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THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

THE BICENTENNIAL AND THE FIGHT
FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Editorial Comment

WHY WE OPPOSE THE ERA

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The Bicentennial and the Fight for Women's Rights

When the Declaration of Independence declared, nearly 200 years ago, that "all men are created equal," it referred literally to *men* and not to women, who were looked upon as men's inferiors. Moreover, it referred only to *white* men and excluded the mass of Black chattel slaves, and thereby doubly excluded Black women. Consequently, the fight for equal rights for women in all aspects has been a cardinal feature of democratic struggles in the United States from the very beginning.

The record of oppression of women in this country has been a long and grievous one. On the spurious grounds that they lacked the necessary mental and emotional qualifications, they were denied the right to vote—a right which was not finally won until 1920. They were denied access to education and to many professions and skilled occupations. They were victims of an all-pervading male supremacy, which found its way into the very structure of our language, and were subjected to degradation and insult on all sides.

Especially hard was the lot of working-class women, who were burdened with endless hours of household drudgery and who suffered gross discrimination in hiring, wages and upgrading, as well as discrimination at the hands of the trade unions. They were made victims of double exploitation, and Black women and those of other oppressed minorities were triply exploited, yielding immense superprofits to the big capitalists.

Against this grinding oppression, women fought heroically. Working women played an important role in the class struggle, a role which grew as, with the expansion of industry, their participation in the labor force rose. They were instrumental in organizing sweatshop industries such as garment manufacture, in which women workers were concentrated. And on occasions when they could not gain admission to existing unions they formed their own unions. They fought for equality with male workers in pay and upgrading, and for protective legislation for women workers.

They played a key role in many bitterly-fought strikes. On many occasions they fought side by side with the male workers. But all too often, as a result of the poisonous influence of male supremacy, they were left to fight on their own.

Out of these earlier labor struggles there emerged a number of

outstanding women leaders, among them "Mother" Mary Jones, Ella Reeve Bloor, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Rose Wortis. The last three become leading figures in the Communist Party.

Equally noteworthy in the struggle for women's rights has been the fight for the freedom and rights of Black women. The role of Black women themselves in this fight has been historically reviewed by Bettina Aptheker in some detail in the February issue of *Political Affairs*. Here, too, there emerged a succession of heroic leaders, ranging from Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman to such figures as Ida B. Wells, Mary Terrell and Mary McCloud Bethune in later years, to name but a few. Among the more recent leaders two are especially worthy of note: Claudia Jones, for a number of years head of the Communist Party's National Women's Commission; and the heroic Communist leader Angela Davis.

Another major arena of struggle was the fight for women's suffrage. Among its leaders may be mentioned such figures as Susan B. Anthony and Anita Whitney, the latter a charter member of the Communist Party.

Out of these struggles grew the observance of May 8 as International Women's Day, a holiday which, like May Day, had its origin in the United States. It began on March 8, 1908, when the women needle trades workers in New York, reacting against their brutal exploitation, held a women's day demonstration to fight for the building of the needle trades unions and to demand the right to vote. The success of the rally, attended by several hundred, led to similar rallies in other U.S. cities and in other countries. And in 1910, at the International Socialist Congress, the great German Socialist Party leader Clara Zetkin moved that March 8 be designated an international women's day, dedicated to the fight for equal rights in all countries.

This year we celebrate International Women's Day in conjunction with the observance of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the United States—of 200 years of struggle against the exploitation and oppression carried on by the U.S. ruling class. This issue of *Political Affairs* is devoted mainly to articles dealing with the present status of the struggle for women's rights. It is clear that great strides in the struggle have been made since 1910. But it is also clear that there is still far to go to resolve the problem of oppression of women.

The appearance of this special issue stems from the initiative of members of the National Commission on Women's Equality of the Communist Party, particularly of its secretary, Comrade Carmen Risturuci. For these contributions we are grateful. Additional articles were planned which were, unfortunately not received in time. We hope to publish these in coming issues.

The Communist Party Enters the Presidential Race*

Gus Hall: It is a great honor to be the Presidential candidate of the Communist Party, USA, especially in this Bicentennial Year Presidential election.

I am happy and proud that Jarvis Tyner will be on the ticket with me again, as CPUSA candidate for Vice President.

Our campaign will be, in essence, a great challenge. We will challenge head-on the present dangerous trends and policies being pursued and pushed by Republicans and Democrats alike.

We will challenge, in total, the politics, economics and the power of Big Business.

We will challenge the current fraud that the people are living too high off the hog—that the people must accept austerity and that wages, social security, unemployment benefits are excessive. The only people living high off the hog are the banks, the corporations and the military brass.

We will challenge the idea that people who now can't make ends meet must be additionally robbed through increased taxes.

We will challenge the deception that big government spending *per se* is the cause of the country's economic ills. The problem is not big government spending; the problem is big government spending in the interests of Big Business.

We will challenge the concept that racism is an inevitable part of our lives. We will raise the question of the necessity of the necessity of outlawing racism as a central issue of our campaign, as we did in 1972.

We will challenge the concept that there is an excess baggage generation of youth in our country; that it is normal that 40 per cent of our youth in the ghettos and barrios will be permanently barred from employment and alienated from society.

We will challenge the view that the government should not set up massive programs for construction of housing, hospitals, schools,

* We present here the statements of the standard bearers of the Communist Party in the Presidential elections, Gus Hall, General Secretary, and Jarvis Tyner, Chairman of the New York district. The nominations were announced at a press conference held at the office of the Central Committee, which was opened by brief introductory statements by Comrades Henry Winston and Angela Davis.

day care centers, recreation facilities, etc.

We will challenge the fraud that the energy complex should be in private hands and for private profit.

We will challenge the trends that will slide us back to the cold war days of tensions and confrontation.

We will challenge the fraudulent deception that the government cannot afford programs that benefit the people. If we slash one-half of the wasteful arms budget; one-half of the subsidies and gifts to Big Business, then we can easily afford these programs.

We will say again and again in this campaign that the problems will not disappear without some basic changes, fundamental shifts.

The time to curb the economic and political power of monopoly is here.

The time for a six-hour day, without reduction in pay, is here.

The time to nationalize sections of industries, especially the energy industry is here.

The time to end racism is here, and NOW!

The time to write a new, democratic electoral law is also here.

The time to elect workers to public office is also here.

To get the biggest clout from your vote, vote COMMUNIST.

As the campaign progresses we will present meaningful programs that will radically and fundamentally depart from the politics-as-usual of the two major parties.

In this sense our campaign will be a challenge to the existing policies of monopoly rule.

Jarvis Tyner: My views are expressed in the statement and the comments of Comrade Hall. I merely want to add that it is our firm feeling that the Communist Party candidates running in the 1976 elections will be decisive to the advancement of democracy in our country overall, and particularly to combat virulent racism, racist terror and violence which is sweeping our nation, and being spewed by the mouths of the major candidates of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

It is our task to articulate and express the needs and basic feelings of the working people of our country. These are the only candidates for President and Vice President who are workers, trade unionists, Black and white. In that sense, we represent a new wave of new politics for our nation. This will make a most valuable contribution to the political process in our country.

Furthermore, I think it is important to look back at the 1972 campaign and where we were in the field. In that year, the combination of Hall and Tyner representing the views and concepts associated with the Communist Party presented the most advanced program of

all. We reached many thousands, yes, millions of people. We fought against anti-Communism and racism and fascism. In that sense we helped to advance the basic needs of the people and to create the basis for a movement, for the liberation of oppressed minorities and emancipation of working people. So it is also a great honor for myself to run representing the Party along with Comrade Hall, and to represent the working class ideas that will shape the future of our nation.

Joint Statement of the Candidates: We accept with pride the honor of standard bearers of the Communist Party in this Bicentennial Year Presidential election.

We pledge to fight the corrupt and reactionary course of the government and its corporate masters.

The Ford Administration and its pussycat Democratic "opposition" are slashing the living standards of the American people. They are putting the American people on short rations—in order to swell the profits of Big Business.

For the American people they demanded "austerity"; to the giant monopolies they hand out billions.

The Administration and its so-called opposition have ravaged our cities and their schools, hospitals, libraries and other social services—even as they have covered up the worldwide corporate corruption of Lockheed, Gulf Oil, Tenneco and other monopolies.

And in all this they have consciously employed racism as a prime weapon to divide the working people and split the ranks of the anti-monopoly resistance.

Now they brazenly assert that the nation has been too generous with social services, that wages and pensions are too high, that we cannot afford new housing and health facilities—even as they appropriate new billions for the highest peacetime military budget in our history.

In short, the Administration and its allies want to reverse the hard won gains made by the people in the last 50 years, including trade union rights, social welfare and civil rights laws. The Democratic "opposition" is no buffer against this drive; it is part of it. We don't have a veto-proof Congress; we have a veto-crazy President.

Republican and Democratic candidates are busy peddling the notion that big government spending is the source of our problems. The real issue is: Spending for what? Spending for the needs of the people—or spending for armaments and giveaways to Lockheed and Penn Central?

We Communists are for a massive works program to rebuild the cities, to construct needed housing, schools and health facilities and

mass transit, a vast program that will provide jobs for the 10 million unemployed, at union wages—all to be financed out of corporate profits and subsidies and by a drastic slash in military spending. Cut out the billions for cruise missiles. Tear down the slums and give the people decent housing!

We are for a law establishing the 6-hour day without a cut in pay as the legal standard.

The two old parties are doing nothing to cut taxes for the masses of the people. We say that taxes can be cut sharply by a genuinely democratic tax program that will compel the monopolies and the super-rich to pay their fair share of taxes.

The major parties seek "concessions" to the oil and gas interests. We are for the nationalization, under democratic control, of the entire energy monopoly.

All the major candidates are against busing for school integration. Why! Because they want to leave untouched the basic pattern of segregation.

We Communists declare that we are for busing and every other step necessary to end racist segregation in schools, jobs, housing and everywhere else. We say: outlaw racist practices!

Despite wide public outrage over the activities of the CIA, the leaders of both major parties are in fact covering up the dirty work of the CIA. The current proposals for an "oversight" committee are simply political cosmetics.

We Communists say: Padlock the CIA—and the FBI, too!

More and more of the old party candidates are moving back to the policies of the cold war. They are parroting the ultra-Right slogans of Reagan, Wallace and Jackson. These policies would push us off the peaceful rails of detente onto the death track of confrontation.

We Communists will continue the fight for detente, for world peace and an end to imperialist enclaves—including the Panama Canal Zone and Guantanamo Bay.

We challenge the revival of the Big Lie, the 30-year-old hoax of alleged Soviet aggression, the cold war myth that has already cost the nation two wars, more than 500,000 casualties and over a trillion dollars in armaments.

Corporate propagandists and their agents in government scream in horror at the cost of such a program. It will cost about one half of the wasteful arms budget; about one-half of the profits of the giant monopolies; and about one-half of the subsidies and giveaways to Big Business corporations such as Lockheed and Penn Central.

The question is not: "Can the country afford it?"

The question is: "Do we have the courage and can we organize the political strength to take away the special privileges enjoyed by Big Business and the super-rich at the expense of the people?"

The question is particularly appropriate today, 200 years after the British colonialists were thrown out of the U.S. The pirate forefathers of the Rockefellers, Morgans and Duponts took over our land and we are today ruled by their descendants who monopolize the banks, industry and government.

But today millions of Americans are rebelling against the monopolies. Increasingly the American people are disgusted with the two-party system of monopoly rule. About half the eligible voters don't bother to vote. Of those who do, many declare themselves independent politically and are seeking genuine alternatives to the old parties.

We propose to advance such alternatives and unite with all who will battle against monopoly domination of our economy and government. Despite the maze of anti-Communist, anti-democratic electoral laws, we will seek to get on the ballot in a majority of the states of the union. In making this fight for ballot status, the Communists are fighting for the democratic rights of all Americans.

We propose to make this Bicentennial Year a year of struggle for the positive substance of the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence, reaffirming the principle declared 200 years ago—that "whenever any form of government" destroys the rights and security of the people, "it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government . . . organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

(Continued from p. 65)

ly Marx's historical approach, his logic, his materialist theory of knowledge, "his analysis of the contradictory substance of the categories of the capitalist mode of production" his discovery of the twofold character of labor, money, commodities, capital, etc., his presentation of the laws and tendencies of capitalism. In struggling with the scientific method he asked and answered the question of the relation of the logical analysis of capitalism and the real

historical process of its origin and development. It was with the assistance of the dialectical method that Marx so ably exposed the empiricism, eclecticism and superficiality of the method of most of the bourgeois economists—"vulgar" economists as he was wont to call them.

Both biographies are highly recommended as scholarly reference works which serious students of Marxism will read, study and use again and again.

Why We Oppose the ERA

The Communist Party, USA, from its very inception, has always placed very clearly the fight for full equality for women workers as basic to the struggle for democracy and for social progress. This has been the basis for the Communist Party's opposition to the Equal Right Amendment (ERA), though we recognize that many of the proponents of the ERA support it because they see it as an expression of the desire and need of women for the achievement of full equality.

I have had numerous experiences discussing the ERA with women in the movement and presenting the position of the Communist Party concerning the ERA at debates and forums. A number of important questions arise time and time again. These experiences provide the basis of this article. This is by no means an in-depth analysis of the ERA or a discussion of all facets of the Amendment. Such a study to unravel all the complexities of the Amendment from a working-class perspective would require a collective of researchers and legal experts.

Our objection to the ERA as it is now worded ("Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any state on account of sex.") is based on three points. First, the amendment is a *mandate for equality* which, in its simple declaration of equality of rights between men and women in law, does not define what is needed to achieve full equality in life. Second, the amendment would wipe out all special protective legislation for women on the basis of their being "restrictive labor laws," and simultaneously threaten to prohibit any future legislation setting specific conditions to guarantee equality for women. Third, its application is in some respects ambiguous, and its ultimate interpretation as to what does and what does not constitute equality will rest with the courts, which are, we might add, controlled by the corporate monopolies.

While we strongly support the aspirations to which the ERA is designed to appeal, our position on this, as on all policy questions, is the result of careful deliberation concerning what is in the best interest of the working class, and in this case working-class women in particular. This deliberation involves careful analysis of the direction of development of state monopoly capitalism, the concrete economic and social conditions which workers confront, and the intensified contradiction between the working class and state monopoly

capitalism. The confusion and controversy over the ERA stem from the lack of clarity on the part of certain forces concerning what steps are needed to move toward equality of women under a system which strives for maximum profits at the expense of all workers, women included. This drive is reflected at one point in the exploitation of women as a source of cheap labor and at another point by their expulsion into the reservoir of unemployed.

In 1970, the percentage of women in the work force was as high as 41 per cent, and women accounted for three fifths of the increase in the civilian labor force during the preceding decade. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, nearly two thirds of all women workers are either single, divorced, widowed or separated, or have husbands earning less than \$7,000 per year. Economic necessity, in the great majority of cases, is what compels women to work. They are concentrated in low-paying, dead end jobs; the average woman earns three fifths as much as her male counterpart. In the midst of the current economic crisis, unemployment of women has reached a high of per cent, and certain gains in employment which women had achieved in some areas, including basic industry, have come under intensified attack and have been reversed, as women are among the first to be laid off.

