

OBREROS EN MARCHA

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EDITORIAL

ON THE BLACKOUT

In this society, the law and false morality are tools of the rich to maintain their class rule and to protect private property and profits. The rich use their laws and morality to achieve those objectives and to condemn, castigate, and quell the oppressed whenever, in their rising in protest against their oppressive conditions, they threaten private property, whether that response is "legal" or "illegal," spontaneous or organized. Within this context, it is the nature of bourgeois legality and morality to consistently portray the oppressed and exploited as lawless, immoral, senseless, and animalistic whenever they disrupt the "peace" that clouds and protects private property, inequality, national chauvinism, sexism, and class exploitation.

This was clearly demonstrated when New York City was thrust into darkness by a massive power failure on July 13th and 14th. On that occasion, the oppressed minorities in the city's ghettos unleashed their pent-up desires to have the necessities and luxuries that they rarely enjoy, in either quality or quantity, in this society. They broke into food markets, furniture stores, jewelry stores, and shoe stores in their communities. Many were stores that historically had cheated their customers. People took to the streets by the thousands—in some cases, entire families participated—attempting to take advantage of the situation by taking home a few items to momentarily improve their miserable conditions of want and hopelessness. Many were able to take food that provided them with an improved diet for a few days. Others managed to pick up a piece of needed furniture while others took jewelry or other luxury items that could be sold fairly quickly in order to buy necessities.

The "looting" occurred in the most economically blighted areas of the city—the South Bronx, Harlem, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bushwick, Brownsville, Jamaica, etc. Although the large majority of people in these communities did not participate in the looting, neither did they condemn their neighbors who did. The actions of the looters expressed the discontent, frustration, and anger that had been building in these communities as a reaction to all the years of imposed poverty. It was these very same black and Puerto Rican communities that were worst hit by the cuts in city jobs and essential social services. It was predominately in these communities that daycares were closed, teachers fired, health services decreased, fire protection cut and sanitation services most severely curtailed. It has been in these communities that money-hungry landlords have set the torch to their buildings. It is in these communities that approximately 40% of the families are on welfare. It is in these communities that unemployment reaches upward of 25% and as high as 75% to 80% among the youth. It is in these communities that want and despair roam the streets in human form.

The politicians and commercial media reacted to the looting by labeling the people as "animals," "hoodlums," and "barbarians." This moral "indignation," however, was not raised by these institutions and individuals against the conditions (such as exploitation, racism and national chauvinism) that breed ghettos, that destroy young bodies and minds, that waste human capacities and talents, that condemn people to ignorance, unemployment and dependency. This indignation was not expressed against the bankers and monopolies that have milked the city for billions of dollars, caused the lay-

offs of over 60,000 city employees, and cut essential social services such as daycare, education, health, and fire protection. No, the commercial media and politicians are not interested in denouncing these criminals—who every day rob the workers and poor of this city of millions and billions of dollars—because they work for, and respond to the interests of these very same "legitimized" looters and exploiters.

Con Edison has been one of the monopolies that has consistently looted the people of New York City. Its electricity rates are double the national average. Last Year, Con Edison's profits exceeded \$300 million. Nonetheless, Con Edison constantly is crying poverty. And despite its high profits, it is notorious for its poor service. Con Edison came out of the black-out with only a tarnished reputation. There were no criminal charges filed against its administrators or major owners. This, however, was not the case for thousands of poor people, particularly thousands of minority youths.

As an aftermath of the two days of black-out and looting, over 4000 people were arrested. Many were arbitrarily grabbed in police sweeps which did not distinguish between the "guilty" and the innocent. Many of those arrested were people who were standing near or passing by looted stores. Once in prison, it was common practice to herd 20 to 30 people into small cells with poor ventilation and no toilets or sleeping facilities. Moreover, those jailed had exorbitant bails set against them. It was not unusual for a bail as high as \$1,500 to be imposed on a teenager for being caught with a pair of sneakers. The imposition of bail was only the "legal" excuse for justifying "preventive detention." As a result, some of those arrested had to remain in the squalid conditions of the overcrowded detention cells for up to a week.

During the black-out, Mayor Beame and the other politicians raised high the banner of "law and order." It is not unusual that, in an election year, the politicians would use this red herring in order to deceive the people and to divert their attention from the city's financial crisis. Having acted as the henchmen for the bankers and the financiers, they have participated in creating the conditions of unemployment and deteriorating social services that breed discontent and frustration. They, therefore, along with their bosses, want to increase the size of the repressive forces in order to respond even more forcefully to any rise in the people's protest, particularly any organized and militant movement that would challenge the rulers and their decisions.

What happened during the black-out will probably happen again, if not in New York, then perhaps in Boston, Detroit, Newark, Chicago, etc. This time, it was a massive power failure that triggered it. The next time, it could be another catalyst such as a police act of harassment.

These eruptions do not occur because the people are lawless and animalistic, as the ruling class would have us believe. This is a racist lie intended to pit worker against worker and to intensify racist attitudes. Clearly, it is not the oppressed or exploited who are barbaric, but the senseless and antiquated system of monopoly capitalism, which, because it places cold profits before the people's needs and aspirations, must be destroyed.

TERRORISM- A DEVIATION !

The most recent action by the FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional) left one dead and several wounded as a result of explosives set off in midtown Manhattan the morning of August 2, 1977. As to be expected the commercial press and governmental representatives seized the opportunity to attempt to discredit all Puerto Rican revolutionaries through insinuations linking the struggle for national liberation with the activities of the FALN. On the other hand, left organizations, both Puerto Rican and Northamerican, continue to assume equally irresponsible positions by simplifications or ostrich-like postures. In this respect, statements such as "lunatics, possible acts of the CIA, they are probably not Puerto Rican, etc." not only fail to educate the masses as to the significance and causes of the development of alienating acts of terror, but in the process reflect incapacity to lead the masses in the revolutionary process. Moreover, these simplifications tend to create fertile ground for the reformist tendencies within the revolutionary movement that seize the opportunity to attack fundamental principles of social transformation, namely the role of armed struggle.

The recent acts of the FALN, and the existing confusion among the people, demand that we once again elaborate on this necessary discussion which we originally presented in the pages of OEM (Vol. 1 No. 5, April 1975):

As an organization, we understand as fundamental that the emancipation of the working class is impossible without a violent revolution and the destruction of the state apparatus which the dominant class has created in order to maintain a system of exploitation and violence. Although armed struggle is a fundamental pre-requisite for the seizure of state power by the working class and the oppressed masses, this does not mean that it can be applied at all times and within all conditions. As Marxists, we understand that the form of struggle utilized must rigorously correspond to the concrete historical situation in which we find ourselves.

