WHERE DO CORRECT IDEAS COME FROM?

OH, YOU UBERFAQS! WHERE DO CORRECT IDEAS COME FROM??

DO DAY DROP FROM DA SKIES??

BOOM!

NOPE!

ARE THEY INVADE IN THE MIND???

NOPE!

AND FROM IT ALONE!

THEY COME FROM SOCIAL PRACTICE!

WORDS: MAD THE TUNE / MUSIC: GLORIA MUNN
C o n t e n t s

Where Do Correct Ideas Come From? 1
Way Out West 4
Symposium on Imperialism 5
Down South 7
Washington, DC Report 9
New England Report 10
Report of the Women's Caucus 11
Sexism 14
A Proposal for the Realistic Reorganization of URPE 18
Literature Clearinghouse 21
Publications 23
National Committee 24

The Newsletter is a means by which members of URPE and other persons attempting to employ a radical economic analysis in movement, academic and other work can share their ideas and experiences with each other. If you have a short article, news, comments, or something else of interest to other radical economists, send it to:

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W h e r e  D o  C o r r e c t  I d e a s  C o m e  F r o m?

Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs -- the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. At first knowledge is perceptual. The leap
to conceptual knowledge, i.e., to ideas, occurs when sufficient perceptual knowledge is accumulated. This is one process in cognition. It is the first stage in the whole process of cognition, the stage leading from objective matter to subjective consciousness, from existence to ideas. Whether or not one's consciousness or ideas (including theories, policies, plans or measures) do correctly reflect the laws of the objective external world is not yet proved at this stage, in which it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they are correct or not. Then comes the second stage in the process of cognition, the stage leading from consciousness back to matter, from ideas back to existence, in which the knowledge gained in the first stage is applied in social practice to ascertain whether the theories, policies, plans or measures meet with the anticipated success. Generally speaking, those that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later. Man's knowledge makes another leap through the test of practice. This leap is more important than the previous one. For it is this leap alone that can prove the correctness or incorrectness of the first leap, i.e., of the ideas, theories, policies, plans or measures formulated in the course of reflecting the objective external world. There is no other way of testing truth. Furthermore, the one and only purpose of the proletariat in knowing the world is to change it. Often, a correct idea can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the source of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles, they consider the question strange and cannot answer it. Nor do they comprehend that matter can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life. It is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfilment of our great internationalist duty.

From the "Draft Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Certain Problems in Our Present Rural Work," which was drawn up under the direction of Comrade Mao Tse-tung. The passage was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung himself.
WAY OUT WEST

URPE activity in the West has increased markedly during the last year, especially in California where the contradiction between prosperity and the deterioration of the quality of life seems to be most visible. The high point of the year for this region will undoubtedly be the Symposium on Imperialism (February 22-25) and the Western Regional Conference of URPE (February 26 & 27) at Stanford University in Palo Alto. However, local chapters have been springing up in previously quiet areas.

Berkeley & San Francisco

On the U.C. campus, URPE'ers are meeting on a weekly basis in the Economics Dept. Lounge (Wednesdays at 4 p.m.) to discuss "What's Wrong with Traditional Economics" on a subject by subject basis, i.e., theory of the firm, inflation theory, etc. For more information call Lenny or Marilyn Goldberg at (415) 848-5908.

In San Francisco the Bay Area School (founded to support radical scholars and research) will open the winter quarter around mid-January. The school accepts tuition from those who can afford it and admits free those who cannot. Two seminars of interest to URPE'ers are "The Political Economy of American History" (Doug Dowd) and "Research Seminar in Economics" (Jim O'Connor).

San Jose

The newly organized chapter at San Jose State gave a teach-in on NEP in the main ballroom of that campus to an audience of 300 people in December. Speakers included local radical economists and a local labor leader. As a follow-up, local URPE members are speaking to labor, civic and professional groups about NEP. Weekly discussion group meets on Tuesdays at Dave Landes' house. For more information call Dave at (408) 293-8390 or at the Dept. of Economics.

Palo Alto

The "Symposium on Imperialism" will import a number of radical economists (see more detailed announcement in this Newsletter), but meanwhile the newly formed "Workshop on Political Economy" meets weekly (20-25 members) and may become a credit course in the Spring semester with John Gurley as coordinator. For information on URPE activities and/or the Symposium-Conference contact: Hill Behn, P.O. Box 6887, Stanford, California, 94305; Tel. (415) 321-2300, Ext. 4101.