Women confront these employment conditions in the midst of an overall crisis of inflation and unemployment in which no stratum or section of the working class is left untouched. Officially, unemployment has reached eight per cent, and among youth, specifically minority youth, the figure is an astronomical 35 per cent. The number of persons officially classified as living in poverty in 1974 increased by 1.3 million, to 24.3 million. Substantial cuts are occurring in all social services, including education, health and day care, and are having a devastating effect on women and on the working-class family as a whole. In 1972, 4.4 million working mothers had 6.5 million children under 6 years of age. It is estimated that for those 6.5 million children there existed 905,000 places in licensed day care centers. Budget cuts are aimed at further limiting and/or reducing this number.

This clearly reflects the movement to maximize profits by cutting social costs at the expense of the working class. This necessitates a deliberate erosion of the basic democratic rights of workers by state monopoly capitalism. It is within this framework that the demands in the struggle for the equality of women must be made.

ERA—Mandate for Equality

The concept of the "mandate for equality" is a very important

one in discussing the Equal Right Amendment. This concept of placing men and women on an equal basis before the law without defining what is needed to guarantee genuinely equal rights for women ignores the historical oppression of women. It says that men and women are equal before the law under a system in which women have historically been unequal, and which has thrived on the divisions it creates among the workers, and in this case between men and women. It denies the huge profits to be made off the backs of women by monopoly capital, which can employ all of the instruments of male supremacy to create an unequal pay scale. It denies the double burdens of racism and male supremacy borne by Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian and Native American women.

The danger involved in this oversimplified concept of equality is that it moves away from the reality of women's status under capitalism, and divorces the struggle of women from the basic conflict between the working class and the ruling class. To illustrate the point further we may refer to a recent study which argues in favor of the ERA, "A Commentary on the Effect of the Equal Right Amendment on State Laws and Institutions," published by the California Commission on the Status of Women and funded by the Ford Foundation.

ERA and Criminal Justice

Discussing the effects of the ERA on the penal system, it states, "It is only the physical integration of men's and women's prisons that will ensure the equality for the sexes which passage of the ERA will affirm as the law of the land." (P. 38.) To begin with, we may point out that this approach abstracts from the whole corrupt nature of the judicial system, and would leave untouched the abysmal prison conditions which have led to one protest after another, which is the real issue at hand.

The study argues that the ERA would compel integrated prison facilities of men and women, and that the courts would uphold the right of women to separate restroom facilities on the grounds of privacy. The study continues (p. 69), "Although where feasible, the courts generally prefer to equalize 'up' to a higher level, that is probably not practical given the small size of the *more comfortable women's prisons*. Theoretically it would be possible for states to build new and more comfortable prisons in which to house both men and women prisoners; *but the cost of such a building program will make it prohibitive in most states.*" (Emphasis added.) Thus, when the progressive demand is for more humane prison conditions, more funding and rehabilitative programs,

a just penal system, an end to the genocidal treatment of Black and other nationally oppressed minorities, a reordering of the penal system within which the rights of women would also be assured, the effect of the ERA would be simply to eliminate the "privileged" position of women. It is interesting to note that in Maryland and in Washington, D.C., after ratification of the ERA, a number of bills were introduced interpreting the ERA in this sense. For example, SB397 would eliminate the right of female prisoners to have separate facilities in county jails, correction or detention houses and reformatories; SB301 would integrate male and female criminals of all ages in state prisons; SB327 would integrate boys and girls in state training and rehabilitative institutions; SB157 would authorize the use of women as well as men prisoners for labor on public roads if they are "physically able to work."

Certainly the representatives of state monopoly capitalism perceive that the ERA would be beneficial in cutting costs while maintaining inferior conditions.

The California study also cites the findings of the National Commission on Violence, which indicate a "chivalry factor" in the bonding, sentencing and paroling practices for women. The authors of the study then conclude that under the ERA this leniency for women would be prohibited, and the treatment of men and women equalized.

Affirmative Action

The question of the meaning of full equality and what is needed to achieve this goal is what provokes the greatest variance of opinion concerning the Equal Rights Amendment. Our estimate is that demands must be for equality to be achieved on a new and higher level. Equality means full economic rights, the right to earn a living, to have equal access to all jobs and to pay on an equal basis. It means that safe and decent conditions of work should be legally guaranteed. Women's rights must include the right to an education, to training, to upgrading, etc. The right of women to enter the workforce, to be effective, requires the attainment of a certain level of facilities for pre-school child care, for public education and for health care. Achievement of equality for women means political and economic guarantees of all of these, *with compensation for past discrimination and the resulting inequalities*. Our estimate would lead us to support a Constitutional amendment which would mandate specific laws to guarantee equal rights on all these levels.

Affirmative action programs are crucial with respect to overcoming the effects of past discrimination against women, and especially

racist discrimination against Black and other minority women. They involve *preferential* treatment for women in hiring, promotion and training. What would be their fate under the ERA?

There are two approaches offered in answering this question. The first, the absolute approach, was taken in an article in the *Yale Law Journal*, by Brown, Emerson, Falk and Freedman, *A Constitutional Basis for Equal Rights for Women*. The study published by the California Commission on the Status of Women refers to this article as follows: "Under the Yale article's analysis of the absolute approach to the Equal Rights Amendment, no 'compelling state interest' could ever be sufficient to justify sex-based distinctions. Thus, if a state school of engineering decided to institute a 'benign quota' system and admit 50% women, although only 10% of the applicants to that school were women, such a program would be unconstitutional under the ERA."

Under the absolute approach, no consideration could be given to the obstacles placed before women which lead to a situation in which only 10 per cent of professional school applicants are women. Need we mention that discrimination toward women begins in the first grade and becomes a factor discouraging women from even considering a more skilled profession later in life? Even more severe are the combined effects of male supremacy and racism which close door after door to Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Asian and Native American women attempting to enter skilled professions. Clearly, the absolute approach would be a step backward, and ultimately a denial of equal rights for women.

The other possible approach mentioned by the California study is "strict scrutiny," under which courts could decide in individual cases that "discrimination against men was necessary in order to remedy the effects of past societal discrimination toward women." (P. 39.) Note that the wording views affirmative action and compensatory aid for women as a *denial of rights to men*. This approach is similar to that being taken by many as regards affirmative action programs for Black people, using them to constantly pit white against Black workers in the struggle for jobs. This has also been the rationale in recent court decisions for striking down affirmative action programs. All this is further testimony to the need to couple the demands for full employment and for affirmative action.

The California study attempts to give the impression that there are two legal options in the interpretation of the ERA with regard to affirmative action. But the Yale article previously cited states clearly that the "strict scrutiny" approach would not be permitted as an interpretation of the ERA. *The Yale article became part of*

the record of the Congressional debate on ERA, and is considered by most proponents of ERA as being the interpretation most likely to be upheld by the courts.

Protective Legislation

According to the California study, the ERA would invalidate the state protective laws for women which are still effective for employers of fewer than fifteen persons, who are not covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The areas of protective legislation that would be effected are minimum wages, overtime pay, rest periods, rest facilities and prescribed days of rest. Other areas could include maternity benefits, maximum weekly hours of work and weight lifting limitations.

Here much of the argument in favor of ERA centers on the assertion that protective legislation is "restrictive" to women and therefore places women in a separate and unequal status from men. Yet, at a time when the aim of state monopoly capitalism is to take back any concessions wrested from them by popular and working-class struggles, we question whether giving up hard-won legislation is not playing into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The proponents of ERA argue that protective legislation is obsolete. There is no question but that protective legislation must be strengthened and updated. But the crux of the problem with protective legislation lies with its deliberate abuse by employers, who under the law escape without penalties for such practices. But do we attempt to solve this problem by eliminating such legislation, and thereby placing women on an equal footing with men to be exploited? Bear in mind that in practice a much smaller proportion of women than men enjoy even the limited protection provided by trade union organization under capitalism.

Many argue that protective legislation has already been wiped out by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the body which sets guidelines for implementation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. On the federal level this is largely true, but is not yet so on the state level. The ERA would effectively eliminate all remaining state protective legislation. And what is important to remember here is that the ERA would establish a *Constitutional barrier* to any future legislation giving special protection to women workers.

Is Extension Automatic?

Some have argued that ERA poses no threat to protective legislation for women, because under ERA all existing protective legis-

lation will automatically be extended to men also. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

Protective laws in some 21 states have already been nullified by Title VII of the Civil Right Act, which, like the ERA, prohibits discrimination on account of sex. On April 6, 1972, the EEOC issued guidelines extending protective laws covering minimum wages and overtime pay to men, but instructed employers to drop all other classes of protective standards for women, if they can prove that "business necessity" prohibits extending them.

The California study states (p. 208), "The 'business necessity' exception to the principle of the extension of benefits to members of both sexes was written into the (EEOC) guidelines to provide for very unusual situations, *such as continuous assembly line manufacturing processes*, where, if an employer were required to give all employees a 15 minute rest period twice a day—a common state provision applicable to women only—the *employer's entire business could be seriously injured*. The Commission most emphatically did not intend the 'business necessity' exception to be construed to include cost or inconvenience to the employer as acceptable reasons for not giving benefits to either sex. The exception will, however, undoubtedly cause further litigation over the scope of its meaning." (Emphasis added.) But what could be a more "serious injury" in the eyes of big business than added costs and reduced profits! Obviously this clause, if applied as interpretation of ERA, would allow big business to avoid extending protective legislation to men based on a proof that profits were threatened.

Let us quote the California study for an example of what legislation might be nullified for women rather than extended to men: "While originally conceived of as a 'benefit,' maximum hours legislation cannot be simply extended to both sexes neutrally as other 'benefits' laws can. Many businesses, such as the auto industry in nonrecession times, need workers for more than forty-eight hours a week. Further, many workers both want to work and need the extra money which overtime work at premium pay provides. Therefore, to place an absolute prohibition on any employee working more than a certain number of hours a week, in good economic times, *would be impossible for industry and very unsatisfactory for the many employees who want to work the extra time to earn premium pay.*" (Emphasis added.) The reasoning which governs is the same as that which argued why women would have to give up "more comfortable" penal facilities and could not be put more baldly: women will be compelled to relinquish something which they have because to extend the same condition to men would be inconvenient or too

expensive for the authorities or for the monopoly corporations.

A further example of rulings under Title VII: In a case involving a Steelworkers local union against the U.S. Steel Corporation, an appellate court, utilizing the "business necessity" clause, affirmed a district court decision which held that women employees were not entitled to back pay for lunch breaks required by state laws. The employer gave men the same lunch breaks, but paid them for the time because, under the law, *men could be interrupted during that half hour for work*. The court held that the employer had complied in good faith with state law and that back pay was not due. Although the study quickly reminds us that "business necessity" has not yet been ruled to apply to the ERA, it states (p. 209), "It is important that state statutes be thoughtfully revised after the passage of the Amendment; these problems should not be left to litigation." Certainly, a precedent is being set for big business to interpret the amendment to their benefit.

In California, following ratification of the ERA, the Industrial Welfare Commission (IWC) did not extend the requirement of overtime pay after eight hours of work per day to men, but voted to require overtime pay only after ten hours of work per day for all employees. Other IWC recommendations call for "working" meal periods, the elimination of scheduled rest periods and lounges and for allowing minors to work until 12:30 at night. In Connecticut, after ratification of ERA, restrictions on the employment of women between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. were repealed and employers need no longer furnish seats for women employees. State after state has eliminated overtime restrictions on women and nightwork restrictions.

The ERA would also nullify state laws which prescribe different weight lifting limits for men and women. Under the ERA, individual ability to meet a uniform weight lifting requirement would be the only allowable condition of employment. Yet certainly encouraging one-to-one physical competition of men and women is not the answer to safeguarding women's reproductive capacities.

The California study concludes, "with the passage of the Amendment all employees, regardless of the number of employees, will be placed on an equal footing as to the conditions of employment for both male and female workers." Are we then prepared to say that women need no special laws governing their conditions of work which could affect their health and safety as women?

ERA has gotten support from representatives of big business such as President Ford, the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Although the representatives of big business must give certain concessions in regard to ERA, it is obvious

that they feel that they have more to gain from its passage than to lose, specifically in the area of increased profits.

I wish only to add one point which should be obvious: uniformity of rules of work and employment for men and women under existing social conditions may preserve or even foster inequality between the sexes. Consider the impact of the nullification of laws limiting overtime work for women, which still exist in a number of states. It would mean essentially capitulation to the demands of employers for unlimited forced overtime, for better opportunities for exploitation. *Employers would still be free to discriminate among potential employees on the basis of who is willing and able to work the greatest amount of overtime.* In the majority of cases, since women bear the principal burden of domestic work, compulsory overtime would effectively bar their employment. And even if a woman agreed to compulsory overtime work, it would create an unequal burden for her and untold stresses on the family.

Who Will Interpret the ERA?

The ERA states that equality of rights shall not be abridged "by the U.S. or by any state on account of sex." The ERA will apply only to the actions of government and those private institutions which are so intertwined with the government that they can be said to be acting for the state. It will not apply, just as the 14th Amendment to the Constitution does not apply, to the actions or activities of wholly private persons or groups. The California study notes, "The business activities of bank and savings and loans associations have never been held to constitute state action and therefore have not been subject to the requirements of the 14th Amendment; it is more unlikely that such institutions would be held to the requirements of the ERA." Immediately after the passage of the ERA in California, the Bank of America in Sacramento announced that it would discontinue taxi service for women workers on the night shift. Certainly the spirit of the Amendment filtered down to this particular bank.

On a great variety of questions, interpretation of the ERA is open to many ifs, ands and buts. Ultimately its meaning would be determined by the courts.

The California study, referring to overtime pay and minimum wage laws, states (p. 207), "However, if a state legislature does not act after passage of the ERA, the analogy provided by the 1972 EEOC guidelines makes it virtually certain that any court asked to consider the effect of the Amendment upon a statute which confers such benefits on women only would extend those benefits to men

also. Nevertheless, to avoid litigation after passage of the Amendment, legislation would be drafted and enacted which specifically extends these state laws to employees of both sexes." (Emphasis added.)

In terms of affirmative action programs, it states (p. 41), "This question also is one which will have to be litigated after the effective date of the Amendment in order to settle it authoritatively." So the ERA, because of its ambiguity, will necessitate a slow, tedious process of litigation for its interpretation. The only option for a working woman will be the time and expense of this long legal process.

This ambiguity is even more dangerous because we are speaking of a Constitutional amendment. Its reversal would involve the same tortuous process required for its adoption: a two thirds vote of both houses of Congress and ratification by three fourth of the states.

There are many aspects of the amendment, not presented here, which played a role in the recent referendums on state ERA's held in New York and New Jersey. The pros and cons presented in the elections sidestepped the basic issues, creating an atmosphere of confusion and diversion from the real questions. One thing was clear: a majority of women were uncertain about what effect the Amendment would have on their lives and the future of their families. This was the reason for its defeat.

The Women's Bill of Rights is a legislative program initiated by Women for Racial and Economic Equality which can be the catalyst for affirmative legislation for women. It incorporates a full program of on the job demands, of demands for health and child care and for the right to a livelihood. It proposes this within the framework of the struggle against racism and big business. It is specific, with no loopholes for big business to exploit at their discretion.

