of this common struggle, by constantly fighting for the recognition that all the just demands of the oppressed should ultimately be demands of women's liberationists. The SWP's emphasis on the abortion struggle to the exclusion of many other just demands indicates a distortion of a fundamental Marxist tenet: that our concentration on the struggles of one oppressed group, women, does not preclude, but rather motivates our concern for the struggles of other oppressed groups.

Instead of preparing the proletariat to struggle for the repeal of abortion laws, the SWP has completely ignored the labor movement, in favor of middle class, primarily student activity. Not only do they ignore the trade unions, but they often forget to mention the aspects of women's oppression and exploitation which might link the abortion struggle to the struggle of the labor movement against workers' exploitation. "The partial freedom women now have to control their own bodies exists alongside the grossest exploitation of the female as a sex object, in advertising, the media, and in personal relationships." Here you find no mention of the exploitation and oppression women face on the job. Those eight hours of daily activity in unsafe conditions at dull, alienating work constitute an area in which women's freedom is virtually nonexistent. Women will not gain complete freedom to control their bodies and their lives until capitalism and its wage slavery are smashed.

Women must understand how their power as workers can be used to fight exploitation on the job and social oppression. This means that women must deal with such questions as: How do you build a trade union caucus? What about women's caucuses? What kinds of demands can be taken into the trade unions? What should be the working women's attitude toward the union bureaucracies? Having no working class orientation, but at best a few verbal holdovers of Trotskyist orthodoxy from their past, these and many others are questions the SWP can neither raise nor answer for women's liberationists.

The SWP has no more to offer the Women's Liberation movement than it has to offer the anti-war movement. The "four principles" it claims to represent are an unprogrammatic mishmash, and what few correct ideas are contained in the "four principles" are renounced by the SWP in practice.

In the women's movement, as in the anti-war movement, the true fighters for women's liberation and socialism must fight for a correct and a working-class orientation, and must battle the distortions and betrayals of the SWP-YSA. ●

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International Women's History Archives

This paper is on file at the International Women's History Archives:
2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94704. Telephone: (415)524-7772. For further information, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Archives.

National Abortion Conference

The effects of the National Abortion Coalition Conference held from July 16 to July 18 in New York City will be felt in the Women's Liberation movement for a long time to come. The conference represents a set-back in our struggle and signals a new phase in the movement. The Young Socialist Alliance-Socialist Workers Party (YSA-SWP) has succeeded, for the moment, in attempting to lead a major part of the Women's Liberation movement onto the same dead-end course that led to the demise of former women's movements, and to the impotence of today's anti-war movement -- the course of single issue reformism and ultimate co-optation by bourgeois-liberal politicians.

Before the conference even began, it was clear what the outcome would be: a) the liquidation of the broader Women's Liberation movement concerned with all aspects of our oppression into a coalition concerned exclusively with abortion, b) the abandonment of any demands or political positions the least bit controversial in order that none of our bourgeois "allies" should be alienated, in other words, unity at any price!

The magnitude of the YSA-SWP sell-out of the movement is seen in the way they watered down the abortion demand itself -- they abandoned all responsibility for ensuring that abortions be not only legal, but available to poor and working class women, as well as to economically privileged women. They also raved on and on, ad nauseum, about what a great and historical step forward the repeal of abortion laws would be, implying that women's control of their own bodies was imminent with the success of this abortion campaign. This is cynical and dishonest. So abortion is legalized... then what? We've hardly touched the basis of our oppression and little is changed. We can never control our own bodies as long as the capitalist system, based on exploitation, racial oppression, sexual oppression and imperialism exists. It is in our interest to recognize this fact and to wage our struggle accordingly, rejecting the illusions fostered by these "socialists."

The conference was called to give rubber stamp approval to demands and actions already decided upon by the YSA-SWP. The structure of the conference reflected this - a whole night was wasted in speeches by our big-name "allies;" workshops were organized on false bases of "constituency groups" and geography, rather than political

issues; and speeches were limited to mindless enthralling over accepted demands and mass actions.

The SWP's combination of reformist single issueism and organizational manipulation sent its feminist opponents into a frenzy of red baiting. The ensuing chaos eliminated the possibility of political debate completely. The sexist charges of the feminists that the YSA is "male-dominated" and "subversive" were self-righteously countered by the SWP with accusations that red-baiters were "enemies of Women's Liberation of the same class as Richard Nixon." The movement descended several rungs on the ladder of revolutionary consciousness, as such

issueism, per se, and opposed demands to broaden the struggle. Their lip service toward the working class consisted of vague and perfunctory verbal gestures, with no mention of the need to struggle around a complete program based on the needs of the working class.

We in Revolutionary Women of New York held two workshops during the conference at which we discussed revolutionary working class perspectives for the Women's Liberation movement. Out of the second workshop on Sunday morning, we presented the following motion to the conference:

full-time child care controlled by the parents and staff.

2) Free quality health care, including contraception, for all women, men, and children.

3) We support the WISE amendment for the right of freedom of sexual expression. We demand an end to all legal, economic, and social discrimination against homosexuals; all consensual sexual relationships are private matters and no concern of the state.

4) Equal pay for equal work. Equal access to all job categories. Make the unions fight for all workers.

5) The Democratic and Republican parties are dedicated to preserving the

MISCARRIES

lies and epithets were freely and indiscriminately exchanged.

