

STALINISM AND CHINA

# RADICAL AMERICA

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also:

THE GI MOVEMENT TODAY

BOLSHEVIKS AND WORKING WOMEN



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# **RADICAL AMERICA**

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## Introduction

Organizing and party-building have aroused widespread interest and debate within the North American left. This issue of *Radical America* tries to address some of the problems raised by this debate.

One of the matters that especially concerns us is the revival of interest in Stalinism. For three decades — from the mid-1920's to 1956 — Stalin's leadership in the Soviet Union and his pronouncements on all topics from revolutionary strategy to science and philosophy dominated most discussion among socialists. But Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin in 1956, the break-up of Soviet domination over the international communist movement, and the worldwide emergence of a New Left in the 1960's seemed to put his influence to an end, especially among young people.

In a recent issue of *Radical America*, we defined ourselves as part of "an anti-Stalinist left." Several readers have questioned this self-definition and pointed out, correctly we think, that its use imposes on us an obligation to explain just what we mean by Stalinism and why we are against it. We accept and welcome this obligation, but we do not pretend that we can meet it adequately in one short statement. Stalinism is a complex phenomenon. On the left today we confront it in organizations that talk of ideological cohesion, discipline, and



"science," but practice dogmatism, authoritarianism, and jargon. We see Stalinism in organizational forms that exaggerate the value of centralism at the expense of democracy, and emphasize the authority of the party and its leadership at the expense of the "non-party masses" and even lower-level party members. Stalinism also involves a drastic narrowing — even in contrast to Lenin's Bolshevism — of the range in which ideological debate and cultural expression are permitted, but also around the details of all its policies. Marxism-Leninism, in the hands of the Stalinists, ceases to be a philosophy and a method, and becomes a theology, the texts of which can be cited — regardless of context, with no concrete investigation of concrete conditions — as a source of eternal truth. The dialectical essence of Marxism is overwhelmed by mechanical determinism.

In the history of the Soviet Union, Stalinism meant, in addition to massive repression and the destruction of democracy within the party, an economic policy that gave the development of the "forces of production" — heavy industry, technology, and science — primacy over the necessity for the transformation of social relations through protracted class struggle. This approach resulted in the acceptance of hierarchical control of enterprises, reliance on material incentives, and tolerance of wide inequalities of income and privilege. Internationally, Stalinism entailed the subordination of other parties and peoples to the policies of the Soviet Union, and a centralization of authority in the world communist movement that ignored the rights of other nations and the need for other parties to develop strategies appropriate to their own conditions.

We hope, in future issues, to deepen and refine this preliminary definition of what we mean by Stalinism, and to play a role in the search for alternatives. Today, however, it is clear that the influence of Stalin is on the rise, whether measured by the sprouting of "Marxist-Leninist" parties that honor and imitate him, or by the new attention paid to his writings on history, strategy, and philosophy. In this issue of *Radical America*, Russell Jacoby addresses one major source of this Stalinist revival: the insistence on the part of the Chinese Communist Party that the revolutionary tradition runs from Marx and Engels through Lenin to Stalin and then to Mao. In his article on China and Stalinism, Jacoby argues that the defense of Stalin by the Chinese is largely tactical, and is part of their struggle with the current rulers of the Soviet Union. He shows, in fact, that Stalin consistently opposed the successful strategies of the Chinese revolutionaries, and on several occasions was responsible for disastrous defeats. In addition, Jacoby shows that on many central questions of socialist theory and strategy — economic development, the role of peasants, or the handling of disputes within the party, for example — the Chinese owe their relative success to pursuing a policy very different from that of Stalin.

One claim of the Stalinists, of course, is that there is a fundamental continuity from the Bolshevik Party under Lenin to the Communist International under Stalin. In considering the origins of Stalin's rule in

Russia, therefore, we have been forced to question the adequacy of Lenin's bolshevism — both his revolutionary strategy and his conception of the revolutionary party — for dealing with the problems of contemporary socialists in modern industrial countries. Anne Bobroff takes a critical look at Lenin's party in her essay on the Bolsheviks and working women during the period 1905 to 1920. Like the present U.S. working class, the working class of pre-revolutionary Russia included a large proportion of women. Bobroff shows that these women were very militant, and created a wide variety of organizations to serve their needs. She also shows that the Bolsheviks lagged behind rather than led these women; that the party men attempted to capture and use the women's militancy for pre-defined party aims, and suppressed autonomous women's organizations and the women's initiative in defining their own goals. Bobroff further suggests that these Bolshevik policies reflected not only sexist attitudes but also the overall hierarchical organization of the party.

An essential part of revolutionary socialist strategy is the role of the military. The recent defeat for the working class in Chile and setbacks in Portugal have vividly illustrated this for us. Our own experiences with the military occurred within the context of the Vietnam war, an unpopular war, fought largely with conscripts and accompanied by a large anti-war movement. These conditions are now largely changed. What are the prospects for organizing in the military today? Has the creation of an all-volunteer army eliminated the discontents that were the basis for much of the GI organizing in the 1960's? These are the questions addressed by Linda Alband, Steve Rees, and Denni Woodmansee. They trace the origins and growth of the volunteer army, the emergence of a new kind of GI movement within the ranks, and examine the possibilities for both union organizing and political work within the armed forces today. The authors show that the changing composition of the armed forces is closely related to changes in the economy. They also show that, in the absence of war, the GI movement of today parallels the struggles in the wider society, concentrating primarily on wages, working conditions, and struggles against authority for control of one's life.

All of these articles are concerned with new ways that socialists are looking at our situation today. We would like to remind our readers that we value your feedback very much, and we call your attention to our "Letters" section as a place where experiences and observations relating to our articles can be exchanged in a brief and informal way.

Finally, many of you are aware that we have launched a fund-raising drive to overcome our deficit and raise our circulation so that we can become self-supporting. This drive is off to a successful start, and we would like to thank the many readers who have responded so generously to our appeal. If you haven't contributed yet we hope you will do so; but you can also help by subscribing if you are a newsstand reader, by asking bookstores and libraries to carry *Radical America*, by



becoming a "sustaining subscriber," and by giving gift subscriptions. We know that these are hard times, but this is just what makes it so important that *Radical America* survive and grow.

The *Radical America* editors

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# Stalinism and China

*Russell Jacoby*

The resurgence of Stalin and Stalinism is a grim comment on the state of the left in the United States. For a left that has passed through "old" and "new" phases, it marks regression and retreat. In the form of "Marxism-Leninism," an incantation monopolized by the "new communist movement," Stalinism is increasingly invoked, if not practiced, by the organized and disorganized left. As a formula it is the left-wing contribution to the "how to" industry; it is equally guilty of deceptive advertising. The "Marxist-Leninist" package contains little of Marx and Lenin (or Mao), but liberal quantities of Stalin and old Communist Party dogma. Today "Marxism-Leninism" is contagious, and few seem immune.

The new Stalinism has only contempt for its forerunner, the new left. This is contempt without an object; the new left has not simply faded, it has been obliterated, erased from mind and memory. When recalled it either draws a blank or evokes the faint odor of failure. Yet the temptation to sing the virtues of the new left must be resisted; this is not only tedious but detracts from a serious study of its weaknesses — and strengths. The fact itself of the revival of Stalinism suggests a fundamental failing of the new left, its inability — or refusal — to delve into the history of Marxism

*OPPOSITE: Mao Tse-Tung on the Long March, 1934-35.*

and revolution. This failing takes its revenge: only a left innocent of history could today be conned by the rhetoric and answers of the 1930s.

The absence of a historical consciousness is a fundamental reason that aids but does not bring about the return of Stalinism. A more specific cause is the Chinese Revolution. The attraction of the Chinese Revolution redoubled as the left ran into obstacles at home. The natural enthusiasm was grounded in the affinities that the left perceived, if only instinctively; the left sensed the vitality of the Chinese Revolution, and its concern for culture, consciousness, and human participation — all of which appeared to be lacking in contemporary Russia. Hence the indifference of the left toward the Soviet Union. Yet this enthusiasm for China has been channeled by the Soviet/China split back to an enthusiasm for Stalin and Stalin's Russia. That is, the official Chinese version of the Soviet/China split has been accepted without reservation by most parts of the North American left. The Chinese version, of course, dates "revisionism" as commencing with Khrushchev; everything prior to Khrushchev — Stalin's Russia — receives the revolutionary seal of approval — minus some "mistakes." This Chinese position has had an incalculable effect on rendering Stalinism acceptable, and even desirable, to the left.

The irony has been missed: the regeneration of Stalinism has come by way of a historic opponent and alternative, Maoism. Stalin was no friend of the Chinese Revolution; and in almost every particular Mao and the Chinese Revolution have diverged from Stalinist models. The notion that Maoism plus Stalinism adds up to a single revolutionary "science" is science fiction. The surgical separation of Russian "revisionism" from Stalinism is, similarly, mythology. Russian "revisionism" is not the negation of Stalinism, but its quintessence.

This article explores some aspects of the relationship of the Chinese to the Russian revolution, Maoism to Stalinism; it is an excerpt from a longer essay, "Stalin, Marxism-Leninism and the Left." I make no claim to be drawing upon original research and sources; in fact I claim the opposite. The argument is deliberately based on recent and accessible works. This can underline the fact that the history of a Russian/Chinese divergence is hardly obscure; moreover it can suggest the books and articles where a general study of Maoism versus Stalinism can begin.

"After the war in Europe was over Stalin sent Mao Tse-tung a Russian book on partisan warfare, the fruit of Russian experience during the German invasion. Mao read it, and showed it to Lin Piao, his best military commander ... Lin remarked: 'If we had had this as our textbook we would have been annihilated ten years ago.'" (1)



The interpretation of the Chinese Revolution is exceedingly difficult; there is little agreement even among its historians. But there is some agreement. In general, an examination of the Chinese Revolution shows that it diverged significantly from the Russian Revolution and that, moreover, it succeeded in spite of Stalin's and the Comintern's directives. In other terms: there is a revolutionary process associated with Mao which is distinct from that associated with Stalin. This means that the Chinese defense of Stalin cannot be taken at face value. The defense of Stalin, in fact, was due more to the events following Khrushchev's rise to power. Inasmuch as Khrushchev came to power as the denunciator of Stalin, the Chinese appeal to Stalin in their disputes with the Russian leader. Thus the framework and terms of the difference, but not the substance: in fact the issues have nothing to do with Stalin. (The relevant events will be discussed below.) It is important to grasp this; for it is the failure to understand the extent to which the Chinese defense of Stalin is not real but tactical that has misled much of the left, in the sense of viewing Stalin plus Mao as upholders of a single revolutionary theory and practice against Russian "revisionism." Nothing is further from the truth. The remarks here intend only to be suggestive, not an exhaustive study of the Chinese Revolution. It is only a question of opening up certain areas of discussion.

The Chinese Revolution and Maoism can be seen as bucking, and diverging from, the Russian model and directions in at least three areas: (A) the role of peasants; (B) political organization; (C) economic organization and industrialization. A glance at several periods of the history of the Chinese Revolution will flesh out these divergences.

### The Role of Peasants

1927 is a nodal point in the history of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao. Prior to that year a "united front" existed between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang. Since China was not yet a unified country, and its proletariat was small and weak, it seemed logical for the CCP to unite with the Kuomintang — under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek — in order to achieve national unification and limited social reforms. Thus the Comintern decided in 1923: "Insofar as the working class... is not yet differentiated as an absolutely independent force, the E.C.C.I. [Executive Committee of the Communist International] considers that it is necessary to co-ordinate the activities of the Kuomintang and of the young Communist Party of China."

As simple as this may appear, it is not. In the history of the Comintern, there have been many kinds of "united fronts." The differences between them depend on the nature of the alliance or subordination involved: e.g., does the Communist Party mute its revolutionary program? disband its organizational integrity? etc.

While the CCP did approve a coalition with the Kuomintang, it opposed the form demanded by the Comintern; according to one commentator, the CCP "profoundly distrusted the Kuomintang and was inclined to regard it as a collection of 'new warlords' and 'new bureaucrats.'" (2)

One chapter of the story can be quickly told. In 1926 Chiang began a major military swing, the "Northern Expedition," to rid China of warlords and unify the country. Advance work for this expedition was performed by the Communist Party. In Shanghai, for example, Communist-led labor unions revolted, seizing the city in anticipation of the arrival of Chiang and the Kuomintang. At this point, the official Comintern position still called for coalition with Chiang. Stalin announced days before Chiang's arrival in Shanghai: "At present, we need the Right. It has capable people, who still direct the army and lead it against the imperialists. Chiang Kai-shek has perhaps no sympathy for the revolution, but he is leading the army and cannot do otherwise than lead it against the imperialists." (3) In Shanghai, Chiang was greeted as a liberator; specific instructions from the Comintern directed workers to hide or bury their weapons. Chiang entered the city unopposed. Then, on April 12, 1927, he launched a counter-revolution — a coordinated and methodical massacre and execution of CCP members and sympathizers — which was literally a lethal blow to the CCP and Comintern policy. (4) This was, in short, a major defeat for the Chinese Revolution and the Comintern policy of "united front."

The collapse of the CCP/Kuomintang alliance was a disaster for the CCP and for Stalin, who was in the midst of a struggle with Trotsky and needed victories in China to vindicate his position. The usual course was adopted: it was decided that Comintern policy was not wrong, but that CCP leadership was, since it had been guilty of "right" errors — kowtowing to the Kuomintang. It was also decided that the Chinese Revolution was now entering a new phase of revolt and insurrection. Under impossible conditions, the Comintern commanded uprisings by the CCP; Mao later characterized this period as one of "reckless action (adventurism)." Instead of organizing an "orderly retreat," party members and followers were commanded to "undertake local insurrections all over the country without the slightest hope of success." (5) The upshot of this policy was simple: the communist movement in the cities was annihilated. The urban proletariat never again played a role in the Chinese Revolution — not until a victorious Mao entered the cities from the countryside in 1949. The total defeat of this policy, then, defined the uniqueness of the Chinese Revolution: it shifted from city to countryside.

What was to become the Maoist strategy, peasant revolution, was formed these very same years, developed either in opposition to or in ignorance of Stalin and the Comintern. To preserve the Kuomintang/CCP alliance, in fact, Stalin had ordered that the radicalism of the peasantry be curbed — to "check the peasant's over-



zealous action with the power of the Party Headquarters." (6) Mao's orientation was different.

Mao's field of activity was the countryside and the peasantry; he had played only a minor role in the events of the city. The betrayal, repression, and misleadership of the urban proletariat — a proletariat which in any case was small in China — meant that the only possibilities were now outside the cities. It cannot be pretended that a focus on the peasantry was utterly new to Marxism, to Lenin or to Stalin; but this is not the point. Hitherto Marxism had been essentially concerned with an urban proletariat, and only in a secondary way with the peasantry. With Mao this is reversed: the proletariat is minor, the peasantry an entire theory and practice. This is Mao's contribution to Marxism: a theory of peasant revolution.

One of Mao's very first writings, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," spells this out; it was written in 1927, the same year as the urban disasters. "To give credits where they are due, if we allot ten points to the accomplishments of the democratic revolution, then the achievements of the urban dwellers and the military units rate only three points, while the remaining seven points would go to the peasants in their rural revolution." (7) This may not seem so original or novel, but within the history of Marxist theory it reverses the relationship between the peasantry and the proletariat. The peasants here are the major force, and the urban proletariat an adjunct. The heresy of this doctrine in terms of traditional Marxism is implicitly admitted by the Maoists themselves; for this sentence — one of the most explicit in the role it assigns to the peasantry — is omitted in recent Chinese editions of the Report. (8)

The remaining stages of the Chinese Revolution can barely be mentioned here: the creation of rural soviets by Mao; the "wars of extermination" by Chiang which finally forced the CCP on the epic "long march" to Yenan; the Japanese invasion of China and the second "united front" between the CCP and Chiang; the defeat of the Japanese (and the end of World War II) and the recommencement of Communist/Chiang hostilities leading to Communist victory in 1949. Three points are worth emphasizing about the Chinese path to revolution: (1) the protracted military struggle (unlike the Russian Revolution, where the military phase was relatively brief); (2) the peasant and rural orientation; and (3) the important role of nationalism. The relative significance of rural revolution and peasant nationalism need not be discussed here; but it should be noted that much of the support for and success of the CCP stems from its assuming the mantle of nationalism following the invasion of China by Japan. (9)

Stalin was not interested in aiding the Chinese Revolution, and more often than not subordinated it to the imperatives of Russian foreign policy. The rural soviets organized by Mao did receive "official" recognition, but were originally ignored or opposed by

Stalin. In general, Stalin was concerned with Japanese imperialism as a threat to Russian integrity; for this reason he deemed that the Kuomintang could provide more of a buffer than what were to him some rural and slightly heretical Communists. Even after World War II, Stalin was advising the Chinese to shelve their revolution in favor of aiding Chiang. He stated then: "After the war we invited Chinese comrades to come to Moscow and we discussed the situation in China. We told them bluntly that we considered the development of the uprising in China had no prospect, and that the Chinese comrades should seek a modus vivendi with Chiang Kashesk, ...and dissolve their army. The Chinese comrades agreed here with the views of the Soviet comrades, but went back to China and acted otherwise." (10) (Note that this passage summarizes the difficulty of capturing the essence of Chinese Marxism. Theoretically, they pretended to toe the official Comintern and Stalin line; in practice, however, they diverged, simply ignoring the prevailing doctrine.)

Finally, it should be noted here that at the end of World War II the USSR directly hindered the Chinese Revolution, when they briefly occupied Manchuria, the most developed and industrialized region of China. At war's end they could have given it over to the Communists, which, according to one historian, "would have in effect decided the civil war without fighting, since the Communists, who already dominated the rural areas of north and eastern China, could with the Manchurian war potential at their command have overthrown the Kuomintang at will." (11) Rather the Russians systematically stripped Manchuria of all moveable equipment, carted it back to Russia, and surrendered the province to the Kuomintang.

The depth and significance of the antagonisms between Stalin and the Chinese Revolution should not be minimized by adopting the formula of "Stalin's mistakes." These "mistakes" cover the entire Chinese Revolution. The Chinese themselves state in matter-of-fact fashion: "We do not defend his [Stalin's] mistakes.... In the late twenties, the thirties, and the early and middle forties, the Chinese Marxist-Leninists...resisted the influence of Stalin's mistakes." The recent Russian attacks on Mao and Maoism — be they "revisionist" or whatnot — may be on target in that they confirm an old Stalin/Mao opposition. They can be accepted, that is, but with an important qualification: what the Russians attack as a negative feature can be accepted as a positive one. One recent Russian attack states: "The frequent appeals Mao makes in his writings to the authority of Stalin and citations from him were also intended simply to create the impression of adherence to [Russian] Marxism-Leninism.... In actual fact, Mao makes hypocritical use of Stalin's name.... A collection of Mao's speeches at closed meetings...reveals that Mao called Stalin a metaphysician and accused him of being opposed to the Chinese Revolution." (12)

### Settling Differences Within the Party

Along political and economic dimensions, the Chinese effort is the history of the departure — openly or implicitly — from the Stalinist and Soviet models. In the political dimension, to use the most general terms, there has been a continuous Chinese attempt, from the early “rectification” campaigns of the 1940’s through the Cultural Revolution of the 1960’s, to treat political differences, culture, consciousness, and subjectivity in a democratic and non-authoritarian manner — at least as contrasted to the Soviet Union.