We can say that one particular form or forms of struggle are correct when they correspond to the given conditions, the level of development of the class struggle, and when they form a part of a correct strategical conception of the revolution; when they take into consideration the organizational forms necessary to carry them out; when they take into account the correlation of class forces at that time; when they move forward and accelerate the struggle of the revolutionary and progressive elements at the same time that they exploit the weaknesses of the enemy.

The form or forms of struggle that are implemented can not be decided based upon our dreams, illusions, or impetuosities.

Let us clarify this point. A revolution is not a military coup (a swift military take-over of the government) nor is it the result of the conspiracies or actions of a small group. This is a petty-bourgeois conception of the revolution resulting from an inability to understand the revolution as the necessary historical result of social evolution.

Nunez-Tenorio, a Marxist theorist from Venezuela points out the following in relation to the nature of social revolution: "(1) the fundamental factor of social revolutions is to be found in the existing contradictions within the economic structure of every society between the level of development of the productive forces and the nature and



character of the relations of production. This is the objective element conditional for all revolution. (2) the former manifests itself at the social level through the class struggle which plays the principal role in the revolution of the social class or classes that through revolutionary action destroys the old power (and with it, the old relations of production) and constructs the new power (and with it, establishes new relations of production). It is the dialectical unity of these objective and subjective factors which is the principal cause and the motor force of all revolution. (3) the importance of the subjective factor (conscious) of the political vanguard (political parties, revolutionary leadership, people etc.) of the revolutionary class or classes that bring about the revolution, particularly of the proletariat revolutions."

What are the roots of individual terrorism? Firstly, it is a clear manifestation of the politics and actions of the petty-bourgeoisie within the revolutionary movement. Lenin, in his article on "left-wing communism" describes this social type as "(one) who under capitalism always suffers oppression and, very often, an incredibly acute and rapid deterioration in his conditions, and ruin, easily goes to revolutionary extremes, but is incapable of perseverance, organization, discipline, and steadfastness. The petty bourgeois, 'driven to frenzy' by the horrors of capitalism, is a social phenomenon, which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalistic countries."

It has been precisely this social group, the petty-bourgeoisie, which has historically maintained hegemony over the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico. In this sense, the petty-bourgeoisie has imposed upon the political struggle the forms of struggle and the political inconsistency proper to itself. Recently, with the total bankruptcy of the strictly "independentista" movement in Puerto Rico characterized by the Puerto Rican Independence Party, with the sharpening of the colonial crisis in Puerto Rico, and with the intensification of the national liberation movements throughout the world, sectors of the petty-bourgeoisie have been radicalized, adopting socialism as their objective. Transforming the political and organizational apparatus to coincide with the structures of the major sectors of the revolutionary movements though-

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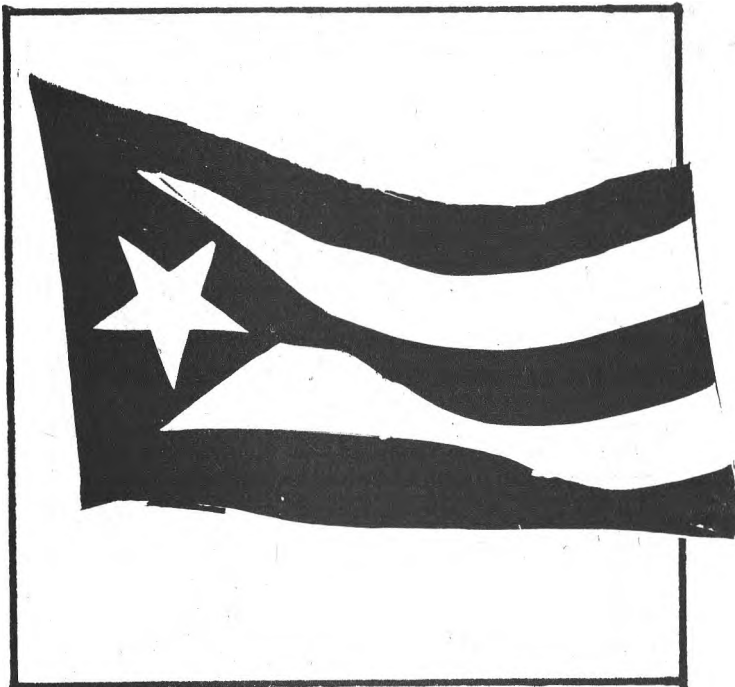
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Terrorism cont.



out the world, they have begun to "wet their feet" in the science of Marxism. In this way, up until the present, they have been able to play a leading role in the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico.

Within this sector, incorrect tendencies have been manifested with respect to the character and nature of social revolution resulting in the same errors which have plagued all revolutionary movements of the proletariat for the last two centuries. Historically, the petty-bourgeoisie has been characterized by its tendency towards extreme individualism, its "exaltation," dispersion, lack of consistency, and for a lack of unity of organization and action threatening to produce the ruin of all revolutionary movements. Its critical economic situation and lack of formation causes it to make "valiant and heroic decisions for the people" but unfortunately more often than not, without the knowledge of the masses. They neither understand the level of development of the struggle of the masses nor the principle that they are precisely the ones who make the revolution. It follows that neither are they able to understand what are the tasks to be undertaken in the light of a strategical conception, nor how these play a role in the mobilization and articulation of the revolutionary strength of the masses. It is the masses that make history.

Fundamentally, terrorism is based on the conception (bourgeois) that "historical development is the product of the individual acts of heroes, personalities, etc." Terrorism increases and gains strength during those periods when the active struggle of the masses is at a low ebb. Their apparent apathy, which is, in great part, a result of our ineffectiveness in performing the tasks of propaganda and organization, propels the adventurists, in their desperation, to commit incendiary acts as substitutes for the actions of the masses. They want "action" when the conditions call for an emphasis on organized work, agitation, and propaganda.

