

Half the World

By **CLAUDIA JONES**

THE lively controversy between Worker readers and author Walter Lowenfels seems to have been resolved as a result of the initiative of the Philadelphia Women's Commission, C.P., and Worker readers who interviewed him as shown in last week's Woman Today page. We remember that the matter at issue, to quote the author, was "essentially an attack on women, a mockery of their problems and a caricature of Marxism."

We should first note that the process of self-critical examination has set in and that it is all to the good. But it is because the deeper problems raised by the Lowenfels controversy are far from resolved, and go beyond the author himself, that I want to add additional first thoughts to this ever-present matter of the fight against male superiority, and particularly in the context of today.

Only if we examine these deeper problems will we be able to say more than was contained in the self-critical interview by Lowenfels, who says, "I am still trying to get to the root of the matter." It is important to get to the root of the matter on this issue. It is our starting point, and not one we should end with.

WHAT IS THE "root of the matter" of this question of male superiority? First, this noxious idea of "theory" about women is premised on the notion that women are inferior. The "theory" that women are inferior is part and parcel of the ideology of the contemporary ruling class, a tool in its fight against democracy and peace and Socialism.

The practical aim of this "theory" besides that of upholding and perpetuating conditions most advantageous for the unbridled exploitation of the working people in general and of women in particular, is to exclude women, who comprise half of humanity (as this column is paraphrased) from public and political activity and struggles. The bourgeois ideologists realize that the larger becomes the section of exploited people who take part in active political struggles, the more acute will these struggles become, and all the more reason will there be for misgivings about the fate of capitalism.

The unavowed but real aim of all the diverse bourgeois "theories" on the woman question is to prevent millions of working women from taking a direct and active part in the struggle for peace and security, in the struggle for the burning demands of the working class and oppressed peoples. Thus, they seek to hamper the course of social development and prolong the existence of capitalism.

Hence, while false at all times, male supremacist attitudes and expressions of false humor, belittling of women, underestimation of activity among and for women's rights and the family, provide subjective obstacles preventing many women from unleashing their full talents which are numerous. Yet every guilty male supremacist will admit the great organizing ability in practical struggles on the part of women. Nor should we belittle the great organizing ability of women, which, as Lenin wrote, operates "without abundance of phrases, fuss, squabbling and chatter about plans, systems, etc." which our swelled-headed "intelligentsia—always suffer from."

To place the question this way is to place it in the self-interest of man as well as of woman. It is to recognize other ideological questions, the problem—as Lowenfels himself stated correctly—of "participation in the struggle for a correct position and understanding of the specific problems of women and the road to their solution."