The Equal Rights Amendment has attracted many supporters because it seems to reflect in a few words the aspirations of women from all areas of life for full equality. But to make these aspirations a reality, it is essential that we have legislation which states: "Equality under the law shall mean: equal pay for equal work; equal access to employment and promotion; improved protective legislation for women and men; affirmative action programs; comprehensive federally funded health care; paid leave for child care; universal pre-school child care; paid maternity leave; protection against forced sterilization; the right to abortion; quality education for all; a guaranteed income."

But between this and the ERA there lies a world of difference.

Afro-American Women

*I have been forty years a slave, and
forty years free, and would be forty
years more to have equal rights for all.*

Long before Sojourner Truth uttered these words which have become a frame of reference for more than 300 years of struggle, Afro-American women had objectively cast their lot in the framework of a freedom struggle embracing *all* who bore the marks of tyranny through enslavement. Looked upon as less, even, than their Black male counterparts, they nonetheless saw primacy in a fight whose culmination would lay a *central* basis for the future triumph of democracy and reason.

Today, forming a major component within the Black liberation movement, their history of selfless motivation and sacrifice can also be felt in the overall movement for an end to monopoly domination. Increasingly dispersed to all areas of social service and production, Afro-American women, in many ways, help set a steady pace in mounting and sustaining the fightback efforts of the entire working class. We are, clearly, long past the point where it is sufficient simply to note the fact that, in addition to national, racial and class oppression, they suffer added discrimination as women—lowest paid, dirtiest jobs, etc. Even the most superficial survey of both Black liberation and working-class struggles shows that the often written-about and referred-to *potential* of Black women has come to fruition on many fronts. This is especially true in regard to a growth of conscious anti-imperialist activity.

We have not yet fully analyzed the consequences of the recently ended International Women's Year for Afro-American women. The failure to do so is, perhaps, an extension of the old "peace movement" lie of Black indifference to international affairs. This basically racist idea found particularly crude expression, most recently, in the February issue of *Midstream*, a monthly Jewish publication of the Theodore Herzl Foundation. Carl Gershman, Executive Director of Social Democrats, U.S.A., in "analyzing" the relationship between the Black and Jewish communities, concluded that "Of course Blacks are not an essential ally of Jews on the issue of Israel. Overwhelmed

as they are by their own problems in the U.S., they have little interest in foreign policy, even in American-African policy, which presumably, would command some attention."

In attempting to obscure the overwhelming failure of the Social Democrats' effort to transform growing anti-imperialist consciousness among Black people into support for Zionism (an effort which, unfortunately, found friends among a few Blacks, including some Black women officials at the highest levels of public office), Gershman denies the reality of heightened African-Afro-American solidarity in a period when a massive front against U.S. interference in Angola—*spearheaded by Black people*—succeeded in quickly exposing and isolating the reactionary foreign policy of the White House within the walls of its own Congress!

Zionist opinion in itself, of course, should not be confused with general progressive sentiment; but as long as the vision of a Black, indifferent mass continues to hang on in some quarters of the U.S. movement for international solidarity, the particular role of Black women is doomed to obscurity. The road traveled by them throughout International Women's Year gives added emphasis to the absurdity of the notion that the Black community would—or indeed could—remain outside the arena of international struggle.

The opening of International Women's Year in 1975 found a situation of already increased political activity among Black people. Seeking an escape hatch in the walls of monopoly's chamber of economic horrors, walls which (in spite of Ford's assurances to the uneasy, masked and costumed enthusiasts waiting in the wings for the signal of the Bicentennial's opening) were becoming more encrusted with unemployment, racism, political repression and attacks on welfare services, Blacks increasingly adopted new levels and methods of organization.

There had been a notable increase in activity among Black women. Within the framework of both Black women's organizations and others headed by or with a membership consisting largely of Black women, they figured heavily among the major outspoken opponents of reactionary domestic and international policies. On every level—from trade unionists to community and welfare rights activists to public officials—they formed the backbone of the struggles for quality education, against FBI harassment of civil rights activists, for the freedom of Joanne Little, etc.

Their increased political activity—especially in union organizing—found greater reflection in the pages of Black publications.

There had also been a notable increase in writings by Black women

in all of the major Black newspapers and periodicals, as well as in the general Left and (for better *and* worse) the bourgeois press. They rarely confined themselves to so-called "women's feature" stories, but rather addressed issues which strike most critically at the fibers of bourgeois democracy.

By the middle of International Women's Year, Black women, while accounting for only one-tenth of one percent of all U.S. elected officials, were 15 per cent of all Black elected officials in the nation. 530 in all, they included 4 federal representatives, 9 mayors, 35 state legislators, 134 members of municipal and 25 members of county councils, and 204 school board members.

Significant also was the much belated recognition this year by *Time* magazine of Addie Wyatt as one of the 12 "Women of the Year." Ms. Wyatt, National Vice-President of CLUW and director of the women's department of the Almagamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of America, was describe by the Baltimore *Afro-American* as "a pioneer in the battle against sexual discrimination in hiring, promotion and pay." She became a trade unionist at 17 when she was "putting lids on cans of stew at Armour Star & Co." Having, in many ways, outgrown the limitations of the largely agitational program of PUSH, where she is also a member and leading figure, Ms. Wyatt now makes a strange "co-" to Betty Ford and Susan Brownmiller, whose conclusion on Black men and rape in her book, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, gives greater clarity to the reasons for Black female disdain of the white feminist movement.

Thus, at the beginning of 1975, the time was ripe, and International Women's Year provided an added incentive to the already developing anti-imperialist consciousness among many sectors of Afro-American women. Their day-to-day search for alternatives to a crisis-ridden existence here at home led, naturally, to the questioning of U.S. policies of aggression against "third world" states and national liberation movements. Much credit goes to the different solidarity movements in the U.S.—with Africa, with Chile, with Vietnam—which mounted educational campaigns on women's struggles internationally. Growing awareness of the role of women in the African liberation movement helped to popularize the demand for the release of ANC leader Dorothy Neyembe and all women political prisoners in South Africa. Speaking at an August 9, 1975 celebration of South African Women's Day, Patricia Roberts said, "It is easy to see that the persecution of South African women is not unlike that of our own Joanne Little, Angela Davis or Lolita Lebron.

We, as Black women and U.S. citizens, must separate ourselves from the shame our country places upon us by upholding apartheid." Thus, in 1975, the world-wide struggle against apartheid won thousands of new fighters among Afro-American women. In such an atmosphere, Black actress/entertainer Pearl Bailey could look for little support from her sisters as she took up her post with the U.S. delegation to the United Nations.

Black women anti-apartheid fighters became natural allies of the Angolan people in their struggle against internal and external reaction. Women radio commentators and news reporters were among the first to gear their programs toward MPLA solidarity support activity. Women emerged, more than ever before, as official spokesmen for organizational and independent viewpoints on platforms of debate between UNITA/FNLA and MPLA supporters. During the State Department and assorted Maoist (particularly African Liberation Support Committee) efforts to distort the positive role of the Soviet Union in aiding the true liberation movement of Angola, the voices of Black women could be heard, often above many others, denouncing the anti-Communist lie which would disarm the Angolan people in the face of U.S.-instigated South African and Zairean invasion. Many who had been enlisted by UNITA to serve as nurses in Angola withdrew on understanding that they might be called upon to administer aid to Portugese mercenaries and white South African military regulars. As a result of their close association with this struggle, Black women have emerged with new levels of political and ideological maturity.

As Black women have become more readily discernable as an important factor in the raging ideological debate, there have been growing attempts to utilize them as the voice of reaction. While the ruling class seriously miscalculated Pearl Bailey's value in influencing the thinking of the Black community, they more accurately judged the value of others whose recent history of support for progressive causes gives them legitimate leadership stature. Thus, the unfortunate leap from U.S. Representative Barbara Jordan's dynamic stand against the Nixon crimes during the Watergate hearings (a stand greatly enhanced by her sound image of self-confidence and racial dignity), to a theoretically illogical, irrational and immoral show of support for the Zionist position at the UN and in the Middle East, should be viewed in the most serious manner. Such tactics are part of a *conscious* effort to "set the pace," or, more accurately, "offset the pace" of mushrooming interest among Black women in world affairs.

For all of these reasons, the U.S. delegation to the World Congress for the International Women's Year in Berlin, GDR, was greatly enhanced by the participation of a group of Afro-American women well schooled in the realm of political struggle. Black trade unionists, teachers, artists, community activists, students, social workers from all areas of the country eagerly embraced the opportunity to *internationalize* their struggle as women and pledged to work in solidarity with all people in what has become the official "decade to promote women's rights (1976-1985)" for equality, development, peace.

Further illustration of the growing anti-imperialist consciousness of Afro-American women is found in quotes from a statement by the "third world" caucus of the U.S. delegation entitled "Women in the Struggle for National Independence and International Solidarity." It states:

As representatives of minority women who have been engaged in the struggle against American imperialism, we feel it is our duty to raise the nature of the atrocities and oppression which racism has caused both within and outside the United States.

The main thrust of the document was to emphasize the *solidarity bond* among nationally oppressed peoples within the U.S., and to identify U.S. imperialism as the *common oppressor* of all working people at home and around the world. It listed, with admirable frankness, the U.S. government's crimes against Native American Indian, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Haitian, Dominican, Chinese and Afro-American peoples. At the same time, the document clearly expressed the intention to fight back:

We have always struggled against racism and imperialism. We, as minority people, have quickly recognized the irrational racism used to justify U.S. imperialism and have struggled against it.

Using the Spanish-American war as a point of reference, they declared,

Black and other minority people have refused to fight in these unjust attacks. "Hell no, we won't go," we have said to the requests of the U.S. imperialists for us to join in their inhumane attacks on the Korean and Vietnamese peoples.

The caucus ended with a list of resolutions ranging from a demand

for the expulsion of South Africa from the UN and an expression of "militant solidarity with the just struggles of the people of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Chile and Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa," to the condemnation of the treatment of "the very talented and committed Paul Robeson, who was denied the right to work or to leave the country because of his support for progressive causes."

This document, unanimously adopted by Commission Seven and entered in the records of the World Congress, now stands as an international testimony to the militancy and ability of nationally oppressed women in the U.S. It carries the recognition that *they stand among the main freedom fighters of the world and constitute an important force in the global struggle for peace and progress.*

International Women's Year also went far in bringing many Afro-American women to the fight for socialism. Anxious mothers who must lead their children to school through racist, anti-busing mobs here in the U.S. take added hope and courage from knowledge of the existence of societies giving massive attention (concretely exhibited in the GDR throughout the World Congress) to the needs of women and children. Delegates to the World Congress quickly embraced the ideals of socialism and returned with an orientation towards exploring its possibilities in insuring the future for their own families.

Within the U.S. movement, such women form an important link bringing together working-class women of all races and nationalities in a concerted effort to strengthen the anti-monopoly people's front. They are the main opponents of feminism—anti-working class in its essence—and most clearly emphasize its departure from the legitimate fight for the equality of women.

A full assessment of the impact of Afro-American women within the anti-imperialist movement has yet to be made, but theirs is clearly a role which, in addition to affecting many areas of struggle—Black liberation, women, youth, labor, etc.—in the U.S., carries consequences in the world movement for peace and socialism as well.

Trends Among Puerto Rican Women

In the past twenty years women have been entering the labor force to a degree where almost half of all American women are working. Today, women comprise more than 40 per cent of the total labor force. Between 1950 and 1960 the rate of labor force participation for all women rose from about 35 per cent to 40 per cent.

For Puerto Rican women, however, that upward trend has not been a reality. Racism, in particular, has played a major role in further deteriorating the conditions for Puerto Rican women in the realm of seeking jobs, advancing their education and in maintaining better living conditions and freeing themselves of economic and social oppression. Today, the participation rate of Puerto Rican women in the labor force is 27 per cent. Whereas other women have been entering the labor force in increasing numbers, Puerto Rican women have been more and more excluded from the labor force. In 1970, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (*A Socio-Economic Profile of Puerto Rican New Yorkers*, p. 70), the proportion of Puerto Rican women who were working was one third less than their participation of a decade earlier. Of major significance also is the dropout rate among Puerto Rican women of prime working age: 24-44. This is important since the median age of Puerto Rican women is 21.

Between 1910 and 1960 the rate of their labor force participation fell from 40 per cent to 38 per cent. From 1960 to 1970 the rate dropped to 27 per cent. A sharp contrast can be seen in the participation of working women as a whole, compared to that of Puerto Rican women. It is also interesting to note that during the 1950's the male Puerto Rican workers had a higher rate of unemployment than their female counterparts.

Between 1960 and 1970 unemployment rose for Puerto Rican women. Today, by very conservative estimates, the figure for women aged 20-24 living in low-income areas is approximately 12 per cent. However, the figures for Puerto Rican women under 20 has been as high as 30 per cent.

The situation of Puerto Rican women, therefore, has remained extremely difficult and worsens as our economy continues in a deep crisis. During the past decade there was an increase of more than 200,000 jobs in New York City. However, the rise in the num-

ber of jobs was more than offset by the growth of the labor force, and the job situation in the last five years, complicated by racist cutbacks in employment, education, community services, etc., has steadily worsened.

In 1969, the number of Puerto Rican women working was 47 per cent of the corresponding number of Puerto Rican men. This was the lowest of any group. This most critical situation arises from a complicated predicament where women face a lack of education, job training and discrimination in hiring. Racism, which is the most vicious and effective tool of monopoly capitalism, manifests itself in every aspect of the Puerto Rican women's reality.

To begin with, the bulk of Puerto Rican women workers have always been in light industry. For hundreds of Puerto Rican women in New York City their first job is in the sweatshops of the garment industry. Most are concentrated in factory work such as electrical, and operatives in apparel and textiles, who comprise 23 per cent. In manufacturing of durable goods they are 20 per cent of the total, and in machinery, including electrical, they are 15 per cent. In food and related jobs they are about 9 per cent. In short, 51 per cent of Puerto Rican women are blue collar workers, of whom most are service workers, operatives and laborers. These are the industries in which Puerto Rican women have been and still are concentrated.

In recent years, to go back to the problem of decline in the labor force participation of Puerto Rican women, a number of the industries which employ them in above average numbers have cut out many jobs, creating unemployment as well as increasing speedup for those remaining on the job. These industries, such as metal products and electrical equipment, as well as apparel manufacturing which, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, have been the largest single employer of Puerto Ricans, including women, cut out approximately 137,000 jobs between 1960 and 1970, a decline of 40 per cent in total employment. Furthermore, job loss in this section continued at a rate of 12,000 per year through 1973.

To add to this, the plants and factories in which many Puerto Rican women workers were employed have migrated to the suburbs and rural areas where employers can pay even lower wages and escape potential unionization. For instance, increasing numbers of New York-based firms and plants have moved to Long Island, Westchester and Rockland County. Since less than 10 per cent of Puerto Ricans travel to work by auto, they are extremely limited in access to these jobs. Therefore, what has been the largest area of employ-

ment for Puerto Rican women has become a shrinking preserve. The protection of a strong union in most cases is absent. The majority of Puerto Rican women are unorganized and those who are in unions, as in the ILCWU, face a racist, class-collaboration leadership ready to sign sell-out contracts.

For those Puerto Rican women who hold office-type jobs, their work is predominantly of a clerical nature involving machine operation, typing and filing, rather than secretarial. Thirty-four per cent of Puerto Rican women were in clerical work in 1970. Here again we evidence another form of exclusion which is racist in nature.