In recent years, the revolutionary movement both in the U.S. and Puerto Rico has experienced a period of apparent inactivity in the struggle. For those who saw, in the late 60's, the struggle of the masses reach unprecedented levels, this period of "relative calm" may seem to signal

an end to the struggle. Others incapable of analyzing objectively the development of the political struggle have incorrectly placed the "blame" on the "apathy" and "indifference" of the masses, thus negating the necessity of a rigorous analysis of our weaknesses and lack of political development. If we add to this picture the lack of experience of the revolutionary movement in general, the absence of a scientific revolutionary formation both at a theoretical level and in its organizational consequences, then we can understand more clearly who some individuals in their myopia decide to carry on the struggle themselves separated from the concrete situation of the class struggle.

Within this context, we condemn the acts of the F.A.L.N. because they divert the energies of the revolutionary movement from meeting its tasks which are so crucial in light of the present development of the struggle. Secondly, the negative effects of these terrorist acts impede the revolutionary education of the masses by alienating them from the most conscious elements. Instead of contributing to the task of establishing and developing the organization of the masses, they contribute to the dissipation of its efforts and the disorganization of its people. In addition, they create a public opinion unfavorable toward revolutionary activity. They discredit revolutionary violence by making it synonymous with terror. Moreover, and paraphrasing Lenin, these actions lead to a premature and unequal confrontation between the revolutionaries and the repressive forces of the state in a direct way. As a consequence, the more fundamental tasks of propaganda and organization are limited or have to be abandoned so that the major part of the energies and resources can be devoted to defense against repression. The result of this inequality in the struggle is that the revolutionaries, instead of the repressive forces, become the victims. On this question, Lenin provided clarity in the following:

"In principle we have never rejected, and cannot reject, terror. Terror is one of the forms of military action that may be perfectly suitable and even essential at a definite juncture in the battle, given a definite state in the troops and the existence of definite conditions. But the important point is that terror, at the present time, is by no means suggested as an operation for the army in the field, an operation closely connected with and integrated into the entire system of struggle, but as an independent form of occasional attack unrelated to any army. Without a central body and with the weakness of local revolutionary organizations, this, in fact, is all that terror can be. We, therefore, declare emphatically that under the present conditions, such a means of struggle is inopportune and unsuitable; that it diverts the most active fighters from their real task, the task which is most important from the standpoint of the interests of the movement as a whole; and that it disorganizes the forces, not of the government, but of the revolution."

These acts of individual terrorism underestimate the revolutionary role of the masses, substituting this for individual acts, motivated by incorrect conceptions of the struggle which negate the necessity of organizing the working class. They divert the energies of the struggle, and result in fostering confusion in those sectors that are integrating themselves into the revolutionary struggle.

We do not condemn violence in the abstract. If we struggle, it is precisely to eliminate from the face of the earth the regimes and systems of exploitation, and the systematized violence to which humanity has been subjected since the emergence of classes and which will end only with the destruction of capitalism. We maintain that armed struggle is one of the principal forms of struggle against capitalism. What we condemn is the use of indiscriminate violence, those acts which are isolated from and contrary to the political struggle being waged by the working class.

Puerto Rico Informa

PUERTO RICO AGAIN AT THE U.N.

During the month of August, the United Nations' Decolonization Committee will discuss once again the colonial status of Puerto Rico. In this year's session, the Committee is scheduled to update the 1974 report on the colonial case of Puerto Rico and to "continue discussion to consider appropriate measures as a follow-up to its previous resolutions on the case" of Puerto Rico. Up for consideration is a resolution which, if approved, will reaffirm the right of the Puerto Rican people to independence and self-determination and call for the United States government to recognize this right and withdraw from the island. Should the Committee decide in favor of independence, the case will then be transferred to the U.N. General Assembly for discussion during its next meeting.

The fact that the colonial case of Puerto Rico is being discussed at this international forum represents an important victory for the national liberation forces in the Island. This victory came as a result of the growing strength of the liberation forces both nationally and internationally. The national liberation forces in the Island have been able to defeat the efforts of U.S. imperialism to prevent discussion of the colonial reality of Puerto Rico in the international arena. Under the leadership of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, the Island's liberation movement was able to get a resolution passed in the Decolonization Committee in 1972 declaring Puerto Rico a colony of the U.S. Again in 1973, the Committee reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence in accordance with Resolution 1514 of 1960.

The correlation of international forces continues to be favorable to the national liberation movement. In the past few decades the world has experienced a series of national and social transformations, leading to the formation of new liberated and socialist republics: Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola, to name a few. These countries have emphatically stated their support for the national liberation movement of Puerto Rico. From their own experiences, these countries know that national and social liberation represents the best interests of the people, the future of humanity. They have struggled for and know the cost and significance of these goals. Many of these countries, as members of the Decolonization Committee have played leading roles in demanding and defending the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence. In particular, revolutionary Cuba has been consistently firm in her solidarity and support.

Despite the importance of international support, the success of Puerto Rico's national liberation movement lies in the development of the struggle on the national level. It is within this context that Puerto Rico's case in the United Nations must be understood and analyzed.

The case of Puerto Rico in the U.N. has not made any significant advancements in the last few years. The main reason for the stagnation in this process has been the inability of the National liberation forces in the Island to defeat reformism, sectarianism and to forge a united front. Last year in our column "Puerto Rico Informa" (Vol. 1 No. 21) we stated that to advance the level of the national struggle, it would be necessary to develop a "... militant struggle outside the confines of democracy but not alienated from the masses; to forget the electoral process



and combat reformism; to set the basis for a National Liberation Front; to abandon sectarianism... these are the tasks that the revolutionary forces in Puerto Rico must give priority to." Yet this did not take place. While Puerto Rico fell deeper and deeper into the economic crisis, the revolutionary organizations were not able to respond effectively to the needs of people. At a time when many workers were spontaneously responding to the crisis and demanding direction, the "leading" revolutionary organization (the P.S.P.) was busily involved in a futile electoral campaign.

In this venture, the PSP did not only fail to provide leadership to the mass struggles but also failed in its intent to broaden its base within the masses and to consolidate the party—a reality which the party's leadership has been forced to recognize. According to its own evaluation after the elections, the party was alienated from the masses, sectarian and rampant with bureaucracy. Today this organization is practically immobilized and still engaged in an internal evaluation that originally was to take one month.

