

Workers World Party

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Workers World Party (WWP) is a Marxist-Leninist communist party in the United States, founded in 1959 by a group led by Sam Marcy of the Socialist Workers Party.^[1] Marcy and his followers split from the United States SWP in 1958 over a series of long-standing differences, among them Marcy's group's support for Henry A. Wallace's Progressive Party in 1948, the positive view they held of the Chinese Revolution led by Mao Zedong, and their defense of the 1956 Soviet intervention in Hungary, all of which the SWP opposed.

WWP describes itself as a party that has, since its founding, "supported the struggles of all oppressed peoples". It has recognized the right of nations to self-determination, including the nationally oppressed peoples inside the United States. It supports affirmative action as necessary in the fight for equality. As well, it opposes all forms of racism and religious bigotry. Workers World and YAWF were noted for their consistent defense of the Black Panthers and the Weather Underground along with Vietnam Veterans Against the War and the Puerto Rican Independence movement. Workers World Party was also an early advocate of gay rights, and remains especially active in this area.

In more recent years the Workers World Party has been controversial for its support of many things that other communist parties of similar political roots very strongly oppose: These include the regimes of Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, and Kim Jong-il; also, the WWP supported the Chinese crackdown on the “counter-revolutionary rebellion” in Tiananmen Square.^[2] These political positions have sometimes made other communists suspicious of working with the party.

The WWP has published *Workers World* newspaper since 1959, and it has been a weekly since 1974.

Workers World Party



Chairman	Larry Holmes (First Secretary)
Founded	1959
Headquarters	55 W. 17 St. New York, NY 10011
Youth wing	Fight Imperialism Stand Together
Ideology	Communism Marxism–Leninism Proletarian internationalism
Political position	<i>Fiscal:</i> Socialist economics <i>Social:</i> Revolutionary socialism
Colors	Red

Website

www.workers.org (<http://www.workers.org/>)

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History

The distant origins of the WWP go back to the Global Class War Tendency, led by Sam Marcy and Vincent Copeland, within the Socialist Workers Party. This group first crystallized during the presidential election of 1948 when they urged the SWP to back Henry Wallace's Progressive Party campaign, rather than field their own candidates. Throughout the 1950s the GCWT expressed positions at odds with official SWP policy, categorizing the Korean War as a class, rather than imperialist, conflict; support of the People's Republic of China as a workers' state, if not necessarily supporting the Mao leadership; and supporting the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by the Soviet Union in 1956.^[3]

The Global Class War Tendency left the SWP in early 1959. Although they would later abandon Trotskyism, in their International Workers Day issue (#3) of their new periodical, the group proclaimed "We are THE Trotskyists. We stand 100% with all the principled positions of Leon Trotsky, the most revolutionary communist since Lenin". Despite having already left the SWP, the nascent group only appears to have organized officially as the Workers World Party by February 1960.^[4] At its inception the WWP was concentrated among the working class in Buffalo, Youngstown, Seattle and New York. A youth organization, first known as the Anti-Fascist Youth Committee, and later as Youth Against War and Fascism was created in April 1962.^[5]

From the beginning both the WWP and the YAWF concentrated their energies on street demonstrations. Early campaigns focused on support of Patrice Lumumba, opposition to the House Un-American Activities Committee, and against racial discrimination in housing. They conducted the first protest against American involvement in Vietnam on August 2, 1962.^[6] Their opposition to the war also included the tactics of "draft resistance" and "GI resistance". After organizing demonstrations at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in support of a soldier being tried for possessing anti-war literature, they founded the American Servicemens Union, intended to be a mass organization of American soldiers. However, the group was completely dominated by the WWP and YAWF.^[7]

During the late 1960s and 1970s the Party threw itself into protests for a number of other causes, including "defen[se] of the heroic black uprisings in Watts, Newark, Detroit, Harlem" and women's liberation. During the Attica Prison riot the rioters requested a YAWF member, Tom Soto, to present their grievances for them. The WWP was most successful in organizing demonstrations in support of desegregation "busing" in the Boston schools in 1975. Nearly 30,000 people attended the Boston March Against Racism, which they had organized. Also during the 1970s they attempted to begin work inside organized labor, but apparently were not very successful.^[8]

In 1980 the WWP began to participate in electoral politics, naming a presidential ticket, as well as candidates for New York Senate, congressional and state legislature seats. In California they ran their candidate, Deidre Griswold, for in the primary for the Peace and Freedom Party nomination. They came in last with 1,232 votes out of 9,092. In 1984 the WWP supported Jesse Jackson's bid for the Democratic nomination, but when he lost in

the primaries they nominated their own presidential ticket, along with a handful of congressional and legislative nominees.^[9]

