

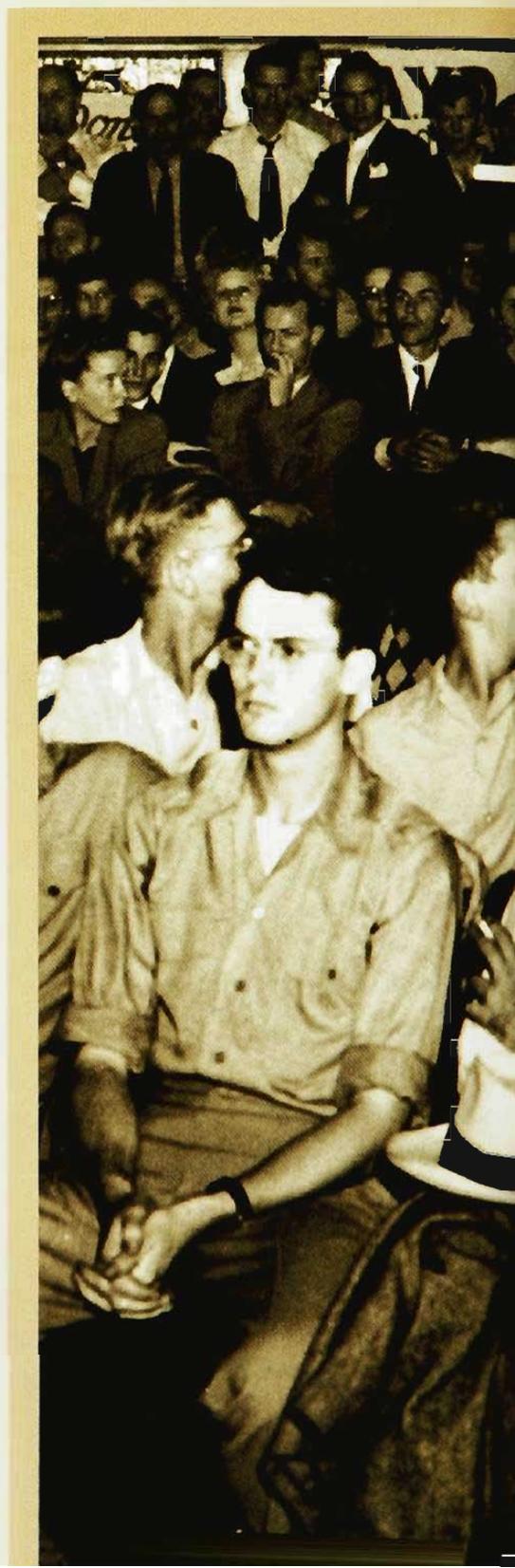
The Holmes Sisters and the

ELIZABETH RAASCH-GILMAN

ON MAY 14, 1944, GRACE HOLMES CARLSON wrote to her sister, Dorothy Holmes Schultz, "It's lucky that I didn't know when I graduated from St. Catherine's that I'd be in prison on the 15th anniversary of our Commencement. I was much too dependent, much too petit-bourgeois to have been able to encompass the situation then. But . . . I would so much rather be myself, today, sitting here than any one of the [particular students], whose minds and souls are full of dry rot." When Schultz responded by sending a newspaper clipping showing two sisters celebrating the anniversary of their graduation, Carlson replied, "The picture . . . and your comment about being glad we took the road we did recalled [Robert Frost's] poem to me . . . 'I shall be telling this with a sigh/Somewhere, ages and ages hence/Two roads diverged in a wood and I/I took the road less travelled by/And that has made all the difference.'"¹

Grace Carlson wrote from the Federal Correctional Facility for Women in Alderson, West Virginia, convicted

Sisters Grace Carlson and Dorothy Schultz, front row, listen intently at a Socialist Workers' Party meeting, about 1940. Teamster leader Vincent Dunne (with hat) is next to Carlson; the man at far right is probably Henry Schultz, Dorothy's husband.



Socialist Workers' Party



of trying to overthrow the U.S. government by force and violence. Like her sister, Dorothy, Grace belonged to the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), an openly revolutionary political group. Carlson and 17 of her comrades, all men, shared the dubious distinction of being the first people sentenced under the Alien Registration, or Smith, Act of 1940. In another ten years, this act would be used more widely to discourage political dissent during the so-called McCarthy Era, but the tiny SWP felt the first sting of the law.

Carlson was perhaps the most prominent woman in the SWP at that time. Her background was ordinary enough, though. Grace Marie Holmes was born on November 14, 1906, in St. Paul. Her father, James A. Holmes, was a semiskilled laborer of Irish descent. As Grace and her younger sister, Dorothy, were growing up, he worked mainly for the Great Northern Railway, first as a boilermaker's assistant and then as a boilermaker. The family lived in a largely Roman Catholic working-class neighborhood off Rice Street.²

Carlson's mother, Mary Nuebel Holmes, was a German immigrant, and as a child Grace was very close to her. Although an invalid for most of her daughters' childhood, she had strong intellectual interests, read widely, and encouraged their education. Carlson remembered, "It was lucky for us that [my father] was interested in making a living so that we could go on to school."

In 1922 six craft unions associated with the railroads nationwide went on strike to protest wage cutbacks and loosened work rules. Initiated by the workers who made equipment and serviced railroad cars, it came to be called the shopmen's strike. The bitter strike was one of a wave of large-scale actions in several industries across the country that year, and the ultimate defeat of most of them dispirited organized labor for much of the decade. James Holmes participated in the strike, and Carlson remembered feeling badly when financial necessity forced him to cross the picket lines and return to work. Her mother evidently persuaded Holmes to take his daughter as an escort, hoping that the presence of a young woman would deter any violence from the pickets. Afterwards, Carlson sought

forgiveness from her priest, confessing that she had helped to deprive the laborer of his wages. (The puzzled priest absolved her.)³ This was an indication, though, that by the age of 16 she was on her way to being a trade unionist.

Besides the turbulence of the shopmen's strike, Grace and Dorothy were exposed to political influences from another—and unlikely—source. The Holmes sisters attended Roman Catholic schools, and some of their teachers were Irish immigrants. The 1910s saw an upsurge in Irish nationalism, culminating in a revolt against British rule on Easter Sunday in 1916. The Irish-born nuns in St. Paul apparently made no secret of their sympathies with the nationalists and conveyed to their pupils an anti-British attitude. Carlson translated this into a vague distrust of all government, and when she entered the College of St. Catherine in 1925 she considered herself "an independent thinker," if not exactly a radical.⁴

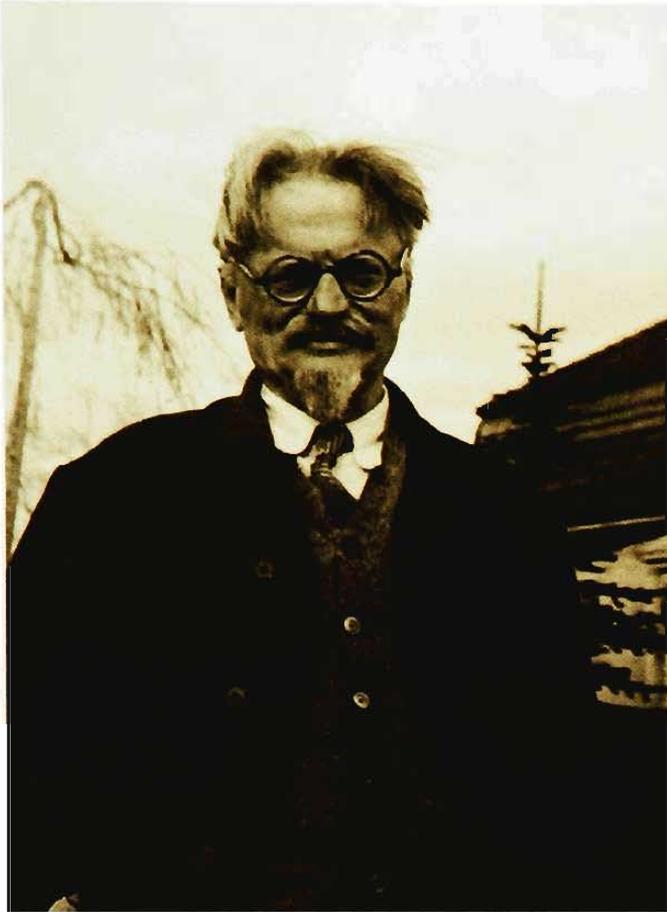
After she left St. Catherine's in 1929, Grace went on to earn a Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Minnesota in 1933 and stayed at the university for another two years as a part-time teaching assistant. Dorothy also completed a bachelor's degree at St. Catherine's and a master's in political science at the University of Minnesota in 1933.⁵

THE EARLY 1930s, of course, was the bottom of the Great Depression. As unemployment gradually worsened and the administration of President Herbert Hoover vacillated in its approach to the problem, more and more desperate workers cast about for new political solutions. Starting in 1930, the Communist Party USA launched an all-out organizing effort among the unemployed, featuring marches, protests of evictions, direct assistance to workers who needed relief, and renewed efforts to organize in unions. In Minnesota, popular discontent resulted in the election of a third-party candidate as governor. Farmer-Laborite Floyd B. Olson took office in 1931 as the champion of the workers and farmers against the interests of big business.⁶

The Communist Party USA, which dated back to 1919, had already weathered two splits. In 1928 one splinter group was expelled for its sympathies with Leon Trotsky, and in 1929 another experienced a similar fate for its sympathies with Nikolai Bukharin. Both of these heroes of the Russian Revolution were maneuvered out of leadership in the Soviet Union by Josef Stalin, who consolidated his control of the Russian (and worldwide) Communist Party in 1929.