In fields where the pay is higher, Puerto Rican women have also consistently been excluded except for some tokenism. In the professional and technical categories they are barely represented. In 1960 they held little over 1 per cent of the administrative and managerial positions. They held 2.9 per cent of professional and technical jobs, though by 1970 this figure had risen somewhat to 6.5 per cent.

When looked at closely, however the jobs which Puerto Ricans have obtained other than blue collar jobs are at the bottom of the given occupational classification. In professional work, for example, they are predominantly technicians, health, social, recreational workers and dieticians. These are practically the only technical and professional categories in which Puerto Rican women are found. In elementary and secondary schools Puerto Ricans accounted for less than 1 per cent of employees in 1970. Those Puerto Rican women who do work in education are for the most part teachers' aides, para-professionals, and some bilingual instructors.

Exclusion from higher-paying jobs because of racist and male supremacist practices, added to the cutting out of major areas of work for Puerto Rican women, has made life very difficult in a time of rising inflationary prices and rising taxes. The lack of adequate child care has also hampered the ability of women to work.

In order to break out of this bind and obtain more decent and higher paying jobs, Puerto Rican women have been in the forefront of the struggle for educational advancement. This was so particularly during the late 60's in the fight for open admissions at the City University of New York.

This struggle, and only this, brought about a breakthrough for these women. From 1967 to 1972 there was a fourfold increase in the number of Puerto Rican students enrolled in the city university. The majority of them entered community colleges in areas where Puerto Ricans live, such as Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn. At Hostos Community College, for example, women were studying nursing, dental

hygiene, laboratory and X-ray techniques. These vocational courses also had a community orientation. Alongside this, women won the right to day care facilities if they were taking vocational training.

Yet, as stated before, the last five years have brought about tremendous setbacks in social services, eliminating many of the jobs Puerto Rican women had gained as a result of their fight for better education. At Hostos the vocational programs are facing a shutdown because of budget cuts. Along with the training programs will go the day care centers.

Therefore, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics puts it, Puerto Rican women are "less able to find work, whatever their educational attainment." They state however that the gap narrows with years of school completed, approaching the proportion for all women who are college educated. Yet for many Puerto Rican women, finding a job is becoming more of a hope than a reality. Maintaining Puerto Rican women in this position only continues to foster attitudes of male supremacy.

Where there has been a lack of educational opportunities for women, job training programs such as Manpower have not compensated. Only 4 per cent of the working age Puerto Rican women in low income areas have completed any job training. In the 16-21 year out-of-school group, the proportion of Puerto Rican women with job training is only 10 per cent, and the likelihood is that those jobs will be geared towards cosmetology, office machine operation and service work, the so-called women's jobs!

Thus, as one can see, the limitations are great and the difficulties manifold for Puerto Rican women seeking a livelihood. However, also seriously oppressive is the exploitation for those employed on the job, particularly with respect to income and wages. Female blue collar workers had a median annual income of approximately \$1,500 less than their male partners. For example, male laborers in 1969 earned a median annual income of \$5,060, whereas that of Puerto Rican women was only \$3,647. The median income of men operatives was \$5,020, and that of women only \$3,639. It is clear that Puerto Rican women are used consistently as a source of cheap labor.

It is the families of these workers, moreover, which are adversely affected by the tremendous profits reaped by bosses from the toil of Puerto Rican women. The women heads of families who were in the labor force in 1969 earned an average income of \$3,188, and more than half fell below the poverty level. This is crucial since the number of families headed by women is one in three within the Puerto Rican population, a proportion twice that of the rest of the

population. In addition the income of Puerto Rican women heads of families was even lower than that of other families headed by women. Also, in a Puerto Rican family, the wife must work as well as the husband in order to obtain an income level comparable to that of an average New York family with one male wage earner. Thus the family income of Puerto Rican families falls 40 per cent below the average of total population and approximates that of Black families. This situation can only lead to women being forced to accept welfare, and the official estimate is that four out of five Puerto Rican families headed by women are on welfare.

Even for those women who have reached a college-level education, exploitation in the form of low wages is also maintained. This is proven by the fact that Puerto Rican women with a college degree earn little more than high school graduates of the total population. Thus, even when the female head has had a little more schooling the family may still be part of the impoverished sector, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report.

Whatever the level of educational attainment of the family head, the impoverished sector is substantially higher for Puerto Ricans than for other families in New York, that is, twice as much. This helps to explain why 30 per cent of the Puerto Ricans in New York City were forced to seek public assistance in 1969.

Another obstacle towards women working, which goes without saying, is family responsibilities. Of the women interviewed in New York City's low income areas, 54 per cent cited family responsibilities for leaving their last job. Among those not working, about a quarter said they would work, given access to satisfactory child care facilities. Interesting also is the fact that 14 per cent complained of poor health, which in low income areas is extremely prevalent.

But in discussing the sharp *decline* in the labor force participation of Puerto Rican women one cannot, as many would like, attribute it to family responsibilities as a major factor. Over the decade there has been no real change in family size or living patterns. It is true that there has been an increase in the number of Puerto Rican female heads of families, yet their participation in the labor force approximates that of Puerto Rican women who are married.

However, decent day care would do much to alleviate the situation of many women who are now forced to take welfare.

With this oppressive condition experienced every day by Puerto Rican women there is a rising anger and frustration which is being channeled into a constructive fight-back. During the struggles of

the sixties the school issue affecting Puerto Rican women, which involved their children as well as themselves, was that of quality integrated education. In New York City for example, School District 1 in the Lower East Side, where the children are predominantly Puerto Rican, racist maneuvers were being carried out such as the ousting of Superintendent Luis Fuentes, an outspoken supporter of bilingual education and preferential hiring of minority teachers. One of the leading racists involved in this was UFT President Albert Shanker.

Between 1963 and 1967 dozens of community boycotts were organized, as on the Lower East Side, in response to the increasing segregation and deterioration of schools. The Board of Education, blocking any integration proposals, became the target of hundreds of Puerto Rican and Black women demanding that school districts be responsive and accountable to the needs of the children. Major demands were bilingual education and hiring of minority persons as teachers, teachers' aides, and paraprofessionals. Smaller school board districts with locally elected boards would control budget, personnel and curriculum. This would have made it possible to implement more equitable qualifying examination procedures, thus opening more teaching positions to minority women.

Puerto Rican women, along with Black and white women, fought to advance the struggle around education and day care. Ideologically what was desired was parent-community control to give parents a say in quality integrated schools, comprehensive day care and intercultural studies.

Needless to say, it was these activities and struggles which opened up some jobs to Puerto Rican women as well as Black women in the low income areas of New York. The programs in higher education, particularly in the City University, such as SEEK and open admissions, enabled greater numbers of Puerto Rican young women to enter college. In high school, the general degree, which amounted to nothing, was eliminated with the advance to open admissions, ensuring the entrance of Puerto Ricans, particularly women, into more meaningful vocational and academic studies.

Today, these victories, large and small, are quickly being taken away. There is a general attack on the unions, on the peoples' movement and on the struggle of workers, particularly women. In these present times of rule by the Emergency Financial Control Board and Big Mac all social services are being cut. More taxes and money which should go for services are being absorbed into the military budget. Programs such as affirmative action are

quickly losing ground where workers are being pitted against each other along racial lines. Many white workers are led to feel resentful that in these times jobs should be given to the so-called "illiterate" and "incompetent" minority women. Democratic rights on the whole are being swept away. (People, especially women, who are the first to be fired, are afraid to speak out, fearing the loss of their job even when they face tremendous speedup and bad working conditions.)

The needs of Puerto Rican women today are desperately urgent. Women, particularly Puerto Rican women, need a strong program of action. However, Puerto Rican women alone cannot struggle from a narrow nationalist viewpoint. Isolated, they will never effectively retard the all encompassing deterioration which they face today.

A program of action on which *all* women, united, will organize is an urgent demand.

Women for Racial and Economic Equality (WREE) has put forth such a program. It is composed of Black, white, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Asian and Native American women. WREE is reaching out to trade unionists, unemployed women, welfare recipients, students and senior citizens. Their organizing efforts are around pressing issues of local communities as well as of workers on the job. WREE is demanding the passage of a Women's Bill of Rights which calls for such things as an end to unemployment, equal pay for equal work, ending discrimination in hiring and promotion, organizing the unorganized, the passage of special legislation to protect the health and safety of women workers. In addition, they are demanding federally funded parent controlled-child care as well as health coverage and maternity leave with pay.

These are among the list of issues around which women must begin to rally unitedly to gain true equality—economically and socially. This program proposed by WREE means for a great number of Puerto Rican women obtaining meaningful jobs, education and family stability. It means an end to insecurity of losing a job, as well as the building of their own self-confidence in gaining leadership qualities in community and related struggles, and of independence from relying on the husband always to provide.

Puerto Rican women must organize themselves around such a program or similar programs along with the rest of their sisters. Only then can we as women ensure future equality in an atmosphere of peace, free from racism and exploitation.

Women under Capitalism and Socialism

The superior "quality of life" socialism offers is particularly visible in the sphere of women's equality. In this area the difference between the socialist and capitalist systems is growing and few people will any longer dispute that women's gains in the socialist countries are not equalled in any of the capitalist states.

A decisive step toward women's liberation took place during the industrial revolution, which drastically changed the techniques of production beginning with the mid-18th century. The introduction of industrial machinery required the employment of large numbers of workers in mills and factories. Many women previously engaged in piece work at home were now employed in the factories. Karl Marx describes the impact of this change in *Capital*. "However terrible and disgusting the dissolution, under the capitalist system, of the old family ties may appear," he wrote, "nevertheless, modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, young persons and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between sexes. . . . Moreover, it is obvious that the fact of the collective working group being composed of individuals of both sexes and all ages, must necessarily, *under suitable conditions become a source of humane development*, although in its spontaneously developed, brutal, capitalist form, where the laborer exists for the process of production and not the process of production for the laborer, that fact is a pestiferous source of corruption and slavery." (*Capital*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, Moscow, page 460. Emphasis added.)

The rapid rise of women's employment in Germany in the wake of that country's industrial revolution is illustrated by August Bebel in his book *Women and Socialism*. In the 25-year period from 1882-1907, Bebel writes, employment in industry rose by 75 per cent for heads of families and 64 per cent for heads and their dependents. The dependents were women and children forced by abysmal poverty to work under inhuman conditions. In that period the number of male industrial workers doubled while that of women tripled, raising women's share of the work force to 22 per cent. (*Die*

Frau und der Sozialismus, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1974.)

While capitalism needed women workers, it resisted all efforts to grant them equality because equal pay for equal work would have curtailed profits.

In 1830-40 women workers in Northern U.S. textile mills mounted widespread strikes against low pay and inhumanly long working hours, ranging from 12½ to 15 or 16 hours a day. They eventually won a 12 hour day, but at reduced pay. Today, a century and a half later, though women make up 40 per cent of the U.S. work force, their wages still average only about 60 per cent of men's. Even today there are only the sketchiest provisions for women's advancement and no provisions at all for the special problems of 13 million working mothers. There are no significant provisions to protect women workers during pregnancy and childbirth.

The drive for profits, which is capitalism's supreme law, not only fosters unemployment—called reservoir of labor by those who need it—but also wage discrimination against women and racial and national minorities. The relation between these two types of super-exploitation has been documented in Victor Perlo's recent book *Economics of Racism USA* (International Publishers, New York, 1975). In it, he analyzes a report by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) which shows wages lost by Black workers and by women workers employed by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company in 30 metropolitan areas. The report estimates that discrimination against women workers cost them \$433 million per year and that Blacks lost \$225 million per year. Of the Black workers 79 per cent were women. "Assume," Perlo writes, "that 79 per cent, or \$178 million, of the \$225 million lost by Blacks in these areas on account of discrimination were sustained by Black women. That leaves \$244 million of the loss sustained by white women."

The situation is similar in other capitalist countries. In some a strong labor movement has won a few marginal concessions. But, as Bebel points out, women's liberation in all its aspects "is just as impossible in the present social and political situation as the solution of the working class problem and thus the path of solving the women question will also be the path for the solution of the working class problem."

The basis for equality of women and minorities under socialism does not rest on idealist or moral concepts. It is the nature of socialist society that makes this equality inherent in the system.

In *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Oekonomie*, Marx writes

that capitalism does not use the rising labor productivity to reduce working hours for the society as a whole to create free time for everyone's personal development. The capitalist tendency is to create disposable time on the one hand, and to convert it into surplus labor on the other. Under socialism, Marx explains, the development of social productive power will be so rapid that everyone's disposable time will increase despite the fact that production now has to assure affluence for all.

This means that socialist society needs the full creative capacity of everyone and cannot afford to lose the contributions of a single individual.

Bebel expanded on this in his book nearly 100 years ago. He wrote that in socialist society it will be the duty of all ablebodied persons to work, without regard to sex, because "society cannot exist without work. It therefore has to demand that everyone who wants to satisfy their needs contribute to the extent of their physical and mental abilities." Because everyone is duty bound to work, he writes, all are interested in seeing that work be as productive as possible because the length of working time and the economic rewards will depend on the degree of productivity. It will also be in the common interest that conditions of work be conducive to health and that it "be as agreeable as possible and offer variety."

It is the premise of any socialist society that the living standard of the population continually increases, not merely in reference to consumer goods, but especially in terms of social and cultural welfare. Therefore, Bebel says, a "common interest motivates all to improve, simplify and speed the process of work. The ambition to invent and discover will be greatly stimulated and workers will strive to outdo one another with proposals and ideas."

This need to develop all its workers regardless of sex, national or racial origin is a basic motivation of socialism. It is the basis for women's equality under socialism; but even where socialism is victorious equality does not arrive automatically. It must be carefully nurtured.

Wherever it has taken power socialism has taken energetic steps to establish women's equality. In 1917, only weeks after the October revolution, decrees concerning women's rights in marriage, in relation to children and their personal liberty were passed. The first Soviet constitution, adopted in July 1918, guaranteed women's right to vote and to be elected, two years prior to the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women's suffrage.

Women's rights in the Soviet Union were extended as improved conditions permitted. By 1936 the second Soviet Constitution was not only able to incorporate women's equality before the law, but to outline conditions that would enable women to fully utilize their legal rights. Article 122 of that Constitution states: "Women in the USSR are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life," and adds the avenues for implementation: "The possibility of exercising these rights of women is insured by affording women equally with men the right to work, payment for work, rest and leisure, social insurance and education, and by state protection of the interests of mother and child, maternity leave with pay, and the provision of a wide network of maternity homes, nurseries and kindergartens."

Years before the adoption of this Constitution, Lenin had pointed out repeatedly that equality before the law, while necessary, is not enough. During the preparations for elections to the Moscow Soviet (on February 21, 1920) he issued an Appeal to Women Workers in which he urged the election of more women workers. "The Soviet government was the first and only government in the world which, as a government of toilers, abolished all the privileges connected with property which men retained in the family laws of all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic," he wrote. "But that is now not enough. It is a far cry from equality in law to equality in life. We want women workers to achieve equality with men workers not only in law, but in life as well. For this it is essential that women workers take an ever increasing part in the administration of public enterprises and in the administration of the state. By engaging in the work of administration women will learn quickly and they will catch up with the men." (*Women and Society*, International Publishers, New York, New York, 1938.)