Ideological background and platform

While the party originally considered itself Trotskyist, it soon began to cease referring to Trotsky in their organ or to carry much, if any, Trotskyist literature. In its first decade the group leaned more to Maoism, while still considering itself to have "the kind of political independence that enables revolutionaries to speak up if they see that the cause is being damaged by the policies of the leadership of socialist countries." They supported the Peoples Republic of China on the issues of the 1959 Tibetan uprising and the Sino-Indian Border War of 1962, and endorsed both the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, but criticized their characterization of the USSR as social imperialist, fearing that it would lead to Sino-American reproachment.^[10] The party was particularly attracted to Lin Biao, praising the inclusion of him in the preamble to the 1969 Chinese Constitution.^[4] They felt that the disappearance of Lin and his associates mark "the end of an entire stage of the Cultural Revolution." They grew increasingly critical of Communist China after 1971, especially their closer relations to the west and supported the "radical faction" within China that opposed this course. After the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976 they considered the Chinese leaders "reaction" and "attacking the revolutionary domestic achievements of the Mao era". By the mid 1980s the only trace of Trotskyist ideology still espoused by the WWP was the idea of the USSR and other Communist controlled countries as degenerated workers' states who had to be defended against imperialism even if their leaderships needed to be criticized.^[11]

Ideologically, the WWP is orthodox Marxist-Leninist. The Party's Trotskyist origins are reflected in much of Sam Marcy's early literature. However, Marcy also continued to uphold the USSR as a socialist state until the very end. When the Provisional Organizing Committee to Reconstitute a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party was formed, the WWP included a friendly headline directed to them, "Welcome, Comrades!" in *Workers World* newspaper. The Provisional Organizing Committee replied by telling them, "Trotskyism is Counter-Revolution and Nothing Else!". Following this, "virtually all mention of Trotsky vanished forever from its pages."^[12]

Activities and organizational structure

The WWP has organized, directed or participated in many coalition organizations for various causes, typically anti-imperialist in nature. The International Action Center, which counts many WWP members as leading activists, founded the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER) coalition shortly after 9/11, and has run both the All People's Congress (APC) and the International Action Center (IAC) for many years. The APC and the IAC in particular share a large degree of overlap in their memberships with cadre in the WWP. In 2004, a youth group close to the WWP called **Fight Imperialism Stand Together** (FIST) was founded.

Workers World Party has regional branches in 20 major US cities. The Party receives donations and contributions as the source of its funding, while volunteers/cadres run the day-to-day operations of the Party. WWP is led by an internally elected secretariat. Currently, the Secretariat is made up of six people: Deirdre Griswold, Larry Holmes, Fred Goldstein, Monica Moorehead, Sara Flounders, and Teresa Gutierrez. The WWP has participated in presidential election campaigns since the 1980 election, though its effectiveness in this area is limited as it has not been able to get on the ballots of many states. The Party also has run some campaigns for other offices. One of the most successful was in 1990, when Susan Farquhar got on the ballot as a US Senate candidate in Michigan and received 1.3% of the vote. However, the Party's best result was in the 1992 Ohio US Senate election, when the WWP candidate received 6.7% of the vote, running against a Democrat and a Republican.^[13]

WWP and North Korea

The WWP has maintained a position of support for the government of North Korea. Through its Vietnam-era front organization, the American Servicemen's Union (ASU), the party endorsed a 1971 statement of support for that government. The statement was read on North Korea's international radio station by visiting ASU delegate Andy Stapp.^[14] In 1994, Sam Marcy sent a letter to Kim Jong Il expressing his condolences on behalf of the WWP with the passing of his father Kim Il Sung, calling him a great leader and comrade in the international communist movement.^[15] Its more recent front groups, IAC and (formerly) International ANSWER, have also demonstrated in support of North Korea.^[16]

Disagreement with other leftists

This is seen in disagreements over analysis of whether or not a particular country is socialist (e.g. Cuba, North Korea or the People's Republic of China) and also positions historically held by the Party (e.g., support for Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Czechoslovakia and Hungary). It is also seen in disagreements over WWP calls for solidarity with governments that it sees as being socialist, anti-imperialist, or any country facing the threat of being attacked by the United States. WWP also faces opposition from ideological groups that are critical of other Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist parties. On the political left, this criticism comes from anarchists, social democrats and the liberal left. The political right is also often opposed to any communist party or socialist organization. When the WWP was playing a role in organizing anti-war protests before the US attack on Iraq in 2003, many newspapers and TV shows attacked the WWP specifically.^{[17][18][19]}

