

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE

**TROTSKYISM AND THE
WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT.**

and

**THE PROLETARIAN APPROACH
TO THE QUESTION OF ABORTION.**

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TROTSKYISM AND THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Trotskyism is a bourgeois trend in the left-wing movement, by which I mean that despite what is often the quite contrary intention of its propagators, it serves only the bourgeoisie, as I shall show tonight.

1. It departs from and attacks the principles of scientific socialism which is the essential weapon in the armoury of the working class (the proletariat) which guides and unites it to enable it to seize and maintain state power, to build socialism and advance to communism;
2. It attacks the socialist states where the correctness of these principles of scientific socialism has been and continues to be proved beyond doubt.
3. It attacks all those who attempt to put forward proletarian ideology and does everything possible to try and silence them;

It promotes and glorifies the ideology of the bourgeoisie, not only by suppressing and vilifying proletarian ideology, but also by active encouragement of bourgeois ideology;

The feature of Trotskyism which makes it particularly dangerous to the working class is that all this anti working class activity is carried on in the name of Marx and Lenin, in the name of socialism and in the pretence of having the interests of the working class at heart.

Insofar as Trotskyism is able to attract some part of the workers to its ranks, it is able to split the ranks of the working class and divert a part of them from the path of liberation. More than that, sooner or later, the Trotskyites will fight on the side of the bourgeoisie to try and suppress the rising proletariat.

The reason we say this is not that we have any personal grudge against Trotsky, or any of his followers, but simply because historical facts and our own experience in the women's movement have proved this to be so: before dealing specifically with the role of Trotskyism in the women's liberation movement, I would like to say something very briefly about the ideological basis of Trotskyism which will help put their role in the women's movement into clear perspective.

What is the theoretical basis of Trotskyism? In my opinion this is to be found contained in Trotsky's so called 'Theory of Permanent Revolution'. The title is misleading because it implies that those who opposed this theory of 'permanent revolution', as did Lenin and Stalin, sought only 'impermanent' revolution, which is not of course the case. No, according to Trotsky, the only revolutionary class in Russia was the working class: the peasantry according to him could not be a reliable ally of the proletariat. The impending revolution in Russia (this was before 1917) would not be a bourgeois democratic revolution but a socialist revolution, i.e. Czarism would be replaced not by the joint democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, but by a "workers' government". In other words, it would be a government of the minority against the overwhelming majority. Further, it would be the function of this government to attack all bourgeois property including the property of small peasants. This would bring the "workers' government" into hostile collision with the peasantry, and the revolution (thanks to Trotsky) would be in danger. However, the Russian proletariat in daring to seize power would have stimulated the European proletariat also to assume state power. The victorious European working class would then come to the assistance of the Russian working class, thereby making the revolution in Russia 'permanent'.

It is clear from this that Trotsky had no faith in the ability of the working class to lead the peasantry, no faith in the revolutionary role of the peasantry, and, according to him the revolution in Russia could not survive, let alone build socialism, unless the victorious

proletariat in Europe came to its assistance.

When after the October Revolution the revolution in Europe did not materialise, Trotsky simply lost his head. He could see only two courses of action open to the Russian proletariat in the absence of succour from the European proletariat. Both courses, alternately advocated by Trotsky, were counsels of despair: either capitulate to the bourgeoisie, or send the Red Army into Europe in the hope it might be able to start off the revolution there after all. The latter course is simply the impetuous adventurism of someone who feels the situation to be hopeless. The only result of such action would have been that the bourgeois states would have been rendered invaluable assistance in their attempts to strangle the young Soviet state. The cause of revolution would have been retarded and not advanced: the Red Army had trouble enough defending the revolution against foreign interventionists at home without spreading itself all over Europe.

However, with this theory of 'permanent revolution', is it surprising that Trotsky, when the European revolution failed, could advocate only capitulation or reckless adventurism? With this theory of 'permanent revolution' is it surprising that Trotsky expressed the view that socialism could not be built in the USSR and devoted all his energies to opposing the building of socialism in the USSR? This more than anything else shows the real essence of Trotskyism - its opposition to the building of socialism, no matter how camouflaged by 'revolutionary' phrasemongering this opposition might be.

Trotsky from time to time asserted that the revolution in the Soviet Union was 'degenerating'. One thing is certain, that had the above theory of 'permanent revolution' been put into effect there would have been no revolution, let alone the chance for "degeneration". In actual fact this "degeneration" referred to by Trotsky was nothing more and nothing less than the successful building of socialism in the USSR under the correct and glorious banner of Marxism-Leninism and the correct leadership of the Bolshevik Party headed by Comrade Stalin. It was the habit of Trotsky to describe anything which did not fit into his theory of 'permanent revolution' as "degeneration". Trotsky might as well have described reality as degenerate because reality certainly did not accord with Trotsky's 'Theory of Permanent Revolution'. All this talk about "degeneration" was only a reflection of the extreme despair of Trotsky's petty-bourgeois intellectualism and his inability to amend his theory in conformity with reality.

However, the proletariat of the Soviet Union, heedless of Trotsky's theory, went from strength to strength in the building of socialism, and Trotsky's views were being daily proved wrong. Trotsky got more and more desperate. To try and prove that he, Trotsky, was right and the Bolshevik faith in the ability of the working class to lead the peasantry in the building of socialism was wrong, he from exile organised sabotage and wrecking activities in the railways, mines and industrial plants intended to undermine the faith of the working class in the revolutionary leadership of the Bolshevik Party. In these efforts he and his organisation entered into direct links with the German and Japanese Fascist governments, who promised to put Trotsky in power in the Soviet Union once they had conquered it, on the understanding, of course, that capitalism would be restored. One of the crimes committed by Trotsky's organisation was the murder of Kirov (a prominent Bolshevik) and the investigations relating to this murder uncovered bit by bit the whole counter-revolutionary organisation led by Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev. The conspirators confessed to their crimes publicly in the famous Moscow Trials* with the result that Trotskyism was thoroughly discredited in the working-class movement and went into decline.

*The questions of The Theory of 'Permanent Revolution', Socialism in One Country, the Moscow Trials, and others, are dealt with in depth by the Association of Communist Workers in a series of public Meetings on Trotskyism or Leninism held in London in 1972. These have been published by the Association of Communist Workers under the title 'Some Questions Concerning The Struggle of Counter-Revolutionary Trotskyism Against Revolutionary Leninism.'

Unfortunately, memories are short, and when the working-class movement was weakened as a result of the victory of the restorers of capitalism, Khrushchev and his followers, in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and in the Parties of Eastern Europe (other than Albania), facilitated by the untimely death of Stalin and other staunch Bolsheviks, then Trotskyism was allowed to rear its ugly head once more and gain ground in the working-class movement.

Let us now turn to the specific role of Trotskyism in the women's liberation movement to see how all this is reflected there and is substantiated. In this introduction, most of the references I shall make will be to the International Marxist Group (IMG)/ Socialist Woman (the front of the IMG in the women's liberation movement), because these are the Trotskyites who have been most active in the women's movement. The International Socialists (IS) are also referred to, but their activity commenced relatively recently, more as a reaction of women in IS to the male chauvinism to be expected in a petty-bourgeois organisation such as IS than from any principled stand on the question.* So divorced is IS from revolutionary theory on the question of women's oppression that it even puts forward the reactionary idea of 'wages for housework': in this way, rather than clearly demanding the right for women to participate in economic, social and political life in every way on an equal basis with men, they are demanding a perpetuation of domestic slavery. The Socialist Labour League (S.L.L.), the other major Trotskyite organisation, regards the women's movement as diversionary** thereby demonstrating how far they are removed from socialism. But in essence all these Trotskyite organisations have as their basis the theory of 'Permanent Revolution', and therefore cannot but be opposed to genuine working-class politics.

Trotskyism and 'the Family'.

Trotsky, as we have seen, believed that it was not possible to build socialism in a single backward country and, since the liberation of women depends on the building of socialism, that women could not be liberated in backward Russia. It is of course true that women can only be liberated where there is socialism, therefore by denying that women were being liberated in the Soviet Union, Trotsky was in effect claiming that socialism was not being built: this formed part and parcel of his general attack on the building of socialism.

The liberation of women consists of their obtaining the right to participate in social production, indeed in every form of economic, political and social life on equal terms with men: this in turn depends on the domestic responsibilities which tie women to the home being socialised so that women are freed from the confines of the kitchen to take their rightful place in society on an equal basis with men. The 'destruction of the bourgeois family' does not mean, as Trotskyites and other vulgarisers of Marxism would have us believe, promiscuity.

*See for instance Kathleen Ennis in her article 'Women's Liberation and the Revolutionary Party' in IS Women's Newspaper no 3: "The women's groups in IS developed in opposition...partly because many women were sick of being semi-passive members of the group, considered only fit for typing and any other odd job going".

**As to the incorrectness of ignoring the women's movement as 'diversionary', see our article 'Why a Women's Movement' in our book 'Questions Concerning the Emancipation of Women and the Proletarian Revolution.'

It means that marriage will no longer be on the terms that the woman will be a domestic slave, economically dependent on the man and with no right to an independent economic, social or political life, but will be a voluntary union on the basis of equality of the partners. As Trotsky believed that socialism could not be built, he equally necessarily also believed that the social services necessary to the liberation of women could never be provided (e.g. creches, kindergartens, public dining-rooms etc.). He closed his eyes to the fact that throughout the 1920s and 1930s, particularly after collectivisation, these services improved enormously and relentlessly in quantity and quality from year to year, and attempted to 'prove' that socialism could not be built, and therefore women could not be liberated, by showing that the job had not yet been completed. This simply won't do: if a job is being done and enormous progress is being made, the fact that there is still work to be done is not 'proof that it can't be done'. The fact of the matter was, and Trotsky could scarcely close his eyes to this, that Soviet women were participating in social production in ever increasing numbers (for instance, between 1929 and 1937, the number of women workers rose from 3,304,000 to 9,357,000, an increase of 283.2%), were playing an increasingly important role, no longer confined to unskilled jobs or women's jobs, were being drawn more and more into the Party and into all spheres of government, were, in short, being liberated. In Trotskyite tradition, in defence of the 'Theory of Permanent Revolution', all these advances, the envy of working women the world over, were denigrated and belittled: for instance, in Revolution Betrayed he sneers:

"the number of children in kindergartens* rose during the five years 1930-1935 from 370,000 to 1,180,000. The lowness of the figure for 1930 is striking, but the figure for 1935 also seems only a drop in the ocean of Soviet families. A further investigation would undoubtedly show that the principal and, in any case the better part of these kindergartens appertain to the families of the administration, the technical personnel, the Stakhanovists, etc..."

So, in five years kindergarten places more than trebled! This hard-fought for and substantial improvement is "a drop in the ocean" as far as Holy Trotsky is concerned, though it was a "drop in the ocean" that no capitalist country could match, particularly when you take into account over 4 million children looked after in seasonal kindergartens! One might ask whether Trotsky really believed that there would have been even more kindergartens if only the 'Theory of Permanent Revolution' had been followed and there had been capitulation to the bourgeoisie? Trotsky wanted every goal of socialism to be achieved overnight or not at all: as far as he was concerned the steady building towards those goals was not socialism at all.

Not content with belittling the achievements of the Soviet people, Trotsky goes on to insinuate that the kindergartens were a preserve of the privileged, though even he doesn't presume to offer any evidence of this! For the truth was exactly the reverse: wherever there was a shortage of nursery or kindergarten places, "further investigation" (to use Trotsky's term) shows that preference was always given to the lower paid workers who needed these facilities most.

The next opportunity Trotsky took to launch an attack on the building of socialism in connexion with the liberation of women was on the question of abortion. Abortion, being damaging to the health of women, was always seen as an evil by the working class and its government. The decree passed in 1920 legalising abortion was passed in recognition of the fact that conditions were so bad that many women were forced to have abortions because they were simply unable to provide the bare necessities of existence for their child. Given that situation, the very least that should be done is to ensure that the abortions are carried out in the best conditions possible. However, by 1936, as a result of the magnificent achievements of the Soviet workers and peasants in the building of Socialism, conditions were greatly altered:

*Kindergartens were pre-school institutions for children from 3-6 years of age

there was full employment, there was free schooling for all, there were social facilities for care of pre-school children (where preference for places was given to the mothers who most needed them in any area where there was a shortage), plus after-school and full holiday-care facilities for all who wanted them. In these conditions the right to 'abortion on demand' was unnecessary and was replaced instead to permit abortion on health grounds only.