The followers of Leon Trotsky were not easily discouraged, however. Trotsky himself, a powerful intellec-

Elizabeth Raasch-Gilman served as research associate for the 20th Century Radicalism in Minnesota Project of the Minnesota Historical Society. Her biographical essay on her grandmother Catheryne Cooke Gilman appeared in Women of Minnesota (reprint, 1998).



Leon Trotsky, whose intellect and charisma inspired a worldwide socialist movement, 1930s

nial and charismatic leader, escaped from the Soviet Union and ultimately took up residence in Mexico. From this distance he issued a stream of books, articles, and speeches denouncing Stalin's government for its bureaucracy and brutality. While endorsing the Russian Revolution and the leadership of Vladimir Illych Lenin, Trotsky maintained that Stalin had corrupted and betrayed the true vision of communism. He worked tirelessly to build an international communist alternative to the Soviet-dominated Communist Party (CP). Trotsky acquired a small but intensely loyal following in the U.S.—and in Minnesota.⁷

The differences between the Communists and the Trotskyists seemed minuscule to most observers, though both parties made much of them, each hurling invective at the other. Grace Carlson remembered being confused on the subtleties at first:

They would start haranguing me about what was wrong with the CP. One time, there was some kind of a march on the state capitol . . . a hunger march . . . and I went to it and the Trotskyists, none of them

came. They told me that I just didn't know what I was doing; that this was led by the CP. Well, at that stage it just seemed to me it was a good thing to participate in this hunger march . . . [To the Trotskyists] polemics counted more than the ideas, in a sense. It wasn't just winning you over to socialism; it was winning you over to [the Trotskyist] branch of socialism. Well, when I finally was won over and became part of the whole movement, I became that way myself, as far as that goes.⁸

In the mid-1930s, socialist philosophy presented a powerful and attractive option to idealistic young people like the Holmes sisters and to fearful workers. The Trotskyists established a base in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters in Minneapolis, and in 1934 they engineered a series of dramatic strikes that boldly challenged the power of employers who had managed to keep Minneapolis a largely nonunionized city. With a combination of careful planning, good timing, and brilliant strategy, Local 574 of the teamsters' union managed to force the firms that employed drivers to the bargaining table. The low-skilled, seasonally employed teamsters won both the right to union representation and substantial improvements in pay and working conditions. Trotskyists like Farrell Dobbs, Vincent (Ray) Dunne, Miles Dunne, and Carl Skoglund provided much of the know-how and hard work behind the teamsters' victories.⁹

Dorothy and Grace Holmes watched these exciting events from the University of Minnesota. Through her political-science professors, Dorothy became acquainted with some Trotskyist students, and both sisters began to attend their open meetings. Grace recalled, "[At their] headquarters they'd talk about the strike and about political events and so forth. I became very interested in their program and in the people, like Vincent Dunne and the others. They seemed to be so much stronger characters than the politicians that I came to know in the Farmer-Labor Party."¹⁰

The spring of 1934 must have been full of promise. While Grace was discovering the Trotskyists she was also falling love with Gilbert Carlson, a law student whom she apparently met at the university. They were married that summer, and for a few years Gilbert served as the attorney for Local 574. In the meantime, Dorothy Holmes also met her future husband, Henry Schultz, through her support activities for the teamsters.¹¹

THE TROTSKYIST DETERMINATION to organize Minneapolis's teamsters and allied workers (such as warehouse workers and gas-station employees) did not allow many



Vincent Dunne, arrested by national guardsmen for his role in the 1934 Minneapolis truckers' strike, on his way to the temporary military stockade at the state fairgrounds in St. Paul

avenues for women to build their leadership skills. Teamsters were, of course, men, and while women provided significant support during the strikes, they played no leadership role in the teamsters' union, either locally or nationally. Similarly, they took a distinct back seat in the Trotskyist party. As historian Constance Ashton Myers wrote of the period before U.S. entry into the Second World War, "The post of district organizer or a rare local candidacy for office appeared the ceiling to which a female Trotskyist could aspire." From 1929 through 1941, no women sat on either the large, elected national committee or the smaller, appointed political committee: "Despite Marxist theory which enjoins female equality, pressures from the social environment and the realities of day-to-day survival made women Trotskyists accept without resistance a subordinate place," Myers concluded.¹²

The entrance of promising women into the party did not go unnoticed, however. Charles R. Walker, a

journalist for the Trotskyist press assigned to cover the teamsters' strikes, sent back to the New York office a very favorable opinion of Grace Carlson. He added that her sister was even more impressive. Vincent Dunne gave Carlson considerable tutoring; she credited him for trying to teach her patience (though she was not sure how well he had succeeded).¹³ Nonetheless, Dorothy Schultz's career in the party until the Second World War was more typical for a woman than Carlson's: while Carlson became a fiery public speaker, Schultz did more behind-the-scenes work. The birth of a daughter in 1938 and a son in 1942 also kept Schultz closer to home. (Carlson never had children.)

Although organizing within the International Brotherhood of Teamsters was closed off to her, Carlson did try her hand at union organizing. In June 1935 she took a full-time job as a vocational rehabilitation counselor with the Minnesota Department of Education. There she helped patients recovering from crip-

pling illnesses to get retraining and find steady employment. At work, Carlson made no secret of her political beliefs, and when state employees began to organize a union in 1937, she was in the lead. She was a charter member of the American State, County, and Municipal Employees' Union Local 10 and served on its executive board for two years. She also was a member of the executive committee of the St. Paul branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Both of these activities gave her valuable experience in organizing and allowed her to claim that she was a "militant trade unionist"—an essential credential for any Trotskyist.¹⁴

Articulate, intelligent, and hard working, Carlson quickly found a place for herself in the party. Less than two years after she had officially joined the Trotskyists within the Socialist Party in 1936, she attended the founding convention of the Socialist Workers' Party (see sidebar, page 364).

In August 1940—and, coincidentally, the day after Trotsky was assassinated—Grace resigned from her job and became the state organizer for the SWP. A few days later she filed as a candidate for the U.S. Senate on the Trotskyist Anti-War Party ticket. The publicity from her filing fueled the ongoing feud between the state Board of Education and Carlson's former boss, Commissioner of Education John G. Rockwell.

