

California Coed, 21, Is the American Communist Party's Foremost Ingenue

By JOHN CORRY

Special to The New York Times

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She is also a history student on the Berkeley campus of the University of California. There, amid its stone and glass splendors, a young man raced up to her last Monday and said the Supreme Court had just ruled that Communists could not be compelled to register with the Government.

"Yippee," she shouted. Like a cheer leader at a California football game (something she has never seen) she spun into the air, heels tucked under her body.

"Wonderful," she said, "just wonderful."

The week before, in a letter to The Daily Californian, the student newspaper, Miss Aptheker wrote:

"I have been for a number of years, I am now, and I intend to remain a member of the Communist Party of the United States."

"It is time to affirm the right to be a Communist," she said, adding that under the Subversive Activities Control Act of 1950 she owed the Government "\$12,150,000 and 5,075 years in prison" for failing to register.

Miss Aptheker, who is a member of the party's national youth commission, asserts that Communist membership among the young has grown fourfold in the last five years.

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they are pen pals, discussing party programs and recruitment efforts among youths. Communism, Miss Aptheker says, has enormous appeal for young people.

She dismisses as "sectarian" the criticism, often voiced by extreme leftists, that the party is a collection of tired men and women. In truth, she says, the party is the "vanguard" of the American left, staking out its advanced positions.

The 1964 Campaign

"Everyone said we were finks for supporting Johnson in 1964, but they failed to understand our true position, which was much more complex," she says. "Goldwater was a neo-fascist and as early as 1960 the party recognized that neo-fascism presented the main danger to the country."

Miss Aptheker is 5 feet 2 inches tall, shuns make-up and wears her hair pulled back severely from her forehead. She gestures with both hands, spreads her fingers open for emphasis, and pursues arguments with measured intensity.

Recently she married Jack Kurzweil, who is studying for a doctorate in electrical engineering. She considers Aptheker her public name, however, and it is as Aptheker that she is listed in the university records.

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Associated Press
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Her mother is also a Communist, and into the family's sixth-floor apartment on Washington Avenue in Brooklyn came many men and women, full of polemics and dialogue, to discuss Marxism at the dinner table.

The late Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, once the head of the party, was a visitor. So was W. E. B. DuBois, who helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and who died in Ghana, a Communist, at 93.

'I Loved Her'

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"I loved her very much. She was very gentle and dignified. Even in prison they called her Miss Flynn."

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Civil War, was called La Pasionaria. That's right, she says, Krupskaya was Lenin's wife.

As the daughter of a leading Communist, Miss Aptheker was not entirely happy in grade school. Teachers, she says, sometimes discriminated against her, and some parents were not pleased when their children wanted to play at her apartment.

Ideology and Outings

Miss Aptheker says her parents tried neither to force her into Communism nor to shield her from it. Ideology, she insists, was balanced by family outings and other aspects of domestic life.

Nevertheless, as a child she first came to know that her parents were somehow set apart from other people. In particular, she recalls a teacher in the sixth grade. She says:

"This one woman was very nasty because my father was a Communist. She singled me out and turned all her prejudices on me."

It was better at Erasmus Hall High School. Miss Aptheker's marks improved although she was nearly expelled for refusing to take part in a Civil Defense drill. Later in high school she tried to form a human rights committee for civil rights activities.

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In her adolescence Miss Aptheker twice marched in Washington—once to protest nuclear weapons, once to advocate the nuclear test ban treaty.

In New York at the age of 17 three of her ribs were cracked during a pacifist demonstration in Father Duffy Square. Miss Aptheker, who said a policeman had hit her with a club, did not tell her parents about it because she "didn't want to worry them and wanted to go to a movie that night with a boy I really liked anyway." The ribs grew back crooked.

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dealer, the Sheraton-Palace in San Francisco and The Oakland Tribune for allegedly refusing to hire Negroes.

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On the Berkeley campus, with its more than 27,000 students, dissent blossoms easily. Each day thousands of handbills are passed out and hundreds of posters and broadsides praise or damn dozens of causes.

In front of Sproul Hall, where the great battles of the Free Speech Movement were fought, students sit at tables to collect money, gather signatures for petitions or pass out literature. Young Americans for Freedom and young Trotskyists may sit next to one another without exchanging more than frosty glances.

Sometimes on the far left there is a sullen intensity that explodes into political nihilism. A group waving a banner that proclaimed it as the Provisional Organizing Committee for True Marxism-Leninism once pre-empted the front row in a peace march that was supposed to include all shades of liberal opinion.

"Highly sectarian," Miss Aptheker says. "I almost blew a gut."

There are other problems, too. After Miss Aptheker made the recent announcement that she was a Communist, she immediately had her phone disconnected to forestall crank calls. She could not, however, stop the flow of mail (though the door of her house carries neith-

er her name nor her husband's) and at least one letter held out the threat of death.

Miss Aptheker is bemused, she says, by what she considers the excessive scrutiny of the police: She says she once picked up her phone—this was before her recent announcement—and heard a tape playing back part of a conversation she had had the day before. Someone, she surmises, was tapping her phone.

Still, there is a collegiate gaiety here. At Berkeley there seems to be little opprobrium attached to being a Communist. A student, for example, passes Miss Aptheker, stops, turns and yells:

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