

MIM THEORY

Volume Two/Three: REVOLUTIONARY FEMINISM

Edited by:

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MIM Theory

Volume Two/Three:
Revolutionary Feminism

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Part I

Editor's Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Republishing notes

Alyx Mayer and Felix Brown would like to express comradely thanks to the Maoist Internationalist Ministry of Prisons (**MIM Prisons**) for their scan of the original MIM Theory documents, and their work in continuing the spirit of MIM.

MIM were the first Maoist group in amerikkka to take a firm stand against heterosexism, and contributed hugely to Third Worldism, an “alter-globalisation” movement and discourse surrounding the destruction of the First World. The editors do not necessarily endorse everything contained within, but we do think that it provides a valuable point of debate and departure, and are republishing this document for its historical value.

Typographical and presentation modifications have been made in the interests of readability. All graphics have been replaced in kind. The text itself remains unmodified apart from an occasional, clearly marked, editor’s note.

If you notice any spelling or grammatical mistakes in this edition of MIM Theory, please notify us by email: **contact** **-(@)- alyx.io**; RE: “MIM Theory mistake”; include the issue and page number so we can make the necessary corrections to subsequent revisions.

Other issues of MIM Theory can be found at:

<http://alyx.io/library/mim-theory/>

About MIM Prisons

MIM (Prisons) is a cell of revolutionaries serving the oppressed masses inside U.S. prisons. We uphold the revolutionary communist ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and work from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat. Our ideology is based in dialectical materialism, which means we work from objective reality to direct change rather than making decisions based on our subjective feelings about things. Defining our organization as a cell means that we are independent of other organizations, but see ourselves as part of a greater Maoist movement within the United States and globally.

Imperialism is the number one enemy of the majority of the world's people; we cannot achieve our goal of ending all oppression without overthrowing imperialism. History has shown that the imperialists will wage war before they will allow an end to oppression. Revolution will become a reality within the United States as the military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

Since we live within an imperialist country, there is no real proletariat—the class of economically exploited workers. Yet there is a significant class excluded from the economic relations of production under modern imperialism that we call the lumpen. Within the United States, a massive prison system has developed to manage large populations, primarily from oppressed nations and many of whom come from the lumpen class.

Within U.S. borders, the principal contradiction is between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Our enemies call us racists for pointing out that the white oppressor nation historically exploited and continues to oppress other nations within the United States. But race is a made-up idea to justify oppression through ideas of inferiority. Nation is a concept based in reality that is defined by a group's land, language, economy and culture. Individuals from oppressed nations taking

up leadership roles within imperialist Amerika does not negate this analysis. The average conditions of the oppressed nations are still significantly different from the oppressor nation overall. As revolutionary internationalists, we support the self-determination of all nations and peoples. Today, the U\$. prison system is a major part of the imperialist state used to prevent the self-determination of oppressed nations.

It is for this reason that we see prisoners in this country as being at the forefront of any anti-imperialist and revolutionary movement.

<http://prisoncensorship.info>

Chapter 2

Notes to this issue

2.1 MIM's pseudonyms

In the previous republished volume of MIM Theory (*A White Proletariat?*), the editors decided to remove the pseudonyms of each article's author(s) as they appeared in the original text. In this volume, however, members of MIM are mentioned throughout the articles in various instances, for example, to present facts/stats collected by a member of MIM other than the article's author(s), or to intercommunicate back-and-forth between authors in an article. Instead of removing, or rewording these instances, they are kept as they appeared in the original text.

MIM explained:

MIM is an underground party that does not publish the names of its comrades in order to avoid the state surveillance and repression that has been historically directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements. "MC"... means "MIM comrade", or a Party member; "MA" means "MIM associate."

— MIM Theory #1: *A White Proletariat?*, p. 2.

i.e.: MC5, or MC99

2.2 Additional credit

A special thanks to the proofreaders who helped catch the spelling and grammatical mistakes we overlooked, in addition to pointing out formatting errors and flaws, and making other helpful suggestions to improve readability:

Mackenzie Brown

Joshua Alexander

Lily Sloane

Part II

Gender and Revolutionary Feminism

Chapter 3

Introduction

In this issue of MIM Theory, MIM seeks to explain how it sees gender oppression, especially in the First World. Building on Lenin's theory of imperialism, which united theories of class and nation in one coherent unit, MIM asked whether or not gender oppression fits in so neatly with the theory of imperialism.

In the last issue of MIM Theory, MIM showed that the white working class is not exploited. It simply cannot be counted on as an ally in the struggle of the oppressed nations and proletariat to overthrow imperialism. MIM does not see any debt the world owes to the white working class as workers except to help it get past its parasitic past and move forward into a peaceful, harmonious society free of nation, class and gender conflict. This debate continues in this issue's letters.

The first step in asking a similar question about gender required throwing aside conventional thinking in so-called feminist circles in the United States. This thinking held that it was incorrect to struggle over women's issues at all—not so much because women's issues were to be ignored as they were in the day Marx and Engels wrote about the issues, but because struggle amongst women or between women and men was supposedly incorrect. Instead of struggle, the therapist's opportunist-money-making point of view has come to dominate the women's movement in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. By this view, no woman's view of her

oppression should be challenged, since all women are sisters in oppression and all women's views are correct.

The overall issue of gender led MIM back into history—especially the history of the Chinese Revolution and the history of the U.S. women's movement in the 1960s. MIM came to unfavorable conclusions about the state of the First World women's movement today, based on its accomplishments and practice.

After looking around, MIM came to the conclusion that, like First World labor, First World women are mainly oppressors, not oppressed people. Fully realizing that many critics of MIM say it is impossible to change the world without a majority of people on your side, MIM explained that it has full confidence in the majority of the world's people—Third World laboring classes.

That is to say the obvious. Now comes the hard part. Contrary to what makes sense from a purely theoretical point of view, in this issue we will look at applications of theory in struggle before we look at theory itself. This is necessary in part because many people consciously or unconsciously believe that theory has no place in the women's movement. As we shall see, some so-called feminists have raised opposing theory and science to a principle of the women's movement. Hence, this issue starts with relatively recent struggles and historical achievements of women's liberation and then proceeds to more general theory.

In this issue, MIM also takes a slight detour back into the issue of the bourgeoisification of the Amerikan working class. In "A White Proletariat?" MIM accidentally left out an article and some charts on the position of the white nation working class. Recognizing that perfectionism needlessly delays revolutionary advance and that no MT can ever be totally complete, MIM is happy to correct its error in this issue and include some other material from our readers as well.

3.1 A Rating for Enver Hoxha

In elections in March 1992, the last remnants of the communist revolution in Albania, which came to power in 1944, were thrown out of government. Albania is now a plain capitalist country like Greece.

The successors to communist leader Enver Hoxha in Albania after 1985 were outright capitalist-roaders, who instead of following the trail blazed by Mao and the Gang of Four in China, took Albania to its current economic crisis and capitalist restoration. However, MIM gives Hoxha a grade of 70% like Stalin, but for different reasons.

Regarding the historical evaluation of the first stage of Albania's revolution during World War II, MIM can have no major objections to Hoxha's work. Hoxha led the communists to kick out the fascists, collectivize agriculture, nationalize industry and liberate women.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Hoxha provided a genuine service to the international proletariat by leading, with Mao, the critique of the Soviet revisionist takeover. Hoxha and Mao defended the memory of Stalin against the Khrushchev revisionists, who changed Soviet policy in order to oppose armed struggle in the Third World and run the Soviet economy on a profit basis.

For this alone, MIM gives Hoxha a lot of credit. Most communist parties in the world and all the others in Eastern Europe went along with the Khrushchev revisionists to one degree or another, although communists in Asia and Africa in particular leaned toward Mao. With the experience of one major capitalist restoration after a successful Marxist-Leninist revolution, Hoxha summed up history and formed part of the correct pole in the international communist movement. (For example, there had been one restoration before in Hungary that crushed the revolution in its infancy, but the Bolshevik Revolution was unique in going down to defeat after decades on the socialist road.)

Further to Hoxha's credit, he joined Mao in press releases backing the Cultural Revolution in China and the theory of continuous revolution. This brings us to 1976, the death of Mao Zedong. By this time, Hoxha had already given more than 30 years of correct leadership to the international proletariat.

Before Mao's death, Hoxha held all the views necessary to be a member of MIM today—no small feat given the influence and power of revisionism all around the world. It is only the last years of Hoxha's life—1976-1985—that MIM quarrels with,

and MIM believes that the mistakes Hoxha made were honest mistakes for the most part. The lies he made to the communist parties of the world regarding Mao Zedong and Hoxha's flip-flops can be interpreted as the necessities faced by a leader in state power surrounded by social-imperialists and renegades like Deng Xiaoping. MIM understands the difficult situation Albania was in after the death of Mao.

MIM does not make essentially nihilist-idealist criticisms the way anarchists and Trotskyists do. No revolution perfectly matches ideals. To not support a revolution because of this fact is utter political immaturity characteristic of intellectuals and the petty-bourgeoisie. In Hoxha's case, however, his line was criticized by the Maoist pole after 1976. There was someone in real life who had a better line than Hoxha's, but Hoxha ignored and mistakenly opposed the correct line espoused by the Maoists.

If no one had developed the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and no one had told Hoxha that there was a bourgeoisie in his party, then we would have to say that Hoxha had a historical record of somewhere between 90% and 100% correctness. As it happened though, the Maoists told him he had a bourgeoisie in his party forming continuously, and after the death of Mao, Hoxha decided it wasn't true and returned to Stalin's theory of class struggle. This major error is why Hoxha can only rate a 70% evaluation.

Today it is clear that Hoxha's own successor, Ramiz Aha, himself was the top bourgeois leader in the PLA. Hence, Mao was right and Hoxha was wrong. It was not easy to do a more thorough study of the Soviet Union than Mao did. With the historical experience of the Soviet Union and China's own rich historical experience, Mao was in a position to come to the correct conclusions regarding how the vanguard party relates to the means of production and class struggle under socialism.

Note: For further references, see MIM Notes 45/52.

3.2 Labor Aristocracy Continued

Informing Spartacist League of What Marx and Engels said about Bourgeoisified Workers

[by Scarlet Pumpernickel]

Regarding the criticism by the Spartacist League’s Workers Vanguard (W.V.) (see MIM Notes 60 or MIM Theory #1), W.V. states that MIM reveals its “deep, anti-Marxist pessimism about the possibilities for class struggle in the United States,” because of the MIM’s stand on the labor aristocracy in the United States. There are two points to be considered in this statement by the W.V. First, what is a “correct” Marxist position on the labor aristocracy? Second, what is “class struggle”?

Here are some references on the first point:

Lenin cited Marx and Engels on developments in the British labor movement—“Tactics of the class struggle of the proletariat,” 1914:

All this should be compared with numerous references by Marx and Engels to the example of the British labor movement, showing how industrial “prosperity” leads to attempts “to buy the proletariat,”(1) to divert them from the struggle; how this prosperity in general “demoralizes the workers;”(2) how the British proletariat becomes “bourgeoisified”—“this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat alongside the bourgeoisie;”(3) how its “revolutionary energy” oozes away;(4) how it will be necessary to wait a more or less lengthy space of time before “the British workers will free themselves from their apparent bourgeois infection;”(5) how the British labor movement “lacks the mettle of the Chartists;”(6) how, “owing to Britain’s monopoly, and as long as that monopoly lasts, the British workingman will not budge.”(7)

Lenin also had this to say in “Imperialism and the Split in Socialism,” 1916:

These two trends, one might even say two parties, in the present-day labor movement, which in 1914-16 so obviously parted ways all over the world, were traced by Engels and Marx in England throughout the course of decades, roughly from 1858 to 1892... In a letter to Sorge [*Ed. note: Friedrich Sorge, a German-born proponent of Marxism in amerika.*], dated Sept. 21, 1872, Engels informs him that Hales [*Ed. note: John Hales, an English chauvinist, and longstanding opponent of Marx/Engels in the Communist International.*] kicked up a big row in the Federal Council of the International and secured a vote of censure on Marx for saying that “the English labor leaders had sold themselves...” In a letter to Kautsky [*Ed. note: Karl Kautsky, another European chauvinist and outspoken critic of Bolshevism*], dated Sept. 12, 1882, Engels wrote: “You ask me what the English workers think about colonial policy. Well, exactly the same they think about politics in general. There is no workers’ party here, there are only Conservatives and Liberal-Radicals. and the workers gaily share the feast of England’s monopoly of the world market and colonies.”

That these ideas, which were repeated by Engels over the course of decades, were also expressed by him publicly, in the press, is proved by his preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, 1892. Here he speaks of an “aristocracy among the working class,” of a “privileged minority of the workers,” in contradistinction to the “great mass of working people.” “A small privileged protected minority” of working class alone was “permanently benefited” by the privileged position of England in 1848-68, whereas “the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement...” “With the breakdown of that (England’s industrial) monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position...” The members of the “new” unions, the unions of the unskilled workers, “had this immense advantage, that their minds were virgin soil, entirely free from the inherited ‘respectable’ bourgeois prejudices which hampered the brains of the better situated ‘old unionists.’”

But under the surface the movement (of the working class in England) is going on, is embracing ever wider sections and mostly just among the hitherto stagnant lowest strata. The day is no longer far off when this mass will suddenly find itself, when it will dawn upon it that it itself is the colossal mass in motion.”

As for the meaning of “class struggle,” references:

As to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this struggle of the classes, and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society...

— Letter from Marx to Joseph Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852.

The ultimate object of the political movement of the working class is, of course, the conquest of political power for this class, and this naturally requires that the organization of the working class, an organization which arises from its economic struggles, should previously reach a certain level of development.

On the other hand, however, every movement in which the working class as a class confronts the ruling classes and tries to constrain them by pressure from without is a political movement. For instance, the attempt by strikes, etc., in a particular factory, even in a particular trade to compel individual capitalists to reduce the working day, is a purely economic movement. On the other hand the movement to force through an eight-hour, etc., law is a political movement.

— Letter from Marx to Friedrich Bolte, Nov. 23, 1871.

And in an article for Bernstein, Engels says:

For a number of years past the English working class movement has been hopelessly describing a narrow circle of strikes for higher wages, shorter hours, not, however as an expedient or means of propaganda and organisation, but as the ultimate aim... One can speak here of a labor movement only in so far as strikes take place here which, whether they are won or not, do not get the movement one step further.(8)

The W.V. obviously does not know what it is talking about as far as what a Marxist position is, and it is unlikely that W.V. will ever consider what the founders of scientific socialism had to say concerning the origins of the labor aristocracy.

The problem the W.V. and other opportunists have with the labor aristocracy is this: the majority of the workers in an advanced capitalist country receive and have been receiving privileges and benefits paid for from a portion of the superprofits extracted from laborers in other countries, particularly in the Third World. For years, especially since World War II, Amerikan workers have been living “high off the hog” and supporting the exploitation of the Third World. Now that the monopoly capitalists are in a mad rush to export capital abroad in the form of “runaway” shops, national chauvinism is on the rise, which leads to... what?

Finally, what “struggles” of the U S. workers? Since 1950, union membership has declined from about 30% of the workforce to about 15%. No one in the labor “movement” has done or will do anything to protect the immigrant workers, especially “illegals.” We therefore should consider the U.S. labor aristocracy as useless, at best. Lenin said in a preface to *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* that the labor aristocracy will play the role of the “Versailles” in a war against the “Communards.” This is already happening as evidenced by the increase in physical attacks against non-whites.

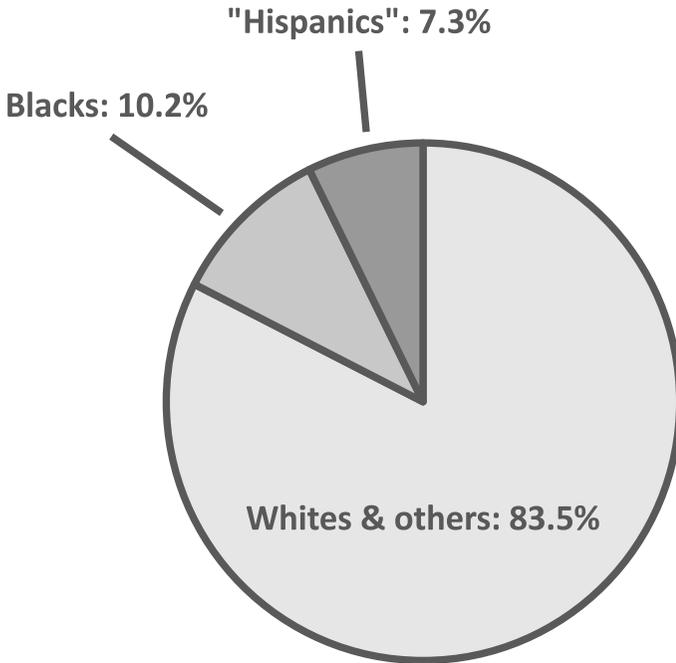


Figure 3.1: Blacks and "Hispanics" as a percentage of employed workers known to the government within U.S. borders in 1989

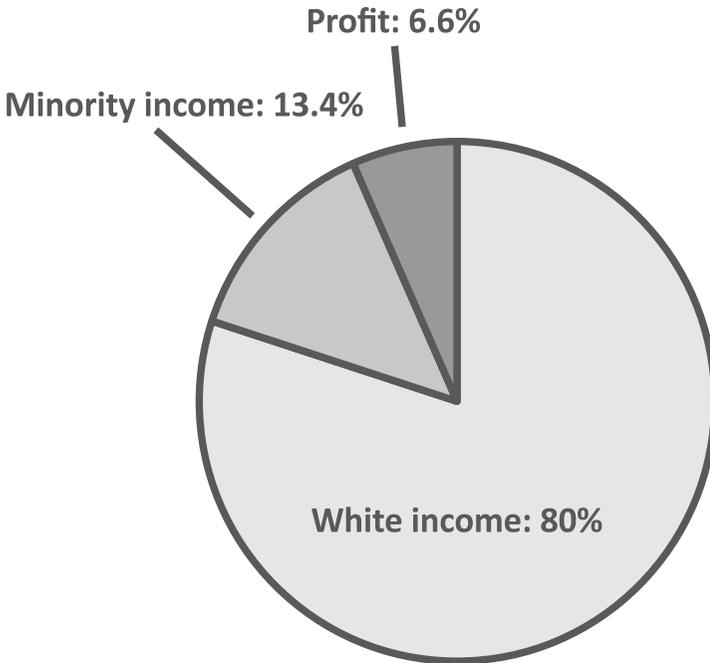


Figure 3.2: 1990 Profits: (1) Assume minorities get 67% of whites' pay. (2) Assume minorities are 20% of the workers. (3) Assume no exploitation of workers outside the U.S. (4) Then none of the \$293 billion in before-tax profits came from Euro-Americans.

MC5 adds: From the quotes that Scarlet Pumpnickel has reproduced from Marx, Engels and Lenin, the only question left on the issue of the historical legacy behind our position is the precise size of the labor aristocracy. The Spartacist League is typical in believing that it is very small, while MIM believes that it has grown apace with the extraction of surplus from the expanding ranks of the international proletariat. The labor aristocracy is still a minority of workers on a world scale, but the majority of workers in the First World. Engels' remark that there is no labor party at all in England is very telling in this regard even for his period of time. He did not regard the problem as a small one at all.

Taking Apart the Left Business Observer

Dear MIM:

Concerning the letter by Doug Henwood (MIM Theory #1, “A White Proletariat?”) of the Left Business Observer.

1. *The author seems to be saying it is the fault of the people like MIM and other “leftists” that the white workers are voting for Duke. This is a very interesting twist of reality. Without having the luxury of being able to take a poll, we can only assume that the majority of people who consider themselves on the “left” share Doug Henwood’s views vis-à-vis Maoism. Probably as many as 90% of these people would agree with Doug Henwood. Now, these people all have connections going back 20 or more years, and all have access to a great deal more resources than the juveniles in question. Not only that, but they have been hawking their line for a long, long time. These, after all, are the same people who convinced everyone—or nearly everyone—to work for Jesse Jackson four years ago.*

If “fault” is to be found for the political backwardness of white workers, should it not therefore be placed at the doorstep of the Doug Henwood’s, the democratic socialists, the social democrats, the this and the that?

In other words, if Doug Henwood really believes that the white workers can be won over to a “left” program, then why on earth doesn’t Doug Henwood et. al. put one out for all to see? [Scarlet Pumpernickel faults MIM for the same thing. MIM is getting closer to having all the pieces of research needed. After the next MT issue on the intersection of class, nation and gender and another upward spiral of struggle, we’ll see what we can do. —MC5]

This is not a new issue with the “left.” The fact is that the “left” has not been able to do anything for 20 years.

Why? Because, first of all, it is bankrupt. It doesn't believe in anything. And it is the section that doesn't do any "research." As a matter of fact, the views represented by Doug Henwood go back to the revisionism of Karl Kautsky. Come on Doug Henwood, check it out; you sound like a smart person.

For Doug Henwood's information, there was a strong labor aristocracy during the 30s, when white workers might have had real potential. How, then, can the labor aristocracy disappear under conditions of an increase overall in the standard of living of the white workers?

2. *Doug Henwood seems to object to the observation that more than \$10 is a "whopping" wage, asking the author of such a statement, "What planet are you on...?" The real question is: What planet is Doug Henwood on? Within the confines of the USA there is a growing section of workers who earn the minimum wage of \$4.35 or less. Many work for \$1.00 an hour. To these people, \$10 is a small fortune. As a matter of fact, \$10 represents the amount of money many of these workers would receive per day in their native country. These workers, are of course, immigrant workers, especially so-called illegal aliens. Contrary to the opinion of people like Doug Henwood, this group of workers is not the "sub-proletariat," but in fact the real proletariat in the United States. As J. Sakai shows, these workers, especially Mexican workers in the Southwest, predominate in the garment and agricultural industries—that is, Doug Henwood, these workers feed and clothe the nation. Periodically you will read about the inhuman conditions these workers slave under—some of them even imprisoned on certain farms. Often, the bosses do not pay them because the bosses know that these workers cannot complain. Furthermore, since taxes are taken out of their paychecks, and since they do not have any political or "human rights," you would think that people like Doug Henwood would be in the forefront in defending these workers under the slogan: "No taxation without representation!"*

3. *Doug Henwood asserts that Maoism is dead. Can Doug Henwood please explain to those of us who ain't too bright precisely and exactly what that means? What is Maoism, for example?*
- a) *Maoism to begin with is the application of the science of People's War to defeat a stronger enemy. Of course, this is not really new. The Germans beat the Romans some centuries ago in the Black Forest with nothing but spears. And of course, the minutemen beat the redcoats during the Revolution of 1776. In any case, is this part of Maoism dead? In that case, then all the people of the world should not bother trying to throw off the chains of imperialism.*
 - b) *Mao Zedong developed the theory of Marxism-Leninism to a higher level in the works "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" and "On Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." Could Doug Henwood please show us how this is dead?*
 - c) *Perhaps Mao Zedong's views on economics are dead. For example, that a poor, backward, semi-colonial country can throw off its dependence on foreign capital, and, by relying on the masses, achieve a self-reliant economy, free from internal or external debt, in which inflation cannot arise and in which the standard of living of the masses can gradually increase. Perhaps these views are dead.*
 - d) *What about internationalism, which is part of Maoism? Within several years after liberation, the Chinese sent in half a million volunteers to assist Korea in its war against U.S. imperialism. No one else did. How could Mao be so stupid as to think that such a point of view would have any validity in today's world?*
 - e) *What about the struggle against Soviet revisionism, which Mao led? This, of course, must also be dead. After all, it wasn't Soviet revisionism that led to the demise of "communism"—it was all Stalin's fault!*

Well, the list could go on. Could Doug Henwood please explain to us "juveniles" what, after all, is dead?

This just in off the wire:

LIMA, Peru (AP)—The Raucana shantytown is a walled fortress with Guard towers. Its residents are safe and happy, but the government isn't. There is little question the slum was founded by Shining Path rebels and efforts by the government to get rid of it—and when that didn't work, to win the loyalty of its residents—have failed.

— *National Employment Digest, San Diego, 3/14/92*

And the article goes on to explain how the PCP [Ed. note: PCP, the Peruvian Communist Party, or “Shining Path.”] organized 1,200 families to seize private farmland and created a shantytown that “has become one of the best organized and cleanest slums in Lima.” The residents are divided into sectors, with their own public kitchens, meeting houses, main square and water well. The people pool money and time to buy food and cook. There are round the clock patrols so that there is almost no crime. Efforts to evict the masses have failed.

The “Shining Path,” Doug Henwood, is Maoist, and it doesn't look dead to me!!!

One last thing: Doug Henwood ends the letter with “wake up and think or in 1997, President Duke is going to throw your ass in jail.” This sounds like wishful thinking on the one hand. What are you suggesting, Doug Henwood—that we accommodate ourselves to fascism so as not to be bothered? Sounds like it.

[Signed,]

Scarlet Pumpernickel

Helping Realize Surplus-Value

From a multinational corporation's point of view, it may not matter if Third World parts or resources are assembled or used by workers paid non-exploited wages in the First World, because the profits from the Third World aspect of the business are so great. Of course, if a capitalist is buying the Third World parts at First World prices from another multinational to be assembled by First World workers, then it does matter. Such firms will go out of business or serve the role of white

collar administration of work with orders from the other companies seeking help in realizing surplus value, at the cost of sharing the surplus value that would otherwise be lost.

The question underlying all this is: Why would the capitalist pay First World workers non-exploited wages? One answer is that as the surplus value gets spread around, Amerikan capital takes the view of the multinational corporations that consider overall profits and political realities.