Los Angeles

An L.A. URPE chapter has been formed with participants coming from U.S.C., U.C.L.A., and Claremont. So far the subjects covered have been NEP and Marxian economics. For information call Ken Kloke at (213) 396-9801 (116 Frazer Avenue,
Santa Monica). Another sub-group of URPE calls itself NOPE (New Organization for Political Economy). Based at U.C.L.A., the group plans to set up a reading room, discussion center and "establish a critical presence" on that campus. Contact: Ira Sohn, Department of Economics, U.C.L.A.

Riverside

At U.C.R. a new URPE group has emerged with 20-25 members attending bi-monthly meetings to discuss current radical literature. For information: Kay Hunt (714) 686-6087 or 783-3643. U.C.R. may be one of the few places where radical graduate students can survive (on the West Coast). Courses offered have included Imperialism, Discrimination, Marxism, Critiques of Neo-Classical Theory. Undergrads -- check it out!

San Diego

It has been a wild Fall for radicals at San Diego State College. The following press release (special to URPE readers) from the "Committee to Stop the San Diego Railroad" explains why URPE has not functioned (formally) in recent months.

Chancellor Glenn Dumke and the State College Board of Trustees are quickly realizing that S.D.S.C. is no longer their quiet, peaceful campus. During the last 3 months students and faculty have united in an effort to stop what we call the "San Diego State Railroad."

Prof. Peter Bohmer, a radical economics professor, was charged with "unprofessional conduct." Specific charges included lowering a student's grade because he was in ROTC, intimidating and ridiculing a student because of his conservative views and actions in Vietnam, and distorting and politicizing the content of his courses. There were initially a number of other charges that were either dropped or rephrased shortly before the hearings began. The charges were, however, in the course of the hearings, proved ridiculous by testimony of over 40 witnesses and affidavits from another 70 students in Peter's classes. Witnesses included 15 Vietnam vets who testified that Peter had shown special consideration for their problems, a 24 year veteran of the Marine Corps, 2 helicopter pilots, a 50-year-old black grandmother, and a Vietnamese student.

A mass campaign to drop the charges and confront the nature of the disciplinary procedures (Executive Order 113) was initiated on the S.D.S.C. campus. This led to mass education and then to militant demonstrations. So effective was the mass support by students and various departments (including Economics, Women's Studies, Chicano Studies, Philosophy, History, etc. . . .) Peter was found innocent of all charges on December 31, 1971. Now, however, the President of the College has fired Peter as of Fall '72. This is just another attempt to rid radicals from the college and university campuses. The latest attempt will also be fought and hopefully reversed.
The groundwork for an on-going movement in San Diego is being laid; no longer will San Diego be a quiet, docile town. With increasingly unpopular local policies and the coming of the Republican Convention next August, San Diego is fast becoming a growing movement city.

Norris C. Clement
San Diego State College

SYMPOSIUM ON IMPERIALISM
A Theory of Capitalist Development
Stanford University, February 22-25, 1972

The Symposium on Imperialism is an educational program designed to analyze Imperialism as a theory of international capitalist development. Liberals and radicals use quite different methods of analysis of economic and social development, with the liberal viewpoint given primary attention in the media and in the classroom at Stanford.

This Symposium has been designed to present both perspectives in juxtaposition through a liberal-radical dialogue during several panel discussions on Asia, U.S. Business Abroad, and Foreign Aid -- in addition to sessions presenting a broad perspective on radical analyses of Imperialism. A film series will precede the conference.

Wed. afternoon: India and Pakistan, and Private Investment in Latin America (two panel discussions -- at 2:00 and 3:30).
evening: China, Japan and the U.S.: Asia in the 70s (panel discussion).
Thurs. aft.: U.S. Business Abroad: Development or Exploitation? (panel discussion)
Fri. afternoon: Is Foreign Aid an Alternative? (panel discussion, Bishop Aud.)
evening: Consequences of U.S. Imperialism at Home (panel discussion)

Panel Participants Include: Paul Sweezy, Tom Hayden, Stanley Sheinbaum, John Gurley, Ronald McKinnon and Earl Ofari,

Members of the North American Congress on Latin America, Arthur MacEwan, James Peck, Robert Gomperts, Stephen Hymer, James Weinstein and Peter Bell.
DOWN/SOUTH

Until recently, interest in URPE among southern economists lagged behind that of economists in most of the other regions. However, during the past year radical economics has been making important gains in the South. Southern memberships almost tripled since one year ago. Even more important than membership figures is the interest in radical economics which is coming to our region.

This year URPE members were present at the SEA meeting in Miami. We set up a literature table in the convention hotel and held two informal sessions at night to get to know each other. The informal sessions also provided opportunities for non-members to talk about URPE. The literature table was very busy. There was a continuous stream of persons who stopped by to talk and read our material. Next year we plan to extend our activities at the time of the SEA meetings. We hope to provide people with opportunities to present the results of their research. We also plan to have sandwich materials available in the URPE hotel room at noon.