A glance at the Rectification Campaign of 1942-44, which in many ways prefigured the Cultural Revolution, may illuminate this. The Rectification Campaign was a struggle over power, and theory, by an embattled Chinese revolution; it was an attempt to resolve the imperatives arising from a renewed Japanese offensive, isolation by the Kuomintang, and the necessity to direct guerrilla warfare and revolution over a wide and decentralized area with a mass of new and unschooled party members. (13) As such, it was an educational and political effort to interpret and apply a received Soviet Marxism — the only Marxism with which the Chinese were familiar — to very unique Chinese conditions. Hence it was directed against a dogmatic and formal Marxism, associated with the Soviet Union, which was irrelevant to specific Chinese conditions. It called, in short, for a Chinese Marxism: “If a Chinese communist, who is a part of the great Chinese people, bound to his people by his very flesh and blood, talks of Marxism apart from Chinese peculiarities, this Marxism is merely an empty abstraction. Consequently, the Sinification of Marxism — that is to say, making certain that in all its manifestations it is imbued with Chinese peculiarities, using it according to these peculiarities — becomes a problem.... We must put an end to writing eight-legged essays on foreign models....” (14)

The campaign sought to replace a formal and irrelevant Marxism with a Chinese Marxism; in doing this Mao championed elements which later became distinctive to Chinese Marxism-Leninism, notably decentralization and the “mass line,” both of which were lacking from Soviet Marxism. A corollary to this was the handling of political differences within the party in a non-violent manner.

The direct target of this Reform Movement was the Comintern and Stalin’s agents in China, especially Wang Ming. These agents were known as the “Returned Students,” since they had studied Marx in the Soviet Union for a number of years and had been sent by the Comintern to more or less direct the Chinese Revolution. Needless to say, those who had been on the scene for a long period, and in the thick of the battles (such as Mao), were none too pleased with the returned students’ Soviet solutions (from Stalin) to Chinese problems. All the specifics of the reform movement must be seen

as efforts to diverge from and undercut the Soviet models represented by the returned students. The mass line itself sought to show the irrelevance of the "foreign" Marxists: to judge whether someone is a "false Marxist or a true one, we need only to find out about his relations with the broad masses of workers and peasants." (15)

Political differences in the party were also treated in a way which sharply diverged from the Russian model. Stalin had acquired the habit of arresting and murdering his opponents, but Mao stated quite openly in the reform documents: "No matter with whom you are dealing, a false show of authority to instill terror is not of the slightest use against the enemy; against our comrades it only does harm.... The Chinese Communist Party does not rely on terror for nourishment; it relies on truth...." (16) All analyses of the reform movement conclude that it was not a purge of the Soviet type: no one was imprisoned or "disappeared." (17)

More recent writings by both the Soviets and the Chinese make it clear that the Soviet model and authority were at issue in the 1940's Rectification Campaign. The official Chinese account of the history of the CCP states that the campaign was directed against "doctrinaires as represented by Comrade Wang Ming," who were "ignorant of the Party's historical experience" and could "only quote words or phrases from Marxist writings." (18) Wang Ming himself, leader of the returned students, later moved to the Soviet Union, siding with it in the Sino-Soviet split. What he has written recently about the Rectification Campaign is obviously distorted, but probably only partially so. According to Wang, Mao charged in the campaign that "Russian Marxism [was] suitable only for leading the Russian revolution and unsuitable for leading the world and the Chinese revolution... [and] that the leadership and assistance of the Communist International to the Chinese Communist Party was entirely wrong... not only 'invalid' and 'ineffective' but even 'harmful.'" (19)

More recently, both the brief "100 Flowers" campaign of 1956 and the Cultural Revolution of the later 1960's can be considered in broad outline as "rectification campaigns." Both were efforts to educate and free the party from Soviet models, revamp authority relations, and in general deal with internal conflict and bureaucracy in a specifically non-Soviet manner. This was openly stated in the "100 Flowers" campaign and in Mao's important work, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People." These were responses to the Hungarian revolution of 1956, which (along with unrest in Poland) pointed to some basic failing in the Stalinist system and bureaucracy. At the very minimum, it was the inability to receive dissent and conflict without terror and repression which finally led to an explosive situation — as in Hungary. Mao stated: "If we persist in using methods of terror to solve internal antagonisms, it may lead to the transformation of these antagonisms



into antagonisms of a nation-enemy type, as happened in Hungary." (20)

The notion of "non-antagonistic contradictions" was not originated by Mao, but he centered his thought on it. This idea at once meant that conflicts persisted in a socialist society — China — and that insofar as they were non-antagonistic, they could be resolved without violence. This was a sharp rejoinder to the regular use of terror by Stalinism to suppress conflicts. According to Mao, "All attempts to use administrative orders or coercive measures to settle ideological questions or questions of right and wrong are not only ineffective but harmful. We cannot abolish religion by administrative decree or force people not to believe in it. We cannot compel people to give up idealism, any more than we can force them to believe in Marxism. The only way to settle questions of an ideological nature of controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion of criticism, of persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression." (21)

The Cultural Revolution is too recent, too complex, and too obscure to discuss at length here. It can be said, however, that in a broad sense it was patterned on the previous rectification campaigns: a vast educational effort directed at transforming ingrained habits, authority relations, culture, and so on. "We must overcome the wrong tendency of some comrades to slight the ideological, cultural and educational front." (22) Such a program is loyal to a major concern of Mao, a concern with culture and consciousness — everything which the bureaucratic approach neglected or suppressed. "To look at things and not people is to do an ineffective job," stated Mao. (23) The point was to undo revisionism not from above but from below, by refashioning the ideas and consciousness of the masses. "This great task of transforming customs and habits is without any precedent in human history." (24) Evidently the Cultural Revolution was also much more than this — it was a struggle over political and economic power, with the deification of Mao Tse-tung used as a tactic.

On this last point, note what Edgar Snow attributed to Mao: that the cult had been necessary so as to stimulate the masses to dismantle an encrusted bureaucracy. "Of course the personality cult had been overdone [according to Mao] .... It was hard, the Chairman said, to overcome the habits of three thousand years of emperor-worshipping tradition. The so-called 'Four Greats' — those epithets applied to Mao himself: Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, Great Helmsman — what a nuisance. They would all be eliminated sooner or later." (25)

## Economic Differences and Industrialization

In its economic organization and approach to industrialization, China has significantly departed from the Stalinist model. This is a widely documented fact. Insofar as the economic structure has an impact on social and political organization, the latter will also depart from the Stalinist model. K. S. Karol, a journalist schooled in Russia who toured China, observes: "Undeniably the Maoists, like all other Communists, have been conditioned by thirty long years of Stalinism. It imposed on them ways of thought, a language, methods of analysis and interpretation...." But, he notes, this is more facade than reality, insofar as their economic policy is non-Stalinist. "It is impossible for us to believe that — even in China — a hybrid Stalinism can be erected on economic bases radically different from those Stalin wanted to establish." (26)

The Soviet and Stalinist model of economic organization is associated with the concentration of resources in heavy industry, more or less patterned on heavy industry in capitalism. This includes a replication of the features integral to capitalist manufacture: lack of participation by workers, hierarchy, strata of experts, etc. In 1949-50 accords, on the morrow of the Chinese victory, Russia agreed to construct industrial units in China from top to bottom — units which would figure in China's first Five-Year Plan. The Soviet model was the goal and the means.

Dissatisfaction with the Soviet model dates from as early as 1953 and opposition to Kao Kang and "one-man management." The "one-man management" idea stems from Stalin: "Our combines," Stalin stated, "must substitute one-man management for collegium management. The position at present is that there are from ten to fifteen men on the board of a combine.... We cannot go on managing this way...." (27) One-man management was established most emphatically in Manchuria, the center of China's heavy industry and of Russia's greatest influence, and the domain of Kao Kang. The opposition to Kao, which finally unseated him, was — in the words of one analyst — "that he had been too zealous in promoting the Soviet model of economic development which featured concentration on heavy industry and relative autonomy for professional management." (28)

Already in these years, then, an open attack was launched on the Soviet model of industrialization with its commitment to heavy industry, experts, hierarchy, etc.; and the search began for an alternate route, one which stressed participation, decentralization, light industry, the human factor, etc. Mao's writings from the mid-1950's, such as "Ten Great Relationships," suggest dissatisfaction with Soviet industrialization. "We have not repeated the mistakes of some socialist countries which attached excessive importance to heavy industries at the expense of light industries and agricul-

ture." (29) According to Jack Gray, there were "two roads" during the first Five-Year Plan: "On the one hand, the orthodox road, giving the greatest possible priority to modern heavy industry as the main engine of growth. This was a variant of the Soviet road. On the other hand, there was the alternative, represented in China by Mao's ideas, ... which ... sought to put the development of heavy industry in the context of, and responding to, the attempt to increase and diversify production in agriculture; to mobilize local savings and labour; to diversify the rural economy ...; to create intermediate technologies ..." (30)

It would be too simple to claim that later developments, notably the Great Leap Forward, the Communes, and the Cultural Revolution, were only logical progressions of these first departures from Soviet models of industrialization. It is true, however, that they followed the same contours: emphasis away from heavy industry and toward intermediate technology, efforts to overcome expert/worker division, "politics in command," etc. In short, they steered China on a course distinct from that prescribed by Stalin's program for industrialization. For example, one of the important "instructions" of the Cultural Revolution, "Along the Socialist or the Capitalist Road" (1967), denounced "rightists" for making a fetish of physical investment and technology, while neglecting the role of extra-technical factors — ideology, enthusiasm, human beings themselves. "The people and the people alone make history." This statement also called for the replacement of managers and technicians by revolutionary committees, participation by shop-floor workers, etc. (31)

Some recently published writings of Mao are extremely explicit in the critique of the Soviet model of industrialization, placing the responsibility squarely on Stalin. These writings are "reading notes," apparently from the late 1950's, and are comments on various Soviet publications, including Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR" (1952). Running through them is a constant reiteration of Stalin's over-emphasis on heavy industry. These notes confirm that Mao was a sharp critic of Stalin and Stalinism: Mao comments, for instance, that Stalin "understood dialectics, but not very much." The notes include some very suggestive remarks about the Soviet Union:

In dealing with the contradictions between the state, the collective, and the individual, Stalin over-stressed the public interest at the expense of the individual interest, and thereby planted the seeds for the subsequent excessive emphasis on individual interest, in the form of material incentives which his successors are said to have implemented. As a result of these and other errors and despite talk to the contrary, the Soviet Union never realized even a true collective ownership system. (32)

These remarks give the lie to the notion of an unbroken Stalin/Mao continuity and refute simplistic notions that Russian "revisionism" begins with Khrushchev.

### The Soviet-China Rift

Finally, it is necessary to say something about the Sino-Soviet break itself. As has been argued here, in some very fundamental respects the Chinese Revolution both openly and implicitly diverged from the Russian Revolution and pattern of development. It is a fact, however, that in the Sino-Soviet rift the Chinese have defended Stalin; but as noted earlier, this is the vocabulary of the Soviet/Chinese difference, not its essence. The present differences the Chinese have with the Russians are not grounded in any Russian break with Stalin's policy or past — a break which has not occurred — but rather stem from a combination of internal economic imperatives and new developments in foreign affairs.

To recapitulate the standard half-true Marxist-Leninist interpretation: Stalin dies in 1953, and Khrushchev manages to secure his power base with a violent denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress in 1956. At the same time Khrushchev champions foreign policies betraying the revolutionary Russian (and Chinese) past, such as "detente" with the West, peaceful transition to communism, and agreements with the West on nuclear bombs. All of this smacks of revisionism to the Chinese, who begin by defending Stalin's revolutionary honor and past, then advance alternative positions: imperialism is a paper tiger, the wind is from the east, nuclear war is a bogey, etc.

The real story is somewhat more complex. As noted earlier several times, the antagonism between Mao and Stalin was founded in Stalin's efforts to control and (mis-) command the Chinese Revolution. As Mao said to Edgar Snow in 1936: "Although the Communist Party of China is a member of the Comintern, still this in no sense means that Soviet China is ruled by Moscow or by the Comintern. We are certainly not fighting for an emancipated China to turn the country over to Moscow!" (33) However, it does seem that this was Stalin's aim; hence his aid to Manchuria and Kao Kang following the victory of the Chinese Revolution was directed at bringing China to a subservient position.

About Stalin's aid to Manchuria and Kao, Franz Schurmann has stated: "...As the Sino-Soviet conflict intensified, one of the most vehement and persistent allegations hurled by the Chinese against the Russians was that they constantly tried to interfere in internal Chinese affairs....In other words, the Russians were attempting to turn China into a satellite. From what is known of Stalin's behavior in Eastern Europe during the postwar period, it is quite likely that he tried to bring China into the same kind of operational



control." (34) This was the Stalinist legacy.

Moreover, the allegedly revisionist policy of Khrushchev, detente with the West, was not new but a constant from the Russian revolution through the Stalin years. From the early days, Russia sought agreements with hostile capitalist neighbors. E. H. Carr has noted that "the Anglo-Soviet trade treaty of March 1921 ... [and] the Rapallo Treaty with Germany in the spring of 1922 marked the beginning of a period of diplomatic activity in which peaceful co-existence with potentially hostile capitalist countries was accepted as the immediate goal of Soviet foreign policy." (35) The position most closely associated with Stalin, "socialism in one country," was in fact a recognition that revolution was not on the world's agenda.

China's policy itself, in particular during the years of 1953-55, was one of non-antagonism toward bourgeois nations: in 1954 it signed a treaty of peaceful co-existence with India, and in 1955 the Bandung Conference set forth the principles of neutralism. About this period Schurmann states, "Like the Russians, the Chinese accepted neutralism as a valid stance and sought a range of agreements with countries willing to accept it." (36) The outbreak of polemics with the Russians in the post-1956 period about "detente" with the West was, for these reasons, no simple return to some pure "unrevisionist" Stalinist (or Chinese) foreign policy; rather it was an appraisal of a new situation. This new situation was defined by the fact that the Russians had orbited the first earth satellite and developed the ICBM—a missile capable of delivering nuclear bombs over long distances.

It is important to note that foreign-policy considerations were not the immediate cause of Chinese dissatisfaction with Khrushchev and with Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. Initially, in fact, the Chinese supported limited opposition to Stalin's legacy within the Communist movement. This policy emerged following Khrushchev's speech, when the Communist world was rocked with internal conflict which included a revolution in Hungary and riots in Poland: China and Mao seemed receptive to some of the attempts to break away from a Russian-dominated Communist movement, and initially supported Gomulka and the notion of equality among socialist nations. (37) Internally China reflected this same policy: this was the period of Mao's "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions," which explicitly mentioned Hungary and implicitly referred to the failure of Stalin to deal with conflict; as well as the period of the (brief) "100 Flowers," where some dissent and discussion was encouraged.

In late 1957, however, there was what can be called a "left turn" in Chinese policy, both internally and externally. Internally the situation seemed to be one of economic necessity. Russian financial aid had never been large, and the Russian model of industrialization did not seem to be serving China well. Industrialization

was proceeding too slowly; as Mao stated, "...we are an outstanding people with a very long history, yet our steel output is low... we must catch up. We shall catch up with Britain in fifteen years." (38) This instituted the Great Leap Forward, which sought on the basis of a deliberately non-Soviet approach — labor-intensive projects, decentralization, intermediate technology — rapidly and furiously to industrialize.

More or less at the same time, there is a "left turn" in foreign policy, inaugurated by Mao's famous speech that the East wind prevails over the West wind. As noted above, this was inspired by the new weapons, especially the ICBM, which Russia had just tested — and which altered the balance of forces. "I am of the opinion that the international situation has now reached a new turning point. There are two winds in the world today.... The East wind prevail(s) over the West wind." (39) Mao slighted the dangers of a nuclear holocaust — exactly the concern of Khrushchev and the Russians. According to Mao, a foreign statesman had told him that "if an atomic war was fought, the whole of mankind would be annihilated. I said that if the worst came to the worst and half of mankind died, the other half would remain while imperialism would be razed to the ground and the whole world would become socialist." (40)

The rest of this story cannot be told here; but evidently a collision course was set. Khrushchev was anxious to work out a detente with the West and an agreement on nuclear weapons; this was no real shift from Stalin's foreign policy. The Chinese were anxious to acquire nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union, and in both internal and external policy were moving left. An initial agreement on sharing nuclear technology between Russia and China had been signed; but given the increasingly militant Chinese pronouncements on war with the West, and their apparent indifference to the human cost of nuclear war, there was obvious reluctance on the Russian part to carry through. Moreover, it was a prerequisite of detente with the West that the spread of nuclear capability be stopped or, more exactly, that Russia deny nuclear aid to China. So, as Schurmann states, "The great blow that sparked the split between China and Russia came in June 1959. Khrushchev suddenly informed the Chinese that, as a condition of detente with America, he was unilaterally abrogating the nuclear sharing agreement of October 1957." (41) Naturally this was regarded as a great betrayal by the Chinese: the selling out of a socialist country so as to come to terms with an enemy.

It should at least be noted, however, that this Russian action was not completely unfounded. At the time, it seems, the danger was that the USA would provide nuclear weapons to West Germany. Russia feared most of all the remilitarization of Germany, which, it should be recalled, invaded Russia in both World Wars. There was little the Russians wanted less than nuclear bombs under West German control. It seems this may have been the "trade-off" with

the USA : nuclear arms would stay out of West Germany and China. Moreover, Mao's loose talk about the possible consequences of nuclear war obviously did not endear him to those who genuinely feared it. Mao stated that the result of a nuclear war could mean that on "the debris of imperialism, the victorious people would create...a truly beautiful future for themselves." (42) The Russians may have thought, not without reason, that after the nuclear war there would be no such "beautiful future."

In any case, this issue formed the root of the Sino-Soviet rift, which was completed several years later when Khrushchev suddenly and without notice withdrew all the Russian economic advisors from China. The debate, of course, did not remain on this single point of detente and nuclear agreement with the West; but this was the starting point and did infuse many of the other issues. From the Chinese point of view, the Russians in pursuit of detente renounced support for revolutionary movements, including China itself. In this sense, the Russians were the "revisionists," championing peaceful co-existence rather than armed struggle. No matter how this conflict is appraised, it seems clear that neither side could legitimately appeal to some Stalinist policy, since the situation with nuclear weapons was essentially new. But if anything, it was the "revisionist" Russia that was most loyal to Stalin's legacy in foreign policy.

This is not to say that there were no legitimate reasons for the Chinese to appeal to Stalin's past; there were. Mao and the Chinese were genuinely shocked at the Khrushchev denunciation of Stalin; not so much because they defended Stalin, however, as because they had not been notified in advance. They considered his actions a violation of Communist solidarity, and one of their charges against Khrushchev was "failure to consult with the fraternal parties in advance." Moreover, it seems that Mao felt somewhat vulnerable to the charges of "cult of the personality" and one-man rule, of which Khrushchev had accused Stalin. A reflection of this was the deletion of "The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung," as the official party ideology, from the party constitution in 1956. (43) There was another, nearly personal, edge to the conflict: Mao and the Chinese rightly felt that with the death of Stalin they were the oldest and most important Communists; they were the veterans from the 1920's, while this generation had passed from the scene in Russia. Yet Khrushchev — essentially a nobody with no real revolutionary past, who was only a subordinate of Stalin — denounced Stalin and completely exempted himself. This to the Chinese appeared as the height of dishonesty — as it was — and a complete violation of the guidelines of criticism/self-criticism. Moreover, this nobody very soon began to treat the Chinese shabbily; he insulted the communes of the Great Leap Forward, exerted economic pressure, and renegeed on a nuclear agreement so as to sign one with a capitalist country. With all this it is understandable that Stalin began to look

good to the Chinese and that their own criticism of him became muted. To those unfamiliar with the history of the Comintern and the Chinese Revolution, China's qualified defense of Stalin is unfortunately taken at face value.