Another reason is that First World laborers are like the managers and sales people of Marx's day. Amerikans are the white collar workers of imperialist world headquarters. These workers help the imperialists *realize their surplus value*. *The fact that they help realize the surplus value does not mean they are the source of that surplus value.*

J. Sakai summarized this trend very well:

The historic trend has been to sharply dilute the role of productive workers even in vital industries. In food products, for example, the percentage of total employment that is non-production (managerial, supervisory, technical and clerical) rose from 13% in 1933 to 32% in 1970. A similar development took place in the chemical industry, where non-production employees rose from 16% of all employees in 1933 to 37% in 1970. In manufacturing industries as a whole the percentage of non-production employees went up from 18% to 30% in 1950-1980.

When we look at the overall distribution of employed Euro-Amerikans, we see that in 1980 white-collar workers, professionals and managers were 54%—a majority—and service employees an additional 12%. Only 13.5% were ordinary production and transportation workers.(9)

Sakai's figure on over half of white workers being white collar is very important, not just to refute Trotskyist mythology of the manufacturing worker as dominant. When over half of the waged/salaried work force is white collar that exerts a pull

on the smaller sector of white workers in manufacturing—the sector people think surplus value comes from. To keep white workers in manufacturing, capitalists must pay salaries that compare favorably with salaries in other jobs, jobs that predominantly help the capitalists realize surplus value.

Capitalists hire non-exploited workers for political reasons (in the sense of concentrated economics) which take their form in the fact that labor power is not unified in one international market. Reality is military/political separation of various markets for labor power and a white administration of production. The American labor force is an economic and military army of tens of millions, helping the imperialists realize surplus value.

Notes

1. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: 1965), vol. 1, p. 136.
2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 218.
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 290.
4. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 124.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 127.
6. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 305. Also, Engels to Marx letter, February 5, 1851; December 17, 1857; October 7, 1858 and April 8, 1863; and two letters from Marx to Engels, April 9, 1863, and April 2, 1866.
7. Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: 1965), vol. 4, p. 433.
8. H.W. Edwards, *Labor Aristocracy: Mass Base for Social Democracy* (1978), p. 186.
9. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, 1983, p. 138.

3.3 Letters

Saginaw Marxists

[The following is an excerpt from a letter to MIM. The rest will appear in future issues on the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the supposed failure of communism. For now, this excerpt touches on issues raised in MIM Theory #1, "A White Proletariat?"]

Dear MIM:

Next point—the working class in America.

Although, as you point out, the American working class is not revolutionary at this time, you fail to recognize the revolutionary potential of the American organized proletariat. As a result, you dismiss the entire American working class as a “non-revolutionary worker-elite.” However, the opposite is true.

This type of action toward the American proletariat, and unions in particular, leads to sectarianism. You can’t get the American workers to accept your program, so you dismiss and ignore them. This is a fundamental weakness in your program. Your sectarianism could lead to political isolation and disintegration. And that is a blow to every socialist political movement, when comrades (of any stripe) become demoralized because of isolation.

Sectarianism can also lead to bureaucratic centralism, which destroys internal party democracy, as well as contradicting democratic centralism: freedom of discussion and unity in action.

And this sectarianism translates into a contradictory “Third World proletariat” milieu. The proletariat in the “developing” neo- and semi-colonies of the world is historically linked to the proletariat of “advanced” capitalist and imperialist countries. Both the “First World” and “Third World” proletarians are capable of carrying out social revolutions. They need each other, such is the root of the call for world revolution, not “socialism in a single country,” the brainchild of Stalin.

The proletariat in backward and developing countries can only achieve those basic democratic tasks, common to Europe and North America, through a socialist revolution. However, the Stalinists and other reformists are incapable of carrying out these demands. A division of the working class, either by race or by political borders, results in a loss for all of the working class.

[Signed,]

Saginaw Bay Marxist Study Group

*Supporters of the Trotskyist Fourth International**March 29, 1992***MC5 Replies**

Apparently, the writers have not had a chance to read MT #1 “A White Proletariat?” People who have seen this magazine know that MIM has already addressed the fundamental issues raised above.

MIM is aware that once the Communist Party (USA) gave in to Khrushchev revisionism in the 1950s, the struggle against Trotskyism was politically disarmed. To make up for those errors perpetrated principally on the youth, MIM makes a point of addressing individual Trotskyist polemics. Other Trotskyists are welcome on these pages in future issues, especially to address MT #1 and Kostas Mavrakis’ book *On Trotskyism*. It is in this way of confronting Trotskyists that MIM has recruited some ex-Trotskyists. We won’t promise our readers anything though, because MIM rarely finds Trotskyists who care enough about what they are doing to take the trouble to read some things from the side they have been condemning for decades (along with the anti-communist media). Trotskyists also generally share a penchant for sloganeering and cheerleading, which is another reason why we won’t be surprised if they can’t say anything about the substantial work written on the subjects. If the writers are an exception to the rule, we apologize in advance.

The writers are very typical of the kind of Trotskyist mistakes that Kostas Mavrakis so thoroughly refuted. In particular, one will notice that the argument makes criticisms without reference to any concrete evidence. The idealist Trotskyist method goes something like this: can you imagine 100% communist success? If Mao, Stalin or other communists have not accomplished the final communist victory it must be on account of their errors. Trotskyist reasoning is a lot like religious reasoning concerning the Ten Commandments. Reality is criticized by how it stacks up against a preset list of dogmas (ideas), instead of how it stacks up against other realities.

The Trotskyists say, “You can’t get the American workers to accept your program, so you dismiss and ignore them.” In a way that is true. It is impossible to win an

entire bourgeoisified class to our program and we don't expect to. If we did, we'd sound like Bill Clinton and the Trotskyists, who both pitch to the same crowd with the same basic demands of expanding white worker privilege at the expense of Third World workers.

The Trotskyist words sound critical but they show no understanding of reality in history. It was the Stalinists of the U.S. Communist Party of the 1930s that had over 100,000 members and organized the CIO. It was the Stalinists that organized the best unions of this century. It is the Trotskyists who now fawn on the sad remnants of those unions.

The Trotskyists were a sideshow in the 1930s then as they were again in the next major upsurge in the 1960s, which was led by Maoists like the Black Panther Party, SDS and the revolutionary feminist Redstockings. Hence, the communists in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao already have the demonstrated capacity to organize oppressed workers. The reason is simple: the Marxist-Leninists in the traditions of Stalin and Mao analyze things scientifically and come up with the right strategies and tactics instead of forever condemning reality for not measuring up to ideals.

The writers add to their backward reasoning by saying that MIM's alleged political isolation is proof that the white working class is exploited! What a way to throw class analysis out the window! It's just like Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) reasoning. *You don't have 50% of the voters? Then you better go back and modify your analysis of who is oppressed. Include those white middle-class demands in your program*, say these kinds of opportunists. The only difference is that the DSA or Jesse Jackson opportunists would not claim to be Marxist and would probably be honest enough to call the people concerned "middle-class" when most Trotskyists would pretend Bubba Duke-voter is an exploited worker. Probably South Africa's DeKlerk would agree: *You don't have the majority of white voters on your side in the whites-only referendum? Better modify the referendum wording or risk isolation from the apartheid.*

People working in MIM know that MIM has never been isolated from the oppressed in this country from its birth and circulation as a xerox leaflet in prisons. In addition,

if the Saginaw Bay group is new and not a Spartacist League front, then it is also “isolated,” even more than Trotskyism has been historically from all Third World revolutions. Does that mean new revolutionary groups should not form, because they start new and small? By that reasoning, Mao’s party—started with about 20 people—never would have gotten off the ground. That kind of “liquidationist” reasoning, as Lenin called it, is also a great excuse to give up revolutionary politics. People who share that kind of reasoning will join the Democratic Party, the Greens or anything else big that is in their faces.

As for division within the working class, that is not the doing of MIM, because that was accomplished by the white workers well before MIM ever existed. MIM reminds the writers that it is the white nation voters who voted in majorities for David Duke. It is also the white workers who continuously slam the workers from Japan and Mexico. When the Amerikan workers do rise out of economism, they do so to pass laws against imports or immigration. That’s their kind of class struggle. Reality is that white workers in this country protect their material interests against Third World workers all the time and they have succeeded in appropriating surplus labor from the Third World as a result.

What would the writers say about apartheid? If the good jobs are reserved for whites, would the revolutionaries there be wrong to deny that white workers have a material interest in revolution? Would the writers then accuse the revolutionaries of being isolated from white workers? MIM says hog-wash. In Azania as in the rest of the world, the Third World proletariat will crush imperialism. No, the First World and Third World proletarians do not “need each other.” It is only the First World workers that need Third World workers in order to continue to lead their parasitic First World life.

Finally, it is a sad joke that today in 1992, the Trotskyists, as they did more than 50 years ago, are still talking about the “socialism in a single country” problem. Will they ever get concrete? Stalinists and their descendants the Maoists are the ones who have led revolutions in several countries and the Trotskyists have only had an assist (as basketball players would say) in one revolution. One man in one country for one brief period does not a revolutionary movement make.

Letters to MIM Theory

Dear MIM:

I look forward to receiving the rest of what you've written on the RCP. I must tell you forthrightly that, although I agree in part with a few of the criticisms that you raise of the RCP, on the whole I think you're on the wrong track. Many of the characterizations in the "Third Draft" are simply inaccurate, and, on areas where you are somewhat on target, the RCP has often already carried out self-criticism.

As for the criticisms the RCP has raised of Stalin and Mao (and even of Lenin and Marx), I think that they are doing exactly what needs to be done—engaging in critical debate. Again, on this point also many of your characterizations are not accurate.

When Bob Avakian says that Maoism without Leninism is nationalism plus bourgeois democracy, he is not speaking of Mao so much as he is speaking of much Maoism that did not integrate itself very well with Marxism-Leninism. As you undoubtedly know, much of the Maoist movement of the 60s was very much oriented toward radical bourgeois democracy (and anarchism), mainly because of its social roots in the student and oppressed nationalities movements.

Everyone has to start somewhere, of course, and the energy and spirit of those movements remains an inspiration, but I believe that what Avakian was trying to do was to sum up that experience in a broader historical framework. Furthermore, it's not clear that what he is doing is at this point "laying down the law" on how we should understand all these things, as he is raising some provocative theses toward the creative development and application of historical materialism.

Your quoting of Bob Avakian to the effect that the Gang of Four were "perhaps not as good as Stalin," shows the main problems of your general approach, namely that you seem unable to understand irony and sarcasm. Clearly, what Avakian meant was that, sure, the Chinese revolutionaries could have used Stalin's methods to eliminate Deng and crew, but this would not have politically armed the masses. Indeed, it's clear from your

Stalin study pack that you haven't understood this point—and that's what Mao's all about as far as I'm concerned: answering the question, how do the masses become the conscious makers of history?

One does not have to disavow Stalin entirely to understand that he really did: over time and in difficult conditions of course, politically disarm the masses. I have just finished reading the new biography of Stalin by Dmitri Volkogonov. Before you get up in arms saying that the author is thoroughly bourgeois in outlook, please rest assured that I know this and that I am able to read between the lines. However, my point is that, as one reads more and more about various things what Stalin undoubtedly did, one has to ask the question, what the hell does this have to do with building socialism and encouraging the transition to world communism? We're never going to get anywhere until we learn to such questions. By the way. I also don't see the charge of "Trotskyism" as very helpful. On the other hand, you may find the Volkogonov bio interesting on this score, because it really does show how personally ambitious and conceited Trotsky was, how much of his enmity for Stalin had to do with the fact that he (Trotsky) could not grasp why such a "mediocrity" (Stalin) had a more advanced position in the party than the true genius of the revolution.

I should add, too, that pointing to some of the New Left origins of the RCP does not turn me off. I came to Mao through [Jean-Paul] Sartre, and I still think we have plenty to learn from his Critique of Dialectical Reason, as well as from the works of Marcuse and other "philosophers of the New Left." I believe in a historical materialism that learns from many sources and struggles—indeed, I believe that this is what historical materialism fundamentally is.

Well, I'll cut this off for now, because it will be a little while before I can really develop some comments on your positions. However, I must say, again forthrightly, that it was irresponsible for you to write such things as "it still must be stressed that the RCP is not the main enemy." I'm glad that, in your view, the RCP is "getting better." Frankly, I think that they are somewhat further away from left economism than you are. I like some aspects of MIM Notes, especially the letters and replies, but I think there's some delusions of grandeur at work even in your adoption

of the MC# tags. The point of a revolutionary newspaper is to expose the bourgeoisie and other elements of reactionary society in a way that allows the masses to take up these issues as their own and to get prepared to radically change society. In their emphasis on the Revolutionary Worker as the main weapon, I think the RCP is doing an excellent job in this task. None of this means that you shouldn't develop Maoism as you see fit, but it is scary to me that you would even think that it needs to "be stressed that the RCP is not the main enemy." Please think again.

[Signed,]

A Midwest correspondent

MC5 Replies

This is definitely a theoretical debate that needs to be addressed within the pages of MIM Theory. It's a difficult letter to reply to because there are really three main actors involved—MIM, the RCP [*Ed. note: Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, a First-Worldist cult highly influential on the international consolidation of First-Worldist communism as practiced by the RIM; Revolutionary Internationalist Movement*], and the Midwest correspondent. We are happy to have this kind of discussion, because we find that those who continuously struggle and study are the people likely to choose MIM over organizations offering comfort, stability and a definite place in a structure that politically disarms the member.

It's very tempting to respond to this letter as if it were from the RCP, but it is not and in fact contains some distortions of the RCP's positions. Any RCP spokesperson who would like some space to address MIM Theory readers on any questions is welcome to do so on these pages in future issues.

Some of the things MIM has already written about the Black Panther Party (**BPP**), the student movement and the white working class—and MIM's differences with the RCP—are especially relevant to addressing the Midwest correspondent. In passing references to "social roots in the student and oppressed nationalities movements" our critic leaves out the tacit reference point—the white working class. The question of the white working class is something that the critic does not address at all, but it

is implicit that s/he feels the failings of some movements were its failure to address the white working class.

On the subject of Maoism “without Marxism-Leninism,” the critic incorrectly distorts the context of the RCP’s statement. It was not a historical summation of communist movement history in the West. The context was a theoretical discussion knocking down Stalin and Mao on a number of points.

In any case, assuming that the critic’s characterization of the RCP line were correct, there are and have been a lot of anarchists since the 1960s who flirt with Mao. That is no excuse for calling Maoism virtual anarchism, bourgeois nationalism or anything else without Marxism-Leninism, anymore than it is an excuse for calling Marxism revisionism because so many trends claim his mantle. In fact, there are far more varieties of revisionism and incorrect trends influenced by Marxism-Leninism claiming the banner of Marx and Lenin than there are claiming Mao. Our readers can ask MIM for a summary on the types of groups in the United States that claim to be Marxist-Leninist. When people become informed of the history of splits in the communist movement, it will be clear that the critic’s claims have no basis in fact.

It is more historically accurate to say that Marxism-Leninism without Maoism is bourgeois democracy, because without the developments that Mao pioneered, there is no way to fight capitalist restoration. The results in Albania show that the result is bourgeois democracy! The fact that our critic upholds Mao against Stalin but then goes on to trash Maoism with Marxism-Leninism seems to indicate that the critic is more interested in criticism for its own sake than consistency, something idealist critics are liable to do. (One way out of concluding that the critic is inconsistent is to assume that the critic is a Trotskyist. Trotskyists would have less bad to say about Mao than Stalin, but they would also use Marx and Lenin to criticize Mao.)

We can only assure the critic that our members have the full right to participation within the party. That includes the right of criticism and voting on proposed criticisms. There is no need to believe any anti-communist propaganda about communists as monolithic and unthinking people; hence there is no need to assume

that communists are likely to shut down their critical faculties. Quite the contrary, people inside parties are more likely to face continuous proletarian challenge and struggle than people outside parties. The party's requirement of centralism—that there is one line put into practice— itself is a guarantee of struggle, as people are not likely to want to see the whole group take the wrong line.

As for the BPP, MIM believes that before they were smashed by the state the Panthers were more Maoist than the RCP, especially from a dialectical materialist perspective. That is to say we don't accept the historical charge of bourgeois nationalism against the Panthers coming from people who do not have the political economy of the white working class down right.

Since the RCP, USA's public self-criticism on the matter of downplaying Mao's contributions, made in the RIM journal, MIM doubts very much that the RCP Central Committee would defend itself the way our critic defends the RCP. In addition, we can't expect our critic to realize that MIM had been making the same criticism of the RCP for years before the RCP made its self-criticism in recognition of Comrade Gonzalo's correct line supporting Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism. The critic should have gathered some of that conflict in MIM's differences with the RCP over its interpretation of Leninism.

On the point of MIM's conflicts with the RCP beyond theoretical practice, the critic also makes indignant claims without knowing anything about the history of conflict between the two groups. The critic could not be aware that some MIM supporters were citing Engels on the need to spend more time polemicizing than fighting the bourgeoisie. They also cited Stalin on "mercilessly delivering blows" against other trends claiming the same banner of socialism. We hope our readers will understand that few people besides MIM and the RCP people in question are in a position to know what was correct to say along those lines, because MIM is not about to go into detail on these questions for casual readers like our critic, especially since it is not clear who we have more unity with, the critic or the RCP.

Our Third Draft of criticism of the RCP explicitly says that it is an attempt to deal with broader questions of line. It is not a summation of the conflicts between our

organizations in practice, which is a sensitive topic, so MIM finds the critic guilty of not investigating, maybe even meddling.

The critic may also be surprised to learn that MIM reads bourgeois biographies of Stalin, a forthcoming review of which will be in a future issue of MT. Perhaps if s/he had read the Stalin Pack more carefully s/he would have noticed. However, no amount of reading history can remedy a fundamentally idealist approach to reading history. Bourgeois historians have been doing it for centuries and show no sign of relenting.

MIM also reads Sartre and in fact distributes some Sartre. We believe that at least as of the 1950s, Sartre's grasp of materialism was better than the critic's. Sartre clearly demarcated against Trotskyism, especially in its idealist historical method of criticizing the genuine revolutionaries.

It is especially ironic that the critic finds it appropriate to criticize Maoism as anarchism, bourgeois nationalism and bourgeois democracy, criticize Stalin and then say, "I also don't see raising the charge of 'Trotskyism' as very helpful." Perhaps this sentence, which echoes Avakian, is an admission that the critic doesn't know what Trotskyism is? Well maybe if supposed Maoists were clearer on things like the differences between Trotskyism and Maoism, they wouldn't be guilty of importing so much anarchism and bourgeois democracy into their supposed Maoism, so once again the critic contradicts him/herself. For its part, MIM educates all its recruits on the different supposedly communist trends out there and includes a brief summary describing them in the bound volume of its own publication MIM Notes. Unlike the RCP, MIM would not make a member out of a recruit who could just as well be a Trotskyist.

Anyone who knows the history of the communist movement in the Western countries knows that Trotskyism and anarchism play a bigger role in the imperialist countries than they do in the oppressed countries. The failed Spanish revolution, the near-revolution in France of 1968 and the problems that the critic alludes to in the United States in the 1960s are all clues. Rather than compromising with these trends on issues of principle with the hope of winning them over, MIM finds it necessary to criticize them.

We have no disagreement that the RCP should “be engaging in critical debate” over Stalin and Mao. If MIM thought that was what the RCP was doing, it would call for unification with the RCP.

It is the RCP’s ...

- stand on the Gang of Four, Jiang Qing in particular,
- its criticism of Stalin and Avakian’s statement against charging people with Trotskyism as if it didn’t make a difference,
- its idealist positioning of the principal contradiction in relation to the anarchy of production,
- its refusal by at least some spokespeople of the 1980s to call the RCP “Maoist,”
- its attacks on the BPP as bourgeois nationalists,
- its stands on the united front, stages in revolution and the white working class
- and its half-way self-criticized stand on smashing busing

... that make MIM suspicious that what is going on with the RCP is not dialectical materialist criticism but simple nihilist-idealist criticism.

Well that’s the low-down-and-dirty one paragraph summation of a huge set of issues, but it should point toward what the real issues are here. From the vague generalities about criticism written by the critic, MIM was not able to do much more in this response.

Perhaps the critic could clarify the following points for future MT issues. How is MIM “left-economist”? MIM sees no value to Amerikan working class economic struggles whatsoever except that they bind the white working class more tightly to the imperialists. There is no organization with a clearer stance on this question, even if the critic does not like it. We expect no gains from white working-class economic struggle and we don’t even think a revolutionary struggle of the white working class is necessary for imperialism to die, because the source of revolution is rooted in the oppressed nationalities, something MIM again agrees with Comrade Gonzalo on in terms of the international situation, including the principal contradiction. Meanwhile, the RCP program is filled with references to the economic conditions

of the white working class. The RCP makes all kinds of noise about breaking with economism, but it will never break with the worst kind of economism—imperialist-chauvinist-economism—unless it does a correct analysis of the white working class along the lines offered in the previous MIM Theory.

Finally, we see you are against our numbered pseudonyms, but what are you for? Please address how our delusions of grandeur compare with the RCP's personality cult? Is it that you are for anonymous leadership entirely? If so, how would that jive with according a role to vanguard leadership and holding that leadership accountable to the proletariat? MIM would rather have a personality cult than anonymous leadership that amounted to total liquidation of the vanguard party's role, so it remains to be seen if MIM agrees more with the critic or the RCP on this point.

Overall though, assuming the critic considers him/herself a Maoist, the most important point to make in response to our critic is that, especially in imperialist countries where budding international communist movements have originated with student and intellectual social roots, we must distinguish between historical materialist criticism on the one hand and nihilist-idealist criticism on the other. This basic point of approach will separate Maoism from Trotskyism and anarchism. Our critic should send us a buck for an excerpt from Sartre on the point.

Prisoners Take Up Theory Questions in their Lives

MIM has discovered that within U.S. borders, prisoners are consistently the group most likely to study political views and undertake revolutionary struggle. That does not mean that prisoners are all ready to take up armed struggle for communism tomorrow, but person for person, the prisoners are the most responsive of all social groups to the idea of revolution.

MC11 undertook to learn from and struggle with the prisoners regarding MIM Theory #1 and some of the issues involved in MIM Theory #2.

The first issue we covered was what the chances are that white people will rise up with the same determination as Third World people to overthrow imperialism.

When asked the same question, the prisoners are, as expected, pretty unequivocal: “None!” “Not likely that collectively white people will fight imperialism because it is set to insure that they will be taken care of.” “Impossible! Why? Because white people from a historical perspective have always sought to exploit and dominate Third World countries. And to rise up against this type of aggression is not in the interest of the capitalist/imperialist.”

One prisoner’s response to MIM Theory #1 follows:

Enclosed are ten 29 cent stamps for the “MIM Theory.” I’d send more but I’m always short of stamps due to my various projects. I liked it in that it addresses the question of working-class struggle in the U.S. I was very impressed with J. Sakai’s book and I see you are too. I think that capitalism is in a period of economic transition as it downsizes in workers employed, increases exploitation (i.e., productivity) and is more mobile than ever in its transfer of jobs, and the physical means of production to whatever country has the cheapest labor. I am also interested in more analysis on the current nature of imperialism. In any case, please send me future issues of MIM Theory.

Here is one response to the question on whether women’s groups which offer “rape counseling” spread fear about crime (a few answered simply yes; no one said no):

Yes, especially utilizing stereotypes and such—although I have no direct experience, one would only need to check out a few “wimmin” centers’ reading materials.

And in response to why white women and the court system disproportionately convict Black men for rape:

That is just another reason to discredit us brothers and to lock us up or even kill us. It also supports the illusion that black men crave white women.

[Another:]

The white woman and the court system disproportionately convict Black men for rape to further humiliate, degrade, belittle, stereotype and destroy the Black men and Black people period. Be it true or false.

MIM also asked prisoners whether they thought social workers and psychiatrists are effective. Many simply said “not at all,” or “no way.” The response so far unequivocally supports MIM’s belief that psychiatry and social work, which are supposedly used to “liberate” people’s minds and help them deal with their problems, are in fact tools of oppression wielded either to force people to “adjust” to the horrors of capitalism, or to shoot them full of drugs in the hope that their sense of outrage will disappear. This is part of our ongoing investigation into the effect of social work and psychiatry on different groups of people. MIM invites people to contribute accounts of personal experiences or general opinions of social work and psychiatry to help expand our analysis. The following are two responses from prisoners.

Psychiatrists are funny to me. No white psychiatrist can probe into the mind of a Black man or woman or child. I feel that white psychiatrists should try and analyze their own crazed minds. Social workers are home wreckers. They elevate themselves by breaking up homes of a so-called minority.

— MA141

You are looking for something to write about inside these prison walls about the social workers and committee of psychiatrists. I do not know if

you are aware of me being in lock-up for the past three years, most of it in MCU (Maximum Care Unit) because of my so-called attitude toward the prison rules along with this so-called “info” indicting me for acts around this prison.

I sometimes suffer from very bad asthma, so I have to come in contact with these so-called “people.” I have suffered from this since I was born. I was given a very high dose of stero, that was causing many unconsciousness mind problems. I wrote these people a letter to look into my complaints. The medication put some in [a] psychopath[ic] emotional disorder to think. Some of my true comrades saw this was not me, so they all came together to stop me from dealing with these doctor killers, [not to mention] how they send me out of their deaf hospital rooms with the HIV patients[—]not that anything is wrong with them[—][the point is that] they know that this drug [does the same] as in South Dakota’s genocide to destroy the revolutionaries inside the prison walls.

I’ve told these people at my last hearing about this matter to see if they are gonna let me out of MCU, but they did nothing but gesture towards me. I very much understand my struggle, so my comrade, please forgive my [English] and try to understand my points... Stay strong.

— MA142

[Ed. note: The above prisoner’s language mistakes have been corrected to improve clarity.]