We tentatively plan to hold a regional meeting in the South this spring, possibly in Atlanta. Our column, "Down South," will continue to appear in the newsletter. We are also considering the possibility of putting out a southern newsletter.

Charles Richter

Down South--Continued

The Southern Economics Association did not seem like an auspicious place to make an URPE invasion. As a result we followed a cautious course of action that deserves some discussion, even if it is now far in the past (early November). As reported by our regional representative, Charles Richter, the literature table was quite a success. People were curious about our wares and willing to buy. Also we had several informal rap sessions, which were fairly well attended. However, our activities at the Southern meetings were surrounded by an aura of internal contradiction. First we took a plush suite of rooms in a fancy Miami hotel at $75/nite. The bellman told us not to worry about the price since the "company" would pick up the tab. And indeed, our "companies" did pick up the tab. While we left a big tip for the maid, we hardly impressed on her the drawbacks of a tourist oriented colonial economy. At the same time at least one of our sessions turned into a beer blast, almost indistinguishable from the majority of other convention parties. With only a few URPE members present, we failed to convey the sense of community that is so impressive at our summer conferences. All things considered, we came across like publishers' reps pushing (quite sincerely) our line of goods.

I think many of these same problems emerged at New Orleans, where they were further complicated by the haphazard and highly disorganized manner in which the URPE sessions were arranged and con-
ducted. While our analysis points towards a basic restructuring of American society, our behavior at these conventions is unlikely to convince an interested observer that we are seriously challenging the structure of the economics profession. If URPE in the South, and elsewhere outside our major concentrations, is to be a membership organization and not just a journal, it is important to somehow convey the fact that URPE is building a viable alternative to the traditional analysis and to the traditional academic work styles and life styles that have been constructed around it. Since many of the grad students and younger professionals in the South are being socialized into a particularly rigid form of academic life, the second part of our message may indeed be more important than the first. If at the Southern meetings we looked like publishers' reps, and at New Orleans we looked like "hip" academics, perhaps the answer lies in providing at least loosely organized discussion groups which address themselves to the problems of working out life styles which harmonize with our analysis of what changes are needed in American society. Emphasis on teaching courses with radical content and structure, relating to union movements on campus, and other problems of being more than a radical academic should be encouraged. Unfortunately, we (perhaps from caution, perhaps from disorganization) engaged in little of this in Miami, but then again New Orleans was hardly an improvement. (Note: I think our Detroit activities scored much better on these points.)

The session in New Orleans on the political economy of the South suffered from the same general malaise that dominated URPE activities at the convention. The turn-out was hardly spectacular, while both Emil Malizia and myself presented papers in a fairly traditional manner. Though the content was probably interesting, the papers could just as well have been distributed through the URPE journal of some other means. The only possible objective that this session or any of the other "substantive" URPE sessions could have served was to introduce some implications of our analysis to a broader audience than we usually command. However, the lack of planning and organization made this outcome highly unlikely. As to the substance of the session, the major question that emerged was whether the metropolitan centers of the country were gradually turning the Southern periphery into a junior partner or whether the traditional sources of power in this region were making such a transition impossible and thus maintaining many areas of the South in a more classically colonial position. The evidence was spotty, but I think an important area of research was delineated. (If anyone would like a copy of my paper, "Is the South a Colony?" please write me. Emil may be reached at the University of North Carolina.)

Some notes on Bar-B-Q sauce are in order here. This matter undoubtedly requires a careful reading of Mao on the handling of contradictions among the people. However, without such concern for form, it should be pointed out that Tabasco sauce is a commercial product whose main ingredients are vinegar, red pepper and salt. Hence the only difference between Jim Bass' recipe and the one presented earlier in this column is the substitution of Worcestershire sauce for mustard. While I admit that I haven't tried this substitution, clearly, the earlier recipe is much cheaper and avoids the use of patented products in the place of their generic equivalents.
For those who are eager for more in the way of Southern cookery, consider the following recipe for raisin sauce for baked ham:

1/2 cup light brown sugar  1/4 cup seedless raisins  1/2 tablespoon mustard  1/4 cup vinegar  1/2 tablespoon flour  1-8 oz. can crushed pineapple

Combine all these ingredients except the pineapple, but use the pineapple juice with enough water to make one and 3/4 cups. Cook slowly to a syrup. Add pineapple. Pour over baked ham which has been sliced. Recipe makes 2 cups.

And again, an historical note: a handbill distributed by the Brotherhood of Timber Workers during a 1912 strike in Merryville, Louisiana begins: "Labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to all it creates..." The strike, unfortunately, was unsuccessful.