SourceWatch, a wiki for the progressive watchdog group Center for Media and Democracy, describes the WWP as "one of the most authoritarian groups on the Left today."^[20]

Splits

In 1968 the WWP absorbed a small faction of the Spartacist League that had worked with it in the Coalition for an Anti-Imperialist Movement called the Revolutionary Communist League. This group left the WWP in 1971 as the New York Revolutionary Committee. The NYRC's newspaper provided rare details about the internal functioning of the group that have subsequently been used by scholars as a primary source. The NYRC later reconstituted as the Revolutionary Communist League (Internationalist).^[21]

In 2004, the WWP suffered its most serious split when the San Francisco branch and some other members left to form the Party for Socialism and Liberation.^[22] The ANSWER coalition aligned itself with the PSL and Workers World Party then founded the Troops Out Now Coalition. The split included many of the top leaders of the WWP which included most of the membership of the WWP on the West Coast.

To date, neither party has officially given any reason for the split. PSL maintains a nearly identical political line.

Presidential Tickets



Members staffing a WWP information booth at Occupy Wall Street, October 2011

Year	President	Vice-President	Votes
1980	Deirdre Griswold	Gavrielle Holmes	13,285 (0.02%)
1984	Larry Holmes, in some states Gavrielle Holmes	Gloria LaRiva	17,985 (0.02%)
1988	Larry Holmes	Gloria La Riva	7,846 (0.01%)
1992	Gloria La Riva	Larry Holmes	181 (0.00%)
1996	Monica Moorehead	Gloria La Riva	29,083 (0.03%)
2000	Monica Moorehead	Gloria La Riva	4,795 (0.00%)
2004	John Parker	Teresa Gutierrez	1,646 (0.00%), includes votes on the Liberty Union Party line in Vermont
2008	No candidate, endorsed Cynthia McKinney	No candidate, endorsed Rosa Clemente	n.a.

[23]

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- ↑ Alexander 1991, p. 911.
- ↑ ^{*a*} ^{*b*} Alexander 1973, p. 554.
- ↑ Alexander 1991, p. 912.
- ↑ Klehr, Harvey (1988) *Far Left of Center*
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- ↑ Alexander 1991, p. 913.
- ↑ Alexander 1991, p. 914.
- ↑ Alexander 1991, p. 915.
- ↑ Alexander 1991, p. 916.
- ↑ "Roots of the Workers World Party" (<http://www.marxmail.org/archives/january99/wwp.htm>). *Marx Mail*. Retrieved October 2, 2008.
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21. ^ Alexander 1991, pp. 913, 941-3, 1049.
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Further reading

- Roots of the Workers World Party (<http://www.marxmail.org/archives/january99/wwp.htm>) by Ken Lawrence, Marxmail Discussion List. January 1999. Retrieved April 12, 2005.
- Politics 1 Guide to US Political parties (<http://www.politics1.com/parties.htm>) contains brief entry on WWP.
- "A Clarification on Sam Marcy and Henry Wallace" (<http://www.icl-fi.org/english/wv/928/wallace.html>) correspondence on the early history of the Global Class War tendency
- "Peace Activists" with a Secret Agenda Part Three: Stealth Trotskyism and the Mystery of the WWP" (<http://oraclesyndicate.twoday.net/stories/2560160/>) by Kevin Coogan

Prominent Members

- Leslie Feinberg, author.
- Sara Flounders, author.
- Caleb Maupin, journalist.

External links

- Workers World Party homepage (<http://www.workersworld.net/>)

- Fight Imperialism - Stand Together, Youth group affiliated with Workers World Party (<http://www.fistyouth.wordpress.com>)
- *The global class war and the destiny of American labor* (<http://www.archive.org/details/TheGlobalClassWarAndTheDestinyOfAmericanLabor>) by Sam Marcy New Haven, CT : Distributed by Revolutionary Communist League (Internationalist), 1979 (a foundational document of the "Global Class War tendency")
- *The class character of the Hungarian uprising : proposed resolution on the class character of the Hungarian uprising : November 3, 1956* (<http://www.archive.org/details/TheClassCharacterOfTheHungarianUprisingProposedResolutionOnThe>) by V. Grey New York, reissued by Workers World, 1959 (another foundational document of the "Global Class War tendency")

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