The board suspended Rockwell at the end of November and a month later commenced a sensational public investigation into his competence as commissioner. The media and the hearings themselves paid a good deal of attention to the fact that Rockwell had tolerated a Trotskyist in the education department for several years. In the meantime, Carlson polled nearly 9,000 votes in the senatorial election—a small showing next to the major parties, but larger than the Communist candidate—a fact that gave the SWP considerable satisfaction.¹⁵

To further introduce this rising star to members of the Socialist Workers' Party, the New York office ("the center") sent Carlson on a coast-to-coast speaking tour in the spring of 1941. Her trip culminated with a visit to Natalia Sedova Trotsky in Mexico. The

"Old Man's" widow commanded some authority in the U.S. party, and a trip to Mexico was something like a pilgrimage. This visit marked the beginning of a cordial correspondence between the two women.¹⁶

WHILE CARLSON WAS TRAVELING in 1941, U.S. entry into the Second World War seemed more and more likely. When Adolf Hitler enlarged the scope of conflict in June by breaking his secret pact with Stalin and invading the Soviet Union, the U.S. Communist Party did one of the political about-faces for which it was justly famous. Almost instantly, it changed from loud opposition to U.S. involvement in the war to loud support. The SWP, wishing to strengthen the Marxist revolution in the Soviet Union without strengthening Stalin's grip on power, continued to oppose U.S. entry. This put the tiny SWP on a collision course with the U.S. government.¹⁷

The first trouble came from a nongovernmental quarter. Local 574 of the Teamsters, where the Dunnes still held a good deal of influence, had long been at odds with the president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Daniel Tobin. Tobin had tried to undercut the Trotskyists' authority as early as 1936, but the rank-and-file drivers had great personal loyalty to their leaders. In that round, Tobin was forced to



Women preparing food for truckers and supporters at the strike commissary, Minneapolis, 1934

EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY

BEFORE THE FORMATION of the Socialist Workers' Party, the Trotskyists went by several other names. When James Cannon and his followers were expelled from the Communist Party in 1928, they called themselves the Communist League of America and tried to persuade other Communists to join them. Trotskyist involvement in the Minneapolis truckers' strike of 1934, along with a restaurant strike in New York, marked a turning point for the CLA. It began to attract workers who had never been Communists and to exert some influence in the labor movement.

Cannon launched an aggressive recruitment effort, which involved joining with other non-Stalinist radical parties. Late in 1934 the CLA merged into the American Workers Party, which had also been organizing and supporting strikes. There the Trotskyists stayed and went by the Workers Party name until 1936, when they struck an uneasy alliance with Norman Thomas and entered the Socialist Party. (Hence, when Grace Carlson and Dorothy Schultz became card-carrying Trotskyists, they joined the Socialist Party.) Early in 1938 the Trotskyists formed a new party, using parts of their most recent names: the Socialist Workers' Party. Ever since, the Trotskyists have been known by that name.

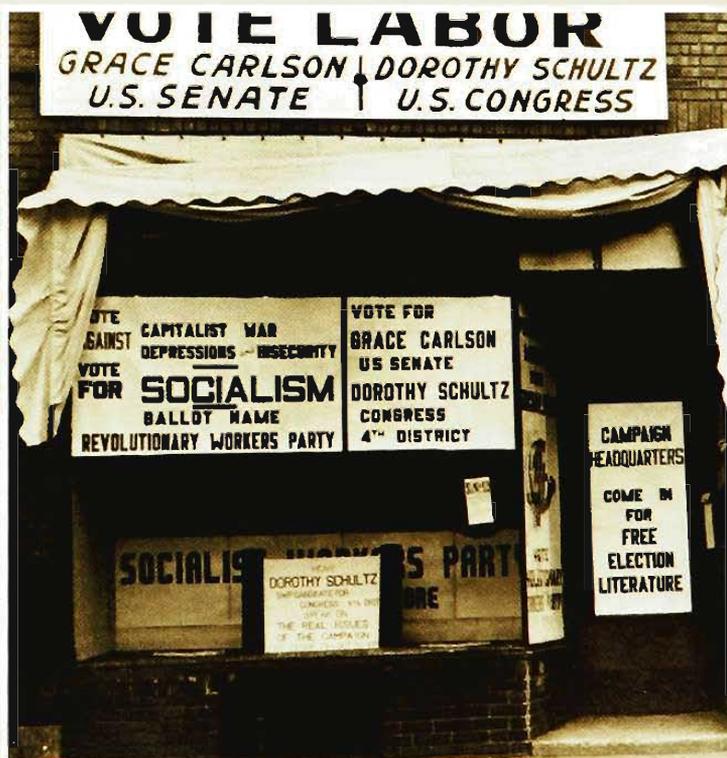
Each time they merged with another group and then left it, the Trotskyists took some of the other party's followers with them—not a recruitment technique that made them popular in the anti-Stalinist Left. In some kind of poetic justice, Trotskyists also continuously lost members through internal struggles. In 1936 one faction walked out of the movement to form its own small party, and in 1940 the Socialist Workers' Party split almost in half. This time the departing faction formed a second Workers Party, which continued to rival the SWP and attract its disaffected members for most of the decade.

The names of Trotskyist publications changed along with their affiliations. The CLA published a weekly newspaper called *The Militant*, which became the *Socialist Appeal* and again *The Militant* in 1941. (It is published under that name today.) During the 1930s and 1940s Trotskyists also put out a monthly theoretical journal, first called *The New Internationalist*, then *The Fourth Internationalist*, and finally the *International Socialist Review*. *The Militant* covered current news from a radical perspective and appealed to many readers who were

not Trotskyists. Due to repeated subscription drives by party members, *The Militant* usually had a circulation of several thousand copies. *The Fourth Internationalist* was a denser, more analytical publication, which often reprinted statements and articles by Trotsky. Grace Carlson wrote for both publications, mainly exposing how capitalism undermined workers' health.

In Minnesota, Trotskyists and their sympathizers also staffed and edited the Teamsters' newspaper, *The Northwest Organizer*, the main English-language leftist labor paper in the state until the CP started publishing *Midwest Labor* in 1937. Although not overtly factional, the weekly *Northwest Organizer's* militant tone and harsh critiques of the labor hierarchy, craft unionism, and Communists reflected the Trotskyist line. It ceased publication in 1941, a casualty of the Smith Act arrests and trial. Daniel Tobin, international president of the Teamsters' union, probably breathed a sigh of relief.

SOURCES: Tim Wohlforth, "Trotskyism," in Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas, *The Encyclopedia of the American Left*, 782–85; Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals*.



Socialist Workers' Party campaign headquarters, 540 Cedar Street, St. Paul, 1946

Thunderstorms
 7-10 inches (trace to 10 inches)
 11-15 inches (trace to 15 inches)
 16-20 inches (trace to 20 inches)
 21-25 inches (trace to 25 inches)
 26-30 inches (trace to 30 inches)
 31-35 inches (trace to 35 inches)
 36-40 inches (trace to 40 inches)
 41-45 inches (trace to 45 inches)
 46-50 inches (trace to 50 inches)

MINNEAPOLIS MORNING TRIBUNE
 THE COPY

THUNDERSTORMS 7-10 INCHES (TRACE TO 10 INCHES) 11-15 INCHES (TRACE TO 15 INCHES) 16-20 INCHES (TRACE TO 20 INCHES) 21-25 INCHES (TRACE TO 25 INCHES) 26-30 INCHES (TRACE TO 30 INCHES) 31-35 INCHES (TRACE TO 35 INCHES) 36-40 INCHES (TRACE TO 40 INCHES) 41-45 INCHES (TRACE TO 45 INCHES) 46-50 INCHES (TRACE TO 50 INCHES)

accept that the Minneapolis teamsters wanted the Dunnes, Farrell Dobbs, and Carl Skoglund to guide them.¹⁸

At the teamsters' national convention in September 1940, a series of challenges by Vincent Dunne and the Minneapolis local, now Local 544, caused Tobin to try again to rid his union of these radicals. The conflict escalated through the spring of 1941, coming to a head in June, when an overwhelming majority of Local 544's members voted to secede from the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and join the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Tobin, a pillar of the AFL, was not pleased by the loss of approximately 5,500 members to the rival CIO and feared that the revolt would spread. As one part of his campaign to purge the Socialist Workers' Party from the Teamsters for good, he appealed to his personal friend, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, for help. If the country were to go to war, Tobin argued, the government would have to rely on the Teamsters to deliver essential goods. The vast majority of them were, of course, loyal, but these Trotskyists opposed U.S. entry into the war and could not be trusted. Two weeks later, on June 27, 1941, the Department of Justice raided the offices of the SWP in Minneapolis and St. Paul, seizing portraits of Lenin and Trotsky, pamphlets for sale, and books from the libraries. Grace Carlson was one of the people working in the Minneapolis office that day. A month later she, Dorothy Schultz, and 27 of their comrades were indicted for advocating the overthrow of the government through force and violence and attempting to create an armed militia disguised as a Union Defense Guard.¹⁹

The weapon that the government used against the SWP was a new law called the Alien Registration Act, or the Smith Act. The Smith Act required aliens over the age of 14 to register and be fingerprinted; it allowed criminals and subversives to be deported; and it criminalized advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government by force and violence. The law also made it illegal to publish and distribute literature advising servicemen to disobey regulations or contributing to

Socialist Worker Party Offices Here Raided by U. S. Marshals

LEADERSHIP FACES CONSPIRACY CHARGE

Literature and Other Articles Seized at Local Office



Deputy United States marshals who raided headquarters of the Socialist Workers party at 319 Marquette avenue, second floor, this morning, are shown here confiscating literature and other articles.