The discrepancy between legal and actual equality, as demonstrated by developments in capitalist and socialist countries, can easily be shown by a few statistics.

Time magazine devoted an issue (January 5, 1976) to the advances of women in the United States, where women have a relatively high standard of legal equality. Achievements reported by *Time* compared with achievements in the same fields in the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic make the point.

Time reports that only 5 per cent of the elective offices in our country are held by women. In the Soviet Union 37.7 per cent of the deputies on all levels are women and in the GDR 36 per cent. In the U.S., *Time* reports, 9 per cent of the physicians are women

while in the Soviet Union they are 72 per cent and in the GDR 46 per cent. *Time* puts the number of women lawyers in the U.S. at 7 per cent, the Soviet Union reports that 36 per cent of the judges and 42 per cent of the prosecutors are women and the GDR puts women's share in judicial personnel at 43 per cent. Even allowing for variations based on differences in the structure of the parliamentary and judicial systems these figures tell the tale.

Time merely tips its hat to women in unions. The fact is that only 17 per cent of the women workers in the U.S. are organized and their share in union leadership is very small indeed. In socialist countries union membership, while voluntary, approaches 100 per cent because it offers many advantages and because socialist society provides a friendly atmosphere for trade unionism. In the Soviet Union women make up 50 per cent of the union membership, 51 per cent of the local leadership and 43 per cent of the central leadership. In the GDR women comprise 49.7 per cent of the union membership, 47 per cent of the Federation's executive body (which is equivalent to the AFL-CIO Council), 47.8 per cent and 48.2 per cent of the district and county leaderships respectively. This is particularly significant when one considers the important managerial role of trade unions under socialism.

Similar situations exist in all other socialist states. Variations of women's equality are predicated on the degree of industrial development, national traditions and the vigor of conscious efforts made to overcome backward attitudes.

The question is often raised why, despite this rapid progress, the percentage of women in top Communist Party and state functions is still small. To point out that it is greater in socialist than in capitalist countries and that they have many more women in secondary jobs is begging the question. There are two reasons for this lag—one is the difficulty in changing human behavior patterns, the other the difficulty in establishing the material conditions for women to reach the top of their careers despite time lost in the process of child bearing.

In *Critique of the Gotha Program* Marx points to the difficulty in changing behavior patterns. "What we have to deal with here," he writes in his polemic against the draft program of the United Workers' Party in Germany in 1875, "is a communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, *still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.*" (*Marx-*

Engels Selected Works, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 17. Emphasis added.)

I will describe some of the efforts made in the GDR to overcome these "birthmarks of the old society." William M. Mandell, in his book *Soviet Women*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue, deals with many aspects of the change in the Soviet Union.

Dr. Herta Kuhrig, chairperson of the research team on women in socialist society at the GDR Academy of Sciences, points out that three steps are necessary to achieve full social equality. (*Equal Rights for Women in the GDR*, publication of the GDR Committee for Human Rights, Berlin, 1973.)

One step, Dr. Kuhrig writes, is to improve material conditions, within the possibilities of the national economy, to enable women to better take advantage of their rights "especially in the field of politics, employment and education."

To do this, a whole number of special measures have been introduced in recent years. A decree passed in December 1972 rules that working women with children under 16 years of age receive one additional day off with pay while taking vocational training, the total not to exceed 60 days. This is in addition to the time off granted all workers who study to improve their vocational qualification. Similar regulations exist for students with children in other areas of study. As a result the number of women in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs declined from 51.8 per cent in 1971 to 43.4 per cent in 1974.

There are also numerous other devices set up by government and industry to encourage career advancement for women on all levels. There are special training courses for women—in some cases held during working hours—to enable them to attain higher qualifications. These regulations are anchored not only in the Constitution, but also in the Labor Code, the Family Code, the Law on the Protection of Mother and Child and the Rights of Women, the law on the Integrated Socialist Educational System and others which all have special provisions dealing with efforts to attain full social equality for women.

Another step toward full equality, Dr. Kuhrig says, is the protection of women in their role as mothers to eliminate the consequences "of centuries of discrimination . . . step by step. The additional duties imposed on the woman in her role as mother must be compensated for."

In this respect there are, first of all, the increasing number of child care facilities. At the present time there are, for every 1,000 children in each age group, 403 places in creches (six weeks to

three years); 804 nursery school places (three to six years), and 640 extended day care places in schools for pupils from the first through fourth grade. Plans call for full satisfaction of the demands for these facilities by 1980. This compares with 10 creche and 173 nursery school places per 1,000 children in 1949.

In accordance with a decree of May 1972—when increased productivity had made this step economically feasible—working mothers with three children and mothers with two children who work in shifts receive 3½ hours a week off their working time without loss in pay, and also receive three to nine extra days of paid vacations.

There is also a comprehensive scheme of state financial support which is received by all families with children, but which favors large and single parent families.

The third area Dr. Kuhrig enumerates as essential to attain full equality is the eradication of "the birthmarks of the old society." "By means of political and ideological persuasion," she writes, "men and women must be brought to develop a correct opinion about the role of women in society and the family, in harmony with the character of socialist humanism. What matters above all is to *orientate on the unity of words and deeds* and to subject old and backward views and modes of behavior, formed under the preceding systems of society, to bold, but helpful and systematically critical assessment." (Emphasis added.)

This is the more widely discussed area of women's equality in the GDR. Here many prejudices instilled by the fascist propaganda of women's role—*Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (Children, Kitchen, Church)—have not yet been fully routed. Ilse Lange, a candidate member of the Socialist Unity Party's Politbureau, published an article in *Die Wirtschaft* (*The Economy*) of May 5, 1974. It dealt with the relation between ideology, household chores and the woman's job. In it, she shows that services and labor-saving devices in the 1965-70 period improved substantially, but that the time women spent on household chores scarcely diminished. While she found this disappointing, she said that research showed three causes:

- It had not been possible to change the basic attitudes of women toward housework. Old habits had proven more tenacious than anticipated.

- Ideological work had not succeeded in showing women that household work will stretch like rubber unless this tendency is consciously fought.

- The greater affluence socialist society provides has increased expectations with respect to home comforts, the satisfaction of which in turn prove to be more time-consuming, including fancier food

preparation, well-set tables with real table cloths, etc.

She quotes a survey which shows that women still perform the lion's share of the household chores, namely 78.7 per cent of the time needed, while husbands did a 13 per cent share of the work and children or other persons 8.3 per cent.

In connection with this Ms. Lange expresses disappointment with the fact that a more just division of labor between men and women had not yet been achieved. She concludes that a much more intensive educational and ideological effort is needed to accompany the material advances in order to attain full equality for all women.

Advances in this respect are markedly better among young people. While I could find no statistics to substantiate it, I know from experience that among young families the men take on a greater share of the chores. Young men are also more likely to stay home when a child is sick—the state guarantees paid leave for a parent of a sick child.

Fuer Dich (For You), a popular women's magazine, last spring asked its readers to write about husbands who had broken with backward modes of behavior. We offer here one example of the replies which illustrates the advances that are being made. A reader, Gisela Krohn, reported that she had been offered a chance at post-graduate studies for her doctoral thesis in Moscow. Her husband, also a scientist, undertook to take care of their small daughter—of course enrolled in a nursery—during the year she would be away. This meant a delay on his own thesis and other problems for which the cooperation of his place of work was essential. Among other things he took off the "household day"—a monthly day off with pay guaranteed to women by law. "Rolf is an example for a future generation of husbands," she wrote and added that the spread of such examples will make it "easier for growing numbers of women to improve their qualifications. The doors will also open for young mothers with small children—doors still closed today because too many marriage partners are still old-style husbands and fathers."

The coincidence of the material and social base for equality and the re-education of the population has brought great strides toward equality of the sexes under socialism. Frequently inequities which still exist are used by anti-socialist propagandists to downgrade the accomplishments and to obscure that fact that women's equality has made much greater strides during the few decades of socialism than it has during the entire period of the existence of capitalism, which started two centuries ago.

If women's equality can only be attained under socialism, why struggle for it at all under capitalist conditions?

There are several aspects to the answer. One is that even under capitalism concessions can be wrested from the bourgeoisie and women's conditions improved. An example is the successful fight for women's suffrage in capitalist countries. Another is the current struggles for equal pay and job opportunities, which have won some concessions from the ruling class and alleviated some hardships of working women. The same goes for the struggles for state-supported child care facilities, free medical service during pregnancy and childbirth and paid maternity leave.

Through such struggles women gain experience in methods of organization, tactics of mass struggle, insight into politics and expertise in many fields which will enable them to make full use of those opportunities for equality that exist.

In addition, such struggles help overcome "backward views and modes of behavior" which will not only yield tangible benefits at present—as for example enlisting men in sharing household jobs—but will permit more rapid progress once the material basis for equality is established.

A very important aspect of the struggle for women's equality is that it must be fought in unity with the working class and national and racial minorities. The demand raised by some feminist groups that the main struggle be directed against men is divisive, would deny women their natural class allies and blunt the edge of the struggle that must be directed against the ruling class.

In his report to the 21st Convention of the Communist Party USA, Gus Hall put the struggle for women's equality in focus when he said that women are "a key link within the class lineup of the people's formations of struggle. The struggle against discrimination practiced against women workers must be placed within the context of a developing class consciousness and a unified working class." (*The Crisis of U.S. Capitalism and the Fightback*, International Publishers, New York, 1974.)

In conducting these struggles it is important to disseminate the truth about the great strides of women's equality under socialism. This will equip the participants with an internationalist and class outlook and permit them to show that the working woman's true interests lie in the establishment of socialism.

Marx and Engels recognized the unity of interests of various sections of the working class and the need for the establishment of socialism in the *Communist Manifesto*: "In the place of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms," they wrote, "we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

Against the Brazilian Dictatorship*

In the name of the Central Committee of the Brazilian Communist Party and our delegation, I wish to congratulate the representatives of our brother parties who are here, especially our dear host, the Communist Party of Cuba, its members, and through them all the Cuban people.

I should also like to thank you for your hospitality and for your attention to creating such good conditions for the success of our meeting.

We think that this meeting is a great event for the revolutionary movement of our continent. It represents an important step for the unity of action of the Latin American Communists, and we can say confidently that it will have a decisive influence in the future, in the process of uniting our forces, institutions and governments which are already participating or that will participate in the fight for peace, for independence of our peoples, for democracy and against imperialism, reaction and the fascist menace.

We are sure that this meeting will make a decisive contribution to increasing the authority of each party in its respective country, as well as to strengthening the unity and cohesion of the international Communist movement.

To be more precise, dear comrades, the importance which we Brazilian Communists attach to this meeting is that it takes a decisive step towards the intensification of the solidarity among our peoples, towards increasing support for those who are fighting today in their countries against fascism and reaction, a common danger which haunts us all.

Please allow me this opportunity to brief you as to the present situation in Brazil.

In American imperialism's neocolonialist strategy for Latin America, Brazil occupies a position of considerable importance. Through Brazil, American imperialism hopes to guarantee its domination and to maintain its exploitation of the peoples of our countries and to stop their march to socialism. It follows, then, that the fascist military dictatorship which rules Brazil not only constitutes a burden for the Brazilian people, but is also a constant threat to the peace and

* Speech presented at a Conference of Latin American and Caribbean Communist Parties held in Havana, Cuba, in June 1975.

security of all peoples of Latin America.

The Brazilian dictatorship, besides being a base for all the most conservative and reactionary forces of the region, is also a focal point for all political and military aggression in Latin America and in several African countries.

Washington understands very well the importance of keeping a country like Brazil under its influence. Some years ago, speaking about the perspectives of U.S. foreign policy, Kissinger said: "The best method to cause a great impact in many countries would be to elevate one country that could attract and serve as an example to their respective regions: in Asia-India, in Latin America-Brazil, in Africa-Nigeria. This, if we act with audacity and on a scale comparable to the Marshall Plan."

And Nixon, in December 1971, during an interview with Brazilian journalists, said: "Your country has a population of 100 million which will by the year 2000 grow to 160 million. Brazil, a very large country, the size of a continent, can't falter. If this should happen then the whole of South America will be weakened." And, William Rountree, ex-U.S. ambassador to Brazil, affirmed that Brazil, because of her geographic position on the South Atlantic, facing Africa, is considered indispensable for U.S. security.

With the fall of the Vargas dictatorship, a strong popular movement initiated, in April 1945, the development of a democratic process.

American imperialism tried by all means to obstruct this process with the military coup of October 1945, followed by the banning of the Brazilian Communist Party in 1947 and the beginning of the cold war, and later with the military coups in 1954 and 1961. Despite the fact that the bourgeois-democratic state was under increasing pressure from the monopolies (mainly those of North American origin) it could not contain the militant demands of the working class, which managed to maintain its real wages until 1958 and resisted the consequences of the accelerating inflation. The Parliament passed a law to limit the export of profits by foreign companies. At the same time the popular democratic movement was growing, strengthening and conquering new positions. However, the economic crisis which started in 1963, with the consequent aggravation of social contradictions which narrowed the based and weakened the unity of the democratic front, created the conditions for the victory of the military coup of 1964. The reactionary coup opened the way for the establishment of fascism in Brazil. With its birth, the imposed reactionary regime, anti-working class, anti-democratic and

anti-national in character, aimed to break the resistance of the working class and the people in the interest of the monopolies. In this process it slowly assumed a fascist character.

In this way the most elementary bourgeois-democratic rights were abolished. The government interfered in trade unions, practically denying them the right to strike, and a drastic policy of reducing real wages was adopted. Furthermore, the limit on the export of profits was revoked. These measures were introduced in accordance with the degree of resistance mounted against the dictatorship. Each breach in the regime was seized by the working class to show its opposition to the regime, but the wrong positions of the ultra-leftist groups, the weakness of the masses and the lack of unity of the opposition forces permitted the dictatorship to answer each action with new and increasingly fascist measures. This happened in 1965, when the opposition won the gubernatorial elections in some important states. The dictatorship answered this defeat by the decree of Institutional Act No. 2, which abolished direct elections for the governor's post. This law also banned all existing political parties and created two new parties, to give an appearance of representative democracy.

In 1968, in answer to the growth of the democratic movement, manifested in part by student demonstrations, the dictatorship decreed Institutional Act No. 5, which gave the President of the Republic power over all existing laws. The increasing difficulties of the regime contributed to a deepening of the contradictions within the government itself, leading the dictator Medici to record in a speech in July 1972 the official launching of the fascist state.

The escalating development of fascism in Brazilian conditions signified the acceleration of the development of a new system of monopoly domination which encompassed the economic, social, political, ideological and cultural life of the nation.

This represents not only the institution of a new system of domination but also the development and maintenance of the reproduction of monopoly capital on a new basis, in which the state is converted into an indispensable element of the process of reproduction itself and the monopolies need to maintain it at their disposal. This represents in the final analysis a contribution to the preservation of the capitalist system.

