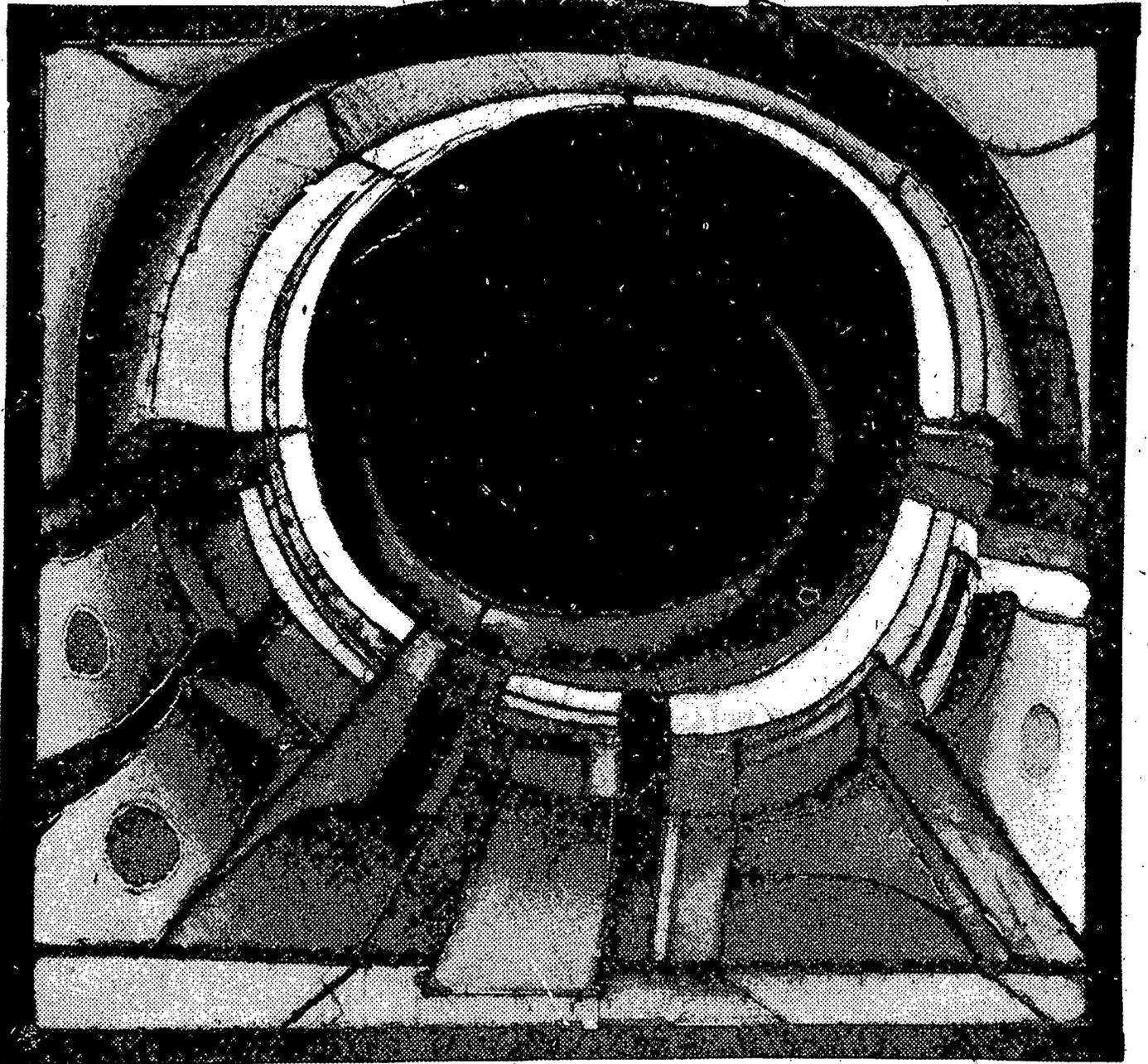


NO. 6 SUMMER 1974

Women and Revolution



Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League X-623 25c



LEE BONTECOU, "UNTITLED," 1961

Women, Culture and Class Society...	2
The Woman Question and Revolutionary Marxism...	10
Women in Castro's Cuba...	15
CLUW: Dead End for Working Women...	24

Women, Culture and Class Society

by Helen Cantor

At first glance, it would appear that the problems of culture and women's contributions to it are somewhat removed from the immediate tasks of building a revolutionary party of the proletariat, and in a sense, these questions are. The struggle for women's creative and full participation in all aspects of society seems of concern only to the educated women of the middle class. Of what concern is this struggle to revolutionists?

The problem of culture and gaining access to it is a fundamental one for the proletariat. As Trotsky wrote: "The proletariat is forced to take power before it has appropriated the fundamental elements of bourgeois culture; it is forced to overthrow bourgeois society by revolutionary violence for the very reason that society does not allow it access to culture" (Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*).

Ever since the beginning of human development the iron necessity to survive has usually necessitated a division between hunting and child-rearing tasks. While this original division did not result in women's present oppression, the development of civilization, i.e., class society, did, by excluding women from many areas of social labor. Women have historically been kept pregnant most of their lives and, under advanced capitalism, isolated in individual households and thus impeded from attaining full expression of their creativity and social productivity. It is only comparatively recently (in the last 200 years) with the development of capitalism, that significant numbers of women (and at first only those of the upper classes) even learned to read or were allowed to attend school.

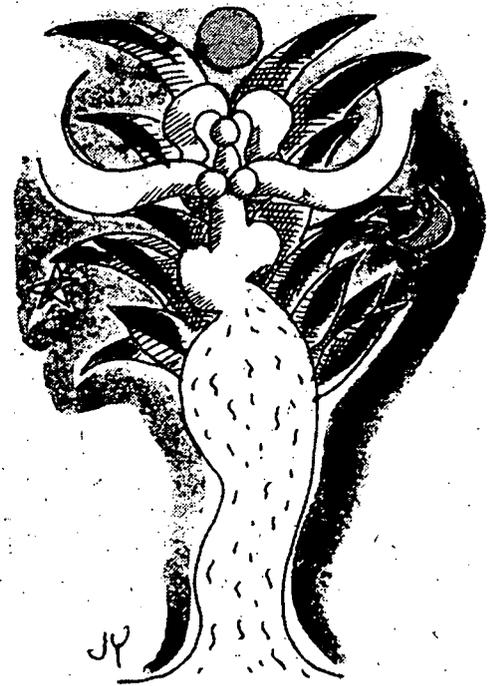
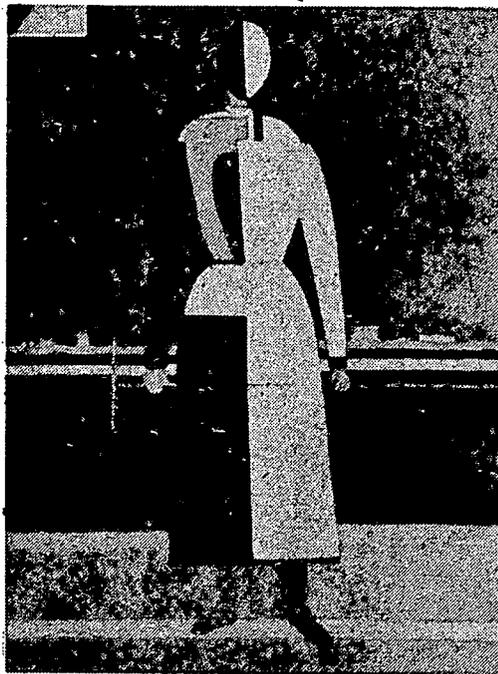
As Marxists, we are interested in human culture—

our fundamental aim is to create a society in which all humanity, unimpeded by material scarcity, can develop its creative abilities freely and to the utmost.

There is a great deal of vulgar materialism and ignorance on the left regarding the relation of culture to the proletariat, due in part to the atrocities of "socialist realism" perpetrated by the Stalinists, including the Maoist variety. "Workerist" philistines glorify the lack of culture in the working class, justifying this by defining all standards of culture as inherently bourgeois. These currents are reflected within women's organizations, too, as shown recently by attempts to create a "women's culture" in opposition to "male-dominated" culture.

"Cultural feminism" has become a trend in what is left of the now largely dissipated outburst of feminist activity of the late 1960's. The women's movement left few organizations in its wake other than a string of women's studies departments on campuses across the country, and small clumps of women's schools or centers (like the Chicago Women's Liberation Union school), most of whose activities center around do-it-yourself gynecology, Volkswagen repair or some variant of "women's culture," such as women's rock and roll bands, poetry readings, paintings or displays of women's crafts. This strain of "cultural feminism" is also evident in recent publications of anthologies of women poets, journals (like *Aphra* or *The Amazon Quarterly* devoted to lesbian culture, or *The Feminist Art Journal*) and endless articles in almost all women's papers (and some liberal papers, like the

The painting at left by Malevich, although atypical of most Stalinist-dominated art, nevertheless is an attempt to idealize the sexless "heroine of socialist labor." The drawing at right (from *The Second Wave*, Vol. 2, No. 4), in contrast, is a typical illustration of some feminists' assertion of women's "true nature" as myth-inspiring, moon goddess/earth mother.



Village Voice and the *New York Review of Books*) on women artists, poets, etc.

The worldview of these cultural feminists is often shared by more political "socialist feminists" and even by many of the ex-New Left Maoists, and is tailed uncritically by groups like the SWP in precisely the same way that they tail black nationalism. To this worldview we counterpose a Marxist materialist understanding of the basis of woman's oppression and of culture in general. In order to seek to create a truly human culture, as Marx said, we must create the conditions in which humanity can, for the first time, make its own history.

Some Currents of Feminism Today

The "cultural feminists" propound several somewhat contradictory theories. First, there are the liberal academics, who argue that there really are great women artists, scientists, leaders, and so on, but that they have been left out of history, so we don't know about them. This is the "herstory" line—"write women back into history." As if wiping out centuries of oppression were merely a matter of altering a few textbooks! "Teach the *real* contributions women have made in the past," they demand. This argument in effect denies the reality of women's oppression, because it denies that that oppression had any particular effect on women.

Another variant on the "herstory" concept is that the reason nobody noticed all this womanly creative activity was because all culture is *male* culture and thus the female aspects of creativity were ignored or neglected—like making quilts or weaving, for example (*off our backs* has had several culture pull-outs on quilt-making). Women's art must be judged by different standards than that of men, advocates of this position say. Women's crafts were not seen as great art simply because women did them—presumably if



Some feminists assert that art by women, such as Barbara Hepworth's "Large and small forms" (1945) above have historically shown a preoccupation with rounded, organic and womb-like forms.

men had made the quilts they would be displayed in the museums along with the Rembrandts and Greek sculptures.

