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WHERE THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY GOES WRONG ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION

by Betsey Stone

In the various documents of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency we are told over and over about the necessity of reaching the working class. We are exhorted to "take" our program to the working class, to "root" ourselves in the working class, to "orient" the activities of the various mass movements we are in toward the working class. But in regard to most areas of our activity, the question of just *how* we should do this is not explained. We are not told what concrete steps should be taken, what strategy and tactics should be followed in the various mass movements if we are to be successful in reaching the masses of workers.

One partial exception to this failure to answer concretely "what to do next" are the documents by the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency on women's liberation. These include the document by Phil Passen and Barbara Gregorich entitled "On Our Tasks in the Women's Liberation Movement" and a section on women's liberation in the article "Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation" by Gregorich, Passen, Massey and McCann.

These documents oppose the perspective of throwing ourselves into the campaign to build a mass-action campaign for repeal of all abortion laws. They argue that there is no reason why the feminist movement should focus on the abortion issue, that we should instead attempt to build mass actions around the three demands of August 26. In addition, they insist that the central demand around which to build abortion actions be "Free Abortion on Demand," and not "Repeal All Abortion Laws."

In taking this position, the members of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency fall into the same formalistic trap which characterizes their general approach to politics. Their motto seems to be, "If you've done it one way before, you should always do it the same way again." Because we marched around the three demands on August 26, it seems that we must always be marching around the three demands. If we once stressed "Free Abortion on Demand," we must always focus on this. Any change, any modification, any tactical adjustment, is seen as a deviation, a capitulation to alien class forces and a step backwards.

The rigid, formalistic, abstract substitute for revolutionary tactics outlined by Gregorich and Passen, if followed, would represent a disaster for the feminist movement. Their discussion article reflects the fact that the members of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have no idea whatsoever of the concrete problems we have been grappling with as participants in this movement during the past year. Most important, if we followed the advice of Gregorich and Passen, we would not do the thing the Proletarian Orientation Tendency claims to be most concerned about, that is, build the kind of mass feminist movement that can reach out to and involve as participants masses of working women in this country. It is they, not the PC who project a course which would mean abstention from the real struggle to build the women's liberation movement as a mass political force.

It is true, as Passen and Gregorich point out, that our tactical approach to some questions raised by the feminist movement has changed over time. And this is as it should

be. We did not come into this movement with any preconceived blueprints for tactics. As the movement itself has changed and grown, and as its outlines and potential have become clearer, we have continually refined and developed our approach to it. And we will continue to do so. In addition, we have made some errors, and have tried to learn from and correct these errors.

At the same time, our fundamental approach to building this movement into a mass movement has not changed at all. We have found that many of the lessons which we learned as participants in the antiwar and Black liberation movements have helped us immensely.

THE QUESTION OF DEMANDS

In attempting to determine just what demands—out of dozens of possibilities—would emerge as the focus, and driving force, of feminist struggles, we proceeded on the knowledge that this question would be determined by the needs and dynamic of the feminist movement itself, and by the reality of American politics—not according to abstract or predetermined notions about what particular demands would, if won, benefit women the most. It was with this understanding that we very early came to the conclusion that abortion was going to be one of the issues which could most effectively build the movement. The first large women's liberation demonstration, held in New York on March 28, 1970, focused on the issue of abortion, and the SWP played a significant role in building that historic action. The demonstration had an abortion focus because important decisions were being made in the legislature and in the courts concerning abortion, and it was clear many women wanted to intervene in this process and make the views of the feminist movement known. As it turned out, this demonstration, along with the New York class-action suit, had a very significant impact on New York and national politics, and helped to win the victory which to a large degree legalized abortion in New York state.

In her report to the SWP plenum on the women's liberation movement, given a month before this 1970 New York action, Mary-Alice Waters devoted particular attention to abortion as the issue which as she put it, "is made-to-order as the initial issue on which the women's liberation movement can cut its teeth." (see Pathfinder Publishers pamphlet) At the Oberlin conference last summer, we further evaluated the experience in New York, and attempted to draw lessons from it which would help us outline our tasks for the coming year. Our approach at that time toward the question of what demands the women's liberation movement would focus around was outlined as follows:

"In picking what particular issues and demands the movement should choose to orient around, there is no formula. There are a number of different demands that we have already found can mobilize significant numbers of women: childcare, equal job and educational opportunity and abortion. In the case of August 26, we have been able to combine all three.

"We believe that the issue of abortion is particularly important at this time. The reason we have emphasized this issue is not only because of its importance to women and

its potential for building the movement, but because right at this time, big changes are being made in abortion laws in states round the country. It is important for the women's liberation movement to intervene in this process, to use the ferment taking place to push the basic demand for free abortion on demand and to educate around the issue of the right of women to control their own bodies." (1970 *Socialist Activists and Education Conference Reports*, Vol. 1, No. 1)

During the course of the past year, it has become even more clear that the abortion struggle has emerged as an important focus of the movement at this time. In almost every state, the legislatures and courts are being barraged with suits and new proposed laws, which reflect the sentiment in favor of the legalization of abortion. Moreover, abortion is the main feminist issue around which women have begun to organize and work together.

In many different states, class-action suits have been filed by women involved in the struggle. Dozens of abortion coalitions and organizations have sprung up around the country to fight for the right of women to control their own bodies, and this has been the case both in areas where the SWP and YSA have participated in building these coalitions, and in areas where there is neither an SWP nor a YSA. In addition, opinion polls show that the majority of women favor the right of a woman to choose. These are some of the *facts* which helped to make clear to us the importance of abortion as a focus of struggle.

The importance of the issue was further underlined by the attacks on the abortion rights movement by right-wingers and prominent capitalist politicians such as Nixon and Muskie. It became more and more obvious that opposition forces to abortion law repeal were organizing in an effective way, and there was no organization, speaking for the rights of women on a national basis to counter this. In this sense, the fight over the abortion issue was chosen for us by the enemies of women's liberation.

Added to this was the announcement by the Supreme Court that it was going to hear several abortion cases in the fall of 1971 and the decision by women in New Haven to call a national abortion law repeal demonstration.

What has been shaping up over the past months is a major nation-wide battle over the question of legalization of abortion. If the women's liberation movement should abstain from this battle, and leave the field to the opponents of women's liberation, this would represent a clear defeat for the movement. On the other hand, if the large numbers of women whom the polls show favor legal abortion can be mobilized, the opportunity exists to wage a campaign which could win massive new layers of women to the women's liberation movement, and which could set a powerful example of how women can create an effective force to fight other aspects of our oppression.

Does this mean women could not be mobilized around any other demands? Of course not. But it does mean that if we are serious about our intention to fight for women's liberation, we will take up the abortion challenge and organize the most effective campaign possible to win the basic right of women to decide. If we turned our backs on this, or treated it in a routine manner, or said, "well, other issues are just as important," we would be abstaining from, or hobbling ourselves for the real battle that will take place — with us or without us.

Gregorich and Passen cite the figures about the growth in the number of legal suits seeking equal pay or equal job opportunities as proof of their contention that equal pay and job opportunities is the demand which would receive the widest support in the women's liberation movement. We agree that the figures are significant. They register the impact the women's liberation movement has already had on thousands of women. But no one who has had the slightest nodding acquaintance with the women's movement in the last two years would contend that there has been as much ferment, action and organization around job equality as abortion. Nor is there as much potential for building mass actions around them at this time. The committees, coalitions, and demonstrations have sprung up everywhere around abortion. The degree of activity around abortion has been qualitatively different than on any other issue.

The recent national abortion action conference was a confirmation of the desire on the part of masses of women, including working women and Black women and Chicanas to fight to repeal abortion laws. At this conference we got a glimpse of the immense potential power of the feminist movement if it begins to mobilize effectively independent of the needs of the bourgeoisie for issues of concern to masses of women.

The conference was also an example of just how women from the campuses, working women, trade unionists, high school women, Third World women and others can unite in a meaningful way. The fact that the conference zeroed in on the specific issue of fighting to repeal abortion laws made it much easier for this unity to take place. More important, the fact that the conference was around an issue on which masses of women want to act made it much harder for the red-baiters and those opposed to building a mass-action women's movement to disrupt and disorient the proceedings.

It is simply not true, as the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency claim, that it is easier to mobilize women *in extra-parliamentary action* around three demands than it is to build actions around one. All three issues of August 26 (actually there were four if we include equal education opportunity) are complex issues. At the abortion conference itself, there were all kinds of difficult questions just around the one issue of abortion that had to be discussed and agreed on before a meaningful action campaign could be launched. These included the question of forced sterilization, the question of our attitude to existing legislation and proposed court actions, and the question about whether we should add the demand for "free abortion" as a condition for participation.

If the abortion campaign was to be serious, the conference had to relate to all these issues. It had to intervene and take positions on the key questions coming up in relation to the abortion struggle today. It could not simply raise the call for "free abortion on demand" and be done with it.

Developing a broad coalition with basic agreement on how to struggle for equal pay, equal job and educational job/opportunities, and 24-hour childcare — in addition to abortion repeal — would be virtually impossible at this time. It would result in no significant mass actions. Unless the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is simply talking about continually raising these demands in an abstract way which had nothing to do with concrete reality

of American politics, a discussion around these issues would raise many questions of controversy and division in the movement. In regard to equality on the job and equal pay, we would of necessity have to deal with the differences over the Equal Rights Amendment, Title VII, and the protective laws, a debate which the various writings of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency do not even refer to. In addition, we would have to think out carefully how this struggle for equality on the job could be coordinated nationally in a meaningful and effective way.

On the childcare question, there would be a whole set of additional issues. There are a myriad ways which the reformists have devised for buying off this struggle—all the way from the orientation of building your own storefront childcare center, to getting bogged down in hasseling with governmental committees about the amount of money to appropriate. Discussions about the problems raised by childcare struggles have appeared in *The Militant* and internal *Discussion Bulletins*, which will be useful in thinking out a long-run perspective on the question of childcare. In addition, in Boston we have participated in the initiation of a childcare referendum which may give us additional experience on how to struggle around this issue.

However, one need not have a very fertile imagination to picture the divisions which would have emerged from the abortion conference had we been trying to hammer out a program for action on job equality and child care, in addition to abortion.

It would be incorrect to try to repeat again and again the experience of August 26. The movement has advanced since August 26. August 26 represented a gigantic step forward for the movement by, for the first time, bringing masses of women into the streets all over the country and by making the demands of the movement more concrete than they had been before on a national scale. But the campaign to bring masses of women into the streets demanding repeal of abortion laws represents a big *step forward* from August 26 in that it is an attempt to intervene seriously in the politics of this country and to fight effectively for a specific goal.

In a report dated May 22, which was sent out to the branches, we discussed this question of the distinction between August 26 and the national abortion campaign in the following way:

"August 26 was the first nationwide demonstration of the women's liberation movement, and as such it represented the first public show of force by that movement. The fact that the demonstration was defined clearly as being around three basic feminist demands was very important in gaining support for August 26, and in helping to concretize the meaning of feminism for large numbers of new women. The demands were widely publicized, and many women participated on the basis of those demands.

"At the same time, many women marched on August 26 because it was their first opportunity to show in a visible way their identification with the feminist struggle in general. August 26, the anniversary of women's suffrage, was widely publicized as "women's liberation day" in the press. In this context, the demands represented the preliminary putting forth of goals of the feminist movement, and it was understood by most of those marching that the government would not immediately act on that program. The

main function played by the demands was that of projecting to masses of women the nature of the women's liberation movement, of enlisting the support of women for the necessarily long-term struggle around those demands. . . .

"A national abortion action could play a different role from that of August 26. That is, it would pick out the one issue that has come to the fore, and concentrate on that and attempt through the mobilization of masses of women, to put the government on the spot on this issue. By concentrating on the abortion issue, and by *forcing* the government to deal with it, actual concessions and victories can be won which would be a tremendous inspiration and impetus to the feminist movement as a whole. It would help to undermine the whole existing ideology which says that women are not capable of organizing themselves as an effective political power."

The abortion action campaign will help to show clearly that this movement is a serious movement, which is in contact with the political reality of this country, and can intervene in this reality and win gains and concessions from the ruling class. And because abortion is the issue around which the greatest number of women have been organizing in this country, a great deal of experience has been accumulated, which makes it much clearer just what forms the struggle will take and what demands should be put forward.

FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND?

The national abortion action conference, despite the disruptions which occurred, was a powerful expression of the depth of opposition on the part of masses of women to the oppressive abortion laws. It showed how wrong Gregorich and Passen are when they assert that working women are "more likely" to be reached by the issues of equal job opportunity and pay, and free 24-hour childcare, than on the issue of abortion, or when they assert that "the party is turning away from the demands of most immediate and daily interest to working class women," or that "by concentrating on the abortion repeal demand and coalitions with the ever-sensitive petty bourgeois groups, the SWP is making it harder for both the party and the women's liberation movement to reach working women."

To assume that working women are less interested than other women in controlling their own reproductive functions, to assume that this problem is not of "daily" and "immediate" interest to working women in the same way that equal pay and childcare are of daily interest, has overtones of paternalism and reflects just that "isolation" from the "life and realities of the class" which the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is always warning the majority about. One of the things which came through most clearly at the abortion conference was precisely the potential which exists to reach out with this campaign to Third World and working women. The degree to which masses of women suffer from the abortion laws and the deepgoing resentment and readiness for action were evident throughout the conference.