The advance of fascism in Brazil facilitated not only the resolution of the economic crisis of 1963-64 at the expense of the workers, but also the acceleration of capitalist development, accomplished by 1968. From this time the so-called "Brazilian economic miracle"

served as the center of the dictatorship's and the imperialists' scheme to develop a model for other countries. Using the most modern communications media, the fascist military dictatorship presents some figures indicating the growth of the Brazilian economy since 1968. Here we can mention the increase in GNP, which showed an increment of 10 per cent yearly. Exports in 1973 were 53 per cent higher in comparison with 1971 and in 1974 reached a value of approximately \$8 billion. They also claim that the control of inflation had limited it to an increase in prices of 20 per cent per year from 1968 to 1973, but in 1974 it had already accelerated, reaching almost 40 per cent. The official propaganda also refers to the international reserves of Brazil, which had reached almost \$6 billion. Today, however they have already been reduced to about \$5 billion. The government, of course, does not say that owing to financial and monetary crises overseas (Brazil being closely linked to foreign capitalist economies) the external debt of the country climbed from \$3.2 billion in 1964 to \$18 billion at the beginning of this year (1975).

The development of capitalism in Brazil is undeniable. No one can deny that the figures presented in the imperialist and reactionary propaganda are held up as a boast to the whole continent—are held up as an example. These are the results of the intensified exploitation of the working class and the mass of the working people. According to official figures, while the real per capita income in Brazil increased by 58 per cent from 1961 to 1973, the real minimum wage went down by about 55 per cent during this 13 year period. In 1970, about half of the country's labor force received a wage of about \$12 monthly. If we compare the national wealth in 1970 with that of 1960, it is clear that the "economic miracle" benefitted only a small minority at the expense of the great majority of the Brazilian people. In 1970, the poorest 50 per cent of the population, which 10 years ago had 18 per cent of the national income, had dropped to 14 per cent, while the richest 1 per cent in this same period had gone from 12 to 18 per cent. At the same time, the misery of the mass of working people has multiplied, so have the profits and benefits of the capitalists, the latifundists, and primarily the foreign monopolists, first among which are the North American monopolists.

During the latest years the government policy of encouraging foreign investments has been attracting a rush of foreign monopolies to Brazil. And in this way they are controlling more and more the key positions of the Brazilian economy. One of the principal attractions is the low wages. Another is the apparent "social tranquility," which is maintained by brutal repression and the many

other facilities that the Brazilian government offers to capital. For example, the four biggest enterprises which operate in Brazil (General Motors, Volkswagen, Ford and Mercedes Benz) nearly doubled their profits from 507 million cruzeiros in 1971 to 980 million in 1972. These tremendous profits gained by the foreign monopolies and a small group of Brazilian capitalists constitute the "miracle" that is easily understood when we compare the profits with the barren existence of millions of Brazilians. This is the other face of the so-called "miracle."

This exploitation is reflected not only in the deterioration of the real wage of the working class and of the salaries of the middle strata, but also in the deterioration of the peasants' standard of life: chronic hunger, illiteracy, disease, unemployment and underemployment. The so called "Brazilian miracle" was a miracle accomplished against the people. But certainly the "miracle" is reaching its end. Already in 1974 the first symptoms of economic crisis had appeared. In the first 7 months of 1974, the number of economic plans approved was down to 1,917 in comparison to 2,850 in 1973, a reduction of 1/3.

There were other signs of the approaching depression, such as last year's inflation tax. All this demonstrates that while the monopolies still dominate there can be no possibility of solving the problems that affect Brazilian society. Even the brutal exploitation of the working class could not assure stable economic development.

All these processes contributed to a deepening of the class struggle and an increase in the democratic movement which the dictatorship is trying to contain by means of savage repression.

Comrades: In Brazilian conditions, where the foreign monopolies dominate the economy, the big Brazilian monopolist bourgeoisie plays the role of a junior partner of imperialism.

Brazilian fascism has its peculiarities. It is fundamentally a dictatorship in the service of foreign finance capital, particularly North American. It is always searching for a wider mass base, using demagoguery and the manipulation of public opinion. The "corporatist" organization of labor is used to integrate the working class and other sections of the population into the system. National chauvinism is one of the most important aspects of its ideology.

It is important to note that the establishment of fascism in Brazil was not a sudden occurrence but rather a tendency that has evolved, since the 1964 coup, into a fascist system of domination of the whole country.

The implantation of fascism in Brazil was effected from the top

and not from the bottom as in other countries where fascist movements gained power. The terrorist violence of the fascist dictatorship also has its particular characteristics. It was evolved from a generalized and indiscriminate repression which tries to eliminate any real danger to the existence of the regime. It is a creation of a military political system, which tries to control the life of the nation while maintaining the appearance of democracy. But as the dictatorship doesn't have the support of the workers, it tries to isolate the people from active political life in the country. The dictatorship has a very weak base among the masses and has no political party with mass support. The Armed Forces are in a certain sense the political party of fascism. Militarization is one of the most evident features of Brazilian expansionism.

According to the North American agency for control of armaments, military spending in Brazil in the decade of the 60's was three times more than that of the rest of Latin America combined. In 1970, Brazil spent \$11 per capita on military equipment and only \$3 for education and public health.

In the words of the Argentinian magazine *Estrategia* the military expenditures of Brazil increased from \$390 million in 1962 to \$3,340 million in 1974, an increase of 756 per cent.

Evidently the information contained in a recent speech of Mr. Veloso, minister of planning, in New York is false. He said that the military expenditure of the Armed Forces this year was only 11 billion cruzeiros. This represents less than \$1.4 billion. The increasing militarization is being fed on the one side by the buying of modern equipment abroad and on the other side by an emerging Brazilian war industry, which produces tanks, airplanes, ships and missiles.

Today, the Brazilian army buys 78 per cent of its armaments in the internal market. In fact, we can already speak of a military-industrial complex in Brazil, but one which is controlled by foreign monopolies, which indirectly control the Brazilian army by supplying equipment, machinery and military technology.

Also, in the Navy as in the Air Force, programs of renovation of equipment are being realized, leading to a total modernization of these sections of the Armed Forces. That is why Brazil has bought more than 100 supersonic Mirage-3s, 42 supersonic F-5E Tiger-2s, and has obtained priority for buying the F-17 Cobra, which will be used by the American armed forces and NATO. Besides that, the dictatorship is building modern air bases, such as those at Anapolis and Santa Maria, and a chain of radar stations which extend across

the regions of Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte and Brasilia.

We denounce the recent agreement signed by the Brazilian and West German governments, according to which Brazil will sell enriched uranium to Germany in exchange for modern equipment for atomic reactors. In practice, this means the preparation of the conditions necessary for the manufacture of an atomic bomb in Brazil, which could be ready in 8 years (this according to press sources). This is why the dictatorship did not sign the treaty of non-proliferation of atomic weapons.

The preparation for war in Brazil is not limited to the aspects that we have already examined. Big sums of money are used in the construction of roads close to the borders of neighboring countries, in the name of the "integration" of these regions. One example of this is the construction of the "Transamazonia" road.

Big military maneuvers are made in preparation for war in the jungles. Such maneuvers are made on the borders of neighboring countries and have the objective of preparing the Armed Forces to deal with "Communist threats" to the "democracy."

Brazilian expansionism is getting more and more aggressive. We can take for example several reactionary coups which have taken place in recent years on our continent (Santo Domingo, Bolivia, Uruguay and Chile). The Brazilian government is openly supporting Pinochet's dictatorship. Not long ago the Brazilian dictatorship sent tons of war material to the Chilean dictatorship. Brazilian fascism also directs its interventionist policies against the progressive government of Peru, and supports the most reactionary forces in Argentina.

The expansionist character of the Brazilian regime can be seen in the agreement with Bolivia for the exploitation of natural gas and iron in El Mutum; in the exploitation of carbon in Colombia (this agreement wasn't concluded due to the opposition of the people of Colombia) and in the construction of a dam on the Itaipu in Paraguay; and in the intention to exploit the hydroelectric potential of Mirim Lagoon on the frontier of Uruguay and Brazil. All these agreements provoked great indignation in neighboring countries, which rightly considered their interests threatened. Many other aspects of the bellicose interventionist character of the Brazilian regime could be examined. But fundamentally, the expansionism is a consequence of the interests of the national and foreign monopolies which support the fascist government in Brazil.

The general perspective is to prevent other Latin American countries from following Cuba's path and in the short run to guarantee

new markets for national and foreign monopoly groups as well as to guarantee the "social tranquility" needed for their investments.

With these objectives, the Armed Forces are constantly modernizing and preparing to intervene in neighboring countries. Brazilian "specialists" in torturing political prisoners are sent to Chile to serve Chilean fascism. The government insists that it has no hegemonic intentions in Latin America but continues a chauvinist campaign under the slogan of "Brazil super-power."

This being so, Brazilian fascism is a constant danger to the Latin American countries which fight for their independence as well as a danger to world peace. It is part the imperialists' strategy to promote local wars. While the presence of socialist Cuba is a fact that contributes to peace and international detente, the existence of fascism in Brazil plays the opposite role of war-mongering confrontation. The working class and other progressive forces of our country have been fighting against this policy and in spite of the difficulties that we face, we have shown our solidarity with the victims of Brazilian aggression as in the case of the people of Uruguay. We have also demonstrated solidarity with the Chilean people.

Comrades: These eleven years of terrorist and bloody dictatorship in Brazil represent eleven years of resistance and struggle of the working class, of our people, against fascism.

Since 1971, our Party has been showing a revitalization in the mass movements. In Sao Paulo, where the working class is most concentrated, since 1972 the number of strikes has doubled each year. In the same way the struggle of the peasants has grown in the countryside for ownership of land and against the mercenaries in the service of capitalist enterprises. The number of rural trade unions, as well as student movement struggles, have reached new proportions. But it is not only the workers who fight for their rights. The Catholic church has played an important role in the defense of freedom and in the anti-fascist struggle. The intellectuals denounce the regime and demand an end to censorship. Also included are even the non-monopolist bourgeoisie who have taken positions against the totalitarian and anti-national regime.

The general hatred of the Brazilian people for the fascist regime and its policy favoring the monopolies was clearly expressed in the parliamentary elections of November 15, 1974, when, in spite of all the restrictions, the opposition party gained more than 60 per cent of the votes. 13 million people voted against the dictatorship, which received 7 million votes. The Communists actively participated in the electoral campaign, using this opportune moment to reinforce

its contacts with the masses. The electoral victory of the opposition confirms in practice the correct approach of the political orientation traced by our Party, which since the 1964 coup and after its 6th Congress indicated to the masses the right way to struggle against the dictatorship, using all possibilities including elections as a means of denouncing the government and in this way to gain strength.

Today this line is proven in practice and recognized by many patriots who were wrong and had assumed prejudicial positions in the struggle of our people against the fascist military dictatorship.

In the face of popular discontent, the increasing isolation of the dictatorship, the evolution of the international situation and particularly in face of the electoral defeat of November, the government of Geisel is searching for new tactics to increase its mass base. Simultaneously it has intensified the anti-Communist campaign and the brutal campaign against the Brazilian Communist Party. It is trying to liquidate the Communist Party and its leaders and by all means to lessen the influence of the Party on the masses.

Fourteen months ago David Capistrano da Costa, João Massena Melo, Walter Ribeiro and Luiz Inacio Maranhão Filho, members of our Central Committee, were kidnapped and probably have been murdered. In the first months of this year six more members of our Central Committee were kidnapped or arrested: Elson Costa, Hiran Lima Pereira, Jaime Miranda, Osvaldo Pacheco da Silva, Renato Guimarães Cuperinto and Nestor Veras. Their lives are in danger, as are the lives of more than 100 other members of the Party. Two presses, which printed our underground newspapers, were invaded by the police. In spite of all this the Party continues to be active and as a proof of this, the Central Organ of our party *Voz Operaria* keeps being printed, thanks to the heroism of members and the support of the working people.

Police repression is followed by a policy called "liberalization" which attempts to divide the opposition forces, to pull away the least firm sections of the working class, to isolate the Communist Party, and to consolidate the unity of the Armed Forces, which is menaced. Nevertheless the deep contradictions of this policy permitted the opposition to gain new positions and strengthen and consolidate its unity as in the last elections.

Fascism, itself, finds it increasingly difficult to pursue this policy of "liberalization" because instead of strengthening its position, this policy in fact leads towards a situation that endangers its existence. To defeat the dictatorship and conquer the regime for broad democratic freedoms for the people it is indispensable to unite all the

forces affected and suffering under fascism. It is necessary to unite these forces in a broad patriotic and anti-fascist front with the participation of all sectors and political currents from the forces of the opposition, most consequentially, the sectors of the armed government party who are in disagreement with the fascist character assumed by the regime and who have support of personalities and socially independent institutions which in spite of their philosophical and political convictions find themselves in disagreement with the government. We can not impose any limit to this unity, which can and must include all Brazilians with the exception of the representatives of the monopolies, the great landowners and their military and police henchmen.

Fighting for the organization of an anti-fascist patriotic front, the Communists understand that the building of a democratic state is the most important immediate aspiration of our people.

To this end we support in principle any program or political platform which has as its center the opposition to fascist legislation and the establishment of a democratic regime.

At the same time as we fight against fascism and for the installation of a democratic regime which could achieve true independence, and recognizing that this is the present stage of the revolutionary process in Brazil, we present the perspective for the establishment of a socialist future for the country. In fact the constitution of a patriotic, anti-fascist front is not an easy task. This front is now in the process of formation. The elections of November were, without any doubt, a very important step in its forging. The defeat of fascism will constitute a very hard blow to the power of the monopolies, whose interests it represents. The only way to consolidate the victory of the anti-fascist forces is to assure the representation of the interests of all the forces united in the front. And it could represent one transitional form in the national democratic revolutionary process—anti-monopolist, anti-imperialist. This democratic regime would guarantee all freedoms to the anti-imperialist forces and would start the process of limiting the power of the monopolies, principally the North American.

The conception of the anti-fascist struggle as an integral part of the struggle for socialism leads to a new understanding of the role of the working class and its party in the formation of the front. Without the hegemony of the working class, the struggle of the anti-fascist front would be tied to the serious vacillations of the bourgeois forces. Only to the degree that the working class assumes this role will the victory be consolidated.

Comrades: In the anti-imperialist struggle of the Latin American peoples, the defeat of Brazilian fascism holds a very significant place. This struggle includes the fight against fascism in Chile, Brazil and other countries.

We understand that our struggle against imperialism is fundamentally concentrated today against the bloody junta of Pinochet, but we must not forget that it is in Brazil that the principal base of fascism and neocolonialism of the continent is located. The defeat of fascism in Brazil is basically the task of the Brazilian people, and it will deal a serious defeat to imperialism and will contribute decisively to a total change in the relation of forces on the continent.

The defeat of Brazilian fascism will be one important contribution to the achievement of relaxation of political tensions in this region of the world. The establishment of the fascist state in Brazil saw the emerging of Brazilian expansionism, a permanent threat to all peoples of the continent.

Only the construction of a democratic state in Brazil will permit the liquidation of the expansionist policy of the fascist regime and the establishment of new relations based on self-determination and mutual respect between Brazil and her neighbors.

The fact that after eleven years of military dictatorship the fascist regime has been unable to consolidate its power, and that it has been defeated in the elections (which it called to camouflage its reactionary essence) reveals that the working class of Brazil, under the leadership of the Communist Party, is able to defeat fascism in Brazil and build a democratic state that will advance its revolutionary objectives.

In this struggle, of inestimable value for our people and in particular for our Party has been the international solidarity shown by the international Communist movement and by all progressive and peace-loving forces of the world.