More radical feminists call for the creation of an entirely separate "women's culture" because, given male dominance, it is supposedly impossible for women to create anything except by withdrawing, creating "their own space." This position asserts that women are inherently different from men, that their sexual identity is the most important thing about them and will inevitably (or should inevitably) determine their social behavior, ideas, creative expression and so on. This argument is quite close to that of the fake anthropologists like Lionel Tiger, who argues in *Men in*

continued on next page



"Rembrandt Seated Among His Students," by a pupil of Rembrandt. In his studio women were not allowed to draw from nude models.

Women and Culture...

Groups that because of the original biological functions of men as hunters and women as child-raisers, they have inherent and instinctual responses to life, see the world differently, and are thus naturally assigned to their present social roles (women aren't good at politics, men are more aggressive).

Shulamith Firestone, in *The Dialectic of Sex*, goes somewhat further than the need for a separate women's culture. For her, culture, in the sense of aesthetics and art, is the expression of women's sexual nature. She writes:

"We have noted how those few women directly creating culture have gravitated to disciplines within the Aesthetic Mode. There is a good reason for this: the aesthetic response corresponds with 'female' behavior. The same terminology can be applied to either: subjective, intuitive, introverted, wishful, dreamy or fantastic, concerned with the subconscious.... Correspondingly, the technological response is the masculine response: objective, logical, extroverted, real-

istic, concerned with the conscious mind...."

—Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*

For Firestone, the sexual division of humanity is the basis from which class divisions grew and from which the division between science and art (objective vs. subjective) developed as well. This division seems particularly artificial and false, however, when it is noted that men have had less trouble in assuming the "feminine aesthetic" mode—most of the great novelists, poets, artists, etc., have after all been men. Why cannot women therefore equally easily assume the "masculine technological" model?

The most developed expression of "women's culture" (at least in the visual arts) is probably the male-exclusionist Womanhouse arts center created by Judy Chicago in California. Judy Chicago, an artist, has developed the theory that women's art has historically shown a preoccupation with womb-like shapes; holes, rounded organic forms (for example Georgia O'Keefe's enlarged flower parts)—the "dark inner space" of woman. *Off our backs* reviewed a women's art show in New York last November in an article called "another cuntree [sic]—at last a mainstream women's art movement," which enthused over the proliferation of gigantic female organs, erotic art, fruit-flower fertility themes, etc., and projected from these the creation of "a mainstream female art movement," whose emphasis was on woman's sexuality. This vision of the liberated creative woman as a flower/fruit/fecund moon-goddess/earth mother would be funny (in an intimidating kind of way), were it not the very same image of woman that has arisen as a result of her oppression and been used to "keep her in her place," creating with her womb, not her mind—the intuitive, irrational instinctive mother to be kept out



"Woman and Foetus," Ernst Neizvestny

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"Petrograd, 1918"
(popularly known as "Our
Lady of Petrograd" by
Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin,
Illustrates survival of
madonna and child theme
in Soviet society.

of the "light of day" of men's politics, creativity, social labor.

"Herstory"

Obviously, these two beliefs—that women have made contributions but been unrecognized and that women are fundamentally different from men—are somewhat contradictory. The first asserts that women can entirely transcend their oppression in class society and rise above its effects to create an art which is "just as good" as "men's" art, the other that women are deep down different from men and therefore must reject all previous human achievement as "male culture" and create their own exclusionary culture and society. We deny both these assertions.

The "herstory" question is dealt with in an interesting and thoughtful article by Linda Nochlin (an art historian) called "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?" (reprinted in *Art News*, January 1971). This

article has created much controversy within the women's movement, not only because of its position on women, but also for its analysis of what art is.

Of course, one's immediate response to the question is a sharp reaction against the natural male-chauvinist answer, "Women aren't great artists because they are incapable of it—all they can do is make babies." But to say that women are potentially equally capable of true creativity is not the same thing as attempting to prove that they are in fact creative, as Nochlin points out. The truth is that women have not participated fully in the creation and development of human culture, because they have been excluded from social production and kept isolated in private occupations of child-rearing and housekeeping, tasks which were historically necessary and from which women could not escape until the development of modern capitalism which provided the technology and productive resources such that this primitive division of labor was no longer necessary.

There have been exceptions to this general truth, of course, but they are almost exclusively from the middle and upper classes. To the extent that a few women have been able to be creative, it has been primarily in the arts, in writing novels, poetry and in painting, for instance. One could ask, "Why have there been no great women architects, bridge-builders, scientists, generals?" equally validly. The reason women have contributed in the arts is not due to some "feminine aesthetic" but because these occupations, being essentially individual and private, were more accessible.

CORRECTION

In "Class Struggle in the Phone Company" (*Women and Revolution* No. 5), we said that "two opportunist groups within the union, Strike Back and Harper's Ferry, capitulated to the scabs." In fact, only *one* of these opportunist groups, the Strike Back Group, is organized within the telephone company. It is supported by Harper's Ferry.

continued on next page

Women and Culture . . .

But even within the arts, women have not been able to contribute as much as men. Why? As Nochlin puts it:

"... [conditions in the arts are] stultifying, oppressive, and discouraging to all who do not have the good fortune to be born white, preferably middle-class or above, males. The fault lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education. . . ."

The production of great art, as Nochlin points out, is not "the direct, personal expression of individual emotional experience . . . the language of art is neither a sob story or a hoarse, confidential whisper" but has rather involved a self-consistent language of form, teaching, building on the experience of past generations of artists, long apprenticeships and intense and lengthy periods of personal experimentation. Women have in most cases been denied access to these artistic necessities. For example, prior to the twentieth century, women were unable to study the live nude, which was absolutely necessary to an artist's education, and were then accused of being incapable of understanding the male form. Upper-class "ladies" were at most encouraged to paint flowers on velvet or China, and were then accused of being unable to develop large, heroic sculptural forms. Almost all women artists up to the end of the 19th century were either the daughters of artist fathers or fathers sympathetic to their intellectual development; or else were associated with a more dominant male artistic personality (for example, Rosa Bonheur, Victorian painter of animals; Maria Robusti, daughter of Tintoretto; Lavinia Fontana, Renaissance

painter; Mary Cassatt, associated with Degas).

To face clearly the fact that only a tiny percentage of privileged women, in exceptional circumstances, have succeeded in becoming successful artists or scientists or whatever they wish is not to despair. Instead of denying the reality of women's oppression, we recognize how this oppression came about and we see a road to end it in the real world through action, instead of retreating to wishful dreaming and academic pursuit of the alleged unappreciated great women geniuses of the past.

Women's Studies and Idealism

The current proliferation of women's studies departments and women's schools implies an underlying philosophy of idealism, which ignores both the actuality and historic necessity of women's oppression and therefore refuses to understand how this oppression must be finally overcome.

Marx asserted that inequality and oppression are historically necessary and can be overcome only through the total development of society, centering on the raising of the productive forces. In *Theories of Surplus Value* he writes, "... at first the development of the capacities of the human species takes place at the cost of the majority of human individuals and even classes. . . ." and in *The German Ideology* he insists that "in general people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. 'Liberation' is an historical and not a mental act. . . ."

But for the women's studies departments, liberation is "a mental act." This belief is characteristic of educated petty-bourgeois academics seeking to rise above the uncomfortable harsh realities of class society because they are caught in the middle. On the one hand, they sympathize with the sad plight of the poor, yet still admire the resourcefulness and cunning (and presumably superior intelligence) of the capitalist and hope that maybe they too will be like him someday. Knowledge is power for these dreamers, because

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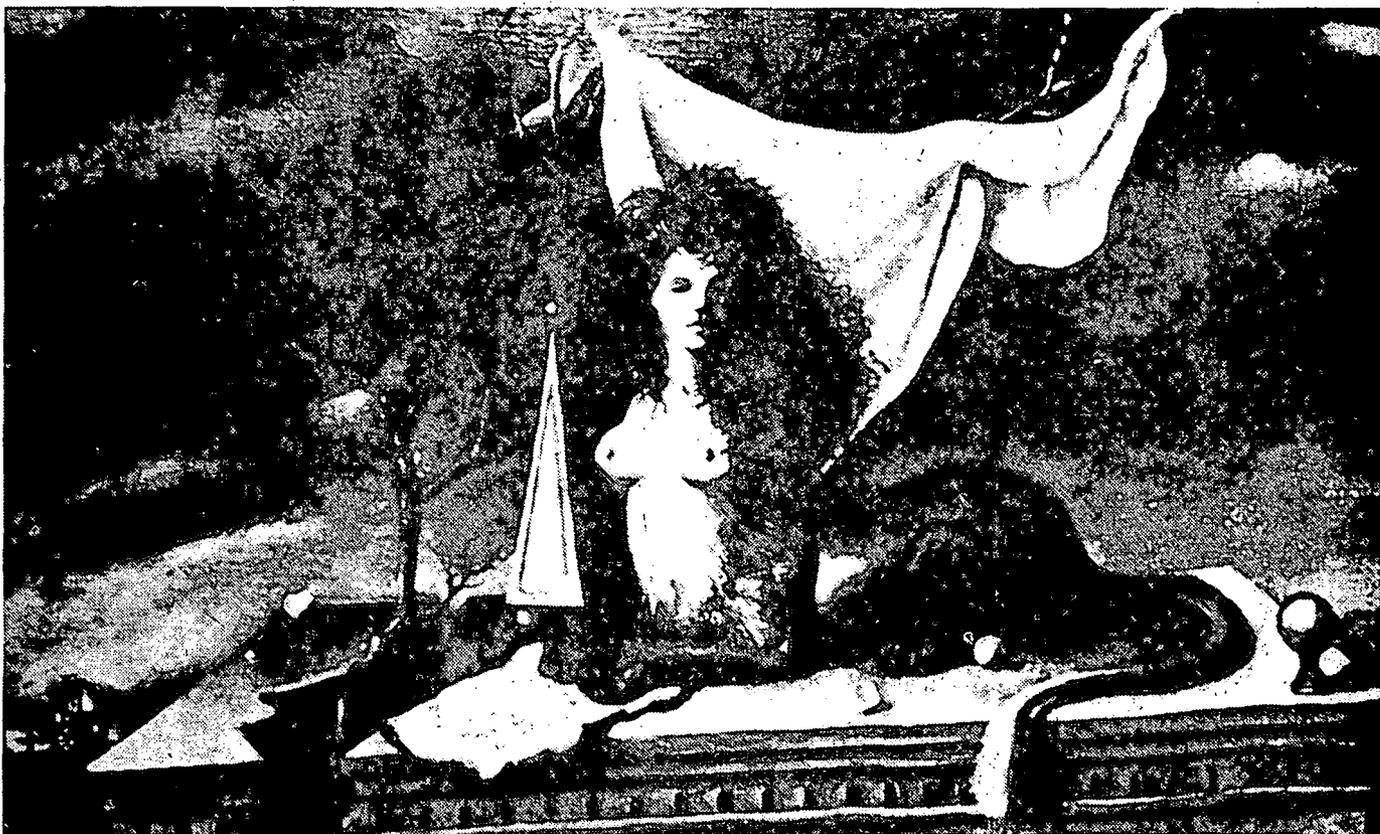
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Leonor Fini, "Petit Sphinx Gardien," 1948. The Surrealists' glorification of mysterious, child-like and irrational aspects of the human personality often find visual expression in images of women, since women have historically been associated with these qualities.

to them it seems that *ideas* rule the world and that if women can only learn the truth about themselves, this will somehow automatically free them.