Finally, it should be noted that recent developments in Chinese foreign policy put in doubt the meaning of the Soviet/Chinese rift, or at least its current meaning. It no longer seems that the Russian "revisionists" are the only ones championing detente and searching for alliances. Of course, no single act of foreign policy can be judged in isolation, nor do any one or two necessarily constitute a trend; but it does seem that a series of Chinese actions has marked a clear retreat from the "purity" of an anti-imperialist position. This is symbolized by the Chinese continuing celebration of Nixon.

Other actions can be added that suggest a change in foreign policy; for example, the Chinese support for Pakistan against the rebellion in Bangladesh. No matter how this is sliced, it seems that the Chinese preferred a united Pakistan as a buffer against a hostile India. In different terms, they supported a dictator over an insurrection, and that this may have been a confused and contradictory revolt does not decisively change the story. Chinese aid to the Ceylon government is also consistent with this modified foreign policy; in the Ceylonese rebellion they joined with the USA, the USSR, and Britain, all of whom had their own reasons for helping to put down the revolt. Chou En-lai's message to Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Ceylon smacks of the language of the establishment: "We are glad to see that thanks to the efforts of Your Excellency and the Ceylon government, the chaotic situation created by a handful of persons who style themselves 'Guevarists' and into whose ranks foreign spies have sneaked has been brought under control." (44) The denunciation of "Guevarists" is a long way from "imperialism is a paper tiger."

This list of recent Chinese foreign policy shifts can be extended — e.g., Angola. It does not necessarily mean that China has betrayed its revolutionary responsibilities. It does suggest, however, that the terms of the Soviet/Chinese dispute were more a smoke-screen than a reality; or, at the very least, were particular to the post-1956 years but have lost their meaning in the 1970's. The Soviet-Chinese conflict must be re-evaluated: it simply cannot be maintained that the Chinese always and everywhere support revolutionary struggles, and the Russians do not. To interpret the Nixon visit to China as a blow for liberation, and Nixon's visit to Moscow as proof of Soviet "revisionism," is not dialectical but confused thinking. In the past, much of the paralysis of the Communist parties was due to their mindless defense of the Soviet Union; this paralysis is not reversed by the mindless defense of China.

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13. See Selden, *THE YENAN WAY*, p. 190 ff.
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15. Cited in J. P. Harrison, *THE LONG MARCH TO POWER* (Praeger, 1972), p. 346.
16. *MAO'S CHINA: PARTY REFORM DOCUMENTS 1942-44*, ed. B. Compton (University of Washington Press, 1966). This is a very useful volume.
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*Rose Hills, co-leader of Save American Vessels (SAV), squares off with base security officer who attempts unsuccessfully to confiscate her banner on the morning of the U.S.S. Coral Sea's deployment. The banner reads, "Good luck on your captain's suicide mission." December 5, 1974.*

# **The GI Movement Today: The Volunteer Armed Forces And Movement in the Ranks**

*Linda Alband  
Steve Rees  
Denni Woodmansee*

As recently as mid-1974, many anti-war critics of the volunteer army pointed to the dangerous likelihood of a professionalized soldiery, a smaller, well-steeled cadre strike force, well-disciplined and highly motivated. Today, many of the military's toughened hard-core are leaving. Sgt. Rock of Easy Company can't hack the low-profile peacetime mission and the substitution of pay scales for patriotism. Only the Sgt. Bilkos remain, the ones who understand that top sergeants may lead in wartime, but in peacetime they manage. The troops they manage consider themselves government employees in uniform, and often work side-by-side with civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DoD). With civilian and military pay scales now linked by law, the already fuzzy line between the citizen and the soldier has been blurred even further. One of the nation's largest public-employees unions, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), was quick to take advantage of what it called a "community of interest" between DoD employees in and out of uniform, and announced last summer that it intended to start a soldiers union in August 1976. What was intended to be a professionalized military may soon become a military of organized workers.

In order to examine these developments, we have sketched the origins of the volunteer armed-forces policy (VOLAR), detailed changes in the form and function of the post-ceasefire military, and traced the ways in which the GI movement was transformed by VOLAR, and VOLAR in turn shaped by those who fill its ranks.

## THE ORIGINS OF VOLAR

VOLAR's roots reach in four directions : (1) the requirements of party politics; (2) the economic situation; (3) the U.S. government's failure to block the revolutionary process in Indochina; (4) the mass upsurge of the sixties and early seventies here at home.

1. Nixon ran in 1968 on a platform which included a well-publicized anti-war plank. Part of that plank was a proposal for an all-volunteer force. The Nixon staffer who designed that policy was a conservative libertarian who despised government intervention in the lives of private citizens, yet revered the military. It is fitting that a man so contradictory as this created a policy so fraught with contradictions. Nonetheless, the measure was immensely practical at the time. It was intended to attract war-weary voters, split the Democrats, and confuse the anti-war movement.

2. Mounting economic pressures also helped shape the streamlining measures that included VOLAR. In 1968-69, due to inflationary levels of government deficit spending required to finance both the war and domestic social programs, American corporations found themselves squeezed by declining rates of profit, tight money markets, and an increasingly unfavorable balance-of-payments situation. Correcting this required holding a lid on government spending. But this proved hard to do given the mass movements' increasing demands on the government for social programs. Not only were those programs established in great numbers and at great expense, but they were financed at the expense of the military budget. VOLAR must be viewed as a part of this war-time pressure for "efficiency" in military spending, one of several ways the DoD tried to get the biggest bang for fewer bucks. Only in the last year has the government felt that the political situation allowed it to try to reverse this trend, that is, cutting back social programs to the benefit of the DoD.

3. The ability of the Laotians, Cambodians, and Vietnamese to conduct a war over the span of decades drained the U.S. military of its men and morale. The Tet offensive of 1968 jolted the more astute Pentagon strategists awake with the realization that this was a war the U.S. could not win. This defeat marked a change in the U.S. military's international function; thus the Indochinese were the active principle which brought the Nixon Doctrine into being.

4. While the Indochinese victory made the VOLAR policies possible, the movements here at home against the war, the military, and the draft made them necessary. The government was able for

some time to continue both the war and the draft, but only at a price. The longer the war lasted, the more people questioned government policy. People questioned the government's right to tax. Many questioned the government's right to draft young men and send them off to war. The military in particular was experiencing a crisis of legitimation, and the switch from a draft-motivated war-time army to an all-volunteer peacetime force became a necessary concession to the anti-war and anti-draft movements.

It was the GI movement that became the critical pressure-from-within which eventually won a number of reforms in the terms of military service. Consider Navy Capt. Jack Caldwell's sense of the GI movement of that period. He is Chief, Operations Center, at the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers of Europe, an extremely high-level post. "In the last 20 years alarming changes have taken place in all of the U.S. armed forces: standards of appearance, courtesy, discipline, performance, combat effectiveness, and loyalty to the nation have suffered a steady decline. Desertion and draft-dodging were excused as evidence of a higher morality. Strong leadership was out. Rap sessions were in.... During the war in Vietnam, sabotage of ships and aircraft — which had been occurring in the Navy for some time — sharply increased. On board ship, several mutinies occurred. These mutinies, called riots by the press, were fomented by minority personnel and were generally unpunished." (ARMY TIMES MAGAZINE, July 23, 1975).

Faced with these problems, the military had to change. It experimented with an ombudsman system at Fort Carson, an unprecedented grievance system for low-ranking enlisted people which depended on democratically-elected barracks representatives. A young enlisted man held the ombudsman post as his sole military responsibility, and had the power to by-pass the chain of command and talk directly to the base's commanding officer. One Pentagon observer, Colonel Robert Heintz, called this a "system of soviets based on the Bolshevik model." In the Navy, Admiral Zumwalt experimented with a loosening up of the regulations governing enlisted people's personal lives: dress codes, haircuts, leave and liberty policy. These two pre-VOLAR experiments, and dozens of others, were for the military a process of sorting out just how far they had to bend in order to win back the cooperation of those in the ranks.

#### THE MILITARY'S NEW FORM. MAKING THE TRANSITION TO VOLAR

The volunteer-force concept was the name attached to two related changes in the form of the military: elimination of the draft, and liberalization of the terms of military service, especially the conditions of work. These two changes, though, could not conflict with the equally necessary overhaul of the military's size and

structure. In accordance with the military's new mission of combat-readiness, the Navy was allotted a more important role, the size of the standing army was trimmed 40%, the reserves were beefed up, and soldiers' jobs were turned over to civilians wherever possible. The Army was now committed to fight only 1 1/2 wars, revised downward from 2 1/2, but had half as many soldiers to do it with. In short, VOLAR planners had little maneuverability. While their assignment was to eliminate the basis for unrest in the ranks, they still had to recruit enough soldiers to fill the rosters, as well as conform to other changes which were no less pressing. The changes which were required in the military's budget, size, terms of service, recruiting, and retention, often produced new problems or aggravated old ones. So VOLAR has "worked" only in a limited sense.

Budget. (1) The Congressional adversaries of the Pentagon's mission-firsters are the young, mostly Democratic, waste-watchful budget-firsters. They argue that defense, like any other item in the national budget, has to make do with what's possible to fund. Military "necessities" are not of their concern. The yearly spring-time ritual which finds these two stags locking horns are the Congressional hearings on the defense budget.

Defense outlays (all figures expressed in terms of constant dollars) were lower in Fiscal Year (FY) 1974 and FY 1975 than in any other year since 1947. A comparison of defense expenditures in FY 1969 and FY 1975 reveals the same trend: a 24% reduction over six years. In the last three years, DoD outlays have stayed at approximately the same level. Furthermore, when DoD spending is measured as a percentage of total U.S. output (GNP), the DoD's share has been declining since the Korean war. In the last eight years it has dropped from 9.3% to 6.0%. When DoD spending is measured as a percentage of the national budget, its share declined from 40% in FY 1966 to 25% in FY 1976. By mid-1972, federal outlays for social programs (income maintenance, health, education, etc.) surpassed military spending as the largest single category of outlays in the federal budget. Since then the gap has only widened. The fact of the DoD's declining share of the national budget indicates that the military is not the political heavyweight it is cracked up to be.

But what happens to the money that the Pentagon finally gets its hands on? Since 1968, the percentage of the military's outlays devoted to personnel costs — civilian and military payroll, family housing, PX subsidies, health services — went up 25% even though the total number of DoD employees went down 31%. Today 57¢ out of every DoD dollar goes to personnel costs. With these costs rising at the same time that the DoD budget remains fairly constant over the last three years, other categories have had to suffer. Research and development, procurement (cut to half its FY 1969 level), and operations and maintenance have been especially hurt.



These trends within the military budget are in part a product of the last decade of struggle between the command and those who fill the ranks. These conflicts, together with the end of the draft, caused the Pentagon to make the terms of service more favorable to the first-term soldier. This strained an already streamlined DoD budget, causing their existing physical plant — ships, planes, buildings — to deteriorate, and delaying new construction. But the trends within the DoD budget also intensify the conflict. While a Navy machinist mate starts out earning about four times what he would have received in 1968, he is likely to be sent to sea on a thirty-year-old aircraft carrier, plagued by broken-down boilers and an inadequate parts inventory. So he winds up working longer and harder, under conditions that get worse, not better. The result has been a wave of protests and some outright mutinies over issues related to living and working conditions.

DoD Secretary Rumsfeld's proposals for the FY 1977 DoD budget are an attempt to reverse these budget trends. First, as part of the current conservative counterattack on government spending for social programs, Rumsfeld calls for a larger DoD budget. Within the budget, he is asking for cuts in personnel costs, and dramatic boosts for procurement (37%) and research and development (15%).

In fact, in the current fiscal year the government has already tried to free some DoD funds by cutting back benefits. Enlisted GIs of all political shadings and experience haven't been too pleased with this recent turn of events, which included: elimination of the GI bill for recruits who sign after July 1975; gradual reductions in government subsidies which in the past had kept post exchange prices low; outright refusals to pay already promised reenlistment bonuses; scaling down of the rate of incremental pay increases. Congress and the Pentagon have tried to explain the cuts as economizing measures vital for "national security." But today's soldiers are not the champions of national security they once were, especially since that economizing is at their expense. If Rumsfeld's suggestions lead to a further decline in enlisted people's standard of living, today's grumbling in the ranks could become tomorrow's roar.

Size. Troop strength for the active-duty armed forces has been slashed 40% since 1968. Reserve strength in 1974 was down only 12% from 1970 levels. National Guard strength remained constant over the same period. The Army was cut about in half, and the rest cut by about a third. Part of the impact of these cuts was buffered by the civilianization of many jobs that soldiers used to hold. In fact, civilians now compose the bulk of the Army's employees in base operations, research and development, supply, and maintenance.

Cutting back troop strength may have resolved some problems, but it certainly has created others. Congressional hearings for the

Navy's FY 1976 budget revealed "severe problems in 36 out of 86 ratings (job categories) in terms of overall manning, first-term retention, and career manning." In fact, so many Navy senior petty officers have quit that they have left 42% of its ships and squadrons in a state of "marginal combat-readiness." The job ratings that are critically short are those involving "dirty work" like machinist mate and boiler technician, and those having no complement in the civilian economy, like gunner's mate. Even though other job categories have more than enough people to fill them, the Navy has a tough time switching people around. On enlistment a savvy recruit can specify in the enlistment contract which job he or she is willing to perform. Forcing a GI to work outside his or her specialty has been interpreted in the courts as a breach of contract. Add to this the highly specialized and technical nature of many of these jobs, and you can see why the days of the interchangeable GI are a thing of the past.

Cuts in personnel strength have been matched by reductions in equipment. The number of planes in the Air Force armada has reached a 30-year low. And many of those on the inventory lists can't get off the ground. When the Air Force was told to deliver tanks and guns to Israel in 1973, it discovered that 60% of their new C-5 transports and 35% of the old C-141 cargo planes were inoperable because they needed maintenance or parts. In addition, a smaller number of technically more sophisticated planes isn't necessarily more efficient. The Navy's F-14 fighter-interceptor is notoriously accident-prone, in addition to costing several times more than its predecessor. The Navy's fleet now numbers 492 ships, roughly 320 ships below the minimum it says it needs to do its job. If they try to keep old ships afloat, they risk spectacular accidents and dissatisfaction among the crew. But if they decommission their old vessels, they only increase the workload on the ships which remain. All new construction is very expensive, especially of the modern nuclear-powered ships. But building more economically-inclined conventionally-powered ships is unproductive in the long run, since they become obsolete sooner.

Internal reforms. Even before the official inauguration of VOLAR in June 1973, the military began to institute hundreds of new policies directed at internal reform. Sweeping pay raises, and bonuses for enlistees in less popular specialties, were among the first. The Army allowed slightly longer hair, while the Navy tolerated beards and longer hair in a variety of styles. The Navy also switched to new dress uniforms that make all enlisted men and women look like junior officers. Most services tried to substitute positive reinforcement for negative punishment in basic training, drawing on new advancements in industrial psychology and behavior-modification techniques. New dormitory-style buildings which allow for more privacy have replaced many older quonset-hut barracks.

Morning reveille is on the way out. Beer is now served in many mess halls. Work schedules have been reduced wherever possible to five days a week, eight hours a day. In response to years of demands by Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican GIs for equal treatment, the Pentagon encouraged base and ship commanders to form human-relations councils. Equal opportunity officers were assigned to each unit to watchdog promotion and training policies. Drawing on the relatively new field of peer group counseling, the Pentagon also encouraged commanders to initiate rap groups, drug rehab centers, and drug amnesty programs.

These changes had profound effects on many non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and for many it was the last straw. The military defeat in Vietnam was dispiriting for them. As Colonel Robert Heintz argued in the SATURDAY EVENING POST (August-September 1974), "...the Army's battlefield accomplishments were frustrated by decisions of civilian politicians and bureaucrats who made the war unwinnable while the country at large ignored its sacrifices." Combine this with the command's "kid gloves" attitude toward VOLAR's new recruits, and then the wave of resignations of crewcut, tattooed, balding, blood-and-guts cold-war warriors becomes understandable. The loss of these men who were the military's skilled workers and experienced middle-level leaders was an immeasurable blow.

Were the demands and militance of the younger and lower-ranking enlisted people eliminated by these reforms? Yes and no. The recruits who still go into the military expecting to suffer beatings at the hands of drill instructors are more often than not pleasantly surprised. Gone for the most part are the dramatic Vietnam-era protests of stockade brutality like that of the Presidio 27, all charged in 1968 with mutiny for protesting the killing of a fellow prisoner. Camp Pendleton, a Marine base in Southern California, is symbolic of this move toward modernization. In place of the dilapidated brig which was once the subject of a LIFE magazine expose, is a brand-new underground structure which is air-conditioned, clean, and efficient. Certainly, not all bases and ships have been modernized to this extent. Neither have all command-level officers adopted these more modern policies of personnel management. General Emerson, who heads the U.S. 2nd Division in Korea, claims to have boosted morale through physical-fitness programs that leave "everybody so tired that they cannot even think about fighting or doping or drinking or anything else." But leaders like General Emerson are becoming an endangered species. The trend is definitely toward modernization. As that trend accelerates, resistance to those outmoded policies becomes similarly rare.

But with military service touted to be just like any other job, those in the ranks are coming to expect that the military will make good its promises. Recruiting slogans play on the desires of new recruits: "If Your Job Puts You To Sleep, Try One of Ours." "The

Army Wants To Join You." "We'll Pay You \$350 A Month To Learn A New Skill." The once controversial concept of equal pay for equal work, whether it's done by workers in or out of uniform, has now become accepted. Soon after Congress authorized the policy of comparability (equal compensation) between federal employees and employees of private firms, they extended the policy to include federal employees in uniform. If any GI had doubts about what his or her employment status ought to be — indentured servant or federal employee — this law erased them. Those in the ranks soon took up the fight to turn soldiering into a job like any other. In fact, the Defense Manpower Commission surveyed sailors in the San Diego area in the spring of 1975, and found that unrest over policy changes and benefit cutbacks was "so high that the idea of unionization came up frequently." In late June, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) announced their intent to start unionizing GIs. These events, when examined alongside the thoughts and actions of enlisted people and enlisted men's wives, reveal a new trend. The Vietnam-era GI movement has been transformed by VOLAR — a set of policies it helped produce — into a different movement. VOLAR has combined with other changes in the military's form and function to create expectations among enlisted people and enlisted men's wives which it cannot fulfill. Reform movements are the result; they are struggles for partial and often realizable improvements in living and working conditions, pay and benefits, and social services.

Recruiting. With the end of the draft, recruiters had to sign up one out of every three physically and mentally qualified non-college males. No peacetime American military had ever had to do this before. In fact, for the first ten months of the VOLAR experiment, recruiters for all services failed miserably. But as unemployment figures soared, and the numbers of men and women in uniform plummeted, recruiters found themselves meeting their quotas. By FY 1975, they more than met their quotas, and in addition improved the "mental and moral quality" of the recruits.

The new pool of recruits tends to be more educated, a little older, slightly more rural, less white, less male, more married, and very unemployed. While only 5% of enlisted people are female, about 10% of the FY 1975 recruits were women. In the last three years, for example, the number of women in the Army has shot up three times. The vast majority are in the four lowest pay grades. Despite claims to the contrary, most enlisted women wind up working as medical or dental technicians, administrative clerks, or miscellaneous workers.

About 17% of all enlisted GIs are Black, and the percentage has been increasing gradually since 1968. But the figures are far from even service by service. Black enlisted personnel make up about 22% of the Army, but only 10% of the Navy. Concentration by job

category is common. Within the Army, Black soldiers made up 26% of all combat arms enlistments in the first half of FY 1975. In the Navy, all stewards (the officers' butlers and waiters) used to be Black. Now almost all are Filipino. Also, in some duty stations like Korea, as many as half the enlisted population is Black, half White.