Trotsky's wrong 'theory of Permanent Revolution' dictated that these improved conditions were impossible because socialism could not be built in a single backward country such as Russia had been in 1917, therefore Trotsky ignored reality and drew a picture of women in desperate want, driven to abortion by their miserable conditions of existence, being herded into prison by the "gendarmes of Thermidorean reaction" which had, according to Trotsky, introduced the legislation in order to 'increase the population' and 'rehabilitate the family'. Trotsky 'overlooked' certain points:

1. The only possible reason for wanting to increase the population would be to increase the labour force. Yet the effect of increasing the birth rate (even if it were possible to do this by decree, which it is not) without providing all the social facilities necessary for the care of children (the existence of which facilities Trotsky denied) would be to pull women OUT of production and thereby decrease the labour force.
2. The Soviet government knew very well that you cannot increase the population by making abortion illegal for it had already observed in 1920 that legislation did nothing to prevent abortion; it was economic conditions which drove women to abortion legal or illegal, and it is only an improvement in economic conditions which can lay the basis for the ending of abortion.
3. The rate of increase of population of the Soviet Union was over 13 per 1000 population per annum, three million more people a year, the highest rate in the world at that time, and the Soviet Union certainly had nothing to worry about on that score.
4. Not only were there considerable social facilities for the care of children in 1936, but the decree itself provided for immediate escalation of these provisions.
5. The decree provided for imprisonment of persons performing the operation illegally and those who incited women to have abortions, i.e. mainly a minority of men who wanted to avoid financial liability for children, and not for the imprisonment of the women themselves.

Of course it would have been very nice if the Soviet government could have taken entire financial responsibility for every child the day after the revolution, but it could not. This was one of the goals towards which the Soviet people were working, as the cost of schooling and medical care were taken over by the State, meals were subsidised, various cheap facilities were provided, grants were given to mothers of large families, but in 1935 there was still some financial responsibility of parents for children. It was hardly 'liberating' for women to be forced into unnecessary abortions by fathers (a minority it is true, but insofar as they existed at all extremely harmful to the cause of women's liberation) more concerned to save a few roubles which they could easily afford than with the mother's health. The draft decree on abortions was discussed far and wide by the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union and was over-whelmingly approved by them, and they after all were the ones best in a position to know whether or not the conditions in Russia were ripe for the ending of indiscriminate abortion.

Trotsky also claimed that abortion had been made illegal in order to "rehabilitate" the family, i.e. to reintroduce the domestic slavery of women; this is why he and all Trotskyites present the right to indiscriminate abortion as a "hallmark of socialist relations"; if this 'right' does not exist, according to the Trotskyites, then there

is no socialism. This is how the Trotskyites find themselves marching arm in arm with their petty-bourgeois class brothers, the neo-Malthusians condemned by Lenin in an article in Pravda no 137, June 16th 1913* who protest against the miserable conditions brought about by capitalism not by fighting to overthrow capitalism but by bowing down under them "as the representative of a class that is hopelessly perishing, that despairs of its future, that is depressed and cowardly. There is nothing to be done... if only there were fewer children to suffer our humiliation - such is the cry of the petty bourgeois." Lenin pointed out that this was not the attitude of the working class whose children would "fight better, with greater solidarity, with greater consciousness and decisiveness, against the prevailing conditions of existence which are mutilating and destroying our generation".

The next focus for Trotskyite venom are the laws introduced in the Soviet Union in 1944 relating to marriage and divorce. Trotsky died in 1940, but his followers carried on his feud against socialism. In 1917 all bourgeois marriage and divorce laws were scrapped. Provision was made for marriage, but in theory it made no difference to the obligation of parents to support their children whether they were married or not. The right to divorce was introduced as an essential factor in promoting the emancipation of women, taking away all legal right of a man to enslave his wife, who was now tied to her husband only so long as she should wish it.

However, in practice, unless the father was married to the mother, it was often difficult to get from him his contribution towards his children's upkeep. The fact is that the contemptuous and uncomradely attitude towards women and children developed over generations cannot be overcome by a decree. Only over a period of time by women seizing the opportunity to fight alongside men in the building of socialism and disproving the old myths of women's inferiority, together with patient reeducation and increase of the cultural level of the masses, can old customs and habits be totally eradicated. In spite of the liberating laws, some men could not regard women as anything other than sexual objects, and without the constraints of bourgeois marriage, refused to take any responsibility for wife or children after they had tired of the wife, which might be very quickly when there was no basis for the relationship other than the need for sexual gratification. Since the State could not, as we have seen, immediately bear the full cost of rearing every child, this led to the mothers having to bear the load on their own, and in exceptional cases even to child vagrancy.

Whereas the Soviet government was not going to force anyone to stay married who wanted to separate, it was necessary to ensure that fathers contributed financially to the support of their children in practice and not just in theory. Since in practice maintenance claims could only be enforced against unwilling fathers if the marriage of the parents was registered, henceforward these claims could only be made at all if the marriage was registered. The fact of the marriage made it clear to all that these obligations were owed by both parents and not just by the mother, but by no means entitled the husband to enslave his wife as had been the case in bourgeois marriage. Nor did this affect the right of either party to obtain a divorce (obligations in respect of children's maintenance of course always continued in spite of divorce). The note of the marriage on the husband's (and wife's papers) made it impossible for either to disappear, marry someone else and wash their hands of their earlier responsibilities. The State did however undertake greater responsibility for the children of unmarried mothers, who now had the choice of either a state grant or of handing their child over to be brought up entirely at state expense.

These provisions, designed to foster a responsible attitude towards women and children, were hailed by the Trotskyites as a restitution of the bourgeois family in all its glory! As can be seen from the above, nothing could be further from the truth: in fact state responsibility for children was increased!

*This article by Lenin "The Working Class and Neo-Malthusianism" is reproduced in our book 'Marxism and the Liberation of Women', p. 52

With respect to divorce, the decree of 1944 made it obligatory for parties seeking a divorce to appear before a Comrades' Court (composed of friends and neighbours), which would try and effect a reconciliation, so that if the divorce was being brought about by old feudal or bourgeois attitudes of either party, attempts could be made to reeducate them to a proletarian outlook. Of course, if there was no basis of affection on which the marriage could be revived, or if it was not possible to eradicate the old bourgeois and feudal attitudes which led to the breakdown, or if either party for any reason insisted on his or her divorce, then it was usually granted.

Thus the new divorce procedures were a step towards raising the cultural level of the people, to enable "socialist relations" to be achieved. Yet this again is presented by Trotskyites as a 'restoration of the bourgeois family'.

The 'solution' to all these problems offered by Trotsky and his followers, we must remember, was capitulation, and not any more effective way of bringing about "socialist relations", although many Trotskyites today may have forgotten the fact; indeed it is doubtful if rank and file Trotskyites ever get to know it. The important thing in a Trotskyite organisation is not to teach the facts, but to teach its members to hate working-class ideology and to despise and patronise the working class.

cc Trotskyism's accusations that the bourgeois family was being restored in the Soviet Union, rlying as they did in the face of reality, soon led to its arbitrary support for indiscriminate abortions, for its condemning motherhood itself as 'reactionary', as being, according to the Trotskyites, merely part and parcel of the resurrection of the bourgeois family. In this connexion, see Red Mole Vol.1 no 5 "Lenin - The Third International and Women's Liberation":

"There is all the same, an uncertainty about how specific the women's movement really is. This is shown in the first conversation that Zetkin had with Lenin on this subject, during the course of which Lenin said: 'there are not a few points of contact between women's and youth movements. Our women comrades must work systematically with the youth. That is a continuation, extension and exaltation of motherliness from the individual to the social sphere'. Lenin is wrong here and this must be said, particularly when one looks at the legal system of the 'socialist' countries where women are consistently lumped together with youth.."

This glorification of abortion for its own sake and its denigration of motherhood made Trotskyism the natural ally of those feminists who believe that women have inferior status in society because they have children, i.e. because of their biological functions, and not because they have been subordinated in the interests of private property. These people's idea of 'liberation' is the ability to "control our own bodies", and nothing else. Like all petty bourgeois they see the future as hopeless, which attitude is reflected in their fear and hatred of motherhood. The Trotskyites attract and encourage all these petty-bourgeois attitudes. They have adopted the slogan 'control of our own bodies'. They are incapable of combatting bourgeois ideology and putting forward the proletarian view because to do so would lessen the impact of their attacks on the Soviet Union and the building of socialism.

Thus modern Trotskyism attacks not just the ^{bourgeois} family but also motherhood, the proletarian family and all stable family relationships. This means it can recommend only one thing - promiscuity.

It attracts all those who have fallen for the bourgeois line that all troubles stem from an inadequate sex life and the 'solution' lies in promiscuity. Modern Trotskyism has adapted itself to accommodate all these petty-bourgeois ideas, as we saw from the support given by IMG members to the feminist Street Theatre Group's proposals to stage at the March 6th Demonstration a production designed to 'break down women's sexual inhibitions'. Further in Red Mole Vol 1 no 10, "Women's Liberation",

Jo O'Brien writes:

"Contraception would appear to release women from the need to be sexually faithful, sexually abstemious before marriage, and (!) to release them from the automatic acceptance of monogamy".

This means that, according to Red Mole, it is not only 'monogamy' (bourgeois marriage) from which women are to be liberated but also the "need to be sexually faithful": in other words Red Mole demands the 'right' of women to be promiscuous.

IS also demand this 'right': in IS Women's Newsletter no 4, Sheila Rowbotham is quoted, presumably approvingly, attacking Pravda for having denounced " 'free love' along with all disorderly sex life" as bourgeois and for having claimed "that the enemies of the people have introduced the 'foul and poisonous' idea of liquidating the family and disrupting marriage". (quotes are from Sheila Rowbotham). What is this other than advocacy of "a disorderly sex life" (promiscuity) and an attack on all stable relationships?

Again in an article in support of the Gay Liberation Front (Socialist Woman Summer 1972) IMG write:

"We should be free to develop with greater individuality, and to do this the stereotype sex roles must be smashed. Many people are alarmed at attacks on gender roles and see only chaos or total conformity as a result. As far as we can see there would be greater individuality and more freedom for experimentation. By openly rejecting the roles of oppressor and oppressed, gay women and men fundamentally challenge the sexual chauvinism that capitalism uses to divide the working class".

It is not surprising that these champions of a "disorderly sex life" find it necessary to suppress for instance what Lenin had to say on the subject of the Glass of Water theory of sexual promiscuity, even when allegedly giving a summary of, plus extracts from, Lenin's Conversations with Clara Zetkin* let us remind our libertarian 'Marxists' of some of what Lenin had to say:

"the revolution demands concentration, increase of forces. From the masses, from individuals. It cannot tolerate orgiastic conditions such as are normal for the decadent heroes and heroines of D'Annunzio. Dissoluteness in sexual life is bourgeois, is a phenomenon of decay. The proletariat is a rising class. It does not need intoxication as a narcotic or a stimulus. Intoxication as little by sexual exaggeration as by alcohol. It must not and shall not forget, forget the shame, the filth, the savagery of capitalism. It receives the strongest urge to fight from a class situation, from the communist ideal. It needs clarity, clarity and again clarity. And so I repeat, no weakening, no waste, no destruction of forces. Self-control, self-discipline is not slavery, not even in love..." (My emphasis).

Thus it can be seen that the libertarian ideology of the Trotskyites is thoroughly bourgeois. But needless to say all this thoroughly bourgeois ideology is dressed up by the Trotskyites in revolutionary phrasemongering and even given 'theoretical justification'. One of the clearest expressions of this theoretical 'justification' is set out in an article entitled "Myth and Reality" (Socialist Woman March/April 1971) by "A Socialist Teacher":

"One of the main indoctrination agencies of bourgeois society, if not the main one, is the nuclear family; the grouping which nestles close to the child and unwittingly ensures that the bourgeois values absorbed already by the parents, will be the root of the child's consciousness of the world. The basic tenets of the capitalist society, competition, the isolation of units to work against each other (divide and rule), the acceptance of hierarchy, with the dominance of the father over the mother and the power of both parents over the children; the fundamental importance of the family and the placatory role of the mother; all are accepted as the natural order of things. And the key to the indoctrination procedure is the mother who acts as the mainstay of the family. It is she who transmits the values of hard work and conformity, it is she who could act as a brake on the husband (for example urging caution rather than action); she is the one who has the responsibility

*See Red Mole Vol 1, no 5, above referred to.

for the co-ordination of all the various tasks of the family. The family is the unit of child rearing, the unit of consumption, the unit of production of use values in the form of housework and, fundamental for the exploiting class, the developer of attitudes."