To assert, as Gregorich and Passen do, that if we do win repeal of all abortion laws without winning free abortion, "working class women will have won practically nothing" is to be totally out of touch with reality. A victory in the fight to legalize abortion will change the lives of

millions of working women, including Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican women, in a very profound way. Already the statistics in New York City showing how many working class women have received safe, legal abortions on medicare is an indication of that.

Of course it is true that free abortion on demand would benefit working women even more. Socialized medicine is and remains a basic part of the SWP's program. And we will continue to fight for the right of abortion for all women, regardless of how much they can pay, much as we will fight for the right of all women to free medical care, free contraceptives, etc. But again, it is a simple fact that more women, including more working women, are now ready and willing to fight to repeal all abortion laws than are ready to fight for free abortions, which is a demand for socialized medicine, at least in a limited sphere. We do not require that women be for socialized medicine before they join the campaign to repeal the laws.

In the past we have demonstrated with others around the demand for "free abortion on demand." In some cases, we even fought to try to make this the main demand raised in demonstrations we took part in. But, as a result of concrete experiences we had in building these actions, we learned that the demand for "free abortion" was unnecessarily splitting action coalitions, and cutting down on the potential for uniting women in the fight for the right of abortion. We found that we could actually bring more women into the women's liberation movement, involve more women in struggle, if we focused on the demand for repeal—and that by doing this, in the long run, we actually won more women to support the need for free abortions. We never made the error of asserting, as Gregorich and Passen do, that the legalization of abortion would *not* be a big step forward for all women, including working women. But, we did make an error in fighting for "free abortion on demand" as the demand which could best unite masses of women at this time.

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency attack the perspective of building a movement for repeal of all abortion laws on the grounds that this is a sign of our general political capitulation to the pressures of the "ever-sensitive petty bourgeois groups." In doing this, they try to make a parallel between the need to fight for the "free abortion" demand in the feminist movement and the fight we carried on in the antiwar movement for immediate withdrawal of troops.

The parallel between our fight for immediate withdrawal within the antiwar movement, and the fight within the feminist movement for "free abortion" is a false one. This is because the demands for "negotiations," or for "set the date" which are *counterposed* to withdrawal in the antiwar movement, are both completely unprincipled. Such demands deny the basic right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. The demand for repeal of all abortion laws, and the demand for free abortion (i.e. repeal plus socialized medicine in this field) are *both* principled demands. Both would represent a tremendous step forward for women. Thus, in deciding what demand to focus on it is a question of what demands will help to build a feminist movement of independent mass action in the most effective way, which ones will bring masses of women into motion, and into opposition to the capitalist government which is oppressing them.

We do not proceed *only* on the basis of picking those demands which are principled and will be *immediately*

supported and understood by the greatest number of women. For example, the demand for "no forced sterilization" will not be immediately understood by many women. Many are not even aware it is a problem. And it is a demand which is definitely unpopular within some NOW circles and among the supporters of population control. But, for precisely this reason, it is absolutely vital that this demand be part of the abortion campaign, linked with the repeal demand, so that the masses of Third World women and other working women who have been subject to forced sterilization will understand and join this campaign which is in their interests, which is for their right to decide.

It is not the "alien class pressures" of NOW, or any other similar group, which determine the demands we decide to support. As a matter of fact, if the SWP were really degenerating to the point where movement "pressures" were beginning to determine our policies, the pressures we would soonest give into would be, not those from NOW, but those of the various sectarians and livingroom feminists we have to combat constantly in the campus and other women's liberation groups we are active in.

The central struggle taking place at this time is between the supporters and opponents of independent mass action, that is, between those who want to build mass actions of women fighting for their needs as women, and those sectarians and "livingroom feminists" who either oppose or have lost sight of the goal of building a mass movement. The red-baiting, and the fights over the question of adding the "fourth demand" and over "free abortion on demand" which took place at the abortion conference are reflections of this more general struggle.

Our support for the demand for repeal of abortion laws as the central focus of the abortion campaign was not based simply on the fact that NOW was splitting from coalitions that called for "free abortion," although that was a danger signal which we took seriously. Our decision was based on our realization that we had been making an error and that the demand for "free abortion" was not the one which could best mobilize masses of women. The question of whether the women in NOW support the abortion campaign is not unimportant. It was NOW, and the forces around it, which gave August 26 the necessary breadth to make it the large demonstration that it was, and drawing in NOW forces will be very important to the building of an effective mass abortion campaign.

Although many of the rank and file of NOW are anxious to participate in mass actions such as the national abortion action campaign, we know that during the past period NOW's leadership has been orienting more and more away from mass action and toward electing women candidates through the Democratic and Republican parties. By making the goals of the coalition explicit, and ones which large numbers of NOW women can and do support, we make it harder for the conscious anti-mass-action liberals to find an excuse for not supporting the campaign.

WHY WE CAN'T DO EVERYTHING AT ONCE

In attacking the perspective of building the national abortion action campaign, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency make the assumption that if we don't help build coalitions around all three demands,

that we are actually *against* struggles around these three demands. In one place, their document refers to our keeping two of the demands "on the shelf." In another, they challenge the Political Committee to explain "why the two demands of equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunities, and 24-hour childcare will *not* mobilize large numbers of women."

Of course, the point is not whether we would *like* to see struggles around these other demands, or whether we think these demands can mobilize large numbers. The point is that by focusing the efforts of the pro-mass-action forces on that demand that can bring masses into the streets, we can best build the entire movement for women's liberation, including struggles around all the various demands.

The situation we face can be made a little clearer by comparing it to the Black movement, where there are many demands which millions of Black workers are ready to fight around, yet because of the political realities of this stage of the class struggle, and because of the relationship of forces within the Black movement, we focus our activities around certain limited tasks. This does not mean that we are opposed to the development of other struggles and groups. It simply means we are not in the position nor have the forces to build them.

Within the women's liberation movement, the relationship of forces is somewhat better at this time, but the size of the movement as a whole, the size of our forces, and the relationship of forces between anti-mass-action and pro-mass-action tendencies, still determines what types of organizations and struggles we want to help build.

The women's liberation movement is still very small compared to its potential, and in many areas it is characterized by sectarianism and "in-groupism." Moreover, there are a whole number of forces, significant in size, who are absolutely *opposed* to the feminist movement overcoming this sectarianism and developing an independent mass action perspective. These forces have been discussed by us many times and include the "livingroom feminists," the sectarians and ultralefts, the Communist Party, and some of the anti-mass action liberals. It is thus important to build women's liberation groups on the campuses and in the high schools where the largest number of militant pro-mass-action women are congregated, and to wage a national action campaign which can make the movement visible to masses of women, and which can bring thousands of new women into the movement, setting an example of how to avoid both livingroom feminism and "depending on progressive women and peoples politicians" tendencies. We are out to build an effective movement, independent, and in the streets.

In all areas of the country where we have members, the SWP has participated in building *both* coalitions and more general women's liberation groups. We have found that the fastest-growing and most militant general women's liberation groups have been those on the campus and high schools, so we have put our greatest efforts there. In any city where there is a healthy coalition capable of leading mass struggles, the campus and high school women have been key to building the kind of effective mass movement which can attract other layers.

This does not mean that we rigidly refuse to build other kinds of groups, or that we are opposed to other groups. In a number of cities, we have helped to build city-wide

feminist groups, such as Boston Female Liberation, as well as campus groups. But, we think that by concentrating our energies, we can best build the movement and encourage the fastest growth of the women's liberation movement as a whole.

In determining what kinds of organizations we should concentrate on building, we did, at one point, make a mistake and over-project what it was possible for ourselves and the movement as a whole to accomplish. This mistake was reflected in the article Gregorich and Passen quote from, which appeared in *The Militant* just after August 26. Under the impact of the August 26 demonstrations, we said:

"In many areas it will be possible to maintain the coalitions that built August 26 — to build a permanent coalition-type organization which will continue united actions, education and coordination around the demands of August 26.

"An organization united around the three demands could carry on an uncompromising struggle on many fronts. Subcommittees could do research on the situation in a particular city concerning child-care facilities, the ways in which schools discriminate against female children, the availability of free, legal abortions, and discrimination against women workers, in order to map out a concrete plan of struggle in all these areas." (*The Militant*, Sept. 25, 1970)

There were two things wrong with the above proposition: 1) The women's liberation movement was clearly not developed enough to build on-going organizations with such an ambitious program, especially given the strength within the movement of the anti-mass-action tendencies, and 2) we confused the purpose and tasks of a women's liberation action "coalition" with those of a women's liberation "organization."

Again, although we were wrong in this projection, because of the newness of the women's liberation movement we did not take a rigid approach in proposing it and we encouraged SWPers in each area to participate in whatever kind of action coalitions seemed most suited for that area. If women in a particular area were moving around abortion, then SWPers joined with them to work on that. If there was some other issue, or number of issues which seemed best to orient to, it was left open to the local area to decide.

The significant thing is that in almost every area, including areas where there are no SWPs, women began to build coalitions and organizations around the issue of abortion. There were three main exceptions to this — New York, Chicago, Boston — all of which built "coalition-type organizations" around more than one demand.

In almost all areas, including the three which formed "coalition-type organizations," gains were made for the movement. In New York, in the process of forming the New York Strike Coalition, a struggle took place over the question of independent mass action which helped to orient the movement outward and educate a whole new layer of women about the importance of mass action. But, at the same time, problems developed in all the "coalition-organizations" which helped to show their limits. In the report sent out to the branches on May 22, we discussed some of these problems in the following way:

"In three different cities we have helped to build coalitions which have been based on more than one demand. In New York and Chicago, these coalitions are based on

the three demands of August 26. The Boston-centered New England Coalition is based on these three plus several more. In all three of these coalitions, there have been recent splits and divisions, where some of the reformist forces have pulled out of the coalitions, both because they became nervous over what they considered were very radical stands being taken by these coalitions, and because they wanted to focus their attention on working within the Democratic Party. In Boston, they objected to the fact that the coalition was based on such "socialist" demands as "free abortion on demand," and "free-24-hour child-care."

"A national campaign around abortion should be able, through the fact of its concentration on the fight to legalize abortion, and through its sheer size, to bring groups such as NOW back into participating in mass action. Coalitions built to carry out such a campaign would, of necessity, be broader and more clearly based on a specific goal than the coalitions which were built around August 26."

What had happened in the cities where coalitions were built around more than one demand was that, as time went by, these coalitions began to look more and more like mass-action oriented feminist organizations. The longer they existed, the more issues they took up—in New York, for example, the strike coalition carried out the *Cosmopolitan* action against sexist advertising and helped to build the Women's Contingent—and the less able they were to play a real role as action coalitions.

The purpose of united front type action coalition is to unite organizations and individuals who may have differences on numerous issues around a specific action oriented to a specific goal. By focussing on a specific goal, and narrowing the number of things which people must agree on, it is possible to mobilize the largest numbers to fight in the most effective way for the needs of women, as has been shown recently by the abortion conference. By broadening out to many issues and by including "free" in the demands for childcare and abortion, the coalitions found that they excluded many women and were not as able to attract new women as they should have been.

STERILE USE OF ANTIWAR TACTICS?

From the beginning of the feminist movement, we have tried to avoid making any over-simplified parallels between the feminist movement and other movements we have been active in, such as the antiwar movement and the Black movement. At the same time, as the PC resolution states, because the feminist movement has the potential to be a mass movement, and because it is fighting the same capitalist system and government which these other movements are fighting, much can be learned from these other movements.

One thing we have learned through concrete experience is that just as is the case in the Black movement, the antiwar movement and other movements, there is an important role for single issue action coalitions within the feminist movement. Such coalitions make it possible to involve more women in struggle than any other form of organization. By being absolutely clear what you are demonstrating about, and by hammering on a specific issue while building a demonstration, there is the greatest potential for winning broad masses of people, because in many cases women first relate to the broader feminist

movement on the basis of a specific issue. Zeroing in on a specific issue is also the best way to put the government on the spot, to make it clear what you want.

Throughout the history of the antiwar movement, there have always been the cries of alarm by sectarian groupings who constantly raise the question of "the other issues." If you focus on the war, you are anti-Black, or you are anti-woman, or anti-labor. They did not see the advantage and need to build different movements for different issues, not did they see the dynamic of the struggle, the way in which the struggle against the war itself would lead to the deepening of all these other struggles.

This same type of formalistic thinking is reflected in the sectarian attitude of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency toward the abortion campaign. For example, Gregorich and Passen raise the following warning:

"It should be noted that there are certain historic dangers in organizing the women's liberation movement around a single demand. The suffrage movement is an example of this. While we are certainly better off to struggle for greater demands because of the suffrage movement, the suffrage movement caused not only victory, but also defeat for women's liberation. By virtue of the fact that the more conservative wing of the movement won the movement as a whole to their perspective of organizing women around the single demand of suffrage, the movement more-or-less abandoned other issues, such as institutionalized house care, equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunities, etc. In the sense that the suffragists concentrated women's time and energy around this one issue for a period of fifty years, the movement was a set-back. The suffragists abandoned the other issues and the movement collapsed when suffrage was granted.

"We think that one of the lessons of the suffrage movement is that suffrage was won *at the expense* of other issues. However, it did not have to be that way. That is, the women fighting for suffrage *did not have to drop the other demands*. . . .