Military recruiters are now competing with other public and private employers on the open labor market. Even with the economic situation favoring them, the military has had to quadruple its advertising budget and boost its recruiting staff substantially. If bad times are good times for recruiters, what will they do when an upturn comes? They have tried to cover this eventuality by eliminating the two-year enlistment, thereby extending the length of many first-term enlistments. This device will help cushion the first blow, but can't do much more. The recent dismantling of the Selective Service Administration may prove to be an overly optimistic move.

Retention. This figure measures the number of people who reenlist. It includes people who reenlist after serving only one term (two to six years), as well as those who have reenlisted several times before (career personnel). Not surprisingly, the Pentagon considers the retention rate a key indicator of the military's health. A low retention rate means that trained and qualified troops are leaving, and the cost of this skilled labor drain is enormous.

All services suffered from a very low retention rate during the war years. Since the end of the war and the start of the economic slump, retention has vastly improved. The Army, for example, reenlisted 50% more men and women in the first six months of FY 1975 than in the same period of the previous year.

Congress has helped nudge reenlistments along by passing the Selective Reenlistment Bonus Act of 1974. But when it hastily withdrew those bonuses for some job categories, cut benefits and pay increases across the board, and established a pension schedule that encouraged early retirement, many reenlistees became disenchanted with military service, and uneasy about the future. Those with some chance of getting a better deal outside the military left. Those trained in job specialties with no civilian counterpart went to career counselors and prepared for their transition to a new employer. Others left active service for a position in the reserves. When the economy picks up, many more disgruntled GIs with under ten years service will leave. Even many of those who reenlist have been involved in some anti-military reform struggle, and stay only because they dislike what awaits them outside even more.

## THE OPPOSITION MOVEMENT IN THE RANKS SINCE VOLAR

As the military's form and function changed, so did the movement in the ranks. Yet to most observers it appeared as if the GI

movement had disappeared altogether. If the mass-circulation magazines and newspapers bothered to cover the military scene at all, they reported ups and downs in recruiting statistics, or harmless accounts of the Navy's first women to be assigned to ship duty. Editors ignored the movement in the ranks, just as they ignored the rank-and-file movement in labor. In contrast, the left press was certainly inclined to cover the opposition movement in the ranks, but lacked the means to do so. The network of left-leaning GI-support projects — coffee houses, book stores, newspapers, counseling centers — had not adapted well to the post-ceasefire, all-volunteer force. When that network disappeared, so did the news sources. The result of this information drought was the apparently sudden transformation of a lush and blooming GI movement into a desert. Was this really the case?

The Pentagon's own statistics reveal some evidence to the contrary. Since 1968, the Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force figures on absenteeism (AWOL: absent without leave) climbed almost without interruption. By mid-1974, the Marine Corp's AWOL rate was 64% higher, and the Navy's 300% higher, than their respective wartime 1970 rates. Strangely, the Army's rate declined steadily in the same period, perhaps because it was the only branch in 1970 whose ranks were filled with draftees. The service-wide average is at its highest level in modern history (86 incidents per 1,000 enlistees in FY 1975). Court-martial and non-judicial punishment rates have remained at wartime levels. Article 15s (non-judicial punishment imposed by a commander without trial) have climbed steadily in the last three years, and now stand at 180 per 1,000 troops, one of the highest rates on record. Bad discharges (anything lower than honorable) have also climbed. In FY 1975, nearly one out of every eight GIs released was stuck with a bad discharge, also a modern record.

VOLAR planners hoped that eliminating the draft would also eliminate the troublemakers. They carefully plotted the ratio of "induced" recruits to those who allegedly signed up of their own free will. By 1974, they should have been able to breathe a sigh of relief as the last draftee and draft-motivated enlistee left the ranks. Today that sigh of relief has become a sigh of despair. Alas, even juicy paychecks and juicier bonuses have been unable to buy motivation or esprit de corps.

The statistics probably reflect a convergence of two trends. On one hand, relations between the command and those in the ranks are strained. Any institution that has to rely on punishment and punitive firings, and suffers from unprecedented absenteeism, is in trouble. On the other hand, Pentagon officials have defended the court-martial and punitive-discharge figures as a healthy house cleaning. They argue that VOLAR's recruiting successes now allow them to sweep out troublemakers from the ranks. In fact, the Army has been honorably discharging between 1,200 and 1,700 re-

cruits each month under a new policy that is designed to do exactly that.

But the movement in the ranks has done more than register its dissatisfaction by voting with its feet. In spite of the shrinking number of news sources, activists in and out of uniform in San Diego, Norfolk, Virginia, Okinawa, Washington, D.C., Berlin, and elsewhere have helped us identify the following trends.

Challenges to race discrimination. One of the first cracks in VOLAR's facade occurred in October 1973, when nearly 200 Black and Puerto Rican soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea simultaneously took over buildings on neighboring bases near the Korean DMZ. The Pentagon's account of the event was that race rioting was started by a "black socialist club." Their response was to rotate many of the soldiers in the most troublesome units back to stateside bases. We interviewed a dozen of those soldiers at the SF International Airport. They found the Pentagon's account laughable, and asked, "Now how can you call it a race riot when all of us (the group included Black, Puerto Rican, and White soldiers) were fighting together against the MPs?" They joked about throwing their top sergeant through a barracks window, and then demonstrated a special handshake, a dap, they made up. Two fingers locked, knuckles knocked, elbows bumped as they explained it was a cross between a black power dap and a peace sign. Daps are usually exchanged only between Black GIs, so this was dreamed up so all the rebels, whatever their color, could say hey.

In June 1974, nearly 80 crewmen left the aircraft carrier U.S.S. Midway in its berth in Yokosuka, Japan, as it prepared to sail for a Pacific cruise. The multi-racial group was led by Black and Puerto Rican sailors. In an anti-military newspaper produced by activists with Pacific Counseling Service in Yokosuka, they explained their demands, which included: end Midway racism in arrests, court-martial sentences, duty assignments, promotions; improve living and working conditions; stop brig brutality; relieve the captain of his command; stop homeporting, a policy which had the carrier's home base shifted from San Francisco to Yokosuka.

In January 1975, Black airmen and WAFS (women in the Air Force) at the Strategic Air Command's Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota took over a dining hall to call attention to race discrimination on base and in town. All 27 succeeded in forcing the base commander to reckon with them as a single body, a procedure strictly forbidden by DoD regulations. No charges were filed.

The independent movement of Black and Puerto Rican GIs has followed approximately the same line of development as the Black and Puerto Rican movement outside the military: demands for equal treatment, affirmative-action programs, and direct action against racist discrimination. This parallel development is not a coincidence, but a logical conclusion of a military made up of citi-



zen-soldiers. Popular movements in civilian society are reflected within the military. For example, the white backlash which the Boston anti-busing movement represents has its military counterpart, too — a sentiment among broad sectors of white enlisted people that their Black peers are benefitting from reverse discrimination.

Challenges to women's oppression. While the military is not the discrimination-free institution it claims to be, it has had to bend to the demands of the women who are now rushing to join. The women's movement has made a sizeable dent. Women recruits run, jump, hurdle, and climb their way through the same basic-training program as men, except for three additional programs: rape prevention, birth control, and grooming. Enlisted women have not taken independent action on issues of particular relevance to women, although they have participated in other types of fights. Rather it is women who are married to first- and second-term enlisted men who are a newly radicalized force to be reckoned with. These women have been at the center and in the lead of two of the most important campaigns to date: the VRB/Out movement to regain the reenlistment bonuses Congress illegally withheld, and the SAV campaign to prevent the sailing of the U.S.S. Coral Sea (see below). In both instances, these women refused to suffer silently, and pushed their demands even at the expense of the military mission. Gone for now are the days when the command could count on a loyal wife to send her husband off on a six-month cruise, tearful but proud to make her sacrifice for the benefit of national security.

Health and safety issues. Challenges to the steady deterioration of living and working conditions have continued through the Vietnam era and mounted in the three years of VOLAR. Marines in Okinawa risked mutiny charges in conducting a work refusal just to get toilets repaired and heat installed in their ramshackle barracks. Sailors on the submarines U.S.S. Snook and U.S.S. Haddock, sailors assigned for treatment to the Naval Drug Rehab Center in southern California, women whose husbands were stationed on the destroyer U.S.S. Robinson, and crewmen on the U.S.S. Fox are among those who have called attention to these problems. Those on the destroyer U.S.S. Agerholm, the U.S.S. Sterett, and the U.S.S. Chicago, prompted by dangerous living and working conditions, have written and distributed their own underground newspapers. The pages of the San Diego-based Center for Servicemen's Rights' newspaper, UP FROM THE BOTTOM, are covered with letters and news articles from readers describing the hazards.

In December 1974, some U.S.S. Coral Sea crewmen and women whose husbands were stationed on the ship opposed its deployment until living and working conditions were improved. The crew expressed their dissatisfaction by taking unauthorized absences, con-

ducting work slowdowns and work refusals when necessary, and wrecking machinery. With maggots in the food, leaks in the hull, and lice in the mattresses, the crew's actions were understandable. But what made the departure of the carrier a contestable and public issue was an organization of no more than eighteen women who were wives, girlfriends, and relatives of Coral Sea crewmen. In news releases and in leaflets the women said that the ship was not seaworthy, the Navy's judgment of the Coral Sea's condition was poor, and there was no reason why the ship should not be put into drydock for major repairs before sailing on its next cruise. While the name of their organization, Save American Vessels (SAV), seemed timid and patriotic, their challenge to the Navy's authority was not. The women gathered 1500 signatures on petitions stating that the ship shouldn't sail until it had been repaired. The petitions were sent to Congress on the chance that they would override the Navy's orders.

Economic issues. In August 1974, enlisted men and their wives founded an organization to win back reenlistment bonuses which were illegally denied by Congress to 28,000 Navy technicians. When many Navy recruits signed up for the nuclear power or advanced electronics programs, they were promised bonuses up to \$6,000 when they completed their fourth year of the six-year program. In June 1974, Congress eliminated most of the bonuses retroactively, and drastically reduced the rest. Even though the government backed out of its end of the enlistment contract, it still considered the contract binding on those who signed. Sailors and their wives organized a counterattack in San Francisco, Long Beach, San Diego, Newport News, Virginia, Charleston, South Carolina, and Honolulu, Hawaii, forming chapters of a single organization called VRB/Out. The demand was simply, "Give us back our variable reenlistment bonuses or let us out for breach of contract." Each chapter initiated a law suit, and some picketed bases and recruiting offices. The suits grew to include over 900 plaintiffs, and each chapter had at its core a group of at least two dozen men and women. The VRB/Out chapters have held together over the eighteen long months of legal proceedings, and continue to rock the Navy's boat even today.

Challenges to restrictions on personal freedoms. The movement for gay rights has jolted many of the country's schools, churches, and public and private employers awake to this reality of life. Now even the military is being roused from its slumbers, even if it is waking up grumpy. Two WAC lesbians, PFC Barbara Randolph and Pvt. Debbie Watson, were booted out with less-than-honorable discharges after making their sexual preference known, even though both were considered model soldiers by their immediate superiors. Air Force Technical Sergeant Leonard Matlovich was on the

cover of TIME magazine after mustering up enough courage to make a precedent case out of his own punitive discharge. Matlovich recounted the showdown with his commanding officer in an interview with Andrew Kopkind in NEW TIMES (8/8/75). "What the hell does this mean?" his CO blurted out after reading Matlovich's coming-out letter. 'It means,' Matlovich said, staring straight ahead, 'Brown Versus Board of Education.'" Open challenges like these are rare, but are only the well-known signs of a massive, less-visible network of bars, clubs, and newspapers which make up the ghettoized gay military subculture.

Two other subcultures — Blacks and dope-culture-oriented Whites — have waged a fight of their own over the Army's haircut policy. Admittedly, GIs all through the sixties complained of the short-hair policy. Only since mid-1974, though, have they made a political issue of it. Throughout the NATO command in Europe, discipline was already so lax that the brass decided to try to hold the line and enforce the short-hair requirements. In Britain, Air Force Sgt. Dan Pruitt publicly refused orders to cut his hair, and immediately won the hearts and minds of U.S. soldiers throughout Europe. Although he was sentenced to the stockade and kicked out with a dishonorable discharge, his supporters considered his uncompromising stand a victory in itself. Others soon followed: Daria Smith, a young black woman, refused to take off her Afro wig; a young lieutenant, Matt Carroll, won enormous support for his refusing orders to get a haircut; PFC Lou Stokes fought to keep his shoulder-length locks; Babette Peyton fought to keep her hair in corn-rows. The most important case was that of eight GIs stationed in Berlin. They got signatures of support from one out of every three of the 3500 GIs stationed in the city, and were backed by Dutch soldier-activists who served under the same joint NATO command.

#### "LONG HAIR? SO WHAT?" vs. OUR INTERPRETATION

The thread that weaves all these fights together is that they are all redefining in action how much a citizen and how much a soldier the GI really is. The standing army was founded on the concept of the citizen-soldier. VOLAR's message that soldiering is just a job like any other has helped blur the line even further. The movement in the ranks is now attempting to erase it entirely. Sgt. Dan Pruitt remarked, "They force us to look different (from civilians) and try to make us different. We are not. This is more true at home, where we may be engaged in domestic wars against our brothers and sisters." PFC Lou Stokes offered his interpretation, "A citizen does not cease to be a citizen once he becomes a soldier, but becomes a soldier because he is a citizen."

Even within the Pentagon itself there are critics of VOLAR who wonder if this is an army that can fight when called upon to do so.

Colonel Robert Heinl, writing in the SATURDAY EVENING POST (August-September 1974), pointed to what he termed "a very American misconception: Congress and the country seem to believe that the only price we need to pay for a good volunteer Army is in dollars.... The hard reality is that, lacking morale, discipline, professional self-esteem, and battleworthiness... the American army in its present state will not be fit to fight half a war let alone one and a half — nor would it be if it had 33 1/3 divisions and another thousand percent military pay raise.... In the soldier's heart lie the wellsprings that make him fight: discipline, loyalty, unit pride, spirit. These are the very things our post-Vietnam Army is struggling hard to regain, and the field of battle where the decision will be reached is not Germany or Fort Benning, but still and always, as General Abrams knows, the soldier's heart."

What Colonel Heinl is talking about is a vacuum of motivation and an indifference to the military mission. It is the military's equivalent of industry's "blue-collar blues" made famous by young workers at GM's Lordstown plant. If enlisted people and enlisted men's wives have anything to fight for, it is themselves. Like Lordstown's rebels, everyone is looking out for number one. This attitude is expressed primarily in the course of day-to-day reform fights. These contests do not in and of themselves contain any inherent challenge to the mission. In fact, it's not so far-fetched to imagine a Korean war-era combat unit demanding the replacement of their commanding officer because his judgment under fire was poor. But today's GIs have consistently subordinated the military mission to their own needs and desires, although they by no means

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General, your tank is a mighty vehicle.  
It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.  
But it has one defect: it needs a driver.

General, your bomber is powerful—  
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant  
But it has one defect: it needs a mechanic.

General, a man is very useful.  
He can fly and he can kill.  
But he has one defect: he can think!

Bertolt Brecht

intended to do so. Rather, in the course of pushing their own demands, they eventually reach a point where they have to decide whether to keep pushing if it means that the mission is impaired. For example, women whose husbands were on the U.S.S. Coral Sea were told by the Navy that putting the ship into drydock for repairs was impossible because no other carrier was available to take its place. The women were not much impressed with this line of reasoning, and told the Navy their mission would just have to wait. It is precisely this "field of battle" where Colonel Heintz knows the Pentagon is still losing.

As a result, the Pentagon has had to rely on a very small number of specially trained and highly motivated Special Forces teams to carry out sensitive missions like providing training and support for Marcos' counter-insurgent troops in the Philippines. They still have no large force capable of carrying out a sustained though limited intervention. U.S. Marines put ashore on a Cambodian island during the Mayaguez events, for instance, were bested by Cambodian forces. The U.S. troops were young, inexperienced, poorly led, poorly informed, and more scared than motivated. The airborne infantry divisions like the 82nd, which trained in the California desert for a mock invasion of Petrolandia, are not prepared for a real trial by fire. As James Sterba of the NEW YORK TIMES wrote last summer, "it would almost be a shame to ask the Army to put all its progress to a test by ordering it to go out and fight a war."

### SOME PROBLEMS FOR ACTIVISTS

With the command continuing to modernize, and with the AFGE scheduled to begin its drive for a soldiers' union in the fall, it becomes all the more important to understand how these trends toward reform will affect GIs' attitudes toward the purpose of their work. The command understands that it is only capable of carrying out its mission if conflict within the ranks is confined within reasonable bounds. And that conflict can only be contained when the military mission is not unacceptable to a large number of enlisted people. In addition, they and the command must come to terms on the conditions under which the mission is to be carried out. When those terms are in question, conflict results which makes fulfilling the mission next to impossible. The LONDON TIMES reached a similar conclusion in an article on the growing soldiers' movement in Europe: "There is also the question of the reliability of the conscripts themselves. If they are not prepared to cut their hair, or to be on duty at the weekend, if they insist on holding demonstrations, writing pamphlets and forming trade unions, can they be trusted to fight, or carry out other military duties when ordered to do so?"

Movements which challenge the purpose of the military can only be successful if they attain some organizational form. Yet the

process of building those forms is also the process of struggle for limited improvements within the present order. How else is that experience to be acquired? Barracks committees and base-wide bodies of barracks representatives were created by American soldiers during the Back Home Movement at the end of World War II. Throughout Europe and the Pacific, these committees linked up using the military's own communications and transportation systems. In massive and illegal demonstrations they flaunted their power in the face of distressed base commanders and Presidential edicts. Despite the government's insistence that they stay in position to preserve the U.S. edge in the emerging cold war, GIs fought for and won the right to come home. But the collective experience required to create those committees was acquired during the CIO organizing drives before the war. Many of the GIs involved in the Back Home Movement had participated in those drives, and had evidently not forgotten the lessons learned in that fight.

Two distinct approaches to GI work have evolved since the ceasefire and the inception of VOLAR, largely in response to this problem of the relation between reform struggles and challenges to the military mission. The first approach is geared toward producing propaganda which critiques the military mission and pays little attention to the more mundane movement to improve the conditions of work. The second buries its critique of the mission and its own political perspective, and instead publicizes and supports just about any movement for partial reforms. The two approaches are held to be mutually exclusive.

The separation of these two approaches results in no strategy at all. Those who apply the first, purely anti-imperialist, perspective are unable to grow beyond small propaganda collectives which attract like-minded enlisted people who go on to do more of the same. Because they write off all movements for partial reforms, they don't participate in them, and consequently have no effect on their development. They remain purists of sorts, and with the end of the war exercise virtually no mass influence. On the other hand, those who apply the second reform perspective without developing a critical stance of their own, independent of the movement in the ranks, are also stuck. They have no way to bridge the gap between the day-to-day movement for reforms and their more long-range objectives. So they contribute legal aid, leafleters, mimeo machines, and a few books on socialism, and hope they've helped out in a good fight. But might not that fight simply speed up the military's own modernizing efforts? What if some group of sailors, with the help of these well-intentioned but uncritical activists, initiates a campaign to correct flagrant violations of safety regulations, and the commander, instead of putting up a fight, heralds the initiative, makes the improvements, and in the process wins the respect of those in his command? Instead of limiting the effectiveness of the military, instead of working to create soldiers' organi-

zations which stand outside of and opposed to the chain of command, the total impact of these activists' uncritical participation has been to make the military run more efficiently.