Thus, instead of demanding that mothers transmit proletarian ideology, our "Socialist Teacher" 'teaches' us to demand the abolition of mothers, a task which is impossible. The idea is that stable relationships cannot but transmit bourgeois ideology. Judith White writes in "The Family in Capitalist Society" (Socialist Women July/August 1971): "Unlike the Stalinists, we do not pretend that the nuclear family can somehow be turned into an instrument for revolution".

These attacks are not simply on the bourgeois family but on all stable relationships. The clear implication is that if children were not in contact with their parents, the bourgeoisie would have a hard time in transmitting its ideology, because somehow the relationship spontaneously generates "the basic tenets of capitalist society". This is absolutely ridiculous. No, if you were at all interested in displacing bourgeois ideology, then you would be concerned with

bringing the workers to understand where their interests lie by popularising proletarian ideology among them, including among the mothers, for in this way mothers will also be brought to transmit proletarian ideology. It really is not necessary to ^{make such a ridiculous} demand the abolition of mothers!!!

However, this extraordinary 'theory' explains for instance Jane Porter's denunciation of measures taken in the Soviet Union in the 1930s to encourage private families to adopt orphans, and her conviction that (despite the drawing of women into public industry, thereby ending their dependent status, despite the increasing social services to take over household chores, and despite freedom of divorce) "the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy towards the family developed in response to two major needs. One was the need for increased labour, the birth rate had to be forced up; and secondly the family was needed as a hold on youth. Where the hierarchical structure of the family has broken down and disintegrated, children and young adults would be developing with an independence and self-confidence that would run counter to the interests of the bureaucracy, which needed to keep control over the workers. Discipline had to be imposed from an early age. The family and the education system were the means by which this could be achieved".

But when the objective reality was that the "hierarchy" within the family was disappearing, one is left with the clear understanding that the Trotskyites consider as primarily important that all relatively stable family groups should go, and, finding that they have not gone and are even encouraged, come to the conclusion that "hierarchy" is to be reintroduced. Thus they turn the facts on their head to 'fit' their theory'.

We might in passing note Jane Porter's petty-bourgeois hatred of discipline as such, a total anathema to the petty-bourgeois intellectual whose style of life in this society leads them to accept as 'eternal truth' that 'freedom' consists of the maximum of free play for their 'individuality', quite the opposite of the working class whose whole strength lies in organisation, which presupposes discipline -- more on this subject later)

Of course the natural conclusion from their view of the 'family' as the main agency for the transmission of bourgeois ideology, which indeed spontaneously generates bourgeois ideology, is that to revolutionise the masses we have first to destroy the family! In actual fact, however, the tendency under capitalism is for 'the family', indeed all human relationships to disintegrate as they are subordinated to the needs of capitalist production. The extended feudal family has been shattered by the need for mobility of labour, and even the 'nuclear' family is being split up both because of the prevalence of bourgeois individualism and because they are unable to withstand the economic pressures put on them under capitalism. Actually we should be ^{concerned} regarding the disintegrating pressures of capitalism on all human relationships, including the 'family'. Yet the Trotskyites have now substituted the family for the bourgeoisie as the target for attack on the pretence that to attack the family is to attack the bourgeoisie.

Nothing could be further from the case, but I shall say more on this later. This is a very satisfactory conclusion for the libertarians and for the bourgeoisie of course, which sees threats to its class rule being diverted safely away, and all in the name of Marx!

Another extraordinary conclusion which follows from their libertarian theories is expressed by Judith White in Red Mole no 42:

"Women's liberation has a place in this process - it is in a sense a late outcome of the youth radicalisation. Many of the people in women's liberation have been involved in political movements; more generally they have been affected by the experience of loosening family ties and the revolt against bourgeois family ideology which has been formative for the new generation of revolutionaries too. This process explains the largely petit-bourgeois composition of many of the groups in the women's liberation movement: young petit bourgeois women have much more access to this experience, on the whole, than working class women". (My emphasis).

Well, there we have it! According to Red Mole, it is the petty-bourgeois intellectuals who form the leading revolutionary class! And why? Because the petty bourgeoisie "have much more access" to "the experience of loosening family ties", i.e. sexually promiscuous behaviour!!!

These are in fact the conclusions of Herbert Marcuse, who, parading as a "Marxist", diverts youth away from revolutionary activity to encourage instead sexual licence, libertarianism, much to the delight of the bourgeoisie which is happy to see revolutionary potential squandered on a task (destruction of 'the family') which is impossible, which by associating the proletarian leaders Marx and Lenin with such nonsense creates a wedge between the revolutionaries and the working class in general which has no time for libertarianism. In any case the bourgeoisie does not have to rely on the family alone or even mainly to spread its ideology: it controls education, mass media, social services, the Trotskyites, the revisionists and Herbert Marcuse. What more does it need?

The Trotskyites and Engels

It is not surprising in view of this emasculation of Marxism by the IMG and other Trotskyites that they attack the great scientific socialists -- always of course in the name of Marx and Lenin. Stalin and Mao Tsetung who led the masses of the Soviet Union and China to prove the correctness of Marxism-Leninism are of course attacked as 'bureaucrats' and worse*.

However, at the present time in the women's movement it is Engels who is exciting most attention from the Trotskyites. Of course it is Engels' work "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" which sets out the Marxist analysis of the oppression of women, clearly and convincingly establishing that the liberation of women depends on the ending of the system of private ownership of the means of social production and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat: it really demonstrates the true nature of Trotskyism to see and hear all their attacks on Engels' work.

Those who accept the Marxist analysis of the oppression of women, supported as it is in Engels' work by an overwhelming body of evidence drawn from investigation of a multitude of primitive societies investigated at first hand by Lewis Morgan and others, and who try and popularise the Marxist,

*The Trotskyites would do well to study the works of Stalin and Mao Tsetung on the question of bureaucracy: in particular they might find embarrassing the call Stalin made to youth to "organise mass criticism from below" in order to overcome deficiencies in Party work (see Stalin: The Tasks of Youth -- International Publishers).

proletarian and only correct analysis among women in order to enable them to understand what is the real cause of their oppression and who it is that they must fight, that the path the liberation lies only in supporting the working-class struggles to overthrow the bourgeoisie, are decried as 'doctrinaire': we shall see who is doctrinaire in this regard:

Margaret Coulson of IMG writes in Vol 1 no 4 of 'International':

Drawing from the anthropological works of Lewis Morgan, Engels tried to interpret the trends in human history which gave rise to this exploitation. Engels' work has been criticized because of the almost exclusive emphasis he places on economic and property relationships and because Morgan's work is not longer considered reliable by many contemporary anthropologists, but it does provide the beginnings of an approach which has yet to be more comprehensively developed". (My emphasis - ER).

Quite clearly, according to this 'Marxist', relying on "economic and property relationships" in explaining women's oppression is incorrect. What is the alternative, we might ask? The only alternative is to lay emphasis on women's biological functions as the cause of their oppression, for if women's inferior status is not due to "economic and property relationships" then it must be natural! Such is the "Marxism" of the International "Marxist" Group. What Margaret Coulson really means is that Engels' work has "yet to be more comprehensively" distorted by bourgeois feminist 'interpretation'.

The Trotskyites' concern is to undermine proletarian ideology by gossip, slander and encouragement of every backward anti working class trend from feminism to libertarianism and gay liberation. They can certainly not offer any serious (real) criticism of Engels' work: there are airy references in passing to "new tasks" (unspecified) and discoveries of "modern anthropological research" - e.g. "Morgan's work is no longer considered reliable" etc - (again unspecified) which apparently render Engels obsolete.

Hazel Watkins in Socialist Woman Oct/Nov 1971 "The U.S. Women's Movement" demands "an extension and even a revision of certain of his Engels' ideas" (again unspecified). This reminds us of what Lenin had to say about those who demanded in general terms the 'freedom to criticize' Marx:

"Thus, the demand for a definite change from revolutionary Social-Democracy* to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less definite turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism. As this criticism of Marxism has been going on for a long time now, from the political platform, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a number of scientific works, as the younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically trained for decades on this criticism, it is not surprising that the 'new, critical' tendency in Social-Democracy should spring up, all complete, like Minerva from the head of Jupiter. The content of this new tendency did not have to grow and develop, it was transferred bodily from bourgeois literature to socialist literature."
(What Is To Be Done?)

The Trotskyite demand for freedom to criticize Engels ('Engels is not a God', quoth M. Coulson of the IMG at the WNCC Conference held at Skegness in October 1971) is nothing but a demand to substitute opportunism for proletarian ideology, just as the demand for the 'right to criticize' Marx was a demand to substitute opportunism for Marxism. The Trotskyites want to substitute their hodge podge petty-bourgeois notions for Marxism: this is why "Engels is not a God" as far as they are concerned.

In particular with respect to libertarianism, Engels is something of a thorn in their side: he sees homosexuality as a perversion of human nature basically related to and caused by the inferior status and seclusion of women in class society. For instance, in 'Origin of the Family' he says:

"...the degradation of the women recoiled on the men themselves and degraded them too, until they sank into the perversion of boy-love, degrading both themselves and their gods by the myth of Ganymede". (my emphasis - L.R.)
The Trotskyites on the

* At the time Lenin was writing Social-Democracy meant proletarian ideology. However after the betrayal of socialism by the revisionists of the Second International the term Social-Democracy became, and still is, associated with reformism, social-chauvinism and social-fascism.

other hand, who as we have seen have substituted 'the family' for the bourgeoisie as the enemy we must attack, regard all homosexuals as highly revolutionary because they "do not fit into the 'normal' heterosexual categories accepted by this society" and therefore present a challenge to 'the family'. In actual fact, such homosexuals as promote homosexuality, as do the GLF, are more the natural allies of the bourgeoisie which, in maintaining the inferior status of women and contempt for them, establishes the conditions for the development of homosexuality.

Further, Engels has no time for theories of promiscuity. He shows that human society developed away from promiscuity before class society arose because of the need to avoid in-breeding: tribes which did not develop the "sexual exclusiveness" so hated by the Trotskyites and every other petty-bourgeois intellectual, were weakened by in-breeding and wiped out. What unsavoury conclusions for the champions of libertarianism and promiscuity, who are shown up to be reactionary beyond the point of absurdity.

Engels moreover took the view that after monogamy had taken on milder forms (because of contact with the customs of Germanic tribes who had not yet developed to the monogamous family and male domination) a very important development took place:

"This, for the first time, created the possibility of the greatest moral advance which we derive from and owe to monogamy... namely, modern individual sex love, previously unknown to the whole world..."

"Our sex love differs materially from the simple sexual desire, the eros, of the ancients. First, it presupposes reciprocal love on the part of the loved one; in this respect, the woman stands on a par with the man; whereas in the ancient eros, the woman was by no means always consulted. Secondly, sex love attains a degree of intensity and permanency where the two parties regard non-possession or separation as a great, if not the greatest, misfortune..."

"Since sex love is by its very nature exclusive - although this exclusiveness is fully realised today only in the woman - then marriage based on sex love is by its very nature monogamy. We have seen how right Bachofen was when he regarded the advance from group marriage to individual marriage chiefly as the work of the women; only the advance from pairing marriage to monogamy can be placed to the men's account, and, historically, this consisted essentially in a worsening of the position of women and in facilitating infidelity on the part of the men. With the disappearance of the economic considerations which compelled women to tolerate the customary infidelity of the men - the anxiety about their own livelihood and even more about the future of their children - the equality of woman thus achieved will, judging from all previous experience, result far more effectively in the men becoming really monogamous than in the women becoming polyandrous".

"What will most definitely disappear from monogamy, however, is all the characteristics stamped on it in consequence of its having arisen out of property relationships. These are, first, the dominance of the man, and secondly, the indissolubility of marriage..."