At the same time other political formations were unable to provide the necessary leadership. The Pro Independence Party—an electoral formation—moved towards the right projecting itself as "the alternative for US Imperialism in the Island." During the recent period this organization has assumed an open anti-communist stance. Obviously it is no longer interested in solving the needs of

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the people. Also the embryonic stage of development of organizations like the Popular Socialist Movement—our fraternal organization in P.R.—prevented them from meeting the task. Today this organization is trying to develop the Anti Imperialist Front along with the Socialist League and other independent forces. This front represents the only organized united efforts in the Island. However it has failed to muster other political organizations, including the PSP. The non existence of an organized united national liberation front in P.R. weakens the efforts of solidarity that the international community can render to it.

Recognizing some of its present limitations, the forces that make up the national liberation movement are beginning to try to improve this situation. Attempts are being made to have the different revolutionary and progressive organizations in the island bring a united presentation to the Committee. These efforts are being carried out under the auspices of the Puerto Rican Peace Council. It is expected that there will be three presentations from the liberation forces of Puerto Rico this year: one by the Puerto Rican Independence Party; another by the Puerto Rican Socialist Party; and a united presentation signed by P.S.P., the Nationalist Party, P.I.P., the Popular Socialist Movement, the Socialist League and the Communist Party of Puerto Rico. This represents a positive step. But if this unity is only a one-time affair, solely for the purpose of coming to the U.N., then it will not resolve the present needs. United efforts have to be deepened, expanded and developed to the fullest in order to create in the future a true national liberation front. Such a front is required not only to improve the situation in the U.N. but more fundamentally to bring about the necessary changes in the Puerto Rican society.

At this year's deliberations there will be unofficial representatives of each of the colonial parties; the Popular Democratic Party and the New Progressive Party of Romero Barcelo. Both delegations will denounce the colonial status of Puerto Rico but will do so in order to promote their own political alternatives "associated autonomy" and statehood, respectively. Moreover the Puerto Rican Bar Association will be making its own presentation; a divisive document endorsed by PSP which limits the colonial question to its judicial aspects negating the class content as well as the political, economic and military aspects.

While we recognize the importance of the struggles waged in the international forums such as the U.N., we must also recognize its limitation. A resolution recognizing the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination and independence does not mean a complete or final victory. At most, a victory in the U.N. will only serve to create favorable conditions for the continuation of the struggle for national and social liberation, particularly since U.S. Imperialism—the most powerful imperialist power in the world—may not comply with the decisions reached in this international body. It will not be the first time that the U.S. will violate international law. Remember the Dominican Republic in 1965, Congo, Vietnam, Biafra, the Portuguese colonies in Africa, Chile, Palestine, etc. As we stated a year ago, "In every one of these cases imperialism violated all types of 'international laws' and 'sanctions' particularly those of the U.N. That is why the struggle at this level cannot be raised to the level of strategy as some forces within the national liberation movement have done." If Puerto Rico is to become liberated, then the Puerto Rican masses led by the working class and its organized vanguard must struggle to achieve this goal. In order for the struggle at the U.N. to move significantly forward during the present and in the future, it is necessary for the struggle at the national level to mature.

Our organization, El Comité-MINP, is committed to supporting the national liberation struggle of Puerto Rico.

Therefore, while we understand the limitations of the diplomatic struggle taking place in the United Nations, we also recognize its importance. As an organization we have always supported the efforts of the liberation movement of Puerto Rico at the U.N. Last year we proposed that we must broaden the support and mass mobilizations in the U.S. in such a manner that not only liberals will become involved, but also—and in particular—Puerto Rican workers, the national minorities and North American workers. We must also build a broad front respecting the ideological and organizational integrity of all the participants in support of the case of Puerto Rico. A quick glance at reality reveals that these tasks have not yet been accomplished. We still consider them a responsibility for all the revolutionary forces in this country to achieve. Once again, while calling for the completion of the above tasks, we join the efforts of the national liberation forces of Puerto Rico and of the revolutionary and progressive movements in this country to mobilize to the U.N., to expose the colonial reality of Puerto Rico and to denounce U.S. imperialism.

ALL OUT TO THE U.N.! SUPPORT THE STRUGGLE FOR
PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIALISM!
GUERRA Y MUERTE AL IMPERIALISMO!



WOMEN'S MOVEMENT SUFFERS SETBACKS

In the past few months, there have been several court decisions and legislative actions that have seriously affected women's rights in this country. The passage of the Hyde Amendment (forbidding the usage of federal funds for abortion), the closing of daycare centers, the cuts in welfare under President Carter's "reformed" welfare system—these all threaten to do away with gains made by working-class women over the past decade. Unfortunately, neither the women's movement nor communist organizations have been able to effectively address themselves to the particular interests of working class women and provide the leadership needed to struggle against these attacks. The Women's Conference recently held in Albany attests to this.

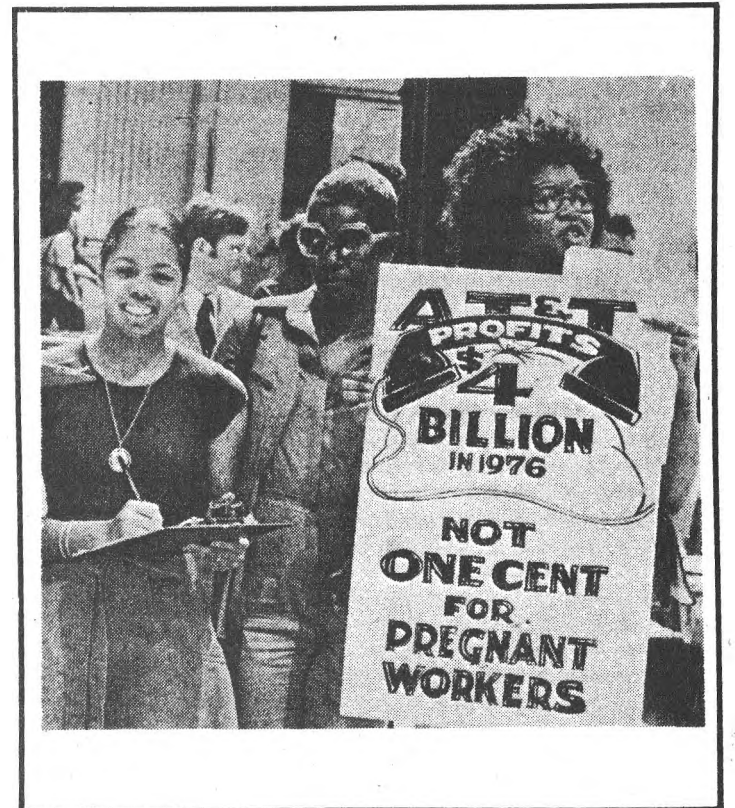
THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE IN ALBANY

In 1975 the U.N. General Assembly proclaimed International Women's Year which marked the first year of International Women's Decade. Recently during the weekend of July 8, 9, and 10 a Women's Conference was held in Albany, New York. This conference marked the first N.Y.S. Women's Meeting in conjunction with International Women's Year, and was one of 56 being held throughout the U.S. under the auspices of the State Department. The purpose of these conferences was to adopt recommendations and elect delegates to the National Women's Conference to be held in Houston, Texas, from November 18-21. At this National Conference, a report outlining the status of women and making recommendations for changes in policy or practices that obstruct women's equality would be developed and presented to the President and Congress by March of 1978.