At left, Deputy John Kane is shown carrying out two red flags while at right Deputy Ross Marston is reporting removal of literature to a truck driver.

2 Red Flags and Trotsky Photo Taken
 3 Women One Man Five Headquarters as Dep-uties Arrive
 Special Assistant U. S. Attorney General Directs Action

Announcement Links Some 544-CIO Chiefs to Group Under Fire
 Local Officials Accused of 'Gaining Control of Legitimate Labor Union to Use It for Illegitimate Purposes'

WASHINGTON—(Special proceedings) for alleged additional conspiracy to subvert government of the govern-ment of the United States by force and violence were held at the Minneapolis headquarters of Acting Attorney General Special Assistant U. S. Attorney General Ross Marston today.

Four federal officials raid- ed the Minneapolis head- quarters here today. They seized portraits of Lenin and Trotsky, pamphlets for sale, and books from the libraries. Grace Carlson was one of the people working in the Minneapolis office that day.

A month later she, Dorothy Schultz, and 27 of their comrades were indicted for advocating the overthrow of the government through force and violence and attempt- ing to create an armed militia disguised as a Union Defense Guard.

The weapon that the government used against the SWP was a new law called the Alien Registration Act, or the Smith Act. The Smith Act required aliens over the age of 14 to register and be fingerprinted; it allowed criminals and subversives to be deported; and it criminalized advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government by force and violence. The law also made it illegal to publish and distribute literature advising servicemen to disobey regulations or contributing to

their disloyalty.²⁰ The Trotskyists were to be the first test case under this law.

At least in public, the defendants were stoical about their arrest. After all, many revolutionists had gone to prison in the making of the Russian Revolution, including Trotsky himself. Why should U.S. revolutionaries expect any different treatment? Nonetheless, they explored legal channels, trying to get the charges dropped. One of the defendants, Albert Goldman, acted as the main attorney, and Grace's husband Gilbert was on the defense team. (By that time the Carlsons were estranged, although they remained legally married and friendly.) Once it was clear that the case would go to trial, the defendants decided to use the occasion to explain Marxism to a larger audience. They viewed the proceedings as a political trial, not a criminal one, and intended to make the most of their time in the limelight. "We set out," wrote Felix Morrow, journalist for the SWP's newspaper and magazine, "to get those jurors to cease abhorring socialism and to recognize and respect the sincerity, sanity and seriousness of the defendants and their ideas." Furthermore, they insisted that the case sprung from a labor union dispute and that the federal government had no right interfering. The prosecution of people like Grace Carlson (a party organizer, not a teamster), James Cannon (head of the SWP, who lived in New York), and Morrow was merely window-dressing, they said, in order to disguise the prosecution of the labor leaders who had dared to cross Daniel Tobin.²¹

For its part, the rival Communist Party was unable to overcome a sectarian response to the case. Its paper,

the *Daily Worker*; ignored the indictments of the SWP leaders for a full month and then labeled the Trotskyists "the agents of fascism in this country" and applauded the government's prosecution. Ironically, the CP's half-hearted denunciation of the Smith Act paved the way for the prosecution of its own leaders under the same law in the 1950s—as the liberal magazine *The Nation* warned might happen. Where the CP was strong in CIO unions and CIO councils, as it was in Minnesota, it used its influence to stop donations to the defendants or statements supporting their cause.²²

THE TRIAL OF THE 28 TROTSKYISTS opened in Minneapolis on October 27, 1941. (Twenty-nine were originally indicted, but Grant Dunne, who had long suffered from depression, killed himself on October 5.) After the prosecution rested its case, charges against five of the defendants, including Dorothy Schultz, were dropped for lack of evidence. That left Grace Carlson as the only woman still in the case. She was specifically accused of telling members of the Socialist Club at the

University of Minnesota that they should accept training under the Selective Service Act because "it would be useful when the seizure of power came." On November 25 she took the stand to respond to that charge. The *Minneapolis Daily Times* described the scene:

Slim, svelte Grace Carlson, the only woman defendant in the trial of 23 persons on charges of seditious conspiracy, took the stand in federal court today to admit frankly that she was a member of the party, in fact state organizer, but to deny that the party's principles, or her own beliefs, called for armed overthrow of the government.

She cited her own candidacy for the United States Senate on the "Trotskyist Anti-War" ticket as proof of her contention that the party was attempting to bring about a revolution by ballot rather than by bullet.

Her nervousness was evident as she told her story . . . Her voice was pitched a little high, her smile a little strained; but her answers were direct.

The defense also produced four members of the Socialist Club who denied that Carlson had advised them to prepare for a violent overthrow of the government.²³

The jury, however, did not entirely believe the Trotskyists' contention that they *predicted* that violence would accompany revolutionary change in the U.S. but did not *advocate* violent means. For a group that did not intend to use force and violence, the SWP's literature certainly was full of warlike language and metaphors. In spite of a full day of Marxist philosophy delivered by James Cannon and a passionate eight-hour closing speech by Albert Goldman, the jury exonerated only five of the defendants. It convicted the remaining 18, including Carlson, of advocating the overthrow of the government through force and violence. The jury acquitted them on the second charge of attempting to organize an underground army.²⁴

The defendants were sentenced to 16 months in prison on December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. They immediately appealed on the grounds that the Smith Act placed unconstitutional restrictions on their right to free speech. Until their legal appeals ran out, they were free on bail. Carlson continued as Minnesota organizer for the SWP until July 1943, when she was transferred to the New York office of the party. As more and more Trotskyist men were drafted into the armed services, the New York leadership was depleted, and the Twin Cities provided some of the necessary back-up.²⁵ Vincent Dunne also moved to New York during this time.

On November 22, 1943, the Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal of the Smith Act defendants, and

Grace Carlson (right) and an unidentified woman leaving SWP headquarters during the raid; picture from the front page of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, June 28, 1941





GERMAN SEA RAIDER, ANZAC CRUISER BOTH SUNK IN BATTLE

Cavalry Slashes Fleeing Nazis

645 Lost With Warship Sydney Off Australia

Today's NEWS Spot-Light

Russ Take Towns in Roslov Rout

LOSERS IN RED TRIAL DISCUSS APPEAL

NAZI TEST

Heard Klemm... (transcription of the article)

... (transcription of the article)



... (transcription of the article)

141 Lost With Torpedoed Sloop

... (transcription of the article)

Charge Draft Official Took Clerks' Pay

... (transcription of the article)

F.R. Demands Japs Expoin Move Toward Thailand

... (transcription of the article)

REFUND

... (transcription of the article)

METAYON SENT

... (transcription of the article)

LOOT OF WAR

... (transcription of the article)

School Board Calls Secret Strike Parley

... (transcription of the article)

There was a battle on appeal... (transcription of the article)

18 Convicted in SWP Trial Ask Willkie Direct Appeal

HAND THAT FEEDS

... (transcription of the article)

Convicted under the Smith Act, Trotskyists Felix Morrow, Vincent Dunne, Farrell Dobbs, James Cannon, and Albert Goldman ring Grace Carlson, pondering their next step.

they were ordered to report to prison on December 31. Grace Carlson went to the Federal Correctional Facility in Alderson, West Virginia, the only federal women's prison at the time. Fourteen of the defendants, including all those from New York, were sent to prison in Sandstone, Minnesota. Three went to a facility in Danbury, Connecticut.²⁶

IN HER FIRST LETTER to Dorothy, Carlson described Alderson: "It has the appearance of a well-kept college campus. The buildings are of red brick, trimmed in white, excessively neat and clean . . . One of the big occupations here is cleaning up and straightening up. Even so great an exponent of Cleanliness and Order as I am feels the strain of it a little bit." Two weeks later, she added,

My present routine is about as follows: I get up between 6:00 and 6:15 A.M. (our doors are unlocked at 6:30). Before breakfast at 7:00 I dress, make my bed, dust and dust mop my room. I am due at the Med[ical] Office at 7:30 where I work until 11:55 A.M. Then, back to the cottage for lunch. I start working again at 12:45 and work until 4:55 P.M. We have supper at the cottage about 5:20 P.M. From then

until 7:00 P.M. we can wash and iron, take baths, etc. At 7:00 P.M., we either go to the living room to play cards, sew, etc. or be locked in our rooms. I usually stay in my room to read. Lights are turned off at 9:30 P.M. Except for every other Saturday night when we go to a movie and Sunday when there is no regular work, this is my daily routine.