Thus the Marxist view is that it is a) subordination of the woman to the man and b) indissolubility of marriage which will disappear, but not "sexual exclusiveness" or the "degree of intensity and permanency" of the relationship, or marriage itself. No wonder the petty-bourgeois libertarians hate Engels, as they hate all proletarian ideology. There is clearly nothing in common between Marxism and the petty-bourgeois self-indulgence they try to palm off on the working class in the name of Marx.

Trotskyism and the Working Class

It is this petty-bourgeois ideology, it is this anti-Marxism that the Trotskyites are attempting in the name of Marx to introduce into the working-class movement and it is to this end, and to give credence to the idea that they are "Marxists", that they try and establish contact with the working class: they go among the working class to try and popularise libertarianism and homosexuality, to try and get working-class women to overcome their "prejudice" against abortion (instead of arousing their indignation at the miserable

conditions under which they live under capitalism which forces women to seek unwanted abortions which the ruling class, adding insult to injury then makes it difficult to obtain). When they fail in these tasks, they then 'discover' that it is the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and not the working class which is revolutionary!

As they go they try to sow distrust among the working class for the essence of Marxism, by denigrating the socialist countries, denouncing the giants of revolutionary thought, spreading distorted interpretations of Marxism which rob it of its proletarian class content, encouraging backwardness and anti-communism. This is the interest of the Trotskyites in the working class!

One can search in vain for any attempt by the Trotskyites to educate the working class in proletarian ideology; one of the main tasks of a genuine Marxist in his contacts with the working class through struggles of various kinds is to try and elevate class-consciousness to an understanding that the proletariat must not be content to defend itself against attacks on its living standards but that it must organise to overthrow capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, a task of which the Trotskyites are well aware. But in practice their activities among the working class are confined to latching on to their economic struggles (e.g. the night cleaners campaign) and interfering in the jobs which the working class can very well do for itself. One will never find in any of their articles on the Equal Pay struggle or the night cleaners' campaign any attempt to explain in a convincing manner to the working class the necessity for overthrowing capitalism. The justification usually given is that the working class is too backward to understand: this either means that the working class is too stupid to understand, which thank goodness it is not otherwise we should have to forget the revolution, or that the working class is under the influence of bourgeois ideology. Thus the justification for not putting forward proletarian ideology is...that the working class is under the influence of bourgeois ideology! The working class must, according to the Trotskyites (and all other bourgeois 'Leftists' for that matter), spontaneously gravitate somehow towards proletarian ideology before they are 'at the stage' when the Trotskyites etc. will put forward proletarian ideology.

Let us remind the Trotskyites of what Lenin had to say on this subject in What Is To Be Done ?

"...all subservience to the spontaneity of the labour movement, all belittling of the role of the 'conscious element', of the role of Social-Democracy*, means, whether one likes it or not, the growth of influence of bourgeois ideology among the workers. All those who talk about 'exaggerating the importance of ideology', about exaggerating the role of the conscious elements, etc., imagine that the pure and simple labour movement can work out an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers 'take their fate out of the hands of the leaders'. But this is a profound mistake."

This is exactly what the Trotskyites put forward when they imply that bourgeois ideology will be overcome if only the workers establish "grass roots control at the point of production". But the Trotskyites are not likely to be interested in what Lenin had to say on this score because they know all this already but simply do not want to popularise proletarian ideology, only to promote bourgeois ideology: there is certainly no difficulty in finding bourgeois propaganda in their publications: for example in Red Mole for 8th-22nd of March 1971 "Liberation of Women is a Revolutionary Task", Branka Magas writes:

"This withdrawal of women from the labour market is always accompanied by an ideological onslaught that has been vividly described by many women writers. Betty Friedan in her Feminine Mystique described the situation of women in pre-war United States. De Beauvoir's Second Sex is a landmark in the history of revolutionary writings of women. Although not a Marxist, she succeeded better than previous writers on this subject /i.e. Engels/ in capturing the essence of bourgeois ideology in relationship to women.

*See note page 11 as to the meaning of Social-Democracy in this context.

Much work still remains to be done: the classical Marxist tradition has not provided an adequate theory of the role of the family in the social formation of the role of women in society." (My emphasis -- ER).

So, according to Red Mole, the bourgeois feminist Simone de Beauvoir "succeeded better" than Engels "in capturing the essence of bourgeois ideology in relationship to women" and "the classical Marxist tradition has not provided an adequate theory of the role of the family in the social formation of the role of women in society"!!! This is how the Trotskyites denigrate proletarian theory and praise the bourgeois feminism of Betty Friedan and Simone DeBeauvoir.

Their bourgeois feminist propaganda is manifested by the fact that there is very rarely any reference in Socialist Woman to Trade Unions without dubbing them 'male-dominated'. Male-domination and "bureaucracy" are blamed for the anti-working-class stand taken by the Trade Unions on many issues. The clear implication is that if the trade unions were not male-dominated but were female dominated then they would discard bourgeois ideology! The fact of the matter is that bourgeois ideology can only be displaced by increasing the understanding of and promoting proletarian ideology among the working class, so that the Trotskyites, by promoting these bourgeois feminist ideas, are actually contributing to the perpetuation of the anti-working-class stand of the trade unions! The Trotskyites also counterpose to the bureaucracy of the trade union leadership "grass roots control": what this means is that instead of demanding that the bourgeois anti working class leadership of the trade unions be replaced by proletarian leadership of unions, the Trotskyites are demanding that there should be no leaders. In this way they try to deprive the working class of organisation and leadership which is essential to its struggles, and thereby to weaken it. This is how the Trotskyites conduct class struggle -- on the side of the bourgeoisie.

Another example of feminism of the IMG is furnished by the cartoons sometimes published in Socialist Woman, e.g. in May/June 1971 where a cartoon appears with the following caption: "Women's oppression is women having to stay quiet while men run the world; women's liberation is women working together to shape the world", (i.e. men rule the world, hence the trouble in the world -- which is thus blamed on men not imperialism). Another example, a comic strip from Socialist Woman of Oct/Nov 1971 which is reproduced opposite.

What could be better designed than this to promote hatred of women for men, so that they fight men, all men, instead of joining with men in the struggle of the working class against the real oppressor of women, the bourgeoisie!

What kind of Marxists are these that they stifle Marxism and promote feminism? They are sham Marxists.

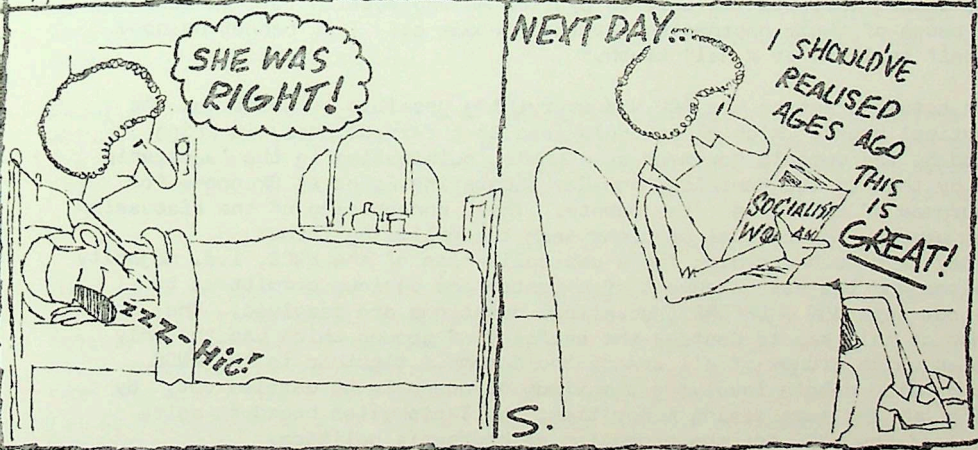
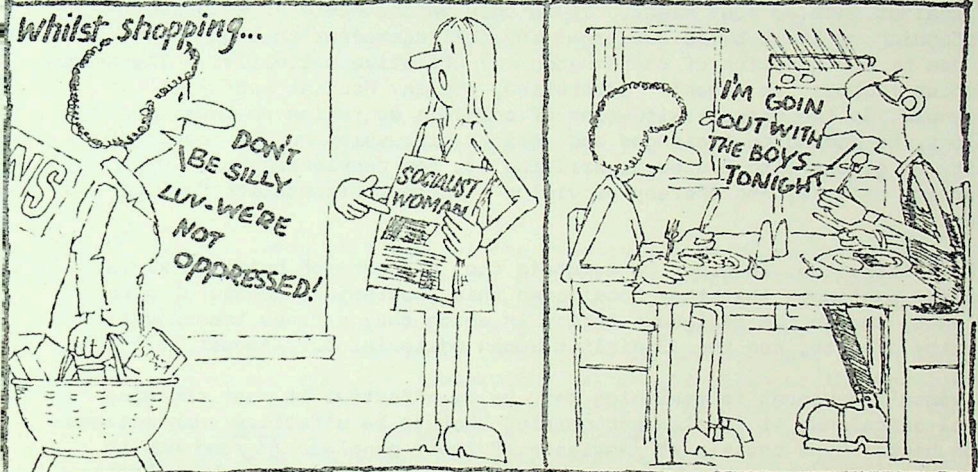
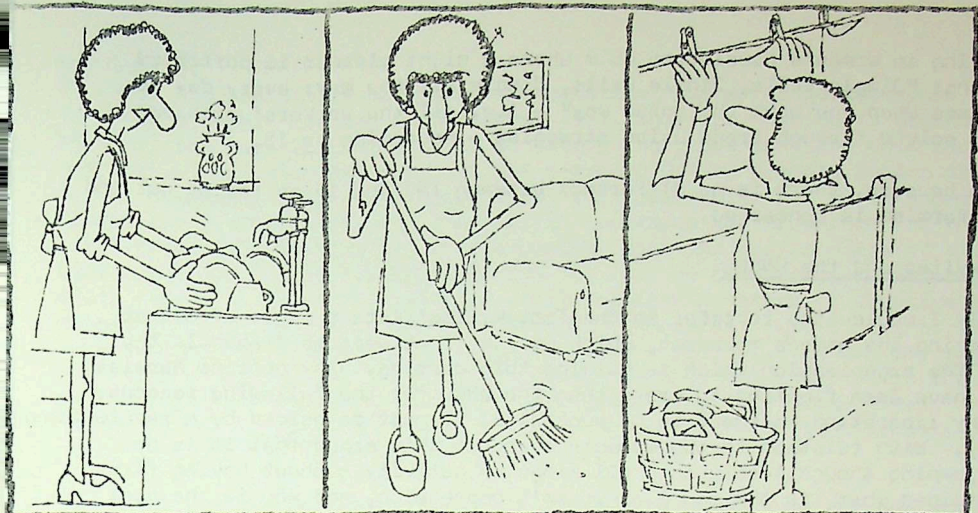
In order to dress up their bourgeois social-democratic policies as revolutionary, the IMG have had to look for a new definition of reformism: Socialist Woman (March/April 1972) carries a review on a Handbook by Leonora Lloyd called "Women Workers in Britain". In this review they write:

"The wide range of statistics...reveal that no reformist solution will solve the problem of unequal pay. Women's inequality at work is structurally determined by an economic system which has always used women as a reserve pool of cut-price labour. Hence the necessity for linking the struggle for equal pay with the right to equal work, and the enormous rift in opportunities cannot be legislated away.

"But if women must fight for their rights, where is the struggle to take place...The answer to that is to be found in the history of the fight for unionisation, and by considering the problems of unionised workers and what can happen when the state ^{succeeds in} completely smashing the power of the unions, e.g. Nazi Germany.

"Therefore, women must find a way to make the unions fight for the demands..." (My emphasis -- ER).

So we can see how the Trotskyites have redefined reformism. They confine the term "reformism" to the reliance on Parliament to bring about reforms. To rely on economic struggles to bring about reforms within capitalism (instead of organising for the purpose of overthrowing capitalism) is not



"reformism" according to the Trotskyites. This is how the Trotskyites try to dress up their reformist activity as revolutionary.