"The reasoning that *first* we must win the abortion demand, and *then* we will organize the fight for other demands, is fundamentally wrong and should be rejected by the party. It sets for the women's liberation movement the 'one-at-a-time' strategy. This is the same thing Elizabeth Cady Stanton inveighed against after the Civil War when she said that Wendall Phillips wanted 'one idea for a generation, to come up in the order of their importance.' "

In the first place, we are not talking about the same thing Wendell Phillips was talking about when he said "one idea for a generation." Wendell Phillips opposed carrying out the struggle for the right of women to vote, simultaneously with the fight for the Black vote. It was telling women, in effect, to wait for a generation. We are not telling *anyone* to wait. We are simply talking about the feasibility, in specific circumstances, of focusing an immediate campaign on a particular issue. Moreover, we know that, rather than setting back fights over other issues, the abortion campaign will help to inspire and give impetus to struggles over other issues, and to the feminist movement as a whole. And the same was true in the case of the suffrage campaign.

Nor is it true that the suffrage movement led to the collapse of the early women's rights movement! If anything, it was the suffrage movement which kept the women's rights movement alive, despite difficult objective con-

ditions. If anything it was the suffrage movement which, to the extent that struggles were carried out over other issues, helped to keep these other struggles going.

Here Gregorich and Passen make an error common among sectarians within the feminist movement of mixing up objective and subjective factors. They do not see that the women's movement died out in the 1920's, not because of the wrong tactics of the suffragists — although they did use some wrong tactics — but because of the objective conditions of the period, which was a period of political reaction.

This same confusing of objective and subjective conditions is reflected in the following comment by Gregorich and Passen: "As women begin to think about their position in society, it is our job to raise and educate around demands which help to expose the basis of women's oppression. We could be faced with a tremendous problem if women were unconcerned with anything but one aspect of their oppression. But that problem does not exist. Tens of thousands of women have demonstrated around the three basic demands."

What about all the other demands which must be met if women are to be free? Is it not a "tremendous problem" that women have not yet demonstrated around these? Many of these are demands which the Socialist Workers Party supports, and will campaign for and educate around. But, we also know that it will not be mainly our "education" which will wake women up to their oppression, and move women into action. It will be the dynamic of the class struggle itself and the progress of the women's liberation movement. The process whereby *through struggle* masses of women will gain new confidence in their power to change society, and a deeper understanding of the possibility of full liberation through mass revolutionary struggle.

Nor do we try to predict exactly what demands will be raised at what times in the future. We have no position which says, "first we must win the abortion demand, then we will organize to fight for other demands." We do not know now exactly what the dynamic of the struggle will be, or at what times effective struggles can be waged around other issues. Nor do we have a predetermined, simplistic view of the abortion struggle itself, which says

that first we will fight for abortion repeal, then we will follow with a fight for free abortion on demand. We have no such theory because we cannot predict at this time what demands will be most capable of carrying the struggle forward in a year, or two years from now. We do not know for example exactly how fast this movement will grow, and we do not know what victories we will win, what unexpected obstacles we will face, or the exact pace of events.

In determining tactics, one must above all be in touch with the reality of what is taking place in society. One must be in touch with what is taking place within the feminist movement, with what is taking place within the general politics of the country, and in the thinking of masses of women. It was these things which we attempted to relate to in making our decision to support an independent mass action campaign to fight for abortion repeal. The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency seem to think that women are relating to the struggle for abortion repeal because of some "prolonged public campaign" which we have carried out on this issue. They tell us: "The proper way to deal with the 'difficulty' of building coalitions around the three demands is to carry on a prolonged public campaign around building actions focused on the three demands—a campaign at least as systematic as the one now being carried on around abortion."

But, Passen and Gregorich to the contrary, no prolonged public campaign was carried out by the SWP or anyone else to help launch the abortion conference and campaign. The significant thing was that the conference was built as big as it was in only four weeks, in the middle of the summer, simply in response to the putting out of leaflets and posters by the Committee for a National Abortion Action Coalition. The fact is that there are many women already fighting for abortion repeal, and who want to continue that fight on a national basis. We have simply tried to relate to that reality, and to help, with our very limited number of forces, to build a campaign which can really have an impact on this society, which can set a powerful example of how women can unite and fight for their needs, and which can help to build the feminist movement as a whole in the most effective way.

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE AND THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT: VICTORY OR DEFEAT?

by Dianne Feeley, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

The first wave of American feminism began 125 years ago, born out of the radicalism of the era preceding the Second American Revolution. But that movement did not develop independently from the main currents in American history. Its ranks were swelled or diminished by the degree of radicalism of a particular period. It was a militant force prior to and throughout the Civil War, it participated in the tasks of Reconstruction, and in fact demanded to participate as a full partner. It sustained itself through the last years of the 19th century, while capitalism pushed its way westward, wiping out the Native Americans, crushing the gains of the Blacks, and attacking the trade union movement. And with the third generation of feminists, the campaign for woman's suffrage was fought out on a massive scale, and secured.

It is necessary to understand what the first feminist

movement accomplished, drawing up a balance sheet which will enable the current feminist movement to evaluate its own heritage, its own roots. The Gregorich-Passen document, "On Our Tasks in the Women's Liberation Movement," denigrates and distorts that history. Others, I assume, will illustrate why the Gregorich-Passen perspective for this period is so fundamentally incorrect, including their views on how we can concretely build a mass feminist movement.

I want to deal with one aspect of their women's liberation document, that which claims winning the right of women to vote was "not only victory, but also defeat." This pessimistic view, which minimizes the importance of securing democratic rights for a section of the American population, has no place in the Trotskyist movement. Rather, our movement must be able to clearly explain why the first feminists were correct in building a coali-

tion that did win suffrage, and how the current struggle can begin on such a high level precisely because of what the first movement won.

Gregorich and Passen accuse the suffrage movement, which was a coalition of forces around the demand to extend the vote to women (not just to "educated" women, not just to white women), of having failed to do more than implement its demand! While they may assert that they support single issue coalitions, Gregorich and Passen seem to oppose them in the concrete. Their argument sounds very much like ultraleft critics of the antiwar movement who maintain that even if the antiwar movement is victorious, its only accomplishment will have been to end the Vietnamese war and bring all the troops home now. "What about stopping the seventh war from now?" these critics ask, evading the central task of this period. The Socialist Workers Party builds coalitions around issues that can mobilize masses because we believe victory teaches the masses that they have power. In order to stop future wars, one must stop the present one.

That concrete victory of an antiwar movement will be the best defense against future wars. It will not automatically insure that we can stop future wars, however. Winning suffrage was the best defense of the feminist movement—but given the repression unleashed following World War I, it was not able to go forward. Nonetheless, it was strong enough to prevent that right from being taken away

If all a coalition does is simply accomplish its purpose—whether that be ending the war, winning the vote, or repealing all abortion laws—socialists should support and build that movement. Winning such a demand, of itself, represents a concrete gain of the working class movement.

But let's take a further look at the suffrage struggle. Why was it unable to build upon its victory?

At the 1848 Seneca Falls conference, the feminist movement was launched around a declaration which outlined the oppression of women and projected a series of demands. From then until the post-Civil War period a series of feminist conferences discussed the various aspects of women's oppression. Women began to speak out for themselves. However, women did not plan out a national campaign around any specific demand. It was only under the impact of the Civil War that the question of extending suffrage was posed. Only at that point did woman's suffrage become the most central issue in the total struggle. As a matter of fact, women were almost totally unprepared to fight on that particular issue.

Suffrage was not an issue abstractly chosen by the first feminist movement, but came to the forefront as the struggle unfolded. It became the central issue over the next fifty years because the ruling class chose that issue as its principal method of attacking women. In a very real sense, the question of fighting for woman's suffrage was like the question of abortion today—an issue which the feminist movement must fight to win because that is where women are being attacked by the government. Failing to organize around the central issue being posed dooms any movement to oblivion.

Woman's suffrage was not won until 1920. As such it represents the last significant victory of the Debsian radicalization. The Red Scare of the early 1920s drove

the Communist Party underground, gave a big boost to Ku Klux Klan terrorism, unleashed race riots, and provided the political justification for arresting thousands of militant trade unionists, deporting hundreds. The fact that women were able to secure their rights in the midst of the growing reaction indicates how strong the suffrage movement had become. But the political climate *did* prevent the movement from building on that hard won victory. The feminist movement, like the trade union movement, was not able to sustain its mass base in the period of reaction which followed.

History has clearly demonstrated that mass movements are built on objective conditions, thinking does not make it so. Despite the unpopularity of the Korean War, for example, there were no mass antiwar demonstrations during the witch hunt of the 1950s. Despite their desperate need to work, women were unsuccessful in protesting against child care center cuts and against work layoffs in the late 1940s.

Of course feminists and revolutionaries continued their work through those dark days of reaction, but they were unable to build a mass movement. Many women who fought for suffrage saw the importance of continuing to press for their full rights as human beings, seeing the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment and the fight for the right of women to have access to scientific knowledge about their bodies as the most central issues. Dr. Antoinette Konikow, a founder of the Socialist Workers Party, was one of the pioneers of that struggle for birth control. Yet the work was an uphill fight because of the country's political climate.

Those two issues which feminists saw as next on the agenda back in the 1920s are precisely the struggles which the second feminist wave are taking up today. And in so far as the first feminist wave did not complete the battles they waged for the right of women to an education and to equal pay and to hold property, feminists will have to take those fights up once again, and complete the struggle.

Instead of being able to organize masses of women in the 1920s, the mass base of feminism was driven underground. It found its forms through the growing numbers of women who attended college, joined the work force, and lived more independent lives. It found its forms through a new freedom of dress, through winning the right to sit down at a bar and the right to cut one's hair. But even in its underground form feminism lived. Today, in the midst of a deep-going radicalization we see that these personal freedoms are relevant issues for women. After all, the right to wear comfortable clothes to work has been something women have fought for around the country over the last two years.

I have tried to outline the highlights in the battle for suffrage because reclaiming our history as revolutionary feminists is not an academic demand but an essential tool in the struggle for our liberation. In understanding our past, and the contributions of our sisters, we can draw certain lessons about the weaknesses and strengths of our movement. In so far as the first wave of American feminism was a politically independent movement, it was strong; but in so far as it leaned upon the Democratic and Republican parties—beginning with the so-called radical Republicans immediately following the Civil War—it suffered.

But we also know that the future will not mechanically repeat the past. We can look forward, with revolutionary optimism, to the abortion repeal campaign as a method which will draw in millions of women into a struggle they can win. Even if a coalition could simply implement abortion repeal, millions of women would benefit, and millions more would have felt their potential as a political force. But if the Socialist Workers Party's analysis is correct about the nature of the current radicalization, the abortion repeal victory will not be faced with a period of reaction, but with the immense possibilities of carrying the struggle for women's liberation forward. That concept of the revolutionary dynamic of masses in struggle is at the base of our united front strategy.

In conclusion, I see that the document, "On Our Tasks in the Women's Liberation Movement," makes a series of factual, and political, errors.

1. They call the winning of woman's suffrage a defeat, and a setback. It was a victory.

2. They assert that the suffrage movement illustrates the danger of organizing around a single issue in the women's liberation movement. The International Socialists also claim that the suffrage movement failed, but extend their logic to conclude that coalitions, such as the antiwar movement, should not be single issue. Whether they consciously realize it or not, Gregorich and Passen question the Socialist Workers Party's strategic approach about how to build a united front mass action coalition in this period.

3. They fail to evaluate the specific historic context in which suffrage was won. But politics is not like a game of chess, and what can be accomplished in the 1970s is not what could have been accomplished in the 1950s. They fail to describe the political climate at the point women won the vote.

4. Because their argument takes place in a historical vacuum, and presents abstract arguments, Gregorich and Passen assume that a coalition around abortion repeal launched in the 1970s and a coalition around winning the vote in 1920 will lead to the same "defeat." Even if they were correct about the "failure" of the suffrage movement, who is to assume, given the radicalization of today, that winning the repeal of all abortion laws will lead to the same conclusion?

5. The authors are incorrect when they state that the first wave of American feminism abandoned all but the suffrage question. How can they explain the other victories of women in the 19th century—the right to an education, the right to be paid for their work (as opposed to having their fathers or husbands collect their

check), etc.?

6. They are incorrect when they assert that the leadership of the suffrage movement "abandoned" other feminist issues. Some leaders were militant feminists, others were supporters of the coalition's demand, holding traditional ideas on other issues. Many lent support to organizing women in the trade union movement, others were central to beginning the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment back in the early 1920s. In fact the suffrage campaign had many links to other social movements of its period. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, one of the most popular feminist writers of her era (who discussed the need to socialize housework and punctured the myth of the woman as the eternal mother with her remark that motherhood was easy—even an oyster can be a mother, the task of a woman was to be a fully human being), was a socialist. Susan B. Anthony came out of the temperance movement, and in fact, temperance was an important source of suffrage supporters. The National Women's Trade Union League played a crucial role in the early 20th century as a mechanism for drawing in working women to fight for suffrage, and on suffrage activists to support labor's rights. But the leadership of the suffrage movement was not homogeneous, as one would expect of a coalition.