Corrections [to MIM Theory #1]

MT#1 had the following errors:

- **Chapter 2.5:** MIM does not regard south Korea as a country, but rather a region of Korea under an illegitimate government installed by U.S. imperialism.
- **Chapter 2.5:** “Also, manufacturing wages may catch up with the West while overall income may decrease.” MIM meant that the manufacturing wages

of Third World countries might catch up with U.S. manufacturing wages. However, other wages in the Third World country could decline. Also, while Third World wages may grow to be a bigger *fraction* of U.S. wages, that can happen while the *total wages and income gap* between the Third World and the United States expands.

- **Chapter 2.5:** “Luckily for the bulk of the world’s population, China, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh all saw tiny improvements in per capita income between 1980 and 1988, though in some cases they also had widening income gaps. Despite these improvements, these countries were still falling behind the superexploiter countries, which got richer even faster.” MIM meant to say that China for example saw increasing internal inequality, a bigger gap between itself and the superexploiter countries and an increase in its per capita income.

Chapter 4

Women's Lib: What Works and What Doesn't

4.1 The Road To Women's Liberation: Idealism vs. Materialism

Feminists looking at the gains for women in the countries that had revolutions in the tradition of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao divide into two camps. One camp of feminists is unfavorable to the communist-led revolutions. On the surface, the reason they give is that women in those countries did not achieve complete equality.

Another camp of feminists is very favorable to the genuine socialist revolutions. These people focus on the gains women made in the revolutions.

Underlying the difference in views is usually one simple difference in approach—idealism vs. materialism. The idealists say social change is a simple matter of having the right ideology, religion or attitudes. When comparing reality to the perfect ideals, you know where you stand. By this approach, the revolutions in Russia, China, Albania and so on look bad.

The materialist approach stresses that the status of women is a real world phenomenon and what matters is what happens in the real world, not what feminists

think in their heads. **The materialist feminist not only has a goal of equality for women, but s/he also cares about finding the most effective path to get there.**

Idealist feminists from the West usually show a patriotic bias in evaluating feminist movements in other countries. That means they wish the feminists in revolutionary countries would use methods like the ones they use in their own countries. Typically, the idealists believe that the feminist aspect of the communist revolution in China did not deal enough with psychology, lesbianism, free love or whatever it is that the idealist Western feminist focuses on his/her own country.

In order to have it their way, the idealist feminists usually ignore history and cultural differences. Hence, the task of the materialist feminist is to show the silences in idealist feminist history. When those silences are made explicit, it becomes clear that idealist feminism should be renamed pseudo-feminism, a prop of the patriarchy.

In the 1920s, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin opposed "feminism," while supporting women's liberation.(1) He did not live long enough to see that the revolutionary legacy he left did more for women's liberation than any other movement. To this day, some people calling themselves Marxist-Leninists say that they oppose "feminism." They don't realize that after 75 years of history the verdict is in on materialist feminism vs. idealist feminism: idealist feminism has been as useless as Trotskyism in bringing progress, because of the same basic failed approach.

It is true that no society in modern history has equality for women. Hence, communists like Lenin and Jiang Qing knew that women still had a long way to go in their revolutions. However, the communists cannot let the pseudo-feminists get away with claiming the banner of feminism. The revolutionaries of this century have earned that banner while the idealists have simply dragged it through the mud.

We proceed by pointing to the positive accomplishments of women as revolutionaries especially in China and Albania. Then we show the negative accomplishments of the pseudo-feminist movements that tried to do without the theories, strategies and tactics of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

Whether it be the anarchist feminist movement in Shanghai of the 1920s, the “sexual politics” forerunners in China, the “take back the night movement” in the contemporary United States, the spread of anti-battering women’s centers, the application of psychology to women’s issues in the First World or work through the channels on battering and sexual harassment, pseudo-feminism has been a horrific dead-end for women. It’s time to sum up that history and get on to the road of Maoist revolution, the most effective way forward for women.

Note: V.I. Lenin, *The Women Question*, New York: International Publishers, 1951.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

4.2 National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC) Advertisement

1275 K Street N.W. Suite 750
Washington, DC 20005
New York Times 10/25/91, p. A5

What if 14 women, instead of 14 men, had sat on the Senate Judiciary Committee during the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas?

As long as men make up 98% of the U.S. Senate and 93% of the U.S. House of Representatives, women’s voices can be ignored, their experiences and concerns trivialized.

—Excerpts from the NWPC advertisement

What if groups like NWPC did not waste their time lobbying an imperialist Senate of 98% men expecting a feminist victory?

The truth is NWPC's concerns were not ignored in the Thomas confirmation hearings. They were aired on national television for days. Rarely does any real struggle of the oppressed get such attention.

WPC's lobbying attempts fail because they are designed to fail. The goals are vaguely conceived and the strategy is absolutely no good.

What if groups like NWPC worked for Maoist revolution instead? In one generation in China (1949-1974—before capitalism was restored) the country developed from a society that allowed buying and selling of women as slaves to a society with 22.6% women in its highest government body of 2885 members⁽¹⁾—the rough equivalent of the top 700 Congressional, military and business leaders in the United States. (Remember that the United States' population is one-quarter the size of China's.)

Since the United States would not start in as bad a position as China did before its revolution, it is likely a Maoist revolution in the United States would bring even more than 22.6% women to top leadership posts. Yet with the failure of generations of the NWPC-type strategy in the United States, the United States of 1991 is still way behind the China of 1974, as evidenced by the figures on Congress the NWPC provides.

**Advances for women under Mao, and the retreats after Mao's death
(1954-1983):**

**THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN CHINA'S HIGHEST GOVERNMENT BODY, THE
NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS**

Year	Congress	% deputies	% standing committee
1954	first	11.9	5.0
1959	second	12.3	6.3
1964	third	17.8	17.4
1975*	fourth	22.6	25.1
1978	fifth	21.2	21.0
1983	sixth	21.2	9.0

Table 4.1: Beijing Review, March 7-13, 1988, p. 25.

**Mao dies in 1975; a year later in 1976, Jiang Qing is arrested.*

In 1949, the infant mortality rate in Shanghi was 150 deaths per 1000 births. In 1972 it was down to 12.6, lower than the infant mortality rate of 18.1 for whites in New York City in 1972.(2) Those concerned with women's well-being understand that this is a statement on the health of women in the two countries; these figures stand despite the fact that the United States is several times wealthier than China.

China under Mao also abolished the use of women's bodies in advertising, not to mention nude pornography. All this and much more was accomplished in 25 years.

When capitalism came back to China it came back after defeating the effort of a communist woman, Jiang Qing, to take the top leadership role in China. It has meant the return of pornography, sexist ads, prostitution, cosmetics, skyrocketing rape rates, and a decline in rural health care coverage and the percentage of women in government. This is all the more reason that MIM mourns the arrest of Jiang Qing in 1976 by capitalist-roaders. At the same time, MIM resolves to learn and teach the lessons of history and continue the struggle Jiang Qing led for women's equality.

Notes:

1. William T. Liu ed., *China Social Statistics, 1986*.
2. China: *Science Walks on Two Legs*, Science for the People (New York: Discus Books, 1974) and *Serve the People*, Victor and Ruth Sidel, Macy Foundation, 1973. Also see the chapter on women in "The Political Economy of Counter-revolution in China: 1976-1988" (MIM).

4.3 Albania and Women

With the results of Albania's second round of voting on March 29, 1992, the Socialist Party lost control of the government.(1) Previously called the Communist Party or the Party of Labour of Albania (**PLA**), the Socialists had controlled Albania from 1944 to 1992.

With the death of Mao Zedong and capitalist restoration in China in 1976, Albania's communist leaders took to the capitalist-road themselves, despite their avowed denials. Ironically, they took to criticizing Mao for saying that when a communist party is in state power, it forms a bourgeoisie in itself that must be struggled against.

Today, it is painfully clear that Albania's PLA did contain a bourgeoisie, one that allowed the ultimate in pro-Western capitalist restoration, crowned in March, 1992. Mao was right about communist parties, while Trotskyists, Hoxhaites and others who refused to admit that the bourgeoisie worms its way into communist parties in power are now proven as wrong as can be. Whether it be Gorbachev, Yeltsin or Albania's Communist Party leaders, it was the supposed "communists" who led the restoration of openly pro-Western, pro-market capitalism in the Soviet bloc. They were the bourgeoisie in the party Mao was talking about when only a minority of communist parties (but a majority of communists) would listen. The history of the Soviet bloc proves once again that Mao's greatest contribution to Marxism-Leninism was the theory of continuing class struggle under socialism and hence the need for continuous revolution and struggle against the bourgeoisie in the party.

Before Albania's communist leaders explicitly denied Mao's scientific thought in 1978 and while the PLA still opposed Soviet revisionism, Albania made many great steps forward. These gains are being tossed aside even as we write this, but they are still worth learning from. Unlike most Eastern European countries that installed communist governments with direct military conquest by Soviet armies during World War II, the Albanians defeated Hitler independently, and installed their own communist government.

Feminists looking at Albania can learn two things. One lesson is that once again no country in the world has yet achieved equality for women, a goal for the final achievement of communism. Another lesson more often overlooked, however, is that some movements for women's liberation are quicker and more successful than others.

Before the Marxist-Leninist revolution, the traditional conditions of Albanian women were more dreadful than most women in the West can imagine:

In Albania, many women were forced to cover their faces in public, were sold as child-brides through pre-arranged marriages and were subject to physical punishment and even death at the hands of their husbands or fathers if they disobeyed. In Albania, only a few hundred women worked outside of the home.(2)

Albania has a population of about three million today.

In this situation the communists stepped in and brought Albania from conditions for women far behind the West and put them ahead of women in the West—all this in a generation and a half. They started by organizing women to engage in armed struggle against Hitler's occupation armies. 6,000 women joined the fight.

A mere 34 years later, in 1978, and before Albania definitively took to the capitalist-road, women made even greater strides in the battle for political power. Not only were there now hundreds of thousands of women working instead of just hundreds, women held hundreds of the very top positions in government:

Women made up 33.3% of the deputies in the highest government body, the People's Assembly, in 1978. Women are 26% of the members of the Supreme Court, 41.2% of the leaders of the mass organizations and 25% of the party members.(2)

By contrast, at the same time in the United States, the U.S. Congress was less than 1% women.

The professions saw women advance from a society with no education for its predominantly peasant population to a society where women had education and used it in their jobs.

	Before Revolution		1978 Albania(2)		USA(3)
Teachers	600	2.7%	5,189	41%	-
Doctors	-	21.0	1,160	38	8.7%
Dentists	-	2.0	362	50	3.5
Engineers	-	-	1,464	18	1.0
Economists	-	-	7,405	63	-
Geologists	-	-	196	20	-
Engineers	-	-	1,242	29	-

In addition to the quantitative advances women made, there were qualitative ones. Women received 15 paid weeks of maternity leave and three months each year until their children were three. Workplaces arranged breaks for women to care for their babies, not to mention free prenatal and postpartum care. In addition, daycare spread widely to allow women to work. Women also gained the right to divorce and state protection for children in the event of divorce.

All these gains were cut short with the slide of the Albanian Revolution into revisionism, state capitalism and now outright pro-Western style capitalism. Feminists can only mourn the loss in previously socialist Albania and look forward to the next revolutionary communist upsurge there, guided by Mao's theory of continuous revolution.

Notes:

1. Boston Globe 3/31/92, p. 13.
2. Rosie O'Connell, "Women and the Family Under Socialism," Workers' Herald 2/82, Vol. 3, no. 1.
3. Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*, NY: Random House, 1978, p.98.

4.4 What Didn't Work in China

On the road to liberation in China, many, many feminists made the correct choice and joined the Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong Their decision contributed to the Revolution of 1949 and the advancement of feminist struggle after that.(1)

It is important to look at feminist politics in China both before the Maoist revolution and after. Pseudo-feminist critics of Mao's CCP are silent on the question of what happened to the non-Marxist feminists before 1949. They said a lot of things that pseudo-feminists are saying today and like today's pseudo-feminists, they failed in their efforts.

The women's movement in China started at least as early as 1912 with petitions and demonstrations for equal rights including the right to vote. By 1922, Communist Wang Hui-wu criticized her comrades in written articles for allowing their women's movements to be taken over by warlords. (Warlords were local authorities, military-prince-fiefdom-bosses before China was unified as a single country.) Hence, from the beginning there was a class struggle within the women's movement.

The communist women of the 1920s also thought that some of the feminists of the day had a way of destroying social change movements from within:

They were equally concerned that the women's rightists not dissipate their energies in battles between the sexes when they should be girding themselves for class warfare. Some would mock the notorious Miss Han Ying who promoted the "hate system" which turned women against

men on the erroneous assumption that their enemy was the male sex rather than an oppressor class composed of men and women.(2)

One of the problems of the oppressed is that their history gets erased or written in inaccessible places. Part of the result is the constant re-invention of the wheel. The idea that men are the supreme enemy is not a new idea restricted to the United States since the 1960s. The idea was in currency in China in the 1920s as well. Where did Han Ying and the whole anarchist feminist movement take Chinese women in the 1920s and 1930s? Nowhere.

Actually, MIM today believes that men are the enemy. It is even possible that at some point in history they may become the principal enemy. But right now, men and women are both still starving by the millions and dying in wars; targeting men sexually as if they were the all-powerful enemy is unrealistic.

One Western pseudo-feminist critic of China's revolution, Suzette Leith, describes one of the communist women close to the foundation of the CCP named Hsiang Chin-yü who had to fiercely criticize certain kinds of "feminists" at the time:

Hsiang's sharpest criticisms were for the "romantics," young girls who espoused free love and placed highest emphasis on individual liberty and happiness. Hsiang labeled these...

[Ed. note: In the original text of MIM Theory #2/#3, the article was accidentally cut off above. It has been corrected below by copying the full article from MIM Theory #4.]

... [Hsiang labeled these] girls dangerous and undisciplined.(3)

As forerunners of today's pseudo-feminists who criticize men for their individual tastes in romance, political women of the 1920s raised such self-serving behavior to a principle. The Western-educated Chinese women demanded that educated

Chinese men discard their traditional wives and start over by marrying for “love,” presumably “love” of educated women.(4) Then as now, the competition for men beneath the surface was concealed, but plain enough to the scientist of revolution.

A high point of women's liberation for pseudo-feminist Leith came when the Nationalist army (the pro-landlord, pro-U.S. army that opposed Mao's People's Liberation Army in the civil war) liberated one woman from her communist husband. Another high point for Leith occurred when a communist husband was killed so that the oppressed wife could manage to escape.(5) Transferring her own decadent Western imperialist culture to China, Leith makes a gigantic leap of logic in examining divorce in China:

The enthusiasm with which peasant women sought out divorces indicates that they, like the girl students, perceived themselves as primarily sexually rather than economically oppressed, in struggle not with the landlord but with the male.(6)

What matters to Suzette Leith, who is preoccupied with the decadent imperialist family, is not that women in China were starving by the millions, but that sexual freedom be attained. Ironically, even in the case of the two women Leith cites as oppressed by communist men, the women in question went on to stay in the Communist Party. They didn't go the individualist, sexual politics route.

MIM would like to be able to make a simple case for women's liberation, especially by pointing to accomplishments of Maoism, and avoid having to say that sexual freedom is subordinate to freedom from starvation, homelessness and militarism, but decadent women like Leith make that impossible. They insist that we dot the “i” and cross the “t,” so MIM does: sexual oppression is not the principal contradiction in the world today, and it hasn't been in China's history so far this century. The sexual struggle is subordinate to class and nation struggle.

It is necessary to prioritize struggles that way because Leith makes comments that peasant women are not oppressed by landlords and that they look on the Nationalist (pro-landlord) Army as liberators. In the first place that is a lie as demonstrated by

tens of millions of peasant women who joined the communist cause. In the second place, it is not even real feminism. The proof is in the society that people like Leith turned to—Taiwan. Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army drove the remnants of the Nationalists out of Mainland China and into Taiwan. Later we will see what the result of efforts of pseudo-feminists like Leith's have achieved for women in Taiwan. We can't leave that job to Leith, because she is so idealist she no where takes responsibility for the outcome of her kind of politics.

Leith concludes her study by saying that Hsiang was loyal to the CCP "rather than to her sex." MIM concludes that Leith is both loyal to capitalism and feudalism, on the one hand, and patriarchy, on the other hand, but demonstrates such loyalty while working under the guise of "feminism."

Janet Salaff and Judith Merkle are another pair of free-love-touting pseudo-feminists. They are sympathetic to the anarchist *cause célèbre* in Soviet history, the Kronstadt revolt of 1921. They also believe that during Stalin's reign as party leader in the Soviet Union:

The most bizarre excesses of the policy can be attributed to the aberrations of his personality.(7)

Salaff and Merkle start with the usual idealist twist on a statement that the revolutionary feminists no doubt agree with:

The Revolution vastly improved the lot of many Russian women, increasing literacy, education and legal rights. Most Soviet women work out of choice as well as necessity, and child care is available. But these accomplishments fall far short of the hopes of the women revolutionaries or the early promises of the revolution itself.(8)

Without producing any of the figures which might refute those MIM has in other articles on China, Salaff and Merkle come to the inaccurate factual conclusions that women only made token gains during the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

Nancy Milton, who lived in the People's Republic of China gave a personal testimony to rebut Salaff and Merkle in addition to analysis of the situation in Mao's China:

During one of my teaching years in Peking, I worked with a teaching group of about thirty teachers, approximately half men and half women. Within this group, virtually all specific leadership was in the hands of women, not because they were women, but because it happened, in each case of teaching specialization, political leadership or whatever, a woman had superior qualifications of experience, ability, training or knowledge... No one seemed to regard the situation as particularly remarkable except for myself, and I, too, came to take it for granted.(9)

Milton went on to thoroughly criticize Salaff and Merkle for an ahistorical and ethnocentric approach.

One interesting aspect of this is that Salaff and Merkle are some of the more correct critics of the real revolutionary feminists. They aren't as far off as some of the more reactionary ones like Leith. All the while calling for free-love, an increased role of women in armed struggle and probably anarchism, Salaff and Merkle make their "ethnocentric" mistakes.

It just goes to show how it is difficult to escape the bias of one's nationality. We must always insist on comparative research at all times, especially before we set about criticizing societies other than our own.

Notes:

1. Jack Belden's *China Shakes the World* is a good source of information on the struggle of women unleashed in the communist revolution.
2. Roxanne Witke, "Women as Politicians in China of the 1920s," *Women in China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973, pp. 40-41.

3. Suzette Leith, "Chinese Women in the Early Communist Movement," Marilyn B. Young, ed., *Women in China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973, p. 50.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Janet Weitzner Salaff and Judith Merkle, "Women and Revolution: The Lessons of the Soviet Union and China," *Women in China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973, p. 155.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
9. Nancy Milton, "A Response to 'Women and Revolution,'" *Women in China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973, p. 181.

4.5 No Gains for Women in Taiwan

The masses know the answer to the question of where Chinese pseudo-feminism led the women of Hong Kong, Taiwan, south Korea, Japan and India. In the most basic aspects, women of these places have yet to be liberated in the most elementary ways. Taiwan and Hong Kong are especially good comparisons with Mao's China, because they are Chinese and because people who opposed Mao's revolution fled to those places. In Taiwan and Hong Kong we can see that not having a communist revolution means failure for feminist goals.

People in capitalist Hong Kong, where several million Chinese live, know that pornography, prostitution and cosmetics are rampant. Just as they are in the West. No tourist will fail to notice the prostitutes. British rule in Hong Kong has made it into just another Western city, except that it has an exceptionally large superexploited population of Chinese workers.

During the 1970s when a quarter of Mainland China's top government positions were in women's hands and a woman was nearly the top leader, Taiwan was following the U.S. model family of the 1950s. In this family, men stay out with the "boys" after work hours, while women remain in tight social isolation at home. Women had a mere 36% of senior high school opportunities, and the hot topic of the day was whether or not to set quotas for women so that they could not occupy

more than 10% of college student positions, instead of being over a third of college students.

Taiwanese men continued to take concubines in...

... quasi-legal form, with the concubine transmitted into a "mistress" whose residence is separate from that of the legal wife.(1)

Becoming a wife carried the same trappings in the 1970s in Taiwan as it did in the United States.

From sexless school girl days, women move into the hard sexual sell, spending hours each week at the beauty parlor and having makeup applied for them by professionals for important occasions. [In addition,] their bodies are molded into heavy corsets and padded brassieres, their feet adorned with spike-heeled shoes, and the services of plastic surgeons are available to reshape eyes and noses to conform to the current standards of beauty.(2)

This went on at a time when in Mainland China the "Mao suit" was the standard apparel for men and women alike.

Once they are married, Taiwanese women have a very weak position, even by Western standards.

As for ownership of property, many women have not been informed that a special contract must be drawn up: if it is not, then all property acquired by them before and during the marriage comes under the husband's management and can be disposed of by him as he sees fit.(3)

In Taiwan, where the anti-communists fled from Mao, women are still housewives. They have yet to secure anything close to equal access to employment opportunity. The same is true of women in Japan and south Korea.

Real feminists realize that the real progress for women's liberation took place not with pro-capitalist reform movements like those in the West or capitalist Asian countries. Nor did real progress come with capitalist restoration in Mainland China. It was the Maoist revolutionary movement that contributed the most to accomplishing women's liberation in Asia.

Notes:

1. Norma Diamond, "The Status of Women in Taiwan: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," Marilyn Young, ed., *Women in China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1973, pp. 211-239.
2. Ibid, p. 236.
3. Ibid, p. 215.

4.6 Jiang Qing, Great Revolutionary Leader

Revolutionary communists from Peru to Amerika to China mourn the death of Jiang Qing, the world's foremost communist leader since the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.

Jiang Qing committed suicide on May 14 [of 1991] according to the social-fascist (socialist in words, fascist in deeds) Deng Xiaoping regime in China. She was serving a life sentence at her daughter's house according to the regime.

Beijing Spring 1989 Connection

The regime reported the death on the night of June 4, the anniversary of the Beijing massacre in 1989.⁽¹⁾ At this point, MIM is not aware of any details in the supposed suicide.

As the people that carried out a coup d'état against Jiang Qing to take power, the Deng Xiaoping regime cannot be trusted to report what actually happened. The New York Times speculated that the regime waited as long as possible to announce the death in order not to give students another reason to demonstrate in the crucial May and early June period. This would also be an attempt by the regime to link student "turmoil" to Jiang Qing.

On June 5, 1989 after the massacre, the Central Committee of the social-fascist regime said the people it massacred were "political rogues, remnants of the Gang of Four, and other scoundrels." The Gang of Four—Jiang Qing, Wang Hungwen, Yao Wenyuan and Zhang Chunqiao—led the Cultural Revolution in China and represented the generation of Mao's successors.

A reading of documents by leaders of the Beijing Spring shows that the bulk of the movement leadership was not in the hands of Gang of Four supporters.(2) Even though the movement in 1989 used many of the same techniques—political posters, which were outlawed by Deng after the Cultural Revolution, gaining free train transport from sympathetic train workers, getting free food wherever they travelled and going into the countryside, other cities and middle schools in order to drum up support beyond the students. Even some of the slogans—i.e., "Down with Deng Xiaoping!"—were also used during the Cultural Revolution.

Life Dedicated to Struggle

Born in 1914, Jiang Qing joined active political circles as a teen-age actor. She joined the Communist Party in 1931 when it faced savage repression from a landlord and imperialist-backed party called the Guomindang (also known as KMT or Kuomintang). She enjoyed a successful progressive and then revolutionary career in theater.

In 1934, she served three months in prison, where guards beat her, by their own testimony.(3)

Enduring several sicknesses that left her hospitalized for months at a time before and after 1949, Jiang Qing received radiation treatment for cervical cancer that nearly killed her in 1956; however, she eventually recovered to continue the struggle.(4)

After success in the Cultural Revolution, Jiang ended up in prison again in 1976—with some possible breaks for hospitalization, but she never relented in agitating against the social-fascists.

Marriage and Political Restrictions

Despite spending 60 years making revolution and spending a quarter of that time in prison as a result, throughout her life Jiang had difficulties being taken seriously simply because she was a woman.

In 1938, she married the chairperson of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong. The party required Jiang Qing to give up politics for 30 years.

Thanks to Communist Party leadership, China's women saw their conditions advance by leaps and bounds compared with pre-Liberation days. Even compared with American women, China's women enjoyed greater equality—in their access to top jobs and more equal pay for instance.

Despite rapid progress in the area of women's equality with men, China still had some old thinking that the Communist Party could not wish away. The reasons for relegating Jiang Qing outside politics were mostly incorrect. First, the party apparently held that Jiang Qing would receive great political scrutiny as the wife of Mao Zedong. Hence, any political mistakes she made would reflect on the party and the party believed that she was relatively inexperienced to be in such a position.

Jiang Qing was not yet a ranking political leader despite her years of dedication up to that point. There was no good reason Jiang Qing could not make mistakes and then correct them.

A second implicit reason the party had was that it wanted stability from Mao and Jiang, since Jiang had an actor's reputation for having had several lovers

and because Mao himself had already had two wives. Still, the two could have guaranteed stability without sacrificing Jiang Qing's political career.

A third reason given was that the party wanted to make Mao more productive and have Jiang Qing take care of him for 30 years as an important political task. Head of state Liu Shaoqi continued with this approach to keep Jiang out of politics after Liberation in 1949.(5)

Despite the many incorrect attitudes toward women both inside and outside the party, from the beginning of the marriage, Jiang served as Mao's political secretary. She was so close to Mao that she retreated with him as part of the last group to leave Yanan under enemy fire in 1947. She was also appointed a political assistant in the revolutionary army in the last and greatest military campaigns of the civil war.(6)

In the early 1950s, despite opposition from the party and Mao, she participated in the land reform movement that distributed land to the peasants and then collectivized agriculture. She did so anonymously so as not to attract attention.(7)

Without so much as a personal enemy of hers as a phony gossip source or circumstantial evidence, male chauvinist pig Ross Terrill speculates that she arranged her work in the countryside land reform movement, just so she could meet with ex-boyfriends.(8) This kind of questioning of her individual motivations is typical of her critics.