The division between the SWP majority and the feminists, as well as between gay and straight women, was deepened by the refusal of the conference majority to endorse the demand for freedom of sexual expression put forward by Women for the Inclusion of Sexual Expression (WISE). The final walk-out during the Sunday afternoon plenary by WISE and other feminists shouting "Off the Trots," ended what limited and off-course discussion there was on a sour and extremely destructive note of anti-communism.

Though this demand for freedom of sexual expression was correct and supported by Revolutionary Women of New York along with others, including International Socialists (IS) and the Free Abortion on Demand Caucus, it was not sufficient. Despite their militancy and their legitimate anger at the SWP's reformism and manipulation, the feminists proved themselves no alternative to the SWP. "Revolutionary emotions" won't build a movement; only a revolutionary socialist perspective and a Women's Liberation movement oriented toward the working class can build an effective struggle. The feminists rejected this perspective in favor of reactionary anti-communism. In the week since the conference, various feminist groups have made statements to the mass media which make the SWP appear to be revolutionary. This helps the SWP, while the movement as a whole is hurt, by giving the media a chance to dismiss Women's Liberation as a "Commie plot." The IS also helped to make SWP politics appear legitimate. While they supported "Free Abortion on Demand," they also supported single

"We, the participants in the Revolutionary Women's workshop, after much discussion, have reached the conclusion that a single issue campaign, as was proposed by the originators of this conference, is a dead-end road to reformism. We must learn the lessons of past movements, including the suffrage movement, which died because of its limitation to the single issue of the vote. We call for the formation of a revolutionary women's movement, based on a working class program. It is only through such an organization that we can reach the masses of working and poor women in society.

The workshop believes that this conference should adopt "Free Abortion on Demand -- No Forced Sterilization" as a central demand of the Women's Liberation movement. We support the demand to legalize abortions, but even if the right to abortion is legalized, many poor black and white working class women will still not have a choice between an expensive legal abortion and a twenty-five dollar "coat-hanger" abortion. To fight for anything less than "Free Abortion on Demand" is a deliberate abandonment of these women.

Because we believe that the oppression of women is deeply rooted in capitalist society, we believe that the Women's Liberation movement must adopt a revolutionary perspective and must orient to that class. To do this, the movement must go beyond the single issue of abortion and work for a working class program for Women's Liberation. As a step toward this program, we feel it imperative that this conference discuss, vote on and adopt these demands:

1) Make the care of children a social, not a personal, responsibility with free,

capitalist system which will not allow women to liberate themselves. No confidence in liberal politicians -- male or female! Militant women need a political weapon -- a working class political party to fight for our interests, as an essential part of the struggle of the working class as a whole.

We condemn red-baiting and anti-communism, specifically last night's attacks on SWP-YSA, as destructive to consciousness and a danger to the movement. Any criticism of individuals and organizations involved in the movement must be based on the content of their politics not their organizational affiliations. The SWP mis-leadership of the movement must be defeated politically, not by organizational exclusion. We also condemn SWP-YSA's slander of their opponents within the movement as enemies of the Women's Liberation movement in the same class with Richard Nixon. This reaction is of the same anti-political character as the red-baiting attacks.

We call for the formation of an ad hoc committee to come out of this conference to further nationwide discussion of the broader issues within the Women's Liberation movement and place Women's Liberation in a revolutionary working class context."

Although, needless to say, this motion was voted down by this conference, we believe that it points the direction that the Women's Liberation movement must take to achieve liberation and that the lessons of struggle, including this fiasco of a conference, will indicate that our approach is correct.

Women interested in discussing the formation of the proposed ad hoc committee are invited to contact Revolutionary Women of New York. ●

It Ain't He cont'd.

point, become involved with men politically and put to lie the notion that women are unequal.

The concept of the sisterhood of all women contains within it the fallacy that society is divided fundamentally along sexual lines. While society is divided along many different lines, it is the class distinction between those who own means of production and those who work for those owners that is critical. The Blacks and Chicanos are finding out that the color of one's skin or one's nationality does not matter when it comes to ruling class oppression. Black and Chicano capitalists and supporters of the capitalist system are just as bad as white capitalists and will crush any opposition just as fast as the white capitalists do. For example, in a recent "disturbance" in Pharr, Texas, the city's police force, which is all Chicano, killed several Chicanos who were involved in a demonstration. It made no difference that both sides were of the same ethnic origins. In the same vein, women capitalists exploit women just as much as male capitalists do. Women must not allow themselves the illusion that Jacqueline Onassis will turn over her wealth to any group without putting up a to-the-

death struggle. Her whole life-style is based on the exploitation of both women and men and to continue living as she does means that she must reinforce that exploitation by any means necessary.

While women's organizations must be selective in the males whom they accept into the movement, interested males must be given a chance to work in the arena so that they can struggle more effectively for the liberation of women and of the working class as a whole. A revolutionary women's group will welcome interested males, because it will see them as comrades in the fight for a socialist society. While revolutionary and working class women have little in common with women like Jacqueline Onassis, who are on the other side of the class line, they have much in common with their working class brothers whose needs are the same as theirs.

The presence of men in the women's movement will be a qualitative step forward in our struggle for the liberation of women and all the oppressed, because women and men fighting together to wage a working class revolution -- not a national, sexual, or racial revolution -- is the only answer to overthrowing the rotten, oppressive society that we live in. ●

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