Originally many women's groups intended to boycott the conference but as it became clear that different anti-women's rights groups were going to be present, the different groups began to mobilize. What was clear from the beginning was that working-class women would not be informed of or mobilized to the conference. Almost no literature appeared in working-class communities, and to this day very few know of this meeting or have any information about what took place.

The issues that were dealt with at the Albany conference and those held in other parts of the U.S. were the right to free and quality daycare, the right to abortion, to decent healthcare, to maternity leave, etc. These issues affect all women but in particular poor and working class women, because they are the most heavily affected by the lack of these services. Yet their input, participation and leadership was not sought.

The results of the conference were positive in that the Right to Life forces (one of the major anti-abortion organizations) and other reactionary forces were defeated and that resolutions were passed in favor of women's rights. However, we must also look at the fact that whenever the women's movement has raised these issues it has excluded working class women from participating in the decision-making process and in the strategies developed to deal with them. When the government denies people their democratic rights, when it does not provide free and quality services, the people affected are the workers. They do not have access to other options. They have no choice but to fight for their rights. But when the women's movement has taken up these issues, it has done so without regard to the particularities of working class women.



Furthermore, the issues of unionization, job conditions, welfare rights, etc.—these are for the most part ignored by the women's movement.

RESPONSE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT TO ATTACKS

The class composition of the women's movement has kept the struggle for women's rights at the reform or legislative level. The petit-bourgeois women who lead the struggle have focused on issues such as abortion, daycare and the Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.), but from the perspective that they affect all women equally, regardless of class background or race. For example, the issue of abortion has been seen solely from the perspective of a woman's right to have an abortion with no one having the right to interfere in the decision (i.e., the government, a doctor, etc.). This perspective is very limited. For working-class women, the issue has much greater ramifications.

Recently the Hyde Amendment was reintroduced in Congress as part of the 1977-78 appropriations bill for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The amendment states that federal funds may not be used for abortions with the possible exception of situations that endanger a woman's life or if she were pregnant due to rape or incest. (This last part has yet to be finalized.) Similarly, the Supreme Court ruled that states no longer have to use Medicaid money to pay for abortions. These developments mean that working-class women presently covered by Medicaid and who now have access to free abortions will no longer be able to obtain them. With the elimination of funds, poor women will be forced to turn to "home remedies" or fall victim to the unscrupulous and profiteering

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ISRAEL-NEW GOVERNMENT, BUT SAME POLITICS

The general elections held this past May in Israel resulted in a major upset for the Israeli Labor Party, the ruling political party for the last 39 years. Since the establishment of the Zionist State of Israel in 1948, the Labor Party had won every national election and dominated every Parliament without a break in its control.

In this election, however, the Labor Party was deposed by the right-wing Likus Party whose leader, Menahem Begin (now the Prime Minister) was the head of the Zionist terrorist organization, Irgun, formed during the final years of British rule in Palestine (1942-1948). The politics of Begin are most concisely expressed by his view that the occupation of the West Bank of Jordan by Israeli forces during the Israeli-Arab war of 1967 was in fact not an "occupation" but a "liberation."

During the 30 years of its domination, the Labor Party led Israel in countless acts of aggression against the Palestinian people. In order to expand its borders, the party directed the country in 3 wars against surrounding Arab countries. Within its borders, it subjected the Arab people to the worst conditions of housing, health care, and education, as well as relegating them to the lowest-paying, most unskilled jobs.

The Labor Party is opposed to any unilateral withdrawal from Arab lands occupied by Israel during the '67 war—the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights in Syria, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank of the Jordan River. It refuses to recognize the existence of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) which in 1974 was recognized by a U.N. resolution to be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It refuses to participate in any peace talks where the P.L.O. is officially represented. Needless to say, the Labor Party doesn't recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a national homeland.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES?

Throughout these years, the Likud party has been highly critical of the Labor Party, constantly presenting that the government has not stamped down enough on Arab agitation within Israel and also that it has not taken a

firm stand against the anti-Israeli propaganda of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. But in essence, there is no fundamental difference between the "moderate" wing of the Zionist forces (like the Labor Party) and the more reactionary wing. Any difference is merely one of form. For example, banner headlines in the commercial press recently screamed the news of Prime Minister Begin's recognition of Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank territory. Under the Labor government, the settlements were technically illegal. Yet the reality is that they were established when the Labor Party was in power; the Israelis were allowed to colonize Palestinian territory; the settlements were allowed to remain in existence. The only difference was that the settlements were not officially recognized by the Labor government. But recognition or not, the fact of their continued existence, the fact of their illegal occupation of land historically belonging to the Palestinian people remains the same. The difference lies in form, but not in content.

Despite these imperialist and reactionary policies, Israel is considered by some countries in the world to be a truly democratic country, the result of the efforts of a persecuted people—the Jewish people—fighting for their very existence. It is not surprising that most of the countries who view Israel in this light are themselves imperialist powers whose own histories detail the oppression and exploitation of many different peoples. Foremost among these are the U.S., France, England, South Africa, Brazil, etc.

The creation of the Zionist state of Israel is seen by these powers as the just resolution of a people's struggle for freedom. Yet we deny that Zionism is or ever was a movement representing the legitimate interests of the Jewish people.

THE BIRTH OF ZIONISM

As an ideology, Zionism expressed the concept of the Jewish people as one nation, who because of their religious beliefs, can never be assimilated into other cultures and societies. This concept is "validated" by the historical persecution of the Jews and by the existence of anti-semitism in all countries where Jews live. Zionism is posed

as the solution to anti-semitism.