By the early 1960s, Jiang was pushing Mao to criticize reactionary cultural and educational practices. Having returned to cultural work in the early 1950s, she was in full swing by the 1960s authoring criticisms and then directing revolutionary ballets and theater.

Jiang criticized art for not changing after the revolution. Art continued to have bourgeois and feudal heroes, ghosts and other superstitions and avoided the life of the common people: "Do you eat?" She cried to the theater people, "That food came from the farmers! So serve the farmers in your plays and operas!"(9)

Throughout the Cultural Revolution, Mao gave his ideological support and theoretical aid, while Jiang Qing did the hands-on work. A strong portrait of her leadership role in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) emerges in a biography called *Chiang Ch'ing*.⁽¹⁰⁾

Jiang Qing was Right

Of all the analysts and critics looking at China after Mao, Jiang Qing saw most clearly what various individuals in the party would do after Mao died. She made the shrewdest political judgements in some cases where Mao Zedong may have proved wrong.

This is not to say that such judgements are the most important aspect of building a movement toward communism. All individuals are the product of historical forces and situations. However, too often, Jiang Qing does not receive credit for what she has done.

Nicholas Kristoff claims for instance that:

One of her grave miscalculations, in retrospect, was to make an enemy of Deng Xiaoping, now China's senior leader, and denounce him as an "international capitalist agent."⁽¹⁾

In the next paragraph of his hack-job, Kristoff goes on to talk about Jiang Qing as "using beauty and sex to win power."⁽¹⁾ Kristoff makes Jiang out to be someone who never understood politics, but Jiang was profoundly opposed to Deng Xiaoping for years. Kristoff's portrayal pretends that Jiang was not a revolutionary veteran in her 50s and 60s when attacking Deng Xiaoping.

Jiang Qing has proved quite correct about Deng Xiaoping as an "international capitalist agent" as MIM Notes has shown repeatedly in past issues.

One of Jiang's merits was her attempt to get Mao to purge Deng Xiaoping from the party much earlier than his third disgrace in 1976. She also led the attack on

Zhou Enlai in the later years, again for consistent reasons of program despite Zhou Enlai's obvious popularity and declining health. Zhou Enlai was Deng Xiaoping's direct political boss and patron.

From the beginning she also saw through Yang Shangkun, reportedly having violent disagreements with him as early as the early 1950s. Yang responded to her radical activism after 1949 by continuing to advocate her retirement from politics.(11) While the bourgeois hacks and revisionists describe this as a personal conflict. Yang's line was obviously sexist across-the-board.

It was Yang Shangkun, along with his relatives, who commanded troops to massacre the people of Beijing in 1989. Yang is now one of the top handful of leaders in the social-fascist regime.

Jiang Qing also reportedly never trusted Hua Guofeng to assume leadership of a province as early as 1967.(12) Despite her low estimation of Hua, Mao appointed him to the top government and party posts just before he died. When Mao died, Hua Guofeng arrested the Gang of Four and helped Deng Xiaoping to power.

In concluding his biography on Jiang, *The White-Boned Demon*, a whole book of psychological National Enquirer-style gossip criticizing Jiang's sex life, Terrill has this to say about Jiang's challenge to Deng from prison:

Jiang added, he's a coward and a revisionist. Only if he debates me [at the 12th Congress of the Communist Party] will he show himself a true Communist.

It was the same Lan Ping (Jiang's name from younger days) who had told Tang Na:

Unless you correct your faults, you will not be worthy to say you once were my lover.(13)

With Jiang Qing in prison because she never gave up the class struggle, all the bourgeois male-chauvinist pigs can talk about is her sex life. The handful of China “experts” who dominate the U.S. media and academic circles are too caught up in sex, not to mention intelligence-gathering, anti-communism and cultural bias, to give the U.S. public any deep understanding of what Jiang was really saying.

Unfortunately, Terrill's book is one of two well-known English-language biographies of Jiang Qing, and hence very influential. Among Terrill's promoters who put recommendations for his book on the back cover are Richard Solomon, head of the Political Science Department of the intelligence company called the Rand Corporation; Joseph Kraft, a syndicated columnist; and Professor Michel Oksenberg of the University of Michigan, Jimmy Carter's number one China intelligence agent and one of Richard Nixon's buddies. Oksenberg in particular distinguished himself by going to China with Nixon in the first group of Americans to pay respects to the regime after the Beijing massacre in 1989.

Jiang During the Cultural Revolution

Thanks to the China-watching-academic-intelligence-media elite, a number of myths have arisen with regard to Jiang Qing in the Cultural Revolution. Jiang is blamed for anything wrong that happened in the Cultural Revolution, even more so than Mao because of her hands-on role.

According to the New York Times:

During the Cultural Revolution, Ms. Jiang oversaw mass rallies in which her enemies were humiliated and physically abused. She also is said to have sought out and killed those who spurned her in earlier years.(1)

The latter accusation is not substantiated in the article, but instead, like half of the New York Times and Los Angeles Times obituaries, plagiarizes Terrill's book. These bourgeois male-chauvinists cannot imagine Jiang's having a political line.

They cannot imagine that she was engaged in class struggle her whole life, in some cases for decades against the very same people.

Every time she proved exactly right in her accusation regarding a “despotic landlord” (Yang) or “international capitalist agent” (Deng), the bourgeois hacks preferred to fantasize about her sex life or label her crazy as in the case of one state capitalist paper in China:

She twists her lips, snorts and even says some nonsense like: “This is not the Chairman’s revolutionary line.”(1)

When revisionists arrested Jiang Qing in 1976, Hua Guofeng’s press criticized Jiang Qing as a “modern witch,” “woman devil,” and “procuress.” For good measure the press added in that “from time immemorial women have been the source of all evil.”(14)

Two of Jiang Qing’s female associates, at the time of the anti-Gang of Four campaign, were tarred with the charges of “she had never had a boyfriend” and “unable to succeed with men at either a high or low level and never able to find a suitable husband.”(14)

Even one of Jiang Qing’s more sympathetic bourgeois biographers—a woman named Roxanne Witke, who at least tried to deal with serious political issues befitting state leaders—accused Jiang Qing of distorting the goals of the class enemy she attacked. Jiang Qing led the Cultural Revolution saying the Liu Shaoqi headquarters wanted to break down collective agriculture, assign plots of land to families, set quotas for farmers for sales to the state, put the rest of the product on a “free” market and open China to superexploitation by Western imperialists.(15) And when Deng Xiaoping took power, he and the rest of his class did every single thing Jiang Qing said he would.

Jiang Qing did not have to distort the class enemy’s goals. There were very large differences between the two sides, the two lines—Jiang’s line and Deng’s line. The new state capitalists led by Deng did indeed break collective agriculture, open free

markets and allow imperialist investment with wages for Chinese workers that amounted to a few dollars a day.

The most serious charges against Jiang Qing by the bourgeoisie would amount to her repressing the masses. This charge is far from proven.

The usual Western custom is to attribute all violence during the Cultural Revolution to the Gang of Four, a means by which it is possible to come up with figures in the hundreds of thousands or millions of casualties. By such a measure there is no question that the Cultural Revolution exacted a high price from the masses.

These figures include violence by factions opposed to the Gang of Four, personal vendettas carried out by people in the name of politics and whatever Western analysts deem a premature death. As explained in previous MIM Notes, this technique is culturally chauvinist and pro-bourgeois because these same analysts use different methods in examining Western bourgeois leaders.

According to Jiang's enemies in power, the Gang of Four killed 34,800 people in ten years in a country with a billion people.(16) By contrast, the regime in one year in 1983 called for a quota of 5,000 executions and apparently surpassed the quota with 15,000 or more.(17)

Meanwhile, Deng accuses both Jiang and the 1989 movement of advocating "beating, smashing, looting and burning." Actually, Jiang Qing took a clear line against violence during the Cultural Revolution. Witke paraphrased Jiang Qing of 1972 this way:

How can ideological aggression against revisionism be sustained without stimulating physical aggression, which might sever lines of communication between the leaders and led? More to the point, how could the violence that was no more than political enthusiasm in action be curbed without breaking off the revolutionary momentum needed to prevent society from sinking back into the *status quo ante* where

poor people and women were excluded from responsibility for public affairs?(18)

From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, Jiang Qing said to a rally of teenage activists:

... if you want to unite, you must be dictatorial toward the minority who persist in violent behavior.(18)

This was a clear statement that people employing violence were undermining socialism.

Jiang Qing was quite right about violence. Violence among middle school students or against intellectuals could not accomplish anything. Again and again Mao and the Gang of Four stressed that violence must be reserved for the tiny class enemy in the party on the capitalist-road and only employed cautiously. Jiang Qing spent much time criticizing ultra-leftism and anarchism for militant posturing that diverted attacks from the capitalist-roaders.

Another little known fact is that Jiang Qing was perhaps the first major leader opposed to the theory of "hereditary redness." At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, privileged children of capitalist-roaders in the party (applauded by Trotskyists for their class stance) used this incorrect doctrine to attack other children.(19) In the end, Jiang Qing prevailed, and 95% of the youth were allowed to participate in the Cultural Revolution.

This did not stop conservative and ultraleft Red Guards from attacking intellectuals and students in the name of defending Maoism. These Red Guards were hoodwinked by children of the capitalist-roaders trying to divert the attack from their parents onto other targets. They roused themselves to taunt Jiang Qing at Beijing University that they were going to "hang and fry" her.(20)

Much is made of the fact that Jiang Qing referred to the intellectuals as the “ninth stinking category” as a means of criticizing them. She also said, “attack with words; defend with force” once, but then took even that mild statement back. Jiang Qing never said, “use this period of freedom, political education and participation to form factions that kill each other and persecute intellectuals.” That this often happened in China demonstrates the difficulties of putting proletarian democracy into practice.

The people's movement in Beijing 1989 would do well to look at the problems with attaining mass participation in politics. When central government authorities allow big character posters to go up everywhere, allow strikes, allow demonstrations and encourage workers and students to administer their own affairs, there is a price to pay in shaking off the old habits of generations.

Jiang Qing knew this but did not conclude that the masses should not start running their own life as her concerns regarding violence show. Nor did she throw out the idea of relying on the masses and encouraging them toward self-reliance in politics, as most of her critics would.

While the Maoists' efforts to rely on the masses had many adverse effects for the masses themselves, a lesser known phenomenon is the several assassination attempts on Jiang Qing.⁽²¹⁾ Many political leaders would have imposed martial law and state of emergency, but Jiang Qing and the Maoists persevered through assassination attempts because they did not wish to incite the masses to further violence against each other in the name of preventing assassination attempts.

Jiang pushed this notion of relying on the masses farther than Mao did in a friendly disagreement within the ranks of Maoists. The Gang of Four held that Shanghai in 1967, and by implication the rest of the country, could organize itself into Paris Commune style governments. When Mao died, the revisionists charged that the Gang of Four moved to have various places establish Paris Communes, which is likely true.

The Gang of Four's notion of proletarian democracy makes the ideas of today's movement leaders like Wuer Kaixi, Shen Tong and Yan Jiaqi look authoritarian and elitist in comparison. These leaders only want freedom of the press and an end

to government corruption. They have little idea how workers and peasants could practice "democracy."

In contrast, in the Paris Commune style administration, the masses seize their government and economy and have the power to recall their officials at any time. Membership in the party and government posts as they were known would be abolished because of the participation of the masses. The class basis of commune rule would be assured by the masses' dictatorship over the small minority and the masses' continuous supervision of their leaders.

The Shanghai Commune of 1967 was shortlived because Mao reluctantly opposed the idea and adopted Zhou Enlai's idea of revolutionary committees as a compromise. Mao held that the masses still needed a vanguard party and that too many communes would complicate foreign policy and make dictatorship and defense preparations more difficult. In other words, Mao felt that the international conditions were not yet ripe for communes. For this reason, among others, Mao lightly referred to himself as "center-left" with the Gang of Four as the real "left."

Jiang Qing realized perhaps more sharply than Mao that the culture and ideology of the society lagged behind the advance of the developing socialist economy. She never "rested on her laurels" as Mao would say.

As an example, in 1952 she was not satisfied with women's progress, especially in the countryside, so when she got the chance, she went to a village incognito and worked behind a plow to show that women could manage plowing of the fields.

In some remarks to Witke, Jiang Qing summed up the situation of women in 1972:

Don't just look at the progress of today. Although women occupy highly important positions in industry, agriculture, education, and other departments, and there are even women in such critical industries as defense, still there are backward aspects that you should examine.(22)

This attitude of not ignoring the realities of patriarchy and class society guided Jiang Qing in her efforts to make “continuous revolution” precisely when she was at the zenith of her power and when typical rulers would have become complacent and defensive of the status quo.

Contrary to what Westerners might expect, Jiang Qing also made a detailed criticism of the personality cult which was built up around Mao Zedong to make it easier to knock down Mao Zedong Thought.(23)

Jiang's Place in History

Comrade Gonzalo in Peru has pointed out that Maoist parties engaged in armed struggle are more advanced than those that are not. Jiang participated in armed struggle led by the Communist Party to liberate China from semicolonialism and semifeudalism.

She also took the struggle to the next stage—against the bourgeoisie in the party under socialism. In that struggle she was the steadiest and foremost hands-on organizer.

After Mao's death and her own arrest with the Gang of Four, Jiang Qing demonstrated herself to be a leader of leaders. Two of the Gang of Four sold out to the regime under pressure in return for lenient sentences.

Zhang Chunqiao, the only other Maoist leader close to Jiang's stature chose a strategy of silent resistance. Jiang, however, by all accounts gave fiery resistance to the revisionists at every turn and to the end of her life. In her political trial even the bourgeois critics noticed that she embarrassed the regime politically.

In all these ways, Jiang served as the leading Maoist in the world since Mao's death. Her death is a tragic loss to the proletariat, especially in the loss of her knowledge derived from practice of the twists and turns in the first historical struggle against the bourgeoisie under socialism.

Notes:

[None of the sources for this article are by Jiang Qing supporters except for Rita Helling.]

1. New York Times 6/5/91. p. 1, p. c19.
2. See Mok Chiu Yu and J. Frank Harrison, eds., *Voices from Tiananmen Square*, Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1990.
3. Ross Terrill, *The White-Boned Demon*, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1984, p. 61.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
7. Roxanne Witke, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1977, pp. 252-3.
8. Terrill, p. 188.
9. *Ibid.*, p. p 248.
10. Dwan L. Tai, *Chiang Ch'ing: The Emergence of a Revolutionary Political Leader*, Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1974.
11. Witke, p. 255.
12. Roger Garside, *Coming Alive: China After Mao*, New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1981, p. 146.
13. Terrill, p. 393.
14. Rita Helling, "Women in China," in *China in Transition: Where to Next?*, South Australia: Adelaide Anti-Imperialist Study-Action Group, 1979, p. 43.
15. Witke, p. 305.
16. Los Angeles Times 6/5/91, pp. A1, A6.
17. Orville Schell, *To Get Rich Is Glorious: China in the 80s*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 44-6.
18. Witke, p. 331.
19. Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978, p. 75.
20. Witke, p. 297.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 352, 362.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 230.

23. Ibid., p. 361.

4.7 Jiang Qing's Post-1949 Accomplishments: Party Posts and Movement Leadership

- 1950 Spring:** Jiang participates incognito in land reform in East China; she is appointed director of the Cinema Department of the Propaganda Department and launches condemnation of the film *Inside Story of the Ch'ing Court*.
Spring through summer: Jiang leads the Wu Hsun investigation.
Fall: Jiang participates in her second episode of incognito land reform, which includes marriage reform in environs of Wuhan.
- 1951 Winter:** Jiang is forced to resign her post as chief of the General Office of the Party's Central Committee; again becomes Mao's secretary and remains so through the 1950s.
- 1954** Jiang engineers Marxian debates over the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*.
- 1961** Jiang is preoccupied with a class analysis of the performing arts.
- 1962** Jiang, with the mayor of Shanghai, K'o Ch'ing-shih, begins her attack against feudal and bourgeois conventions in art and literature.
Spring: Jiang drafts the May Sixteenth Circular. [*Document to become the most important initial set of instructions to Red Guards in 1966. —MC5*]
- 1963 December:** Jiang seeks background for *The Red Detachment of Women* on Hainan island.
- 1964 June and July:** At the Peking Opera Festival, Jiang makes her first public speech; continues opera and ballet reform behind the scenes, while stimulating other arts festivals.
December: Jiang is elected to the National People's Congress.
- 1965** Jiang organizes the critique of Wu Han's *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*, presented in Yao Wenyan's name in November.
- 1966** Jiang directs the Forum on the Work in Literature and Art in the Armed Forces in Shanghai; is appointed cultural advisor to the army by Lin Piao; drafts second May Sixteenth Circular; becomes secretary of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. (Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee is convened with Ch'en Pota as head, and Chiang Ch'ing and Chang Ch'un-

ch'iao as his deputies.) *[The Cultural Revolution Group functioned as the highest body of the party at the time. —MC5]*

1967 Jiang is appointed adviser to a reorganized PLA Cultural Revolution Group; having addressed groups and rallies for almost a year, presides over the Peking Rally commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of Mao's Yanan talks.

1969 April: Jiang is elected to the Politburo.

1971 Winter: Jiang is among the designers of the national campaign against Lin Piao; throughout the mid-1970s, continues to revise revolutionary operas, ballets, and musical compositions introduced in the 1960s; releases film versions of some. *[Jiang Oing was also the secretary of the group responsible for the anti-Lin Piao, anti-Confucius campaign of 1973-4. —MC5]*

Note: Roxanne Witke, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1977), pp. xviii-xxiii.

4.8 Soviets Embrace New Freedom to Objectify Women

While most of the Soviet Union's new capitalists seem to know little about what they're getting into, the editors of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the organ of the Young Communist League, have the whole thing worked out. They now take capitalism for granted, and argue that political institutions must be modelled on the economic system: "A market of ideas is just as essential to progress as a market of goods and services."

Thus setting the pace for politics, the new liberalized market needs only to commodify the rest of human life, and the Soviet Union will have capitalism in all its glory. "Our crude purveyors of erotica could learn something from their American colleagues." writes one *Pravda* editor, clutching a copy of *Playboy* dripping with his semen.

Another issue of *Pravda* ran a *Playboy* photo of an undressed woman fondling a life-size bust of V.I. Lenin.

DOMESTIC DEAD-ENDS

4.9 Revolution and Violence Against Women

This is a revolutionary analysis of domestic violence, sexual assault and the criminal justice system. MIM admires the intentions and dedication of people involved in providing care to women who are victims of violence. MIM also recognizes the struggle in bringing attention to these issues as essential work.

MIM is quite critical of the analysis of most professionals and organizers in these fields. The literature in the field of violence against women is rife with inaccuracies, problems of statistical interpretation, theoretical inconsistencies, dogmas, self-congratulatory praise and exaggerations of success. This article contradicts most of the existing literature—sometimes attacking it directly and by name, more often stating the truth as the best antidote to confusion.

The reformist women's movement has failed: Why we need a revolution

Revolution will save more women from battering and rape sooner than any other strategy. Figures show that battering is not going away despite increasing attention since the contemporary imperialist women's movement against battering began in 1971 in England.(1)

Thousands of shelters to protect the battered started forming in the mid-1970s. By 1980, 48 states had passed laws on domestic violence.(2)

By 1985, however, according to a survey, the battering rate was the same, statistically speaking, as in 1975.(3)

Statistics on rape are similarly discouraging for reformists. Despite the rise of the women's movement and many institutions created to deal with sexual assault, the problem of rape is increasing.

Police report that the percentage of women rape victims who report has wavered around 50% for the past 15 years with only slight variation. So the increase in rape seen is not simply caused by an increase in reporting of rape. According to police reports, rape is actually rising.(4)

Rape per 100,000 women (12 years and older):

1970:	46.3		1986:	88.6
1980:	86.3		1987:	87.5
1985:	86.6		1988:	88.1

Table 4.2: from the Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1990

I don't know anything about those particular statistics, but I do know when there's a rotten fish, and it's absolutely not true that rapes have been decreasing in number...(37)

... said Susan Brownmiller, author of *Against Our Will*, an influential book on rape.

Some figures from the Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics on rape show that rape decreased by a third from 1973 to 1987. Among other problems with the Justice Department figures is that they include men as rape victims unlike the figures above. Rape of men by other men may have decreased for reasons unconnected to the situation of women. In any case, even Justice Department figures show that overall violent crimes against women 12 and older has remained unchanged since 1973. This is despite a decrease in the victimization of men in violent crime, a trend consistent with the idea that rape of men has decreased while that of women has not.(5)

Rape is increasing at a time when the United States is already plagued by pervasive rape. "A recent random study in San Francisco showed 44 percent of women have been victims of rape or attempted rape at least once in their lives."(6)

Is mandatory arrest of batterers helping battered women?

It is important to look at the detrimental effects of mandatory arrest when assessing its overall usefulness. One problem that has yet to be overcome is the arresting of women at a far higher rate than before the law was in effect. In 20% of the calls, according to a study in Wisconsin, both the man and the woman are arrested. In nearly all cases, it is later found that the women were violent in self-defense, but the trauma and monetary cost of these arrests cannot be rescinded.(7)

In another Wisconsin study women reported dislike of the mandatory arrest policy because of inappropriate responses by the police and financial problems arising from the incarceration of the abuser who may provide the family's only income.

Some of the women also reported fear of increased abuse after the arrest. Among victims who have had contact with the police since implementation of mandatory arrest, only 27.8% said they would call for help in the future, while 68.4% of these women said they definitely would not call the police.(8)

This study went on to discuss the problem of mandatory arrest for children in the family who often feel guilty for calling the police to report the abuse, and who are left in the care of human service agencies when the police arrest both parents. The study concludes that "In most cases ... [the mandatory arrest law] has not been successful in the first months in providing safety and protection to victims of domestic abuse."(9) Far from claiming to work towards ending domestic violence, this study admits that the law does not even help the women it directly affects.

These problems will most affect poorer women, who are disproportionately oppressed nationalities. These women ultimately cannot hope to have problems of power and control in their relationships solved by an economic system that rests on the power it has over their lives. This is tantamount to asking the batterers to end their battering with no external influence. Only by overthrowing the system

that upholds the need for power of some over others can we hope to eradicate the problems of power in our relationships.

Mandatory arrest doesn't decrease battering through deterrence.

There is no national evidence that arresting batterers is a solution to domestic violence. Police arrests of batterers have become more and more common nationally, but we have no evidence that battering has decreased. In 1984, only 10% of police departments advocated arrest of batterers. By 1985, it became 31%; by 1986, 46%.⁽¹⁰⁾ With the increase in arrests and threat of arrests, believers in the criminal justice system and reformism would think that the 1985 figures for battering should be much lower than in 1975, but they aren't.

What little evidence exists on the side of the reformists—and this issue is so irrationally treated that no national figures are kept—shows that there may have been a slight decrease from 1975 to 1985 in husband battering of wives. That decrease was so small, however, that it was not statistically significant. In other words, the two surveys done in 1975 and 1985 by Straus and Gelles were incomplete samplings of battering in the country, so by statistical rules, the levels of battering in 1975 and 1985 were the same.⁽¹¹⁾

Straus and Gelles also say that severe violence by husbands has declined. Their figures show that severe battering violence has declined more than ordinary battering. According to their own statistical rules, even these figures are not compelling, but the authors went to USA Today and told the public that battering had declined.

It now turns out that more complete figures collected by the FBI on homicide committed by boyfriends and husbands contradict the Straus and Gelles study. Between 1975 and 1985, homicide of women by boyfriends and spouses rose. For white men killing white women the figure rose 30%.⁽¹²⁾

Since shelters became available, the numbers of women killing their partners have decreased 25 percent. And yet the numbers of men killing their partners have increased. Why? "It could indicate a number of

things: a desperate reaction to (men's) losing control of women," says Ann Jones, author of *Women Who Kill*.⁽¹³⁾

The evidence since 1985 is very sketchy. However, between 1984 and 1987, rates of violent crimes against women including rape and assault remained the same. More specifically, in Chicago domestic violence charges increased 82% between 1987 and 1989.⁽¹⁴⁾

In Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 1981-82 there was an experiment that is now widely cited as proof that arresting batterers decreases battering. It showed that the amount of repeat violence by batterers over a six month period decreased with arrest as compared with other police methods of handling the batterers—mediation and separation of the couple.

There were many shortcomings to this experiment which make it difficult to use the data in any conclusive analysis. Two sociologists reporting favorably on the Minneapolis experiment pointed out several problems including the large proportion of arrests made by three officers particularly enthusiastic about the experiment and who were affected by domestic violence on a day-in-day-out basis, much more than other officers in the department.⁽¹⁵⁾ It is difficult to draw conclusions based on the actions of three police officers. Because of their large contribution to the data it is not possible to tell if the short range decrease in battering was merely due to the methods employed by these officers rather than by the effects of the mandatory arrest policy.

In addition, one should note that the period of study in the experiment was quite short. It is possible that the shock value of arrest will wear off over time.

In any case, a better designed and more recent study in Omaha, Nebraska contradicts the Minneapolis experiment. The Omaha experiment involved more police officers, fewer data collection discrepancies, the entire city of Omaha and higher rates of victim willingness to be interviewed. This study showed no difference between arrest, separation and mediation as strategies of handling battering.⁽¹⁶⁾

And no study shows that the deterrence caused by arrests actually reduces battering overall. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, the change to a policy of arresting batterers in 1987 coincided with no change in the amount of battering. There may have been a slight increase. The Ann Arbor figures were collected in such a way that they could not shed light on the question of arrest. However, those arrested for domestic violence show the same likelihood of repeating within six months as those who are not arrested. Once again the evidence is inconclusive except for one thing: battering did not decrease.