Joe Persky  
University of Alabama in Birmingham  
1919 Seventh Avenue South  
Birmingham, Ala. 35233

WASHINGTON D.C.

What we are currently organizing is close working "operatives," a vehicle which is slow to evolve into its fully radical potential.

Over the last two or three years, the Washington D.C. Area U.R.P.E. Collective has sponsored the following activities:

1969 - Discussion groups of "selected titles" in radical paradigms which relate to the "rising consciousness" of radicals at that time.
1969 - The Mayday Conference  
1969 - Started organizing Political Economics within the Economics Department of the American University  
1970 - Expanded the A.U. membership and organized working political collectives  
1970 - Extended the "book title" discussion groups  
1970 - Organized A.U.'s program in Political Economy  
1970 - Became ever aware of the need to extend the discussions to include the Washington Area other than A.U.  
1971 - The February Conference on Government Expenditure  
1971 - A.U.'s first course offering of Theory of Political Economy at the Graduate Level  
1971 - The Coordinators of the Editorial Board was set up in order to make the "shit work" of the Journal a collective operation  
1971 - Discussion groups were set-up which specifically were to include new members (much the same idea as 1969-70) and to "raise consciousness" among this group of the greater Washington Area Collective  
1971 - The continuance of the Cadre (the original group) on accelerating our own political education  
1972 - Tentative: another Mayday conference.
My current activities have been expanded. I am trying to help Charles Richter "organize" the South while preparing for the A.E.A. meetings in New Orleans. Of course, I am keeping up with the Coordinating stuff. Peter Adelsheim and I are the "working committee" for finding the summer camp for the annual meeting. Our current emphasis is on Library Subscriptions in the Southern Region; making State Representative Regionally available for organizing purposes and to give the Region a more "personal" touch.

For the D.C. Area — we are continuing the process of criticism and self-criticism as far as our lives and our heads are concerned. We are trying to extend the base of operation from totally A.U. to a truly metropolitan collective operation. 

Howard Aylesworth, Jr.

NEW ENGLAND

A New England regional conference was held in Boston, October 16 and 17. The first day was devoted to a panel and discussions on the wage freeze and other recent capitalist manoeuvres. (We decided that to call it Nixonomics is to give too much "credit" to the instrument of capitalist necessity). Sunday there were discussions on power structure research in New England, on Chile, and on what economics has to say about alternative societies, as well as a business meeting and a planning session for the women's conference in New Haven. The substantive discussions cannot be summarized in this small space, save to point out the obvious conclusion that

\[ 0 < P (\text{Allende succeeds}) < P (\text{Nixon succeeds}) < 1. \]

However, some lessons in conference organizing should be passed on to other URPE regions.

We had hoped for a large turnout of non-economists for Saturday's wage-freeze sessions. Notices were placed in the semi-underground press, and sent out to the large number of community organizations on the mailing list of Urban Planning Aid. A good many non-economists did come, but most were from university based movement groups and already aware of the basic facts of the freeze. As a result, the panel, which had been planned to reach the wider audience, ended up going over ground that was familiar to the people there. Some discussion of organizing issues was generated in workshops, particularly on the potential for working with labor unions, through either regional central labor councils or rank and file caucuses. But discussion tended to swing back and forth between these questions and technical economics with not much being resolved.

The panel Sunday on power structure research in New England was smaller, but a more determined effort had been made to invite people who were doing radical research and organizing in Cambridge and Springfield, (Mass) Maine and Vermont. The result was a useful exchange of information sources and conclusions, and debate over the appropriateness of such short run or agitational demands as land reform (Maine) and highway moratoria (Massachusetts and Vermont). The moral seems to be that we can have more interesting discussions, and be more relevant to other groups in the movement, by sharing our work with, and orienting it toward these groups. But to do this we cannot simply post a notice of a meeting. It takes more work.

Matthew Edel
REPORT of the WOMEN'S CAUCUS

The URPE Women's caucus or members of that group were involved in a number of activities this past fall. The major activity was the Conference entitled "Economic Perspectives on Women," held in New Haven, November 13-14, 1971. Material presented at the 18 workshops on November 13 and 14 ranged from personal experiences to sophisticated analysis of treatment in economic theory to varieties of HEW investigations.