7. In contrast to Gregorich and Passen's view that woman's suffrage failed because it *only* accomplished its stated purpose, socialists understand that we are the fiercest fighters in the battle to see that democratic rights are extended to all. Had woman's suffrage not been won, would Gregorich and Passen tell masses of women today that building a coalition to secure woman's suffrage would lead to a "defeat"? Do they really have such contempt for democratic rights that they cannot see how the lives of millions of women will be concretely affected by their winning the right to decide whether they should have an abortion?

8. While Gregorich and Passen assert that the feminist movement was sold down the river on the issue of suffrage, I maintain that the first feminist movement would have remained a small nucleus of women, and would probably have died out before the Debsian radicalization, had they not built the suffrage movement. It was the issue of suffrage that deepened the consciousness of masses of women to a greater understanding of their oppression as women. Without a coalition built around the issue of suffrage, the first wave of American feminism would have been more like a ripple. Concretely, the women of the 1970s would have less of a heritage on which to build the feminist movement of today.

July 26, 1971

IN REPLY TO COMRADES LOVELL AND NOVACK
By Barbara Gregorich and Phil Passen, Cleveland Branch

Two of the contributions to pre-convention discussion printed in Bulletin No. 12 and all of the contributions printed in Bulletin No. 14 are criticisms of "For a Proletarian Orientation." There are common misconceptions and distortions of what was said in "For a Proletarian Orientation" that run through all of these contributions. We feel that the second document we helped to write, "The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation," helps to answer many of the accusations and misinterpretations. In this contribution to the pre-convention discussion, we will reply specifically to the articles by Comrades Lovell and No-

vack, who are major party leaders and whose statements, by virtue of that fact, are very important and help to inform the rank and file of what the party leadership (or part of it) is thinking.

**THEY REDEFINE OR MISDEFINE THE
PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION**

In "Have We Given Up Our Proletarian Orientation?" Comrade Frank Lovell *redefines* proletarian orientation and then "illustrates" that the party has not given up

this orientation. He says, "Our proletarian orientation is our program, the transitional program adopted in 1938 and our key programmatic documents since." (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, no. 12, p. 25) This is very assuring, except that our proletarian orientation is not equivalent to or synonymous with our program. First of all, if the words "proletarian orientation" were nothing more than a synonym for "program," then we would be perfectly correct in telling people, as we handed them a copy of the transitional program, "Here, read our proletarian orientation." Or we could say that Comrade Cannon warned that without the correct composition, the proletarian orientation could become a "scrap of paper" overnight. The latter obviously does not make sense, nor does the former. The reason they do not make sense is that the proletarian orientation and the program are not two *synonymous* things.

Comrade Lovell must know this. The proletarian orientation is *based* on the program; it is, as the very words tell us, an *orientation*, a *direction*. As we said in "For a Proletarian Orientation," "A fundamental aspect of a proletarian orientation is that the party must see the recruitment of workers as a basic task, must enter the organizations of the workers, and must seek to root itself in the working class." (Vol. 29, no. 2, p. 3) An orientation is the manner or *method* by which a program is implemented. It implies the strata toward which the propaganda of the party is directed. For a party which aims to lead the working class, program must be implemented in accord with a proletarian orientation. The fact that we have a proletarian program does *not* mean that the program is being implemented in accord with the proletarian orientation.

Comrade Lovell, who has been in the SWP for many, many years, and who must surely know the difference between an orientation and a program, is being dishonest with other comrades and with himself when he seeks to equate the proletarian orientation with the transitional program and the party documents. In our opinion, the reason Comrade Lovell is being dishonest with others and with himself is that he wishes to believe that the SWP still has a proletarian orientation, and since he can see that the party is *not* directing its work toward the working class, he then makes the proletarian orientation synonymous with the transitional program. He thereby hopes to "prove," through a bit of word juggling, that since we still have the transitional program we still have a proletarian orientation.

We do not agree with Comrade Lovell's simplistic equating of orientation with program, and we feel, as we have attempted to show in our previous documents, that unless the proletarian orientation is implemented—unless the party turns toward the working class—the program itself is endangered and will sooner or later be changed.

Since Comrade Lovell identifies the proletarian orientation with the program, he obviously feels (and his document indicates this) that the proletarian orientation is a principled question. Comrade George Novack, however, treats the proletarian orientation as a tactical question. In fact, Comrade Novack and Comrade Lovell are in disagreement, since the former says we have something other than a proletarian orientation, and the latter says we have a proletarian orientation.

According to Comrade Novack, the SWP now has an "other sector" orientation, a "tactical orientation," or a "balanced orientation." He explains this in the following statement: "The wide differentials between the propulsion

behind the other sectors and the organized workers is the basis for our current tactical orientation." (Vol. 29, No. 14, p. 7) Further more, he says:

... Lenin did not invariably head directly toward his fixed objectives but, taking objective circumstances into account, sometimes attained them by roundabout routes.

Something of the same sort is the essence of our presently balanced orientation. (p. 8)

The first thing we would like to point out here is that Comrade Novack is, like Comrade Lovell, using a bit of trickery in defining the party's orientation. Comrade Novack defines the party's orientation as a "balanced" one. Just what is a "balanced" orientation? Is it something like a balanced diet, containing the minimum daily requirements of protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals, etc.? Or is it something like a scale, being balanced when it contains equal amounts of (in this case) petty bourgeoisie and workers? While balancing may be in order for toddlers, tightrope walkers, and various circus artists, we think that what is necessary for a revolutionary party is a *class* orientation, and for us that is the proletarian orientation. Comrade Novack might just as well have told us that the party has a "good" orientation. What is the *class content* of terms such as "balanced" and "good"?

The second point that must be made is that the difference between Comrades Lovell and Novack, *unacknowledged differences*, are typical of the differences we have encountered among the NC document supporters. Some supporters of the NC's document say that the proletarian orientation is a principled question and that the party has a proletarian orientation. Others say it is a tactical question and that the party does not have a proletarian orientation. *All* avoid explaining what a proletarian is. *All* avoid coming to grips with the party's past tradition, with the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky on *the importance of entering the working class*.

THEY DISTORT WHAT WE SAID

In arguing against "For a Proletarian Orientation," Comrade Lovell distorts what the authors said. A prime example of this distortion is that Comrade Lovell attributes to the authors the position of wanting to do *exclusively* trade union work, of confining the SWP's work to the trade unions. Comrade Lovell does this in several ways. First he urges comrades to re-read *The History of American Trotskyism* ". . . to remind ourselves that we were never preoccupied with or primarily motivated by the narrow problems of trade union work however important these were for us at various stages of our development." (Vol. 29, No. 12, p. 21) The implication here is that the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation" want the SWP to be "preoccupied" with the "narrow problems" of trade union work.

Then, in describing the post WW II strike wave, Comrade Lovell says, "We did not confine our activities to unions." (p. 22) Again, this implies that "For a Proletarian Orientation" calls for the party to "confine" its activities to the trade unions. Further, Comrade Lovell says, "Our objective throughout has been to become a *political* factor in this society, related to the objective developments as they occur as much as possible, a force to be reckoned with in *every* arena of activity related to the class strug-

gle." (p. 24) We must point out that the implications of such statements are that the authors and supporters of "For a Proletarian Orientation" do not want the party to relate to or become a force to be reckoned with in every arena relatd to the class struggle. Such statements, which abound in Comrade Lovell's document, *are arguing against a position that the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation" do not hold.* Comrade Lovell is constructing a straw man and tearing it to pieces. While this may give him great pleasure, it is not very enlightening. In fact, it is obfuscating.

Finally, Comrade Lovell gathers the courage to abandon his implications and come right out and *say* that we advocate a position that in fact we don't advocate. According to Comrade Lovell,

We have a difference with Comrade Gregorich and her associates over what tactics are best for us at this time. She seems to be saying that we ought to direct all our attention toward the union movement, urging our comrades to get into *strategic* industry as we never did at any time in our history. (p. 25 emphasis in original)

Here, then, is the clearest example of how Comrade Lovell distorts the contents and intentions of "For a Proletarian Orientation." For those comrades like Comrade Lovell, who cannot or will not read, who cannot or will not give an honest presentation of an opponent's position, we refer to what we said in our document: "The party, *while not ignoring the developments among the students or any other sections of society,* must at all times gear its *major* [not total, all, complete, exclusive, only, etc.] attention and activity toward rooting itself in the key sectors of the proletariat." (Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 7 emphasis added)

Like Comrade Lovell, Comrade Novack also distorts what we said in "For a Proletarian Orientation." Comrade Novack says,

Comrade Gregorich and her cothinkers disagree with our line on antiwar work and do not think highly of the results. . . . To them it represents "an adaptation to the union bureaucrats." while the gigantic April 24 demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco were "not a rank and file action." (Vol. 29, No. 14, p. 7)

First of all, we did not say that we disagree with the party line on antiwar work. Secondly, we did not say that the party line represents an adaptation to anything. We are in agreement with the line of building a massive antiwar movement based on the slogan of immediate withdrawal. Thirdly, what we called an "adaptation to union bureaucrats" was not the party's line, as Comrade Novack blatantly asserts. What we called an adaptation was the fact that the party seems to court these union bureaucrats without criticism, seems to not wish to put pressure on them to utilize the union apparatus to aid the rank and file in the organization of union contingents to the antiwar actions. Most of all, we consider it an adaptation that the SWP does not want to get into the trade unions to organize and direct the antiwar sentiment from within and as part of the rank and file. Comrade Novack would do better to address himself to the question of the party's relationship to the union bureaucrats than to distort in the grossest way what we said.

Furthermore, we said that when union bureaucrats provide trains and busses for the rank and file, the bureau-

crats are doing it *for their own reasons*, and in the sense that the organizing of the trains and buses and the mobilization of the rank and file are not carried out by the rank and file, it is not a rank and file action.

Finally, in a stupendous piece of distortion, Comrade Novack says:

April 24 provided an excellent test of *the opposing lines.* The matter was really posed in this way: was it more important to organize the kind of antiwar actions we did—*or concentrate the forces at our disposal in doing routine union work, as they urge, or else launch an insignificant and "purely proletarian" and "really revolutionary" counter-demonstration as PL and the Wohlforthites do.* (Vol. 29, No. 14, p. 7 our emphasis)

Nowhere in any of our writings will Comrade Novack find anything that says the party should go into the unions *instead of building the antiwar movement.* The supporters of "For a Proletarian Orientation" do not believe that trade union work and antiwar work are mutually exclusive, as Comrade Novack wants people to believe they are. Comrade Novack wants to scare people into thinking that adopting a proletarian orientation means abandoning the antiwar movement, and since Comrade Novack can't find this false dichotomy in our writings, he *makes it up.* Or perhaps we are too harsh on Comrade Novack—perhaps it is not that he has *deliberately* distorted what we said. Perhaps Comrade Novack is incapable of thinking dialectically and thus considers trade union work and antiwar work as mutually exclusive.

THEY DISTORT HISTORY

At the beginning of his document, Comrade Lovell mentions *The History of American Trotskyism* and says, as we quoted before:

The only reason for mentioning it here is to urge the comrades to re-read the history and to remind ourselves that we were never preoccupied with or primarily motivated by the narrow problems of trade union work, however important these were for us at various stages of our development. The overriding problem for us always and under all circumstances was how to build the party, how to recruit and train party cadres. (Vol. 29, No. 12, p. 21)

As we said previously in this contribution, it is not the position of the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation" that the party must be "preoccupied" with the "narrow problems" of trade union work. It is our opinion that the party must be concerned with the broad problem of the party's relationship to the trade unions and the utilization of all areas of party work in building a base in the organized working class. The question of the party's relationship to the trade unions was a problem that concerned the party at all times, and this is one of the lessons of *The History of American Trotskyism.* But Comrade Lovell, in presenting the lessons of *The History of American Trotskyism* as he does, skips right over the fact that a primary concern of the party, which sought to become a party rooted in the working class, was the question of its relationship to the trade unions (the organized working class). The trade union question was not, as Comrade Lovell implies, an incidental question that popped

up now and then at "various stages of our development." Let us refresh Comrade Lovell's memory with a few lessons from *The History of American Trotskyism*.

In "Factional Struggles in the Old Communist Party," Comrade Cannon said:

While we were fighting out the battle for the legalization of the party, we also fought to correct the party's trade union policy. This struggle, too, was successful: the original sectarian position was rejected. The pioneer Communists revised their earlier sectarian pronouncements which had favored independent unionism. They now directed the whole dynamic force of the Communist Party into the reactionary trade unions. The chief credit for this transformation also belongs to Moscow, to Lenin, to the Comintern. Lenin's great pamphlet, *The Infantile Sickness of Left Communism*, cleared up this question quite decisively. By 1922-23 the party was well on the road towards penetrating the trade union movement and began rapidly to acquire a serious influence in some unions in some parts of the country. This was particularly the case in the coal miners union and in the needle trades unions, and elsewhere, too, the party made its influence felt. (*The History of American Trotskyism*, p. 23)

In "The Dog Days of the Left Opposition," Comrade Cannon mentions again that the trade union question came up—even during the dog days. "The Trade union question had an extraordinary importance then as always." (p. 83) Comrade Cannon here was explaining that once again it was necessary to explain that the policy of red unions was incorrect. However, we hope that nobody is narrow-minded enough to interpret this to mean that *only* when it is a case of red unions vs. mass unions should the vanguard party discuss the relationship of the party to the unions. The question of the party's relationship to the class, in this case to the trade unions, is, as Trotsky said, "the most fundamental question of revolutionary Marxism."