	1986	1987*	1988	1989
<i>Complaints:</i>	200	234	200	229
<i>Arrests:</i>	27	104	91	111
<i>Repeat arrests:</i>	3	5	5	9

Table 4.3: *mandatory arrest policy began this year

In 1987:

- out of 104 arrests, 15 victims were assaulted a second time by same assailant.
- out of 130 complaints that did not result in arrests, 18 victims were assaulted a second time by same assailant.

(All figures from Ann Arbor Police Department.)

One common flaw in analyses of battering and police stems from a Bureau of Justice Statistics report that women who called the police were less likely to face a second assault from the batterer. The Department of Justice hastily concluded that police efforts deter the attacks of batterers.(17) Since this theory is not substantiated in other evidence, the Justice Department should have inquired further into the differences between women who call and women who do not call the police. Women who called police may have been more likely to leave their spouses than women who did not call police. This would reflect those women's survival skills rather than the effectiveness of police interventional.(18)

The overall situation of battering points to the failure of the criminal justice system in dealing with the problem. Figures collected from 1978 to 1982 show that a woman is beaten every 15 seconds.(19)

The substance of this paper and its claim that arrests do not help stop battering have been rejected by academic publications. However, the evidence for our position continues to accumulate. One of the scholars responsible for the reformist arrest-the-perpetrator orthodoxy has recently recanted and admitted that arresting batterers may actually contribute to more violence against women.(38) When it comes to the strategy of arresting batterers adopted since the mid-1980s preliminary evidence shows that it has failed: battering has increased.

Batterers' workshops don't help them stop battering

The success rate of programs for batterers is zero. Only popular prejudice dictates that therapy "cures" batterers. Figures on one treatment—used by 75% of batterer programs—called "anger management" or "anger control" show that it does not work.(20)

In one of the clearest reviews of all the batterer programs, Edward Gondolf writes:

In general, even marginal batterer programs appear to reduce violence in at least some of the batterers whom they treat... About 10 percent of program participants may be found to be violence-free and living with a female partner after a year.(21)

In the very same article, Gondolf says:

It has been estimated that as many as 30% of batterers may recover through "spontaneous remission," that is, through factors not related to treatment.(22)

(Note that this does not refer to a time-frame, but we assume that a “cure” implies relative permanence.) This means that a higher proportion of people who are not treated stop battering than people who are treated by marginal programs.(23)

Almost all studies of battering programs are misleading because they compare men who dropped out of the program with men who did not. In the case of alcoholism treatment programs and now also battering programs, it is proven that more determined people stay through to complete programs. This means that people who already intend to stop battering stay through the battering programs. The program completers believe more in stopping violence. They are more likely married to their victim, more likely employed, less likely to have been arrested before and less likely to drink than the program dropouts.(24) In other words, the battering programs do not help batterers; they simply attract batterers more likely to stop battering of their own accord.

Oddly enough, sometimes people who quit such programs are less likely to batter or at least no more likely to batter again than those who complete the programs—as in the case of anger control treatment. There are no general reviews of batterer programs that do not conclude with extreme caution or even pessimism on the state of programs as they exist even while holding hope for the future.(25) Yet even the most favorable reviews do not account for the possibility that some batterer programs make things better while others make them worse—a random outcome. For real evidence that battering programs work, there would have to be more successful programs than failures and those programs would have to succeed with the same kinds of batterers not included in the programs. Such evidence does not exist.

One counselor who works with both the batterers after arrest who are undergoing mandatory treatment and the women they abused did an informal survey of the women. She found that while they reported the physical abuse decreased, if not entirely stopped, over the 9 months of their contact with the program, the women also reported a drastic increase in emotional and psychological abuse—which, many contend, has far deeper and more permanent effects on the women.(26) This possible outcome is only one ethical problem with the current state of the anti-battering movement. More seriously, women are more likely to go back to

batterers once they join treatment programs despite the lack of evidence of their effectiveness.

Making the issue even more complicated is the fact that 26% of all couples experience violence within a year(27) and an estimated 60% experience it in the duration of a marriage. Since some studies show that large portions of batterers stop battering for a year, it becomes difficult to separate out battering men from non-battering men. Battering is that widespread. One thing for certain is that switching from a proven batterer to another partner is no guarantee of living a battering-free life.

Having a batterer attend a program does not make him any less likely to batter than before. MIM recommends that victims of battering not trust programs for batterers who have already demonstrated frequent and severe violence.

Lesbian practice is not the solution

Lesbian communities have been rocked again and again by battering problems.(28) There is nothing about women's biology that prevents them from using violence against each other.

On average, women are physically smaller and weaker than men, so on average their physical violence is not as severe as men's. The medical problems resulting to men are a small fraction of those caused by men to women in battering. Yet surveys show that women are more prone to battering than men. For example, according to one survey women are more likely to throw things at people in the midst of romantic conflicts.(29)

Another survey shows the following result:

Whereas 15.5% of the men and 11.3% of the women reported having hit a spouse, 18.6% of the men and only 12.7% of the women reported having been struck by a spouse.(30)

The violence of women is not simply a tall tale told by males. In one study, interviewing only women, the subjects were asked if they and/or their male partners had been violent in the previous year. The totals for the women's self-reports show that more women were the sole perpetrators of violence than men. The most common pattern was for both men and women to be violent. The second most common pattern was for women to use violence without any retaliation from men, and the least common occurrence was of male violence only.(31) In other words, women admit to using violence more frequently than men but with less injurious effect.

Another caveat to saying that women are less violent than men is that wives are almost as likely to murder husbands as vice-versa. Women commit 48% of all spouse murders. Outside of marriage, women only commit one tenth of the murders, but the home situation makes both sexes violent.(32)

All this shows that women and men are both prone to violence in relationships. It is not important that this violence is sometimes instigated by and sometimes a reaction by women. The tragedy is that neither will disappear within romantic relationships—lesbian or heterosexual—as they exist in this society. This violence is not something intrinsic to men but rather a product of our society.

The existence of violence by women against women, men and children is further proof that restructuring society is necessary. Lesbian separatism will not eradicate what MacKinnon has called “gendered” roles. Only the abolition of power of people over people will solve the problem.

Who benefits from the status quo?

Batterers do. As the figures show, they have not been stopped.

The anti-battering movement has brought necessary publicity to the problem of domestic violence; but it has done so in a way that is very misleading. With all the hype, people get the impression that something is being done to stop battering.

Numerous social workers, psychiatrists and non-professionals have obtained jobs in work against battering with the increase in attention to battering. Those people who have jobs in this work also benefit from the status quo of battering. Without battering then jobs would disappear.

People working in the battering field probably start with good intentions, but lose track of their original goals as they become bogged down in the details of emotionally draining overwork. Contributing to this loss of focus is an ideology and mythology of the anti-battering movement that prevents it from staying in touch with its own reality.

The ideology of the anti-battering movement gets in the way of understanding the problem.

In two words, this ideology is “liberalism” and “Liberalism.” The first “liberalism” is the belief in reforming the system, as opposed to overthrowing it to make fundamental change. The second “Liberalism” is individualism, the failure to conceive of women as an oppressed group in a thoroughgoing way. The whole notion that a psychiatrist can work with a client to solve an individual’s problems is the epitome of this line of thinking.

Most of the research presented at a conference on battering refers to psychological “traits” or “attitudes” of batterers and battered people.(33) This characterization of traits ignores the fact that batterers do not exist in a vacuum, but rather as a product of society. While MIM believes that all people must be held accountable for their actions, it is also important to recognize the roots of these actions and attack these roots as the only effective way to create change.

Without working for structural change in society, a lot of the energy and resources of the anti-battering movement will be wasted. Ann Arbor’s SAFEHouse, Domestic Violence Project—a haven for women fleeing their batterers—distributes leaflets based on the premise of individualism, a dead-end for women.

One flyer which at least two anti-battering centers distribute purports to show “traits” of batterers, as if picking the right man with the proper psychiatrist would be the ideal for romance.

The problem with this way of thinking is that it presumes that none of these kinds of behaviors are found in “normal” relationships. The profile of assailants labels all people who have ever used power in a relationship. All men are instantly implicated because, as MacKinnon wrote:

Gender is an inequality of power.(34)

This is not to mention the inequalities of power that exist for reasons of social and economic status, race, and age, to just mention a few, that create power dynamics among men and women in all relationships. This power inequality that we are all taught to ignore is a product of capitalist society and as such cannot be eliminated by just avoiding those men who more overtly use “tactics of assailants.”

The belief in the two dogmas of liberalism and Liberalism is so strong that most people writing on the subject do not even address the issue of the effectiveness of their work in stopping battering.

While the Minneapolis study received widespread attention, the Omaha study has yet to have any impact in anti-battering circles. In fact, the authors of this essay did not come across any mention of the Omaha study in any research on battering.

In the case of batterers’ programs, the problem is apparent in the very title of one article—“Seeing Through Smoke and Mirrors: A Guide to Batterer Program Evaluations.” Gondolf concludes in this article that:

Most batterers face the same pressures after completing a program, and several new batterers are likely to have taken their place in the meantime, if, in fact, the batterers are reformed.(35)

Even after this summary statement, Gondolf backpedals “not to down-play the importance of batterer programs.”(36) He ends the article by supporting criteria of success that do not include stopping batterers.

Tolman and Saunders write a whole article about their pet treatment called “anger control” and write about its (in)effectiveness in passing only in the last section of the article. They are employed in social work and psychiatry respectively.

When all is said and done, the government does not even keep national annual figures on battering. Perhaps the liberals, conservatives, reformist feminists and criminal justice system all are too afraid to hear the truth—that only communism can eradicate the problem of sexual assault and battering.

Most books and articles on battering are about case studies, gory details, struggles for funding, laws—anything that does not address the bottom-line: whether or not battering is reduced.

Where MIM stands on minorities and battering

The most important thing to realize in addressing this question is that the white criminal justice system is a repressive tool. It does not solve the rape and battering problem for white women.

Since Blacks, Latinos and Indigenous people constitute oppressed nations within the boundaries of the United States, it is doubly inappropriate to see the white justice system as liberating battered women of these nationalities. It is not possible.

National liberation struggles should support and be supported by women's liberation movements. The opportunities to abolish the power of whites over others and men over women will often occur at the same time.

What will revolution accomplish?

This essay has shown that the cheap fixes for violence against women—police, arrests, psychiatry, rehabilitation programs, shelters and even education programs—do not work. Living in the midst of oppression, it is easier to adjust than

to struggle. Being happy requires that one not think too hard about the power of people over people exercised every day.

Part of that corrupt adjustment that tempts each and every one of us is the attractiveness of power. Romance culture socializes women to find rich men attractive; it socializes women to enjoy their own passive role and tells men to enjoy their dominance. White women are tempted to ignore issues of national oppression and thus continue to enjoy their position of power in the white nation as well.

Not surprisingly then, most of the spontaneous response by the movement to stop violence against women really amounts to adjusting to women's oppression. Social workers, psychiatrists and doctors attempt to make women feel better about battering without eliminating battering.

The difference between a revolution and this kind of adjustment to oppression is that in revolution, the power of oppressor over the oppressed is eliminated step by step. This will mean taking away the economic power of the wealthy. It will mean working toward the end of government power over people, especially that of military forces. For women it will mean being no more or less vulnerable in any way than men. For oppressed nationalities it will mean running their own affairs without fear of military or police force from oppressor nations.

The struggle for this goal—communism—is not simple. We do not attempt to go into all the details here. Here we simply show that for those who have in some way realized that they cannot adjust to rape or adjust to battering, revolution is the most effective, the most realistic way forward.

Notes:

1. Ginny Nicarchy, "From the Sounds of Silence to the Roar of a Global Movement: Notes on the Movement Against Violence Against Women," *Response: To the Victimization of Women and Children*, vol. 12, no. 2, NY: Guilford Press, 1989. *Liane Davis cites 1976 as the year that battering was accepted as widespread problems in the United States: "Battered Women: The Transforma-*

- tion of a Social Problem," *Social Work*, vol. 32, no. 4, 1987. *To her credit, Davis concludes that "as social workers continue to develop services and policies, they also should remember that, although wife abuse occurs in the interpersonal arena, it is a social problem that requires social solutions."*
2. *Christian Science Monitor* 2/6/90, p. 9.
 3. Robert L. Hampton, Richard J. Gelles and John W. Harrop, "Is Violence in Black Families Increasing? A Comparison of 1975 and 1985 National Survey Rates," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, no. 51, November 1989, pp. 969-980.
 4. *Some surveys show much higher rape rates than the conservative figures below. Differing definitions and means of asking the question produce different results. Nonetheless, these figures show that using the same definition from year to year, the rape rate has increased.*
 5. *New York Times* 1/17/91.
 6. Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 23.
 7. Kevin Hamberger and Judy Arnold, "The Impact of Mandatory Arrest On Domestic Violence Perpetrator Counseling Services." *Family Violence Bulletin*.
 8. Jill Burnbaum, "Report Finds Both Good and Bad Initial Results of Wisconsin's Mandatory Arrest Law," *Women's Advocate*, vol. XI, no. 4, July 1990.
 9. *Ibid.*
 10. Janell Schmidt, "Research Note: Republication of the Minneapolis Experiment," *Response: To the Victimization of Women and Children*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1989, NY: Guilford Press, p. 23.
 11. Murray A. Straus and Richard J. Gelles, "Societal Change and Change in Family Violence from 1975 to 1985 As Revealed by Two National Surveys," *Physical Violence in American Families*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990.
 12. *Christian Science Monitor* 2/6/90, p. 9.
 13. *Ibid.*
 14. *New York Times* 1/17/91. *Chicago Tribune* 10/24/90.
 15. Lawrence W. Sherman and Richard A. Berk, "The Specific Deterrent Effects of Arrest for Domestic Assault," *American Sociological Review*, no. 49.

16. Franklyn W. Dunford, David Huizinga and Delbert S. Elliot, "The Role of Arrest in Domestic Assault: The Omaha Police Experiment," *Criminology*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1990.
17. Patrick A. Langan and Christopher A. Innes, "Preventing Domestic Violence Against Women," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, August 1986.
18. *Ultimately another serious study by two sociologists has the same problem. In trying to control for the different kinds of batterers there are to show that arrest deters battering, Berk and Newton end up showing, above all, that men with partners who signed a complaint against them were less likely to repeat violence. This theoretical flaw is fatal to the study. The study also controls for four other factors concerning the victim instead of the batterer and then presents itself as a study showing that batterers are deterred by arrest! Berk and Newton acknowledge this by saying, "We do not find that arrest deters all prospective batterers... Rather, arrest seems to deter those people whom the police are most likely to arrest."* Richard A. Berk and Phyllis J. Newton, "Does Arrest Really Deter Wife Battery? An Effort to Replicate the Findings of the Minneapolis Spouse Abuse Experiment," *American Sociological Review*, no. 50, April 1985, p. 260.
19. Ellen Steese, "What Statistics and Shelters Say About Battered Women," in *Man Against Women: What Every Woman Should Know About Violent Men*, Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Tab Books, Inc., 1989.
20. Richard Tolman and Daniel G. Saunders, "The Case for the Cautious Use of Anger Control with Men Who Batter," *Response: To the Victimization of Women and Children*, vol. 11, no. 2, NY: Guilford Press, 1988, pp. 15, 18.
21. Edward W. Gondolf, "A Guide to Batterer Program Evaluations: Seeing Through Smoke and Mirrors," *Response: To the Victimization of Women and Children*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1987, p. 16.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
23. *Higher rates of "spontaneous remission" are suggested by Scott L. Feld and Murray A. Straus in "Escalation and Desistance from Wife Assault in Marriage," Murray A. Straus and Richard J. Gelles, eds., Physical Violence in American Families, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990.*
24. Alfred Demaris, "Attrition in Batterers' Counseling: The Role of Social and Demographic Factors," *Social Service Review*, March 1989.

25. Zvi C. Eisikovits and Jeffrey L. Edleson report negatively on two out of three types of batterer programs—individual and couple counseling. “Intervening with Men Who Batter: A Critical Review of the Literature,” *Social Service Review*, September 1989.
26. Some studies have backed up this type of impression from clinicians. They are reviewed in “Overview of Literature on Efficacy of Batterer Programs,” *Violent No More*. This review starts: “The jury is still out on the question of whether treatment programs for batterers work.”
27. Studies of husband violence range considerably from about 10% of husbands per year upward to 35%. For a listing of studies see Murray A. Straus and Richard J. Gelles, “How Violent are American Families?” *Physical Violence in American Families*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990, pp. 100-103.
28. Kerry Label, ed., *Naming the Violence: Speaking Out About Lesbian Battering*, Seattle: Seal Press, 1986.
29. Murray A. Straus and Richard J. Gelles, “Societal Change and Change in Family Violence from 1975 to 1985 As Revealed by Two National Surveys,” *Physical Violence in American Families*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990, p. 121.
30. R.L. McNeely and Gloria Robinson-Simpson, “The Truth about Domestic Violence: A Falsely Framed Issue,” *Social Work*, vol. 32, no. 6, 1987, p. 485. *This study is emphatic that women commit more violence than men and that men are even less likely than women to report it.*
31. Jan E. Stets and Murray A. Straus, “The Marriage License as a Hitting License: A Comparison of Assaults in Dating, Cohabiting and Married Couples,” in *Physical Violence in American Families*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990, pp. 238-241.
32. Murray A. Straus and Richard J. Gelles, “How Violent Are American Families?” *Physical Violence in American Families*, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990, p. 98.
33. David Adams, Jann Jackson and Mary Lauby, “Family Violence Research: Aid or Obstacle to the Battered Women’s Movement?” *Response: To the Victimization of Women and Children*, vol. 11, no. 3, NY: Guilford Press, 1988, p. 15.
34. MacKinnon, p. 8.

35. Edward W. Gondolf, "A Guide to the Batterer Program Evaluations: Seeing Through Smoke and Mirrors," *Response: To the Victimization of Women and Children*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1987, p. 18.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *New York Times* 1/17/91.
38. Daniel Goodman, "Do Arrests Increase Domestic Violence?" *New York Times* 11/27/91, p. B7.

4.10 Revolution: The Only Effective Way to End Women's Oppression

Women's organizations in the United States claim to educate people while decreasing the oppressive conditions women face. People who work in these organizations accept three principles: women are oppressed in our society, this needs to change and if enough women's organisations are built, eventually this will change. Working from the first two (correct) assumptions, it is important to understand why the third is incorrect. MIM hopes to persuade feminists that working for the revolution is the only effective way to end women's oppression.

In examining the idea of changing women's position in society, we must look at the origins and the mechanisms of maintaining the system which oppresses them.

As Catharine MacKinnon argues:

A person is defined by whatever material conditions the society values; in a bourgeois society, a person might be a property owner. The problem here is that women are the property that constitutes the personhood, the masculinity, of men under capitalism.

Women are oppressed in Amerika because capitalism values ownership and the power of people over people, a right and power which men have always had and defended. As long as capitalism is allowed to exist supporting the value of power

of the few over the many, a value that manifests itself as the power of men over women, women's powerlessness will be institutionalized.

First World chauvinism in the anti-battering movement

Battering is the most commonly recognized type of violence against First World women. This is no surprise to anyone who understands battering as men controlling women; imperialist control over Third World countries is the single greatest cause of injury to their people as well. MIM understands that the violence will only be eliminated through attacks at its source; women's centers do not attack the source of the problem.

Domestic Violence Centers (DVCs) do work which assumes that men batter women because they face no consequences for these actions; their work focuses on developing laws to serve as deterrents. This is the same premise that leads to the conclusion that the death penalty will prevent crimes, and can be used effectively in our society. Penalties have not even been shown to reduce the number of repeat offenders, and the crime (battering) continues.

When DVCs talk about gains for the battered women's movement they talk about opening new shelters and gaining public recognition for the fact that battering occurs and is a crime of violence against women. These are important gains as protection for victims and as vehicles to make more people aware of the oppressions women face, but DVCs never cite a decrease in the abuse of women as a product of their movement. Not only is their vision of how to eliminate battering for women in the United States inadequate, but they do not have a view of how to fight the violence against the majority of women in the world.

These organizations do nothing to address the abuse of Third World women, the greatest abuse of women promulgated by the American government and people. Without this vision and a plan of how to carry it out, how can they call themselves women's organizations? When they gain privileges for white women they come at the expense of, or simply to the exclusion of, Third World women.

Continue the struggle in rape-prevention and reproductive “rights”

Rape prevention centers work on the assumption that sexual assault is based on individuals' attitudes and beliefs about power differences between genders. They work to prevent rape by re-evaluating behavioral norms and promoting change in gender definitions. But what about challenging society? These gender definitions are products of our society and as long as the institution behind these values does not change, individuals challenging their own ideas will still be raped.

While many in the United States are applauding the medical industry for developing Norplant, a method of contraception that is reliable and hassle-free, they ignore the many Third World women who were used to test the product.

By 1987, Norplant had been tested on over 30,000 women, mostly in the Third World. The way Norplant is administered makes it inappropriate for use in many areas of the Third World, where health systems are poorly developed. Infections were common among the testers and many women could not get Norplant removed when they wanted to; according to the Population Council, trial investigators “may be hesitant to remove the implants out of concern that the scientific data may be rendered incomplete.” Norplant is also being used as a sterilization device in Third World countries where population control is an important means of controlling the poor and oppressed by controlling women's bodies.

By 1976, 24% of all “Native American” women had been sterilized; and by 1986, 35% of all women in Puerto Rico were sterilized. Most of this is done without these women's knowledge or consent, with the knowledge and funding of the American government. What is the point of fighting for the rights of women when those who are the most oppressed are often hurt by the fight?

Capitalism uses the Third World as a market for birth control corporations, just as it does for other corporations. The U.S. government bought up Depo Provera wholesale for mass consumption in the Third World. After being found too dangerous for U.S. women's use, the deadly contraceptive is available in Central American drug stores. The American women's movement considers this a great success.

4.11 Reforming Capitalism: The Ultimate Defeatism

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.

— Audre Lorde

DVCs, Rape Prevention Centers, and other women's help organizations ignore the plight of the majority of the world's women. By focusing on gaining small improvements for women in the United States—improvements that are based on lobbying for both money and laws from the government—these organizations prolong the overthrow of imperialist patriarchy. By working within capitalism and relying on its support, these organizations lend legitimacy to capitalism. By legitimizing capitalism, they perpetuate the suffering of all women.

The Amerikan battered women's movement has done nothing to help Third World women, who suffer under a patriarchy propped by the Amerikan government. For many of these women battering is as common as a household chore, yet DVCs tacitly endorse this abuse by legitimizing capitalism, promoting the view that the violence can be fought within the system.

If you truly believe that women cannot be liberated until capitalism is overthrown, then you should not work in an organization that legitimizes capitalism. The survival promoted by the Amerikan women's movement is killing us.

WORK WITH MIM

The first goal in the fight against capitalism is to strip it of all legitimacy. Organizations that help women in this country are inherently anti-capitalist. If people were to form such an organization within the context of a revolutionary party this would serve both the party, and the women with whom it came into contact. This

idea is similar to the Black Panthers' breakfast programs. The help and education these organizations can offer within this system can serve to build a movement in the United States that is strongly based in the needs of women, focused on educating about the need to liberate Third World women and all oppressed people. We must educate from the understanding that no woman can be free under capitalism, and that to overthrow capitalism, and therefore imperialism, is the greatest act of women's liberation.

Note: Betsy Hartmann, *Reproductive Rights and Wrongs*, New York: Harper & Row, 1987.

4.12 Abolish Psychology

“Psychology” is merely a thin skin on the surface of the ethical world in which modern man seeks his truth—and loses it.(1)

This essay touches on some academic studies usually ignored and draws out their implications on the role of psychology and psychiatry in society. Some may find their appetites only whetted. They can go on to read the studies of substance reported here. Other readers can use this essay to start to place the role of psychology in society and to become more critical of it.

I. The Slippery Object of Study

Here MIM defines psychology—the worst of bourgeois social sciences—as the pseudo-science of finding human motivations, or development processes in thinking, to explain human behavior. Psychiatry is the practice (psychotherapy) of trying to alter individual behavior through the application of psychological theory to the individual.

MIM has no major quarrel with people doing research on drugs or biochemical processes of the brain. Biochemistry and medical science are legitimate fields of endeavor. As long as we recognize the limitations of using this knowledge

to explain human behavior, there is no problem. These fields can also apply a materialist philosophy of knowledge. (See MIM literature list for readings from Marx, Engels and Lenin on materialism.)

MIM also has less of a quarrel with a mechanical materialist school of thought called behaviorism, which was founded by Pavlov and B.F. Skinner. Behaviorists avoid sexual motivation and mental process issues, explaining human behavior in terms of material rewards and punishments. Much of this work is materialist and it tends to be critical of most psychology.

Hence, MIM poses the idealists of psychology—the people studying the “psyche”—against the materialists who happen to engage themselves in psychology, but who really should be called something other than psychologists. In calling for the abolition of psychology, MIM wants to stop good tuition, research and client funding from going to waste on useless idealism.

a) Traits

Psychological traits—the stable characteristics often attributed to individuals such as “intelligence,” “laziness,” “honesty” and “capability”—do not exist. Every individual is a product of material circumstances—their situation or environment. Since a person may be placed in different environments, a person cannot have stable psychological characteristics.