The IS are every bit as reformist, yet also claim to be "socialists". For instance in *Woman's Voice* no 1, in an article entitled "Why Women's Unionisation", they reply to the feminist Selma James who had in her pamphlet 'Women, the Unions and Work' attacked Lenin for advocating a 'trade union consciousness' in *What Is To Be Done?* One would have thought that as 'Socialists' IS would have pointed out that in *What Is To Be Done?* far from advocating 'trade union consciousness', Lenin shows that 'trade union consciousness' is insufficient and must be replaced by revolutionary consciousness. Instead IS does what? It defends trade union consciousness, which it glorifies with the description "organised political power"!! In this way IS renders Selma James more profound! IS then plumbs the depths in a comic strip

appearing in Women's Newsletter no 6 where a night cleaner is portrayed chanting: "Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle all the way; every day is Christmas When you work the union way" - i.e. all the workers' problems can be solved through trade union struggles - according to IS.

As can be seen, there is no difference between IMG and IS as far as out and out reformism is concerned.

Trotskyites and the WNCC

Finally I would like to refer to the Trotskyites' latest major effort at sabotaging the women's movement, which was their attempt to dismantle the WNCC, the organisation which is holding this meeting. Any genuine Marxist would have been fighting to strengthen the WNCC for the following reasons: for any liberation movement to be successful it must be guided by a revolutionary theory. With relation to the women's movement this means that it is no good jumping thoughtlessly into all kinds of activity without having first ascertained what is the cause of women's oppression, and who is the real enemy against whom we must fight. It is only on the basis of a correct understanding of these basic questions and full agreement thereon that there can be any question of coordinated and effective activities. Therefore, any honest fighter for women's liberation, and any Marxist worthy of the name, would, in the present situation of complete confusion on these basic questions, be demanding prolonged and serious discussion on the basis of equality of groups with a view to arriving at, and convincing women of, the correct answers, and thereby providing a correct orientation for our movement.

The IMG Trotskyites, in order to maintain the pretence of being Marxists or socialists pretended that they considered this theoretical debate of great importance, though the ambiguous terms* in which they express themselves are worthy of note, see the Socialist Woman editorial July/August 1971:

"The women's movement is realising that to be effective it must organise national campaigns; it is also recognising that to be effective such actions must be backed by a certain /? analysis of their problems /? and how to tackle them. They must be able to provide an explanation for new members, and a cause of their oppression for them to aim at. This cannot be done on a half analysis or a half truth."

But in actual practice the IMG did everything possible to undermine the theoretical debate which alone could lead to a correct analysis being adopted by the women's movement as a whole, culminating in the leadership given by them to the feminists and Gay Liberation Front at Skegness for the purpose of defeating the debate. Their undermining of the discussion of our urgent theoretical problems took the following forms:

1. They have been pressing for a centralisation of the WNCC, i.e. majority decisions and the establishment of a centre and various committees to carry out work NOW -- BEFORE theoretical questions are resolved. The purpose of this was to destroy the equality of groups which was the only basis on which groups of all trends could remain together in the WNCC for a genuine debate involving a maximum of women to be carried out. By forcing out and suppressing minorities, the Trotskyites hoped to seize control of the WNCC for the promotion of bourgeois politics.
2. They have consistently and flagrantly disregarded the standing orders of the WNCC, e.g. in order to secure control in conjunction with the CPGB revisionists of the March 6th demo. so as to exclude proletarian politics from the platform and promote feminism, libertarianism and reformism in the name of the WNCC - see our article 'On the March 6th Demonstration' in our book "Questions Concerning the Emancipation of Women and the Proletarian

*One of the things which makes Trotskyism hard to combat is their looseness and ambiguity of language which is in fact only the outward manifestation of their eclecticism and absence of principle. Their aim is that while what is said should appear revolutionary, it should in fact express the outlook of the petty-bourgeoisie. In other words, it must be Left in form and Right in essence. For instance, nobody would disagree that "there must be an end to bourgeois family relations therefore it is only by seeing how they approach this question in practice and by doggedly pursuing them through every twist and turn that we can pin them down and see that what they mean by this phrase is

Revoluti n.

3. When responsibility was given to members of Oxford Socialist Woman Group to convene a WNCC meeting in September 1971, they did nothing to organise it until the very last minute, in an attempt to prove that the WNCC could not work. They then tried to put the blame on Oxford Women's Action Group.

4. At Skegness, where in October 1971, the opportunity for an extended discussion of these pressing theoretical questions was organised for the first time nationally, they, in conjunction with the revisionists of the CPGB and their fellow Trotskyites from the IS, on the basis of encouraging every and any kind of backwardness (petty-bourgeois hatred of organisation, hatred of men, lack of seriousness and anti-communism) gave a lead to the feminists and the GLF to disrupt the conference to prevent those who were serious from continuing the business for which they had come: it is ironic in this connection to recall their pious comments on the Dolle Minas conference in Holland with respect to the behaviour of petty-bourgeois elements at that conference (Red Mole vol 1 no 6):

"These [the petty-bourgeois elements] started shouting down serious speakers trying to contribute to an analysis of the problems and work out a programme and a form for the organisation, saying things like 'down with programmes, what we want is action'..."

Very reminiscent of the behaviour of the Trotskyites at Skegness, is it not? When it comes to silencing proletarian politics within the women's movement (or anywhere else), principles to which lip-service is paid are totally abandoned in practice.

The Trotskyites know that without the eradication of mistaken understanding of the cause of women's oppression, without the general introduction of proletarian ideology, any activity could not be anything other than misdirected, a diversion from our real tasks and a succour to the bourgeoisie; yet, pandering to the petty-bourgeois impetuosity in the movement which wants action, any action now, the Trotskyites dishonestly slander the revolutionaries who seek to promote debate of essential theoretical problems with a view to establishing a correct orientation on the basis of which our activities can be effective in achieving our aim, women's liberation, by alleging that we are against all activities. It is only by such dishonest distortion and concealment of the true facts that the Trotskyites can hope to hide the bankruptcy of their policies.

We will state our position on this matter quite clearly: we are against activities which are a diversion and a succour to the bourgeoisie and we are in favour only of activity which will help achieve women's liberation, and this is WHY we consider the question of a correct theory to be so urgent!

We think it will be clear from this what is the orientation of the Trotskyites:

They adopt as their hero - Trotsky, whose lack of faith in the working class and whose petty-bourgeois impetuosity led him to formulate the incorrect 'theory of permanent revolution', deny the ability of the working class to build socialism in one country; whose petty-bourgeois vanity prevented him from correcting his theory when the facts proved him to be wrong and led him to a campaign of vile slander and abuse against proletarian leaders, proletarian organisation and proletarian ideology; who became the chief agent of German and Japanese Fascism for organising wrecking and sabotage in the Soviet Union - this is their hero!

Then in the name of Marx and Lenin they attack all principles of scientific socialism, all proletarian ideology and actively promote bourgeois ideology. (In the women's movement we have seen in particular the baseless vilification of Engels and the glorification of De Beauvoir and Betty Friedan).

quite different from what genuine socialists would mean. Thus on a superficial reading one might suppose there was a good deal in Trotskyite literature which was 'revolutionary', but this is no more than the Curate's egg could have been said to be "very good in parts". In Trotskyism, as in the rotten egg, it is what is rotten and not what is "very good" which determines the essence.

Since the experience of the working class in the Socialist countries has proved correct the glorious principles of Marxism-Leninism, has proved that the working class can seize ownership and control of the means of production and organise production in the interests of the many and not for the sake of the private profits of the few - in short has proved that the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois mode of production can and must be overthrown - the Trotskyites (again in the name of Marx and Lenin) slander and vilify these countries in a desperate attempt to ensure that the British working class should never follow their glorious example.

The Trotskyites encourage feminism, libertarianism, anarchism and every form of petty-bourgeois backwardness on the principle that the masses are backward and therefore, in order to be one with the masses, we must encourage backwardness.

Finally, the Trotskyites do everything in their power to silence the revolutionaries in the movement, including, as we have seen, trying to dismantle this organisation, the WNCC, the only form of national organisation for the women's movement which, at the present stage of theoretical confusion, will enable us to develop into a force capable of achieving the liberation of women!

We hope that we have been able to do enough to prove to women who wish to fight for their liberation, and that of the whole working class, not to be taken in by the fine phrases of the Trotskyites who are nothing but a Trojan horse in the working-class movement.

Introduction given by Ella Rule on behalf of the Union of Women for Liberation at a WNCC public meeting in London in September, 1972.

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All groups and individuals in the women's liberation movement are invited to submit articles for publication in the forthcoming issues of "Women's Struggle" (though priority will be given to articles from affiliated groups and their members in the allocation of space). Articles for publication should be sent (on stencils for foolscap pages, with $\frac{3}{4}$ " margins, please) to the W.N.C.C. Treasurer, at the above address.

THE PROLETARIAN APPROACH TO THE QUESTION OF ABORTION.

Those feminists who regard women's biological functions (childbearing) as the cause of women's oppression, rather than the interests of private property, naturally see their liberation in terms of ability to put an end to their childbearing role rather than in ending the system of private ownership of the means of production, the real basis of women's oppression and of all oppression.

These women therefore regard abortion as crucial to liberation rather than seeing it as an evil, harmful to women's health, which is necessary only for so long as women are driven to it by sheer poverty. In bourgeois society this will always be the case and it is utter hypocrisy for the bourgeois ruling class to refuse women abortions. However under socialism when the working class controls the means of production, it is able to do away with destitution and want, and thus do away with the need for abortion, except on health grounds.

However the feminists have been supported in their erroneous thinking by the pseudo-Marxists, the Trotskyites and the revisionists, whose main aim is to undermine proletarian ideology and organisation, which is why they denigrate the achievements of the Soviet people in the building of Socialism in the USSR: for instance Betty Underwood writing in the Morning Star describes abortion as the only safe method of contraception. These pseudo-Marxists have the gall to cite Lenin in support of the suggestion that abortion is liberating, whereas Lenin had made it clear in his article 'The Working Class and Neo-Malthusianism' that he regarded abortion as a necessary evil under capitalism, which it was sheer hypocrisy for the bourgeois ruling class to refuse. These pseudo-Marxists present the ending of the 'right' to indiscriminate abortions in the USSR in 1936 as 'proof' that the CPSU(B) had 'degenerated', instead of the proud proclamation of the Soviet workers ^{and peasants} that they had succeeded in doing away with misery and want in the USSR.

We present the material which follows in order to put paid for once and for all to all this feminist thinking, and to expose the nature of the Trotskyite and revisionist distortion of Lenin's position: we believe that working class women will do better listening to what is said by a life long revolutionary like N. Krupskaya/^{rather} than to what is said by such life long revisionists as Betty Underwood.

**UNION OF WOMEN
FOR LIBERATION**

A STRONG SOVIET FAMILY

Preface to the pamphlet "The New Law on Mother and Child", 1936,
preface written by P. S. Krupskaya.

After widespread discussion at meetings and in the press of the draft decree "on the prohibition of abortions, increased material assistance to young mothers, the establishment of government aid for large families, the extension of the network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens, increased penalties for failure to pay alimony, and certain alterations in the divorce laws", this decree, with certain additions and amendments, has been passed by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R.

The carrying out of this decree will entail great expenditures on the part of the Soviet state. But our Union of Soviet Socialist Republics has become so strong that it can afford to take them upon itself.

Why does the government undertake these large expenditures? Because it considers the measures comprised in the decree to be of great importance in remoulding people's personal lives, in actually emancipating the working women, ⁱⁿ establishing proper family relations.

It was just because the law now adopted is of such great importance that it was first put up for discussion by the people.

Such discussion is of the greatest importance. In the first place, the universal discussion of the draft decree has called it to general attention, has brought it home to the broadest masses. Everyone made his suggestions. Of course, only a small number of these suggestions - the most important, the most essential could be included in the decree. But these suggestions raised a number of serious questions which will help in the carrying out of the decree.

People working in the People's Commissariats of Justice, Health and Education will ^{time and again} read over these suggestions from various strata of people, in order to be able to carry out this decree in the proper Soviet way, as Lenin would have wanted it carried out, as Stalin demands.

The universal discussion of the decree will help its correct application. The universal discussion of the decree will arouse public attention and help to establish public control over this work.