"Women's Culture"

Those who advocate the creation (or announce the existence) of a separate women's culture also share this idealism, in that they believe it is possible to withdraw from an oppressive society and thus escape its effects. They are either extremely naive, cynically selfish or simply opportunist in advocating this for the mass of women, because it is possible for only a few privileged women with a sufficient financial base to create a relatively pleasant and isolated personal milieu, in which they can concentrate on discovering what their "true sexual essence" may be.

What the "true nature" of men and women is—whether or not men and women have different social needs and expectations because of their biological differences—is a question which cannot be answered objectively under the hideously deforming pressures of class society.

Attempts to create a separate women's culture therefore tend to end up imitating or using the most extreme caricatures of womanhood—like the fruit/flower/moon goddess. The attempt to discover a separate "woman's aesthetic" in art of the past, too, is rather difficult. It is obvious that the work of artists within a particular period or school (Baroque, Rococo, Impressionism, German Expressionism, Cubism, etc.)

resembles that of others in the same school far more than the work of individual men and women within each particular school differs.

Stalinism and Art

It's not accidental that some of the proponents of a women's culture reprint Stalinist works or admire Mao's "proletarian" art theories (see for example the paper *Women and Art*, Summer/Fall, 1972, and its supplement on "Art and Society" devoted entirely to works by Stalinist art historians). The caricatures of "womanhood" (either the eternally strong or eternally suffering woman) are necessary to their art in the same way that caricatures of the proletariat and bourgeoisie are necessary for Stalinist propaganda. They need very obvious symbols to mark their work as clearly identifying itself with a particular viewpoint, and also, in their condescending opinion, in order to be immediately understood by the masses. This "socialist" art which requires "realism" as its medium drags all art down to the level of crude propaganda and clichés of brawny-armed workers, factory chimneys, red flags, etc. Likewise, the cultural feminists need to show "female" symbolism—and in this society no other symbols are available which would be immediately understood by "the masses" except sexual imagery, traditional images of womanhood, round, organic, "warm-tender" qualities, etc.

Many feminist artists are quite hostile to abstract

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Women and Culture...

art because it doesn't fit their concept of art as propaganda. It's not immediately obvious what the ideological viewpoint is, or even in fact whether a man or woman painted it! Thus such work must be under constant suspicion as not being "correct." This vulgarity has nothing in common with what art is, which is *not* propaganda (not the "hoarse whispered confession" or "sob story"), but rather an attempt to *extend* consciousness, to break *new* ground, and is therefore often difficult to understand at first.

Women artists have begged to be judged by the same standards as men, for there is one standard in art. Different standards in this case, as in all other areas, only mean disguised contempt. As Virginia Woolf wrote, "It is fatal for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal for a woman to lay the least stress on any grievance, to plead even with justice any cause; in any way to speak consciously as a woman" (*A Room of One's Own*). The question of standards in art is important. As Trotsky said, "proletarian art must not be second-class art" (*Literature and Revolution*)—the proletarian revolution will lay the basis for creating a culture which must build on (and will eventually supersede the *best* of all past cultures.

Male Chauvinism

But isn't the concept of culture being used in too broad a sense? What about male chauvinism? Isn't there, after all, such a thing as "bourgeois culture" which can poison the minds of the workers? The uprooting of bourgeois ideology requires not a purge of bourgeois art, à la the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," but the elimination of the material conditions (the repressive nuclear family, social inequal-

ity, unequal access to education and jobs, absorption in child-raising and housework, etc.) which have given rise to male-chauvinist ideology. If these conditions are changed, reflections of this change will ultimately appear in literature and art. That is the only way to thoroughly and forever abolish false conceptions of reality. As Orwell said about Salvador Dali (and he *loathed* Dali, believing him to be a truly sick individual who spread fantasies of necrophilia), it is a dubious policy to ban much of anything, particularly in the fields of art or science. Lenin continually warned comrades not to become too self-assured, too self-righteous, because Marxism is a science of economic and political life which applies only indirectly to other disciplines. Essentially Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky all insisted on the autonomy of art.

Of course there is a dominant "bourgeois culture." But it is based on the entire accumulated experiences of all human societies since the beginning of man. Thus it would be more accurate to speak of "human culture in a bourgeois epoch," for it is this entire range of human culture which the bourgeoisie has taken as its exclusive possession and which the proletariat must conquer. Socialist society must and will base itself upon this entire accumulated experience.

Socialist Humanity

Since the beginning of class society the social roles of men and women have never been equal—that is the goal of communist society. Until such a society is achieved, it is almost impossible to untangle the results of social training and education, which reflect the inequalities of class society, from what may possibly be real differences among peoples, sexes, etc. We are justly suspicious of the uses to which research in "social sciences" is put in capitalist society. As Trotsky said in a speech to a scientific gathering in Russia in 1925:

"... the greater the trust of socialism devoted to direct study of nature, the greater is its initial distrust in

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Women and Revolution

approaching those sciences and pseudo-sciences which are linked closely to the structure of human society, its economic institutions, its state, laws, ethics, etc."

— "Dialectical Materialism and Science" in *Problems of Everyday Life*

Much of these "pseudo-sciences" end up simply justifying the status quo, i.e., capitalism with its attendant evils, because they begin with the assumption of some kind of "eternal human nature" which produces society, and thus that's the way it has to be, forever and ever." Further, all past alleged differences between races and sexes have at one time or another been used by reactionaries as an ideological excuse for the purpose of justifying the oppression of (or even seeking to destroy) the supposedly "inferior" grouping.

But suppose some real aptitudinal differences do exist between men and women and could be proven? Our response would be "so what?" A free society must require absolute equality of opportunity and access to all areas of human life and culture. A proletarian state developing toward communism (the classless society) will have no reason to fear investigation and exploration of all potential differences, because our society

will be based upon the absolute equality and freedom of all humanity, regardless of any such differences.

As Isaac Deutscher said at a Socialist Scholars Conference on the subject of "socialist man":

"We do not maintain that socialism is going to solve all predicaments of the human race. We are struggling in the first instance with the predicaments that are of man's making and that man can resolve. May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies—hunger, sex, and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labor movement have taken on.

"Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these. And if his nature remains aggressive, his society will give him immeasurably greater and more varied opportunities than bourgeois man has for sublimating his instinctual drives and turning them to creative uses.... The average member of socialist society may yet rise, as Trotsky anticipated, to the stature of Aristotle, Goethe, Marx.... And we assume that 'above these heights new peaks will rise.' We do not see in socialist man evolution's last and perfect product, or the end of history, but in a sense only the beginning of history." ■

Two Attacks

Gangster tactics on the left are the last resort of the politically bankrupt. Over the years the Spartacist League, which holds a principled position against violence on the left (and a consistent record to back it up), has been the target of various decaying tendencies who could not deal *politically* with the SL's correct program.

Two recent attacks have taken the form of assaults upon our banners carrying women's liberation slogans. The attacks are unconnected—one was perpetrated by feminists in Boston, the other by supporters of the Revolutionary Union (RU) in the Bay Area—but both reflect the substitution of thuggery for polemics.

The Boston attack took place on International Women's Day when feminists, who define their enemies not according to politics but according to sex, attacked our banner reading "Free Quality Health Care for All; Free Abortion on Demand," *because it was carried by men*. The attack was successfully repulsed but lamentations over the male "invasion" of the Women's Day demonstration lingered on. In an article in *The Boston Phoenix* (19 March 1974) Karen Lindsey complained:

"Most of them [men] were with the Spartacist League, and they suffered no diffidence at being in a women's demonstration. They carried signs, led chants, and had the arrogance to try and sell women copies of a magazine [*Women and Revolution*] purporting to explain the women's revolution. They and their womenfolk even started chants challenging the independent women's movement: 'Women and men, together united'."

The Spartacist League pleads guilty to challenging the "independent" women's movement, that completely ineffective dead end which through its class collaboration only *delays* the triumph of the proletarian revolution and thereby the emancipation of women. We look toward a women's section of the Spartacist League

which will be independent not of *men*, but of the *bourgeoisie*!

And one more thing: the SL does not have "women-folk" (or "menfolk")—just comrades.

The second attack occurred on June 1 in the Bay Area at a demonstration called by the Committee for Better Working Conditions, which is composed of supporters of the Revolutionary Union and others, to protest the rescinding of protective legislation for women by California's Industrial Welfare Commission.

When the Spartacist League appeared with signs calling for support to the Equal Rights Amendment the RU, which opposes passage of the ERA, attacked our politics with the only weapons at its disposal—hooliganism and vicious slander. Unable to counter our slogans politically, the RUers tore down our signs, threatened our comrades and blocked the distribution of SL literature. When members of the Militant Action Caucus of the Communications Workers of America defended the SL, the RUers slandered them as scabs and agents of the bosses. But apparently these fantastic lies did not have the desired impact because the RU thugs deemed it necessary to resort to still more despicable tactics. As MAC members made their way back to the regional CLUW conference they were attending, RU supporters and members of the Committee for Better Working Conditions led by Vern Bown, a member of the ILWU, followed them down a side street, ripped the leaflets they had been distributing out of their hands and attacked them. Others who came to the MAC members' defense—including two SLers—were viciously attacked as well.

Upon their return to the CLUW conference, the MAC members reported the incident and called upon CLUW to sign a petition protesting this gross violation of workers democracy. We encourage our readers to add their names to this petition by writing to:

Militant Action Caucus
P.O. Box 462
El Cerrito, California 94530

The Woman Question and Revolutionary Marxism

Translated from Kommunistische Korrespondenz

The following article appeared in Kommunistische Korrespondenz No. 2, April 1974. KK is published by the Berlin Committee for the Support of the SL-ÖBL Agreement for Common Work in Germany, a grouping supported by the Spartacist League/US and the Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists (ÖBL). The Committee is striving to establish itself as a pole of authentic revolutionary Marxism in West Germany and in West Berlin; it has already succeeded in attracting some of the best cadre from the various West German ostensibly Trotskyist organizations, which are in a considerable state of organizational and theoretical disarray: their "Trotskyism" has for years been marked by economism, national particularism and the adoption of the whole spectrum of Pabloist theory and practice—from acceptance of Mandel's theory of "neocapitalism" through economist opportunism in the trade unions to the downplaying and ultimately denial of the role of the vanguard party.