Finally, in "The Turn to Mass Work," Comrade Cannon said:

The task of the revolutionary militants, as we defined it, was to plunge into the labor movement as it existed and try to influence it from within. (p. 121)

* * *

In preparing the notes for this lecture, I looked over some of the articles and editorials we wrote at that time. We were not merely critical. We did not merely stand aside explaining what fakers and betrayers the leaders of the American Federation of Labor were, although they were that without doubt. In an editorial written in connection with the American Federation of Labor convention of October 1933 we said that the great movement of the masses into the trade unions can be seriously influenced only from within. "From this it follows: Get into the unions, stay there, work within." This key thought permeated all our comments. (pp. 121-122)

Thus we can see that the trade union question, while certainly not an issue that preoccupied the party, was an issue that the vanguard party had to take a position on and had to pay constant attention to. Unless the party

correctly answered the question of the party's relationship to the trade unions, the party would fail in its task of winning the workers and making the revolution. This is the very same question that faces the SWP today—will the party continue to isolate itself from the mass stream of American labor, or will the party return to its proletarian orientation and begin the conscious penetration of the working class?

Comrade Novack also distorts the party's history by implying that the party began to penetrate the working class only from 1944 on, only when the working class began to move in the post-WW II upsurge. This is not true, as we pointed out in "The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation," and as the above quotes from Comrade Cannon illustrate. In fact, as we illustrated in "The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation," just two years ago Comrade Novack himself said that the SWP's entry into the Socialist Party "... aided our penetration of the auto, maritime, and other unions so that the proletarian orientation, which remained a constant concern of our movement, was enhanced." (Vol. 27, No. 11, p. 6) Comrade Novack implies that the party did not begin to enter the working class until the post-war upsurge because that is the idea he is defending *today*—that the party need not enter the class until the class is in rapid motion. In order to get across this idea, Comrade Novack distorts not only the party's history, but he conveniently forgets what he himself said two years ago.

Comrade Novack also alludes to the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation" as sectarians of the Oehlerite variety, as "standpatters" who refuse to enter the living movement. We say to Comrade Novack that *we* are not the sectarians—the sectarians are those who *refuse* to turn toward the working class, the "standpatters" are those who "stand pat" on the movements *outside* the working class.

Another distortion of history committed by Comrade Novack occurs in his description of the current radicalization and his defense, thereby, of the NC resolution. He says: "One anomaly is the fact described in the NC resolution, that the current radicalization did not begin with the organized workers but among other social layers" (Vol. 29, no. 14, p. 5) One wonders what Comrade Novack's concept of the history of social struggles is. First of all, Comrade Novack is obviously in disagreement with Comrade Breitman, who said that the radicalization of the 1930's did not begin with the organized workers. Apparently Comrade Novack either thinks Comrade Breitman is wrong, or Comrade Novack considers the 1930's an anomaly also. And what about the radicalization in Russia in the late 19th century?—was that an anomaly too, since it did not begin with the organized workers? Perhaps Comrade Novack should write a contribution in which he illustrates how in previous radicalizations the organized workers began the radicalization.

THEY HIDE OR DISTORT PARTY MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

In "For a Proletarian Orientation" we said that the party, in giving statistics on its membership, gives a breakdown according to age, number of cities lived in, number of years spent in college, etc. What these statistics *ignore* is the breakdown according to trade union affiliation or industry worked in. Now, Comrade Lovell, in trying

to reassure the party membership that the proletarian orientation is intact and that the party is proletarian because its program is, says:

We have not at this point recruited very many young workers, but more than is generally known. We have comrades in several basic industries, all good party builders. We expect their numbers will grow. (Vol. 29, No. 12, p. 25)

This statement is *vague*, to say the least. What does "not . . . very many young workers, but more than is generally known" mean? Who can be convinced of *anything* by this? Do we have 20 young workers in basic industry? 40? 80? 160? Why is Comrade Lovell so vague? Why does the party consistently refuse to tell us how many comrades we have in steel, and what they are doing in their unions; how many in auto, and what they are doing in the UAW; how many in the post office, and so on. Why can't the party begin to concentrate on young workers, not just on youth?

Comrade Lovell is deliberately vague on the question of party composition, but Comrade Novack actually lies. On page 3 of "Schematism or Marxism," Comrade Novack says: "We have several hundred union members who are conducting political activity, as far as possible, among the militants they are in contact with." As everybody knows (and as most, if not all, dictionaries define it), "several" means more than two. Therefore, according to Comrade Novack, the SWP has *at least 300* union members who are conducting political activity in the unions. 300 out of 770 members is not at all bad for a party that is ignoring the trade union question. Perhaps the revolution can be made by sheer luck after all—perhaps the workers will come to us without our going to them. Unfortunately, however, the 300 or 400 or maybe even 500 comrades, all of which are "several hundred," exist in Comrade Novack's imagination and not in the Socialist Workers Party. The party membership statistics reported at the March 1971 Plenum said that we had 770 comrades and that 163 of these were in unions. (This report, as all other reports, avoided a breakdown of which unions these comrades were in and what they were doing in their unions.) Now, as anybody who makes an honest effort to deal with mathematics will notice, 163 is just slightly more than half of "several hundred."

What is the matter with Comrade Novack? Is it that he cannot add? Or is he so involved in "roundabout routes" of attaining goals that he approaches 163 in the roundabout fashion and reads it as 361? Whatever the reason for this, the fact is that Comrade Novack is doing great harm to the party by lulling it into believing that all is well. We would like to suggest that Comrade Novack first find out which unions our 163 comrades are in, what they are doing in these unions, and then draw some conclusions regarding the party's policy regarding trade union work, the necessity of colonization, etc. This will prove a more fruitful way of allowing the entire party membership to analyze the progress we are making in penetrating the working class. An analysis based on fact may be less spectacular than the "roundabout route," but it is the only kind of analysis that will enable the party to assess its weaknesses and correct them in order to build the party on a firmer foundation.

THEY OFFER A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE UNIONS AND THE PARTY

Comrade Lovell says, "We think that the struggle within the union movement will be influenced and *its outcome determined by* massive social protest movements outside the union movement" (Vol. 29, No. 12, p. 25 emphasis added) This is clearly a new analysis that Comrade Lovell is offering, but he "offers" it without explaining it. Our analysis of how the struggle in the trade unions will be determined is best expressed in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," by Trotsky. Briefly, Trotsky's analysis was that the opposition in the trade unions would be gathered around two fundamental points:

(1) the independence of the unions from the capitalist state, (2) democracy in the unions. Moreover, the analysis by Trotsky stated that in the epoch of imperialist decay, it was *more important than ever* for the revolutionary party to be in the trade unions. The development in the trade unions depends on, and its *outcome will be determined by, the participation of Bolsheviks inside the unions.*

Now, if Comrade Lovell wants to disagree with this analysis laid out by Trotsky and reaffirmed by the party for two decades, then he should first of all state what Trotsky's analysis was and then explain why this analysis is no longer valid.

Comrade Lovell offers another new analysis when he says, in trying to justify why the SWP is not in the trade unions, "During the war years the unions were transformed in a way that we did not fully realize at the time. They became institutionalized, were drawn into the wartime apparatus of government, and accorded an official status different from the old craft unions of World War I" (Vol. 29, No. 12, P. 21) Here Comrade Lovell is implying that something *so drastic* has happened to the trade unions that today, in looking backward, we can see that it is a good thing we aren't too concerned with these "institutionalized" bodies. What we would like to ask Comrade Lovell is, *what is it* that has happened to the trade unions that differs from Trotsky's analysis in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay"?

Comrade Novack also offers a new analysis when he tells us that the party's trade union activities ". . . perforce occupy a secondary status in our total operations, and, while they can be expected to expand, will not command priority until *and unless* large sections of the industrial workers go into action." (Vol. 29, No. 14, p. 3 our emphasis) *What* does this "unless" mean? Comrade Novack seems to be saying that large sections of the industrial workers *may not* "go into action." No doubt they will continue to go to work every day while somebody else is making the revolution? If this is, indeed, Comrade Novack's assumption, we would like to ask him which section of the working class it is that is going to "go into action" to make the revolution.

THEY ARE IDEALISTIC

Comrade Lovell closes his document by saying "If a genuine rank and file movement develops in the unions around any big national issue, we will be there." (Vol. 29, No. 12, p. 26) These are noble intentions, Comrade Lovell, but *how* will we be there? Perhaps we will borrow Comrade Bartell's light cavalry and gallop toward the "genuine rank and file movement" to lead it? Will we thun-

der in from the outside to save the day? The fact is that unless we have roots in the working class organizations, unless we have comrades who themselves are the rank and file of the working class, we will be in a *very poor* position to influence their struggles.

Comrade Novack likewise exhibits an idealistic attitude. He tells us that while we do not seek to penetrate the working class, "we do project a transitional program of demands and measures for the left wing forces in the unions that they [not we, but they] can advocate to bridge that gap." (Vol. 29, No. 14, p. 7) In other words, we will give the union militants a program and hope they can carry it out—meanwhile, we will watch them from afar. It seems that Comrade Novack combines (dialectically and not schematically, of course) attitudes of wor-

ship and contempt toward the working class. On the one hand, he thinks all movements *except* the organizations of the working class need the party's intervention—thus the working class is deemed so knowledgeable that it does not require the injection of Bolshevik politics by revolutionaries entering the class. On the other hand, he thinks that perhaps the organized workers in industry might not "go into action" in their own interests, thus we will simply have to make the revolution without these ignorant people. In either case, the overriding interest in Comrade Novack's roundabout route is to go around the workers. In this sense, he is seeking a roundabout route to the revolution, and there is no such road.

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NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY AND RELATED
TOPICS IN THE LIGHT OF MARXISM AND FEMINISM
by R. Vernon, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

Any area of scientific investigation that focuses on human activities, interactions, labor, and exchange of products of labor (prehistory, ancient history, modern history, political science, "sociology," economics, ethnology and anthropology) is an area where the historical-materialist approach has much to contribute, and can make decisive contributions. Anthropology, prehistory and ancient history are areas more or less remote from the interest of most revolutionists, for natural and understandable reasons, but have been tackled fruitfully by Marx and Engels as part of their general study of human society.

Although revolutionists are not the least bit impressed by the pretensions of bourgeois scholars and pundits in the areas of what are termed "political science," economics, "sociology," and (modern) history, and are not the least impressed by their haughty rejection of Marxist economics and politics, it is not uncommon for revolutionists to bow down before the sloppy scholarship and flimsy "theories" of the "experts" in prehistory, ancient history, and anthropology, and their haughty rejection of the meddling by F. Engels and, more recently, comrade Evelyn Reed, in their private preserves.

Although topics relating to ancient, prehistoric, and primitive politics and economics are not our center of focus, the flourishing of the present feminist movement lends added interest to these topics. All areas of science dealing with humans are deformed by the extreme patriarchal-bourgeois bias (and often white-racist bias) dominating these studies in all their aspects, the distortion of these studies by a pervasive and rocentric partiality which gives only third-rate consideration, at best, to half the human species. (Relatively few patriarchal-bourgeois anthropologists even bother to find out what the primitive women in the people they are studying say, think, or do, and primitive women are often more reticent and secretive about tribal secrets and customs, though more knowledgeable, than the men.)

A. PREHISTORY

The contributions by Evelyn Reed deal primarily with human prehistory, with aspects of the social life of primitive humanity in the period prior to 10,000 or so years ago, the transitions from those modes of life and production to date, and survivals found today which are indicative of that primitive-communist epoch, with heavy reliance on deduction based on the Marxist method of

study of societies.

Bourgeois-patricarchal anthropologists are *totally incompetent* in the area of prehistory. Their field, handled none too well by them, is the study of the remnants of primitive humanity within the past century, as they find these remnants worked through the meat-grinder of the capitalist world market and colonialism for anywhere from 350 to 50 years. Period. They are not even reliable when dealing with the recent or ancient history or primitive or developed peoples, because of their lack of understanding of the dynamics of society. In practice, they have shown themselves inept at distinguishing between archaic traits in existing remnants of primitive peoples and distortions of those traits introduced by the world capitalist market and by direct imperialist domination and extermination, since they know nothing about capitalism and how it works, and *had better keep on knowing nothing*, if they value their jobs and grants and degrees in a capitalist society. (Besides, that's the field of other faculties, the political-science department and the economics department, which have already "refuted" Marxism.)

There are, of course, archaeologists, and specialists in prehistory from a bourgeois-patriarchal viewpoint, but these too suffer from their ignorance of the dynamics of development and interaction of classes, social structures, production and modes of production, and depend on the insights of bourgeois-patriarchal ethnographic studies of the present remnants of primitive peoples in concocting their "theories."

Societies have never leapt straight from matriarchal primitive-communist levels to patriarchal forms in one step. All sorts of transitional forms, long-surviving vestiges, and embryonic patriarchal institutions have come into being and are found today here. Descent reckoned through the mothers, matrilinear descent, often persists to times when the society has become class-structured. Matrilineal marriage, with the wife or wives remaining with their own clan and the husband(s) moving in with them, or visiting them, may persist likewise as a vestige. Societies well on the way to patriarchal class-differentiated forms, with the women in subjection, often still retain matriliney and matrilocy and are carelessly referred to as "matriarchal."