The AFGE's proposed soldiers'-union drive looms just over the horizon. Because it is a change in the structure of the relation between the GI and the command, it is a much more significant reform than a simple change in policy. Will this structural reform bring the opposition movement in the ranks into the AFL-CIO's fold, and following the principle of co-management, subject the soldier to yet another chain of command? Or will the drive lead to a broader and deeper radicalization in the ranks, one which exceeds the limits of the AFGE's original intentions? The outcome is not one which can be settled by classic formulas.

In France, the soldiers' movement has been fighting for a year to win the right to form a union. Shunned by the unions of the French Communist and Socialist parties, the soldiers received the hesitant support of the Christian-Democratic Trade Union Federation (CFDT). The far left is the only coherent political force which supports the soldiers' initiative. Its militants both inside and outside the army have for some time participated in the movement for soldiers' rights. Now their efforts are directed toward giving this fight for a structural reform — a union — anti-capitalist and anti-militarist content. In the Netherlands, an organization of socialist soldiers (BVD) works inside the ten-year-old conscripts' union (VVDM) pushing for better terms of service and conditions of work, and outside as well, questioning the NATO alliance and the purpose of maintaining an army useful only in the event of civil war.

Here we'd do well to heed the examples of the French and Dutch comrades. While the European political context is vastly different from ours, the problem of reform and revolution in the armed forces is the same for them and us. How else but in the process of struggle are old habits shaken, ideas reshaped, the balance of class forces altered, new instruments of struggle forged? This pertains to class struggle in the military as it does to that in any other institution. We now have an opportunity to shape the development of the volunteer armed forces. The AFGE drive is only the most recent expression of that opportunity. The alienation of enlisted people and enlisted men's wives from the purpose of their work, and their dissatisfaction with the conditions of work and the terms of service, now coincide with a fiscal crisis of the state which limits the military's options. Add to this picture a military which has been defeated in Indochina, humiliated in Europe, and delegitimized at home, and VOLAR's vulnerability becomes apparent. It remains for us to take advantage of this opportunity while it lasts.



## FOOTNOTE

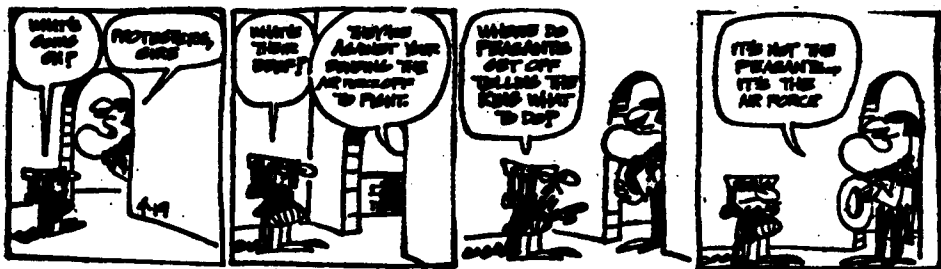
1. Because this section argues the opposite of what many left-wing critics of the DoD budget have argued, a more detailed explanation of our sources and categories is in order. The figures were taken from STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE U.S., 1975, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Budget; various House and Senate Armed Services Committee hearings on the FY 1976 and FY 1977 DoD budget; U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, August 18, 1975; Roger A. Freeman, THE GROWTH OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT: A MORPHOLOGY OF THE WELFARE STATE (Stanford University: Hoover Institution Press, 1975), pp. 105-127.

For the interpretation of trends in the Federal budget, and DoD and domestic program outlays, see Freeman, above. For related analysis of Federal budget trends, and the relation of DoD outlays to domestic outlays, see James O'Connor, THE FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

The theoretical approach to budget analysis is summarized in the preface to James O'Connor's THE CORPORATIONS AND THE STATE (New York: Harper Colophon, 1974), p. 105, and developed more fully in his FISCAL CRISIS OF THE STATE.

The category of "defense outlays" describes actual expenditures for military personnel, retired pay, operations and maintenance, procurement, RDT&E, military construction, family housing, civil defense, and military assistance. It does not include gross obligations incurred but not spent, the NASA budget, or the percentage of foreign aid or interest on the national debt attributable to military functions or past wars. See James Cypher, "Capitalist Planning and Military Expenditures," REVIEW OF RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMICS (Fall 1974), pp. 16-19, for persuasive arguments to include these categories when determining the size of the military budget and its impact on the economy. Others go further than Cypher, and argue that all outlays for veterans' affairs should be included as well. Yet even if these factors are included, they affect only the size of the military budget, and not the trends: its declining share of the GNP and the Federal budget, and its decline relative to the domestic-outlay portion of the Federal budget.

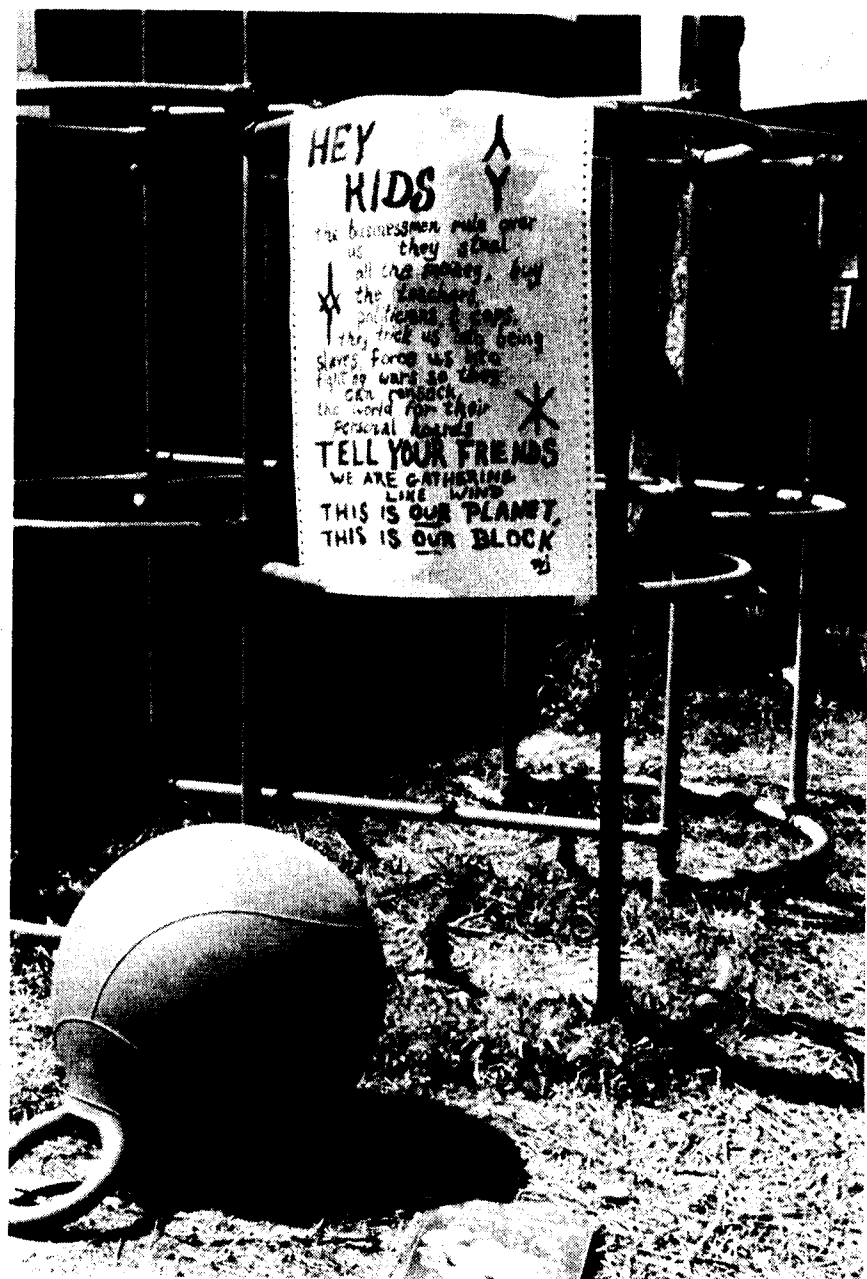
*The authors have been active in the soldiers' and veterans' movements in Okinawa, California and the Pacific Northwest. They and others are now starting a newspaper directed toward the anti-military movement in the armed forces, and are interested in involving like-minded people. Send comments and questions to them care of RADICAL AMERICA.*

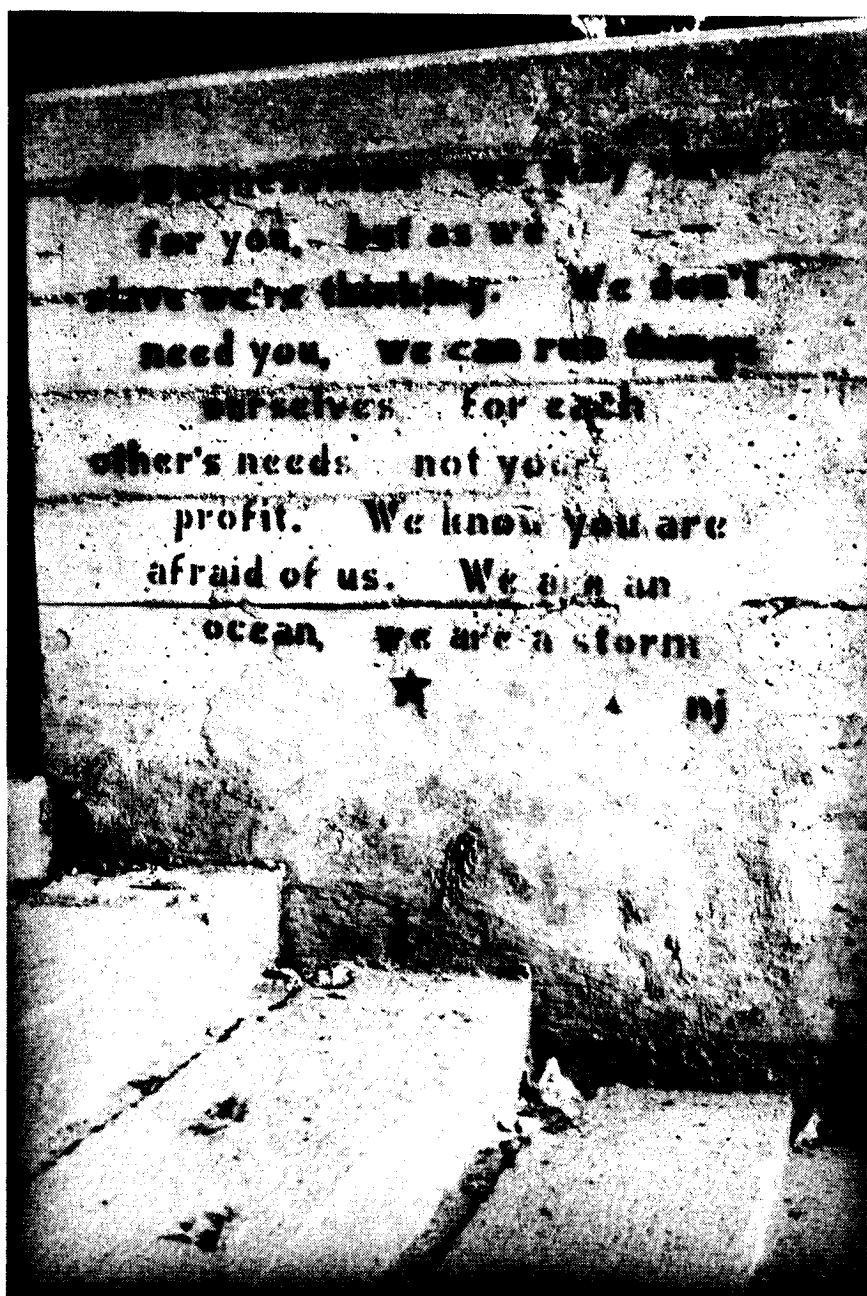


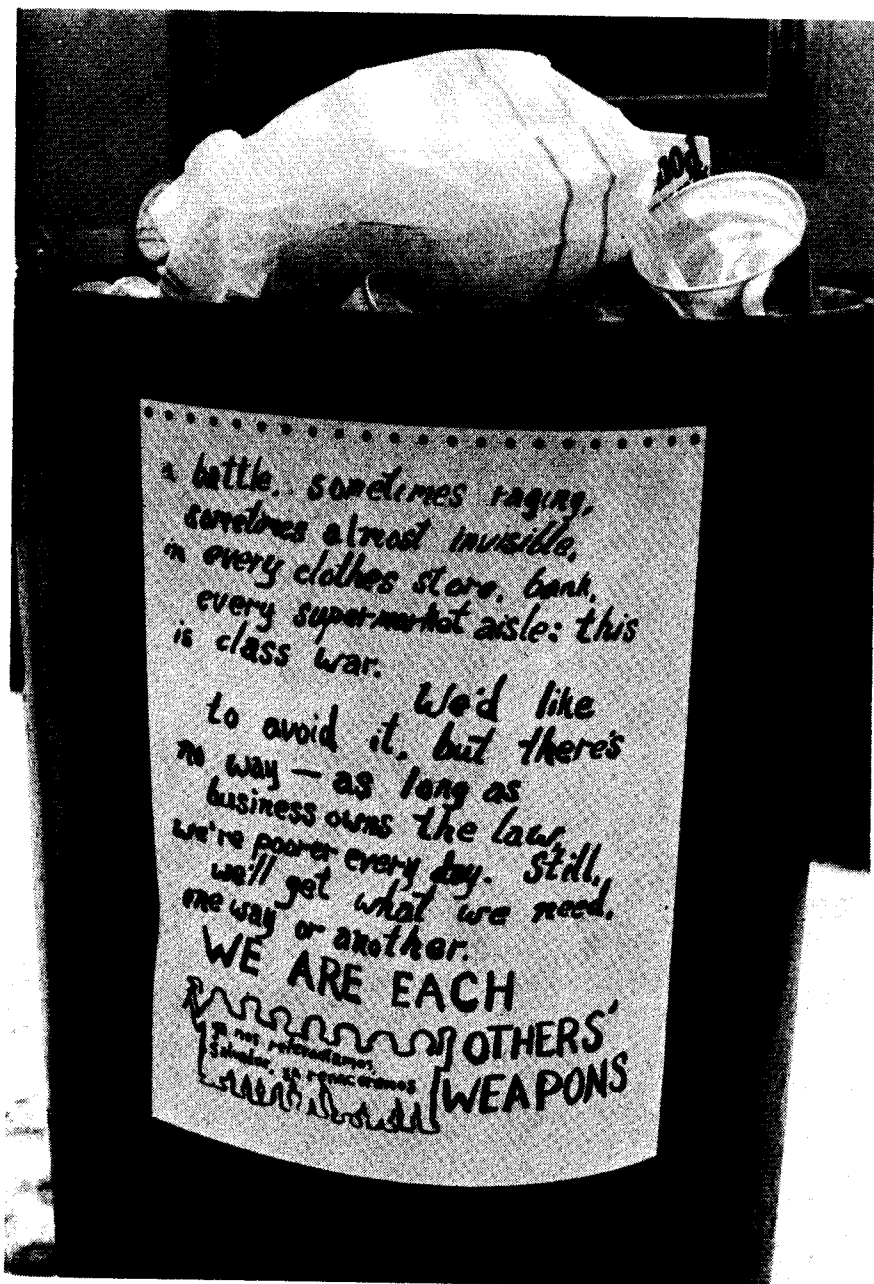
## Poems to Battle and Help Heal

*N.J.*









a battle, sometimes raging,  
sometimes almost invisible,  
in every clothes store, bank,  
every supermarket aisle: this  
is class war.

We'd like  
to avoid it, but there's  
no way — as long as  
business owns the law,  
we're poorer every day. Still,  
we'll get what we need,  
one way or another.

WE ARE EACH  
OTHERS'  
WEAPONS

N.J. is the author of *INSURRECTION/RESURRECTION: A POEM CYCLE TO BATTLE AND HELP HEAL*, from which these photo poems are reprinted. He is a member of Working Peoples Artists (P.O. Box 40909, San Francisco, CA 94140) which published the book.



# **The Bolsheviks and Working Women, 1905-20**

*Anne Bobroff*

The liberation of women requires, among other things, that women be encouraged to develop their ability to think, and at times take action, independently of men. This has several implications for mixed socialist organizations regarding internal structure and the relationship of the political organization to the masses. In fact, the problem of how to organize women is inseparable from more general organizational questions. Internally, an organization committed to women's liberation must allow ultimate power over all decision-making to rest clearly with the rank and file, because women tend not to be in leadership positions. There must be real opportunities to move into leadership for all groups traditionally excluded from posts of major responsibility. This necessitates limiting the possibility of an old guard holding onto leadership over a prolonged period of time.

In its relationship to the masses, the political organization must adopt practices which encourage each human being's confidence in her or his ability to think or make decisions independently. Socialists must, on the one hand, take strong radical positions, but on the other hand, not seek to gain power over any group which

*OPPOSITE: Women textile workers march in a demonstration organized after they went on strike on February 23, 1917, International Women's Day.*



is not in turn able to democratically remove them from that power. They must take a leadership role, but at the same time realize that their activity is only one of the inputs necessary to the radicalizing process. Another is the masses' own independent experience of life, particularly during the course of collective action. When workers, including women workers, take action on their own, socialists should recognize, publicize, and encourage their capacity to do so, as well as offering a radical analysis and constructive criticism.

The converse of all this is that centralized, top-down organization actively prevents the conditions necessary to women's liberation. The Bolsheviks' relationship to working women during the early 20th century can be examined as a case in point.

Until 1919-20, the Bolsheviks firmly opposed any form of separate organization of women — or in fact any acknowledgement of women as a distinct group within the working class. Rather, they always called women workers to fight for socialism "hand in hand with men." During the first two decades of the 20th century, meanwhile, the Russian "bourgeois feminist" movement, as the Bolsheviks characterized it, was strong. The feminists favored organization of women of all classes, separate from men. Between 1905 and 1917, their efforts in fact began to attract popular support from working women. The Bolshevik leadership reacted to this situation by compromising somewhat with their original opposition to recognizing women as a unique part of the labor force. This resulted in a series of changes in Bolshevik policy toward working women between 1913 and 1920.

Party literature claimed that this gradual change in policy resulted because women were much more backward than men. The Bolsheviks habitually referred to women as the "otstalyi sloi" — "the backward stratum." (2) They were portrayed as the most politically unconscious and unorganized segment of the working class, requiring special attention to bring them up to the level of men.

With regard to some groups of women workers, and particularly after 1917, this consideration was probably important. But I will argue that quite the opposite factor forced the Bolsheviks' acceptance of the woman question as an important issue prior to the revolution. This factor was the tremendous growth among many working women, beginning in 1910, of militance, organization, and awareness of their own needs. When working women began to demonstrate their own independent power, the Bolsheviks were compelled to relate to them: to develop ways of attracting this new source of energy to the party, and to prevent the possibility of its alignment with the "bourgeois feminists" or other political tendencies.

But the fact that women had had substantial success in independent action was rarely acknowledged, let alone encouraged, in party literature. This was reflective of the Bolsheviks' emphasis on the need for centralization in all aspects of political action. Women

were never allowed any degree of real autonomy in defining their own liberation, not only because of sexist attitudes, but also because Bolshevik politics in general did not stress the need of all human beings to become self-defining.