Thus these groups' abstentionism on the woman question and their accommodation to petty-bourgeois feminism are hardly anomalous. They have played a reactionary role in the recent campaign to repeal Article 218, the statute rendering abortion illegal in West Germany. No less an abandonment of Marxist fundamentals is the arrogance which these organizations have tended to display toward their female comrades, relegating them to auxiliary roles in a fashion unpleasantly reminiscent of the American New Left.

Women and Revolution greets the emergence of the Berlin Committee, the first West German group to advance seriously the sole possible solution to the issue of women's liberation: international proletarian revolution and the socialist transformation of all society.

After two years, Article 218 has again become the object of discussion and campaigns, primarily because of the possibility of an imminent decision in Parliament, which, according to what one reads in the bourgeois press, bodes no good. At any rate, nothing more is to be heard in SPD [Social Democratic] circles of simple repeal, which was initially proposed by the SPD Women's Conference. On the contrary, it is feared that nothing will remain of the provision for legal abortion before the third month of pregnancy, leaving only abortion by medical authorization.

Yet it should be clear to everyone that only the simple repeal of Article 218 and the realization of abortion on demand covered by medical insurance constitute a decided improvement for women and above all for proletarian women. We believe that making abortion legal only for the first months of pregnancy

is totally inadequate, since there are too many contingencies that can make it impossible to keep to the three-month limit. Women must have the democratic right to decide even after three months. We must push this democratic right and fight for it.

Reformist Weasling

Reformist organizations such as the Jusos, the DKP/SEW¹ and women's groups under their influence (e.g., the Socialist Women's League of West Berlin) maintain on the other hand that while abortion until the third month is admittedly not optimal, further-reaching demands do not at this time stand a chance of being realized.

Revolutionaries must counterpose to such weasling out of democratic demands the position that only struggle will effectively show what can be realized. One thing can be said at this point, however, and not only with reference to Article 218 but to political and trade-union struggles in general: *The more moderate one's demands, the less will be realized in the end result. Reforms in bourgeois society are not the result of systematic reform work, but rather the "byproduct" of revolutionary struggles.* Anyone who demands legalized abortion only during the first months of pregnancy should not be surprised when only abortion on medical authorization is discussed in the Bundestag.

Feminism as a Dead End

The West Berlin feminist women's group Bread and Roses does raise the sole correct demands—for the simple repeal of Article 218 and for abortion on demand covered by medical insurance. But is it capable of offering women from the working class and the middle layers of society a perspective for their emancipation? It and other feminist women's groups (cf. *Women's Paper* No. 2) have raised the slogan, among others, "*Women united are strong.*" This can be interpreted only as meaning that women should organize specifically on the basis of their sex—as women—which means that the feminist groups see as the fundamental and most important contradiction in capitalist society that between men and women. But a false—as we see it—premise leads to false conclusions. And we will not leave this assertion unproved; on the contrary. Let us look at the ways women are oppressed in capitalist society and how this oppression can be overcome.

Women are *doubly* oppressed. Women are exploited and oppressed first in their role as proletarians, that is, as producers of surplus value. Since to date the demand for "equal pay for equal work" has not been

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Altkon des gefamten Proletariats bringt das Ende
der Wucherherrschaft

Cover of *Die Kommunistin*, September 1923, edited by Clara Zetkin—militant communist and international leader of struggle for women's emancipation—depicts overthrow of "the rule of usury" by the proletariat.

achieved, one can speak of super-exploitation in the case of the exploitation of the woman worker. But women also suffer an additional sexual oppression specific to their sex, through the institution of the bourgeois family.

In the bourgeois family there exists between the "breadwinner" and his "dependent" domestic slave a division of labor which divides and atomizes the working class. Because of "his" family, many a worker refuses to participate in a strike in the factory or to force through his own demands in opposition to the capitalist. He remains passive, whereas at home he takes out his pent-up frustrations on his wife—and assumes the role of *pater familias*.

This sexual oppression of women runs through all classes, but it is based on the institution of the bourgeois family, which is necessary for the bourgeois state as the instrument for oppressing women and atomizing and splitting the working class into male workers and female workers. The patriarchal family developed in the process of the differentiation of society into classes and the simultaneous emergence of private property, finally becoming institutionalized with the function of insuring the inheritance of this property by the legitimate son. Consequently, the first prerequisite for the emancipation of women is the socialization of the means of production. In other words, the proletarian revolution and the seizure of power by the proletariat will create the basis for the

destruction of the institution of the bourgeois family. Concretely this means that all marriage and divorce laws will be repealed, that all household duties, such as cooking, laundry, child care, will be replaced by free public kitchens, laundries, nurseries and kindergartens. The full emancipation of women as well as the rest of society will be realized only in communist, i.e., classless society free of every form of oppression.

The following conclusions flow from this analysis:

1. The division of the working class into hostile camps of women and men must be opposed by communists. Working-class women and men must struggle side by side to abolish capitalist exploitation.

"The Congress of the Communist International asserts that both the success of all the tasks posed by it as well as the final victory of the world proletariat and the complete abolition of the capitalist order can be assured only through the closely-allied common struggle of working-class men and women."

—"Resolution on the Necessity of Drawing Working Women into the Struggle for Socialism," adopted at the First Congress of the Communist International on June 3, 1919²

2. We have nothing in common with bourgeois feminism or petty-bourgeois women's movements. Each instance of the organization of proletarian and petty-bourgeois women into organizations that are petty-bourgeois feminist, upholds the division of the working class, leads women away from the revolutionary path of the working class and diverts them from the common struggle of working-class women and men for the overthrow of capitalism.

At the Third World Congress of the Communist International (see the Minutes, p. 916), Clara Zetkin points out in this regard:

"There is only one movement; there is only one organization of women communists within the Communist Party, together with male communists. The tasks and goals of the communists are our tasks, our goals. No autonomous organization, no doing your own thing which in any way lends itself to splitting the revolutionary forces and diverting them from their great goals of the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the construction of communist society."

She carried this thought further at the Fourth Congress:

"What we usually designate as the communist women's movement is no independent women's movement and has nothing to do with any feminist tendency whatsoever."

—Protokolle des IV. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale, p. 725

But let us stay with the feminists a bit longer. It is often heard that simple repeal of Article 218 will lead to women's self-determination over their own bodies. Is this notion anything but utter utopianism? A concrete question, with a concrete answer: does a woman who has worked for eight hours on the assembly line, then goes home to cook, clean and look after her children have determination over her own body, even with the right to legal abortion?

The Role of the Trade-Union Bureaucracy

Let us turn now to the trade unions, which (at least considering their pretensions) might be regard-

continued on next page

...Revolutionary Marxism

ed as representing the interests of working women. But far from it. In the present situation, which requires bringing massive pressure to bear on the SPD government through a broad mobilization of the membership, the bureaucracy cowers behind a lukewarm petition campaign in support of the three-month legal abortion period, imagining that it has thereby fulfilled its duty to proletarian women. While cleaving to the SPD government's directives vis-à-vis the three-month legal limit (how could they do otherwise in view of the intimate entanglement of the trade-union bureaucracy with the SPD?), on another level they are true-blue in orienting to the SPD's wage guidelines. Any mobilization of the trade-union base—around any reformist demand whatsoever—could in an actual movement develop its own dynamic and slip out of the bureaucrats' hands. That is something the messrs. (and mesdames) bureaucrats could not risk. The trade-union bureaucracy drags the SEW and the DKP along behind it, not only in regard to legalizing abortion only for the first months of pregnancy, but in almost every wage conflict as well that is ended with a rotten compromise by the trade-union bureaucracy.

Maoist Politics of the Family

On Sunday 16 March 1974 various groups distributed leaflets at the demonstration in Berlin, organized and initiated by the Bread and Roses women's group in favor of simple repeal of Article 218. We should like to examine these groups briefly.

Opportunism and renunciation of Marxist-Leninist principles as far as the eye could see. The Maoist KPD demands in its leaflet, "Article 218 must be repealed—The democratic right of families to their own family planning must be realized!" The first demand is correct. But what is the character of "the democratic right of families to their own family planning"?

With this demand the Maoist KPD would like to divert attention from the function of the family in the bourgeois state (already described in detail above) and to ascribe a positive role to the family—which it in fact has, but for the bourgeois state, not for the working class. We see the basis for the KPD's avoidance of Marxist analysis of the family on the one hand in its assumption and defense of Stalinist theory and practice and on the other in the ideological upgrading of the nuclear family in China.

A few historical facts on this point. Stalin reintroduced the bourgeois marriage and divorce laws and again outlawed abortion—all this in fundamental contradiction to the achievements of the October Revolution and the practice of the Party and the Supreme Soviet under Lenin and Trotsky. In China the oppression of women is cemented by the family. It is certainly not possible to replace the family *ad hoc* in China by a general system of public free kitchens, laundries, nurseries and kindergartens. The reason for this (contrary to the KPD's assertion that China is a socialist country) must be sought in the fact that the productive forces of this deformed workers state are relatively undeveloped. In China, what we

have is not a society of surplus but rather one that still must be characterized as a society of scarcity, this despite the indisputable and immense progress made by the Chinese people since the victorious 1949 Revolution. But the bureaucracy of the Chinese Party and state makes a virtue out of necessity. Instead of explaining to the Chinese working and peasant masses the context outlined above, present conditions are propagandized as ideal for a socialist country. The "vanguard" does not attempt through intensive enlightenment and agitation to make even the bare beginnings of overcoming bit by bit the patriarchal family structure.

The Spartacusbund: Do-Nothingism as Transitional Slogan

A few weeks ago a new organization, the Spartacusbund (Spartacus League) emerged from an unprincipled fusion between the Communist Organization Spartacus (Kommunistische Organisation Spartacus) and Spartacus-BL (Spartacus Bolschewiki-Leninisten).³ Its rejection of the meaning of essential parts of the Trotskyist program, as developed methodologically in the "Transitional Program" of 1938, has led not only to a hopelessly confused economism, but has also resulted in an unexcellible indifference and abstentionism on the woman question. The trade-union work of the Spartacusbund clearly reveals that it is incapable of overcoming the gulf between minimum and maximum program with transitional slogans. What does Trotsky's "Transitional Program" say?

"The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old 'minimal' demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial, 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very-bases of the bourgeois regime. The old 'minimal program' is superseded by the *transitional program*, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution."

—"The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International"

With the help of these transitional slogans it is possible to raise the backward consciousness of the working class to a higher level and to bridge the gap between the historical mission of the working class and its present consciousness.

The abstentionism on the woman question mentioned above is revealed for example in the fact that the Spartacusbund did not take part in the demonstration in Berlin. They evidently could not even pull themselves together for a leaflet.⁴ Yet the positions which communists must take in fighting for democratic demands and working-class rights can scarcely be new to the comrades of the Spartacusbund. The call for simple repeal of Article 218 and abortion on demand as part of state health insurance is a democratic de-

mand and a democratic right, which must be fought for and won in the interest of both proletarian and petty-bourgeois women.