Lenin spoke many times about the necessity of drawing every cook into the work of governing the state. The universal discussion of the decree teaches the masses to govern. In order to govern, knowledge of the matter in hand is essential. And the discussion of the decree furthers this knowledge, fills the decree with living, practical matter. The discussion of the decree made it possible to accumulate quantities of practical material about the living conditions and personal life of our working people. The subcommittees of the Soviets will themselves be able to engage in organising everyday life on a new basis, without entrusting this work to their bureaus. The work of the subcommittees of the Soviets in the remoulding of everyday life will now become much more extensive and throughgoing.

The problems dealt with in the decree vitally concern every family, and they particularly agitate the women.

Women took an especially active part in the discussion of the decree, and, of course, this is of extreme importance.

It is common knowledge that Lenin attached enormous importance to the matter of emancipating women, furthering their enlightenment and drawing them into social work.

A great deal of work to this end has been going on all the time, but Lenin's principles could be properly applied only after the necessary prerequisites for their realisation had been created.

Ten years ago, could the state have assigned such funds for the maternity homes, nurseries, kindergartens? Ten years ago, would it have been possible to arrange such widespread discussion of the decree, to draw the villages into the discussion? Would the peasant women's voices have sounded so loudly at that time?

Especially heated discussion was provoked by the clause on the prohibition of abortions, which had been legalised in 1920. Looking over some old articles of mine, I found one in which I dealt in detail with the question of abortions. The article was printed in the *Kommunistka*, No. 1 - 2, for 1920. It was called "The War and Childbirth".

"The war", I wrote in that article, "has brought the country to the extreme of poverty and ruin. And poverty as a rule is the grave of all human relations. Poverty forces women to sell their bodies, forces women who are not prostitutes making a trade of it, but mothers of families, who often do it for the sake of their children, for the sake of their old mothers."

The Soviet laws have changed the nature of marriage, transforming it from the purely commercial deal that it often was before the Socialist October Revolution into a union on the basis of mutual sympathies. But the Civil War, constant evacuations, the break-up of old habits that were established in the course of centuries, made marital ties very unstable.

This instability of marriage and the material hardships - the Civil War, the ruined state of the country, the food shortage - led to the fact that in many cases the entire burden of rearing and training her child fell on the mother alone.

"How is one to help the mother, breaking under the burden of childbirth and the rearing and upbringing of children?" I wrote in my article. "The answer is clear - the state must not only undertake the protection of the mother and child, must not only care for women during pregnancy, and during and after confinement, but must set up tens of thousands of nurseries, ^{kindergartens, children's colonies and dormitories} where children receive care and food, where they would live, develop and study under conditions ten times better than even the most loving mother could provide for them by her own unaided efforts."

The Soviet government did away with the old homes that took the children away from their mothers forever; it shut down the "establishments for the manufacture of angels" which had existed under the old regime and had in reality been institutions for concealed infanticide. It set up children's homes, kindergartens and nurseries, but at that time all this was but a drop in the ocean.

The situation was especially grave in the countryside, where the kulaks were active in agitating against ^{the} nurseries. In 1919 we still used to receive petitions signed with crosses by illiterates, begging that the children should not be put in the nurseries, not be taken away from their parents forever. Children's homes were often materially exploited by "teachers" who had no connection what ~~ever~~ with pedagogy, with the teaching and raising of children.

So in 1920 this matter of abortions became acute. Up to that time abortions had been punishable by law. But the penalty ~~descended~~ not on those who compelled women to have abortions, nor on those who performed ^{illegal} abortions under extremely insanitary conditions, and by methods which for a long time ^{after} impaired the health of the women concerned - it was the woman who was held responsible. At that time I wrote:

"The fight against abortions must be carried on not by persecuting the mothers, who resort to abortions often at great risk to their own lives, but must be directed towards eliminating the social causes that have made it necessary for women to resort to abortions.

"...Of course, impunity with respect to abortions cannot rid the mother of the depression produced by an abortion. Her whole organism has, as it were, entered on the path of childbirth, the organism has begun to adapt itself to nourishing the embryo within it, and the mother usually feels an interruption of this process to be a crime against herself and her child. The nervous excitement and yearning that can often be seen in the eyes of a woman who has resorted to an abortion are ^{enough} to show at what price the mother buys her freedom.

"It was only bitter want that compelled the working women to reject motherhood.

"Improvement of general living conditions, and in particular the protection of mother and child and the public education of children, will remove this main cause which at the present time forces women to violate their natural instincts, renouncing motherhood, that greatest of joys.

"Those who really want to remove from the order of the day all these horrible questions of infanticide, of abortions, of contraceptions, must work without pause to build the new life in which motherhood will take the place due to it."

Fifteen years have passed since that article was written. Now the question of abortions appears in a new light. Our country has become rich, mighty and prosperous. Our people are better educated and more enlightened. Women have become a force in the collective farms. They have become active in social work. Many of the women are Stalhanovites. They are studying hard. The Party and the government surround the children with public care. They make their childhood a happy one. It is with good cause that millions of working women are so devoted to Stalin - they see his solicitude for the working women.

Under these new conditions the questions of the family and of abortions appears in a new light. The new decree will play an extremely important part in remoulding people's modes of life.

It is essential to carry out this decree on the widest possible scale, to fight for good maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens. There is much work ahead.

"...If a collective farm woman's husband beats her, all the members of the collective farm will gather to discuss the incident and condemn the man. But this happens only in cases of crude despotism, whereas family relations are a subtle thing. In the period of transition from capitalism to communism, the survivals of capitalism sometimes assume new forms as "protective colouring"; the old is sometimes resurrected in new forms.

Under capitalism it was characteristic for family relations to be based not on love, not on mutual confidence and respect, but on material considerations. These family relations were supplemented by an utter lack of responsibility on the part of the man towards women with whom he would live without marriage. The Soviet laws have done a great deal to destroy the basis for family relations of this kind: the freedom of divorce and the alimony law have done much to make family relations more wholesome. But in some cases we still have survivals of capitalism in the form of an irresponsible attitude on the part of a man towards motherhood, nor is there always the necessary concern for his children. This irresponsible attitude sometimes assumes the disguise of a struggle against the old family relations, which in actual fact serves to conceal an irresponsible and uncomradely attitude towards the woman. She is told to have an abortion and that's that.

During the transition period from capitalism to communism there are many factors hindering the elimination of this irresponsibility. The law on the prohibition of abortions which was put up for popular discussion had as its aim to help in eliminating this old, frivolous, irresponsible attitude towards women. The law on the prohibition of abortions increases the responsibility of the father and improves conditions for expectant and young mothers and for mothers of large families. Large numbers of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens intended to increase public care of mother and child are now being built. The number of permanent and seasonal nurseries is to be doubled by Jan 1st 1939, the number of permanent kindergartens is to be trebled, and seasonal playgrounds are to be provided for all collective farm children..."

EXTRACT FROM "THE WIFE - HER SOLDIER HUSBAND'S FRIEND AND COMRADE", SPEECH
DELIVERED AT A CONFERENCE OF WIVES OF RED ARMY COMMANDERS BY N. KRUPSKAYA.

"...All of us know the great role of Comrade Stalin in this work. And let me say that our work, the work of furthering the enlightenment and arousing the activity of the masses of women, was also led by him. Comrade Stalin has time and again stressed the important part played by women in all spheres of socialist construction, particularly in the collective farms; he has constantly given ^{us} exhaustive and very clear, specific instructions on methods of organising work among women.

Take a look at the whole history of our women's movement. At first we had the Women's Organisations. In their time these Women's Organisations fulfilled a very important function. But when the scope of the work became greater, when it became necessary to start a truly mass movement, they proved inadequate. Other methods of developing this movement arose, and the movement became closely linked up with the entire work of socialist construction.

I should like together with you to express the deepest gratitude to Comrade Stalin for what he has done to further the enlightenment of women, to develop their activity in social work, for what he has done to make women active builders not in word, but in deed..."

THE DECREE OF OCTOBER THE 18th 1920, which legalised abortion in the Soviet Union.

Quoted from 'Protection of Motherhood in the U.S.S.R.' by Esther Conis.

" 'During the last decade the number of women who terminate their pregnancy prematurely increases both with us and abroad.

The legislation of all countries struggles against this evil by punishing both the woman who is guilty of abortion and the operating physician.

This method of struggle has been ineffectual. Abortions were necessarily made in secret and the woman very often became the victim of mercenary ignorant persons who traded in this secret operation.

As a result 50% of women fell ill of infections after abortions and 4% of them died.

The workers' and peasants' Government realizing the dangers of such a situation has undertaken a campaign against secret abortions among working women.

It foresees that this phenomenon will gradually disappear with the building up of socialism.

But until now the surviving traditions of the past and the heavy economic conditions of the present compel a good many women to have recourse to this operation. The People's Commissariat of Health and the People's Commissariat of Justice are convinced that methods of repression are completely useless in this case.

In order to preserve the health of women and the interests of the race from ignorant and greedy quacks these two Commissariats decree:

1) The operation known as abortion may be lawfully performed free of charge in Soviet hospitals where the conditions guarantee a maximum of insury.

2) All persons who are not licensed doctors are strictly prohibited from performing abortions.

3) The midwife guilty of performing this operation is deprived of the right of practice and is liable to punishment by the People's Courts of Justice.

4) The physician performing abortion in the course of his private practice with a mercenary purpose is liable to punishment by the People's Courts of Justice.'

" The legislation governing abortions permits the operation of an artificial termination of pregnancy by physicians in a hospital environment. The principal aim of the above mentioned decree was the struggle with illegal, underhand and secret abortions and their consequences which every year gave rise to tens of thousands of women's diseases and crippled a countless number of women.

The decree on abortion was supplemented by the section 140 of the Penal Code of Laws.

'The performance of abortion with the consent of the mother but by persons without medical training or by persons with this training but in unsanitary surroundings is punished by a forfeiting of liberty or by compulsory labour of a year or by a fine up to a sum of 600 roubles.

If this operation was performed under the above mentioned conditions but as a trade or without the consent of the mother or has caused her death it is punished by forfeiting of liberty for a term of not more than five years.'

(Penal Code of Laws. Section 140)

" The Penal Code of Laws allows every woman to resort to abortion; but she must first pass through a consultation for women where she is told whether there is any contraindication to abortion for her. The physician of the consultation having taken into consideration the social and household conditions of the applicant tries to persuade her to give up abortion and he frequently succeeds in doing so.

Abortion is permitted only during the first three months of pregnancy.

The legislation of artificial abortion deprived it of its underhand character, considerably diminishing thereby the dangers connected with it.

The legislation controlling abortion made it possible to study this important phenomenon openly and thoroughly as well from the medical as the social point of view. An obligatory registration on special cards of the cases of abortion of all such women as had received due permission (introduced in 1924) was useful in this respect. The women entering into hospitals with symptoms of miscarriage (abortion out of hospital) are also registered.

An extensive statistical study of materials concerning abortion in the U.S.S.R. was undertaken by the People's Commissariat of Health in connection with this legislation. It led to the following conclusions:

The legislation of abortion has resulted in the stopping of the secret abortions.

We may see this from the following table.

Out of every 100 women who had recourse to abortion in Moscow, the operation was performed out of hospital:

In the year 1923	by 56,9%	of women
"	1924	by 43,2% "
"	1925	by 15,5% "
"	1926	by 12,2% "
"	1932	by 10,0% "

Free and legal abortion performed in special gynaecological hospitals by experienced physicians has made it possible to considerably reduce the complications after abortions and to liquidate almost entirely the mortality after abortions.

In the U.S.S.R. there is one case of death to 20,000 abortions.

In Moscow where the statistics on abortions are very exact the proportion is of one case of death to 23,000 abortions.

The legislation of abortion has not affected the birth-rate in the U.S.S.R. The number of births is constantly on a high level of 40 pro 1,000 of population.

In other countries where a penal system as regards abortion is applied this system has been powerless to stop the rapid fall of the birth-rate.

The annual growth of the population in U.S.S.R. is of 3 millions.

At the same time an extensive work of enlightenment on the question of abortion is being carried on with the purpose of rendering clear the harm of abortions. Pamphlets are published on this subject, conferences are held. Some good films have been made and widely circulated throughout the U.S.S.R. Prevention of abortions and birth-control is carried out in the U.S.S.R. principally at rooms for sexual hygiene at consultations.

In this way the prescription of contraceptive means is individualized through being adapted to every given case. It is performed under regular medical supervision and control and thus it has become an important agent in women's health and in the prevention of abortions.