From this important tribune, we want also to thank the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and all Communist and Worker's parties and in particular the fraternal Latin American parties for their valuable help in our difficult struggle in Brazil.

World solidarity and in particular the struggle of the Latin American peoples will defeat the danger of fascism on the continent and will guarantee the advance of the struggle against imperialism for democracy, national independence, peace and socialism.

BOOK REVIEWS

SYLVIA NEWCOMB

Soviet Women

William Mandel's very thorough and illuminating study of Soviet women* is a much needed, basic work on a topic which has received more than its share of distortions in the U.S.

Using very vivid statistics, historical analysis, probing into various aspects of contemporary Soviet life, employing biographical sketches and his own vast and rich experiences and exchanges with Soviet citizens through the years, Mandel well documents his basic assertion that "It is very difficult indeed to challenge the superiority of socialism for women."

In a chapter on "Women in the Revolution," Mandel points out that working class women played a catalytic role in the Great October Revolution by demonstrating against the Czar on International Women's Day in 1917.

Lenin gave great leadership to the cause of women's emancipation. Under his leadership the Bolsheviks who came to power took sweeping steps even beyond the scope of the demands of the bourgeois feminists of the time, steps which are instructive to our movement today. Mandel writes,

"The disappearance of the earlier feminism was not simply a matter of class hostility. In a matter of months, the new government legislated more than the upper-class feminists had ever asked for: suffrage of course, . . . employment rights equal to those of men, equal pay for equal work, universal paid late pregnancy and early maternity leave. Overnight, the status of women in Russia became far and away the world's most advanced."

Mandel brings the reader up to date on the status of Soviet women in a manner which is mindful of the historic backdrop of great backwardness in most areas which now comprise the USSR. "The achievements towards women's liberation in the Soviet Union," he says, "are even more extraordinary in light of the background." In explaining the metamorphosis of life for women in Central Asia, he points out that "their branch of Islam provided for probably the worst, most complete, and most degrading oppression of women existing in any large population in modern times."

So, too, is he careful to point out the colossal devastation World War II brought to every aspect of Soviet life, the great role

* William Mandel, *Soviet Women*, Doubleday, New York, 1975, \$3.50.

played by women in the anti-fascist struggle and some of the very unique problems they have faced as a result of the Nazi holocaust. (He does not similarly emphasize the continual onslaught of imperialism against the first land of socialism.)

One of the most useful aspects of *Soviet Women* is the comparative analysis of Soviet women's status in relation to U.S. women. U.S. employed wives, for example, earn 37 per cent as much as their husbands while half of Soviet women make as much or more than their husbands.

Mandel battles many erroneous bourgeois feminist ideas, but the point he makes most forcefully is that educational advancement, high earning capacity and full employment combined with protective legislation and guaranteed government assistance in the delivery and upbringing of children are prerequisites for women's personal independence, growth and equality, as well as freedom to marry and stay married for reasons of love and mutual respect.

Mandel correctly shows that the bourgeois feminists' aims fall short of this goal and are even contrary to this goal. Thus, he points out that "the clock is actually being turned *back* by half a century under the guise of equal rights for women in large areas of the U.S." This refers to the steps taken in some states which have passed the Equal Rights Amendment to repeal or nullify protective legislation for women.

Mandel cites astounding statistics on Soviet women in the professions which speak very poorly not only for the station of U.S. women but also for the educational-technological level in the U.S. generally. He points out that "U.S. women in the leading professions is just about the lowest in the world. Fewer physicians (9% of U.S. doctors) in proportion to men are to be found in the U.S. than anywhere but Spain, Madagascar and South Vietnam." In the USSR, 75 per cent of the physicians are women. Only 5 per cent of U.S. lawyers are women and under 2 per cent of engineers and architects are women. But in the Soviet Union, there are more women engineers than in the rest of the world combined.

"The status of Soviet women in the professions," Mandel says, "is incomparably superior, absolutely in a class by itself." However, in the U.S. the status of women is not only low, but it is slipping backward. Thus he points out that women hold a smaller percentage of jobs in colleges than 50 years ago and, whereas in 1950 women comprised 50 per cent of elementary school principals in the U.S., today women hold only 20 per cent of these positions.

There are now 200,000 Jewish women with college training in the professions in the Soviet Union, representing nearly half the total Jewish female population of working age. "There is nothing like that anywhere in the

world," Mandel points out, "including Israel, which has the same number of Jews . . . or in any country on Earth."

Mandel probes very deeply and from many angles the question of women's double burden. It is clear from what he writes that there is great diversity of viewpoint among Soviet women, Soviet men and leading spokespersons as to the range of the problem as well as to the solution. Involved in the picture is the fact that sociologists and Soviet citizens generally are far from unanimous as to whether women are by their nature better geared to child-rearing responsibilities than are men. The concept "different but equal" is very much at play. Thus, the emphasis in many instances is placed on equal but diverse household responsibilities for men and women. Whichever way one views it, however, one of the remaining problems Mandel points to is that not all citizens (especially men) share the goal of equal division of household responsibilities. Many place greater emphasis on the very important development of appliances and services which will reduce housework for both women and men.

Women, consequently, for the present, have on the average less time to devote to their jobs and their careers than men and this apparently does have an effect on the overall promotion of women in supervisory and other particularly time consuming fields. We cannot necessarily agree, however, with Mandel's broad stroke

in asserting, "those with children are not fully equal because of the demands of nurturing."

He points to an extremely encouraging study which shows that, while 80 per cent of husbands over 50 years of age contributed less than half of the household work, the figure drops to 50 per cent of all husbands whose wives are 25 years or younger. This study speaks well of the educational work being done on this question in the Soviet Union, so often denied in the writings to which we have access in the U.S.

It is very unfortunate that certain weaknesses mar this extremely valuable study by Mandel. Several of his references to Black people and other peoples of color reflect shortcomings in his understanding of the struggle against racism. One example is his statement that, "except for teachers and social workers, the comparable figures for Black professional women are so low that to cite them would be to reinforce the racism of the American mind." By not explaining that the low figures stem from capitalism, Mandel seems to infer the cause is racial inferiority. He should have pointed to the gross, systematic discrimination against Black women in education and in entering the professions, historically and at present.

So, too, is it extremely important that a progressive author not give up on the "American mind" as hopelessly racist. This certainly is not true of all whites

in the U.S. and denies the possibility and imperative necessity of winning the white masses against racism and for Black-white unity. Mandel appears to assign himself to a pitiful minority of anti-racists, but one who cannot relate his understanding to the "American mind" as a contribution to the struggle against racism. By referring to the "American mind" as racist, he also portrays all Americans as white.

A similar example of Mandel's insensitivity on this question is contained in the following: "... as a dance buff, I have yet to see a Black prima ballerina or male lead in classical ballet in a racially mixed company in the United States, despite the acknowledged primacy of Blacks in dance." It is a distortion of the role and talents of oppressed national minorities to merely point to their *absence* in fields of prominence without pointing to their systematic exclusion as the cause. The statement also tends to accept a stereotyped image of Blacks as inherently good dancers, a "concession" made by racists to point up their image of Blacks as inherently less capable in other fields of endeavor.

Mandel also uses chauvinist stereotypes of peoples from Latin America. He refers to Cuba as "a country of high temperment," a slur on its most rational and purposeful revolutionary activity. The repeated use of the word "macho" to describe male supremacy of Latin American men is

not only a chauvinist stereotype, but an Anglo man, especially, should focus his attention on the special forms of male supremacy in the U.S., particularly among Anglo men, and not point his finger through the popularization of a borrowed term "macho," at the men of nationally oppressed communities and nations.

The book would also be improved, in the estimation of this reviewer, if the author had a deeper understanding of socialist democracy. The CPSU, the Party which led the first socialist revolution, blazes the trail to communism and leads the world peace and liberation forces, is portrayed as "controlling," not leading, as is in fact the case. Solzhenitsyn, a stereotype of a reactionary by any reasonable progressive standards, whose views are repugnant to the vast citizenry of the Soviet Union, is seen as a "dissident" who could publish his works under a more "liberalized" administration. Mandel also does not attempt to document his assertion that some Soviet Jewish women "suffer for their desire to leave."

Mandel concludes *Soviet Women* with the hope that this book will provide "material from which to draw conclusions about the solutions to be sought in our country" towards women's equality. He has indeed provided a great abundance of sorely needed material and insight, a fact which overshadows the weaknesses indicated above. It is our hope that a wide readership of *Soviet Women* will elevate the

level of understanding of socialism as practiced in the leading socialist country, particularly the understanding of the vast and continuing inroads women are making toward full equality. Mandel is absolutely correct in

pointing out the instructive value of such a study of Soviet women in relation to the growing movement, particularly among working-class women, in our country for full equality.

RENEE WHITE

The "Politics" of Rape

With the growing activity of movements for women's equality, books on "women's" issues have been appearing in droves. Many have received a great deal of attention by the media and the general public. Among these are a number of recent books on the problem of rape which reflect the growing demand by women that this crime directed specifically against women be given serious attention as a major social concern. We should welcome, debate and develop the positive contributions that have been made in this area. At the same time many of these books consciously or not express racist, elitist, anti-working class views which are detrimental to advancing the struggle for full equality for women and which must be exposed and fought against.

The Politics of Rape is one recent widely discussed book which

* Diana E. H. Russell, *The Politics of Rape: The Victim's Perspective*, Stein and Day, New York, 1975.

embodies these contradictions.

The main point of the book, as stated by the author, is to disprove the often expressed idea that women who are victims of rape wanted to be raped or were in some way "asking for it." This point of view is unfortunately prevalent in many areas, including among the police and in the courts, and accounts for the failure in many cases to investigate and prosecute cases of rape. As applied to Black women it has been and is a particularly vicious racist view. The author herself notes:

When race is involved, a double standard often operates. If the victim is white and the accused is black, the rigorous requirements of proof that exist when the rapist is white are lifted, and the rapist is more likely to be found guilty. However, if the victim is black and the rapist is white, the victim is likely to be subject to a far harsher and more unfair trial than her white sister. (P. 291.)

To prove her point, Ms. Russell, an assistant professor of soci-

ology at Mills College in Oakland, California, interviewed over eighty victims of rape. The book is made up of twenty-two of these interviews, along with commentary by the author and final chapters on male supremacy and some proposed solutions to the problem of rape. Most of the women interviewed in the book are middle class — students, professionals — in the Berkeley area, mostly quite young, in their teens or early twenties, and the majority are white. The author does not indicate any attempt to gather a more representative sampling of U.S. women, particularly working class women from a non-college community, although she makes the unsupported statement that “a disproportionate number of rapists . . . come from the lower class (sic).” (P. 142.)

The interviews indicate the anger and resentment that women justly feel toward manifestations of male supremacy in our society, both from individuals and from institutions. But no conclusions are drawn as to the nature of the society that permits and fosters such attitudes and treatment. All that Ms. Russell offers us towards an ultimate solution is the suggestion that we live in a “male-dominated society,” that “men have to give up their monopolization of power in the society as a whole” in order to solve the problem of rape, that “structures,” “values,” and “processes” have to be changed. Since at one point she makes the statement that some men become

rapists as a way of dealing with their powerlessness in society, she is evidently aware that not all men hold “power” in this society; however she does not examine what distinctions there might be and her discussion lacks any class analysis, reflecting instead a strong elitist, anti-working class outlook, as the above quote shows.

The most negative and dangerous aspect of the book is the repetition of and failure to contradict glaring expressions of racism. Throughout the interviews frequent references are made to fear of Black men, to the assumed “fact” that male supremacy is greater among Black, Chicano and other non-white men than among whites. These statements are accepted and amplified on by the author. Yet Ms. Russell states in the course of the book that most rape is *intra-racial*, and later that “rape victims are disproportionately poor black women” (p. 290), and that “racism is often the primary motivating influence” in rape convictions and death penalties for rape (p. 291). But these facts are only brought forward, and very briefly at that, in the concluding portion of the book, after the readers has waded through 200-odd pages of blithe acceptance of myths that historically have been used by the ruling class of this country to perpetuate the oppression of Black and other minority men and women.

Ms. Russell offers some worthwhile proposals for eliminating male supremacist treatment of

women by the legal system, the prisons and hospitals. She suggests that there should be more women judges and lawyers and that district attorneys should be able to disqualify potential jurors who express male supremacist attitudes. She proposes a system of government compensation to rape victims who apply for it. As part of a prison reform program, she points out, the prison personnel must be reeducated to eliminate male supremacist attitudes. These proposals are all thoughtful and worthy of further discussion. The way in which the police, the courts and the prisons treat women and particularly Black and other nationally oppressed women is a matter of immediate concern, as the Joanne Little case testifies. Communists and progressive people generally have a responsibility to take up this question with a concrete program of action to protect the lives and rights of women. At the same time we must give greater attention to the history of the oppression of women in the U.S., particularly working class women, and the struggle against it, to issues that are currently being raised by and about women, and to developing and expanding the theoretical understanding of the fight for the liberation of women as part of the liberation of the entire working class.

While reflecting a serious concern, worthy of further study, with the oppression of women in our society, as manifested in the

crime of rape, *The Politics of Rape* unfortunately deals with its subject in a most superficial, unscholarly way. This is a commentary on the kind of shallow thinking that goes in many social science departments of our universities, and calls attention to the need for the contributions of Marxist-Leninists. *The Politics of Rape* is filled with general unsupported assumptions which are lent credence by their inclusion in the book. The history of the use of the charge of rape as a racist weapon against Black men is not dealt with at all. The rape of Black and other minority women as part of the maintenance of a system of slavery and oppression is not dealt with. The general climate of violence fostered in our society, the exploitative nature of social relations under capitalism or even the very existence of capitalism, the use of sex and interpersonal relations as commodities, the use of people as commodities—none of these aspects of our social life are mentioned by the author, although they are commonly talked about today and recognized as important social problems.

A serious political discussion of any social problem, and the search for a solution, must include an examination of the social setting in which it arises, its historical roots, the class and other social forces involved, its repercussions in society. Putting the word “politics” into the title of one’s book is not a substitute.

Moynihhan-Kissinger Racism

The dialectical interconnection of imperialist, racist policy—domestic and foreign—is brilliantly exposed in Henry Winston's booklet.* This work is also very timely in aiding us to deeply understand the interests of U.S. monopoly capital in the obscene outbursts of its spokesmen who are the enemies of the "Third World," the international working class and the socialist community. Such outbursts of rage and venom were injected into the halls of the United Nations against the resolution condemning Zionism as a form of racism and racial discrimination. The author writes:

The Administration has selected [Daniel] Moynihan to project an international counterpart of the racist concepts in his report: i.e., to blame the widening economic gap between many of the underdeveloped and less-developed nations and the imperialist nations not on U.S. and world imperialism but on its victims.

Comrade Winston uses the sharp blade of scientific socialism to expose the essence of Moynihan's reactionary social philosophy which attacks the victims of racism, the Black people who have a history of valiant struggles against inequality, super-exploitation and oppression.

Moynihan and his pack fume with arrogance and hurl abuses reminiscent of slave society

against hundreds of millions of hitherto oppressed people, now rising as the wretched of the earth to attain the bright summits of freedom, human rights and dignity. They call this noble history-shaking endeavor the "tyranny of the majority." All the communications media are mobilized to broadcast this message.