Attended by over 250 women, whose fields of competence included economics, sociology, corrections, welfare, union organization, and life, the conference was the first attempt of women in the field of economics to organize themselves and share information. Participants were mainly from the East Coast. Conference planners felt that opening the meetings to women without formal training in economics recognized an important feminist goal, to demystify the professions. A second goal realized by the conference was to apply economic analysis to subjects previously excluded from the male-dominated field as insignificant, such as housework, and others of non-market production. Also during the weekend, women economists met as a group to explore strategies for change in the field. One decision was to form a presence at the December AEA meetings. Out of the conference have come the following additional items: a mailing list to be sent along with notes of the conference to all on the list (to join contact Sondra), and a special issue of the URPE Review containing articles and reading lists (to submit articles, etc. contact Sarah). There are also plans for a possible conference on Marxism and Feminism to be held in Buffalo Feb. 5-6 (contact Paddy Quick, Harvard University).

The Women's Caucus had an afternoon session at the New Orleans meetings. Members of the URPE Women's Caucus did the background and initial publicity work for a women's presence at the AEA meetings in New Orleans. A full set of resolutions were passed at the Business Meeting.

Women at the AEA Meetings constituted themselves the Caucus of Women Economists, with power to organize women economists, and help select the members of the Committee on the Status of Women. This group and its steering committee include many women with "dual membership." If anyone is interested in the activities of this group or being on its mailing list they should contact Carolyn S. Bell, Dept. of Economics, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.

Through publicity and some of the activities above mentioned we have reached a number of people who are not in the major areas of URPE activity. Therefore, if you are in an area with few others contact the list of people who wrote into or attended the women's conference and perhaps we can all become inter-connected at the local or regional level.
RESOLUTION OF THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS ADOPTED BY THE
AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION, DECEMBER 28, 1971

I. Resolved that the American Economic Association declares that economics is not exclusively a man's field. The Association herewith adopts a positive program to eliminate sex discrimination among economists, whether employed in universities and colleges, industry, finance, publishing, or other endeavors. The President shall make known, by all available means, the Association's adoption of the following principles:

a) To redress the present low representation of women in the economics profession, the Association shall actively encourage the study of economics by women at all levels of education.

b) No academic institution or department shall discriminate against women in admission to studies in economics or in the form or amount of financial aid. Every economics department shall actively encourage qualified women graduate students without regard to age, marital or family status, and shall actively promote their subsequent employment.

c) No employer, academic or otherwise, may discriminate against qualified women economists as candidates for positions, or for promotion or tenure, or for assignment of duties and responsibilities.

d) Salaries, fringe benefits, and facilities and resources for research for women shall be the same as those for men in the same position and rank.

e) There shall be no distinction between men and women as to what is considered to constitute full-time employment.

f) Employment may not be refused to any qualified economist on the grounds of family relationship to another employee.

II. Resolved that the American Economic Association establish a committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession, numbering at least eight persons to be appointed by the President for a term of three years. The Association shall provide or seek funds for this Committee to investigate the extent of conformity to the principles stated above, and shall make recommendations for affirmative action. The Committee shall present an interim report at the next annual meeting. Its general findings, conclusions, and recommendations shall be published by the American Economic Association upon the Committee's request. When the Committee finds evidence of discrimination against women, it shall make this available for publication by the American Economic Association, and for the Association to present, as amicus curiae, in any complaint, remedial action, or suit.

III. Resolved that the American Economic Association shall encourage flexibility in providing opportunities for education and employment on a part-time basis for both men and women.
IV. Resolved that the American Economic Association shall appoint women economists as members of the editorial boards of its economics journals, that it shall actively encourage the appointment of women as program chairmen and participants at all future meetings, and that it shall urge companion associations to follow its example.

V. Resolved that with a view to a radical improvement of the hiring practices in the economics profession, the President and the Executive Committee appoint a committee to recommend to the next annual meeting a code of procedure including among other reforms an open listing of all employment opportunities.

VI. Resolved that to facilitate attendance at its meetings, especially by younger members of the profession, the American Economic Association shall provide well publicised child care arrangements at future sessions.

***

The Executive Committee is herewith requested to consider the feasibility of compiling a roster of women members, together with their professional qualifications and fields.

MIDWEST CONFERENCE FOR A RELEVANT SOCIAL SCIENCE

Meeting to be held at the Indiana University Union, Bloomington, Indiana, Friday-Sunday, February 25-27, 1972

The purpose of the Conference is to consider alternate approaches to fundamental social issues. A wide range of disciplines and experiences will hopefully be drawn upon. The concern will be both with theoretical debate and with making available research and expertise to those working to improve the quality of life.

Tentative program:

Panel discussions, followed by workshops:
  Social Science for Whom?
  What should we look at?
  How should we look at it?
  What should we do with our findings?

Anyone wishing to make a presentation or act as a discussant should contact us as soon as possible.