In 1896, the founder of modern Zionism, Theodore Herzl, presented this theory in his book, *A Jewish State*. In it, Herzl presented that the only way to solve the Jewish problem was to establish a national Jewish state. Herzl clearly stated that wherever the new home was located, the people already living there would have to be displaced. Thus, from its inception, Zionism was an imperialist and racist ideology.

Because of its historical and religious connections as the ancient homeland of the Jewish people, the most logical place for Jewish colonization was Palestine. But the most important factor to Herzl and the other early Zionists was not the "historical homeland" but rather, the location of an area large enough and fertile enough to support the influx of millions of people. Thus, other parts of the world besides Palestine, such as Argentina and Uganda, were also considered for colonization. In the end, however, because of religious sentiment for Palestine, it was chosen as the most suitable place.

From the very beginning, Zionism worked to achieve its aim by means of making deals with one imperialist power or another. The guiding principle of Zionist diplomacy was to affiliate itself with whichever world power happened to be controlling Palestine at that time.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A HOMELAND

The Zionists achieved few concrete results in the maneuverings until they gained the support of the British government in the 1900's. At that time, Britain saw itself as stepping into the power vacuum that would be created in the Middle East when the ailing Turkish Ottoman Empire fell. (The Ottoman Empire at that time included, besides Palestine, the present-day areas of Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Turkey.) The British imperialists also had their eyes on the rich oil reserves that had already been discovered in the area. They saw that the Zionists might be able to help them to establish a base.

In order to undercut the influence of any other imperialist power in the region, in particular France, Britain

A.F.L.-C.I.O. - Continues To Conciliate

When Jimmy Carter ran for President last year, organized labor—particularly the AFL-CIO—was a staunch supporter of his campaign. Hundreds of thousands of dollars from union treasuries were given to his campaign chest by the AFL-CIO—money acquired from the toil and sweat of millions of union men and women. In their publicity, the AFL-CIO portrayed Carter as the great hope of the American labor movement after 8 years of "regressive Republican administration." But Jimmy Carter, as all Democratic and Republican politicians, has demonstrated that his allegiances do not lie with the working class of this country but with Big Business and its ruling circles. This can be clearly seen in the actions of the Carter Administration with respect to the efforts to reform the Taft-Hartley Act and to raise the minimum wage.

Last month, the Carter Administration submitted to Congress a weak labor-reform proposal that is intended to make changes in the Taft-Hartley Act, particularly the provisions of the act that deal with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The proposal was the product of a "compromise" between the class collaborationist AFL-CIO and the Carter Administration. The "compromise" represents a substantial retreat from the demands that the labor movement has fought for decades to obtain in its efforts to reduce the unfairness of both the law and the enforcement practices of the NLRB.

TAFT-HARTLEY, NLRB AND PROPOSED CHANGES

The Taft-Hartley Act was passed in 1947 by the efforts of Big Business. It came on the heels of the massive strike wave that followed World War II (in the steel, electrical, and auto industries, etc.) as workers tried to regain lost purchasing power cut by post-war inflation. It was then condemned by all of labor as a "slave labor law."

The intent of Taft-Hartley was to restrict the gains made by the labor movement with the passage of the Wagner Act of 1935, which protected the right of American workers to organize in trade unions. The Wagner Act also outlined unfair labor practices and revitalized the already existent NLRB to guard against abuses. Accordingly, Taft-Hartley placed restriction on labor by:

- banning closed shops (in a closed shop after a probationary period, a worker automatically becomes a member of the union);
 - allowing craft unions to break up well-established, industry-wide bargaining units (encouraging raiding and jurisdictional fights);
 - allowing states to adopt compulsory open-shop laws (which now exist in 19 states);
 - banning secondary boycotts and sympathetic strikes (although it allowed employers to band together to break a strike);
 - subjecting unions to damage suits even before the NLRB ruled on a case;
 - limiting the strike weapon by the requirement that mandatory injunctions be issued in secondary boycott strikes and that a federal 80-day injunction be ordered in strikes affecting national security.
- The effects of these provisions were to restrict the strike weapon and the right to unionization.

As for its effects on the NLRB, the Taft-Hartley Act reorganized the NLRB, consolidating its bureaucratic characteristics and inflexibility to the demands of labor for fair treatment. As a result, no distinctions were to be made between company unions and independent unions; the time



for filing and ruling on a case was increased; and the Board was required to conduct a hearing before every union certification election. The intent was to grant employers time to defeat unionization efforts and to limit the ability of workers to choose their own unions.

Under the recommended changes submitted to Congress by the Carter Administration, the Congress would:

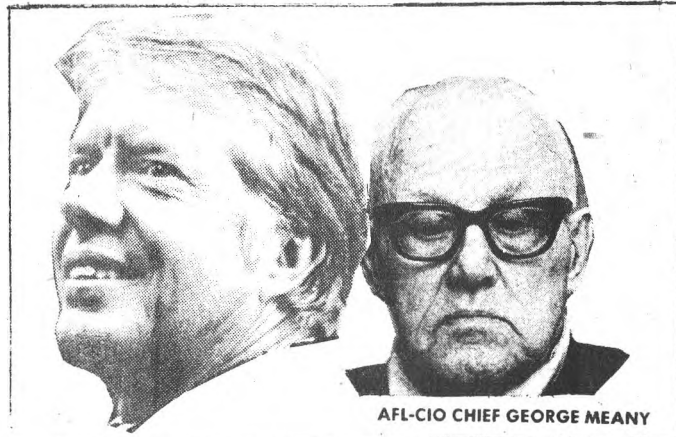
- establish a fixed period, not to exceed 35 days, for holding a collective bargaining election after a petition has been filed by a union;
- expand the NLRB's size from five members to seven in order to cope with the large number of cases it processes;
- authorize the NLRB to direct payment of double back pay to workers discharged for organizing activities;
- authorize the NLRB to order employers to compensate workers for wages lost because of a refusal to bargain for a first contract after an election is won by a union;
- require that appeals of Board decisions be filed within 30 days of those decisions; if no appeal is filed, the Labor Board would request the courts for immediate enforcement. Further, the proposed changes grant the NLRB the authority to deny a federal contract for three years to a company guilty of repeated violations of NLRB orders. However, this is a hollow threat because it is hamstrung by exceptions such as the proviso that "if the Secretary of Labor determines that debarment is not in the national interest, or if the affected federal agency determines that no other supplier is available," then sanctions would be lifted.