With its political abstentionism in the present campaign against Article 218 and on the woman question in general, the Spartacusbund harks back to the tradition of Spartacus-BL. One will seek in vain in all the issues of the paper that have appeared since the birth of Spartacus-BL for articles that deal in any way with the woman question. In light of this fact, working women will ask whether perhaps the day-in, day-out oppression and discrimination to which they are subjected in factory, office and family is not just a subjective delusion.

The indifference of Spartacus-BL and the Spartacusbund to the woman question seems to us exemplified in their rejection of the campaign led by what was then the KJO-Spartacus (Kommunistische Jugendorganisation Spartacus) against Article 218, which, when the real movement died away as a result of the 1972 government crisis, degenerated into a capricious obsession of the KJO. Rejection of the conception of the KJO misled the Spartacus-BL organization into condemning wholesale even propagandistic intervention in favor of the assertion of a democratic demand, namely the simple repeal of Article 218.

With the needs of proletarian women as a point of departure (simple repeal of Article 218 is such a need!) transitional slogans must be developed which lead to the goal of the seizure of power by the proletariat. This in no way means that there is a special program for women; there is only *one* program. The program for proletarian women is the full Trotskyist program with particular emphasis on and expansion of those areas which relate to the special oppression of women.

Since, however, the Spartacusbund does *not* stand on the full Trotskyist program and/or has deviations from this program (a narrow national perspective, economism on the trade-union question, overrating of the SPD, a confused position on Chile, support for Arab nationalism, indifference to the woman question), it is also incapable of making into the foundation of its politics the experience codified in the discussions on the woman question at the first four Congresses of the Communist International. It is therefore incapable of counterposing itself to the feminist women's movement, the Stalinist organizations (SEW/DKP, KPD, to name two) and the United Secretariat's single-issue tactics, and thus showing proletarian women a perspective which will lead them to the proletarian revolution.

Single-Issue Tactics or Transitional Program

We can deal with single-issue tactics in the light of what the International Marxist Group (Gruppe Internationale Marxisten, GIM) has to say about the problem of Article 218 and the general perspective for women's liberation. The GIM is the German section of the "Fourth International" ("United Secretariat"), an ostensibly Trotskyist "world party," which is presently characterized by the reformism of the minority tendency around the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and by the centrism of the majority ten-

dency (Mandel, Krivine *et al.*; cf. the article "Reformistische Gelüste gegen guerrilla-orientierten Zentrismus," in the German *Spartacist No. 11*).⁵

In general the GIM—above all its West Berlin group—supports the USec majority and takes a very critical stand toward the SWP. But in the struggle against the illegality of abortion the comrades apparently believe that they must point to the success of the American campaign: "In the USA it was in this way that the women's movement last year achieved the legalization of abortion for the first six months of pregnancy." In just what way this occurred the reader to be sure learns only in very obscure terms:

"For one thing the distinctiveness of women's societal function gives them the right to bring forward specific demands and to fight for these demands through distinctive forms of struggle. The struggle against Article 218 is such a distinctive form of struggle which in the dynamics of its movement can and must develop forms of expression that are, to a certain degree, autonomous and specific, in order to be really successful."

We wish to cast light on one point here: The "Women's National Abortion Action Coalition" (WONAAC) led by the SWP was based on the *single-issue* tactics also used so "successfully" in the antiwar movement. One concentrates totally on a *single limited issue* and attempts to build the broadest front possible on this basis—even far into the bourgeois camp. Such an approach is in the view of the SWP not popular-front tactics, since alliances with bourgeois forces are supposedly impermissible only in generally political campaigns touching on many issues (e.g., elections).

In practice, concentration on the single issue took the form of not even demanding *free abortion*. Since there is no system of state health insurance in the USA, precisely this demand would have been very explosive and could have extended the struggle against the illegality of abortion along class-struggle lines into a general struggle for national state health care.

That would of course have cost the "movement" the sympathy of the "liberal" doctors, who were also

continued on next page

Kommunistische Korrespondenz

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...Revolutionary Marxism

against the illegality of abortion, in the hopes of raking in profits in the future from performing legal abortions. For the SWP support by medical capitalists and other members of the medical establishment was more important than the chance to advance the struggle for the socialist program with the help of the abortion question.

The end result of such clever Realpolitik was the immediate collapse of the SWP-led women's movement after the Supreme Court ruling legalizing abortion. It is precisely here that the duty of revolutionaries to link up isolated struggles with other concrete ones as closely as possible is demonstrated—the necessity to channel the demands which arise from these struggles into a system of transitional demands culminating in the question of state power.

The Program of the Spartacist League

Below we print the program of the Women's Commission of the SL/US [see *Women and Revolution*]

No. 4]. As can be easily seen, this is not a "women's program" in a narrow sense. Nonetheless this program takes as its point of departure demands which are particularly significant for working women. Isolated from one another, many of the slogans it raises would not go beyond the framework of reformism; conversely the slogans in which the program culminates would [in isolation] have an utterly abstract character. Taken together they constitute a concretization of the Trotskyist transitional program applied to the present situation in the USA and especially to the proletarian women's movement.

The SL/US raises similar programs for the growing number of trade-union caucuses influenced by it. The concrete point of departure is adapted to the respective conditions of the particular arena; the method of the programs is one and the same—the methodology of the Fourth International.

The ÖBL [Austrian Bolshevik-Leninists] and the Berlin group around *Kommunistische Korrespondenz* have before them the task of applying this program to the concrete conditions of their countries and in the struggles against all variants of reformism (including feminism), Stalinism and centrism, of advancing the reconstruction of the Fourth International! ■

NOTES

¹The Deutsche Kommunistische Partei and the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Westberlins are the Stalinist parties of respectively West Germany and West Berlin. The Jusos is the SPD youth group.

²In relying on an inaccurate reprint of Comintern documents the author of this article unfortunately introduced a number of minor inaccuracies into the citations. We have corrected these and are advising the Berlin comrades of the errors.

³Largely on the basis of a typically Pabloist organizational atrocity perpetrated against them the Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands (IKD) split from the German section of the so-called United Secretariat in 1969, thereafter setting up the Communist Youth Organization Spartacus (KJO/Spartacus) for exclusively youth-directed trade-union work, since in the view of the IKD older German workers were too apolitical, too demoralized by the years of fascism (in 1970!) to be reachable by a communist organization. To insure the execution of its line and guard against youth vanguardism the IKD, in violation of Leninist norms of youth-party relations, functioned as a faction in the KJO. The result, as the SL/US had warned, was exacerbation of youth-party relations and an unclear split in December of 1971, when the IKD, outvoted at the KJO National Conference, walked out announcing it was the sole proprietor of the KJO trademark, thus adopting the youth-vanguardist approach against which it had supposedly been serving as theoretical bastion! This despite the massive street demonstrations by German workers in support of the Brandt government (the "September Strikes"). Not surprisingly it turned out then that no one, not even the IKD, really wanted the old trademark: faced with widespread demoralization and resignations the KJO struck the "J" (for "youth") from its name to become the Communist Organization Spartacus (KO/Spartacus). Meanwhile the erstwhile majority of the

KJO, which had set up Spartacus/Bolschewiki-Leninisten was, despite blatantly economist opportunism in its trade-union work, not doing so well either; the result, in February of this year, was a totally unprincipled fusion of the remnants of the two organizations (it was agreed to discuss outstanding differences after the fusion conference; both groups were, however, able to agree on writing their supposed enemies in the "United Secretariat" to request observer status at the USec World Congress, on the basis of adherence to a hazy, indeed deliberately non-political family of Trotskyism concept!). The Berlin Committee sees the exposure of these unprincipled—and unsuccessful!—opportunists as one of its main tasks, with the aim of recruiting what subjectively revolutionary elements remain in the organization to the banner of authentic revolutionary Trotskyism.

⁴*Kommunistische Korrespondenz*, No. 3 (June 1974) corrects this statement, noting that "The Spartacusbund did not in fact participate, but it did distribute a flyer, a fact which escaped our notice." KK adds that this error does "not concern the political position of the Spartacusbund" and concludes, "There remains a gap between its support of the democratic demand for the repeal of Article 218 and its ritual professions of the necessity of fighting for socialism. This gap can be bridged only by the Transitional Program, which the Spartacusbund however fragments." Moreover it is clear that the Spartacusbund fears that treatment of so hot an issue as the special oppression of women might scare off the backward elements of the class...."

⁵The article, written by Michael Milin of the Revolutionary Internationalist Tendency (RIT) of the SWP, originally appeared in *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 28, July 1973.

Women in Castro's Cuba

The widespread popularity of the film "Lucia" by the Cuban film maker, Humberto Solas, among members of ostensibly left and feminist circles is indicative of the extent to which the condition of women in Cuba is seen as a model of women's emancipation under "socialism." While the Cuban regime's reliance on the nuclear family and its treatment of homosexuals have been the subjects of particular criticisms, these have generally been seen as problems soon to be resolved through the "revolution within the revolution." Thus Linda Jenness of the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) stated in her essay, "Lucia, an Attack on Male Chauvinism" (in *Women and the Cuban Revolution*), "The Cuban Revolution is still in process and the struggles within the revolution are still in process, including the struggle against male chauvinism. Lucia has not won but she is fighting, gaining strength and support, and, like the Cuban Revolution, she will win."

Marxists regard the condition of women in any society as a touchstone for the measure of the advancement and emancipation of the society as a whole. Cuba, which has undergone a social revolution which culminated in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie—both the native Cuban oligarchy and the U.S. imperialists—is not a socialist society. Rather, it is a deformed workers state administered by a bureaucratic caste—a caste which exercises political power over the masses of the Cuban people in the place of those who *should* wield that power, the Cuban working class. Despite the opportunistic enthusiasm of the SWP and others for Cuba's "successful battle against discrimination," the fact is that deformed workers states are fundamentally *incapable* of providing the basis necessary for the full emancipation of women.

In what sense is Cuba a "deformed" workers state? Whereas the political isolation of the Soviet Union and the growth of the Stalinist bureaucracy resulted in the *degeneration* of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Cuban Revolution was riddled with fundamental *deformations* from its inception. The guerrilla forces which seized power in 1959 were led by petty-bourgeois rather than proletarian elements, who based themselves on a program of partial nationalizations, minimum land reform, profit-sharing for the working class and the revival of bourgeois democracy—all to be achieved through the ouster of the corrupt Batista dictatorship.

While Castro did not start out as a Stalinist—or a Leninist either (he stated in 1959 that he represented "a sincere democracy [that wanted]... no dictatorship of one man, one class...")—by the time of the CIA invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961, when he found himself forced to defend the material gains of the revolution against imperialism, the clique which had existed as far back as the guerrilla organization in the Sierra Maestra had begun to assume, both organizationally and ideologically, the forms of a classic Stalinist bureaucracy.