It is all the more necessary, therefore, to study Winston's invaluable contribution to defeat the new assaults on freedom, democracy and national liberation. Human rights are being won by the oppressed peoples. But the ruling class is panicky, fearful and hysterical as it faces the prospect of losing the loot accumulated through super-exploitation, and yes, genocide. The voices of democracy ringing throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America and backed by the socialist countries scare the imperialist rulers. One is reminded of Engels' comments in 1895, when the German workers' party, long illegalized by the anti-socialist laws, won telling victories in the parliamentary elections, Engels wrote in his introduction to *The Class Struggles in France*:

The irony of world history turns everything upside down. We, the "revolutionaries," the "rebels"—we

* *The Moynihan-Kissinger Doctrine and the "Third World,"* New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1975, 64 pages.

are thriving far better on legal methods than on illegal methods and revolt. The Parties of Order, as they call themselves, are perishing on the legal conditions created by themselves. They cry despairingly with Odilon, *la légalité nous tue*, legality is the death of us, whereas, we, under this legality get firm muscles and rosy cheeks and look like life eternal.

The people of the "Third World" are determined to reconquer their land and resources, delivering blows at racist ideology and acts. This causes dismay to the Ford-Moynihan-Kissinger trio. Our author clarifies all this and thereby spurs people to action.

Winston correctly directs his main blows against the domestic racist rationalizations of Moynihan, Cameron, Bell and others. These professional rationalizers attempt to support policies and practices against the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native Indian and Asian peoples. They place the onus for the deterioration of conditions of Blacks on the Black family. Moynihan's "benign neglect" theory is a coverup for the prevalent malignant racism affecting U.S. society as a whole. Winston's booklet places the blame squarely on capitalism. He writes convincingly that "racist and class oppression are interconnected features of monopoly rule, and that racist doctrine and practices are inherent in capitalism's drive for profits and superprofits."

Two important conclusions derive from this Marxist analysis.

First, the main historic task for U.S. workers is to wage an incessant struggle to overcome the catastrophic economic crisis which affects all phases of life, to weaken and defeat imperialism at home. This contributes to forcing imperialism to release its tentacles from the oppressed peoples the world over. Marx puts it squarely: "It is altogether self-evident that to be able to fight at all, the working class must organize itself at home *as a class* and that its own country is the immediate arena of its struggle." (*Selected Works*, International Publishers, Vol. 3, page 21.)

Amilcar Cabral, the great African Marxist, emphasized this primary task. In his speech at the Havana Conference in 1966, Cabral quoted a proverb well-known in Africa to stress the need of the African people to fight for their liberation: "The African people affirm in simple language that 'no matter how hot the water is at its source, it will not cook your rice.'"

The second conclusion is similarly basic: The fight against racism places special responsibility on white workers and progressives. The facts underlying this principle of internationalism are amply given in the booklet under discussion. In direct violation of this principle is the editorial of the *Morning Freiheit* branding the UN resolution on Zionism as "shameful," "infamous" and "dishonorable." To write so means to join the cacophonous trio spouting anti-Sovietism and anti-Arab, anti-African racism.

This excellent work, the revolutionary passion it expresses, should inspire the reader to distribute it widely and to intensify his activities in defense of the peoples striving to achieve freedom and well-being. The objective analysis of imperialism and racism, the deep feelings of brotherhood toward the victims of centuries-old oppression and degradation, the unshakable proletarian devotion to the working peoples of all races Winston expresses are part of Marxism humanism. He personifies what the great Latin poet Terence said: "I regard nothing human as alien to me."

What has imperialist oppression of Africa meant? Here is Cabral's description of the situation which long prevailed in Angola and Mozambique. This description is of an infinitesimal part of the barbarous conditions of servitude still rampant in Africa: "Every year 250,000 Angolans are hired by the plantations and mine owners. Every year 400,000 from Mozambique are dragged into forced labor. Among them, 100,000 are exported to South African and Rhodesian mines." We bow our heads in shame for this barbarism and raise them in anger demanding an end to imperialism and racism in every corner of the bloody empires.

Winston brings into the open the real forces behind the sinister Kissinger-Moynihan strategy. These are the multinational corporations which established economic control and domination and are the driving force aiming to

divert the developing countries from the non-capitalist path of development. This is especially true with regard to Africa. In 1972, writes Winston, U.S. corporations invested three and a half billion dollars abroad and repatriated ten and a half billion dollars.

The Maoists, who have betrayed the basic revolutionary principles of socialism and internationalism, not only in China but also on a world scale, are now impeding the "Third World" from making the choice among models of development for a non-capitalist path. Their course has departed far from revolutionary positions to anti-Sovietism and collusion with the imperialist enemies of the oppressed peoples. The abominable label of "two superpowers" is aimed at the Soviet Union and the socialist community. Winston clearly proves that Maoism is an ally of the Kissinger-Moynihan doctrine of support to the counter-revolution in Angola. A mere glance at the Maoist record in recent years suffices to demonstrate its nefarious role, including its friendship with the fascist Pinochet regime in Chile while the world clamors for a stop to its butchery. On other important world policies such as peaceful coexistence and detente, etc., Maoist China is also siding with reaction.

The booklet devotes several pages to the strategy and type of development planned by monopoly capital for developing countries. Puerto Rico is the prototype of full economic, political and mili-

tary-strategic control. Yet the Maoist delegate at the UN did not participate in the debate and vote on the question of self-determination for Puerto Rico. Thus, Winston annihilates the Maoists' fantastic distortion of world reality which serves imperialism.

As the Chairman of the Communist Party USA, Henry Winston is a loyal and devoted son

of the working class and a leading member of its vanguard. He carries the torch of Marxist ideological clarity, fighting relentlessly against bourgeois ideology whatever its form, as taught by Lenin: "We must untiringly combat any and every bourgeois ideology regardless of the fashionable and striking garb in which it may drape itself." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 342.)

DAVID ENGLESTEIN

The Lives of Marx and Engels

There is a unique quality about these biographies of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.* The personal lives and political activities of these great proletarian revolutionaries are recounted in both volumes. So mingled do their lives become with the emerging struggles of the working class that the reader gets as background a succinct history of the class battles in England, France, Germany and other countries for the period of 1842 to 1895. The biographies are thus a unique though brief record of the class struggles and revolutions in

many lands and of the leading personalities involved.

The admirable exposition of the participation of Marx and Engels in the Communist League (1847-52) and in the International Working Men's Association (the First International, 1864-76) is presented in the context of the history of these organizations, as is Engels' role in laying the foundations of the Second International (1889). To this is added data on the earliest of vanguard organizations of the working class in various countries—the establishment of Communist and Social Democratic parties based on scientific socialism.

Above all, these volumes demonstrate the authors' profound assimilation of the letter and spirit of the articles, correspondence, reports and books that Marx and Engels wrote. Of the

* *Karl Marx—A Biography*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975. *Frederick Engels—A Biography*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975. Both books were prepared under the supervision of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the CPSU by groups of authors.

main works there are remarkable summaries frequently accompanied by brilliant interpretations of methodology which are most rewarding.

It is to these three major aspects of both volumes—Marx and Engels and the history of the working class of the period, the story of their involvement in the formation of vanguard organizations internationally and nationally, and the approach to the method and content delineated in their works—that this review will devote itself. The first two questions will be discussed jointly while the latter will get separate treatment.

Marx and Engels, influenced by the German philosophers Hegel and Feuerbach, independently arrived at similar philosophical and political conclusions which soon lead them to formulate the theory of scientific socialism. They were still in their 20's when they formulated the key propositions of scientific socialism, Marx having been born in 1818 and Engels in 1820. Due to family pressures Engels left Germany and helped run a family textile firm in Manchester, England. There he became acquainted with the daily lives of the workers, and wrote articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung* of Cologne, Germany, of which Marx was editor-in-chief. When that paper was banned by the authorities Marx left for Paris in 1844. Marx and Engels developed an intimate friendship and collaboration which was to last a lifetime after their meeting in Paris that same year.

From a revolutionary-demo-

cratic position Marx moved rapidly towards materialism and communism. Meeting French workers and German emigrés in Paris influenced his thinking, so that he wrote to Feuerbach, "History is moulding these 'barbarians' of our civilized society into a practical element for man's emancipation." (*Marx*, p. 59.) Engels visited working-class districts, often with Mary Burns, an Irish woman employed in the family factory, whom he later married. From direct observations he learned to appreciate the role of the working class and advocated that the great independent proletarian movement of Chartism merge with socialism. Thus, Marx and Engels in the mid and late 1840s were not only in the process of "self-clarification" on the theoretical questions of philosophy, political economy and socialism but were simultaneously fusing this knowledge with the lessons of the struggles of the proletariat.

Marx and Engels joined the League of the Just in 1847 as it was in the process of ridding itself of its utopian trends. That very year it was renamed the Communist League. The change in its outlook could immediately be judged by its basic watchwords. The former organization's call was "All Men are Brothers," while the latter's revolutionary slogan became "Workingmen of All Countries, Unite."

The revolutions of 1848-49 in France, Belgium, Germany, the uprisings in Prague, Vienna and other cities were bourgeois democratic in essence. The major aim

of the revolution was to abolish feudalism (in France its remnants) and to create a favorable economic and political atmosphere for the advance of capitalism. The working class played an important if not always decisive role in these events.

Marx and Engels had hoped that these bourgeois democratic revolutions might soon lead to working class power and socialism in several European countries, and were sanguine about the great "peaceful" Chartist movement in England. In these revolutionary years, despite the fact that they were few in numbers, the members of the Communist League were often to be found in the front ranks of the working class—on the barricades and on the battlefield. The year 1848 saw the publication of the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels, as the program of the Communist League before the outbreak of the revolutions.

Later that year Marx and Engels returned to Germany. They were in touch with various workers' democratic societies. Marx began publication of a newspaper to which Engels contributed a series of articles on the Polish struggle for independence. Even as the counter-revolution was gaining the upper hand, Engels organized and took part in revolutionary military action on the Rhine in 1849.

A period of reaction set in. The Communist League, due to persecution from the authorities and to sharp internal ideological differences, was dissolved late in 1852. Marx settled in London and

Engels returned to Manchester. They corresponded with revolutionaries in various countries and wrote articles for newspapers of different political persuasions. For example, Marx kept in touch with Weydemeyer and others in the U.S.A. and sent them articles written by him and Engels for *Die Reforme*. Marx and Engels collaborated in writing for the New York *Daily Tribune*, a liberal bourgeois newspaper, though the articles always bore the signature of Marx. Marx also analyzed with deep perception the Civil War in the U.S.A. He was profoundly interested and wrote articles on the process of colonial enslavement in Asia and Africa in the 1850's and 1860's. Marx saw its interconnection and interdependence with the working class' struggles.

In September 1864 the International Working Men's Association (later to be known as the First International) was founded in London. The Preamble and the Provisional Rules and the Inaugural Address were written by Marx and unanimously approved by the General Council, the leading body of the International. The first line of the Preamble read, "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves." (*Ibid.*, p. 416.) English trade unionists, French and Belgian Proudhonists and later Bakuninists (brands of anarchists) and German LaSalleans (opposed to trade unions and seeking government aid from Bismarck for workers' cooperative projects), and followers of Marx and Engels

all sought forms of international unity but found little or no common ground ideologically.

The First International played a significant role in building international solidarity, in supporting strikes morally and financially, in clarifying the role of trade unions, in propagating the ideas of scientific socialism as opposed to the ideology of anarchism. It held debates on war and peace and on the question of the national liberation movements in Ireland and Poland. It stimulated the birth of the first mass Marxist Party in Germany under the leadership of Liebknecht and Bebel. A Russian section was set up in 1870. One of its peaks of activity was reached when it called for the support of the Paris Commune throughout all its sections in Europe and the U.S.A. In the years following the dissolution of the International (in 1876) Marx and Engels struggled to set up independent proletarian parties in various countries and gave special attention to developments in Germany, the U.S.A. and Russia.

Marx died in 1883. Many of the years he spent in London with his wife and children were years of deprivation, poverty and illness. Four of his seven children died at an early age. Engels' generous financial assistance over the years kept Marx and his family from starvation. In spite of these severe hardships Marx's daughters and friends often spoke of his youthful spirits.

Engels remained in London. After Mary Burns had died in 1863, he later married Lizzie, Mary's sister. In 1869 he end-

ed his business partnership—his "hateful work"—in Manchester and was free to devote his time to the Party and science. He was directly in touch with socialist leaders and organizations in Germany, France, England, the U.S.A., Russia and other countries. He was one of the major initiators of the meeting that laid the foundations for the Second International in 1889. Delegates from 20 countries were present, the majority of whom were followers of Marx and Engels.

There is space for little more than a bare listing of some of the major works of Marx and Engels. My main object in this section is to illustrate how the authors of both biographies with profound scientific knowledge and great clarity are able to direct the reader's attention to the evolution of the thought of Marx and Engels and to their use of the dialectical method and historical and dialectical materialism. It is not only to summaries of Marx's and Engels' works that the authors address themselves but to a scientific insight to their methodology and philosophy.

Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* are highly significant though fragmented writings and deal among other matters with alienated labor. It was not published during his lifetime. *The Holy Family* (1845, by Marx and Engels) and *The German Ideology* (1845-46, by Marx and Engels) and Marx's *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) were giant steps forward in the evolution and elaboration of the basic categories of historical and

dialectical materialism. Marx now described lucidly how material production—the mode of production of a given epoch—basically influenced the life of the period. He also elaborated on the role of the masses in history.

Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844) is illuminated with a materialist approach to the data that he gathered from direct contacts with workers and from other reliable sources. The authors turn to Lenin's creative description of the Communist Manifesto (1848): "With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of the new communist society." (*Ibid.*, pp. 148-149).

Marx's *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) and *The Civil War in France* (1872) were original, analytical and historical documents dealing with Napoleon's coup of 1851 and with the Paris Commune of 1871. The latter work is justly famed for its scientific observations on the bourgeois state and for its lessons on the role of the proletarian state. Marx expressed his deepest admiration for "working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris."

Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) contains his oft-quoted classic definition of the materialist view

of history. The *Grundrisse*, which he worked on in 1857-58, was not published in his lifetime. The first volume of *Capital* was issued in 1867 in German. The next edition was in Russian in 1872 and the French edition was published serially between 1872-75. After Marx's death, Engels published Volume II in 1885 and Volume III in 1894. *Theories of Surplus Value* was gotten out by Kautsky in bowdlerized form after the turn of the century.

Engels' *Anti-Duhring* (1878) is designated by the authors as an "encyclopedia of Marxism." Its three sections are devoted to the three component parts of Marxism—philosophy, political economy and socialism. The book demolished Duhring's "system," which was in actuality but another form of reactionary petty-bourgeois socialism.

Dialectics of Nature and The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (1889) by Engels remain remarkable works and are still widely used. The former book was published after his death.

The *Critique of the Gotha Program* by Marx was a polemical work (as so many of Marx's and Engels' works were) directed against the emergence of opportunist trends in German Social-Democracy.

In the biography of Karl Marx the reader will find perceptive material of the highest order on *Capital*. In fact, Chapter Ten is entirely devoted to *Capital*. In their profound evaluation of *Capital* the authors indicate concrete-

(Continued on p. 7)

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