However, the major deficiencies of this sell-out agreement made by the AFL-CIO is its failure to recognize the submission of 55% of signed cards as sufficient for NLRB certification without any election. This allows the employers the opportunity to continue to enjoy the luxury of

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CARTER cont.



AFL-CIO CHIEF GEORGE MEANY

having extended election campaigns during which they can deceive, harass, frighten and intimidate workers away from unionization. Moreover, this agreement leaves untouched Section 14b of the Taft-Hartley law under which states can pass "right-to-work" laws banning union shops. Consequently, this section continues to be a weapon in the hands of the employers to fight unionization—particularly in the South where only a fraction of the industrial labor force is organized.

Despite their mild character, the Carter Administration's proposals will face stiff opposition in Congress. Big Business is gearing all its lobbying efforts to defeat or weaken the Carter package. Employer associations have all denounced the proposals and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has characterized the legislation as "an ill-advised attempt to further the interests of organized labor."

MINIMUM WAGE—BELOW POVERTY LINE

The thrust to reform the Taft-Hartley Act and the NLRB comes at a time when similar efforts are also underway to upgrade the minimum wage. Presently, the minimum wage stands at \$2.30 an hour or .62 cents below the \$2.92 an hour minimum that marks the poverty line. According to government statistics, for a family of four \$2.92 an hour is the minimum wage essential to achieve a minimal standard of living. Under the Carter-AFL-CIO "compromise,"

the minimum would rise to \$2.65 an hour which would still leave the wages of the 9 million workers, presently covered by the minimum wage .27 cents below the poverty line.

Originally, the AFL-CIO had advocated \$3.00 an hour minimum wage. However, in their negotiations with the Carter Administration, they finally settled on \$2.65 an hour. In addition, they agreed that the new bill would fix the minimum permanently at 53% of the hourly manufacturing wage. This represents only a small gain since the federal minimum has historically been about 45 to 50% of the workforce. Among those uncovered the largest sector are 3 million farmworkers whose average wage is \$1.90 an hour. Another large sector uncovered are hundreds of thousands of teenagers who work in the giant fast food chains such as Burger King, MacDonald, etc. The bill also fails to eliminate the "tip credit" system under which service workers—particularly in the food service industry—have tips deducted from their salaries. This practice affects nearly 2.2 million workers. Most of these millions of workers are women and over half are black women. Of these 2.2 million workers, only 20% are in unions.

The AFL-CIO "compromise" with the Carter Administration is nothing but a sell-out of millions of workers. Understanding that this "compromise" safeguards their interests, business lobbyists have announced their approval of the deal. There is no doubt that for them it "insures reasonable profits" but for millions of workers it only spells continuing misery and degradation.

The latest compromises between the Carter Administration and the bureaucrats of the AFL-CIO demonstrate a lesson which history has raised again and again—namely that the working class cannot expect to have its class interest served by the agents of the ruling class. Therefore, we must plant the seeds now to unseat the bureaucrats from their positions of power within the labor movement. This will be done by building a grass-roots movement in the trade unions that fights on the principles of class struggle unionism and that combats all the divisions (racism, national chauvinism, sexism, etc.) which the bureaucrats and the bosses use to pit worker against worker. It will only be such a class conscious and organized movement that will win meaningful concessions from the ruling class (such as the elimination of Taft-Hartley). This movement will not be built spontaneously or overnight. Moreover, it will require the conscious leadership of Marxist-Leninists who are willing to learn from the masses and to build concretely their leadership roles.

Israel cont.

negotiated with the Arabs (who were agitating for their independence from the Ottoman Empire) as well as with the Zionists. In 1915, England agreed to guarantee the independence of Arab territories if the Arabs would enter the approaching World War on the side of the European powers. British betrayal of Arab national interests began one year later, in 1916, when it concluded a secret agreement with France to divide up the territories among themselves.

In 1917, Arab interests were betrayed once again when the British government published its Balfour Declaration, calling for the "establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." This declaration became the legal basis of the Zionist claim to Palestine.

When World War I ended, the secret agreement between France and Britain was implemented, and the Arab territories were divided up among the western imperialist powers. Palestine and Iraq were given to England. At this point, there were two conflicting trends in British foreign policy: 1) the initial agreement with the Arabs on their right to independence and self-determination and 2) the Balfour Declaration calling for a Jewish homeland. The two trends were irreconcilable. Britain resolved the problem by playing the demands of the two groups against each other as a method to increase its own power in the area. For the next 25 years, 1922-1948, this was the cornerstone of British policy in the Middle East.

ZIONIST CONTROL EXPANDS

In 1919, Palestine had a total population of 700,000 people. Arabs represented 91% of the total population and Jews, 8.3%. Arabs owned 97.5% of the land while Jews owned 2.5%. During the period of British rule, the Zionists began immigrating to Palestine by the thousands. By 1948, almost 30 years later, Jews represented 32% of the total population. However, land ownership had only increased to 6.5%.

Despite limited land ownership, the Zionists entrenched themselves in Palestine. They set up the Jewish Agency to administer all programs leading to the establishment of the Jewish homeland. They established policies which still exist in Israel today. All

land acquired from Arabs became "Jewish property" forever. Zionist regulations forbade the re-sale of land back to the Arabs. Land could only be sold to another Jew, or else be turned over to the Jewish Agency (today in Israel, the office that institutes this same land policy is the Jewish National Fund). The Agency was responsible for establishing Jewish settlements using only Jewish labor. Jewish colonizers were subject to punishment or loss of land if Arab labor was used instead of Jewish labor. Through the Agency, the Zionists gained more and more control over the general administration and economy of the country.

PARTITION

As a "resolution" to the growing conflict between the Arabs, the Zionists and the British, in 1947, the U.N. partitioned Palestine, creating an Arab sector, a Jewish sector, and the international zone of Jerusalem. The Arabs were given 43% of the land (even though, at that time, they controlled 93% of the total area) and the Jews received 56%.

This decision was totally unacceptable to the Palestinian people. It denied



them their right to self-determination and it took away 50% of their land.

On the other hand, the Zionists—determined to declare themselves a Jewish state—immediately began attacking Arab villages. One of the most infamous attacks was on the village of Deir Yassin in 1948, in which 250 men, women, and children were deliberately massacred. The purpose of this attack was to create an atmosphere of fear and terror among the Palestinians so that they would flee their

land. By the time the state of Israel was actually declared (in May, 1948, only 6 months after partition), over 400,000 Palestinians had been forced to leave their country.