She further asked her sister to assure Natalia Trotsky that this prison was a far cry from the Czarist dungeons that she was imagining.²⁷

Even so, Carlson suffered from isolation and homesickness. "With all this activity," she wrote her husband, who was serving in the army in Italy, "you might think that the time flies for me, but it doesn't. I am very, very lonesome. There are no congenial companions here. But so are you lonesome and so are millions of others lonesome in this weary world. It won't be this way forever, though, and that is something to hold onto."²⁸

At first Carlson found her fellow prisoners quite distasteful. "You have never seen unlovelier specimens of white womanhood, who still feel themselves innately superior, just by virtue of being white. The constant use of words like, 'n——r' and 'c——n' has me physically ill. I am not in a position to do much educational work, but I do the best I can." Most of the other prisoners had been convicted of prostitution under the May Act, which made it a crime for women to approach men in the armed services. Since so many men were training in the area and since the women were desperately poor, prostitution was inevitable. The only other political prisoners in Alderson had assisted German spies to enter the U.S.—hardly the kind of political action that Carlson approved.²⁹

All prisoners had work assignments, and Carlson was sent to the medical office. As a vocational rehabilitation counselor she had worked in hospitals, and to find herself once again in that setting was actually a treat. At first she did primarily clerical work, though before long

she undertook a program to conduct psychological testing and treatment of inmates.³⁰ It was unusual to have a Ph.D. psychologist in prison, and the warden was happy to take advantage of Carlson's specialty.

As time went by, her judgments about her fellow prisoners softened. "I was awfully amused," she wrote her friend Miriam Braverman, "by your reference to one of the former inmates whose picture you saw in the [New York] *Post* as a 'tough-looking customer.' She acted as an assistant organist here, and as I remember her, was *relatively* ladylike in appearance and actions. You still have a lot to learn (as I did) about the 'facts of life.' Few of these girls had the chances to learn self-discipline that we did, and the lack of it is stamped on their faces and reflected in all their words and actions." A few months later, she described another of her fellow inmates to Dorothy:

She herself is the mother of 10 children—one daughter is here with her. They are from North Carolina and are here as "public prostitutes" under the May Act. But she's devoted to her children and can hardly wait to get back to them. I say with embarrassment [*sic*] now that when I first came here, I thought that she was crude and vulgar and no-good, but I have lived to learn better. People really do try but the cards are stacked against them! I always knew that in a statistical sense but I'm learning about its meaning in individual lives now.³¹

The warden urged Carlson to "be a good influence on these younger girls," and she obliged—though her influence might not have been exactly the kind the warden had in mind. One of her visitors, Henrietta Geller, reported to their party comrades that:

Grace said that she felt she had a great responsibility in demonstrating to [the other girls], and to the staff, what a Trotskyist is. She was told by one of the staff that they expected a hulking Scandinavian fire-eater, and were bowled over when she appeared. Grace told me that it was a great satisfaction to her to see the preconceived prejudices and notions of what a Bolshevik is give way to respect and confidence. She told me that when she is asked how she can work the way she does, and maintain good relationships with everybody, she tells them, "My party trained me in hard work, discipline, objectivity and devotion to principles."³²

Still, political and cultural differences remained, even when Carlson could feel sympathetic to her companions:

One of the more exasperating features of the backwardness of the girls here is their attitude on the "woman question." Since so many of them have been convicted as prostitutes, you can readily see that the struggle for equality of women on the intellectual, social and economic levels is not understood. They take it for granted that women are "different," "more emotional," etc. etc. They want things to be that way. That is, in fact, their pathetic stock in trade. I don't argue this or any other question much, but sometimes I am provoked into answering back someone who thinks that the Clinic is not run efficiently because a woman doctor is the Chief Medical Officer or that conditions would be better in the institution as a whole if we didn't have a woman as Warden.³³

IN THE MEANTIME, life in the SWP outside was not easy, either. Generally, more and more work fell on fewer and fewer shoulders—and most of those shoulders belonged to women. The Trotskyists' continued opposition to a popular war left them almost as isolated as Carlson was in prison. The Minneapolis and St. Paul branches were depopulated by the Smith Act prosecutions and by the draft. Nationally, by the summer of 1944, some 166 SWP members had been drafted out of a total membership of perhaps 700.³⁴ No precise numbers from the Twin Cities are available, though Carlson's correspondents frequently mentioned their reduced numbers.

The branches tried to maintain programs that predated the war. Members of both the Minneapolis and St. Paul SWP belonged to the NAACP chapters in their respective cities and participated in their activities. Dorothy Schultz and Beatrice Janosco served on the executive committees. The SWP had regular public meetings, called Sunday Forums, where a member would speak and lead a discussion. The topics usually involved a certain amount of research and were generally related to current events. Some of the topics during 1944 included Ireland, labor politics, women and the war, and the reconstruction of Europe. In addition, party members tried to participate in electoral politics, although with the most experienced candidates in prison, this was hard. The SWP considered running Carlson in the Senate race that fall from prison but eventually decided against it. There were also occasional celebrations to organize: a May Day speech, the annual strawberry festival in June, the raspberry festival in July, and the Trotsky memorial in August on the anniversary of his death.³⁵

Of course, 1944 was anything but a normal year for the SWP, and many demands flowed from the abnor-



Marx, Trotsky, and Lenin surround the honor roll listing the 18 Smith Act defendants, 14 of whom posed before their send-off to prison. Back row (from left): Farrell Dobbs, Harry DeBoer, unknown, Clarence Hammel, unknown, Oscar Coover, Jake Cooper; front: Max Goldman, Felix Morrow, Albert Goldman, James Cannon, Vincent Dunne, Carl Skoglund, Grace Carlson

mal situation. The task of supporting the prisoners at Sandstone fell primarily to the Twin Cities locals of the party. The inmates needed visitors, books, cash, and party publications. The hundred-mile drive to Sandstone was not to be undertaken lightly, given gasoline rationing, yet prisoners with families in the area all received one or more visits a month.³⁶ And party members on the outside raised money, money, and more money—to buy things for the prisoners, give stipends to their families when needed, and print pamphlets about the case.

Comrades tried to build public pressure for a presidential pardon and repeal of the Smith Act. In this they were assisted by civil libertarians; however, when it came to organizing a rummage sale, or getting signatures on the pardon petitions, or arranging speaking engagements about the case, the stalwarts were SWP members. Beatrice Janosco wrote to Carlson, “[We] made a lot of plans for the campaign. Among other things, Winnie [Nelson] and I are to work on the cam-

pus. I intend to put the baby in the buggy and just make the rounds that way. It is very difficult getting someone to stay with her even for a few evenings a week, so I know that is the only way I am going to be able to get out.” The accumulation of duties led to weeks like this for Dorothy Schultz:

Lillian Pankratz was here for supper Monday, signed the [pardon] petition, gave me \$1 for the case; Tuesday was NAACP branch meeting at which I made the report on a questionnaire to all St. Paul candidates in the city elections . . . and I got another 8-10 signatures [on the pardon petition]. Wednesday night I spent at the library; Thursday night I went to bed while Henry went over to Mpls. Tonight we are taking Ann [their daughter] with us to the W[orkers'] D[efense] L[League] meeting. Saturday afternoon I have a sub-committee meeting [of the NAACP] on the Minn. Home Guard, preparing a letter to Governor [Edward] Thye . . . Sunday

is my Forum on Italy. And that, as Eleanor [Roosevelt] would say, is my week.