# I

Although by 1905-06 women's emancipation was very much an issue among the Russian intelligentsia, neither of the left-wing parties (Bolsheviks and Mensheviks) systematically endeavored to organize female workers. Alexandra Kollontai, probably the earliest and strongest proponent of organizing women in this period, told of years of fighting both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on this issue (she changed several times from one to the other between 1905 and 1917). Her ideas were continually dismissed by most members of both parties as a "right deviation towards feminism" — a reference to the "bourgeois feminist" movement of the time. (3)

This attitude contrasted with the activities of the "bourgeois feminist" groups and, after 1905, their interest in working women. The feminists called for the unification of women of all classes. They tried to attract working women — in particular domestic servants, their own maids and cooks. A major activity was an attempt to organize maids into unions. Because the feminists did not agree with a class analysis of social change, it apparently did not occur to them that as employers they were not the best organizers of their own maids. Kollontai reported sarcastically that they "tried to construct an idyllic, mixed union of grand-lady employers and domestic servants.... [They] strove to organize domestic servants under the vigilant eye of the mistresses." (4)

Another important activity of these feminist groups was their establishment of a number of working women's political clubs. Even Kollontai gave some praise to these efforts: "Here lectures were read and discussions conducted, with the goal of arousing the interest of working women in the political life surrounding them." They were soon closed by the police, however. The feminist groups also collected 40,000 signatures, many from working women, for a petition for electoral rights for women. (5)

During 1905-06, in response to this limited activity among women, even some Bolsheviks were beginning to compromise with the old position on the question of women. They supported three working women's socialist clubs in Petrograd. Kollontai took credit for much of the organizational work of one, formed from a "basic nucleus" of working women whom she had gathered together in the spring of that year. The club was frequented by 200-300 working women of various industries. (6) A recent Soviet book quotes the memoirs of a working woman who stated that she became active in the party through the club. (7) But there were many Bolsheviks who criticized the club as separatist and guilty of the usual devia-

tion. Their hostility eventually caused even Kollontai to leave her work there. (8)

A similar situation occurred in 1908, when the Mutual-Charity Society and various professional women in Petrograd began organizational work for an All-Russian Women's Conference that autumn. (9) Convinced that this would be a politically educational, consciousness-raising experience for working women, Kollontai wanted the socialists to participate. Although she obtained the approval of the Central Committee, she met hostility from many members of the RSDLP, Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, both on grounds of separatism and on grounds of collaborating with a bourgeois group. Her strongest opponents were the Petrograd Committee of the party, above all Vera Slutskaya, a Bolshevik. (10) We shall see Slutskaya taking a rather different position in 1917.

Feeling strongly about the value of participating, Kollontai went ahead with preparations for the Conference despite the opposition. For months, systematic work was carried out among working women, particularly textile workers, but also cardboard, rubber, tobacco, footwear, and domestic workers. Police surveillance was continuous and Kollontai had several narrow escapes. She managed, however, to hold dozens of secret meetings (varying greatly in size) among working women to discuss various topics relevant to them. The aid of several, such as the weaver Antonova and the seamstress Solov'eva, was invaluable. Kollontai also obtained the support of the Union of Textile Workers and later the Central Bureau of Trade Unions in Petrograd. (11)

As Kollontai gained influence among working women, the Petrograd Committee suddenly decided, shortly before the Conference began, to attend it after all. They delegated Vera Slutskaya as their representative! Some members were still strongly enough opposed, however, to print an appeal to working women urging them to boycott the Conference. (12) This controversy within the Petrograd Committee was a reflection of the conflict between theoretical antipathy toward separatism, and the practical realization that working women felt a need to deal with concerns peculiar to women in all-female meetings.

At the Conference, attended by 750 women, the tiny minority of working women read the reports they had prepared on such topics as women workers and the trade-union movement, the position of female artisans, the budget of working women, insurance of working women during pregnancy. (13) They earned the undying hatred of the feminists for their class analysis of women's emancipation. (14) Kollontai's own appearance at the Conference called forth furious debate. Next day the hall was surrounded by police, who asked for identification papers from all participants. Kollontai, warned in advance, fled Russia, not to return until 1917. Her report to the Conference was read by the working woman Volkova. (15)

The Bolsheviks entered a new stage in their relationship to working women at the beginning of 1913. Prior to this point, as we

have seen, the woman question had been debated almost entirely by individuals within the Petrograd Committee, and had not achieved any permanent institutional form. However in January the Bolsheviks, including Lenin, who were involved in the publication of PRAVDA began to include a woman's section in the newspaper, in honor of the first celebration in Russia of International Women's Day, February 23. (16)

In late 1913 the Bolsheviks decided to publish, as an official organ of the Central Committee, a journal, RABOTNITSA (Working Woman), specifically for working women. RABOTNITSA dealt with a wide range of women's concerns: maternity insurance, female labor (including a demand for female factory inspectors), child-care centers, hygiene information, the problems of working women and the family, children's stories, Women's Day, electoral rights for women. (17) However, the Bolsheviks' old attitude toward the organization of women was still very much in evidence in the journal. It continued to attack the notion of separate organizations of women.

Perhaps the best indication of RABOTNITSA'S character is the leading article (editorial) of the first issue. In contrast to the bourgeois feminists, it said:

Politically conscious women see that contemporary society is divided into classes.... The bourgeoisie is one, the working class the other. Their interests are counterposed. The division into men and women in their eyes has no great significance....

The "women's question" for working men and women — this question is about how to involve the backward masses of working women in organization, how better to make clear to them their interests, how to make them comrades in the common struggle quickly. The solidarity between working men and women, the common cause, the common goals, and the common path to those goals. Such is the settlement of the "women's" question in the workers' midst.... (18)

After only seven issues, two of which had already been confiscated, the war began, and RABOTNITSA was closed by the police.

Following the February revolution of 1917, another important step was taken by the Bolsheviks with regard to organizing women. The revolution began with massive, very militant workers' demonstrations, set off by women celebrating International Women's Day. Sixteen days later, the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Committee placed Vera Slutskaya in charge of agitation among working women. In three days, on March 13, Slutskaya brought to the Executive Committee her recommendations for dealing with the revolutionary situation among women. She advised

the formation of a Women's Bureau as part of the Petrograd Committee and revival of the newspaper RABOTNITSA. (19)

Slutskaya stressed that:

The bureau will conduct only agitational work. The working women in general will be organized in the proletarian political and trade-union institutions. No independent women's organizations whatsoever will be created. All work will be conducted in full agreement with the decisions of the Petrograd Committee. (20)

RABOTNITSA once again began publication, this time weekly instead of fortnightly as before the war. The newspaper continued as the focal point of women's work. However, there was still opposition to the Women's Bureau from members who thought it "very much reeked of feminism . . . ." (21)

The Bolsheviks' agitation among working women during 1917 included women's meetings which did not take a permanent organizational form. Two regional conferences of non-party working women were organized by the Bolsheviks, one in Petrograd and one in Moscow. (22) And in November 1918 the first socialist All-Russian Women's Conference was convened by the Central Committee in Moscow. (23)

Although it was not a matter of party policy, women's sections, called zhenotdely, began to be organized as early as the summer of 1917. At the VIII Party Congress in 1919, a Women's Department was established as an arm of the Central Committee. The IX Party Congress in 1920 made it binding upon lower levels of the party to establish their own women's sections. The tasks of the women's sections were to carry out party work among women in local factories, to take part in a system whereby female workers and male workers' wives were selected for apprenticeship in some part of the Soviet bureaucracy, and to organize large conferences of working women. (24) The women's sections marked a major change in the Bolsheviks' opposition to exclusively female organizations. But the main function of the sections was to recruit and train women for work delineated by the party, not to serve as autonomous, on-going, mass-based pressure groups for women's interests.

## II

As we have seen above, between 1905 and 1920 the Bolsheviks went through a series of changes with regard to their views on how women should be organized. What were the causes of this progression? The Bolsheviks themselves attributed their efforts in this area to the notion that women were especially backward, and therefore needed special attention to increase their political consciousness. However, examination of the newspapers of the period re-

veals that in fact a great deal of activity among working women occurred just prior to at least two of the Bolsheviks' major policy changes: the 1913-14 decision to publish RABOTNITSA, and the creation of the Women's Bureau in 1917. The attempt to organize inactive segments of the female labor force was undoubtedly one function performed by the Bolsheviks' new agitational devices. But the initial impetus to create them, that which first compelled attention to women workers, was the militancy of those groups who were active.

Let us look once more, then, at the years 1905-17, this time examining the female labor force itself. Activity by working women was comparatively minor before 1910. Several strikes and meetings did occur, particularly during the 1905 revolution, and this undoubtedly explains the early sporadic attempts by a few Bolsheviks to address themselves to working women. However, the overall impression given by newspaper accounts of the years 1905-10 is one of scattered acts by individual working women, a low level of strike activity, weak resistance to intimidation, and defeat. (25) For example, in October 1906 RABOCHII SOYUZ (Workers' Union) wrote that women were intimidated not only by their employers but also by their husbands and fathers. Of Moscow's 250,000 workers, one-third were women. Only several hundred of these were organized. (26) The few strikes of the period, with the exception of two among the Moscow textile workers in 1905 and 1906, ended in defeat for the workers. (27)

(The fact that little activity by women was reported in newspapers during these years does not necessarily mean that they were totally quiescent. It may well be that they used this time to lay the groundwork for organization which was to make possible the outburst of strikes beginning in 1910. The point is that there was an absence of the type of highly visible, successful, large-scale activity which would later compel the Bolsheviks to change their policy on women.)

Before going on to examine the strike wave of 1910-14, we must note one other feature of the female labor force in the earlier period: the tremendous growth in the number of women workers. Between 1901 and 1910 factory owners hired fewer men than women (or laid off more men than women) in every year but two. There were two reasons for this. First, women could be paid less than men. Second, employers had learned from the massive strikes of these years that women were much less likely to rebel, interrupt production, or force improvement of conditions. These hiring practices were repeatedly noted by factory inspectors. For example, in 1904 a factory inspector's report observed that "factory owners everywhere possible are replacing men with women, not only among adults but also among youths, believing the female element in the factories to be more docile and steady." (28)

Between January 1, 1901 and January 1, 1910, the number of women in the labor force increased by 18%, while that of men in-

creased by only 1.3%. In 1901 the number of men workers was 1,251,240; it increased to 1,267,572 by 1910. Women workers numbered 441,012 in 1901 and increased to 565,211 by 1910. The number of workers in the total labor force grew by roughly 141,000 during these years; of this number, 88% were women. (29) It is therefore highly significant that this was not a period of very great attention to women by Bolsheviks.

It is clear, then, that a large increase in the number of working women over an extended period of years was not in and of itself sufficient to focus Bolshevik attention on women workers. Not until these women began to wage militant strikes did the Bolsheviks develop an interest in them as a distinct group.

In 1910, when the female labor force suddenly erupted with strike activity, it was once again factory owners, ever sensitive to their profit margins, who became aware of it first. A 1910 survey by the Moscow Society of Factory and Plant Owners disclosed the development of militancy among women workers. The Menshevik newspaper NASH PUT (Our Path) delightedly gave a full report on the survey. With gleeful sarcasm, the Menshevik article was entitled "The faithlessness of women." The Moscow Society's survey complained of the recent outbreak of strikes in the area, and observed as a "characteristic feature...the energetic participation of women in them." The survey continued with a review of the previous years in which women's inactivity could be counted on. NASH PUT commented sarcastically: "Light-headed women are not sympathetic, however, to the anxieties of the factory owners, and did not live up to the manufacturers' hopes for them. Such is human gratitude!" (30)

The "first gleam" of the renewed workers' movement was manifested in the Moscow textile industry in the spring of 1910, (31) and textiles continued to contribute a very large number of participants in the strike movement until the war (partly, of course, because of the large numbers employed in textiles as compared with other Russian industries. (32) Since women constituted over half of the employees in most branches of the textile industry, (33) it is not surprising that their earliest activity occurred in spinning, weaving, and lace-making factories. NASH PUT reported in August 1910 that "In the strike at the Givartovsky [lace-making] factory, as in other textile strikes, the women have distinguished themselves by their energy and steadfastness." (34)

The "first gleam" was largely characterized by unskillfully waged battles, disunity, and defeat, lasting through the spring and summer. "Strikes here follow one after another with feverish rashness, without the least agreement and in a most disunited manner...." After a few hours, or at most a few days, workers would return to their jobs with promises, but never guarantees, of satisfaction from the factory administration. In several instances, factory owners were able to capitalize successfully on male sexism

to divide and weaken workers' strike efforts. For example, the strike at the Mussi textile plant involved two different lists of demands put forward by the women's and men's workshops separately. In an "extremely uncomradely" manner the men, "having gained from the administration several concessions for themselves ... returned to work, wrecking the women's strike." (35)

Before long, however, strikers began to develop organizational skills, a determination not to return to work until genuine gains were won, and a willingness of women and men to support each other. There is some evidence that the workers were able to overcome or at least temporarily transcend their sexism in response to militant women's leadership. It was not uncommon for a women's section of a plant to strike, and then to gain the support of other workers, including men, who would walk out in sympathy. For example, in October 1910 the administration at the Teikov textile factory increased the work load among the women in the water-frame workshop. Even under the former conditions this work had been "most difficult," resulting in two deaths from overwork. In addition, "the extremely unceremonious treatment of them by the administration stirred up discontent among the women." The women struck, and were subsequently joined by the weavers, spinners, and ultimately all 5,000 workers in the factory. (36)

A similar situation occurred at the Bek textile plant in early 1911. Again, a change in the work routine of the women water-frame operators created discontent. The women appealed to the male mule operators, and "after a quick discussion work was unanimously discontinued on all floors." Foremost among their demands was to return the women to their former working conditions. In late 1913, at a Riga rubber factory, women in the galoshes works began fainting from a combination of spoiled benzine and poor ventilation. One woman hit her head against her machine as she fainted; she later died from the injury. The women galoshes workers refused to go to work the next day. In all, 5,500 people ultimately struck. And disturbances at the Khludovsky textile factory were removed following settlement of a walkout by 5,000 employees when three women were dismissed on suspicion of having incited the workers to strike. (37)

These activities by working women had an effect on society beyond the factory gates as well. The Teikov strike, which lasted several months, became known throughout Russia, and some members of the Duma attempted to conduct an investigation (quashed, however, by the majority). And NASH PUT remarked in February 1911 that several strikes in which women played a prominent part were "touchstones for the Petrograd textile workers. The attainment of even insignificant demands raised the mood of workers in other factories." (38)

In place of the disorganized quality of the first months of the strike movement, workers developed determination and tenacity.



Strikes lasted weeks and even months, despite threats of dismissal, police action, and eviction from company-owned housing and dining facilities. Enticements were no more effective than threats. For example, in a Moscow pastry and perfume factory, which employed 2,000 women in a total work force of 3,000, workers approached the factory administration with several demands. The administration offered to increase wages, hoping to dissipate their rebellious mood. However, this only increased the workers' determination, and they went off to make up an even longer list of demands. During the 47-day strike at the Palia textile factory in the summer of 1913, "two thousand workers, predominantly women, are displaying a steadfastness and determination unusual even in the present strike period." (39)

Women also manifested an ability to organize and maintain strikes. Specific demands were formulated, ranging from wage increases to paid pregnancy leave and use of the factory owner's bath house and laundry facilities. Demands were usually included which insisted that no one be dismissed as a result of the strike, and that workers be paid in full for strike days. A copy of the demands would then be presented to the factory administration. Only after a refusal to accede to their demands would the workers strike. Sometimes they would issue an appeal to the factory inspector of the area to substantiate their complaints.

Women often took part in negotiating with factory administrations. At the Butinev textile factory in Moscow, for instance, five representatives were elected by the workers to conduct negotiations. Three of the five were women. A carefully planned system of protecting them was set up by the workers. To protect the negotiators from dismissal, the workers signed the following letter and sent it to the factory owner :

We, the undersigned, men and women weavers of the Butinev factory, all unanimously elected from our midst five representatives. In case they are fired, we have pledged to stop work and to guarantee each of them one ruble in support from each of us.... We will firmly remember that only in our united strength can we guarantee the success of our cause.... (40)

Women frequently took measures to ensure that their strikes could continue despite lack of strike funds. In 1913, at the Alekseev factory in Moscow, a strike had been going on for three weeks. Back in their village the home of two of the strikers, sisters, burned down. As a result they had to send all their savings home to their father. Rather than become strike-breakers in order to make a living, the now penniless sisters turned to the other working women. The latter took up a collection among themselves, and the problem was solved. A collection was also made among the

striking women at the Mikhailov factory when one of their number needed money for a funeral for her dead child. The woman had not wished to become a strike-breaker; the strike there had gone on for four and a half weeks. (41)

Women also displayed organizational ability when they were not striking. At the Levkovich tobacco factory in Saratov, a hospital welfare fund was formed of 665 workers, a majority of whom were women. Benefits given through the fund included a grant to pregnant women. At the Voronik, Lyutsh, and Chesner textile factory, two women were elected to the ten-member board of directors of the Hospital Fund. (42)

Perhaps the most interesting development in the female strike movement during the 1910-14 period was the growth of consciousness among working women of their own needs as women. They would no longer accept rudeness and sexual exploitation by foremen and employers. And they also set forth strike demands relating to their particular needs.

Strikes frequently began when women refused to tolerate the sexual abuse which was endemic. At the Grisov factory in Moscow in 1913, a strike began because "The attitude of the factory administration is revolting. There is no other word for it than prostitution." Among the demands was one for polite treatment of working women in particular, with prohibition of swearing. The immediate cause of the 1911 strike of 5,000 workers at the Khludovsky factory in Yartsev was the "indelicate treatment" of women workers by one of the foremen, whose offenses were even documented by the factory inspector. The strike demands included the dismissal of this foreman. At a plywood factory in Riga, women worked with glue prepared from blood, curds, cement, and lime. The glue stank terribly and ate away at their hands. But a second cause for discontent was that several foremen were "not ashamed to curse in the most obscene words even to women." (43)

Demands were often made which related to the problems of pregnant women and mothers. For example, at the Bek textile factory, the strikers demanded a pregnancy leave of six weeks and abolition of the practice of firing pregnant women. These demands were won. The striking Mal'tseva weavers made the same demands, adding that women should receive half pay during the period when they were not working. The policy of pregnancy leaves was won at Mal'tseva also, but without pay. Workers at a Moscow factory in 1913 demanded that pregnant women be relieved of having to lift or carry heavy weights. They also called for two one-hour breaks each day for mothers to nurse their babies. At another Moscow factory where 1,000 workers were striking, a demand was made that the administration end its policy of not hiring married women. (44)

One other interesting incident took place during the strike at the Moscow Alekseev factory. A report on the strike in its sixteenth

day described the mood as "cheerful, particularly among the women." The men strikers at this plant had established a cooperative credit system among themselves. The women wished to join it also, but the man responsible for administering it created "all sorts of obstacles." So the women decided to elect their own representative, a woman, in his place. (45)

The one area in which women apparently did not recognize a right was equal pay. Most wage demands in strikes involving women called for a system of increases for both sexes, structured so as to maintain higher pay for men than for women.

The development of this strike movement among women caused the Bolsheviks to reassess their earlier policy, and to begin publication of the women's page in PRAVDA in 1913 and of RABOTNITSA in 1914. As we have seen, the Bolsheviks almost always attributed their new attitude toward women to their backwardness. Yet this explanation simply does not ring true in the light of the activity traced above. At one point the Bolshevik Anna Elizarova, Lenin's sister and one of the original editors of RABOTNITSA, gave a more likely explanation (which may also reflect Lenin's view). Writing in 1923, she attributed the conception of the women's newspaper to

the rise of the workers' movement which began in 1912 .... This movement aroused... in general the more backward masses of the woman proletariat, who only... in 1913 first celebrated women's day.... Among working women arose an irrepressible striving to have their own journal. PRAVDA could not accommodate in its pages the masses of correspondence from working women. Besides this, the working women wished to create something of their own, to manifest their own initiative. (46)

Kollontai supported Elizarova's explanation: "In Russia the movement matured. The general rise led to the simultaneous appearance of two journals for working women RABOTNITSA and the Menshevik GOLOS RABOTNITSY (Voice of the Working Woman)." (47) Since women were now an active, potentially revolutionary force, the Bolsheviks were compelled to seek effective ways of relating to them.