By the end of 1948, over one million Arabs had been evicted from Palestine. 22% of the "Arab sector" had been incorporated into the State of Israel. 76% of Palestine now belonged to the Zionists. As Herzl had originally described it, the population of the colonized country had been displaced from their own land.

ISRAEL AND THE U.S.

During this time, U.S. imperialist interests were beginning to replace the waning British influence in the Middle East. The U.S. was emerging as one of Israel's strongest supporters. In fact, during the U.N. partition vote, the U.S. was responsible for "convincing" (through political and economic pressure) many countries to vote for partition.

The U.S. interest in Israel was due to several factors. With the ending of World War II there was strong pressure from the American Jewish community, as well as the general population, to help the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who had survived the criminal policies of mass genocide carried out by Hitler and the Nazis. The U.S. government responded to the pressure, but not by allowing the refugees into the country. Instead, their solution was to send them to Israel. This would create more legitimacy for the Zionist state and, as a result, would give the U.S. a stronger foothold in the Middle East. At the same time, the U.S. could maintain its hypocritical image of concern for the Jewish people.

The relationship between Israel and the U.S. flourished. As a developing capitalist country that basically functioned on a war-readiness economy, Israel depended very heavily upon the influx of money and equipment (particularly, military equipment) from the U.S. Today, approximately \$2 billion a year in military aid comes from the U.S.

One very interesting development in the relationship between the two countries is that part of the aid coming from the U.S. has been used to build up Israel's arms export industry. In 1976, Israel exported over \$500 million worth of arms to more than 20 countries. Recently, more and more of

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Israel cont.

this business is being done with reactionary or fascist regimes that are increasingly becoming isolated within the international community.

South Africa is a prime example of this situation. At a time when South Africa faces political and economic isolation, Israeli trade and investment in the country has increased. Likewise, South Africa is increasing its business

ventures in Israel. Ideologically, there is much unity between the apartheid system and Zionism. In fact, in South Africa, there exists a large Zionist community which is a strong supporter of the continuation of white supremacy in that country.

In particular, Israeli exports have increased to those countries which, because of popular and Congressional pressure within the U.S., are no longer able to receive certain kinds of military equipment from the U.S. This is the case with many countries in Latin America—Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador, etc.

The recent Carter-Begin discussions reaffirmed the ties between U.S. Imperialism and Israel. Despite Carter's declarations on human rights and his statements on the rights of the Palestinian people to a national homeland, U.S. foreign policy is still committed to supporting Zionist Israel and its political, social and military aggression against the Palestinian people. In Israel, U.S. imperialism has a vehicle to protect its economic interests in the middle-east, and a "policeman" to unite with Arab reactionaries against the just aspirations of the Arab masses for social equality, democracy, and self-determination.

WOMEN Cont.

quacks who pass themselves off as abortionists. The only other alternative available would be permanent sterilization (which doctors will readily perform, particularly on Black and other minority women). Clearly then, it is not only the right to abortion which must be addressed, but also the right to a free and safe abortion. Without funds, working class women are losing the right to determine one aspect of their lives.

The overwhelming majority of women in the various women's organizations that exist are professionals or in managerial positions. They are not dependent on government funds and are able to pay for their abortions. In this country, and in capitalist society in general, your "right" to a safe abortion, quality daycare, healthcare, legal assistance, etc., is determined by your ability to pay for it. This fundamental fact is not addressed or understood by the women's movement.

THE E.R.A.

Another issue confronting the women's movement at this time is the E.R.A. This proposed amendment to the constitution which is presently up for ratification in different states reads, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the U.S. or by any state on account of sex." What this means is that all laws and practices which treat women differently than men are discriminatory and must be changed to reflect equal treatment. If the E.R.A. were passed, it would mean that discrimination against women in terms of hiring, salaries, job protection, etc., would be illegal. Schools and training programs could not longer discriminate against women. All property and earnings in marriages would belong to both partners, not just the man.

While we support the E.R.A. because it potentially advances the position of women, we must also understand its limitations. In this society, it is not possible for women to achieve real equality. The way this society (and all capitalist societies) are organized, only a very few (the owners of the big banks and corporations) benefit from the wealth that workers produce; the rest—particularly the working class and oppressed nationalities—get barely enough to live on. Thus, whatever laws are passed, no matter how widespread they are, their impact is limited by the very essence of our economic system. While it is correct for the women's movement to organize support for the E.R.A., unless its limitations are understood and are part of the education that takes place around the amendment, it will mislead women into thinking that the question of women's

oppression has been resolved.

It is this class perspective that has been missing from the women's movement. The cuts in services are not seen as part of the overall attack on workers' democratic rights. Many women's groups see the court ruling against abortions as "male chauvinist" or "male supremacist." They view the closing of daycare centers as "sexist." In essence, these characterizations take the feminist position that the enemy is "the man." Although there are some women's groups who take exception to this and claim that they see the class struggle as primary, in practice sexism and male supremacy become the focus of their work and actions. This is not to negate that sexism and male supremacy, as well as all forms of chauvinism, must be addressed and fiercely combatted, but it must be done within the context of class struggle. The superficiality of the feminist approach to women's oppression points out clearly the class background and weaknesses of the women's movement. At the same time, it also points to the serious failure of the revolutionary movement to raise the necessary questions, organize and provide leadership to the women's movement in general and to working class women in particular.

The Role of the Revolutionary Movement

For the most part, serious progressive and revolutionary groups have tailed behind the spontaneous mass struggles that we have been witness to in the past years in health, education, housing, and women's rights. On the one hand, the dogmatists dismiss the women's movement as "bourgeois feminists," negating the very valid and concrete issues that are being raised and consequently leaving the leadership in the hands of these "bourgeois feminists;" on the other hand there are the revisionists who allow the struggle to remain at the level of reforms, negating the fundamental fact that women's oppression is a class question.

If we as Marxists-Leninists are to truly represent the working class, then the struggle for women's liberation must be seriously and consistently taken up. It is not enough to "support" the struggle; our responsibility is to lead it. Within our own ranks and in our daily integration with the masses we must struggle against sexism and women's oppression, developing the necessary vehicles for the integration of women into the long-range revolutionary struggle. We must be an active force within the struggles taking place in the different working-class communities in this country. We must insure that the struggle for women's equality is bound to the class struggle; without this link and this perspective, we doom the working class of this country to the continued exploitation and oppression of which it has long been a victim.