Many reasons which compel women to resort to abortion do not exist in the U.S.S.R. Rising standard of living in the working class, the building of lodgings for workers, the extension of the network of creches and birth control in addition to these will gradually make away with abortion."

THE DECREE OF 1936, which prohibited indiscriminate abortion,

Quoted from: "Nursery Schools in Soviet Russia", Foreign Language Publishing House, 1936

The New Laws

" On June 27th, 1936 this latest decision of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars was published. As this crucial decision will have a tremendous influence on educational work with parents and children in the near future, we are particularly fortunate in having it reach us in time to be included in this book.

Without quoting this extensive document of exceptional importance in full we cite only the introduction...

DECISION OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS OF THE U.S.S.R.

The October Socialist Revolution which laid the foundation for the abolition of all class exploitation, for the abolition of the classes themselves, at the same time laid the foundation for the complete and final emancipation of women.

In no country in the world does woman enjoy as complete equality in all branches of political, social and family life as in the U.S.S.R.

In no country in the world does woman, as a mother and a citizen who bears the great and responsible duty of giving birth to and bringing up citizens, enjoy the same respect and protection of the law as in the U.S.S.R.

However, the economic breakdown of the country which took place during the first years after the Civil War and the armed intervention, and the inadequate cultural level of the women inherited from the pre-revolutionary epoch did not enable them at once to make full use of the rights accorded to them by the law and to perform, without fear of the future, their duties as citizens and mothers responsible for the birth and early education of their children. In this connection the Soviet power permitted on Nov. 18, 1920, the practice of abortions (artificial interruption of pregnancy) for women so long as, as the People's Commissariat of Health and the People's Commissariat of Justice wrote, "the moral heritages of the past and the difficult economic conditions of the present still force a section of the women to submit to this operation". (Code of Laws, No. 90, p. 471.)

Back in 1913 Lenin wrote that class-conscious workers are "unquestionable enemies of neo-Malthusianism, this tendency for the philistine couple, pigeon-brained and selfish, who murmur fearfully: May God help us to keep our own bodies and souls together, as for children it is best to be without them."

But while rebelling against abortions as a social evil Lenin considered the mere legislative banning of abortions clearly inadequate to combat them. Moreover, he pointed out that under conditions of capitalism these laws only reflect the "hypocrisy of the ruling classes" as they "do not heal the sores of capitalism but make them particularly malignant, particularly harmful to the oppressed masses." (Volume 16, pp. 498-499.)

Only under conditions of socialism, where exploitation of man by man does not exist and where woman is an equal member of society while the progressing improvement of the material well-being of the toilers constitutes a law of social development, is it possible seriously to organize the struggle against abortions by prohibitive laws as well as other means.

The abolition of capitalist exploitation in the U.S.S.R., the growth of the material well-being and the gigantic growth of the political and cultural level of the toilers make it possible to raise the question of a revision of the decision of the People's Commissariats of Health and Justice of Nov. 18, 1920.

Necessary material provision for women and their children, state aid to large families, the utmost development of the network of maternity homes, nurseries, kindergartens, legislative establishment of a minimum of sums which the father of a child must pay for its upkeep when husband and wife live apart, on the one hand, and prohibition of abortions on the other, coupled with an increase in the penalty for willful non-payment of the means for the maintenance of the children, awarded by a court, and the introduction of certain changes in the legislation on divorces for the purpose of combating a light-minded attitude towards the family and family obligations - such are the roads which must be followed in order to solve this important problem affecting the entire population. In this respect, the Soviet Government responds to numerous statements made by toiling women.

In connection with the above, and taking into consideration certain remarks made by citizens during the discussion of the draft, the C.E.C. and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. decide:

PART II ON INCREASING MATERIAL AID BY THE STATE TO WOMEN GIVING BIRTH AND ON ESTABLISHING STATE AID TO LARGE FAMILIES.

5. In order to improve the material position of mothers, both working women and employees ^{to increase the allowance issued from state social insurance} insured in the organs of social insurance/funds for the purpose of procuring the necessary articles of infant care, from 32 rubles to 45 rubles.
6. To increase the allowance issued to the mother for nursing the infant, from five rubles to 10 rubles a month.
7. In relation to uninsured toiling women - members of co-operative artels and enterprises - to establish that the said allowances be issued by the co-operative mutual aid funds on the same basis.
8. To abolish the limitation fixed by the code of labour laws for women employees (Article 132), making them equal to working women in regard to the length of the leave accorded prior to and after childbirth (56 days prior to and 56 days after childbirth).
9. To establish a criminal penalty for refusal to employ women for reasons of pregnancy, for reducing their wages on the same grounds, providing in the law the obligation of preserving for the pregnant woman, while transferring her to lighter work, her former wages based on earnings for the last six months' work.
10. To establish a state allowance for mothers of large families - for those having six children, an annual allowance of 2,000 roubles for five years for each subsequent child from the day of its birth, while for mothers having 10 children one state allowance of 5,000 roubles on the birth of each subsequent child and an annual allowance of 3,000 roubles for a period of four years following the child's first birthday. To extend this article of the law also to those families who at the moment of the publication of the law have the required number of children.

PART IV ON THE EXTENSION OF THE NETWORK OF NURSERIES.

14. To double by Jan. 1, 1939 the existing network of nursery beds for children in the cities, state farms, workers' settlements and on the railways, increasing their total number to 800,000 beds by putting into service:

In 1936, in addition to the 34,000 beds provided by the 1936 plan			
	100,000	new beds	
In 1937.....	150,000	" "	
In 1938.....	150,000	" "	
	<u>400,000</u>		
Total	400,000	" "	

15. To double by Jan. 1, 1939, the existing network of nursery beds both in permanent and seasonal collective farm nurseries in rural localities, increasing the number of beds in permanent nurseries by 500,000 and in seasonal nurseries by four million beds, including:

In 1936, in addition to the 70,000 beds in permanent collective farm nurseries scheduled by the 1936 plan	100,000 beds
in seasonal nurseries in addition to the one million beds according to the 1936 plan	500,000 beds
In 1937 in permanent collective farm nurseries.....	200,000 "
in seasonal nurseries.....	1,500,000 "
In 1938 in permanent collective farm nurseries.....	200,000 "
in seasonal nurseries.....	2,000,000 "

The People's Commissariats of Health of the Union republics and the territory, province and district executive committees are to supervise the development of the above network of nurseries.

16. In cities and in industrial centres, beginning Jan. 1, 1937, work in nursery schools is to be in two shifts, to last 16 hours a day, including the rest days.

17. To instruct the People's Commissariats of Health of the Union republics to secure the appropriate personnel for the newly opened institutions by allotting 15 million roubles in addition to the appropriations made for the training of the intermediate medical personnel.

18. To instruct the People's Commissariats of Health of the Union republics to build during three years so as to complete by Jan. 1, 1939, an additional 800 new dairy kitchens in the cities, industrial and district centres for the feeding of 1.5 million children under three years of age and to open:

In 1936 - 30 kitchens of the first category (at an estimated cost of 83,000 roubles each).

100 kitchens of the second category (at an estimated cost of 65,000 roubles each).

In 1937 - 70 kitchens of the first category.

200 kitchens of the second category.

In 1938 - 100 kitchens of the first category.

300 kitchens of the second category."

Part I of the above decree, (translated from Italian translation in "Codice Sovietico delle Leggi sul Matrimonio, la Famiglia e la Tutela" by Mario Matteucci, published by Capriotti Editori, Rome 1947)

PART I "1. Abortion, in view of the undeniable harm which it causes to health, is forbidden, whether in hospitals or in special nursing homes, or in the private houses of doctors or pregnant women. Abortion may be induced only when continuation of the pregnancy puts the

pregnant woman's life in danger or threatens to cause serious injury to her health, or else in cases of severe hereditary diseases of the parents, and then it may only be effected in hospitals and in maternity homes.

2. If an abortion is performed outside a hospital, or in a hospital but in contravention of the above, the doctor who has performed the operation is liable to a term of imprisonment of between one year and two years. If an abortion is performed in unhygienic surroundings, or by a person who is not medically qualified, the punishment shall not be less than three years' detention.

3. Where the woman is induced by some other person to undergo abortion, that person shall suffer detention for two years.

4. Pregnant women who undergo abortion in contravention of the above, shall be punished by public reprimand, and, if the offence is repeated, by a fine of up to 300 roubles."

by V.I. Lenin.

At the Pirogov Doctors' Congress* much interest was aroused and a long debate was held on the question of abortions. The report was made by Lichkus, who quoted figures on the exceedingly widespread practice of destroying the foetus in present-day so-called civilised states.

In New York, 80,000 abortions were performed in one year and in France there are as many as 36,000 every month. In a St. Petersburg the percentage of abortions has more than doubled in five years.

The Pirogov Doctors Congress adopted a resolution saying that there should never be any criminal prosecution of a mother for performing an artificial abortion and that doctors should only be prosecuted if the operation is performed for "purposes of gain".

In the discussion the majority agreed that abortions should not be punishable, and the question of the so-called neomalthusianism (the use of contraceptives) was naturally touched upon, as was also the social side of the matter. Mr. Vigdorichik, for instance, said, according to the report in 'Russkoye Slovo'**, that "contraceptive measures should be welcomed" and Mr. Astrakhan exclaimed, amidst thunderous applause:

"We have to convince mothers to bear children so that they can be maimed in educational establishments, so that lots can be drawn for them, so that they can be driven to suicide!"

If the report is true that this exclamation of Mr. Astrakhan's was greeted with thunderous applause, it is a fact that does not surprise me. The audience was made up of bourgeois, middle and petty bourgeois, who have the psychology of the philistine. What can you expect from them but the most banal liberalism?

From the point of view of the working class, however, it would hardly be possible to find a more apposite expression of the completely reactionary nature and the ugliness of "social neomalthusianism" than Mr. Astrakhan's phrase cited above.

..."Bear children so that they can be maimed..." For that alone? Why not that they should fight better, more unitedly, consciously and resolutely than we are fighting against the present-day conditions of life that are maiming and ruining our generation?

This is the radical difference that distinguishes the psychology of the peasant, handicraftsman, intellectual, the petty bourgeois in general, from that of the proletarian. The petty bourgeois sees and feels that he is heading for ruin, that life is becoming more difficult, that the struggle for existence is ever more ruthless, and that his position and that of his family are becoming more and more hopeless. It is an indisputable fact, and the petty bourgeois protests against it.

But how does he protest?

* Pirogov Congresses - Congresses of Russian doctors convened by the Russian Doctors' Society in memory of the great Russian surgeon and anatomist N.I. Pirogov. In this article the reference is to the XII Pirogov Congress, St. Petersburg, 1913.
 ** Russkoye Slovo - a liberal-bourgeois newspaper which appeared in Moscow 1885/1917.

He protests as the representative of a class that is hopelessly perishing, that despairs of its future, that is depressed and cowardly. There is nothing to be done... if only there were fewer children to suffer our torments and hard toil, our poverty and our humiliation - such is the cry of the petty bourgeois.

The class-conscious worker is far from holding this point of view. He will not allow his consciousness to be dulled by such cries no matter how sincere and heartfelt they may be. Yes, we workers and the mass of small proprietors lead a life that is filled with unbearable oppression and suffering. Things are harder for our generation than they were for our fathers. But in one respect we are luckier than our fathers. We have begun to learn and are rapidly learning to fight - And to fight not as individuals, as the best of our fathers fought, not for the slogans of bourgeois speechifiers that are alien to us in spirit, but for our slogans, the slogans of our class. We are fighting better than our fathers did. Our children will fight better than we do, and they will be victorious.

The working class is not perishing, it is growing, becoming stronger, gaining courage, consolidating itself, educating itself and becoming steeled in battle. We are pessimists as far as serfdom, capitalism and petty production are concerned, but we are ardent optimists in what concerns the working-class movement and its aims. We are already laying the foundation of a new edifice and our children will complete its construction.

That is the reason - the only reason - why we are unconditionally the enemies of neomalthusianism, suited only to unfeeling and egotistic petty-bourgeois couples, who whisper in scared voices: "God grant we manage somehow by ourselves. So much the better if we have no children."