Fundamentally akin to the bureaucratic castes which wield political power in the USSR, China, North

Vietnam, etc., the Castro regime reflects nationalist parochialism counterposed to the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Rejecting the Leninist understanding that the gains of the Cuban Revolution can only be safeguarded through its extension and the destruction of imperialist capitalism on a global scale, Castro stated in May, 1966: "Because while repeating once more that I consider myself no more than an apprentice in revolution, I believe that socialism can be built in a single

**"Who is going to prepare
dinner for the man, when he
comes home from work?
Who is going to wash, clean
and all those things?"**

—Fidel Castro, 1966

country and that communism can be built to a certain extent."

Without the leadership of a tested Leninist vanguard, the Cuban working class was unable to contend seriously for state power at the time of the insurrection or afterward. As a result, Cuba is a state which stands on working-class property forms but which is fundamentally deformed by the presence of a Stalinist bureaucracy in place of workers democracy. While the Spartacist League calls for the unconditional military defense of all workers states in order to defend the gains of the international working class, we call at the same time for political revolutions within those states to overthrow the bureaucracies and put political power in the hands of the workers.

Sexual Oppression Continues

The overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of deformed workers states have resulted in significant gains for the women of those states. In Cuba, birth control and abortion, while not encouraged, are legal and, like all health care, they are free. There are enough day-care facilities to accommodate 16 percent of the children of working women. Masses of women have been taught to read and write, and more women are being trained for technical and professional jobs than ever before. The Federation of Cuban Women, which was established by the government in 1960, attempts to "slowly" raise political consciousness in women while involving them in local projects, such as the organization of child-care facilities.

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...Cuba

Nevertheless it is obvious that Cuban women remain oppressed and are considered inferior to men. Although there are women in every branch of the economy, the majority of them are in light industry, education, day nurseries and the food industry—areas which are generally regarded as women's domains. Child-care centers and elementary schools are staffed solely by women. Military service is obligatory for men but not for women, and women are also exempt from the law against absenteeism on the job. Many American women who went to Cuba with the Venceremos Brigade were startled to find that work in the sugar cane fields was segregated according to sex, with men assigned to cane cutting and women to the less prestigious but not necessarily less arduous task of gathering. But perhaps the most indicative manifestation of the Cuban Revolution's failure to resolve the woman question is Cuba's continuing support and even glorification of the primary institution for the oppression of women—the nuclear family. The official endorsement of the family structure is a hallmark of deformed workers states and of Stalinism in general.

Stalinism Relies on the Family

The Bolshevik Party, which succeeded in carrying out the only successful proletarian revolution in history, understood that women would never achieve lib-

eration and social equality until they were free of the isolating and stultifying drudgery of the family and able to participate fully in social life and production. Therefore even in the desperate conditions of counter-revolution, civil war and foreign military intervention, the fledgling Soviet government took immediate measures to emancipate women from the stranglehold of the family by attempting to socialize all the work done by women in the home—cooking, cleaning, laundering, mending, child care—and by simultaneously enforcing equality of opportunity in the state, in industry, in the party and in the armed forces.

The conditions of backwardness, isolation and poverty which prevailed in post-revolutionary Russia and the failure of the revolution to spread to the advanced industrial countries made it impossible for the Soviet state to carry forward its program for women or for the society as a whole. These conditions also made possible the emergence of a privileged, conservative bureaucratic caste which defended its position by calling every new defeat a victory. Thus the historic defeat of revolution in Germany, which sealed the fate of the Russian Revolution and paved the way for fascism in Germany, was rationalized by Stalin in the anti-Marxist slogan, "Socialism in one country." The ignominious betrayals by the Soviet Union of working-class struggles around the world, resulting in the loss of innumerable lives and the strengthening of imperialism, were sloganized as "Peaceful coexistence." And the degeneration of the social position of Soviet women and their relegation once again to the nuclear family where they provided what the im-



Cuban working women leave textile factory.

CUBA INTERNACIONAL

poverished government could not—free domestic labor and child care—found its expression in Stalin's proclamation that "The family is the primary unit of Soviet society" (now updated by the Maoists to read, "The family is the fighting unit for socialism").

The Stalinist bureaucracy in Cuba—a country which is also poor, backward and partially dependent upon family-based peasant agriculture—has taken over these slogans and the treacherous policies behind them in their entirety. The 1971 Culture and Education Congress held in Havana passed the following resolution on the family:

"The family has taken on a role in our society as it links up with collective institutions, making possible the integral formation of man and the construction of socialism. The need to rapidly strengthen the economic base of the country to the greatest possible degree promoted the massive development of men and women. The family structure changes as a result of the mobilization of social factors, and the socialist society makes it possible for the family to serve as the link between children and young people on the one hand and the social environment on the other."

—*Granma* No. 19, 9 May 1971

Unlike the Bolsheviks, who deplored the role of the family, the Cuban Stalinists view the family not as an oppressive vestige of capitalist society which socialist society must replace with collective institutions, but instead, as Linda Gordon pointed out in "Speculations on Women's Liberation in Cuba," "They do not consider the nuclear family to be a class institution, but rather a natural one." (In fact, far from being a "natural" institution, the family has not always existed. Its establishment and the transformations it has undergone in various historical epochs are closely linked to the prevailing property forms.)

Cuban society continues to reinforce the old attitude that women, whatever else they do, are responsible for housework and child care. And, as Sheila Rowbotham points out (*Women, Resistance and Revolution*), no amount of rhetoric concerning sexual equality can obliterate the practical lesson impressed on every Cuban child—the mother cooks and stays home; the father goes out.

Cuban Government Persecutes Homosexuals

Stalinist attitudes toward the family are generally linked to reactionary attitudes toward those who do not fit into the traditional family structure—homosexuals. Perhaps the most notorious codification of the backwardness of the Castro regime on the question of homosexuality lies in the document of the 1971 Culture and Education Congress:

"On Homosexuality: It was resolved that it is not to be tolerated for notorious homosexuals to have influence in the formation of our youth on the basis of their artistic merits. . . . It was proposed that a study should be made to find a way of applying measures with a view to transferring to other organizations, those who, as homosexuals, should not have any direct influence on our youth through artistic and cultural activities. . . . It was resolved that those whose morals do not correspond to the prestige of our Revolution should be barred from any group of performers representing our country abroad. . . . Finally, it was agreed to demand that severe penalties be applied to those who corrupt the morals of minors, deprived repeat offend-



CUBA INTERNACIONAL

Castro and Brezhnev: Two Stalinists confer.

ers and irredeemable anti-social elements. . . . Cultural institutions cannot serve as a platform for false intellectuals who try to make snobbery, extravagant conduct, homosexuality and other social aberrations into expressions of revolutionary art, isolated from the masses and the spirit of the Revolution. . . . The social, pathological character of homosexual deviations was recognized. It was resolved that all manifestations of homosexual deviations are to be firmly rejected and prevented from spreading."

Despite the fact that the day after the Congress, the Cuban ballet, which is known to have homosexuals in it, left undisturbed for France to represent Cuba, there is a history of homosexual repression in Stalinist Cuba. In 1965 there was a roundup to get homosexuals off the streets. In 1967 teachers suspected of being homosexual were made to publicly "confess their sins" before large audiences in the universities. Genuine socialists, in contrast, stand for the democratic right of non-exploitative sexual freedom and oppose all discriminatory, sexist laws which bar homosexuals from the right to a job, marriage, etc.

The above statement reflects the worst sort of sexism and discrimination with regard to sexual freedom. The stable, monogamous marriage is seen as the non-deviant alternative to promiscuity in general and homosexuality in particular. Other positions of the Congress on art and culture generally conform to the classic Stalinist views on cultural expression (See "Women, Culture and Class Society," page 2) and are linked with Stalinist views on the sexual questions by the limitations on free expression which both pose.

"Who Is Going to Prepare Dinner . . .?"

The question arises: why is the bureaucracy so intent on preserving marriage and the family as the

continued on next page

...CLUW

basic unit of social organization? Why is any deviation from heterosexual, monogamous married life such a threat? In analyzing the Stalinist position on these questions in the Soviet Union, Trotsky explained:

"The retreat not only assumes forms of disgusting hypocrisy, but also goes infinitely further than the iron economic necessity demands.... The most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by 40,000,000 points of support for authority and power."

—Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

All Stalinist bureaucracies maintain sizeable security forces which not only defend the state from capitalist infiltration, but also stifle the expression of any internal political opposition. Thus, no political parties are permitted in Cuba other than the Cuban Communist Party—a party which, incidentally, has never even elected its own central committee nor held a national party congress since its inception. In its attempt to maintain social control, the Cuban bureaucracy, like the Russian, relies heavily on the family institution. Moreover, Castro's bureaucracy can no more provide the material base necessary for the replacement of the family and the full integration of all women into the labor force than could Stalin's, a fact which has not eluded Castro. As he stated in 1966:

"There is a sign here in front of us for example which says, 'One million women working in production by 1970.' Unfortunately, it will not be possible to have one million working in production by 1970. We feel that this goal may be reached perhaps within ten years, but not within four.

"We could propose it as a goal to be reached by 1975. Why can't this goal be reached in four years? Because in order to be one million working in production, we must have thousands of children's day nurseries, thousands of primary boarding schools, thousands of school dining halls, thousands of workers dining halls, thousands of centers of social services of this type must be set up, because if not, who is going to cook

for the second or third grade child when he comes home for lunch?

"Who is going to care for unweaned infants, or babies of two, three and four years of age? Who is going to prepare dinner for the man, when he comes home from work? Who is going to wash, clean and all those things?"

—Fidel Castro, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*

Who indeed? In a country lacking the material resources to provide these essential domestic services, the burden will continue to fall as always upon the women.

In describing the problems of the isolated Bolshevik Revolution, Trotsky pointed out:

"It proved impossible to take the old family by storm—not because the will was lacking, and not because the family was so firmly rooted in men's hearts. On the contrary, after a short period of distrust of the government and its creches, kindergartens and like institutions, the working women, and after them the more advanced peasants, appreciated the immeasurable advantages of the collective care of children as well as the socialization of the whole family economy. Unfortunately, society proved too poor and little cultured. The real resources of the state did not correspond to the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on the basis of 'generalized want'."

—Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

But in a poor and backward country such as Cuba how are the necessary resources to be accumulated? The solution is obviously the extension of the revolution to the technologically advanced countries. Why then has Castro not championed the creation of a revolutionary international—as Lenin did—for the purpose of waging class war against imperialism on a world scale? The answer to this one question is a key which unlocks an endless number of doors, each disclosing a class betrayal.