Patrilineal and patrilocal societies could have come into existence only very recently, in the last 8000 years or so, mostly only much later (the last 3000 years). In order to

have such patriarchal forms, it is necessary to know who the father is, and to care who he is. This can be known only if the woman is the property of her master-husband, and made sexually inaccessible to all other men. And this in turn requires development of private property in humans (slaves and wives), as well as in products of labor. There is NO patriliney or patrilocy anywhere in the animal kingdom outside of very recent human society, nor can there be. (Some biologists and animal ethnologists project their androcentric ways of looking at things onto other species of animals, but that is to be expected in a sexist society.) It is always possible to tell who the mother is, she is the one who gives birth, and that told all that needed to be known in prehistoric times about what clan the newborn infant belonged to, his/her most precious inheritance.

The schedules of development of humanity and of modes of production, suggested by L. Morgan and held to by Engels in his "Origins," are subject to modification in the later stages of barbarism, because of combined and uneven development, particularly interactions between primitive peoples and developed class societies. But this combined and uneven development could come into play only AFTER such class societies, or higher stages of barbarism before them, came into existence in the first place, i.e. within the last 5,000 to 8,000 years. (Bourgeois-patriarchal pundits have much fun pointing out such and such tribes with features of Morgan's "upper barbarism" which are still behind in development compared to some other tribe typified by Morgan's "middle savagery," say. They "forget" to add that these tribes are also acquainted with christian missionaries, coca-cola, firearms, syphilis, tax-collectors, the nearest capitalist trading-post, etc.)

Societies which develop sedentary agriculture without having passed through a stage of nomadic cattle raising tend to retain many matriarchal features (matrilocality, matrilineal women prominent in all or many features of the tribe's social activities and decisions) even after experiencing advanced social differentiation, inequality, and the development of classes. Property in land tends to remain social, and often in the hands of the women, for many centuries. But property in the form of slaves and/or cattle, more readily divisible, exchangeable, and movable, tends to accelerate trends toward class differentiation and patriarchal domination. As of half a century ago, almost all primitive peoples engaged in predominantly pastoral life were patrilineal, while hunting tribes were about 50% still matrilineal (and most agricultural societies had long since undergone further development).

B. ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS

The same situation applies to ancient history. There are archaeologists and ancient-historians, but their methods and theoretical equipment are crude and unscientific, non-Marxist, and their work severely distorted by bourgeois bias and patriarchal sexism.

How weak and rudimentary the development of patriarchal forms was a mere 3000 to 4000 years ago is lucidly demonstrated by the fact that the first class-structured civilizations to appear on the scene had few patriarchal precedents to go by, and retained striking matriarchal hang-overs. Matriliney and women's ownership of properties were clearly the rule in Egypt and Elam

5000 years ago, and the position of women eroded only slowly through the next 3000 years in those countries. Dynastic incest had to be developed as a juridic form to arrange for inheritance of royal privileges by the son (through his mother as both the sister and wife of the king). These and other matriarchal features, not limited to the ruling class, were so deeply rooted that these two societies never succeeded in shaking them all off in their entire existence, and progress toward patriarchal class society had to be picked up by later civilizations which leapt over them. The descendants of the Indus-valley civilization of 4,500 years ago (Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, etc.) could be none other than the Dravidians and aboriginal nations of southern India which even today retain notable matriarchal features. Shumer, the Mesopotamian civilization already in existence 5,000 years ago, was way ahead of Egypt and Elam in the development of patriarchal institutions, but only its successors, Babylon and Assyria, were capable of completing the job. Shumer boasts the world's earliest known individual literary work, *Ninmesharra*, the "Queen of All the Tabus," a paean to the Shumerian mother goddess *Inanna* (later Babylonian *Ishtar*) by the world's first known author *Heduanna*, the high priestess of *Inanna*.

The next generation of ancient civilizations, before 3,000 years ago, the western Semites (Ugariti, Phoenicians), Babylonians, Hittites, Sabeans, Chinese, Aryan Hindus, also display many matriarchal vestiges (polyandry, vestiges of totem-clan structure in social organization, women prominent in national affairs and on an equal footing in domestic life, mother-goddess religions and priestesses, etc.), but patriarchal institutions are making their way noticeably, except in the case of Crete, Mykenean Greece, Kushites and Nubians (Ethiopia).

By the middle of the first millennium BC (before Caesar), we find some full-fledged patriarchal class societies with the women definitely in the back of the bus (Assyrians, Attic Greeks, Chinese, Persians, Babylonians, Hebrews, but with some prominent heavily "matriarchal" holdouts (Egypt, Elam, Etruscans, Sabeans, other Arabs, Ethiopians, and Nubians, Lydians, and other Anatolians, Celts, Libyans (Berbers, Scythians) still around among the advanced peoples.

Most developed civilizations have been definitively and unambiguously patriarchal in their family and social structure within the past 2,000 years, but among late holdouts we may mention: Peruvian Incas, Aztecs, Tibet (dubbed *Nü-Kwo*, the "country of the women" by contemptuous patriarchal Chinese), Japan (matrilocality persisting till 500 years ago; known as the "land of queens" by contemptuous Chinese), southern India, some parts of what is now Indonesia, Khmer (Cambodia), Zimbabwe, Buganda, and Malagasy.

A few of the many vestiges of primitive-communist matriarchy and clan-totem structure found among the Semites and Indo-Europeans are discussed in sections F and G.

Bourgeois-patriarchal anthropology is not concerned with this area of history, since that belongs to a "different department," of course. And the Ancient History faculty does not have to be concerned with the matriarchal aspects of ancient civilizations, and inferences to be drawn from them because, "as we know from anthropology, there never was any matriarchy." So that's that.

C. "UNDER THE MOST PRIMITIVE CONDITIONS"

Bourgeois-patriarchal anthropology came into existence as a recognizable discipline only toward the close of the last century, and much of its studies has been done only in recent decades. Capitalist expansion, a necessary prerequisite to the development and motivation of those studies, had been in progress at various levels of development (mercantile capitalism, colonialist plunder, chattel slavery serving the industrial market, early industrial revolution, full-fledged imperialism) centuries before, and has mis-shaped and reshaped countless numbers of primitive peoples that have fallen into its maw, at first indirectly through trade contacts and a few missionaries, later through direct subjugation and even extermination. Capitalism also shapes the thinking and activities of bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists, and the universities in which and from which they work.

Bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists do their field work and concoct their "theories" in total ignorance of the capitalist world market which affects and dominates both them and the fragments of primitive peoples they are studying and they are in harmony with the prevailing androcentric sexism. Even their best work is somewhat like recording folk music in the middle of a boiler factory going full blast at the top of the morning shift, and not bothering to take account of the noise background. The data they collect are of value, when handled judiciously with proper understanding of the capitalist and sexist background "noise," but their interpretations and "theories" are something else.

One of the most characteristic unscientific features of bourgeois social "scientists" is their penchant for viewing their subject in isolation, pragmatically, statically. Dialectical contradictions and dynamic development are concepts utterly alien to them. They present a catalog of tribes A which are matrilineal and matrilocal, tribes B which are matrilineal and patrilocal, tribes C which are patrilineal and patrilocal, tribes D which are dyslocal and reckon descent along both paternal and maternal lines, tribes E which show no clear clan structure, etc., and proceed as if these tribes existed in those states ever since the Big Bang, when the galaxies were created with a flick of "Let there be light," or at least since the first *Caveman*. Tribes with various features of combined and uneven development are displayed as proof that there is no orderly development to human society, and can be none (how long has that number been on the hit parade?). One theorist has coined the term "multilinear evolution" to dress up this confusion with a polysyllabic name.

Since some tribes and nations retain pronounced patriarchal features even in stages of development where class structure, social inequalities, patriarchal suppression of women prevail, while other tribes have advanced to distinct patriarchal forms or have lost their clan structure altogether at a comparatively lower stage of economic development because of their history and interaction with neighboring civilizations or the capitalist world market, "theories" are concocted to the effect that matriarchy, insofar as it exists at all, is a "later stage," or that some kind of clanless patriarchal family (what "family" could mean in such contexts is seldom defined, but bears little resemblance to what we call "family" in civilized class society) is the

basic building block of human society, because we find peoples living "under the most primitive conditions" with such clanless features. The prize theoretical achievement of the anti-historical school of American "historical anthropology" (Boas, Olson, Swanton, Drucker, Kroeber, Codere, the white racists Lowie and Coon) is their discovery of tribes of Northwest Pacific Coast Native Americans (Salish, Kwakiutl) allegedly undergoing a transition from patriarchal to matriarchal forms of society, which is supposed to throw doubt on and refute the theory of matriarchal origins of society (see section E).

The favorite exhibits of anti-theoretical bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists are peoples "living under the most primitive conditions imaginable" who show "no traces" of clan-totem structure of matriarchal past, and who live and work as "monogamic" families, "patrilocal" bands. The most preferred candidates for this status of "most primitive" peoples with such un-matriarchal characteristics as "strict monogamy," nuclear families, patrilocy, etc., are the Eskimos (see section D), African rain forest Pygmies, Khol-San peoples [Hottentots and Bushmen], California and Plains "Indians," Patagonians, Tasmanians, Andamanese, Amazon "Indians," Veddahs of Ceylon (see section H).

Historic human society is rich in forms of decay, and transitional forms, of archaic matriarchal totem-clan structure, partial adjustments to needs of the new patriarchal societies and structures coming into existence, deformations caused by surrounding civilizations and especially by the world capitalist market within the past century, development of new post-clan social ties such as patriarchal households, age grades, secret societies of women, secret societies of men, specialized warrior gangs, fragments of clans joined together in settlements and forming new territorial ties, etc. These are seized upon hungrily by bourgeois-patriarchal theorists as proof that there never has been any primitive-communist matriarchal stage, that humanity developed by a multiplicity of unrelated, haphazard pathways.

"Diffusion" is a magic wand for bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists, used to dispel all theoretical difficulties. Regardless of the level of productivity and modes of production of any given people, and regardless of its history, anything and everything, whether incidental or fundamental to the life and work of the people in question, is palmed off as "diffused" from somewhere else. The prize diffusionist confusion is flaunted in the case of studies of the Northwest Pacific Coast tribes, where such fundamental institutions and structures as totemic institutions and matrilineal clans are projected as diffusions into allegedly previously clanless patrilineal tribes from their "more advanced" matrilineal neighbors (see section E).

There are other sciences which take the problem of diffusion seriously (thermodynamics, mathematical theory of probabilities, neutron physics, petroleum geology). The current confusionist situation in anthropology also typified geology until about a century ago. All those who claimed that the earth had undergone an orderly and structured development were condemned and refuted, and considered blasphemers against the revealed Word. Agassiz and Cuvier argued that there was no geological succession from one stage to another that could be demonstrated. Species of fossils found in strata arose there through "successive acts of creation," supposedly later strata could be found

below "earlier" strata, seashells on mountain tops were left there by the Deluge (Noah's, that is), and were not evidence of previous upheavals of the earth not revealed in the Hebrew magical texts. All this nonsense came to a halt about a hundred years ago, for a good reason. Petroleum came on the scene, and Rockefeller and Co. needed scientists who could tell them where it was at, i.e., where the oil was at. Economic geology was born, and diffusion of petroleum in and out of petroliferous strata was a secondary problem that had to be approached scientifically. In petroleum geology, the diffusion unit known as the darcy, or permeability coefficient, is defined as the "permeability of a porous medium to viscous flow of one millimeter per second per square centimeter of surface of a liquid of one centipoise viscosity under a pressure gradient of one atmosphere per centimeter." The capitalists were not fooling around—they need scientists working on their geology, but can tolerate clowns working in anthropology, history, "sociology," and other social "sciences."

D. ESKIMOS AND ALEUTS

These polar peoples today show little or almost no trace of their former clan structure. Eskimos occupy expanses of the Arctic region from the tip of Siberia (Chukotka peninsula) across Canada to Greenland, and down to Labrador, in sparse and scattered communities. Their matriarchal clan structure broke down at least a few centuries ago in the central Arctic area and Greenland. Records of the Aleuts and Kadiak Eskimos written by the Russian priest Venyaminov (St. Petersburg, 1840) show evidence of polyandry, cross-cousin marriage, matriarchal vestiges and clan structure among these groups before they got drawn hopelessly into the fur-trade vortex. Remnants of patrilineal clans have lately been discovered among the Chukotka (Siberian) Eskimos and their neighbors on St. Lawrence Island; these clans are in an advanced stage of decay.

Central Eskimos exhibited an intriguing form of decayed totemism. During the walrus-hunting season, it was tabu ("pitshete") to hunt walrus while wearing clothes made from sealskin, or when having just eaten meat of polar bear, salmon, or whale, or while using weapons or implements that were used on, or in contact with, some other food species. Violation of tabu would be punished by the Eskimo supreme deity, the walrus-goddess Sedna, who would cause the offended animals to withdraw from the hunter. Each food animal in turn could be hunted only on such *glatt kosher* terms, free from contamination by clothing, weapons, etc., associated with one of Sedna's other species (Boas, BAE 1888; Nelson BAE 1899). At that point in central Eskimo history, with clans dissolved and replaced by local hunting-community ties, an echo of of the totem divisions survived as seasonal tabus, believed to be enforced by the Eskimo ancestress Sedna or Arnakwagsaq (KE: Aranakakararuloq) "the Old Woman," or Uinigumsuitung (KE: Uingatshuitoq), "She who will never tolerate a husband" (What's a way-out feminist goddess like her doing in the mythology of a "strictly monogamous" patriarchal people?).