In determining how best to gain the support of this important new part of the working class, the Bolsheviks were undoubtedly influenced by the ideas of the separatist feminists who had achieved some successes in relation to working women.

Just as in the case of RABOTNITSA, the next major revision in the Bolsheviks' relationship to working women — the 1917 establishment of a Women's Bureau of the Petrograd Committee — resulted from continued independent activity by working women.

Strikes of women employees began once again during the war; women also took part in demonstrating against the difficult conditions of living created by the conflict. (48) And the February revolution itself began with women striking on International Women's Day, 1917, in direct defiance of the Bolshevik desire to keep them quiet and under control. The Bolsheviks felt that the moment was not ripe for revolution, and that striking before May 1 could only create confusion and loss of discipline. V. Kayurov, one of the directors of the Bolshevik Vyborg District Committee, was sent to speak at a gathering of women on the eve of Women's Day. After discussing the significance of the celebration, he explained the need for discipline, for abstention from strikes and individual demonstrations, and for the women to "act exclusively according to the instructions of the party committee." (49)

Working women decided to strike despite the Bolsheviks' directive against doing so. Streaming out of their factories, the women called other factories out too, and mass demonstrations began and spread throughout Petrograd. The Bolshevik worker I. Gordienko recounted a scene typical of that day. On the morning of February 23, the cries of striking women could be heard outside the windows of his workshop.

I and several other comrades quickly showed ourselves at the window.... The gates of the First Bol'shoi Sampsonievsky factory were thrown wide open. Masses of militant women flooded into the alley. Those who saw us began to wave their hands, crying, "Come out! Stop work!" A snowball flew in through the window. We decided to join in their demonstration. By the chief office, near the gate, a brief meeting formed, and we went out into the streets. Hand in hand with the marching comrades and with cries of "Hurrah" we went out with them to Bol'shoi Samsonievsky Street. (50)

This process was repeated at factory after factory. Kayurov was totally shocked by the women's rebellion.

...to my surprise and indignation... we learned... of the strike in some textile factories and of the arrival of a number of delegates from the women workers who announced [that they were going on strike].

I was extremely indignant about the behaviour of the strikers, both because they had blatantly ignored the decision of the district committee of the party, and also because they had gone on strike after I had appealed to them only the night before to keep cool and disciplined. (51)

As March 1917 progressed, women continued to play a forceful role. Petrograd maids called a meeting, and so many came that

they could not all get into the hall. They held the meeting in the street outside instead; there they stood surrounded by soldiers. (52) Women of the Min'on chocolate and confectionery factory shops printed a long appeal to the Soviet in RABOCHAYA GAZETA (Workers' Newspaper), detailing their terrible working conditions. (53) A meeting of workers from all tobacco factories in Petrograd called for maternity benefits. At the Narvsky Workers' Evening Classes, it was decided to spend the rest of the term discussing political and social questions of the moment. One of the topics they listed was women's rights. (54) At the Frolik factory a demand was made for a 100% increase in men's wages and 125% for women — unusual given the frequent pre-war lack of concern with bringing women's wages closer to the level of men's. A political club for working women was opened in Petrograd. (55) A telegram from an Irkutsk meeting on the question of women, attended by 3,000 men and women, called on the Provisional Government to grant women full electoral participation in the Constituent Assembly. (56) In Petrograd, women took part in factory meetings which discussed the war and elected representatives to the Soviet. Large meetings brought together all employees of a particular branch of work in the city. For example, a meeting of laundry workers was summoned in RABOCHAYA GAZETA :

Working women and working men of laundry establishments!

It is time for us to think about forming a union.

We are entirely unorganized and it is necessary for us to send women representatives to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

Come, everyone, to our general meeting, which will be Sunday, 12 March, at the Women's Medical Institute....

Call everyone to the meeting. (57).

Many women were present at a general meeting of about a thousand restaurant employees where it was decided to form a trade union of all restaurant workers. As its representatives to the Soviet the meeting elected "two cooks, two waiters, and one woman." (58) RABOCHAYA GAZETA printed an appeal signed by "Comrade Katya," a waitress, who supported the formation of the trade union.

Comrade working women who work in the tea rooms of Petrograd!

....All of you know in what kind of back-breaking conditions we lead our lives in the tea rooms. Working for 16 hours in 24 and getting for this labour chance "tips in tea," we find ourselves entirely dependent on the tavern-owners. Now the hour has come when even we, united in one goal in the Union, must lay claim to better conditions.

I call you, comrades, to unite!  
Meet! Organize! And we will gain... satisfaction of our needs and legal rights!

Elect from each tea house ONE person for discussion and further working out of activities. Comrades will be notified soon about a place to meet.

Comrade Katya (59)

All-women's meetings were sponsored by many different groups: the feminist League of Equal Rights for Women, the Society of Petrograd Women Lawyers, the Mensheviks. (60) This renewed activity by "bourgeois feminist" groups and the Mensheviks — and the fact that it achieved some initial success in attracting large numbers of women, as we shall see below — was undoubtedly a major factor influencing the Bolsheviks' strategy toward women during the revolutionary period. Because the Bolsheviks were rivals for the support of this important sector of the proletariat, they could not afford to ignore the special concern with women's issues which was clearly effective in appealing to them.

A description of one of the meetings arranged by Menshevik women, for example, appeared in RABOCHAYA GAZETA. The hall in which they met

...was filled by working women, maids, laundresses, and soldiers' wives [many of whom, of course, were employed in the city's factories]. Soldiers' wives formed the largest group and from the beginning of the meeting made their presence known with cries — with demands for increasing rations. The maids and laundresses spoke out, complaining about their life....

The soldiers' wives protested that the meeting was not paying enough attention to their particular plight. So one woman proposed a resolution

...calling on the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies to turn its attention to the situation of soldiers' wives and to act to increase rations. The resolution was accepted unanimously. The soldiers' wives were quieted down and the meeting went on. Entire ranks of comrades came forward with speeches about the necessity for organizing trade unions.... The meeting ended with a song of eternal memory to the fighters who had died and the Marseillaise. (61)

However the soldiers' wives soon took matters into their own hands. Five days later they held their own meeting, attended by

600 of their number. Out of this meeting came a demonstration in early April calling for a system of government grants which they presented in six carefully worked-out demands. The very tightly, almost martially organized demonstration was joined by 100,000 people. (62) Clearly, permanent support from this group of women was a prize to be sought after by all political tendencies.

On March 8 there was a suffrage demonstration consisting solely of working women. "...a vast army of working women from factories in the Moskovsky and Porokhovaya districts, with music and banners, appeared at the City Duma to declare their demands about women obtaining electoral rights." (63) And later that month the League of Equal Rights for Women, a bourgeois feminist group, organized a demonstration calling for woman suffrage and full participation in the Constituent Assembly which drew 35,000 women of all classes. (64)

All of the activity described above obviously did not occur before March 10, when the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks charged Slutskaya with drawing up plans for a Women's Bureau. But it is important to set this Bolshevik policy decision within the context of the type of events that were occurring at the time. Contrary to official Bolshevik claims, the formation of the Women's Bureau was a result of the activity — not the "backwardness" — of women. Slutskaya's own recommendations in strategy discussions within the Petrograd Committee are evidence of the Bolsheviks' actual reasoning at the time. In her first report explaining why she felt a Women's Bureau was necessary, she said, "In view of the fact that at the present time an appreciable movement has come into existence among them [working women], it is desirable to direct the said movement into the channels of political action, having first organized them into trade cells." (65) Kollontai (who was back in Russia by then) also based her opinion about the need for a Women's Bureau on the activity of working women — and also on the successes of the feminists. She felt that her position was again confirmed "especially seeing how the equal righters captured the minds of working women and got a following among soldiers' wives. The demonstration of soldiers' wives demanding an increase in grants [mentioned above]...still more convinced me of the necessity of a specially planned party apparatus for work among women." (66)

The Bolsheviks continued work among working women throughout the remainder of 1917. I have not examined newspapers for the period after March to determine the level of activity among the female labor force. But other research, as yet unpublished, suggests that similar motivations prompted work at least until the end of 1917. At any rate, by 1919-20, when Bolshevik women's sections were formed — the next major change in the party's policy toward women — the context of organizational activity had changed sharply. The Bolsheviks were now fighting to consolidate their power

and mitigate the destruction wrought to the economy. Prior to the revolution, agitational effort tended to be directed toward those groups which demonstrated organizational power or a clear potential for it. After the revolution, the Bolsheviks confronted a more complicated and difficult situation. They could carry out their social programs only if they succeeded in fostering an economy which could support them. This required the commitment not only of active workers, but also of all those who played a basic role in the economy yet did not want to make the personal sacrifices necessary to restore and increase production. And, during the war, women had become a tremendous proportion of all workers: by 1917, they composed 40% of the total work force. (67) The Civil War, again drawing men out of the factories and into the Red Guards, repeated this situation. Winning women's cooperation was obviously crucial to economic well-being. Thus, the sheer size of the female labor force must now have had a major effect on the party's attitudes, and in contrast to the pre-revolutionary situation, Bolshevik agitation among women now had as a top priority the attraction of less active groups to its programs.

A brief look at the party's statements on women's sections supports this hypothesis. At the VIII Party Congress in 1919, Kollontai gave a speech explaining the necessity for women's sections. More fighters were needed to rebuild the economy, she pointed out, and they would have to be drawn from among women of both the working class and the peasantry. Kollontai began her speech by defining the need for women's sections: "to include in the number of comrades struggling for communism and building our Soviet Republic all of that vast cadre of working and peasant women who now in Soviet Russia play so huge a role in our economy." Soviet society must relieve woman of tasks relating to child-care and housekeeping, said Kollontai, because "domestic labour takes up all her time, takes away her strength, prevents her from giving herself up to direct, active participation in the struggle for communism and construction work." (68)

Again, at the IX Party Congress, which accepted the formation of women's sections as official party policy, the great importance of women in the economy was cited, "especially in connection with the immediate goals of the present moment—the industrial and food devastation...the IX All-Russian Congress of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) feels that work among the women proletariat is one of the urgent goals of the moment and a necessary part of our all-party work." (69)

Thus, under the pressures of economic crisis, women's sections were created as a device by which to obtain a resource, women's labor power, for the tasks of economic reconstruction and the consolidation of political power.

The goals of the zhenotdely did not include an effort to give women a role in determining those tasks by including them in the



party's highest decision-making bodies. Women's sections did not function as ongoing pressure groups having a voice in policy-making at all levels. Nor did they seek to draw large numbers of women up from the ranks, to be educated to assume leadership positions, equal with men, in top committees.

What was the Bolshevik attitude toward the female leadership? How did the leadership relate to the women who edited RABOTNITSA and staffed the Women's Bureau? Despite the theoretical insistence that men and women work together, the day-to-day implementation of party policy with regard to the female labor force was left entirely to the women of the party. RABOTNITSA, the Women's Bureau, the 1918 Conference — in none of these did men take part in carrying out routine tasks. In addition, Bolshevik women close to the party leadership participated in all-women conferences, such as the three international congresses for socialist women held during this period.

To bring this into perspective, however, we also need to know who made policy in the area of the party's relationship to working women. Several examples seem to indicate that major decisions were always referred to party leaders. And because that leadership was overwhelmingly male, this meant that policy toward working women was ultimately always delimited by men.

For example, the Bolshevik women who ran RABOTNITSA worked in close association with Lenin. Prior to the war there were two editorial boards, one "in exile" in Paris, the other in Russia. Although both boards were made up completely of women, the editor of SOTSIAL, DEMOKRAT — Lenin — had the deciding vote in the event of a tie. In addition, the organization of the newspaper gave equal voting power, as Armand explained it, to the Russian and the foreign editorial boards, "no matter how many people are on the Russian editorial board." (70) With Lenin abroad, this organizational structure seems quite clearly a device with which to guarantee majority control over editorial policy to Lenin and those women who were in closest contact with him. Thus, Lenin's control of the Bolshevik press extended directly to RABOTNITSA, despite its uniqueness as a women's journal.

On one occasion, Armand, of the Paris editorial board, sharply criticized a RABOTNITSA account, written by someone in Russia, because it did not coincide with the description of the same event printed in PRAVDA. In a letter to Krupskaya, Armand strongly emphasized the need for the foreign editorial board to "guarantee our ideological influence over [the Russian] editorial board." (71) As far as the Women's Bureau was concerned, its personnel were chosen by various Bolshevik district committees, while its tasks were delineated by the Petrograd Committee.

A most blatant example of the deference of these Bolshevik women to the male leadership of the party — even when they were meeting in all-women's groups — occurred at one of the interna-

tional women's congresses mentioned above. Three of the five Bolshevik representatives were women who had been very active in RABOTNITSA : Krupskaya, Armand, and Elena Rozmirovich. (72) Angelica Balabanoff described how Lenin sat drinking tea in a nearby restaurant while the women's congress was in session. It was 1915, and the Bolsheviks sought to deal with the collapse of the Second International. The "Bolshevik women, working under Lenin's direction, introduced a resolution which...called for an immediate organizational break with the majorities in the existing Socialist and Labour parties and for the formation of a new International." Despite the overwhelming opposition of all the other delegates, the Bolshevik representatives would not withdraw their motion. Because a show of international unity among socialists was desperately desired at that point, Clara Zetkin finally negotiated with the Russian women and Lenin in a separate room. "Here Lenin finally agreed to a compromise." (73) At a supposedly all-women's congress, the Bolshevik delegates refused to alter their position until Lenin had agreed to compromise.

These incidents illustrating the relationship between the male leadership and women in the party give us further insight into the Bolsheviks' resistance to organizing working women into all-female groups. Loyal, politically sophisticated women were frequently allowed to work in a semi-autonomous way because the male leadership could count on their submitting to decisions made by party committees. (74) Similar deference to the male leadership could not be relied on from the great masses of women who were just becoming politically active. Therefore there were strong reasons, as far as the Bolsheviks were concerned, against encouraging the latter to meet separately.

During the entire period of 1905-20, the top Bolshevik party committees were always overwhelmingly dominated by men. Women, even those who worked closely with the male leadership, accepted a subordinate role. This situation could only have been changed if the party had been willing, on a mass scale, to explicitly encourage the development of women's ability to think and behave independently of men. This would have been necessary on a mass scale because it involved challenging the entire culture intricately woven with women's oppression. But countenance of women's independence of men would have called into question the role of the predominantly male party leadership. After November 1917, it would also have hampered the party's effort to utilize women's labor.

Within this context, it becomes clear why many Bolsheviks described women as the most backward stratum of the working class — and why they never recognized the very active role which women took in the labor movement. (No literature, for example, was written exploring and extolling their part in the strike wave of 1910-14. Rather, women workers were for the most part portrayed as incapable of playing a positive political role without education

and agitation among them by the party.) The Bolsheviks' categorizing of women as backward was part of an attitude which sought to prevent the growth of activity and thought independent of the party leadership.

The Bolsheviks saw the party, not women themselves, as the primary agent of liberation. The party was to set the goals and tasks of the liberation process, and create the foundations for it (child-care, jobs, and so on) after the revolution made this economically and politically possible. Yet, although Bolshevik literature ignored women's activity, in fact this activity profoundly affected party policy toward them. It ultimately compelled the Bolsheviks to change their opposition, held tenaciously for years, to all-female organizations. But, as we have seen, even the women's sections did not encourage women's independence.

The continuing conflict between women's autonomy and a unified revolutionary organization among left-wing political groups in the West today suggests the difficulty of solving this problem. Now, under ongoing pressure from the independent women's movement, new solutions are still being explored. Women's caucuses in mixed political groups can often give women more independence than did the Bolshevik women's sections, encouraging them to develop their own abilities to initiate action, take leadership roles, and affect the policy of the organization as a whole. In addition, unlike the Russian "bourgeois feminist" separatism, women's caucuses can also allow women and men to work together on the general tasks of the revolutionary organization.

Many aspects of the exact relationship of the contemporary women's caucus to the mixed political organization — its degree of autonomy in various areas — have not yet been clarified. Still unsettled are such questions as whether a women's caucus should have an independent press, in what areas it should be free to act completely autonomously, at what points it should be subject to veto by the mixed organization as a whole, and so on. If these details are worked out, the women's caucus may well resolve the historical conflict between the feminist movement and revolutionary organization. Until a compromise satisfactory to women is reached, however, the working class will not, as the Bolsheviks wished, be united.

Clearly a major prerequisite for successful resolution of the conflict between feminists and any revolutionary or radical party is a policy of full internal democracy, including subjecting the leadership to periodic elections by the rank and file, and to limited terms of office. Without such internal democracy, as the Bolshevik pattern shows, the sexual composition of the leadership, as well as the direction of party policies, will continue to be reflective of contemporary power relations and the dominant values of the society around it.

## FOOTNOTES

1. I would like to thank the following people for their helpful criticism and suggestions: Dan Boothby, Eric Chester, Miriam Cohen, Randy Earnest, Bernard Elbaum, William G. Rosenberg, Nancy Wechsler, and Julia Wrigley.

2. This description appears throughout Bolshevik literature on working women. See, for example, the letters between the members of the editorial boards of RABOTNITSA, edited by A. F. Bessonova, in "K istorii izdaniia zhurnala 'Rabotnitsa'," ISTORICHESKII ARKHIV, no. 4, 1955, and K. Samoilova, RABOTNITSY V ROSSIISKOI REVOLIUTSII K MEZHDUNARODNOMU DNIA RABOTNITS, 1920.

3. A. M. Kollontai, IZ MOEI ZHIZNI I RABOTY (Odessa, 1921), *passim*.

4. I. M. Dazhnia et al., A. M. KOLLONTAI, IZBRANNYE STAT'I I RECHI (Moscow, 1972), p. 290n.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 289n.

6. Kollontai, *op. cit.*, pp. 17, 20-21.

7. VSEGDA S VAMI; SBORNIK, POSVYASHCHENNYI 50-LETIYU ZHURNALA "RABOTNITSA" (Moscow, 1964), pp. 14-15.

8. Kollontai, *op. cit.*, p. 21. It should be noted that Soviet accounts of these clubs and also the women's conference discussed below differ considerably from Kollontai's, claiming that the party participated wholeheartedly in both. See VSEGDA S VAMI, pp. 14-15.

9. DAL', no. 2, January 1, 1909, pp. 21-22. DAL' was edited by V. and Ya. Matyukhin.

10. Kollontai, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 25-26; and PROFESSIONAL 'NYI VESTNIK, no. 21, January 24, 1909, p. 17. PROFESSIONAL 'NYI VESTNIK was a Social-Democratic publication, edited by A. A. Isaev and Kh. K. Spandikov.

12. Kollontai, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

13. PROFESSIONAL 'NYI VESTNIK, no. 21, January 24, 1909, pp. 17-18.

14. The report in DAL' on the conference told of an amusing incident. After it was over, the organizational committee, "ejecting working women... arranged... a noisy banquet in the luxurious restaurant Kontan — and there the excessive celebration and triumphal cries of the lady-philanthropists were unexpectedly broken off by the confusion at a loud question of Sudilovskaya: 'Why aren't there working women, peasant women, and maids at this table?'" (no. 2, January 1, 1909, p. 23)

15. Kollontai, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

16. Old Style dating is used throughout. Unfortunately, these issues of PRAVDA have not been available to the author.

17. Unfortunately, only two issues of RABOTNITSA have been available. I have also used as sources on the nature of RABOTNITSA reprints of RABOTNITSA articles in two other sources: Bessonova, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-39, and VSEGDA S VAMI.