There is now considerable evidence for this contention, produced by psychologists themselves. Speaking of a common phenomenon, Jones and Nisbett say:

The observer often errs by overattributing dispositions, including the broadest kind of dispositions—personality traits. The evidence for personality traits as commonly conceived is sparse.(2)

The logical *raison d'être* of psychology is under attack by psychologists, but they often seem oblivious to the implications of this attack. Many psychologists be-

lieve for instance that personality traits do not exist, while still not realizing that psychology without personality traits is really not psychology at all.

In the first third of this century, it was possible to believe that social behavior was best understood in terms of personality traits—that is, best understood by knowing people's locations on nomothetic dimensions defining individual differences in general tendency to display a given type of social behavior. Thus, the best way to predict a person's behavior in a particular situation would be to examine the primary trait which the situation taps, note the person's level on the relevant trait, and make predictions accordingly. Similarly, the best way to *explain* behavior of a given type would be to call on a personality trait corresponding to the behavior.

This model of behavior had much to recommend it early in the century. It was extremely close, if not identical, to the common sense lay view of behavior.(3)

Psychologists surmise character traits and then try to prove that people with certain traits will perform a certain two or more behaviors indicative of that trait. In other words, after deciding someone has a personality trait, the observer or psychologist looks for confirmation of that trait in more than one action by the person with the supposed trait. The results are that even when an observer attempts to find very similar behaviors in the same person, s/he fails. Typically the association of two or more behaviors is between a correlation of .10 and .15 in studies done according to Nisbett. That means that people do not consistently exhibit personality traits.

Reviewing other work, Nisbett advises against social judgements that attribute personality traits to anyone:

This work indicates that people's ability to detect covariation is astonishingly poor.

By this, Nisbett means that when people expect certain traits in people, “they tend to see it even if it is not present, and sometimes even if the opposite relation to that expected is present.” In fact, when someone has judged someone else to have a certain trait, only a very strong factual pattern in the opposite direction will convince the observer that s/he is wrong—(correlation between supposedly linked behaviors of a character trait greater than .6 in the direction opposite of what the observer thinks).

Examples of things psychologists study include lying, neatness in appearance and timeliness in turning in assignments by elementary school students. Measuring people's ability to see behavioral patterns on observance of simple behaviors such as these, psychologists find that people fail miserably. Nisbett concludes:

As three generations of social psychologists have observed, the strong preference for personal dispositions as a basis for prediction is likely to deflect people from attending to those factors that often can serve as a useful guide for predictions—that is, to situational factors or as Lewin put it, the field of forces operating at the time the behavior takes place.(4)

Another famous and worthwhile study took a group of students at Stanford and divided them into groups with the same personality scores. The study found that contrary to popular opinion, guards exhibited mean behaviors in a prison simulation strictly because of their role and it did not matter how they scored on a personality test.(5) Such a study of behavior in social roles is not objectionable to Marxists, because ultimately, classes are also social roles. But the study of social roles should not be called psychology anymore than the study of classes.

Aside from the geographic and economic factors behind people's behavior are the historical factors. The idea that people have character traits that stay the same over time has been used since Plato to justify the existence of fixed upper classes and lower classes. In contrast, even some social psychologists are beginning to recognise that psychological generalizations could never hold for more than their culture, time and place. In “Social Psychology as History,” Kenneth Gergen correctly

argues that psychologists can contribute to the historical record by systematically collecting descriptive data:

Historians may look back to such accounts to achieve a better understanding of life in the present era. However, the psychologists of the future are likely to find little of value in contemporary knowledge.(6)

Most psychologists today do not realize that the non-existence of personality traits obviates psychology and psychiatry. All that is needed to determine the well-being of people is a social analysis of social environment—a study that should not be called psychology, although people calling themselves psychologists might happen to do such studies in spite of their training.

The next section looks at how the anti-traits theory has profound implications for management theory. Whereas people only barely observe even the most trivial behaviors correctly, they cannot observe important behaviors that managers would hope to predict. This is not to mention predicting the behavior of a person transferred from one environment to another.

b) Bourgeois management theory as an application of psychology

Psychiatry has frequent use in direct class struggle at the point of production. Today, psychiatrists attempt to manipulate workers in the United States by doing things from timing bursts of music over the intercoms to sending fumes of a controlled smell through the vents. One recent study tested the work efficiency of rock'n'roll versus other kinds of music and found that rock listeners were the most efficient workers.

At a more serious level, the psychiatrist has always stood in the background ready to label those workers no longer wanted and about to be fired “insane.” In *Asylum*, a psychiatric magazine with anarchist pretensions, Brian Davey explains mania as an incompatibility between one's capacities and one's role in the social pecking order—one's job:

Why is an overinflated ego such a problem? If a person overestimates his own capabilities and explicitly or implicitly challenges the power of others then he will upset those others. As ego inflation proceeds in hypomania, the typical pattern is that the person becomes more and more irritable.

To MIM's chagrin, even the anarchist psychiatrist editing the magazine bought this individualist bullshit regarding workers. So if a worker has a lousy job and doesn't like it and becomes "irritated," the shrink will be there to label the worker "in hypomania."

Maoists do not believe in trying to fit individuals into individual positions under capitalism. No amount of psychiatric therapy can make everyone fit. The whole system must be overthrown because it squelches human potential.

Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin did not always speak in the most correct manner on these questions, even while their real underlying analysis was correct. The greatest materialists of their day the first half of this century still spoke the language of psychology. Lenin forecasted the split between Trotsky and Stalin, but he attributed the split to personality differences in his Dec. 26, 1922 statement, part of the "Last Testament:"

These two qualities of the two outstanding leaders of the present C.C. can inadvertently lead to a split.

Furthermore, according to Lenin on Dec. 24:

Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a general secretary.

Of course, Lenin also felt Trotsky had "excessive self-assurance."

Stalin and Trotsky both took this criticism from Lenin very seriously because they themselves had carried over psychological reasoning in their management theories. They both took pride in placing the right people in the right jobs. As general secretary of the party, Stalin kept extensive personnel files and assigned people where he thought fit, individual by individual. Calling people “incompetent” or “brilliant” in their jobs was regular fare. For his part, to claim the mantle of leadership of the Bolsheviks, Trotsky referred to Stalin as a “dull mediocrity.”(7) Of a certain famous general, Trotsky said:

Voroshilov is capable of commanding a regiment, not an army of 50,000.(8)

For his part, Stalin complained about some military officers he had to work with during the civil war:

For the good of the cause military plenary powers are indispensable to me here... In that case, I alone shall, without any formalities, dismiss those commanders and commissars who ruin the job.(9)

Thousands of pages have been written on Stalin just from a psychological view. Even supposedly Marxist biographers could not resist frequent psychological evaluations of Stalin. Isaac Deutscher referred to Stalin as Asian in character and said that among other things, “his intellectual needs were more limited” than Lenin’s other top-ranking colleagues.(10)

Lenin and Stalin succeeded in their management roles in spite of these kinds of psychological carryovers in their thinking. Their materialist and structural analysis was sufficient to make casual psychological references mere descriptive rhetoric. Calling a trade official in a certain area critical to maintaining Soviet food supplies a “rascal,” Stalin nonetheless recognized the whole environment he was working in as a “bacchanalia of profiteering.” He did not just remove the official on the military

front in charge of trade, as if removing an individual personality would change anything. Stalin also decreed food rationing and price controls.(11)

What Lenin and Stalin did under more desperate conditions in shorter periods of time— pick the right leaders for the right place and time— Mao Zedong more consciously avoided, particularly in the Great Leap and Cultural Revolution where he set about training masses of revolutionary successors, not just a party elite.

Some Western economists have come to recognize the value of investment on the scale that China undertook in the Great Leap.(12) With everyone making backyard steel furnaces without the transport necessary to move the steel, the short-term goals were not met. However, millions of people did learn valuable skills in the process. They confounded the experts in getting so far as to make backyard steel furnaces.

While communists do not seek to fail in their short-term goals, the factor of the political and economic education of the masses and the party rank-and-file should always be considered. Ultimately, management decisions to find the right person for the right job should be replaced by making all people the right people for all jobs. This will unleash the atomic bomb of the masses' creativity and make the advance to communism possible.

Under capitalism, before the socialist revolution, the communists do not have state power. Hence, they do not have tremendous power to alter their social environments. That means the vanguard party will have to mimic corporate management practices to some extent or find itself obliterated by circumstances unforgiving of management techniques only appropriate for socialism.

On the other hand, fighting the imperialist way will mean that the masses will not attain their goals. The vanguard party cannot motivate its members solely by the pursuit of salaries and profits. Instead, the fight against oppression itself must provide the motivation for the work of the vanguard party.

Ultimately, this oppression will motivate billions of people in the Third World to outperform their counterparts in imperialist corporations. In the United States,

MIM must help unleash those millions also motivated by oppression to build a vanguard party able to perform more tasks than any multinational corporation.

A key advantage in this struggle of the oppressed is that the oppressed have no narrow property interests in the party. They are not like technical experts who withhold their services until paid the right price. Nor are members of vanguard parties, and vanguard-led movements, like labor aristocracy workers who goldbrick their positions. The oppressed are desperate to spread resources, information and know-how as widely as possible as quickly as possible among the proletariat and its allies, so that oppression may be overthrown faster. The proletariat should not recognize anyone who does not do that as communists.

The only time when a property-element of conflict enters the vanguard party and complicates leadership questions is the time that the bourgeoisie either directly or through revisionism seeks to take over the vanguard party. At those times, some individuals may have to claim that they are better leaders than others promoting revisionism or bourgeois interests. Comrade Gonzalo in Peru undertook just such a difficult struggle and won when most communist parties in the world turned to revisionism with the fall of Khrushchev and ended up dissolving in recent years. In situations of confusion, it would have been incorrect not to credit a Gonzalo, because to do so would have been to equate him with revisionists of many shades and therefore to confuse right and wrong.

Anarchists believe there are no leaders in a social movement against oppression while subjectivists tend to think that everyone's opinion is equally valid, at least within an oppressed group. Both anarchists and subjectivists failed in launching the armed struggle in Peru. That task fell to Gonzalo and his party.

Despite the importance of individual leaders in history thus far, their personalities, sexual motivations, cognitive structures and individual psyches were of no importance. What was important was their analysis and action that represented the interests of large groups of people.

c) Lenin on Freud and some aspects of psychology

Like hundreds of women Ph.D.'s in psychology, sociology and literature decades later, Lenin sensed the negative implications of Freudian psychology for women:

Freudian theory is the modern fashion. I mistrust the sexual theories of the articles, dissertations, pamphlets, etc., in short, of that particular kind of literature which flourishes luxuriantly in the dirty soil of bourgeois society... It seems to me that these flourishing sexual theories which are mainly hypothetical, and often quite arbitrary hypotheses, arise from the personal need to justify personal abnormality and hypertrophy in sexual life before bourgeois morality, and to entreat its patience. This masked respect for bourgeois morality seems to me just as repulsive as poking about in sexual matters. However wild and revolutionary the behavior may be, it is still really quite bourgeois.(13)

Lenin would have agreed with MacKinnon that there was no way, no matter how cleverly, to fuck oneself to freedom. Lenin is correct that in some sense the Freudians, the Christians and today's advocates of "sexual politics" all share the same premise—that somehow sexual choices and tastes make a big difference. For Lenin, bourgeois sexuality and sexuality that claimed to challenge it were not worth differentiating, not worth "poking about in."

Young people, particularly, need the joy and force of life. Healthy sport, swimming, racing, walking, bodily exercises of every kind, and many-sided intellectual interests. Learning, studying, inquiry, as far as possible in common... Healthy bodies, healthy minds.(14)

Lenin went further to attach Freudianism to the general decadence of imperialism, the moribund stage of capitalism where social relations started to decay and clear the way for a new mode of production:

Dissoluteness in sexual life is bourgeois, is a phenomenon of decay. The proletariat is a rising class. It doesn't need intoxication as a narcotic or a stimulus. Intoxication as little by sexual exaggeration as by alcohol.(15)

Here we see that Lenin would agree again with MacKinnon on the critique of Freudian derepression theories, that say people are better off recognizing human needs for sex. The proletariat does not need sex to spur it on. Instead:

It receives the strongest urge to fight from a class situation, from the communist ideal.(16)

Another legacy of psychological thinking especially Freudianism is to attack a critic by pointing to his/her sexual motivations. Freud said such attacks on his theories were part of repression, something he theorized happened that required people to block out the truth of what he was saying and certain aspects of sexual life generally. With this method, Freud made it impossible to disprove his theories. The substance of what a critic said no longer mattered, only the fact that all humans have a sexual nature that requires them to block out the unfiltered sexual truth.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a leading French organization with the trademark of "women's liberation movement" took the same position with regard to critics of its psychoanalytic approach:

Opposition is explained away in psychoanalytic terms, turned into expressions of hate or fear, dismissed as hysterical, when the group responds at all.(17)

Hence, Freudianism, individualism and bad logic live on in precisely those places where they should be struck down.

Such psychological pseudo-reasoning strikes a responsive chord in those who are both self-indulgent and unwilling to exercise their mental faculties—a whole group

of people disempowered by imperialism. Why bother thinking? Just examine the motivations for what individual people say and do. Ironically, then as today, many supposed feminists buy into Freudian or similar psychological thinking.

Lenin refuted the individualist-motivational approach quite perfunctorily in his gender struggles:

And you, completely abandoning the objective and class standpoint, “attack” *me*, accuse me of identifying free love with points 8 to 10. Astounding, simply astounding... You place in opposition to one another not class *types* but cases, which might indeed arise. But is the matter one of cases? If you take as your subject-matter the individual case of impure kisses in marriage and pure kisses in a transient liaison, it is subject-matter for a novel (since a novel carries descriptions of individuals, analysis of character, psychology, of given types)—but in a pamphlet?(18)

Lenin wrote this in 1915, but in 1991, MIM still has a hard time even entering dialogue with many people calling themselves feminists precisely for the reasons Lenin mentions. It's hard to have a discussion about the real world with someone who looks at life as one giant pot-boiler.

II. The Lack of Effectiveness

a) How to evaluate the practice of psychiatry

“Psychotic” means out of touch with reality, or unable to separate real from unreal experiences.(19)

How is it possible to prove psychiatry does not work? Isn't it an obvious success since it collected \$1.7 billion in fees in 1980?(20) Don't lots of people say they feel better after seeing psychiatrists?

In Amerika, where the myth of the individual reigns supreme, it is almost impossible to pierce the veil of superstition surrounding psychiatry. Numerous studies have proved that psychiatry does not work, but these studies do not prevent people from spending ever larger sums of money on psychiatry. The truth be damned as far as Americans and psychiatrists are concerned. In the language of the psychiatrist, Amerikan society and psychiatry are psychotic.

Rational reasoning processes go out the window to the extent that most people reading this essay probably have not heard of the argument here. It's a very simple method though. It is not possible to prove the effectiveness or lack thereof of psychiatry in an individual. Instead it is necessary to take large numbers of people and examine the results of therapy, despite the risk that the hard core Freudians will say you are "repressing" in doing so.

Take 200 people diagnosed with depression, neurosis, schizophrenia or any other problem thought of as psychological—anorexia nervosa or battering, for instance. Then take 100 of those people and send them through therapy. Take the other 100 people and give them no therapy. If 60 out of 100 people in each group are "cured" after a year, then therapy has no effect.

If 80 out of 100 people receiving therapy become "cured" and only 20 out of 100 people receiving no therapy are "cured," then we say that therapy helped. If on the other hand, only 20 receiving therapy are "cured" and 80 out of 100 receiving therapy are not "cured," then we say that therapy has had a negative effect: psychiatry will have promoted mental illness.

In taking 200 people, it is important to have what is called "random assignment" in the experiment. That means not putting the good people in the group getting therapy and all the people with the worst problems in the group receiving no therapy. For example, a study of the effectiveness of counseling on batterers found that if one accounts for the fact that people determined to be "cured" seek counselling, then psychological counseling has no effect on batterers. In fact, there is evidence that psychiatric intervention makes battering a bigger problem. (See the essay "Revolution and Violence Against Women.")

How does one account for which group of 100 has the duds and which group has the people predisposed to be cured? The best way is to draw numbers out of a hat and assign people to the therapy and non-therapy groups. This does not happen often. The second best method is to take those people committed to sticking through months of therapy and comparing them with other people likewise committed to change but not in psychiatric therapy. In this way, it is possible to account for the commitment of the client to be "cured" and not give credit to psychiatrists for curing people who would have been cured by any means because of their commitment.

b) Studies of studies

There have been so many studies regarding psychiatry's effectiveness or ineffectiveness that now there are studies of the studies. One study will show no effect of psychiatry. Another will show some positive effect and another will show a negative effect of psychiatry. The studies of studies show that overall psychiatry has no effect in curing clients. Moderate psychiatry critic and psychiatrist E. Fuller Torrey cites a more thoroughgoing criticism of psychiatry published in *Behavior and Brain Sciences* as follows:

The effectiveness of psychotherapy has always been the specter at the wedding feast, where thousands of psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, clinical psychologists, social workers, and others celebrate the happy event and pay no heed to the need of evidence for the premature crystallization of their spurious orthodoxies. The need to do so, emphasized by experimentalists and other critical spirits, has also threatened to upset the happy union.(21)

By looking at individual studies, one is able to see how it is possible to judge psychiatry as useless. Frequently, psychiatrists use drugs to give their clients confidence in their own rehabilitation. A placebo is a pill that has no medical value. It may be just a lump of flour. In some studies, psychiatrists give their clients placebos. A study of 109 psychiatric outpatients showed that 80% improved after taking the placebo for a week. Two-thirds of the people still taking the fake pills three years later reported improvement in their condition.(22)

Since this kind of manipulation works in psychiatry, psychiatrists do it in all kinds of forms all the time. In another study, 56 outpatients diagnosed “neurotic” took placebos. Their improvement “compared favorably with the results obtained by short-term psychotherapy in a similar group.”(23)

Another study tested two major schools of thought in psychotherapy against a control group and found no difference.

Indeed, there is evidence that the more deeply schooled in psychiatry, the less effective one is in therapy. Paraprofessionals have had more success than professionals in 12 studies.(24)

Torrey has collected evidence suggesting a radical change in priorities in psychiatry. However, his work is rather detailed and tame rhetorically speaking, so the Wall Street Journal and Los Angeles Times did not notice just how radical an idea it is that professionals trained in psychological theory are unnecessary. He compared witch-doctors with psychiatrists to find out what practices they have in common and concluded that even a college education is not necessary to do a psychiatrist's work, again with the exception of some rare disorders strictly medical in nature.

Once again, anything positive that psychiatrists accomplish is in spite of their training and need not be called psychiatry.

c) Qualitative detail

Just how bad psychiatry is in real life comes out in detail in a study of 12 different mental hospitals. Eight people acting as patients turned themselves into hospitals claiming they heard voices. Then they did everything possible to get themselves released right away with the exception of one of the eight people.

The result was that the hospitals kept the people from 7 to 52 days for an average of 19 days. While trying to prove their sanity, not one of the pseudopatients was recognized as sane by the hospitals, so that they were released for schizophrenia “in remission.”

In another experiment, the psychiatric hospitals were told that they had been having pseudo-patients sent to them. The hospital staffs were then asked how many people they thought were really sane out of their patients. The study concerned 193 patients.

The staff had a ten point scale for how sure they were someone was faking insanity, with 1 or 2 indicating that they were pretty sure the person was faking. It turns out that 41 out of 193 patients received a score of 1 or 2 from someone on the hospital staff. Twenty-three out of 193 were given scores of 1 or 2 by at least one psychiatrist. In actuality, however, not one of the patients was faking it.(25)

The inaccuracy of psychiatry exposed in the Rosenhan study shows that there is not much real substance to psychiatry. Only in rare cases where people need medical help—drugs—is psychiatry useful. Such cases, however, require no psychological training, only recognition of brain or other physical damage.

The government publication “Schizophrenia: Questions and Answers” is typical. Prepared by Dr. David Shore, this free pamphlet explains that there is no scientific agreement on the causes of schizophrenia.(26) This alone should alert the reader that psychiatrists aren't talking about a unitary phenomenon.

Instead, schizophrenia is described as 8 grab-bag of phenomena sure to make most people feel inadequate and in need of psychiatric care; although, Shore says that only 1% of the population develops schizophrenia.

Symptoms of schizophrenia include “social isolation or withdrawal or unusual speech, thinking, or behavior.”(27)

A person with schizophrenia may feel anxious and confused. This person may seem distant, detached, or preoccupied... or he or she may move about constantly, always occupied, wide awake, vigilant, and alert.(28)

In other words, schizophrenics could be anybody.

Almost attributing schizophrenia to the entire religious population and all people who make social judgements, Shore says:

Delusions are false personal beliefs that are not subject to reason or contradictory evidence and are not a part of the person's culture. They are common symptoms... false and irrational beliefs that a person is being cheated, harassed, poisoned, or conspired against. The patient may believe that he or she... is the focus of this imagined persecution.(29)

In other words, if a person has a rare belief, s/he is schizophrenic. A person can believe in God or make incorrect social judgements of other people and not be schizophrenic according to Shore, because those beliefs are part of the person's culture. The oppressed who rise up, however, are schizophrenic. People simply aren't persecuted in the United States, says Shore.

Not surprisingly, MIM has seen psychiatry used as a means of social control. People with radical ideas are seen as schizophrenic. In one case, a dean of a school at which MIM was doing work threatened a radical activist with being committed to a mental hospital if s/he did not stop political activities. Another case, exposed by MIM research, shows that a woman Students for a Democratic Society (**SDS**) leader (whose family wishes her not to be named) was committed to a mental hospital and subsequently drugged to death for throwing either an egg or a rock at the then-Vice President Spiro Agnew at a demonstration.

Such cases are an indictment of psychotherapy in its most seemingly neutral medical aspect. Actually for some time, drugs were overprescribed for psychological problems. There has been a movement against the overuse of drugs, but it remains a constant battle over where to draw the line. A study of one hospital with over 1,000 patients found 20% suffered complications from psychiatric drugs. Sixteen died with psychiatric drugs as the sole or contributing factor.(30)

III. Why Doesn't Psychology Disappear as a Field of Study?

So many crushing studies concerning the uselessness of psychology and psychiatry have been made, why do they persist as fields of study? Don't social scientists have any standards? The answer is the same for why pseudo-scientific theories of race never disappear: some groups of people are willing to overlook the truth for ideological benefits.

With its uses for social control—in prisons, mental hospitals, schools and workplaces—psychological theory and its practice of psychiatry are not going to disappear. The ruling groups find them too useful in controlling subordinate groups.

The strength of psychology is its acceptance by the middle class and large numbers of proletarians with illusions. The ruling class would have fewer options if it could only use police and prisons for social control.

The system of psychiatry works well for the middle classes, especially women, who are disproportionate users in the United States. Psychiatrists require a Ph.D. and hence come from upper class backgrounds. More importantly, one study shows that 90% of mental health literature espouses middle class values.(31)

With support from upper and middle classes for its ideological message, psychiatry will not disappear no matter how much of a failure it is in improving society. The mythology of the individual must go on at all costs for the propertied class to defend their position in society.

Notes:

1. Michel Foucault, *Mental Illness and Psychology*, New York: Harper & Row, 1976, p. 74.
2. Edward E. Jones and Richard E. Nisbett, *The Actor and the Observer: Divergent Perceptions of the Causes of Behavior*, General Learning Corporation, 1971.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 130.

5. Craig Haney and Philip Zimbardo, "Social roles and role-playing: observations from the Stanford Prison Study," *Behavioral and Social Science Teacher*, 1973, p. 25-45.
6. Kenneth Gergen, "Social Psychology as History," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 26 no. 2, pp. 309-320, May 1973.
7. Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography*, New York: Vintage Books, 1960, p. 248.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 202-3.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
12. Wheelwright, E. L. and MacFarlane, Bruce, *The Chinese Road to Socialism*, New York: Monthly Review, 1970, pp. 147-8.
13. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, V.I. Lenin and Joseph Stalin, *The Woman Question*, New York: International Publishers, 1951, p. 80.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
17. Claire Duchon, *Feminism in France*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 39.
18. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, p. 78-9.
19. David Shore, "Schizophrenia: Questions and Answers," Rockville, Maryland: National Institute of Mental Health, 1986.
20. E. Fuller Torrey, *Witchdoctors and Psychiatrists: The New Common Roots of Psychotherapy and Its Future*, New York: Harper & Row, 1986, p. 1.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 197-8.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
25. D.L. Rosenhan, "On Being Sane in Insane Places," *Science*, Vol. 179, January 1973, pp. 250-8.
26. Shore, 1986, p. 7.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

30. Torrey, p. 38.
31. Ibid., p. 33.

For some more material on psychiatry as social control read books by and on Thomas Szasz, who is considered an anti-psychiatrist and civil libertarian. R. D. Laing might also be interesting in this regard. Of course, China's approach is covered in literature on China. China abolished psychology and virtually wiped out mental illness under Mao only to have it resume with the restoration of capitalism. (See a book MIM distributes called *The Political Economy of Counterrevolution in China: 1976-1988*.)

Further recommended readings:

1. *Readings in Radical Psychiatry*, New York: Grove Press, 1975.
2. Radical Therapist Collective, *The Radical Therapist*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1971.
3. Phil Brown, *Radical Psychology*, New York: Harper & Row. 1973.
4. Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution*, NY: Random House, 1978.

Chapter 5

The Issue of Tone and Approach

5.1 Tone and “Macho”

Amerikan women are often put off by revolutionaries’ aggressive approach. The charge of “macho” posturing or “sexism” against revolutionaries is nothing new. The Weather Underground of the 1960s and 1970s faced this charge from within and without.(1) The Revolutionary Communist Party (**RCP**) also receives criticism along these lines all the time.(2) And of course, sometimes the charge is true, like when a Black Panther at a Students for a Democratic Society (**SDS**) convention echoed Eldridge Cleaver’s infamous words that “the role of women is supine.”