After a uncharacteristically gloomy letter from Schultz in late May, Carlson wrote from Alderson, "How fortunate I am to have found this haven of peace and rest! I think that if I were to use my influence, I could get you in here, too."³⁷

On June 15, 1944, Dorothy's husband, Henry, was admitted to the hospital. He had been complaining of stomach pain, and it finally got so severe that he could not eat. In the next three worry-filled weeks he nearly died twice, as the doctors gradually determined that he had a rare complication of appendicitis. His recovery was long and slow. Once she was sure of his recuperation, Dorothy began to worry about money; Henry was the family breadwinner. On impulse she took a 48-hour-a-week job at the Ford Motor Company plant and put her two children in summer camps. Her comrades quickly stepped in. One of Carlson's New York correspondents wrote, "Dorothy . . . acted like this was her personal trouble, and [took] a job in industry, to make up for the loss of weekly income. The center intervened however, sent a representative from Chicago and the necessary funds and ordered her to give up the job. She will have to learn, like the rest of us, that not only her services belong to the party, but also her troubles." Carlson added her own voice to the chorus of objections: "You must not think of going back to work . . . You have a different role to play in the organization there. You're the leader there—all the more so now that Henry is out of things and you must have the proper amount of time and energy to be able to deal with all of the problems. I'm glad to hear that Morrie [Stein] sent in some money. You'll need plenty, I know, but Henry and you are worth that to the Party."³⁸

Dorothy, for her part, was intensely grateful for the support. She told her sister, "I can't even begin to enumerate the kindness and help of all the comrades. Betty and Paul stayed at the house for a couple of days and nights. If it hadn't been for Elaine [Roseland], I am not quite sure how things would have gone on. She came over with me Friday and simply stayed until late yesterday when the turn for the better became more convincing. There's nothing like an organization! Bea [Janosco], Winnie [Nelson] and Evelyn [DeBoer] got nurses when the hospital authorities said flatly, they weren't to be had." In a separate letter, Roseland described how the determined trio had put their organizing skills to work to get leads on nurses who would stay with Henry around the clock in the hospital. During wartime, such nursing care was rare, indeed.³⁹

AS CARLSON OBSERVED, Dorothy Schultz was now the leader in the Twin Cities SWP, although her husband held the title of "organizer." She was not the only woman whose responsibilities had increased dramatically under the double impact of the war and the imprisonments. Janosco found herself scrambling to learn public speaking so that she could lead Sunday Forums. Other women were being groomed as well. Schultz wrote approvingly: "Jean [Tilsen] gave her first Forum speech last Sunday on the British White Paper and Palestine. She did very well . . . She has promise if she can slough off some of this adolescent coyness and personal concentration."⁴⁰

Still, women in the party found themselves hampered by the requirements of home life. Janosco described an NAACP meeting she attended: "Irving [Blumberg] was scheduled to make a report and Reverend [Clarence] Nelson was present and was expected to speak, but I could not wait to hear either one, as the meeting started late, and by the time all the musical numbers were included in the program, it was 5:30 and I was due home to feed the baby, get dinner for John, make him a lunch, etc. etc." Another of Carlson's correspondents, Miriam Braverman, spoke more strongly when her letter-writing was interrupted: "To be continued later, because I have to go home and do my duty . . . cook for Harry. (Why was I born a woman? . . . grrrrrrr)."⁴¹

Elaine Roseland, the secretary at the Minneapolis headquarters of the party, was coached by both sisters. Carlson's letters to her were full of encouragement, and when Roseland took on a Sunday Forum, Carlson suggested where she might find reference materials. In August Roseland was sent to a two-week vacation school sponsored by the Detroit branch of the party to improve her knowledge of Marxism and Trotskyist principles. Much to Schultz's, Janosco's, and Carlson's distress, the plan backfired. For the gentle, impressionable Roseland fell head over heels in love with a comrade from the Chicago branch, whom the older women agreed was quite unsuitable. As tactfully as they could, they tried to persuade her to disentangle herself. "Who would ever have thought," lamented Janosco, "we would have a problem like this?"⁴²

In general during this time, the line between personal and political seemed rather thin. Party members appeared to be happiest and at their best when engaged in social functions. They prepared meals together two or three times a week at the party headquarters. They showed home movies of past events, like the raspberry festivals and the departure of the 18 for prison. And they helped one another out with personal

difficulties and routine needs, such as child care.

This sense of togetherness may well have reflected the fact that they were a small group whose political stand on the most important issue of the day—the war—was quite unpopular. When the prisoners left for their penitentiaries, the party set a goal of recruiting ten new members for every one in prison, or 180 all told. At the first gathering of the national committee after the release of the prisoners, it was reported that the SWP had gained 125, for a nationwide total just over 1,000 members.⁴³ Carlson's correspondents often mentioned the appearance of new faces at party events or the return of old ones that had not been seen for a while.

The only others who opposed the Second World War consistently were religious pacifists. The SWP disdained both religion and pacifism, however, and never made any real attempt to form alliances with them. Not a structured group, the pacifists included a number of different denominations and did not have a unified response to the war; the majority went to Civilian Public Service camps run by the military, while others chose prison rather than cooperate with the military at all. There were a few connections between Trotskyists and conscientious objectors: for instance, Carlson knew Wally Nelson, an African American from St. Paul who entered prison at about the same time she did. His wife, Juanita, assisted with fund-raisers for the SWP prisoners.⁴⁴ While there is no guarantee that an alliance with the pacifists would have increased the SWP's influence, many conscientious objectors did go on to devote their lives to social service and social change, and they might have been more radical if they had adopted some Marxist analysis from the SWP.

In the long run, association with the NAACP did not strengthen the SWP, either. After her conviction and before her imprisonment, Carlson had written to Natalia Trotsky, "We have come to have many real friends among the colored men and women in the St. Paul and Minneapolis branches of the NAACP. It has been rather startling to me to see how little disturbed they are by having their names associated publicly with ours." After the trial, she admitted, she began to think that "those of us who were directly involved would be pretty well cut off during this period from any fresh contacts. It is, therefore, doubly satisfying to find the reverse of this situation to be true." By the fall of 1944, however, Carlson's correspondents sounded discouraged with their NAACP work. It appeared to them that the Communist Party was making inroads with some of the best leaders in St. Paul, and the Minneapolis branch seemed to be suffering from lack of leader-

ship, program, and direction. After the SWP national convention, Janosco wrote frankly, "Although the convention was an inspiring affair, for us here, it is a contrast to our isolation, and I know Elaine [Roseland] finds this a little depressing. Problems of all kinds are magnified now. We all feel that. Sometimes it is hard to remember, as Ray [Dunne] says, that we live for a better day."⁴⁵

A BETTER DAY FOR GRACE CARLSON came on January 31, 1945, when she and the Sandstone prisoners were released with five months of supervision. She was happy to be leaving prison, although she felt quite proud of the psychological-testing program she had pioneered. "I had had my heart set on a year of academic study and research, but Fate and the Department of Justice determined otherwise," she wrote to Natalia Trotsky. "By a happy conjuncture of circumstances, my work assignment turned out to be even more advantageous to me than such a year of luxurious study. The opportunity for this intensive clinical study of human behavior, especially of subjects who are products of the terrible economic and social conditions of the South, is one which would please any Marxist."⁴⁶

The Sandstone prisoners, by way of contrast, had more leisure time in which to study and discuss Marx-

SWP members relax at Mountain Spring camp, northeastern U.S., 1949. From left: Arnie Swabeck, James Cannon, Rose Karsner (a correspondent of Carlson's and married to Cannon), Oscar Coover, and Carl Skoglund



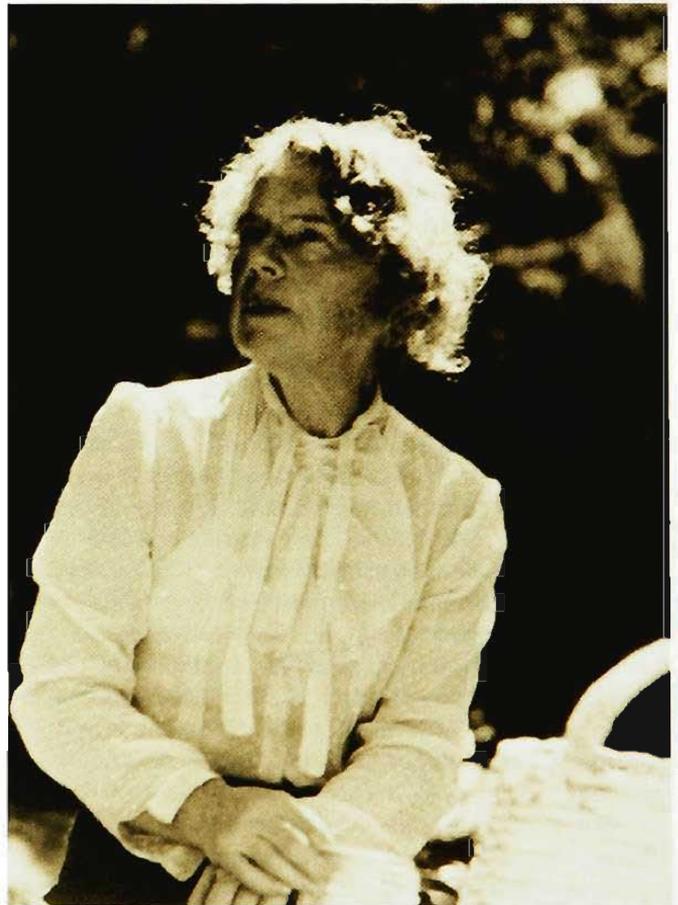
ism. This proved to be a mixed blessing. While James Cannon wrote an elaborate plan for a Trotskyist university, Felix Morrow, Carlos Hudson, and Albert Goldman were beginning to have doubts about the structure and politics of their party. Even before their release, comrades in New York knew that they were discontented, and at the 1944 national convention tensions had exploded into another of the periodic battles over doctrine that repeatedly splintered the party. After their release, Hudson and Goldman left the party in disgust; Morrow was expelled at the 1946 national convention.⁴⁷ Other former prisoners sank quietly into private life and appear to have played little further role in the SWP.