Castro has not created a revolutionary international for the same reason that Trotsky was exiled from the Soviet Union and assassinated by an agent of Stalin, for the same reason that the capitalist Franklin Delano Roosevelt was supported by the Communist Party, for the same reason that the embattled workers

BLACK STAR



Women of the Cuban militia. Military service in Cuba is compulsory for men only.

and peasants of North Vietnam were never given more than token military assistance by either the Soviet Union or China, for the same reason that the Comintern was disbanded in 1943, for the same reason that Nixon was invited to sip cocktails with Mao Tse-tung—because *Stalinist bureaucrats view international proletarian revolution not as a goal, but as a threat to their privileges, a threat which must be checked at any cost!*

Revolutionary rhetoric is something else again. Like all Stalinist bureaucrats, Castro must depend upon the support of the workers and peasants whose interests he claims to represent, and to this end May Day rallies, parades, extravagant claims about the achievements of Cuban "socialism" and impassioned speeches denouncing imperialism and praising revolution are all quite useful, but no bureaucrat whose own country lacks the most elementary forms of workers democracy can afford to lead a struggle for international socialism. That is why, when just months before the collapse of Allende's popular-front government, Chilean copper miners struck for improved wages, Castro appealed to them (unsuccessfully) to "sacrifice more" for the fatherland. A revolutionary Cuban government would have undermined the efforts of right-wing forces to use the strike to their political advantage by raising demands such as those in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 23): "Unconditional Defense of the Chilean Miners' Strike! For the Formation of Workers' Militias! Smash the Pop Front; For a Workers Government!" In Cuba, where members of oppositional political parties, including ostensible Trotskyists, have been in jail since the early sixties, where the type for Trotsky's *The Permanent Revolution* was smashed by Castro's police, the bureaucrats cannot put into practice their own revolutionary rhetoric.

Women's Liberation Through Socialism!

The creation of a revolutionary international capable of leading revolutions in the advanced countries as well as in the underdeveloped ones is necessary for the victory of socialism. The Spartacist League therefore works for the rebirth of the Fourth International. Until Cuba is able to industrialize fully, without the pressures of world imperialism and without the betrayals of the bureaucracy, the full emancipation of Cuban women cannot be achieved.

Those who call for a second, feminist revolution in Cuba must come to understand that the woman question can never be separated from the more general question of the nature of the socialist society. A genuine socialist society in Cuba, whose construction will require a political revolution in Havana to overthrow the Stalinist Castroite regime, will be profoundly different from the society which we see there today. Workers democracy will take the place of the present cliquist bureaucracy, and the conditions of material abundance will provide the basis for women's emancipation and equality for the first time in modern history. *For the unconditional military defense of Cuba against imperialist attack! For political revolution in Havana to overthrow the Castroite bureaucracy and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers democracy!* ■

Anti-Divorce Referendum Defeated in Italy



Italian women demonstrate against repeal of divorce law. TRUINFO

In Italy's first national referendum since 1946, the country's ultra-conservative divorce law, which went into effect only three years ago, was retained despite all attempts by the Roman Catholic Church, the Christian Democratic Party and the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement to repeal it. The law provides that marriage may be terminated after a separation of five to seven years or in instances in which one party has been sentenced for a grave crime. Contrary to the expectations of these reactionary forces, Italian women, who constitute a majority of the electorate, cast the decisive vote *against* repeal and for their own rights.

The divorce question has already split Italy's coalition government (the Socialists and Social Democrats opposed repeal) and may well lead to its downfall.

The Italian Communist Party, Italy's second largest political force, played a characteristically equivocal role. While officially against repeal, the CP refuses to openly confront the Vatican—to the point of *opposing* the democratic right of legalized abortion. Like the Communist Party in the U.S., which opposes the Equal Rights Amendment, the Italian CP has demonstrated once again that it is willing to sacrifice not only socialism but even the most elementary democratic rights in order to ensure continued opportunities for class collaboration.

(For a fuller account of the defeat of the repeal and the role of the Italian Communist Party, see *Workers Vanguard* No. 45, 24 May 1974.)

continued from page 24

...CLUW

California—simply an out-and-out strikebreaking operation led by Fitzsimmons' Teamster bureaucracy and employing the time-tested tactics of goons, scabs and deals with the bosses.

Despite all attempts of the CLUW leaders to retain Point 14, it was finally deleted in a plenary session, a reflection of the widespread support for the UFW among the CLUW membership. But when a motion in support of the UFW was introduced, the CLUW leaders resorted to a sweeping repertoire of bureaucratic maneuvers—ignoring motions, miscounting votes, cutting off speakers, unplugging microphones and, finally, calling for the sergeant-at-arms to clear the floor—all in order to keep this motion off the agenda. They succeeded.

The Spectre of "Outside Agitators"

In the context of these incredible machinations, the Spartacist League emerged not only as the sole consistent and outspoken critic of the undemocratic procedures, but as the pole of working-class militancy at the conference. Forewarned by the intervention of trade-union supporters of the Spartacist League in prior CLUW regional planning meetings where they had counterposed a class-struggle policy to the reformism of the CLUW leadership, the conference organizers correctly recognized the SL as the main danger to the smooth functioning of their carefully stage-managed conference.

Addressing the United Auto Workers' delegation caucus meeting Friday night, Olga Madar waved a xeroxed copy of a *Workers Vanguard* article ("Women Bureaucrats Rig CLUW Conference," *WV* No. 40, 15 March) and told the delegates that if they heard anyone saying anything similar, they should "shut them up." Due in part to this unsolicited advertising, Spartacist salesmen sold over 400 copies of *WV* and *Women and Revolution* to participants during the course of the conference.

The conference organizers were surprised and even admitted "panic" at the large turnout in Chicago. Anxious to keep out the "radicals," they had insisted on a rule which allowed no one into the conference without a union card. Among those excluded were representatives of the Brookside Women's Club, an organization of the wives of striking Harlan County miners who had wanted to address the conference. There was even some question as to whether AFT and AFSCME members from states where strikes by public employees are illegal could be represented at the conference. While there was a great deal of dispute about this rule at the conference, the leadership was adamant and quite willing to tarnish its desired image as champion of the masses of unorganized women in order to ensure a "safely" controlled conference.

Shift in the Arena of Struggle

Many ostensibly revolutionary organizations were represented at the conference although, in contrast

to the Spartacist League, most of them declined to raise their politics or even to identify themselves. Just as many New Left feminist organizations, having witnessed the degeneration of their "consciousness-raising" groups into yoga classes and self-help medical clinics, now find themselves compelled to organize within those very trade unions which they recently disparaged as hopelessly male-dominated and reactionary institutions, so most of the ostensibly revolutionary organizations have likewise in the last two years been forced to make a sharp verbal turn to the working class. Even the Socialist Workers Party, notorious for its tailing after the feminist movement and its total subordination to petty-bourgeois radicalism, now fills its paper, the *Militant*, with uncritical enthusing over the struggles of the labor movement, although, like the International Socialists, it continues to try to exploit the old feminist rhetoric as well.

"Sisterhood" rhetoric in the mouths of supposedly working-class organizations represents a fundamental contradiction because feminism reflects the social reality not of working women, but of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women, for whom sexual oppression rather than class oppression is the primary form of social oppression they suffer. Since *their* oppression as women is primary, these women believe that *all* women are primarily oppressed as women and that the fundamental division in society is that of men against women. Such an ideology is not widely accepted in the working-class movement, where it is more apparent that the ultimate source of the oppression of working women is the capitalist bosses and not men in general.

The "turn to the class" of left organizations and their new-found workerism are no more a strategy for the overthrow of capitalism than was New Left ideology. Real class-struggle leadership means turning the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle, organized around a program that speaks to the needs of the entire class and the oppressed sectors of the population. Workerism, on the other hand, has two basic components: 1) the identification of the struggle for socialist revolution with the struggle for the day-to-day sectional interests of the working class within capitalism; and 2) the belief that the consciousness of the vanguard party derives uniquely from its participation in working-class life, i.e., we must learn from the workers.

The first proposition leads directly to support for the narrow reformism of the bureaucrats, to the rejection of any but "simple trade-union" struggles. Demonstrative of this was the workerist refusal on the part of groups such as the IS and the Revolutionary Union to support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. At the CLUW conference, when an issue speaking minimally to the aspects of women's oppression outside the workforce came to the floor—the issue of child-care centers paid for by the companies—there was an attempt made to quickly brush aside the issue. Myra Wolfgang, of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, one of the CLUW organizers and known for her opposition to the passage of the ERA, said that she opposed this amendment on the basis that women in her union wouldn't want their children to be cared for in the back room of a bar! She went on, attempting

WV PHOTO



CLUW leader Olga Madar at the mike. Last summer she participated in the 1,000-person goon squad organized by UAW bureaucrats to smash expressions of rank-and-file unrest.

to horrify the audience with the spectre of child-care centers in steelyards, etc. Such argumentation is ludicrous, but the fact that it borders on buffoonery shouldn't obscure the lack of seriousness with which the CLUW leadership views such issues.

The second proposition leads to adaptation to the present consciousness of the working class, and since the current bureaucracy is the main spokesman for this consciousness, an adaptation to these traitorous misleaders of the class: All ostensibly revolutionary organizations, whose supporters attended the conference in large numbers, failed even in their minimal duty as declared socialists to attempt to expose the machinations and reformism of the CLUW leadership. The supporters of the International Socialists attempted to pressure the CLUW leaders to support the UFW (offering no criticism of Chavez' sellout policies) while hailing the conference as an exciting and positive development. Supporters of the SWP simply buried themselves—they even caved in on support to the UFW, in the interests of preserving "unity." SWP supporters have been involved with CLUW for over a year, since the earliest planning meetings, and have yet to raise a word of criticism.

This cringing before the unity-mongering of the CLUW leadership is a clear indication of these groups' inability to lead the workers forward. To cover for their capitulation these cynical opportunists claim that CLUW must be preserved as an important "first step." "At least women workers are beginning to organize," they say. This is nothing but a bowing before the accomplished fact of the hegemony of

reformist leadership over the working class and in no way resembles a revolutionary strategy for ousting the bureaucrats and replacing them with a class-struggle leadership. CLUW is not a temporary stage on the inevitable road to socialist consciousness, but rather a roadblock which will be transformed or smashed as an obstacle as the proletariat develops revolutionary consciousness.

The CLUW organizers posed a self-serving feminist solution to the oppression women face in the workforce—more women in the bureaucracies. This cynical proposal reflects a particular urgency in the case of the UAW where a power fight is currently raging. Olga Madar is retiring this year and the UAW exec board has agreed to maintain a token woman as UAW vice president. No less than 12 women have thrown themselves into the running for this \$30,000 a year job, but none are running on the basis of any opposition to the sellout policies of the Woodcock regime or on any program that concerns the struggle against women's oppression. When asked why the candidates' plans weren't more ambitious, why they would not, for example, run for president of the UAW, Olga Madar made very clear where her loyalties lie: "We are all members of the Administration Caucus and we're not about to put members of our own team and caucus grouping out of office" (*Detroit News*, 7 April 1974). Thus while urging rank-and-file women to support her and other female bureaucrats on the sole basis of their sex, Madar shows that she recognizes that politics comes first—in this

continued on next page

CLUW...

case the reformism of the sellout UAW tops.