Lodgings of all kinds will be available. All correspondence about the Conference should be sent to the coordinator:

Stephen Sachs
Department of Political Science
Indiana University - Purdue University at Indianapolis
925 West Michigan Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202
Sexism

Reaction to Women's Liberation

Lawrence Tharp's "Reflections on Sexism After the URPE Summer Conference" (URPE Newsletter, Nov. 71) calls for some comments and criticism. He rejects his initial "reaction" to women's liberation, passivity and guilt, and suggests as a solution what boils down to an individual struggle to liberate Lawrence Tharp (LT) from his oppression by sexism. The gist of his argument is: 1. "The oppression of women is maintained and reinforced by the economic forces of our society." 2. That men are the instruments of women's oppression implies that "I (LT) myself am oppressed," that LT "never enjoyed playing the machismo role," and that "authoritarian relationship with women" denied LT his "real needs," therefore "to the extent that I cannot live out these liberated relationships, I am oppressed." 3. "Just as women's liberation is achieved through the struggle of women, I must define my own liberation . . . My liberation . . . cannot be given; I must liberate myself." That "I develop a concept of my own liberation."

Some glaring misconceptions and bad views stand out. These reactions are by no means isolated and limited to LT but are rather common amongst radical men. Radical men have generally failed to keep up with the theoretical developments in the women's struggle against sexism.

The Contradiction and the Struggle

The contradiction between men and women in the ranks of the people has a fundamentally non-antagonistic character. Like most contradictions amongst the people, this contradiction in present day America is shaped and characterized by the class nature of society and its particular historical development. The woman question, like the national question, is in essence, and only in essence, a class question: not all aspects of the contradiction manifest themselves as class struggle pure and simple. If this is so, the emancipation of women from sexual oppression is integrally linked to the emancipation of the whole society from class oppression and exploitation.

However, it would be just as wrong to separate the woman question from the class question as it would be to see them both simply as one. The view that holds the woman question as being unrelated to the class struggle may be characterized as a "right" position, while the view that reduces it to a purely class question may be called "ultra-left." The right and the ultra-left have a frighteningly similar inclination towards simplism: they both see the woman question as a strict class question. The right sees the question as an antagonistic contradiction between the class of all males against the class of
all females; the ultra-left, on the other hand, reduces the
woman question -- and indeed every other social question -- to
the antagonistic contradiction between the bosses and the
workers. No doubt both positions are wrong and at best lead to
confusion.

The right wing of women's liberation tends to transform
a non-antagonistic contradiction amongst the people into an
antagonistic one, and thus weaken the ranks of the people. The
philistine left, on the other hand, would have us believe that
the struggle of women against sexism is a reactionary middle
class struggle because it does not address itself directly to
class struggle. Is it surprising, for example, that PLP con-
siders both women's struggle against sexism and "all nationalism"
as reactionary? These leftist philistines and sectarian
reckers fail to see -- or cover up what must be clear to them --
that the struggle of the working class cannot advance without
the development of the struggles of blacks and women for libera-
tion.

"Men's Liberation"?

The whole argument about how men (or LT's) are
"oppressed" by sexism is spurious, deceptive and in essence
reactionary. For one thing it slurs over the fact that men are
objectively benefiting from sexism. This, I must hasten to add,
does not deny that the prevalence of a sexism makes impossible
the development of genuine and healthy relationship between the
sexes. But what it does mean is that women, especially third
world and working class women, are the main victims of sexism.
To say that men are oppressed by sexism is quite similar to
saying that the slave masters and capitalists too are the vic-
tims of their own oppression. (An argument common amongst the
idealistic love-everybody flowerchildren.) However true it may
be that men are also oppressed by sexism, the cry for "men's
liberation" has strong reactionary potentials and overtones.

Dare we tell blacks that the white racist is oppressed
and needs to liberate himself before he can deal with his
racism? Does it need a reminder that the patriotism of the
Vietnamese is progressive while that of the American is reac-
tionary? Fredrick Douglass clearly recognized that his slave
master was oppressed -- less than human -- but he did not recom-
ment that he needed a liberation movement. The slaves would
liberate all the victims of slavery in the process of smashing
slavery and liberating himself. The degree to which man can
claim to be liberated can best be measured by the degree to
which they are willing to struggle against their own positions
of privilege.

It is one thing to organize as, say, "Friends of
Women's Liberation," or men's groups taking their lead from what
the sisters in struggle have to offer -- as the Young Lords
brothers have done -- quite another to organize "men's lib."
Where it is legitimate and progressive to organize women's
and black caucuses in male-white dominated organizations in a
male-white dominated society, it would be reactionary to organize
male or white caucuses -- even if male whites are numerically
inferior in the given organization. Caucuses are meant to
develop struggles and ideas around the special oppressions experienced by those subject to that special oppression -- sexism, racism, etc. -- within and outside a given organization or society. The Lords call the women's movement "The Revolution within the Revolution." It is the most oppressed who are most determined and capable of leading the struggle in unity with other oppressed people. It is no accident that black and white women are in the lead today in the struggles against racism and sexism; the early birth of the women's movement came about through their struggles against slavery and their leading role in the early labour struggles.