To bolster the morale of the party workers who had supported the prisoners so faithfully and to counter the defection of some of those “heroes,” it was important that at least one of the prisoners be seen as more fiery and dedicated to the cause than ever. Here Carlson stepped willingly into the breach, as soon as the terms of her probation would allow it. From June 19 to August 22, 1945, she undertook a coast-to-coast speaking tour, lecturing on the subject of “Women in Prison.” At first the subject of her speech met with some polite resistance from branch leaders. Others simply added to her topic. They feared that the industrial workers they had been trying to recruit would not care much about conditions for women in prison. Carlson was able to report from Detroit, however, “Bob Kingsley told me that he had been very opposed to this subject but that he realized during the meeting that the workers were really interested. This has been my experience everywhere.” Newspaper coverage certainly made the most of Carlson’s undiminished dedication to the cause: “Woman Who Served Term Renews Political Crusade,” announced the *Detroit News*, and “Ardent Socialist Undaunted After 13 Months in Prison,” said the *Detroit Free Press*.⁴⁸

Carlson continued her prominent role in the party. She resumed her post as state organizer in Minnesota, and she ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate in 1946, the same year that Dorothy Schultz campaigned for the House of Representatives. Two years later, Carlson ran for vice-president on the SWP’s first presidential ticket. Schultz, too, remained active until the late 1950s and even served on the national committee, although the birth of two more children limited her activity somewhat. Still, the role of women in the party did not change significantly as a result of their work in 1944. As in other segments of society, women’s leadership in the workplace and in public life decreased at the end of the war. This reversion to prewar patterns robbed the SWP of talent and left it vulnerable to criticisms of

sexism and male chauvinism when a new wave of feminism emerged in the 1960s.⁴⁹

Sexism and male chauvinism aside, leadership in the SWP was hardly democratic. While Leon Trotsky lived, he analyzed all world events, formulated all party positions, and advised all the socialist parties loyal to him around the world. After his assassination in 1940, the U.S. party was left to guess how the Old Man would have analyzed the world situation and what policies he would have put forward, based on his voluminous writings. James Cannon and Trotsky’s other close acquaintances did that interpretation. The result was a combination of openness to individual analyses and overall stultification in the party’s thought. For example, when Carlson went on a speaking tour in 1940 or gave a campaign speech in 1948, she chose her own subjects, reflecting her own interests and experiences. She broke no new theoretical ground for the party—but no



Natalia Trotsky, with whom Grace Carlson established a warm friendship



Sisters Dorothy Schultz and Grace Carlson filing petitions to have their names on the 1946 ballot, when Schultz ran for Congress and Carlson for Senate

one did, even during and after World War II. For instance, rather than examining the postwar situation through the lens of 1945, the SWP looked back to 1917. This led to the curious prediction that the disgust of working-class soldiers over the long and difficult “imperialist war” would boil over, once formal hostilities ceased, and the soldiers would revolt against their commanders. That, Trotskyists reasoned, was what the Old Man had foreseen happening in Russia in 1917, and it must be ready to happen again.⁵⁰

Trotskyists were not alone in looking back, though. U.S. elected officials also remembered 1918, when World War I veterans had returned to their interrupted lives, often without much money or many prospects, and social unrest resulted. The G.I. Bill of 1944 was designed specifically to avoid a repeat of that situation and to give veterans a considerable boost into the middle class. Thus the second postwar period, which began with a wave of labor strikes, did not in the long run provide very fertile ground for socialism in the U.S.—especially when Cold War tensions began to build after 1948.

GRACE CARLSON ABRUPTLY RESIGNED from the SWP in June 1952, when she was on the verge of a second run for vice-president of the U.S. In a two-paragraph letter she informed James Cannon, “I am planning to return

to the Catholic Church and it will be immediately clear to you and to the other national committee members that I would be unable to serve as a candidate.”⁵¹

Her decision was a complete bombshell; even her sister did not know that she was contemplating this step. Later in life Carlson explained her conversion this way: “My father died. That was a very traumatic situation for me. It wasn’t that I thought his death was so tragic—he was old and he’d been sick and I don’t think he even minded dying, but then the whole philosophical question came up: Who would make up to him for everything that he had missed in his life? All the problems that he’d had (and I certainly had been one of them). That’s when I went back to the church.” Cannon made a special trip to the Twin Cities after receiving her letter and concluded: “She just got tired. That is all. She was good for sixteen years but the next sixteen appeared too tough for her. She has rationalized it on the church. That is an escape.” One of her contemporaries later speculated that she was despondent over the state of the Twin Cities branches of the SWP. Whatever the reasons, Carlson’s departure from the party led to a painful estrangement between the Holmes sisters, which ended when Dorothy herself dropped out of the SWP. Grace reconciled with her husband Gilbert, however, and went on to become a professor of psychology at St. Mary’s Junior College in

Minneapolis—a post she held until 1979. She identified herself as a Marxist—only as a religious, rather than an atheist, Marxist—up to her death on July 7, 1992. Dorothy Schultz is still alive.⁵²

THE SMITH ACT PROSECUTION had something of a delayed effect on the Socialist Workers' Party. As long as the case against the defendants was in the courts, it provided a rallying point and made party members feel heroic—and perhaps a bit more important on the political scene than they really were. As 1944 wore on, however, the strain on the party grew, particularly on

the Minnesota chapters, which throughout the 1930s were second only to “the center” in importance. Government repression was only one factor in the SWP's stagnation, though. Its own lack of theoretical imagination, internal feuding, and continued hostility from the more influential Communist Party combined to keep the SWP marginalized throughout the postwar years. Furthermore, it did not have the foresight to build upon the leadership shown by women during its crisis period to counter its own stagnation. It took a renewed wave of student activism in the early 1960s to put the Socialist Workers' Party back on the national political map. □

NOTES

1. Grace Carlson to Dorothy Schultz, May 14, June 11, 1944, Grace Carlson Papers, 1929–1986, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), St. Paul. Unless otherwise noted, all correspondence is in these papers.

2. Here and below. “Biographical Sketch, Grace Carlson,” Carlson papers; Grace Holmes Carlson, interview by Carl Ross, July 9, 1987, transcript, p. 1–4, 20th Century Radicalism in Minnesota Project, in MHS Library. The information on Mary Holmes is from the birth certificate, “Baby Girl Holmes,” in possession of Dorothy Schultz, Madison, WI.

3. David Montgomery, *The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865–1925* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 400–09, 422–24; Carlson interview, 1.

4. Carlson interview, 2, 4–5.

5. “Biographical Sketch,” Carlson papers; Dorothy M. Holmes, “A Study on International Relations and the Grade School” (master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 1933).

6. Roy Rosenzweig, “Unemployed Movements of the 1930s,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, ed. Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 793–96; George H. Mayer, *The Political Career of Floyd B. Olson* (1951; reprint, St. Paul: MHS Press, 1987), 17–56.

7. Constance Ashton Myers, *The Prophet's Army: Trotskyists in America, 1928–1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977), 23–33, 44–51; Tim Wohlforth, “Trotskyism,” and Paul LeBlanc, “Socialist Workers' Party,” both in *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, 782–85, 727–29.

8. Carlson interview, 41.

9. By far the most detailed and gripping (though somewhat self-serving) account of the truck drivers' strikes is by Farrell Dobbs, a Trotskyist and participant: *Teamster Rebellion* (New York: Monad Press, 1972).

10. Carlson interview, 6.

11. Dorothy Schultz, interview by author, Dec. 29, 1994, notes in author's possession.

12. Elizabeth Faux, *Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915–1945*

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 72–73, 115; Myers, *Prophet's Army*, 190.