There is a good side and a bad side to these charges against revolutionaries. The positive aspect is that women have the oppressed’s distrust of power. When women see revolutionaries prepare to seize power, they recoil in horror, because they hate power generally for what it has done to women.

The bad side is that women who distrust revolutionaries for seeking power also have no proven plan for achieving an end to male supremacy. Countless middle-class women prefer—much like the intelligentsia and petty-bourgeoisie generally—to avoid the issues, tolerate all sides, take an ambiguous stand and use pleasant tones in all political discussions. For the same reasons that the disempowered and the

petty bourgeoisie believe in pacifism or libertarianism, they believe in opposing machismo in revolutionaries.

The feminist revolutionary Redstockings have already done an excellent job criticizing Amerikan women for their reaction to confrontational politics. The Redstockings developed this criticism out of their own political practice, for which they were frequently smeared personally and attacked for their “unsisterly” or “unfeminine” tone. The Redstockings knew that when women confronted with revolutionary politics reached for that criticism of “macho” or aggressive tone, they were expressing their disempowerment, not striking a blow against sexism. It is not the fault of the revolutionary that the imperialist patriarchy holds power and can only be challenged by people seeking power. When it comes to confrontations, most revolutionaries would rather be doing something else in the good society, the communist society—playing guitar, having sex or eating good food. But communists have no choice other than to live in the unpleasant imperialist patriarchy.

MIM too has faced the charges of being grossly male chauvinist, macho or sexist, especially for its tone and its confrontational manner. Many of these criticisms come from women who would appear to have a high level of unity with MIM on gender questions. The issue goes beyond the bad logic that says that the tone or personal motivations of a discussion are more important than its substance. The Redstockings dealt with that logic in their book *Feminist Revolution*.

Those women who agree with MIM know that pornography and even Hollywood are a bad influence on society, and not frustration-release valves as libertarians think. If it is clear to a woman that pornography can cause violence, that it teaches and socializes people the wrong way, then why isn't the opposite clear? That is, **why isn't it clear that if you don't teach people when it is the right time to be angry, they won't get angry?**

MIM believes if you want people to be angry about rape, you have to teach them. If you want them to get angry about white nation chauvinism, you have to teach them. There is nothing in society that will prevent people from getting angry for the wrong reasons. Anyone who reads about the stupid reasons family members

resort to murder in this country will realize that. That's not to mention how anger in a society like Germany was taken out on Jews by the millions.

Take pornography for example. If MIM does not get angry about pornography or gross Hollywood movies or other cultural influences, then what's to stop men from enjoying these things? Especially since MIM work is focused on youth, where else are youth going to learn their values if revolutionaries don't teach when to get angry and when not to get angry?

The revolution against oppression needs every individual it can get on its side to use the correct tone in dealing with injustice. The capitalists dominate the superstructure and are bombarding people with all kinds of stupid moral messages all the time—that is stupid for the proletariat and quite rational for the bourgeoisie, which likes to see the proletariat do stupid things to itself. Revolutionaries must counter these bourgeois messages.

Since reality is not always cheerful except for conservatives who love the status quo, we must be able to call on different tones all the time—happy, cheerful, sorrowful, bitter and angry. Since we believe in Mao's idea of strategic confidence—we are confident that even as we struggle through mistakes the revolution will succeed—we generally avoid fearful tones except in tactical situations. As an idea of how far we go with this idea, comrade Gonzalo in Peru once said that nuclear destruction of the human race or even the end of the planet earth “doesn't mean shit for the universe.”

One prisoner in a recent issue of MIM Notes cited a correct aspect of Islam in rightly condemning the fanning of fear as the road to ignorance. In contrast, many First World women fear being “cut on.” A radical collective called the Bread & Roses collective admitted that one of the reasons women of the collective oppose free love is the traditional idea that having one man as a committed lover protects the woman from the world outside the couple. While the Bread & Roses collective is generally correct in its approach to monogamy, it is incorrect to give any credence to the fear of criticism and self-criticism. MIM has learned that Mao's idea not to fear criticism or self-criticism has special feminist meaning.

The fear of being “cut, hammered, exposed”(3) as the woman from the Bread & Roses collective says needs some explaining for the Third World proletarian off the street reading this. She does not literally mean someone is cutting her with a knife or hitting her with a hammer. What the First World woman means by being “cut on” is criticism, a blow to what First World women call their “self-esteem,” something the capitalist class wants all women to believe in so that they will go on believing that oppression is an individual matter. Concern with getting “cut on” is just another way that First World women in particular obliterate the violence against the Third World. For it is this kind of “violence” against women that justifies the First World woman ignoring her complicity with imperialism and real violence. Some pseudo-feminist women go so far as to call it “psychological rape” or just “rape” or maybe “sexual harassment” to be criticized or confronted.

Rather than fanning fear or emitting perpetual cheerfulness, Maoists fight for the really oppressed by getting their anger and confidence together. The oppressed have much to be angry with.

Probably it is the intellectual and culturally-privileged woman who is the worst offender in regard to issues of tone. Women as a group are socialized to adjust to power structures and to smile at all times for men. Having had a wide variety of deep cultural influences in life, the culturally-privileged woman in particular does not understand why a perfectly level tone used at all times will not convey to people the moral meaning necessary. After all, she is capable of attaching her own moral significance to words expressed in a perfectly monotone or cheerful manner. Why can't everyone just do that?

MIM believes that people adequately exposed to various cultures are more capable of rendering the correct or various moral meanings to a political argument. However, it is simply not true that everyone gets the chance to go to diverse plays, operas, movies and lectures performed by everyone from fascists to communists.

In fact, even the most culturally advanced people must undergo continuous cultural remolding. Some new ideas or inadequately exposed ideas will not be understood by the most thoroughly cultured people. For this reason, MIM builds its own

independent media and arts and it uses a tone that is subordinate to the political content of its message.

Notes:

1. Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman*.
2. Jim O'Brien, "American Leninism."
3. "Men and Women Living Together," in Edith Hoshino Altboch, ed., *From Feminism to Liberation*, Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing, 1971, p. 47.

5.2 Substituting Identity for Analysis

[This article arose because many people in Politically Correct (P.C.) circles would not struggle with MIM unless MIM's Third World or oppressed nationality members were the ones speaking on Third World issues and women on women's issues, etc. While MIM recognizes that the Third World proletariat is going to do most of the work in overthrowing imperialism, and that oppressed group people are more likely to do revolutionary work than nonoppressed group people, that is not an excuse for individuals of any group status to say they can't struggle over what oppression is, or that someone's analysis is incorrect because they are an individual member of an oppressor group.]

MIM knows the Azanian miner or Vietnamese peasant can't always be in front of our First World faces to tell us how to cut down U.S. imperialism. In the 1960s, millions of Vietnamese died at the hands of U.S. military forces thousands of miles away. Was it possible for the Vietnamese being bombed to personally struggle with every white person in the United States over what exactly to do to stop the war? Of course not. Did that relieve the Amerikan population of the duty of figuring out how to stop the war on their own if necessary? Obviously not. Even though some individual Vietnamese told us the U.S. bombing of Vietnam was a good thing, people principled in their opposition to nation, class and gender domination hold to their analysis opposing the bombing.
—MC5]

MIM has noticed a hesitancy, particularly within certain political circles, to acknowledge the existence of certain objective truths. These truths usually pertain to people of color (for whom white people cannot speak), to lesbians, bisexuals and gay men (for whom heterosexuals cannot speak), and to people of other oppressed groups (for whom no one not belonging to those groups can speak). The doctrine that comes out of this hesitancy: pay attention to who is speaking, not to what they are saying. The practice that comes out of this doctrine: engage in no struggle for liberation based merely on its analysis, because only the faces that spout it can tell you if it's valid.

When we look at the context in which this doctrine is used, it makes some sense. It comes up most often in the context of reformist political work (which tries to better the situation of some oppressed people through reforms to the system). It is argued that if you are going to reform the system to benefit certain people then the leadership you take should be theirs. They should prioritize their needs (what they want reformed first) because it is a basic understanding that under capitalism all of these needs will not be met. Best to get the urgent ones taken care of first.

MIM shares the belief that there is no better teacher than experience. People who have felt most directly, harshly, individually the violence of capitalism are most thoroughly educated about the damage those structures cause. A good example of this is the work of the Black Panther Party in the breakfast-for-school-children programs. The Panthers knew that exploitative capitalist practices were forcing Black children to go to school hungry, if they went at all. The idea of providing people with basic needs, even under capitalism, is not a bad one.

Yet too often this type of practice is used as a crutch by people too lazy to examine the true nature of the oppressive structures, as an excuse not to develop an analysis. The Panthers never took the line that giving children breakfast would end the oppression of the Black nation. They maintained the goal of smashing the imperialist capitalist state as the only way to end its exploitative practices. The breakfasts were one way of giving more people the opportunity to work for revolution. MIM pushes all people, no matter what their material conditions, to make thorough analyses of the nature of oppression. These analyses can then be used as tools to strengthen revolutionary forces and demolish capitalism.

Restricting analysis to a survey of individual experience often works directly into the hands of the oppressors. Once people are focusing on individuals, it is too easy to assume that it is possible to isolate individual oppression and “fix it” in isolation. MIM does not believe oppressions can be separated, either from each other or from capitalism, and chooses not to restrict its practice or its goals by analyses based on this belief. MIM works to tear apart the structures of capitalism with the understanding that while the power of some groups over other groups exists, reforms to modify the system are meaningless. Any practice which is not based on a revolutionary analysis reinforces the repressive structures.

So it is with this understanding that MIM openly acknowledges the following objective truths:

1. The exercise of power of some groups over other groups (oppression) is a function and a foundation of capitalism.
2. Oppression will not “get better” or “go away” under capitalism—the only thing that gets better is the capitalists’ incentive to exploit; the only way it goes away is to focus (often more brutally, only temporarily) on someone else. The white working class in First World countries for example, can improve its own working conditions, standard of living, etc., at the expense of the superexploited workers of the Third World.
3. The more time wasted reforming the oppressive structures, quibbling over semantics and who said what, the more people die under capitalism.

These points are proven by the work of women like Eleanor Smeal, respected “feminists” who pride themselves on all the reforms they have achieved for wealthy white women in First World countries. Smeal tries to speak for women everywhere; yet, in acting on the gross and inaccurate assumption that certain aspects of oppression are constant for all women, she proves objective truth #1: some women do have enough access to power afforded by class and national status to successfully perpetuate the oppression of other women.

Objective truth #2: some women in the United States are gaining more access to power. They have corporate jobs, they have recourse to fight sexual harassment at these jobs; they have better childcare and healthcare than women any place else

(and most men in the world too). It is obvious that things are “getting better” for these women; yet, no loss is being taken by the capitalist patriarchy. All of the benefits these women get are stolen directly from poor and Third World people. It is not “woman power” that these corporate women claim, or anything other than plain old power. By refining the system they are gaining themselves access to patriarchal capitalist power, and the ability to more effectively oppress and exploit

Objective truth #3: Eleanor Smeal, and those who do work like hers, are doing nothing to challenge the structures that oppress women. If they were, they would not be wealthy or famous. They are working to gain themselves more power to join in the oppression, and to profit off the labor and deaths of the poor and nationally oppressed peoples of the world.

Reluctance to make an analysis of someone else’s conditions under capitalism is not respectful deference to the reality of their experience, it is the ultimate in reactionary acceptance of the standards of the state. Wealthy, First World women’s organizations, in their own quest for power, consistently bypass the needs of all other women. Invoking the dictate against speaking or acting “for” other women, they add credibility and strength to the forces which kill these women with more expediency every day.

Asking “whose analysis is this?” instead of “who does this analysis serve?” buys into the notion that oppression is a subjective experience, and can be effectively altered only by the “directly oppressed.” While MIM believes it is important to recognize the ways in which capitalism teaches lessons to its victims, it is important to move from that recognition to the knowledge that no form of oppression will change substantially under capitalism. Once people have accepted this truth, they should join MIM in working to smash the state.

5.3 Politically Correct Language

“Politically correct” (P.C.) is actually a phrase that used to have great Marxist-Leninist significance. Recently, P.C. has become a bad thing for a number of reasons.

The P.C. people work to focus our attention away from radical change, which has nothing to do with prettying language. Quite the contrary, the full force of language is necessary to convey reality.

Sure the P.C. crowd can mandate P.C. language on Amerikan campuses, but that won't stop the David Dukes. P.C. often has no grip on national oppression at all. A P.C. gay/lesbian tabloid in Michigan, *Ten Percent*, is an example. During Senator Kerry's presidential campaign, the paper devoted 20 inches of newsprint to a joke of the Senator to the effect that he didn't want the gay/lesbian vote.

But there is no space in the paper dedicated to gays/lesbians in the Third World. Instead, there is a long story in the same issue trying to continue the Cold War. It's about how Tass [*Ed. note: Tass is the Russian News Agency, founded in 1902, and still functional today. It is owned by the Russian government.*] and Soviet News Services still do not allow references to gay/lesbian liberation movements abroad. To paraphrase Ten Percent's message, "See, the communists who are so bad, they make us gays/lesbians look like real Americans!"

The sense of strategy of the P.C. crowd is enough to drive one crazy. Yes, the world would be better if everyone used nice language, but the P.C. crowd never goes beyond language.

It's as if a number of colleges and mass organizations have become middle-class finishing schools of a new type, because increasingly people argue about when to be offended by language instead of what political issues to think about.

The context in the last few years of "bad" language is often rebellion against school administrators who try to whitewash their images as institutional oppressors by clamping down on students' language. These days it's hard to read a few weeks in the newspapers without seeing a school administration action somewhere that directed at language.

MIM has opposed school administrations' taking control of student speech from the beginning. Compared with the group of people running colleges—the academic bourgeoisie—students are truly angelic. MIM would rather see students, supervised

by the international proletariat, telling the academic bourgeoisie what to do. That won't be accomplished by a simple language and attitude fad.

5.4 Rationalists and Mystics

This article came during a crucial inner-party struggle regarding gender from late 1989 into 1990. It was only natural that the party struggle over some of the views of feminism that were circulating outside the party. MIM has concluded that revolution proceeds best with an analytical approach as opposed to an emotional approach: that is a large part of the meaning of saying there is a science of revolution. We believe there is a point in studying history and not repeating its mistakes. People who want gender, nation and class domination eliminated should search for the best way to do that. Aside from the issue of the relationship of revolutionary science to tone and feelings is the role of cultural work to expose the masses to communist values—values opposing all gender, class and nation domination. MIM does not treat the issue of how to conduct cultural work here; although there are some cultural reviews in this issue of MIM Theory.

What is the philosophy of materialism? Materialism is the assumption of an existence of an outside world, an objective world outside the subject or consciousness. In other words, the paper this is written on exists independently of the mind of its beholder.

Marxist materialism has the added stipulation that the outside world is knowable, completely knowable. In this, Marx was not original so much as receiving the wisdom of the Enlightenment of the late 1700s via Hegel of the early 1800s.

So it is quite apt to label a Marxist a certain type of rationalist. Marx would be insulted today to be called a rationalist, but that would only be because he believed certain debates were already settled by the 1800s and the term rationalist would take on a different meaning in that context. He would no longer want to be counted in the company of rationalists.

Today, in the debate between psychologists, or people talking about feelings in the party, on the one hand, and those arguing against incomprehensible feelings

and the pseudo-scientism of psychology, on the other hand, the latter should be considered rationalists in a positive sense.

Mystics, on the other hand, are people who believe that not everything is knowable. Feelings, spirituality and religion are necessary because reason is limited according to the mystics.

This is all from a debate in the 1700s that Marx believed was settled once and for all. Unfortunately though, to this day many people do not appreciate just how reactionary mystic ideas are. They fail to go beyond the 1700s. Then the same people will complain about Marxism as an idea from the 1800s and claim to have “new ideas,” which really date from the 1600s or prior.

The rationalist view on the question

The rationalist view is that all things can be understood *if* the absolute truth is not apparent yet, it may be some day and we can struggle to reach it. Marxists in particular maintain that they hold parts of the absolute truth now, a position without which there would be no proletarian ethics.

Before Marxism, there were other schools of thought that held smaller pieces of the absolute truth. In their day, these schools of thought, maybe French socialism or Hegelianism for instance, were the best available.

Hence, the rationalist view of feelings is that feelings can be broken down into their components or if not broken down, at least understood as caused by something concrete. In fact, it is by mastering knowledge of the objective world that Marxists are able to seize power and build socialism.

What does that mean? It means that without a rational understanding of the real world, we are merely pawns of objective forces, billiard balls. In particular, as long as the proletariat behaves as a billiard ball and not an acting subject that is aware of the laws of the real world, capitalism will prevail.

People have thus far acted as a billiard ball or set of billiard balls. History has not been of the people's creation because the people have not had the power to create their own destiny.

Rationalism and feminism

What needs to be hammered more often within Marxism is the idea that as long as women behave as billiard balls, they too will be enslaved. Currently women are objects. To end this status they must master the power that makes them objects.

As it stands now, women are socialized to enjoy their status as objects. This is what MacKinnon calls the eroticization of power.

There are a number of diversions from the project to end the relationship between power and gender. One diversion is the feminist liberalism on sexual assault which seeks "good," "healthy" sex instead of an end to gender inequality. Criticizing the feminist liberals, MacKinnon is careful to point out that all sex is rape until inequality is abolished.

In concrete terms, liberal groups, like most anti-rape centers and anti-battering organizations, are not fighting for the abolition of power, but instead the refined enjoyment of sexual violence. They don't want the violence this way; they want it that way. You can't use a gun. but you can be wealthier. You can't use your fists, but you can head the army.

The source of all supposedly feminist thinking that does not seek the abolition of power is the socialization brought about by the patriarchy. The best of these socializations is the lesbian socialization. Lesbian feminism in its non-Maoist, separatist form is the most progressive of these expressions of patriarchal socialization. The reason this is the best of them is that separatists have a grasp of women as a group. They see patterns in their personal lives. It is only one more step to see the necessity of seizing power as a group. But because there has been no lesbian-feminist, separatist revolution, separatism in practice has meant maintaining the status quo of capitalist patriarchy.

Then there are the heterosexual separatists. The bookstore that does not want MIM Notes because it only carries exclusively women's literature typifies this. These women are not even trying to comprehend power in its totality.

Then there is mystical feminism, embedded in spiritual faith-healing, witchcraft, ecofeminism, etc. Green feminism claims to be searching for a new paradigm, but it does not know what it is. In the meantime, women should have faith in spirituality, subjectivity, etc. None of these kinds of feminism attempt to study power systematically. They don't care to because like crude believers in the apocalypse, they expect to be delivered to liberation by a mystical force or maybe they don't care for liberation that much and enjoy the refined art of talking about oppression instead. There are a billion ways to eroticize power. People who enjoy this essay, but don't become rationalist feminists are just another case of the eroticization of power. Whether it be non-Maoist lesbianism, heterosexual separatism or witchcraft, these supposed feminisms are actually an assertion of femininity, a glorification of women's current relatively powerless state.

he root of this is the patriarchal socialization of women to restrict themselves to the sphere of feelings, while letting men develop the rational faculties necessary to wield power. Women are taught to read romantic novels, major in English, or maybe psychology, if the women seem like they are getting too many scientific ideas.

The trouble is that we are good at recognizing some of these latter problems, but have trouble debunking it in other forms. The truth, however, is that there is no non-rationalist feminism, only numerous marketable bullshit feminisms that divert women from power and the abolition of power.

MacKinnon is useful because she is for the abolition of power (at least in its patriarchal form) and inequality and she studies it. She hasn't studied everything—China and the Soviet Union are two weak points—but she does study, and she has a lot of the picture in the United States down right. She studies pornography, rape and even the feelings behind romance. At times, MacKinnon spouts subjectivist nonsense in her work, but in spite of herself, MacKinnon produces rationalist feminism.

Mystical regard for “feelings” is a classic pattern that women fall into and is really a holdover from feudal times. Mysticism was thoroughly defeated in the French Revolution, which could not have happened without an end to mysticism in the intellectual spheres. It is the progress of science in the growth of production that was the material basis for mortal blows to mysticism during the enlightenment.

The material basis for these feudal feelings is the family structure today in which women have been serfs, restricted to a piece of land and made into appendages to men. The destruction of the family under the decadence of imperialism has had countless bad effects, but one good thing is that in a period of confusion, new ideas may arise.

In this decadent phase of imperialism, people treat each other as objects in an ever more intensified way. The statistics on divorce, wife-battering, children on welfare, etc., show how the old capitalist patriarchy can't even hold itself together. At some point people will decide “enough!” and a completely new ideology not completely understood with reference to previous ideologies will arise in social relations. In these social relations, people will be less and less objects and more and more united until all power is abolished.

5.5 On Arrogance and Revolution

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 40, March 1990 —

On occasion members of MIM have been called “arrogant” or overly “self-important” for carrying out their work in a necessarily confrontational fashion. Usually those calling MIM “arrogant” are making an unprincipled response to a principled argument.

Reformism

Some “leftist” people oppose all people calling themselves revolutionaries as “arrogant.” That’s OK. That is consistent, consistently anti-revolutionary.

Revolutionaries have to be “arrogant” (the word is “uppity” for women). Revolutionaries are saying that the whole system is fucked and they have a better way in the interests of the international proletariat.

Revolutionaries are saying that they can go toe-to-toe with George Bush and his millions of paid minions. George Bush and all the imperialist presidents before him were arrogant. MIM has a long way to go before it can arrogantly stop him (without his permission) from doing what he did in Panama, for instance.

Bush and his government handle every political issue that comes along. Revolutionaries do the same. They do not give in on any issue. They know that if they do the result will be the rule of the capitalists on that issue.

People who are going to go toe-to-toe with the imperialists cannot be the people who believed what they were taught—that they cannot understand the issues and that the imperialists can do a better job running society. In a way, MIM tries to train all of its members as if they were going to be prime ministers. That is the only way the oppressed will ever take on the imperialists and win.

Disempowerment: the ruling ideology

Oppressed people and women in particular have it drilled into them at an early age that they cannot rule or are not ready to rule. They simply are not capable, according to the imperialist patriarchy. This ideology of classism, sexism, national chauvinism and racism dominates the dominated.

Revolutionaries are “power-hungry,” “authoritarian,” “self-important,” etc. What each revolutionary must decide is “better us than them”—meaning better we hold power than the others. When it comes down to it, the issue is not if Jesus would approve of us, but whether we would be better in power than the status quo of the imperialists.

Therefore, coming from non-revolutionaries, the charge of political “arrogance” is an honor to revolutionaries.

Psychologists' lack of logic

Coming from supposed radicals, the charge “arrogance” is an individualist smear when arguments fail.

To call someone personally “arrogant” is to give in to bourgeois psychology—an instrument of social control. All charges regarding the personality of an individual have a common logical flaw: they do not address the argument in question. When individualists can't defeat someone's argument they say they don't like him/her in one way or another.

It does not matter if someone is personally “arrogant,” “psychotic,” “crazy,” etc. If their argument is correct, it is correct regardless of who they are or their psychological motivations.

Political activists who concern themselves with personality analyses waste their time and create an atmosphere where the bourgeoisie can use psychiatry to control opponents of its system. Plenty of radicals in this country, especially women, have been drugged, made into mental vegetables and even killed in psychiatric hospitals—all in the name of “helping” them with their “arrogance” or “psychosis.”

The size of the middle class in the United States promotes widespread individualist ideology that supports psychology as a substitute for scientific thinking about society. The personality cult strategy of the RCP, USA, for instance, is the flip side of this psychologizing error. Progressive and revolutionary people should never play into this bourgeois ideology and should avoid personal statements, especially about each other.

Real arrogance: viewing the masses as stupid

“Arrogance” is hypocritical as a political charge, usually coming from supposed radicals. They often claim to agree with MIM on many principles, but say that they do not want to be arrogant and alienating, so they work in non-revolutionary groups to gain people's “trust” to radicalize them “step-by-step.”

The really arrogant people are those who believe that a forthright revolutionary argument is too hard for the people to understand.

Time and time again, so-called radicals (especially in single-issue groups) inform MIM that it “alienates” people who are not ready to hear the truth so directly presented. That is real arrogance.

There are those who say the people are not ready to hear about all the issues. One should just work on Central America, or South Africa, etc., because that is all that people are ready for and that is all that one can hope to change. That is a condescending view of the people. It is also a concession to the imperialists who are often happy to give in on one issue in order to retain control of the rest of the globe.

Anti-authoritarian anti-arrogance

Then there is an incorrect argument that exists because of the middle-class nature of most of the Amerikan population. The middle class believes it has “made it” on its own economically. Middle-class politics is doing politics on one’s own, never submitting to the discipline of a political organization.

The middle-class argument basically goes that parties are useless and that people should just work till the day that social transformation becomes self-evident on an individual basis. Someone like Noam Chomsky is one of the most positive models of such political work.

Among feminists, the argument comes out as distrust of all organizations as patriarchal.

Among anarchists, people oppose disciplined and confrontational political organizing because they distrust all states and, hence, people out to seize state power.

Among intellectuals, the argument is common because they are trained to pick apart any argument and stand for individual truth and not work in disciplined vanguard parties which require them to advocate lines which they will not agree

with in every case. Intellectuals substitute pursuit of intellectual beauty for effective social change and thereby destroy all that is beautiful.

The call for principled discipline in politics is “arrogance” in the mind of most Amerikans. Amerikans like to think of themselves as “different,” “unique,” “individuals with free will,” etc.

All Amerikans know is “rights” and “freedom”—freedom *from* various forms of obvious control—vanguard parties for example. They do not appreciate freedom *to*. Yet the international proletariat will never have the freedom to live in peace; to run workplaces and governments; to eat, to have shelter and to have a clean environment unless it adopts a form of organization more disciplined than the imperialists’ and unites its vast resources.