Accepting this leadership, however, is not synonymous with passivity, blind following or awe based on guilt. Nor does the primacy of class struggle mean the subservience of black or women struggles for liberation to the larger struggle; on the contrary, it means that those struggles themselves are a form of class struggle. No progressive organization can truly advance in the absence of this "Revolution within the Revolution." Clearly, in the process of the development of caucuses and the forging of good leadership and unity in the united front all kinds of mistakes and wrong tendencies will develop which will be/should be corrected for the struggle to surge ahead. (Note the remarkable development of the women and black movements in the scant past decade or so.)

Although LT states emphatically that he too is oppressed by sexism and that he "never enjoyed playing the machismo role," his argument is unconvincing, besides the point, and rather subjective. It is this kind of attitude that leads to individual and idealist solutions to a problem that is social and concrete in nature. The women's movement has long ago recognized that it must go far beyond the personal crises to advance the struggle, and few women today want to exclude men from their lives (although it is understandable why some still do.)

The way in which men and women are socialized to meet the standards and needs of a market dominated society reduces the male/female relationship to a relationship between objects. The woman is socialized into a brainless, beautiful, selfless, submissive, coy, subjective, hysterical, consumption oriented, and weak object. (While most women know, for example, that they are not weak, helpless creatures: who carries the laundry, groceries, lifts 30 pound babies, and is advised to shovel the snow when their men reach forty, etc., etc.? ) Men, on the other hand, are socialized into brainy, rugged, he-man, aggressive, dominating, "objective," "cool," bread winning objects. Men and women are forced to suppress their selves and live up to a Madison Avenue image of themselves. These are but manifestations of the alienation process at the stage of monopoly capitalism. Men, stripped of the exercise of power of control over their own lives, are led to believe that they have power of control over women, and that to exercise this power they only have to live up to the he-man virile image of the Madison Avenue man. In the process they become emasculated and frustrated. The alienation is deep rooted and complete -- almost. It starts from birth -- pink and blue -- and is reinforced all along in various stages of socialization.
What Is Liberation?

Like every other social phenomenon, liberation too has a class character and means different things to different people in different situations and epochs. It could mean a loaf of bread for a Bengli, a 24 hour day care center for working class mothers, legal abortion and adequate health care services for all women, equal job opportunities for those discriminated against, end of imperialist aggression for the Vietnamese, or ultimately an end to the exploitation of people by people. It is in this vein that women's liberation implies one thing for the white middle class women and quite another for the working class women, and still different things to middle class radical men, white working class men, black working class women, etc., etc.

The women's movement has been radicalized, most of all, with the emergence of third world and white working class women. Struggles around welfare rights, day care for working mothers, health care for the poor, but most of all the development of third world and black women's movements have changed the direction of the struggle. Most middle class women in the movement now are not simply out for a bigger share of the pie, but recognize that the society itself has to be transformed if the plight of women were to change in a meaningful way. They also recognize that the movement would have to address itself to the needs of third world and working class women if it is to be a real force for social change. Groups like NOW, who simply demand that women be able to "make it" within the system continue to function, but they are far from spokeswomen for the movement.

It is only through struggle that the common needs will become more well defined, higher unity -- imperative for success -- attained and the broader spectrum of the masses engaged. It is in this context that "liberated men," "liberated women," "liberated relationships," etc. become meaningless, idealistic phrases. Full liberation is inconceivable in the absence of a fully liberated society bent on serving the people. LT's statements "ultimately, liberated men and liberated women are not and by definition cannot be in conflict with each other," or "liberated relationships can be achieved, however, only at the expense of an ongoing struggle between radical men and women" make no sense in the context of the US in 1971. It is arrogant as well as self defeating to say "the time has come for me to start taking my own liberation more seriously and women's liberation less seriously."

The liberation of LT is integrally linked to total liberation and any illusions about individual salvation must be thrown out. We have learned a great from the women's struggle against sexism and racism, and will have to learn a lot more to completely fanshen - together, in struggle.

HZA
1 High Street
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A PROPOSAL FOR A REALISTIC REORGANIZATION OF URPE

In the midst of our concern about the issue of elitism, we are, at the same time, perpetrating an organizational structure which fosters the very problem about which we are all concerned. In addition, the present structure is fantastically inefficient and ineffective. The whole problem, as I see it, revolves around the myth that URPE is "run" by a National Steering Committee, "democratically" (?) elected by geographic regions and the Women's Caucus. Members of this committee are supposedly charged with the administrative coordination of the organization between the National Conferences and with "regional organizing."