13. Charles Walker to Herbert [Solow?], May 28, 1936, Charles Rufford Walker Papers, 1924–1937, MHS. On patience, see, for example, Grace Carlson to Dorothy Schultz, Feb. 13, July 2, 1944.

14. State of Minnesota, “In the Matter of the Removal of John G. Rockwell,” hearing before Board of Education, transcript, p. 1407, 1409, Rockwell and Carstater Hearing Files, Minnesota Department of Education, Commissioner's Office, Minnesota State Archives, MHS; *Socialist Appeal* (New York), special Minnesota campaign ed., Oct. 19, 1940, p. 1, Rockwell and Carstater Hearing Files, box 2, “Carlson, Grace, 1940” folder, hereinafter, Carlson file.

15. Grace Carlson to D. H. Dabelstein, Aug. 21, 1940, copy, and John G. Rockwell to Herbert L. Lewis, Aug. 31, 1940, both in Carlson file; Mary Herrick, “Dr. John Rockwell vs. Minnesota Spoils,” *American Teacher*, Jan. 1941, in “Clippings 1938–1941” folder, Rockwell and Carstater Hearing files, box 2; *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, Dec. 27, 1944, p. 1, 9. For Trotskyist gloating over election results, see “Minnesota Vote Tops Minorities: Final Returns Show Carlson above CP and SP Combined,” Nov. 30, 1940, p. 1; “Our Party's Vote in Minnesota,” Dec. 14, 1940, p. 2; “Our Party's Election Campaign in Minnesota,” Dec. 21, 1940, p. 4; “The Vote for Trotskyism in Minnesota,” Feb. 8, 1941, p. 4—all in *Socialist Appeal*, microfilm copy labeled *The Militant* (its predecessor and successor title), University of Minnesota.

16. Farrell Dobbs to Grace Carlson, Nov. 28, 1940. Rose Karsner remarked that Carlson seemed to have the best relationship with Natalia of any of the U.S. female leaders; Karsner to Carlson, Dec. 14, 1944.

17. For the SWP's position on the war, see “Defend the Soviet Union: Manifesto of the Socialist Workers' Party,” *Fourth International* 2 (July 1941): 170–73; on the party's size, see Myers, *Prophet's Army*, 165. In 1940 the SWP had between 500 and 625 members nationwide, having just weathered one of its internal disputes, which resulted in half the membership leaving.

18. The number of Local 574 changed to 544 as a result of this tangle; for details of the struggle, see Ralph C. James and Estelle James, "The Purge of the Trotskyists from the Teamsters," *Western Political Quarterly* 19 (Mar. 1966): 5–15.

19. On Roosevelt's involvement, see James and James, "Purge of the Trotskyists," 10; on the raid, see *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, June 28, 1941, p. 1, including picture of Carlson "fleeing"; for the charges against the Trotskyists, see Felix Morrow, "The Federal Prosecution of the Socialist Workers' Party," *Fourth International* 2 (Aug. 1941): 214–17.

20. Myers, *Prophet's Army*, 178.

21. Felix Morrow, "The Minneapolis Sedition Trial," *Fourth International* 3 (Jan. 1942): 7; "The FBI-Gestapo Attack on the Socialist Workers' Party," *Fourth International* 2 (July 1941): 163. According to Grace, a priest told Gilbert that he could not be a socialist and a Roman Catholic at the same time, so he left the SWP. The couple separated in about 1940; Carlson interview, 7. Gilbert was one of the seven correspondents Grace was allowed to select while in prison; see "List of Authorized Correspondents," in folder marked "SWP Correspondence Jan.–Feb. 1944," Carlson papers.

22. *Daily Worker*, Aug. 16, 1941, p. 5; "The Issues at Minneapolis," *The Nation*, Dec. 13, 1941, p. 602. George Novack, an SWP leader from New York, toured the U.S. in 1944, speaking on behalf of the prisoners. His letters to Evelyn Anderson, his secretary, frequently reported on opposition encountered from Communists in the CIO. These letters are in Civil Rights Defense Committee (CRDC) Records, 1941–1958, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison (microfilm edition, 1994), hereinafter cited as CRDC records.

23. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Nov. 7, 1941, p. 5; *Minneapolis Daily Times*, Nov. 25, 1941, p. 1.

24. William F. Warde, "Capitalist Frame-up: 1941 Model," *Fourth International* 2 (Dec. 1941): 295–96.

25. Carlson to Natalia Trotsky, June 19, 1943.

26. *The Militant*, Jan. 8, 1944.

27. Carlson to Schultz, Jan. 16, 30, Mar. 19, 1944.

28. Contained in Carlson to Schultz, Mar. 5, 1944. For a while Grace was unable to get V-Mail paper, so her letters to Gilbert were transmitted through her sister.

29. Carlson to Schultz, Feb. 27, 1944; Carlson interview, 8–9, 37.

30. Evelyn Anderson, "My Visit to Grace Carlson, Apr. 26, 1944," typescript, n.p., SWP Correspondence #5 folder; and Henrietta Geller, "Report on My Visit to Grace Carlson on June 28th, 1944," typescript, n.p., SWP Correspondence #7 folder—both Carlson papers.

31. Carlson to Miriam [Braverman], May 7, 1944; Carlson to Schultz, Aug. 6, 1944.

32. Carlson to Schultz, Jan. 30, 1944; Geller, "Report on Visit."

33. Carlson to Elaine Roseland, May 14, 1944.

34. Undated, unsigned report, probably from Morris Stein, acting national secretary, to Political Committee, June 27[?], 1944, CRDC Records.

35. Beatrice Janosco to Carlson, Mar. 17, Apr. 6, Carlson to Elaine Roseland, May 14, Schultz to Carlson, Oct. 13—all 1944.

36. Elaine Roseland to Carlson, Mar. 21, 1944.

37. Beatrice Janosco to Carlson, Mar. 1, Schultz to Carlson, Mar. 24, Carlson to Schultz, June 4—all 1944.

38. Rose Karsner to Carlson, July 3, Carlson to Schultz, July 2, Schultz to Carlson, July 3—all 1944.

39. Schultz to Carlson, July 3, 1944; Roseland to Carlson, July 5, 1944.

40. Schultz to Carlson, Apr. 7, 1944.

41. Janosco to Carlson, July 30, 1944; Braverman to Carlson, Apr. 26, 1944.

42. Carlson to Roseland, May 14, 1944; Janosco to Carlson, Aug. 29, Oct. 4, 15, 1944.

43. Roseland to Carlson, Mar. 21, May 5, 1944; Janosco to Carlson, Mar. 22, Aug. 23, Sept. 17, 1944; Schultz to Carlson, May 1, 1944; "Organizational Report," submitted to the National Committee's plenum, May 12–14, 1945, p. 8, 10, Records of the Socialist Workers' Party, microfilm edition (1977), roll 3, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, hereinafter cited as SWP Records. The originals are in the Library of Social History, New York City.

44. Schultz to Carlson, Feb. 21, Mar. 10, 1944.

45. Carlson to Trotsky, Feb. 5, 1943; Janosco to Carlson, Oct. 4, 15, Nov. 24, 1944; Schultz to Carlson, Nov. 10, 1944.

46. Carlson to Trotsky, Dec. 31, 1944, in possession of Dorothy Schultz.

47. Miriam Carter and Rose Karsner to Carlson, both Aug. 30, 1944; Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 255–56, 287.

48. See letters from P. Ryder, R. Kendall, and M. Ingersoll to Morris Stein, June 10, 13, 1945; Carlson to Stein, July 12, 1945; flyer from Philadelphia, promising that Carlson would address issues like "women under capitalism, how to abolish racial discrimination, and the way to economic security and lasting peace"; articles, July 12, 1945—all CRDC Records.

49. Farrell Dobbs to Dorothy Schultz, Dec. 1, 1953, SWP Records.

50. Farrell Dobbs to Carlson, Nov. 28, 1940; Carlson to Dobbs, Dec. 1, 1940; Wald, *New York Intellectuals*, 254–55, 295–97.

51. Carlson to Cannon, June 18, 1952, SWP Records.

52. Schultz interview; Carlson interview, 38–39; unsigned memorandum of a telephone call with "Jim [Cannon]," June 20, 1952, SWP Records; Jean Tilsen Brust, obituary of Grace Carlson, *Bulletin of the Socialist Workers' League*, Mar. 12, 1993, p. 14–16.

All images are from MHS collections, including p. 358–59, from the Minneapolis Tribune.



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).