The first Eskimos to be drawn into the capitalist market were the Eskimos of Labrador, Baffin Bay, and West Greenland back in the 1600's. Danes moved in among the Greenlanders as settlers. The Moravian Brothers moved in on the Labrador Eskimos 220 years ago, and brought

them Bibles, rifles, steel traps, and smallpox. But Eskimos could have the steel traps and rifles, bringing in plenty of fur-bearing animals that the good Brothers sold at a handsome profit (to the greater glory of "God"), only if they gave up polygamy, Sedna, and Eskimo mores and beliefs. The Moravian Brothers had such a sweet racket going that the Hudson Bay Co. moved in and bought them out in 1925. But Moravian Brothers were set up elsewhere to pray, and prey on other Eskimos.

The introduction of firearms and steel traps, later even motorboats, store-bought harpoons, etc., brought Eskimos deeper into fur market trade relations, intensified individual hunting and private acquisition, and accelerated the breakdown of clan-kinship relations, and even of local territorial patriarchal-household ties, eating away at the fabric of Eskimo collective production and collective distribution like concentrated acid. Store-bought food replacing the natural fat-rich balanced diet of the Eskimos brought the benefits of rickets, scurvy, TB, and population decline (with consequent further breakdown in primitive kinship ties). Eskimos became motivated economically to concentrate on hunting fur-bearing animals for the market, rather than food animals for their own needs. Eskimos living "under the most primitive conditions" thus began to have their lives regulated by fluctuations in the far-off "primitive" high-fashion centers, long before they came into contact with anthropologists.

The Alaska Eskimos and the Aleuts came into the capitalist fur market via the Russo-American Co., founded in 1799. The Russian settlement on Kadiak Island was founded in 1783. Aleuts and Eskimos were forbidden to wear animal skins and furs, which were for the Tsarist colonial fur market only. Fortunately, it was difficult to enforce the ukaz. But there are Eskimos today who wear rags because they have to sell the furs they get from hunting just in order to buy trading-post "food."

Inland central Eskimos subsisted by hunting caribou, generously provided by our stone-feminist mother goddess Uinigumsuitung. These animals numbered in the millions, a herd on the move presenting a sea of antlers miles across and tens of miles in length. Since the central inland Eskimos had absolutely no need to hunt silver fox, which they couldn't eat, but which made good profits for the Hudson Bay Co., these enterprising traders devised a method to elevate the level of civilization of the recalcitrant Eskimos. They offered bounties for every caribou hide, guns and ammo to kill off caribou with. Dozens of huge stockpiles of caribou hides, economically useless and rotted by warble flies, were reported near a Hudson Bay post in 1923. After the Eskimos had been induced to waste away their abundance of caribou, they had no choice but to hunt silver fox to eke out a living. Fifty years ago, there were a million head of caribou in Alaska; today, barely 150,000. Seventy years ago, Canada boasted (or complained) of over twice that number; by 1959, the number had been cut to 200,000. Naturally, the number of Eskimos declined precipitously too. Undoubtedly many Eskimos show no trace of clan structure today, are down to fragments of individual families, and are "living under the most primitive conditions imaginable," like starving to death, in the shadow of a "most primitive" U. S. imperialist DEW radar installation.

(Abbrev.: BAE—Bureau of American Ethnology Report; KE—southwest Alaska Kuskokwim Eskimo)

E. PACIFIC NORTHWEST COAST TRIBES

The remnants of the Native American tribes that occupied the littoral areas of what is now British Columbia, Vancouver Is., and the state of Washington developed transitional societies with budding patriarchal features and embryonic class structures which will be of great interest in the general Marxist study of development of societies. They have also become a favorite subject for the elaboration of anti-historical and fantastical bourgeois-patriarchal "theories" in anthropology.

The abundance of fish (salmon, halibut, flounder, smelt) and aquatic animals (whale, seal, sea otter) in the region was so great that it permitted the development of a surplus product centuries ago, and with it the appearance of social inequalities, even though agriculture was rudimentary and pack animals nonexistent. (British Columbia fisheries grossed \$30 million a quarter-century ago, all for You-know-who, and none for the "Indians.") The Native Americans involved, reading from north to south, are the Kadiak Eskimos, Eyak, T'lingit (Alaska panhandle), Tsimshian, Haida, Kwakiutl, Bella Coola, southern Kwakiutl and Nootka (Vancouver Is.), Coast Salish (Puget Sound and environs), and Chinook (Columbia River). Surplus product was traded with the Athapaskans and Shoshones across the Cascade Mts. for game meat, pemmican, copper, and slaves. Chinook purchased North California slaves from the Klamath and sold them to these northern tribes. The patriarchal-household slave population possibly reached a maximum of one-tenth of the total population, but had not yet given rise to an economy based on slave production. Slaves were the property only of the chiefs and "rich" families, and thus accentuated the development of social inequality, breakdown of clan property and of clan structure. War expeditions for acquisition of fresh slaves from neighbors (later even from neighboring tribes-folk) began to be common.

All these Native Americans were much at the same level of economic development, and in transition from decaying matriarchal to patriarchal forms, when they became involved in the fur trade. Spanish merchants visited the area and claimed it for Spain, the Russian fur traders moved in as early as 1783 (Kadiak) and 1804 (Sitka). The English began to muscle in from the sea, and MacKenzie reached the coast from overland in 1793, claiming the area for the Northwest Co., which merged with its rival, the Hudson Bay Co., in 1821. The Americans got into the act with the Lewis-Clark expedition which reached the area in 1805, followed by several waves of settlers.

The first massive white settlement was on Vancouver Is., Ft. Victoria in 1843, with white townfolk, soldiers, farmers, missionaries, and a brothel (which introduced a new wrinkle in the Native American slave trade, the price of female slaves doubling from 30 to 60 blankets apiece). With the California gold rush, heavy settlement in the territory of Washington in the 1850's, discovery of gold in the Fraser River bed in 1856, founding of the cities Vancouver, Seattle, Tacoma, Olympia, Everett on the lands of the Coast Salish, the southernmost of these Native Americans were swamped, and rapidly doomed.

Contact with Europeans through the fur trade, besides introducing devastating epidemics of smallpox, influenza, and syphilis, stimulated and accelerated the growth of trade relations, social inequalities, production for an out-

side market, and breakdown of matriarchal clan structure. But the influx of white settlers en masse was devastating in the case of the Salish and Chinook, grinding up their culture completely and "acculturating" what was left of the Salish to christian prostitution and nuclear families, grabs of their remaining lands by new settlers, day labor at starvation wages in sawmills, fisheries and farms, and confinement to concentration camps ("reservations"), where meager plots of land marked off by U.S. government surveyors were allotted to the remnants of the Coast Salish on a FAMILY basis. (There is nothing left of the Chinook.)

The more northerly tribes were not so immediately overwhelmed and wasted by white settlers, but were sooner or later decimated by epidemics, starvation, and occasional extermination, driven from their fishing and hunting grounds onto reservations or restricted areas. The group of T'linkit, Haida, and Tsimshian declined from 20,000 to 4,000 from the 1880's to the 1920's, the Bella Coola dwindled to 300 or so, the Nootka from 4,000 to 1,600, while the Kwakiutl declined catastrophically from about 58,000 around 1800 to a mere 2,000 in 1890.

The anthropologists began to make the scene in the 1890's, and the area has been favored for "field work" ever since, in fact saturated. These scholars discovered that all the tribes were patrilineal, while the northerly ones were matrilineal. Totemic clan structures and their corresponding totemic ideology were pronounced among the T'linkit, Haida and Tsimshian, and progressively weaker in the southward direction, while the Coast Salish were—surprise! surprise!—"clanless," and living as individual families, with "no trace" of totemic clan structure (and what are those animals on their totem poles? "Decorations."). Distant cousins of the Coast Salish, the interior Salish around Spokane, who had been through the same mill as the Plains "Indians," also showed "no traces" of clan structure or matriarchal vestiges. Presto! The pragmatic anti-theoretical American anthropologists finally came up with a "theory," one that turns the whole matriarchal theory of social origins upside down.

According to this "theory," cooked up by Boas, Swanton, Drucker, Olson, Sapir, Kroeber, Lowie, this region is characterized by the archaic social structure of individual nuclear families in a clanless society, typified by the interior Salish, Shoshone, and most Plains "Indians" (they're wrong about them, too, but that's another article). As the Coast Salish split off and moved to the coast centuries back, they came under the influence of the more highly advanced coastal tribes, with their "later" matriarchal structures, as did the Kwakiutl farther north. The Salish and Kwakiutl then began to adopt matriarchal forms by diffusion, grafting these onto their "more archaic" patriarchal and clanless forms. These "borrowings" become progressively stronger as we proceed northward, till we get to the T'linkit, Tsimshian, and Haida with their totem clans and matriline. Barbeau carries this superb logic one step further, and attributes even these features to cultural diffusion from Asia in the XVIII century (from Empress Catherine, Tsarina and Queen of All the Russias??). Morgan and Engels are now completely defeated and *wasted*, since evidence of matriarchal survivals in a primitive patriarchal society can be treated as "signs of a future matriarchy which is only just beginning," as G.R. Taylor asserts in his silly and incongruous introduction to the Grosset and Dunlap paperback condensation of Briffault's *The*

Mothers.

This theorizing epitomizes the best of bourgeois-patriarchal anthropology, which is of some value (but still hamstrung by bourgeois bias, sexism, ignorance of their own capitalist world and how it works) for collecting isolated data, but a dim bulb in the area of interpretation and theory. It never even occurs to them to look for "diffusion" of capitalist effects (capitalism?! what's that??) from such *archaic* features in the former lands of the Salish as populous Seattle and Tacoma, Boeing Aircraft, increasing proletarianization of the remnants of Salish and other Native Americans moving into industrial centers (Twin Cities, Chicago, LA) to find jobs.

There are many other features of the former life, mores, and social structure of these Pacific NW coast nations which are fascinating from the standpoint of Marxist studies of the breakdown of primitive communism, transition from primitive communism to pronounced social inequalities and developing class society (the famous NW coast "potlach" totem-clan-based wealth-distribution ceremonies, which show a dialectical interpenetration of both stages, and are beyond the understanding of bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists), development of modes of exchange and money in primitive societies, encroachment on clan properties by private-acquisition trends, conservatism of primitive communism and resistance to change, etc. Student comrades who have been or are anthropology majors could make contributions here if they adopt the same independence from the "authorities" in this field as revolutionists adopt from the bourgeois-patriarchal "authorities" in history, economics, and what is called "political science" (ugh!).

Right on to the enterprising Kwakiutl at Fort Rupert who put up the sign on his house front, for the benefit of the next batch of anthropology majors doing their field work: "White man get good information here—CHEAP— inquire within."

F. MATRIARCHAL VESTIGES AMONG THE SEMITES AND INDO-EUROPEANS

Evidence supporting the matriarchal theory of social origins is found not only among remnants of peoples still "primitive" today, but in all of our ancestors, including the overwhelming majority of humanity descended from the Semites, Indo-Europeans, Chinese, Black Africans, Malay-Polynesians, Dravidians, Paleo-Siberians, Mongol-Turkic-Finnic peoples. Semites share a common ancestry with the ancient Egyptians, Libyans or Numidians (today's Berbers), Hamitic and Kushite peoples in Africa, as evidenced by cultural, geographic, and linguistic affinities.

Evidence on matriarchal features, pronounced and vestigial, among the Egyptians from predynastic times till after conquest by Islam could fill ten thick volumes and keep going. Berber women are still in the ballgame; Berber women have tenaciously preserved the Berber nationality and language through centuries of domination by Rome, Islam, and western colonialism. The Tuareg women of the central Sahara, descendants of the Garamantes described by Herodotus in 500 BC, still pass elements of Berber culture down from mother to daughter, including the ancient Tifinagh writing system (which they invented and which is not shared with the men) found on rock paintings in the Sahara (Hoggar, Tassili-n-Ajjer, Taman-

rasset). These women have persistently refused to wear veils, even after centuries of Islam, and their husbands, fierce warriors, wear them instead.

The status of women remained high among the Arabs till a few centuries after Muhammad (who wouldn't have "made it" without the independent wealth of his wife Khadija), and Beduin Arabs retained matrilineal vestiges well into the XX century. All Semitic religions were distinctly woman-oriented until 2300 years ago, the Hebrews making the first patriarchal breakthrough in 400 BC, and then only with the help of the patriarchal Persians. Semitic kinship terms are of matrilineal origin, Semitic words for *humanity* are derived from the stem for *woman*, and the word for *nation* derived from the word for *mother*.

More discussion of early Semitic matriarchal survivals is found in W. Robertson Smith's treatise *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, which is not exhaustive.