The reality is that:

......steering committee members are not "elected" at all, but chosen from among a few members from each region who attend the Summer Conferences. Usually the selection is engineered before regional meetings by a few "old hands"; and/or a desperate attempt is made to find someone from the region who would be willing to be a member of the committee, and at the same time, agree to do some work. The real world result of this is that a large percentage of the committee has done no organizing work at all, and, for the most part, not even attended Steering Committee meetings.

......the actual coordinating work that has occurred has been done by a few interested individuals (the "sub-elite") who have the interest and/or the resources and time to devote to URPE activities; and who have a masochistic proclivity for shitwork. They, at the same, determine the policy and public image of the organization, i.e., they control the Review, the NEWSLETTER, and make up the programs for the National Conferences. All this is done by five or six people with occasional help from perhaps ten more. Most of the time, quite independently of the membership or the Steering Committee.

......if these five or six people decide not to work for URPE the organization would, in all likelihood, collapse; or at best, become "just another economics association."

In a sense, this is a dilemma because, on the one hand, those who have worked for URPE should be congratulated on its success; but on the other hand, the present organizational structure fosters the same form of elitism it purports to oppose.

Therefore, I propose that we should consider changing the organizational structure in such a way that both the administrative and the organizing functions can become more viable and effective. At the same time, broaden the participate base to include more members and preclude "voluntary elitism."

Specifically, I suggest that:
1. The Steering Committee should be eliminated, along with the myths that surround it.

2. The organizing function should be turned over to state representatives, one from each state, whose primary job would be to publicize URPE, serve as "contact person" for inquiries made to the national office, and become involved in other organizing tasks in their states as they are so inclined. Their names should be published in the NEWSLETTER with the suggestion that they are the people to contact for speakers, literature, etc. They should be selected from volunteers attending the Summer Conference. If some states are not represented, members in those states should be contacted by mail and asked to volunteer. This would actively involve 50 people in URPE, and make our organizing function, at the least, realistic.

3. The administrative function should be turned over to a small Executive Committee (or whatever we want to call it) made up of seven persons as follows:

   a. One employee of the National Office who would also serve as coordinator of the committee.

   b. One member elected from the Review Board Coordinating Committee.

   c. The editor of the NEWSLETTER.

   d. One member elected from the Women's Caucus.

   e. One member from the Western region (California to Denver) whose expenses to attend meetings would be paid.

   f. One member from the Mid-west region (Denver to Pittsburg).

   g. One member from the Eastern region (Pittsburg, East).

   Regional members would be elected by the entire Summer Conference, from volunteers, not nominees, for a one year term.

   The functions of this committee would be similar to the former Steering Committee, i.e., to rule on interim policy matters, to plan Winter and Summer Conferences, and to provide supportive liaison to the State Representatives. Normally, all members of this committee would be expected to attend four meetings per year. One in the early Fall to plan the Winter Conference, one during the Winter Conference, one in early Spring to plan the Summer Conference, and one during the Summer Conference. All committee meetings would be open, but only committee members should have a vote.

   Soon after the elections, one member of the committee should be designated to serve as Program Coordinator for the Winter Conference, and another to coordinate the Summer Conference.
Although this proposed committee may appear similar to the existing Steering Committee, it would in fact be a much more efficient and realistic administrative mechanism. This is primarily because it would have no organizing role. It would be small enough to be workable. Its members would be, in fact, elected; and specific individuals would be assigned specific roles.

URPE has always been run by six or seven people. Why should we continue the myth that it is not?

URPE members should be aware that only a few days before the New Orleans conference, an anonymous letter was sent to the hotel where we had reserved the "URPE suite" to be used for our traditional "free lunch program", the Job Clearing House, conference registration, committee meetings, etc. The letter stated that URPE was an irresponsible organization of "hippies" which did not pay its bills, and which used the suite for loud parties, to serve free food and to house large numbers of people (all contrary to hotel policy). Although we were able to convince the hotel management that none of this was true, the letter still forced cancellation of some of our planned activities and nearly disrupted the entire conference...which, of course was the intent of whoever sent the letter. It is rather obvious that we need to be better prepared to deal with this sort of harassment in the future. A more efficient administrative structure would make this task much easier. The "streamlined" Steering Committee I have proposed above could have handled this minor crisis quickly. As it was, with the large unwieldy committee we now have, a few of us were forced to make some quick decisions which affected the entire organization without really having the authority to do so. This is clearly ridiculous.

Therefore, I propose that re-organization be the first item of business on the agenda for the Summer Conference.

John Pool

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