18. Bessonova, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-39.

19. L. S. Gaponenko (ed.), REVOLYUTSIONNOE DVIZHENIE V ROSSII POSLE SVERZHENIYA SAMODERZHAVIYA (Moscow, 1957), pp. 55, 67.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

21. L. Stal', "Rabotnitsa v oktyabre," PROLETARSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA, 1922, no. 7, p. 299.

22. See PRAVDA, March 1917; Stal', *op. cit.*, p. 299; and THE EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN: FROM THE WRITINGS OF V. I. LENIN (New York, 1972), p. 66.

23. PROTOKOLY I STENOGRAFICHESKIE OTCHETY S'EZDOV I KONFERENTSIH KOMMUNISTICHESKOI PARTII SOVETSKOGO SOYUZA: VOS'MOIS'EZD RKP (b) (Moscow, 1959), p. 297n.
24. K. Samoilova, ORGANIZATSIONNYE ZADACHI OTDELOV RABOTNITS (Moscow, 1920), passim.
25. See issues of MOLVA, 1905; BOR'BA, 1905; PROFESSIONAL 'NYI SOYUZ, 1905; VPERED, 1906; GOLOS TRUDA, 1906; GOLOS PROLETARIYA, 1906; RABOCHII SOYUZ, 1906; PROFESSIONAL 'NYI VESTNIK, 1907-09; and NADEZHDA, 1908.
26. RABOCHII SOYUZ, no. 2, October 10, 1906, p. 6.
27. BOR'BA, no. 1, November 27, 1905, p. 4; and PROFESSIONAL 'NYI VESTNIK, no. 14, September 29, 1907, p. 15, no. 11-12, August 18, 1907, p. 8, no. 20, April 2, 1908, p. 12. Not included in this tabulation were two strikes whose outcomes were not recorded in the newspaper: BOR'BA, no. 9, December 7, 1905, p. 4, and GOLOS TRUDA, no. 14, July 5 (18), 1906, p. 3.
28. A. Ryazanova, ZHENSKII TRUD (Moscow, 1923), pp. 34-35, and NASHA ZARYA, no. 11-12, November-December 1910, p. 102.
29. Taken from a report of the factory inspector quoted in Ryazanova, op. cit., p. 35.
30. NASH PUT', no. 11, December 20, 1910, pp. 4-5.
31. Ibid., no. 6, August 30, 1910, pp. 2-3.
32. V. I. Lenin, POLNOE SOBRANIE SOCHINENII, Vol. 23 (Moscow, 1961), p. 212.
33. By 1914, women formed 57.1% of the labor force in cotton processing, 46.5% in wool, 71.1% in silk, and 57.5% in linen. VSEROSSIISKAYA PROMYSHLENNAYA I PROFESSIONAL 'NAYA PEREPIS': FABRICHNO-ZAVODSKAYA PROMYSHLENNOST' V PERIOD 1913-1918 (Moscow, 1926), vol. 26, p. 100.
34. NASH PUT', no. 6, August 30, 1910, pp. 2-3.
35. Ibid., no. 6, August 30, 1910, pp. 2-3.
36. Ibid., no. 9, November 7, 1910, p. 8.
37. Ibid., no. 13, February 10, 1911, p. 9, no. 19, July 28, 1911, p. 11; and NASHA ZARYA, no. 12, December 1913, p. 35.
38. NASH PUT', no. 12, January 14, 1911, p. 9, no. 13, February 10, 1911, p. 9.
39. Ibid., no. 6, August 30, 1910, pp. 2-3, no. 19, July 28, 1911, p. 11; and ZHIVAYA ZHIZN', no. 5, July 16, 1913, pp. 3, 4, no. 6, July 17, 1913, p. 4, no. 7, July 18, 1913, p. 4, no. 14, July 26, 1913, p. 4.
40. ZHIVAYA ZHIZN', no. 5, July 16, 1913, p. 4.
41. Ibid., no. 13, July 25, 1913, p. 4.
42. Ibid., no. 13, July 25, 1913, p. 2, no. 19, August 1, 1913, p. 2.
43. Ibid., no. 9, July 20, 1913, p. 4, no. 8, July 19, 1913, p. 4; and NASH PUT', no. 19, July 28, 1911, p. 11.
44. NASH PUT', no. 13, February 10, 1911, p. 9; and ZHIVAYA ZHIZN', no. 5, July 16, 1913, p. 4, no. 13, July 25, 1913, p. 4.
45. ZHIVAYA ZHIZN', no. 9, July 20, 1913, p. 4.
46. A. Elizarova, "Rozhdenie Rabotnitsy," RABOTNITSA, 1923, no. 2, reprinted in VSEGDA S VAMI, pp. 22-23.
47. Kollontai, op. cit., p. 28.
48. See, for example, RABOCHEE DVIZHENIE V PETROGRADE V 1912-1917 gg.: DOKUMENTY I MATERIALY (Leningrad, 1958), passim; see also S. Smidovich, RABOTNITSA I KREST'YANKA V OKTYABR'SKOI REVOLYUTSIY (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), pp. 10-11.
49. Quoted in E. N. Burdzhakov, VTORAYA RUSSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA: VOSSTANIE V PETROGRADE (Moscow, 1967), p. 120.
50. Quoted in ibid., p. 122.
51. Quoted in G. Katkov, RUSSIA, 1917: THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION (Oxford, 1967), p. 252.
52. PRAVDA, no. 7, March 12, 1917, p. 3.
53. RABOCHAYA GAZETA, no. 9, March 16, 1917, p. 2.

54. IZVESTIYA, no. 11, March 10, 1917, p. 6, no. 23, March 24, 1917, p. 3.
55. RABOCHAYA GAZETA, no. 8, March 15, 1917, p. 3, no. 11, March 18, 1917, p. 4; and PRAVDA, no. 12, March 18, 1917, p. 4.
56. IZVESTIYA, no. 26, March 28, 1917, p. 7; and RABOCHAYA GAZETA, no. 8, March 15, 1917, p. 3.
57. RABOCHAYA GAZETA, no. 4, March 10, 1917, p. 4.
58. PRAVDA, no. 6, March 11, 1917, p. 4, no. 7, March 12, 1917, p. 3.
59. RABOCHAYA GAZETA, no. 4, March 10, 1917, p. 4.
60. IZVESTIYA, no. 9, March 8, 1917, p. 5.
61. RABOCHAYA GAZETA, no. 9, March 16, 1917, p. 3.
62. Ibid., no. 12, March 19, 1917, p. 3, no. 25, April 7, 1917, p. 2, no. 27, April 9, 1917, p. 3.
63. Ibid., no. 3, March 9, 1917, p. 3.
64. IZVESTIYA, no. 20, March 21, 1917, p. 7.
65. Gaponenko, op. cit., p. 67.
66. Kollontai, op. cit., p. 48.
67. Susan Kingsbury and Mildred Fairchild, FACTORY, FAMILY, AND WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION (New York, 1935), p. 16.
68. VOS'MOI S'EZD RKP(b), p. 296.
69. PROTOKOLY I STENOGRAFICHESKIE OTCHETY S'EZDOV I KONFERENTSIY KOMMUNISTICHESKOI PARTII SOVETSKOGO SOYUZA: DEVYATYI S'EZD RKP(b) (Moscow, 1960), pp. 452-3.
70. Bessonova, op. cit., p. 22.
71. Ibid., p. 41.
72. O. Razich, "Mezhdunarodnaya zhenskaya sotsialisticheskaya konferentsiya 1951 g.," PROLETARSKAYA REVOLYUTSIYA, 1925, no. 10, p. 169.
73. A. Balabanoff, MY LIFE AS A REBEL (Bloomington, Indiana, 1973), pp. 132-3. When the same situation was repeated several weeks later at the International Youth Congress, Balabanoff again found Lenin "sitting in the very place from which he had directed his followers a few weeks before. I asked, ironically, 'Vladimir Il'ich, did you come here for tea or for the resolution?' He answered me with an annoyed glance." (p. 134)
74. Kollontai was a partial exception to this rule. During the period of 1905-07 she behaved in a more independent-minded manner than did any of the Bolshevik women who were active later. Yet she never took any action with regard to working women which was actually forbidden by the party, and the effect of pressure by other Bolsheviks on her was seen when their criticism caused her to stop working at a women's club in 1907.

*ANNE BOBROFF is a graduate student at the University of Michigan, working on her dissertation on the activity of working women in revolutionary Russia. She has written a review article of recent books on women in Russia and the Soviet Union which will be published in the next issue of the UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PAPERS IN WOMEN'S STUDIES. She is also active in the Graduate Employees Organization, a union of teaching, research and staff assistants at the University of Michigan.*

## Letters

*(Editors' Note: We would like to encourage our readers to send us brief (maximum: 1000 words) responses to our articles and comments on important political issues for publication in this section. We will print as many as we can of those which seem of general interest to our readers.)*

Dear Radical America:

I liked Jean Tepperman's article on "Organizing Office Workers" in the January/February issue. She laid out the work conditions and grievances plaguing office workers and analyzed the divisions among them that have thwarted large-scale organization thus far. Her sketch of underlying social forces responsible for the growing officeworker movement was right on target. But on one key issue, Tepperman was disappointing. She implied that the absence of clear socialist politics in officeworker organizing was accidental. I am convinced that a real explanation is possible. It must be based on the politics of officeworker organizers and particularly on their decisions about the nature and funding of the new organizations.

Let me begin with a bit of background. There are officeworkers' organizations in six major cities. Nine to Five in Boston and Women Employed in Chicago got underway in 1973; Women Organized for Employment in San Francisco and Women Office Workers in New York began in 1975; Cleveland Working Women and a Dayton group got started in early 1976. The groups range in size from about 25 members in Dayton to over 300 in Chicago.

Founders of each group wrestled with the problems of starting and maintaining an organization focussed on officeworkers' needs. At the outset, Nine to Five was only a newsletter; Women Office Workers held a successful conference in 1973 but did not build a membership organization until a full-time paid staff began work two years later. Founders of most groups concluded that they needed a staff of two or three persons who would start a membership organization and initiate research and action programs. This required substantial financial support. Current operating budgets reflect this early decision — they range from \$30,000 to \$80,000 to support a full-time staff, as well as pay rent, telephone and printing costs. Some founders had liberal politics and saw no difficulty in seeking financial aid from liberal sources. Others, I suspect, had socialist politics but despaired of organizing effectively on a voluntary, part-time or after-work basis. The socialists did not see the possibility of early financial support from concerned officeworkers — writing them off as difficult to reach, conservative and poor. So, like their liberal sisters, socialists turned to outside funding sources, hoping to maintain some independence in their day-to-day operations.

Looking for financial support, officeworker groups approached foundations and churches as well as labor unions. All present officeworker organizations eventually received most of their funds — 60% to 99% — from foundations and churches. As we know, these are liberal institutions. At most they are reformist, hoping to preserve capitalism by ameliorating some of its worst effects. The great majority avoid projects

addressing work conditions or organizing efforts. However, several "social change" foundations — John Hay Whitney, Joint Foundation Support, and Youth Project — bankrolled most of the offeworker organizations. The Methodist, Presbyterian and other churches have also provided some support while the YWCA has given office space in several cities. Like most foundations, churches are leery of workplace organizing; at least one church donor discontinued funding after learning that the offeworker organization was criticizing business practices.

The "social change" foundations exercise specific control through the Youth Project which is the common conduit of funds for all the offeworker organizations. Required monthly reports on activities permit Youth Project staff to compare each organization and enforce an operating orthodoxy. The foundations favor the model of Women Employed, which has mounted highly publicized "actions" to gain civil equality for Chicago offeworkers. This particular mode of operation was developed and refined at the Midwest Academy; it became the orthodoxy for the other offeworker organizations. (Women Employed and the Midwest Academy are closely linked, sharing essentially the same leadership.)

The Youth Project generally insists that the staff of each new offeworker group attend a 2-week session at the Midwest Academy, run by Heather Booth. Here, people learn the essentials of "direct action organizing," such as choosing a target, doing tactical research, staging an action, learning how to negotiate, and most important, how to win "victories." The Academy instructs its students to find issues with a "handle" — some agency or official who can be hounded by publicity into a concession. But what are the victories? Token promises from politicians, insurance commissioners, civil servants to obey existing laws, guidelines, affirmative action programs, etc. Some lengthy legal suits may produce back pay and other financial settlements for a few women. The result, as Tepperman rightly points out, is a reliance on the "good guys" in government.

The politics of the Midwest Academy inherit the anti-communism of Alinsky, the modern mentor of direct action. The Academy staff regularly disparage "little left groups," a label applied to anyone with a socialist perspective. Thus they educate offeworker organization staffs to pursue civil equality and avoid socialist theory and practice in their organizing efforts.

Funding from foundations and churches also hastens the development of a bureaucratic, centralized staff which focusses its efforts on winning approval from funders rather than serving the needs of its members. In most groups, the staff proposes and directs the organizations' policies; members are expected to show up for leafletting, picketing and education programs.

Several offeworker organizations also sought early funding from labor unions. They thought that unions would support the rising militancy among clerical workers. But the unions weren't interested. As usual, they were unwilling to support a broad effort to organize the unorganized. Especially, they were not prepared to fund organizing that was not under direct union control. Since then, some unions have been attracted by the offeworker efforts, but only when the groups could develop office-based committees ready to feed dues-paying members into the union. On this basis, Nine to Five got the first union funds. The Service Employees International Union provided \$30,000 and a Local charter in hopes of benefitting from Nine to Five's progress among university clerical workers. Since this is a fairly recent development, it remains to be seen whether socialist politics will shape this new Local. I rather doubt that SEIU would support an overtly socialist Local, particularly if it tried to influence their other Locals. But the thrust toward unionization may help develop a certain degree of class consciousness among offeworkers. The direct confrontation between organized offeworkers and their bosses favors such a development more than the foundation-sponsored petitioning agencies of the liberal state.

In the future, offeworker groups will be turning to new funding sources, since the foundations and churches refuse long-term support commitments. Women Employed claims that direct mail appeals and neighborhood door-to-door solicitation will permit it to be self-sustaining very soon. For these campaigns, Women Employed will depend on fundraising professionals. Such commission-conscious fundraisers may



exert an even more conservative influence than did the liberal foundations and churches. Most important, financial control will continue to remain largely out of the membership's hands. The other officeworker groups may also go the Women Employed route. Even if they adopt strategies for raising monies directly from their membership, the logic of their early liberal development will be difficult to displace.

I do not claim that the leadership of the officeworker groups have any easy choices before them. But they do have a responsibility to articulate and lead the growing militancy of millions of officeworkers. The old dreams of officeworkers for status and mobility are fading fast in the face of industrial work organization, steep and rigid hierarchy, criminally low pay and unchecked sexism. This situation requires a socialist analysis and a direct confrontation with the capitalist roots of officeworkers' oppression. If the officeworker groups continue to focus on liberal demands for civil equality or, at most, the organization of business unions, they will fail to seize a great opportunity in the history of the American working class. The foundations and churches will have made good on their small investment.

Anna Bahr  
March 28, 1976

*ANNA BAHR is the pseudonym for a person who has been close to officeworker organizing efforts.*

Dear Radical America:

I think Anna Bahr points out some important problems with the approach of the officeworker organizations she describes: the token or legalistic nature of their victories; the anti-communism and general dismissal of political education as a priority; and the degree to which the groups seem to be directed by the staffs.

(In discussing these problems, however, I want to stress that I feel these groups have made a tremendously valuable contribution in creating a climate that encourages office worker activism and organization, as well as building organization in many concrete ways. This is something few other groups have been able to achieve — traditional unions seldom, and explicitly socialist groups never.)

It is certainly true that the existence of these problems is not accidental. However, I think Anna Bahr gives a somewhat distorted impression of their cause. I think the problems she describes flow from the political ideology of the staff. Their view seems to be that *only* mass organizing is valuable at this stage in history. This in turn is based on the observation (which I think has a lot of truth) that the main obstacle to building the movement is people's feelings of powerlessness and cynicism about the possibility of change. There is also an assumption (which I disagree with) that people don't learn from words — political education, propaganda, etc. — but only from action. Building broad-based mass organization is the way to provide people with real experience of power and change. This is the reason for the emphasis on victories.

This ideology leads to the problems Bahr describes. One is a tendency to set up "victories" that don't have much substance. I think a more important one is that concentration on building the broadest possible organization can lead these groups to try to seem quite conservative in order to avoid scaring anybody off. The enormous concern for short-run effectiveness also seems to me to be connected to the tendency toward close control by the staff.

The organizational center pushing this ideology seems to me to be the Midwest Academy. Activists are encouraged to go there and learn it first hand, along with organizing skills. My knowledge of the inner workings of these groups is limited, but it seems to me that Bahr vastly over-emphasizes the role of pressure from funding organizations. Nine to Five doesn't need to be strongarmed by the Youth Project into sending people to the Midwest Academy. They do it because they agree with Midwest Academy politics, and find the skills training useful.

The second problem, I feel, with Bahr's letter, is her formulation of an alternative approach. I'm not sure of the best way for a socialist to work in the office workers' movement. But it's clear to me that the vision of an "overtly socialist Local" is dangerously removed from reality. Most U.S. workers are not socialists — in offices, factories or anywhere. If you believe, as I do, that mass organization is important, you have to accept the fact that, for now, mass organizations will not be socialist. Insisting that they should be will only lead organizers to isolate themselves.

This is the contradiction faced by socialists working in the office workers' movement. I don't feel satisfied with the way Midwest Academy-connected groups deal with this contradiction. But the important thing is to develop other approaches, not to pretend that this contradiction does not exist.

Jean Tepperman  
April 15, 1976

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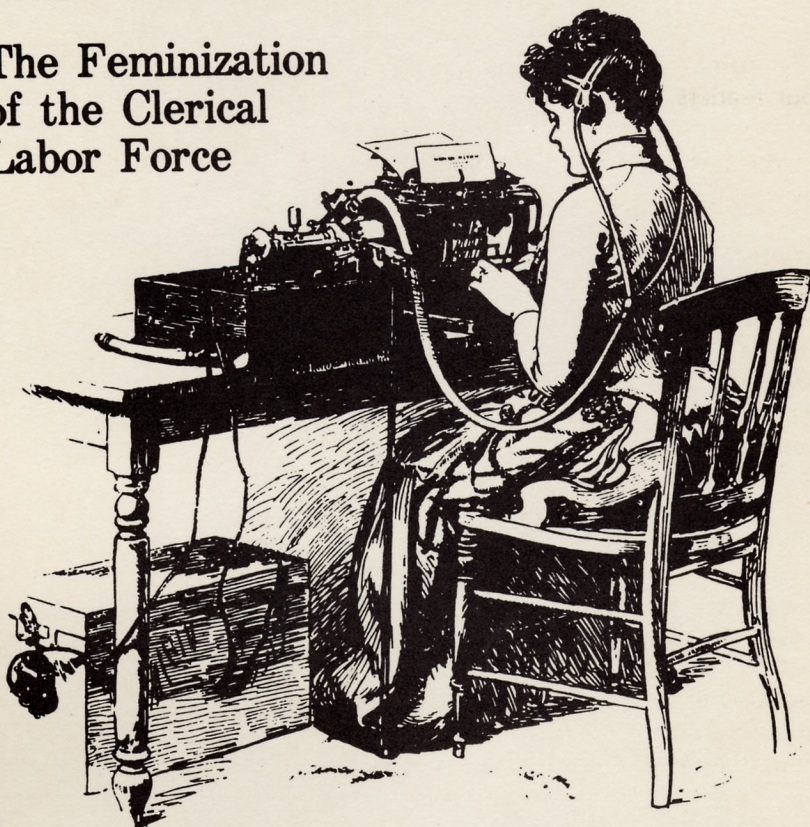
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