Indo-Europeans separated out into their various nations at least 6,000 years ago, and all their derived fragments, including Hittites, Hindus, Iranians (Persians, Medes=Kurds, Sarmatians, Scythians, Tadjiks, Afghans), Greeks, Slavs, Celts, Latins, Balts, Germans, Phrygian-Armenians, Illyrian-Albanians exhibit pronounced matriarchal features when they first show up on the scene in history, with some features retained till recently. The languages feature matrilineal kinship terms (Sanskrit, ancient Greek, Latin, old German, modern Slavic languages, Armenian, Lithuanian). Slavic languages are rich in distinctions between in-laws on paternal and maternal sides, with modern Polish still distinguishing paternal and maternal uncles; and old English gives us *eam* for maternal uncle (Dutch *oom*, German dial. *Ohm*, *Oheim*) and *fetir* for paternal uncle (German *Vetter*, which now means "cousin"). Slavic languages also have frozen in them a matrilineal comment, in their different expressions for a man marrying and a woman marrying; but Sinhala (spoken in Ceylon) takes the cake, having the same words for maternal uncle=father-in-law (*mama*) and for nephew=son-in-law (*bana*), a clear vestige of cross-cousin marriage.

"Uncle" is a borrowing from the Latin *avunculus*, maternal uncle, with the meaning "little ancestor," thus emphasizing the position of the mother's brother in matriarchal society.

The Greeks had a word for it: *patrida*, the "fatherland," originally meaning "descent through the male line." But before 550 BC, they identified much more readily with the *metropolis*, the "Mother-city" or "womb-city," the city-state much closer to matriarchal origins.

The non-Aryan peoples who inhabited Europe before the arrival of the Aryan barbarians were all clearly matriarchal in character, not only given the time of history, but the concrete survivals in evidence. The most highly developed of these pre-Aryan peoples, the Etruscans and the (Minoan) Cretans, display prominent matriarchal features in their archaeological records, the Cretans being unsurpassed anywhere in the world in this respect. The Etruscan word for father has been lost, since the Etruscans never bothered to record it on their tombs, while they never failed to indicate the mother (*ati*). The Basques retained vestiges of matriliney in the Pyrenees till recently, and are the only nation in Europe where the men preserve clan-totem dances (*Hartz*, bear dance; *Zamalkain*, horse dance; *Guipuzcoa*, fox dance). Matrilocy was extant on some Aegean islands in the XX century (survival of the

pre-Aryan "Pelasgians").

The abundant matriarchal vestiges in Greek and Roman civilization are what clued Bachofen in to the previous existence of societies in which women enjoyed a higher status and independence, and wielded more direct influence in decisions.

G. MATRIARCHAL VESTIGES IN JUDAIC AND CHRISTIAN MAGIC AND MYTHOLOGY

Religion, whether extant or vestigial, reflects basic relations in societies past or present, indicating who should be boss (master and slaves, husband and wives, king and subjects), what should be done or not done, how, and why. Much debris from societies long obliterated is still preserved, like fossils, in religion; in many cases this constitutes most or all of what is known about some extinct society, the only preserved "hard" evidence or archaeological remains.

The same systems of magic (religions) that are powerful ideological weapons in the suppression of women today carry in their baggage, lugged from the distant prehistoric past, prodigious traces of the position of women in matriarchal society. All of the systems of magic and their paraphernalia were invented by prehistoric women in the first place, and still bear their stamp, as evident in the fact that male officiants in *all* religions have to don women's apparel when doing their thing, and the fact that women are banned from practicing magic under pain of death in many magical systems, both "primitive" and modern.

The earliest ethical moral, or tabu, seems to be banning of men from contact with women engaged in giving birth, suckling, or menstruation. This universal tabu was laid down and enforced by the prehistoric women, and pre-dates even the clan, since it applies to maternal-clan brothers as well as to men outside the clan. It is shared with many carnivorous, and even herbivorous animals, who chase the males away immediately upon being impregnated, and will not suffer the presence of males near their newborn cubs. For instance, the polar bear in early March is either in heat or has just given birth to cubs. One of the most dangerous enemies of the helpless cubs is the male polar bear, who enjoys dining on tender polar bear cubs. If a male polar bear shows up near the lair, the mother bear immediately prepares for a pre-emptive strike, and is a mean customer who should be given a wide berth, or else.

Menstruation being akin to parturition, this universal human ethic is extended to the monthly cycle, soaks up mystical correlations with the moon (sky-gods, sacred trinities for the three visible phases of the moon; sabbaths on which no work /originally no copulation/ is permitted, i.e., lucky and unlucky days, tabu days /holy days, holidays/ marked in red on the calendar; lunar halos; gods who die and resurrect in three days like the new moon, and who are always associated with the mother goddess; red cosmetics), and becomes a fundamental feature of every religion that has ever emitted emotional vibrations.

In early north-Semitic religions derived partly from the Arabian desert peoples, and partly from the more highly developed Shumerian civilization. The supreme deity of the Shumerians, the mother goddess Inanna (Ishtar to the Babylonians, !Anat to the Syrians and Hebrews, Astarte to the Phenicians), has left her imprint all over Western

Civilization. Besides creating humanity, and creating the original Forbidden Fruit, she is credited with causing the original Deluge by menstruating profusely. Her consort, the dying-and-resurrecting moon god Dumuzi (Tammuz to the Babylonians, Ba!al !Aleyan to the western Semites) got around quite a bit too. The Shumerians and Babylonians, among their many accomplishments, divided the monthly-menstrual magic cycle into four equal parts, and believed that Inanna menstruated every seventh day, on which day she was *evil*, and it was inauspicious to transact business, or undertake new ventures. Hence her imitator, the more recent Hebrew god Yahu, or Yahweh, has his period every seven days too (marked in red, i.e., menstrual blood, on the calendar).

Yahu appears to have been invented somewhere along about 1200 BC, but did not start off his career as the distinctly patriarchal woman-hating demon he later became. (But Hebrew records do suggest that women had to protect their children from this child-murdering demon by smearing menstrual blood on their doorposts as an apotropaic magic charm /Exodus 12:13 and 12:23 /Originally, Yahu functioned as a consort of !Anat, as demonstrated by the archaeological records. In ancient Hebrew temples, Yahu was the bull ("calf" as the surviving doctored Hebrew magical texts contemptuously put it), and !Anat the cow. Being in competition with the Ba!al, he also picked up the wild-boar totem of the latter, which is why the swine has such an enhanced sacred status in Hebrew magic (humans forbidden to partake of its meat, etc.). The texts indicate that a Yahu shaman, Elijah, ran a rain making contest against priests of the Balal to prove which god was the best rainmaker, i.e., which god was in !Anat's favor (Kings I). A colony of Jewish mercenaries on the island of Yabu (Elephantine) in the Nile river worshipped Yahu as a consort of !Anat as late as 400 BC.

As patriarchal trends in Hebrew society (and in the Near East in general) become more predominant, bitter battles broke out between representatives of the old and new orders. The bloody civil war lasting for centuries is the entire subject matter of the Hebrew Book of Kings I, II, and of the ravings of the women-hating shamans Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, et al. Even after the Babylonian exile, the patriarchal Yahweh faction had still not carried the day, Jews were still worshipping !Anat ("Queen of Heaven," Jeremiah 7:18 and 44:17-18). But the older matriarchal Hebrew religion was doomed, especially under the authority of the Persian Empire, which had already got rid of the Persian goddess Anahita, and had established an all-male patriarchal religion more in conformity with the social realities of the day.

Christianity is a system of magic which, while originating as a degenerate offshoot of a local patriarchal magical system (Judaism), became the ideological expression of the declining stages of the patriarchal Roman Empire, and became reshaped in the course of centuries as an ideology and system of magic acceptable to a broad range of European tribes and peoples (Germans, Celts, Slavs) going through various stages of transition from barbarism with conspicuous matriarchal hang-overs to patriarchal forms.

The sociopolitical situation in the Roman Empire that set the stage for christianity is discussed in Kautsky's *Foundations of Christianity*. The tribal and local-nationalities and foundations throughout the empires had been

obliterated, the patriarchal Roman slaveholding economy and culture was dominant throughout and dragging the whole empire down to ruin and hopeless chaos. Competing systems of magic were the Egyptian-derived matriarchal Isis cult and some Greek matriarchal mysteries, already doomed to oblivion, the Mitra offshoot of the patriarchal Persian religion, the stillborn cult of the Roman Divus Caesar, and several others. Despite its super-patriarchal late-Jewish origins, christianity soon adapted itself to its new surroundings and in so doing reflects the strength of matriarchal hang-overs in the decaying Roman Empire and surrounding barbarians.

The Jewish Yahu lost some of its primary features (monotheism, totem identification with the pig, nationality) and merged with the Divus Caesar to form the christian woman-hating father-god. The pantheon was supplemented by a fertility goddess and her typical consort, the dying-and-resurrecting god, the most popular deity in christianity. The mother goddess retained such typical features as no husband ("the Virgin," i.e. unmarried) or only a very subordinate superfluous "husband" who in any case is not the father of her child, and a baby suckled at her breasts in imitation of the Egyptian Isis and her infant Horus, Egyptian lunar halos included.

The other major christian deity is a zoomorphic compound totem god, an Evil God known as "Devil," retaining the horns, hoofs, trident, and tail of various pre-christian totem-derived deities. This is an imposing deity possessing more names and epithets than all the other christian deities combined, and comes in two colors, menstrual-red or black, as is the case with many other matriarchal deities. Black is a color associated with rainmaking, with the magic needed to produce black clouds laden with rain; hence the black cats, black goats, and black garb of rainmaking witches ("it's raining cats and dogs"). These deities were quite familiar to the peoples of Europe, in one variant or another, and their matriarchal features are often recognized and welcomed by non-European peoples, facilitating the latter's submission ("conversion") to christianity.

Women were forbidden to practice magic either inside or outside the system, under christianity, and any woman continuing ancient matriarchal tribal magic ("witches") were put to death. Men initiated into the practice of christian magic wear female-derived clothes, and in some christian sects are forbidden to marry. In some cases, the old matriarchal practice of male officiants castrating themselves survived (the women-hating Church "Fathers" Origen and Tertullio, the *castrati* sopranos of the Pontifical Choir). The one special subordinate place for women in christian cults, the convent of nuns, is a vestige of the Near-Eastern institution (mis-labeled "temple prostitution") of the Babylonians, Phenicians, and Hebrews, in which the female votaries were brides of the god. In the desexualized christian variant, although the female votaries are "brides of Christ," the dying-and-resurrecting god is not ritually impersonated by a live male.

The totem sacrifice of the dying-and-resurrecting god is retained in christianity, with cannibalistic overtones, and the sacrificed god is tortured and hung up on a high place ("Calvary" and "Crucifixion") as in the bear-sacrifice and reindeer-sacrifice totem rituals still surviving in Europe, Siberia, North America, and elsewhere, and dating

back to the paleolithic. The Egyptian (and later Jewish) practice of circumcision, practiced in some (and usually more obvious) form all around the primitive world as a male imitation of the vagina and of menstrual bleeding and its attendant powerful magic, was not consistently carried over into the christian system. Hostility to polygamy in principle is unique to christianity, found nowhere else; christians are the ONLY "strictly monogamic" people known.

All systems of magic are moral and ethical, i.e. enjoin some form of behavior backed up by the social opinion and force of the "community," but the principal and consistent moral or ethic of any patriarchal religion is the suppression of women, which is honored in the observance no matter how many tabus of other types are violated right and left, and Judaism and christianity are true to form in this respect.

Hundreds of further examples of matriarchal vestiges surviving in this area could be cited, and are especially interesting as conspicuous and readily familiar elements in the daily life of a totally patriarchal industrial civilization. "Superstitions," or isolated fragments of pre-christian magical beliefs no longer embedded in a coherent magical system, are also rich in clan totemic survivals (half-human half-beast creatures, contests of totem animals representing the confrontation of ancient tribal phratries [bullfights, horse racing], reincarnation in another species, snake dances and snake cults—which are invariably associated with and started by women) and other matriarchal vestiges (dread of number 13—the number of menstrual cycles or lunar months in a solar year).

H. MISCELLANEOUS "MOST PRIMITIVE" PEOPLES

The distortions introduced by bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists in the case of the Pacific NW coast tribes and the Eskimos, discussed here briefly for limitations of space, also characterize their treatment of their other favorite exhibits, the "most primitive" peoples exhibiting "strict monogamy," supposedly nuclear patrilocal families just like American Mom and Dad and Kids, "no trace" of clan-totem structure or the matriarchal substratum of such structures.

All of these peoples (Khoi-San, now extinct Patagonians, now extinct Tasmanians, California "Indians," Andamanese, Amazon "Indians," Ceylon Veddahs, Pygmies) have been ripped off by their neighbors, driven into remote and inhospitable areas, and then worked over by colonialism, and what was left of them, if anything, drawn into the capitalist world market and mutilated one more time, by the time the anthropologists showed up.

Studies of these remnants, either directly or through the data accumulated by field anthropologists and by observers on the scene at earlier stages, invariably reveal substrata of totemic clan structure, and a different earlier status of women. These people were not *always* in their present battered (or extinct) state. This battering does not affect all the characteristics and structures of primitive peoples in a uniform way, but naturally cases where clan structure has been distorted almost beyond recognition, or obliterated, are the favorite ones for anti-theoretical and anti-historical anthropologists. There are limits, of course—bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists did not try to pass off the inmates of Auschwitz and Buchenwald, "living under the most primitive conditions," as the most

primitive form of *mankind*—but they would if they could get away with it.

Comrades who have some academic familiarity with anthropology and ancient history, and/or enough interest in the area to devote some spare time, could make contributions enriched by Marxism and doubly enriched by

as much freedom from deeply rooted patriarchal-sexist preconceptions as possible (no easy job). Non-Marxists are not equal to the job, not even if they have acquired more degrees than a thermometer.

July 26, 1971