It goes without saying that this does not by any means prevent us from demanding the unconditional annulment of all laws against abortions or against the distribution of medical literature on contraceptive measures, etc. Such laws are nothing but the hypocrisy of the ruling classes. These laws do not heal the ulcers of capitalism, they merely turn them into malignant ulcers that are especially painful for the oppressed masses. Freedom for medical propaganda and the protection of the elementary democratic rights of citizens, men and women, are one thing. The social theory of neomalthusianism is quite another. Class-conscious workers will always conduct the most ruthless struggle against attempts to impose that reactionary and cowardly theory on the most progressive and strongest class in modern society, the class that is the best prepared for great changes.

Pravda No. 137, June 16, 1913

Collected Works, Vol. 19

32, Newell Road,
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire.

10th October 1972.

OPEN LETTER TO ALL WOMEN'S LIBERATION GROUPS

Dear Comrades,

re: "National Women's Conference".

We have received a notice inviting us to attend a 'national women's conference' in London November 3rd-5th. We shall not be attending or sending any representative to this so-called 'national women's conference':

Before the women's movement can hope to advance one step towards the liberation of women, it must be clear about (a) what is the cause of women's oppression and (b) which is the enemy against whom we must fight. Without a correct understanding of and agreement upon these fundamental questions, it will naturally be totally impossible for the movement to plan activities which bring women any closer to the ending of their oppression. Yet it is well known that there is extreme confusion on these basic questions among the women in the movement.

As a result of our examination of the development of the oppression of women, we in UWL are convinced that it was the institution of private ownership of the means of social production which caused and causes the oppression of women, and that the enemy we must fight is our Imperialist bourgeois ruling class which denies us the right of participating in economic, social and political life on an equal footing with men solely in the interests (a) of maintaining its class rule and (b) of keeping up its profits. Therefore we are convinced that while the Imperialist bourgeoisie rules, there will be no liberation for women; it is only when the working class rules that women can achieve liberation. Only when the working class rules are facilities (creches, laundries, public dining-rooms) set up permanently, on a mass-scale and at prices everybody can easily afford, which free women from domestic slavery. This has been confirmed by the experience of women in every Socialist country (e.g. China, Albania, North Vietnam, North Korea, pre 1956 USSR).

Yet the majority of the women in the movement have not had the opportunity to consider these very basic questions: what is the cause of women's oppression and who is the enemy we must fight. In fact they have been discouraged from considering them at all carefully, with the result that many women still mistake the effects of their oppression for the cause, which leads them to an incorrect identification of the enemy we must fight, e.g. all men, or our biological functions, or the 'patriarchal family'. Others spread further confusion by paying lip-service to the idea that monopoly capitalism/Imperialism is our enemy, but in practice divert activity against men, our biological functions or the 'patriarchal family' etc. Activities based on such gross misunderstanding of their situation at best divert women from fighting the real enemy, at worst are of direct assistance to the bourgeoisie in promoting divisions among the working class so that they fight among themselves instead of against the bourgeoisie. Because this confusion and lack of understanding helps the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie is anxious to perpetuate them.

For these reasons, we in UWL have been pressing throughout our participation in the movement that these theoretical tasks must be given the most urgent priority, hence our support for the WNCC which, because of the principle of equality of groups, is the only form of national organisation which can provide a forum for a thoroughgoing debate of these fundamental questions; it is only in such an organisation that the views of different groups and individuals have to be considered on their merits rather than on apparent numerical support. We say 'apparent' support deliberately, for it is only after a thoroughgoing and prolonged discussion that women will become aware for the first time of what exactly is the line that they have been 'supporting'. 'Numbers' have no meaning until a high degree of understanding of the issues being debated has been reached by all participants.

Yet this 'national women's conference' which is being called is being set up in opposition to the WNCC as a forum for all those friends of the bourgeoisie, such as the Trotskyites and the revisionists, who wish to perpetuate the existing state of confusion, rather than to bring an end to it as we are endeavouring to do in the WNCC. The Trotskyites, revisionists and feminists, whose politics are a hundred per cent bourgeois, are concerned to ensure that the women's movement never progresses beyond the stage of theoretical confusion and mistaken understanding of the cause of our oppression and of the enemy we must fight, because this confusion and mistaken understanding helps only the bourgeoisie. These people have set up this 'conference' in opposition to the WNCC in order to draw women away from the forum where proletarian - anti-bourgeois - politics have a voice, albeit only one among many. The object of this 'national women's conference', apart from that of attempting to popularise and pass off as 'revolutionary' the thoroughly petty-bourgeois, anti-men and anti-organisational theories of Selma James, is to try and set up a 'national' organisation run entirely through committees and "offices" for control of which the Trotskyites, the revisionists and the feminists will vie with each other, mobilising such numerical 'support' (of the kind based on lack of understanding) as they can muster. Whichever cliques succeeds, the effect will be to give bureaucratic control of the movement for the promotion of bourgeois politics, theoretical debate abandoned in favour of a flurry of trendy 'activities' of a kind which promote only the interests of the bourgeoisie, disintegration of national organisation as unsuccessful cliques withdraw with their followers, thorough suppression and isolation of any person or group presuming to put forward proletarian politics.

It is clear therefore that this 'national women's conference', far from advancing the cause of women's liberation, can only set it back, is intended to try and deliver the women's movement straight into the hands of the bourgeoisie, the enemy of women's liberation. For this reason we refuse to support this so-called 'conference' and we would warn any woman who is honestly concerned with fighting for liberation to have nothing to do with such a fraud.

We call upon women to fight to increase their own understanding of the cause of their oppression, of whom and how to fight. We call upon women to reject the philistine view that theoretical problems can be ignored, for we ignore these at our peril. We call upon women to give active support to the WNCC, the fronton which the cause of women's liberation is being advanced.

Yours fraternally,

UNION OF WOMEN FOR LIBERATION

(Letter circulated to all known Women's Liberation groups).

WOMEN'S NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

presents

FOUR PUBLIC MEETINGS

on

Feminism and the Women's Liberation

Movement: the role of the Gay Liberation Front in
the Women's Liberation Movement

April 22nd 1972

Revisionism and the Women's Liberation **Movement**

June 24th 1972

Trotskyism and the Women's Liberation **Movement**

September 9th 1972

Marxism - Leninism and the Women's **Liberation Movement**

October 28th 1972

between 6-00-10-00 p.m.

at

The Laurel Tree
Bayham Street

LONDON N.W.1.

Just off Camden Road. Nearest tube station is Camden Town

Organised by: WOMEN'S NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

c/o W.N.C.C. Treasurer 32 Newell Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

THE W.N.C.C. AND THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The women's liberation movement has arisen because an ever increasing number of women are becoming aware that, because there is no basis in nature for their inferior status in society, their oppression is not inevitable, that it can and must be ended. For this reason they are attracted to the women's movement, but mostly have no clear idea as to how their liberation is to be achieved, only that it ought to be. The duty of any women's liberation organisation is to work out a correct strategy and tactics for the achievement of liberation - i.e. to work out how women's liberation is to be achieved - and then put that strategy and tactics into effect. At the moment there are a wide variety of theories held by different groups of individuals in the movement as to a) the cause of the oppression of women and the enemy to be fought & b) the most effective way of achieving our aim. Since all these theories conflict with each other it is clear that they cannot all be correct. It is equally clear that if the women's movement is to fulfil its duty to the women of this country it must ascertain which of these theories is correct and corresponds with women's real interests. To do so we must first find out what these theories are, and examine diligently whether in past experience and practice they have been proved successful or unsuccessful, and we must debate and discuss in depth these theories with a view to discovering which is correct, i.e. which we shall adopt as the basic guiding theory of the movement, upon which we shall base our strategy and tactics - our plan of action. When this thorough-going examination and debate has taken place, then is the time to adopt a policy for the movement, and form a national unified organisation on the basis of that agreed policy.

The question of the correct theory for the liberation of women is ABSOLUTELY VITAL; the success or failure of the present women's liberation movement depends on it. We must therefore undertake the task of examining the various theories of women's liberation extremely seriously and in a scientific and workmanlike manner. In order that this essential debate take place it is necessary to provide a forum in which the different policies put forward can contend on an equal basis and in such a manner as to enable as many women as possible to follow and participate in the exposition, examination, criticism and debate of these different theories. Such a forum is the Women's National Co-ordinating Committee (W.N.C.C.). The W.N.C.C. is a federal organisation which any and all women's liberation groups are welcome to affiliate to and participate in on the basis of the equality of all affiliated groups. It publishes a bi-monthly journal, "Women's Struggle", to which any group or individual in the movement may contribute. Copies of the terms of reference of the W.N.C.C. and of "Women's Struggle" (12½p per copy or 75p per annum incl. p&p) are available from the W.N.C.C. Treasurer (address below). Contributions for publication in "Women's Struggle" should be sent to the Treasurer at least two weeks before the date of the next meeting of the W.N.C.C., which is the publication date for "Women's Struggle", priority being given to contributions sent in by affiliated groups in the event of shortage of space.

The current series of meetings is being organised by the W.N.C.C. as its contribution to the most pressing task facing the movement at the present time: the search for the correct policy on the basis of which we can build a national united movement, a genuine mass movement capable of making a contribution to the liberation of the women of Britain. Groups and individuals are invited to make contributions at these meetings; all such contributions being published in the succeeding issue of "Women's Struggle" (subject to availability of space, as above). Any person attending these meetings who needs overnight accommodation, if from outside London, or crèche facilities, should contact the W.N.C.C. Treasurer at least one week beforehand, if possible.

Organised by W.N.C.C. c/o W.N.C.C. Treasurer,
32, Newell Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.
(Hemel Hempstead 55456)

WOMEN'S NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

pre s e n t s

SOCIALISM AND THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN

a series of public meetings

Women in the Socialist U.S.S.R.

December 9th 1972

Women in Socialist Korea

February 10th 1973

Women in Socialist Viet Nam

April 14th 1973

Women in Socialist Albania

June 16th 1973

Women in Socialist China

September 8th 1973

between 7-00 -10-30 p.m.

The Enterprise

Chalk Farm Road

London N.W.1.

opposite Chalk Farm tube station

Organised by WOMEN'S NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

c/o W.N.C.C. Treasurer 32 Newell Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

WOMEN'S NATIONAL
WOMEN'S NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING
COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Adopted unanimously at W.N.C.C. meeting, Sheffield, June 27, 1970.

Recognising that at the present stage of the development of the women's liberation movement in Britain, a united national women's organisation with common programme does not exist. But in fact there are many women's groups in different parts of the country with differing concepts, approaches and objectives regarding women's liberation. Recognising that only by involving the masses of women and building a united, national women's organisation with common objectives will it be possible to effect a basic change in society to realise women's liberation.

In view of the above, it is agreed that the Women's National Co-Ordinating Committee is based upon the following principles:

1. The C.C. should be open to all women's groups and organisations with two representatives each.
2. The independence and equality of all groups is recognised.
3. The C.C. shall take necessary steps to disseminate information to promote better understanding of the viewpoints of various groups and their activities and facilitate towards unity and broadening of women's liberation struggle.
4. Upholding the principle of democracy and equality, the C.C. shall take all decisions by mutual agreement.
5. No decision shall be binding on any group which does not agree with it.
6. To promote unity, step by step, the C.C. will help not only mutual discussion regarding the women's problems and role in society but will positively encourage united action among them on issues about which there is agreement.
7. If a number of groups, by mutual agreement, decide to take united action on any issue, such a decision is not binding on others who are not a party to it.
8. Real co-ordination, to be effective, should not only be in words but also in deeds if a united women's liberation movement is to be achieved.
9. To promote the aims of women's liberation and to achieve better understanding of women's problems, the C.C. shall periodically organise national conferences and help local conferences of women.

Group Name: _____

Contact/Secretary, Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Tel. No. _____

We wish to affiliate our group to the W.N.C.C. and enclose the annual affiliation fee of £1. We agree to work in the W.N.C.C. in accordance with its terms of reference; we understand that as an affiliated group we have the right to send two delegates to all W.N.C.C. meetings and to participate fully in its functioning on the basis of the above terms of reference.

Signed: _____

Cheques/ P.O.s should be made out to Women's National Co-Ordinating Committee . and sent to Maysel Brar, W.N.C.C. Treasurer,
32 Newell Road,
Hemel Hempstead
Herts, (Tel: 0442 55456)