Besides an exposé of the CLUW leadership, what is needed is an action program which links the struggle for the emancipation of women in the workplace with the struggle for the emancipation of women from the confines of the family and with the struggle against the capitalist system. At the West Coast regional CLUW conference on June 1, SL supporters attempted to advance just such a program but the body voted 100 to 37 that no resolutions be allowed from the floor. Among those supporting this bureaucratic maneuver to stifle political discussion were supporters of both the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party and the Maoist October League.

The Spartacist League will continue to counter the hollow rhetoric of the CLUW bureaucrats with the action program which CLUW needs to wage a militant and effective struggle. We propose the following:

1) *Support the Equal Rights Amendment.* The ERA is a simple, basic assertion of women's equality which must be supported. We recognize that the employers may attempt to use the ERA, like Title Seven of the Civil Rights Act, as an excuse to undermine some desirable gains of the working class, such as protective legislation. The employers and their courts can always be relied upon to make use of every such opportunity. Laws, however, do not determine the outcome of the struggle between labor

and capital—they are the *product* of that struggle. We must fight to protect these gains ourselves, with our weapons, the weapons of labor. Maintain and extend to men beneficial protective legislation!

2) *Organize Women Workers and All the Unorganized.* Special organizations to fight women's oppression should be working-class organizations, not permanent blocs between labor leaders and liberal bourgeois politicians. CLUW's membership should be limited to those who are within the labor movement therefore. But the task of organizations like CLUW should be to recruit the masses of unorganized women—the vast majority of working women—to the labor movement, not accommodate the do-nothing policy of the present union leadership or set up sterile, separate women's unions. CLUW must seek aggressively to bring unorganized women into the trade-union movement through actively supporting and initiating union organizing drives. Any woman worker/supporter of a union organizing committee (or member of a union-affiliated organization) should be allowed in CLUW. Furthermore, CLUW should be open to *all* trade unionists, not just women. No male exclusionism! Women's oppression hurts all workers, and women's struggles are a concern of the entire working class.

The hypocrisy of the union tops and the need for a class-struggle program were blatantly demonstrated at the CLUW founding conference in Chicago by the utterly shameful betrayal of the Farm Workers. The mostly Chicano farm workers of the UFW and women workers are equally dependent on labor's fight to organize the unorganized and combat all forms of special oppression of workers, yet the CLUW leadership capitulated to the Teamsters bureaucrats' cynical talk about jurisdictional disputes being "good for the workers." Farm Worker bureaucrats, true to the "turn the other cheek" pacifism of Chavez and Co., backed off in cringing, weak-kneed capitulation, lending credence to the obscene gestures of phony "solidarity," from Teamsters bureaucrats. Every CLUW chapter has the obligation to correct this sellout and extend wholehearted support to the Farm Workers against the Teamsters/grower/government alliance. This does not mean support for Chavez' pacifism or unprincipled attacks on rank-and-file Teamsters, such as suing the Teamsters Union in court, but rather concrete acts of labor solidarity such as "hot-cargoing" scab goods.

This betrayal only highlights the uniformly insufficient and temporizing efforts of the top leadership to organize the unorganized. The Southern textile industry, for example, is composed mainly of women workers who are unorganized, grossly underpaid and forced to endure atrocious working conditions. Yet every day, members of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and ILGWU in the North cut scab textiles! The union leaders "deplore" the lack of unionization, but they refuse to back up their talk with secondary-boycott action. The entire power of the labor movement should be utilized in labor boycotts of scab products. Such weapons would ensure the success of organizing drives. Support the Farm Workers! Teamsters out of the fields! Use the power of labor to organize the unorganized: for labor boycotts of struck products backed up by the strike power of all unions. Organize part-time and temporary workers and unemployed workers.

WV PHOTO



UFW leaders capitulated to their Teamster "sisters."



Militant Action Caucus spokesman.

3) *End Discrimination, No Preferential Hiring—Jobs for All.* The labor bureaucracy's deliberate neglect of the most oppressed layers of the working class fosters bourgeois-led, moralistic, reformist movements for protection through paternalistic laws, quota hiring programs, etc. These programs are used as vehicles for government intervention into the labor movement and for advancing the cause of specially-oppressed layers at the expense of other workers.

Instead of the preferential schemes of the corporations and the government, we counterpose union control of hiring to end discrimination and struggle for an expanded job market to make more jobs at the expense of the capitalists, not the workers. For union hiring halls and union-controlled job upgrading on a first-come, first-served basis! For union-controlled training programs to recruit and train minority and women workers, paid for by the companies with full pay and benefits during training. Jobs for all—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay. For equal pay for equal work and equal access to all job categories, enforced by contract.

4) *Toward Freedom from Domestic Servitude!* Women must be freed from the confines of the home to function in society. Their special oppression is contingent upon preventing their full and equal integration into the work force—into the social and economic functioning of society. Keeping women "in their place," slaves to repetitive, enervating household drudgery and child rearing, is indispensable to the employers, a conservatizing influence that teaches bourgeois ideology, the virtues of docility, submissiveness and prostration before established authority. We must fight for free 24-hour child care under worker/parent control, paid for by the employers or the state! Free

quality health care! Free abortion on demand! Free and immediate divorce on demand, with no alimony and with child care paid by the state! Employer-paid pre- and post-natal maternity/paternity leaves!

5) *Break with the Bourgeoisie.* The failure of the labor movement to lead militant struggles against the special oppression of women and minority workers, its failure to organize the unorganized and its refusal to militantly fight for the needs of all workers are intimately connected with its ties to bourgeois politics. Subordination to capitalist politicians and the two capitalist parties chains labor to an impotent policy of begging for crumbs in the courts, legislatures, etc. To preserve the "good will" of these servants of the ruling class, the labor bureaucrats must resort to flagrant disregard of the rank-and-file's democratic rights to prevent militants from rallying their fellow workers behind the class-struggle policies which threaten "labor peace." This subordination is felt in other ways too. The First N.Y. Trade Union Women's Conference, at which CLUW organizers spoke, was sponsored by the women's project of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations (NYSSILR) of Cornell University which is funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation. This same NYSSILR has served as a major conduit for CIA funds. These are anti-labor, strikebreaking agencies which will restrict the movement to policies "safe" for the bourgeoisie. CLUW must immediately dissociate itself from these vicious enemies of the working class.

6) *Oust the Bureaucrats! For a Workers Party and a Workers Government.* Because the present entrenched reactionary trade-union bureaucracy is the primary obstacle within the workers' movement to these policies, instead seeking to confine workers' struggles to token gestures at reforming capitalism, this bureaucracy must be replaced with a class-struggle leadership in the trade unions. Women and other specially oppressed workers whose needs are systematically ignored by the bureaucracy have a particular interest in building caucuses in the unions which can develop into such a revolutionary alternative leadership on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to a class-struggle program. An intransigent struggle against the special oppression of women and all the most exploited sectors of the working class is integral to such a strategy.

Bureaucrats like Joseph Beirne (CWA) and Jay Lovestone (AFL-CIO), etc., with direct ties to CIA union-busting abroad, have no place in the labor movement. These traitors will be driven out as the workers build their own political party with a program of international class solidarity.

The Democratic and Republican parties are the bosses' parties and do not represent the interests of workers, male or female. Capitalist politicians are not labor's allies! They stand for the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. We stand on the principle of independent working-class organization and politics. Oust the bureaucrats! For a workers party based on the trade unions to fight for a workers government! ■

Labor Bureaucracy's Creature

CLUW: Dead End for Working Women

WV PHOTO



CLUW bureaucrats exploit "sisterhood" rhetoric for their own ends.

Over 3,200 women representing 58 unions attended the founding conference of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, held in Chicago on March 23-24. This large attendance points to a shift in the arena of struggle for women's liberation and raises in a new form the same question which faced the petty-bourgeois women's movement of the 1960's: which way forward—class struggle or impotent feminist/reformist schemes?

CLUW was initiated about a year ago by several women who hold lesser posts in the apparatus of various international unions. Although at that time CLUW refused to even support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment because it was "too hot" an issue (the AFL-CIO was still opposed to it then), the CLUW initiators wanted to jump on the bandwagon of popular sentiment in favor of women's liberation in hopes of building an organization that they could use as a power base for their careerist aspirations in the bureaucracy.

Although there appears to be much jockeying for position within the structure of CLUW, the real control rests in the hands of the large, well-established international bureaucracies, such as the United Auto Workers (UAW). Indicative of this was the election of Olga Madar, UAW vice president, as national chairperson of CLUW. Madar has no credentials as a rank-and-file leader, and actually rose to her present position from the post of recreational director in the UAW rather than as the result of any demonstrated ability to lead militant struggles. In fact, she has recently achieved notoriety for scabbing. Last summer when a series of very militant wildcats rocked Detroit auto plants in anticipation of the 1973 contract, Olga Madar was one of the leaders of the 1,000 person goon squad mobilized by the UAW tops to squash any expression of rank-and-file outrage at the general economic squeeze and the conditions in the plants.

Claiming to want to organize women unionists in order to achieve "full equality of opportunities and rights in the labor force" (CLUW Proposed Statement of Purpose), the organizers of CLUW found that they had opened a Pandora's box of issues and impulses not compatible with their narrow reformism and collaboration with agencies of the capitalist government and private union-busters like the Ford Foundation. Heavy-handed bureaucratic maneuverings marked the proceedings of the conference as the organizers did their best to keep under wraps the impulses of militancy, trade-union solidarity and internationalism expressed by many of the rank-and-file participants there.

Slippery parliamentary sleight-of-hand was necessary even to ram through the agenda without allowing debate or amendments. This agenda was important to the bureaucrats' plans as it provided for election of officers before the discussion of the political/action resolutions, thus insuring that exposure of their truly conservative policies would not interfere with their election expectations.

The most disgusting example of the watchful "patronage" of the international bureaucracies and of the CLUW leaders' willingness to dispense with even elementary union solidarity was their concerted effort to defeat a motion supporting the United Farm Workers against the scabbing of the Teamsters in the fields of California.

Even before the conference began the CLUW Proposed Statement of Purpose—which included the notorious Point 14, a proposal that CLUW "not be involved in issues or activities which a union involved in identifies as related to a jurisdictional dispute"—indicated the conference organizers' endorsement of the Teamster leadership's campaign to smash the United Farm Workers. The fact is that *there is no jurisdictional dispute in the fields of*

continued on page 20