Sometimes the drug of individualism will cause progressive people to run away from principled arguments with MIM. Even when the individualists know they are wrong or at least unable to give a reason to oppose MIM’s line in this or that instance, they willfully avoid the truth and muddle through their political lives and probably degenerate into outright mainstream views. They avoid working with MIM for the truth because they have received training from the bourgeoisie from day one that disciplined politics are wrong.

In contrast, people in MIM believe it is best to promote the best politics available on any subject. MIM works in a disciplined fashion to support the best political work whether by non-MIM people or MIM people until MIM finds something better. For example, J. Sakai is not a MIM member. However, MIM recognizes the truth of J. Sakai’s book *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat* as a gigantic leap forward in MIM’s understanding of the United States. Although MIM has reason to believe Sakai would not approve of MIM’s work, MIM upholds the truth in his/her book and distributes it in a zealous way regardless of the individual relationship between MIM and Sakai.

People should approach MIM the same way, not as individuals protecting their egos and supposed “free will,” but as people learning by working with what seems best and then moving on if something more revolutionary comes along.

MIM never concludes: “we don’t know; therefore, do nothing and let the status quo continue.”

By opposing proletarian discipline, individualists make it easier for a minority of well-organized imperialists to decide the important issues of life—the so-called individuals’ lives. The real authoritarianism is exercised by the imperialists.

The imperialists stand with an army of millions organized and armed to the teeth, ready to invade Panama, and the Americans will criticize MIM as “arrogant” at this stage just for trying to organize a disciplined party and newspaper to overthrow these imperialist pigs.

History proves that individualism is ineffective as a strategy for social change. MIM must ignore the majority of Americans who charge “arrogance” and do not belong to a disciplined party for social change.

Possible problems with revolutionary arrogance?

Mao did say that communists should watch out for arrogance, especially becoming isolated from the masses and their struggles.

Arrogant comrades would order other comrades around and give orders to the people without investigating the situation. (Orders may be necessary, but not out-of-the-blue.) Communists should listen to the masses before they set about leading society.

In MIM, however, this kind of arrogance is not a significant problem yet. MIM does not hold state power or even a people’s army and hence cannot give orders to people. It can still upset people with principled arguments, but that is not the same thing as giving orders.

In fact, internationally, Maoists have a hard enough time setting up vanguard parties, nevermind making errors of arrogance. If anything, the people who should be leading Maoist parties are not arrogant enough. Embarrassed by their own weaknesses, they wait for someone else to lead the way. Such people often de-

generate because revolutionary political practice is the most important way that revolutionaries learn how to be revolutionary leaders.

In addition, a large portion of MIM's program is determined scientifically by the interests of the international proletariat and does not depend on the interests of the Amerikan masses who are largely a labor aristocracy. In other words, unlike Chinese communists, communists in Amerikkka cannot learn mostly from the majority of people.

Instead the revolutionary-minded must study the international experiences of the proletariat with social change if they are to avoid the corruption that is Amerikan politics and ideology.

Chapter 6

Anita Hill vs. Clarence Thomas

6.1 Clarence Thomas vs. Anita Hill: MIM's Internal Struggle

The Senate hearings dispute between Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill went on television in mid-October 1991. At the time, MIM had already been conducting months of internal discussions on how gender fits in with nation and class oppression. Yet when it came time to write an article for MIM Notes about the conflict, there were many different lines; the hearing proved anew to everyone in the party the necessity of thorough theoretical struggle.

This issue of MIM Theory is motivated by a desire to clear the way for a more unified practice. The controversies MIM has forced itself to deal with in this issue prepare comrades to act in ever-more meaningful unity in the future. Taking a stand on the issues is also essential to the practice of the mass line that Mao prescribed for revolution. It is not enough to study the masses and listen to their opinions on nation, class and gender. The party must sum up the views of the oppressed and then put the mass line into practice in order to learn from the practice of trying to change society. It is impossible to do that without taking sides in complicated issues like the intersection of nation, class and gender.

Readers will recall that Anita Hill was a Black female employee of the government and that Clarence Thomas was her Black male superior years before he was nominated for the Supreme Court. Hill told televised Senate hearings that while she was not sure that Thomas had sexually harassed her legally-speaking; nonetheless, in her own opinion, he had sexually harassed her in repeated pornographic statements that he made to her while she was his employee.

Of course, in individual disputes like this it is difficult to get the facts. Thomas' friends told the New York Times that he was the type to take all his friends to pornographic movies as a younger man and talk about pornography. Based on this evidence, MIM thought that Thomas was probably lying when he flatly denied making any pornographic statements to Anita Hill; since Thomas was counting on Bible Belt Senators' votes to get him onto the Supreme Court, he could not risk admitting the truth.

MIM is not interested in Thomas and Hill as individuals and we don't claim that we or anybody else have all the facts on the conflict of two individuals. What is important is how the public perceived the conflict and what it means to women and Blacks as groups.

On the issues of principle as opposed to fact, MIM divided on gender and nation questions. Contrary to what the public might think, communists are not monolithic in their views and within MIM there was an angry debate about the Thomas/Hill controversy. Although MIM had already taken the public stand that Clarence Thomas was a lackey sell-out of the Black people, an example of what MIM refers to as the comprador class, the party divided on Anita Hill's relationship to the Black nation.

What class did Anita Hill represent and how did she fit into the question of national oppression? One pole within the party supported Hill as a person leading an outbreak against the patriarchy. Another pole opposed Hill as a representative of the enemy class and as someone leading the women's movement down a false path to liberation.

Some saw in Anita Hill a symbol for the idea that “no means no” in sexual harassment. These members of the party cited Catharine MacKinnon and eventually came to the position that Anita Hill had “stopped” Thomas’ harassment of 10 years prior and now had a chance to strike back against Thomas and “survive.”

The other pole of the party argued that Anita Hill had other job offers, lived a middle- to upper-class life and needn’t have worked with the bootlicking Thomas to “survive.” This pole in the party dubbed the other side “paternalist,” because it believed the other side always protected women with the assumption that women are too weak to defend themselves. This same pole in the party accepted the label of “victim-blaming” in order to clarify discussion.

In the end, most everyone questioned whether Anita Hill or Clarence Thomas represented any part of the Black nation. They both seemed to have built careers on selling it out—in Thomas’ case by opposing affirmative action and in Hill’s case by working for people like Thomas. Some wondered why we should care at all what happened to either Thomas or Hill. However, the debate within the party proceeded because of the larger symbolic meaning of the conflict.

Was it true that Anita Hill and sexually harassed women like her in the United States have to be tactically careful to avoid letting their bosses set back their careers? Was it justified for Anita Hill to have continued professional interactions with Thomas while she regarded him as sexually harassing her?

One comrade representing the paternalist line of reasoning wrote:

Someone mentioned, a while ago, that if Hill “was not satisfied with her deal at the time, she had an obligation to make a stink then.” Why? Are we holding a bourgeois up to communist standards? If so why? I still do not understand that point. She did in fact ask him to stop, which he did not do.

In response to this line of reasoning another comrade wrote:

I find it ridiculous that people talk about Hill as some kind of dupe of the media and Congress. Her strategy in life all along was to play the comprador game. She was used as a token in the imperialist government to justify the oppression of Black people and in a very big way, not just a receptionist or social worker, but as a hired pen and lawyer of the imperialists and confidant of a future Supreme Court Justice. Compradors just don't get much higher than that.

This comrade went on to write:

On a revolutionary basis, Hill has a legitimate complaint, as do ALL women in this society all the time, whether or not they stay on their jobs or in their relationships or any other deals they make.

On an economist basis. Hill's case sucks. The fact that she followed Thomas to another job when she had at least one job secure and perhaps another one possible (if you believe Senator Cranston who said a law firm left it open for her to come back precisely to refute Senator Helms who was trying to say that Hill was hopelessly incompetent) shows that Hill thought Thomas was the best deal in town. The wages were good so to speak. This is the real lesson of Hill's complaint. It simply makes no sense within the capitalist system. Hill's complaint only makes sense in the context of revolution.

If we assumed that women or other victims face a life-and-death threat which keeps them from interpreting the present correctly people would be correct to support Hill. Then it would be of course a virtual slavery we were fighting against by pushing reformist struggles.

On the paternalist side, one comrade offered the following criticism of the Hill/Thomas article that was printed in the paper:

My main problem with the story was that it inaccurately blamed Anita Hill as an individual. Who is Anita Hill and what was her alliance in the

action of the hearings? It has been suggested that she is a comprador, it has also been suggested that she is a national bourgeois. I would lean toward her being a national bourgeois because she does not serve the imperialists directly. Either way she is not a proletarian. However I think it is significant that her allegiance in the hearings was with her gender. All women experience varying degrees of the same oppression.

In response someone quoted Mao on the definition of national bourgeoisie:

This class aspires to attain the position of the big bourgeoisie, but it suffers from the blows of foreign capital and the oppression of the warlords and cannot develop. This class has a contradictory attitude toward the national revolution. When it suffers from the blows of foreign capital and the oppression of the warlords, it feels the need of a revolution and favours the revolutionary movement against imperialism and the warlords ... This class is what is called the national bourgeoisie.

Its right wing must be considered our enemy; even if it is not already, it will soon become so. Its left wing may become our friend, but it is not a true friend and we must be constantly on guard against it. We must not allow it to create confusion in our ranks.(3)

— Mao

How does one get Hill to count as national bourgeoisie? When did she ever support national revolution or did I miss something? When did she oppose imperialism? What blows from foreign capital did she suffer? Her whole existence is predicated on foreign capital.

Another representative of the victim-blaming line wrote:

It is paternalism, perpetuating the idea that women are powerless, to say it's a positive thing for women to come forward at any time to

discuss their experience with rape. First World women know what they're doing when they enter romantic relationships, bourgeois jobs, etc. Reinterpreting these relationships as coercive way after the fact is opportunist because people who do it are pretending they were coerced, and that they had no other options. Supporting that reinforces the women-are-powerless line and the myth that there is such a thing as non-coercive sex under capitalism.

This does not mean that all First World women have the same gender privileges as the most successful First World capitalist. But their gender privileges make them objectively not revolutionary. Again, we can look at First World women as analogous to Amerikan workers. Some of them will be revolutionaries, but not based on their material conditions.

So what proof can you see of First World women's gender privilege? How about exploiting Third World women's sexual labor? Examples:

1. Testing contraceptive and numerous other reproductive-tract damaging devices on women in the Third World.
2. Using domestic servants (largely Third World women) as husbands' sexual objects. Wives pushing rape off themselves on to the servants, then abusing them for 'seducing' their husbands. Not to mention using servants as wet nurses, etc.
3. In Amerika during slavery: unlimited sexual access to slave women. Ditto on the rape, wet nurses, not to mention reproductive labor.

In another response to the line that Hill was allied with her oppressed gender one comrade wrote:

The question is why do women enter both sexual and employment interactions with men generally? Do they generally do so because of life-threatening force/dependency involved?

The answer is no. They do not. Asexuality is an option. Many terrible things happen among First World women for no reason connected to

absolute life-and-death dependency. MIM should not excuse behaviors that could have been avoided with asexuality. It must weigh the costs of being non-asexual.

First World women don't want to rock the boat (the whole system of oppression) when they have a good thing going. They simply eroticize and concretely enjoy their power over Third World women, and for that matter, Third World men.

The party majority voted to support the following proposition:

Women within the boundaries of the United States who are not exploited or superexploited (e.g., white women, bourgeois women, comprador women, etc.) do not face a life-and-death/survival relationship with men within the boundaries of the United States in their sexual and employment interactions.

The pole representing the party majority then pushed the issue further by questioning Anita Hill's basic strategy. Did Hill really land a blow against the patriarchy or did she play into the imperialist patriarchy's hands? Did she lend a voice to women's liberation or did she end up silencing millions of women by launching an incorrect struggle and losing? Hill and Thomas had shown no prior scruples to being used by the government to advance white nation interests in exchange for career rewards. Were they just doing it again?

Some more facts were brought to bear. Before the accusations against Clarence Thomas were made public, polls showed that a majority of the public had no opinion about whether Clarence Thomas should be a Supreme Court nominee. Blacks were even more uncertain than whites. There was a division within the Black community's bourgeois leadership as well, with groups like the Black Congressional Caucus opposing Thomas. Anita Hill's critics pointed out that all this changed once she attacked Thomas as an individual.

According to the New York Times: 58% believed Thomas; 24% believed Hill; 18% were other—didn't know, neither or both.(1)

There was little difference between men and women, or between blacks and whites. But Republicans were more inclined to believe Judge Thomas than were Democrats.

6 out of 10 said that they believed that the hearings were an embarrassing spectacle that would “result in nothing good.”(1)

In the latest New York Times/CBS News Poll taken Sunday night, a plurality of women in every age, income and educational group said they believed Judge Thomas more than they believed Professor Hill.(2)

Men supported Thomas for confirmation by 46%. Women supported him 44%. Whites wanted him 47%; Blacks wanted him 40%. A Time survey showed a similar story with 49% supporting Thomas (which does not mean a majority opposed him).

According to NPR, 71% of Blacks rallied at the last minute before the Senate vote to support Thomas; a similar poll of Southern Blacks had already shown that support much earlier. The anti-paternalist pole in the party argued that the liberals had discredited a good cause of the oppressed once again and that the Black masses would support Thomas for reasons connected to the liberals' decadence.

Here is a quote from an internal document of the anti-paternalist position:

Some elite circles of Blacks believed Hill only because they are obsessed with having a liberal on the Supreme Court. Knee-jerk pseudo-feminists believed Hill as dogma. These people worry about the politics of the Supreme Court and the issue of affirmative action. However, if we ask Blacks off campus and outside the ruling circles of the North, the Blacks look at it in terms of what it means to them in everyday life. On that level, the Black masses correctly found this whole thing

disgusting. They saw it as an attack on solidarity amongst the people, the basic social ties of everyday life.

What the masses sensed in terms of the decadent implications of the whole affair is why Hill's charges against Thomas actually confirmed public opinion from a majority of "no opinion" to a majority of support for Thomas. (Can you say "setback?") In this, the masses demonstrate great wisdom while basically giving the bourgeoisie what it wanted—legitimacy for a comprador and illegitimacy for feminism (In talking about the Democrats, the Republicans correctly recognized the whole situation as a "fork," as in chess where the whole situation is a win-win situation for the oppressor.) While the people in even our supposedly revolutionary circles focus on one issue, the masses see other problems. The masses were not entirely sucked into the event for the reasons that the bourgeoisie wanted.

Only 24% of the public believed Anita Hill and that figure shrank even further at the moment of the Senate vote. Nonetheless, the party majority said that it believed Anita Hill but found her approach counterproductive. The party majority believes that the masses had doubts about letting the patriarchy decide whether or not Thomas had harassed Hill. Wasn't Hill giving legitimacy to Senators and the existing Supreme Court judges by acting as if they were not guilty of the same kinds of things as Thomas was? Why should Thomas be singled out?

And then there is the issue of how can anyone, including a Black woman, approach a white dominated power structure and ask it to do justice among Blacks? Black people soundly defeated this notion by opposing Hill. The anti-paternalist pole recalled that the Black Panthers regarded the Amerikan government as an occupation government and didn't recognize its court system or its army and police. Why should Blacks legitimize Senate hearings on the morality or immorality of Black people?

While not supporting Hill angered one portion of the party, another portion was angered by the lessons Hill was trying to leave the public.

I'm afraid the real reason this comes up is that my critics have no problem criticizing phony communism or cultural nationalism, but when it comes to women, whoa! Put on the kid gloves!

... said one party member who believed that the opposing faction treated women too much like idiots incapable of understanding politics.

Another party member asked since when it was that MIM supported anybody's talking to the FBI. This referred to the fact that Anita Hill answered FBI questions about Clarence Thomas before the whole television spectacle. Ordinarily MIM would say to slam the door in the FBI's face, so why were comrades defending Hill on this point? Was not the "kid gloves" treatment for women the basic reason?

In contrast, someone from the minority view said:

It has been stated and suggested that there are some women that are not exploited. I disagree. Women are characterized by the patriarchy and capitalism as submissive and powerless. Women are not powerless, yet they live with this as part of their identity which is reflected on them by society. Nobody has the power to completely throw off what society throws on them (a case in point is the reality of the need for us communists to combat liberalism). Women are conceived of as nature, not human. They are human. Yet when the social environment you constantly interact with views you as nature you absorb some of it. I don't think this is paternalistic. I think it is reality. Women are seen as sex objects and do not escape this reality when they are not having sex. It has permeated into daily thinking and become part of their daily interaction—employers and friends, etc. This is not meant to support dependency on men. However, it is supporting the identification and exposure of romance culture and socialization.

Another party member replied:

As a group, women are not exploited unless we consider that the surplus value of women's labor is appropriated. This may be the case, though the breakdown would likely be on class lines more than those of gender—Barbara Bush and Leona Helmsly do not clean house for no pay; the women of the proletariat and the labor aristocracy do. Someone could make a case for women as exploited, which I have seen some comment on, though not really a developed argument. It appears that the point you were making was that women are oppressed, not that they are exploited. I would prefer to retain exploitation as a specific economic term that indicates that there is surplus value appropriation in the production process.

Another comrade defended the minority view this way:

If I am being paternalistic by saying it's okay for people to bring up cases of harassment after they are no longer threatened, then so be it. Was Hill in a survival situation? Probably not, but had she lost her job she would have been! What is survival anyway? What is life or death? Is it okay to be mentally dead? What does that mean? Anyway, what I would like to say is that I still do think it is okay for people to bring up past wrongs after the fact. No it is not productive revolutionarily speaking, in any immediate sense, but it gets people thinking about why these things happen. If people did not talk about date rape, we probably would be much further back in terms of our analysis on sexual assault and rape. It is intrinsically individualistic and not really going to do anything, that I agree.

From this quote, one sees that the divisions within the party were not really only two divisions. There were a number of positions held within the party. Sometimes people in differing camps overlapped with each others' positions at unexpected points.

Before the crucial votes, comrades raised many calls for unity and criticized “spontaneity,” which meant letting the bourgeoisie set the agenda for our party. It was crucial not to let the Senate have yet another victory just by getting on television and getting our party all riled up. Despite the fact that there were a wide variety of positions on the Thomas–Hill conflict, not one comrade allowed the bourgeoisie to divide the party over these issues.

All comrades recognize that there is white nation chauvinism and patriarchal thinking in our own ranks. This is as unavoidable as living in the imperialist system. However, one view and its corresponding strategy within the party is the least patriarchal and white nation chauvinist and will do the most to overcome oppression, so we must attempt to adopt that view and strategy. Which comrade’s view is the most correct approach to nation, class and gender oppression we never know for sure, but we agree on trying out one position and strategy at a time and we select that stand and strategy by majority rule.

Our comrades have all learned too well that communists must wisely choose what issues they split over or the imperialist patriarchy will never face a united challenge. We Maoists unite on the largest issues of the history of the international communist movement—the Cultural Revolution and the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union— beyond that we recognize that there will always be differences within the party ranks. We do not allow just anyone a vote in forming our party’s line and strategy. Despite differences in the ranks, we are confident that uniting the people who support the Maoist road forward in one party is the fastest road forward for the oppressed.

1. New York Times 10/15/91, p. 1.
2. *Ibid.*, A10.
3. Stuart Schram ed., *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, New York: Praeger, 1969, pp. 213-14.

6.2 The Two-Line Struggle on Gender: Paternalism vs. Anti-Paternalism

This essay represents the anti-paternalist position that MIM ultimately came to agree on. It was written in the midst of the debate around the Hill/Thomas issue.

There has been an on-going two-line struggle in the party and between the party and outsiders on the issue of gender. Sometimes people fall in one camp, sometimes the other, but the two lines have consistent underlying assumptions.

There are a number of problems in taking the correct line on this question. This is to contribute to the lop-sided crushing of paternalism necessary for the struggle.

For historical purposes, it is essential to state the two lines to correct our course after practice if the anti-paternalist line proves to be incorrect.

I. What is Paternalism?

Dr. Mary Jackman is a women's issues researcher who asked why it is that women do not demonstrate much women's consciousness in the United States. She compares the importance of class, race and gender issues in people's minds and finds that class and gender are virtually non-existent in the minds of Americans, based on numerous surveys on various questions.

Jackman's work is flawed liberalism in most regards, but she comes up with one interesting theoretical answer to her question. The following is paraphrased from a talk that she gave:

The thing that holds back women's consciousness is paternalism. Men treat us like irrational, emotional objects. When we complain about something, they say, "aren't you cute? We love it when you do that [be irrational]." And WE love it when they say that. We compare each other to pets and ...

She explains this is possible because the oppression of women is so intimate that it's hard to separate out, unlike class and race where there are two distinct groups that do not interact in close quarters, but which in fact tend to live in entirely different neighborhoods.

Most people in MIM's circles would recognize this statement as true. The difficulty lies with separating it from other ideas of women's consciousness.

The key to distinguishing between paternalism and revolutionary feminism is recognizing how we would treat women on the one hand and men on the other. When we treat women in a paternalist way we slip into the idea that they can't understand the issues the way men can or that they are too powerless to do anything.

Most of the time paternalism is easy to recognize. The problem we are having in the party is recognizing it when it calls itself feminism. Patronizing feminism is paternalism. It's exactly the same problem as recognizing imperialism that calls itself socialism.

In MIM, we have our ideas together on class. Throw twenty kinds of revisionism at us and we'll dissect it in one page of sectarian review on the Soviet Union.

On nation, we know liberal integrationism and cultural nationalism as problems to struggle against in the United States. In the rest of the world, we can tell the difference between a comprador and a revolutionary nationalist. Inkatha leader Buthelezi [*Ed. note: South Afrikan leader of the Inkatha Freedom Party, notoriously integrationist and cultural nationalist in MIM's view, having been a major proponent of non-violent solutions to apartheid.*] has never evoked the slightest difficulty for MIM in terms of analysis.

Attacking Liberalism and the "uncle Toms of the women's movement," Catharine MacKinnon is almost the Malcolm X of the women's movement. Although Malcolm X was in favor of revolution and armed struggle (and his ideas made the most sense connected to that strategy), he still had reformist, human-rights and religious illusions. His idea of making petitioning the U.N. to oppose genocide of Blacks a

central task is not unlike MacKinnon's focussing on legal work on pornography and sexual harassment:

I think the single worst mistake of the American black organizations, and their leaders, is that they have failed to establish direct brotherhood lines of communication between the independent nations of Africa and the American black people.(1)

Malcolm makes it clear that he is talking about organizing African diplomats in the U.N.

Even when he is criticizing the liberal integrationists, Malcolm X has some illusions himself.

[Malcolm:]

I said that the American black man needed to quit thinking what the white man had taught him—which was that the black man had no alternative except to beg for his so-called “civil rights.” I said that the American black man needed to recognize that he had a strong, airtight case to take the United States before the United Nations on a formal accusation of denial of human rights.(3)

What we are waiting for in the United States is the Black Panthers of the women's movement. When Malcolm X was saying these things in the early 1960s, the first Maoist party in the United States was just getting off the ground. The Chinese split with the Soviet Union had just happened. Catharine MacKinnon makes her historical appearance at a time when Maoism is a little stronger, but when feminism is still in liberal condition.

II. What is the Pro-Paternalist Position?

In connection to the present argument, the relevance of MacKinnon is that she holds that pornography influences both men and women. This is an anti-paternalist position. It's very much like saying that white supremacy ideas influence the Buthelezi camp.

Some will come back and say that MacKinnon is blaming women for their problems by citing the fact that women buy into pornography. When MacKinnon says women have sex for every reason from money to love and points out that women being raped often don't seem able to tell, she is saying that women are socialized.

Many separatists would say that is not true and that women hold a naturally superior consciousness. They claim the anti-paternalist approach is victim-blaming. Underlying the whole approach is usually the view that First World women are somehow necessarily dependent on men in a way necessary to maintaining life.

III. Applications

In another recent struggle within the party, some people argued for toning down the language in our anti-rape work. In an unprecedented move in the party, they actually wanted two separate flyers, one to attack the enemy directly and one to use slower, softer language to deal with the masses of women involved concerning a criticism of paternalist, rape-promoting-posing-feminist flyers being distributed on campus.

Battering

In a review of a book on battering, a man complained that MC5's stance was victim-blaming. MC5 had criticized using the burning-bed approach to battering (which upholds women's violence against their husbands, lovers, etc., as a spontaneous act of liberation) as some kind of model when actually it represents a problem in our society.(4)

MC5's critic held that women were dependent on men; hence they have to kill their spouses. MC5 held that "if you are already in a life-threatening situation defend

yourselves by any means necessary.” However, it is simply not true that First World women must enter battering relationships.(4)

The case of the burning-bed resistance is the ultimate in proving the paternalist position wrong because it shows that women do have power in reality. However, the whole idea that the burning-bed case is such a great thing indicates how paternalist feminism is simply one of two poles in decadent imperialist patriarchy. People enter into leisure-time activities and then kill each other. MIM does not see merit in either men or women for getting involved in such leisure-time activities that end in death. That cannot have any redeeming value. The burning-bed strategy is not a solution.

Dating

Following massive struggles in party circles, MIM had the foresight to publish “Romance, Gender and the Party” on Jan. 23, 1989.

Since most people in MIM and anti-imperialist/militarist movements generally can survive without romance, communists do not waste time discussing romance or sexist attacks within individual romances.(5)

Lotus Blossom disagreed. S/he took the muddled line:

Too many women do depend on a romantic relationship for survival when they shouldn’t!(6)

In MIM Notes 36 and 37, Lotus Blossom took the line that:

The party I can work with has to have in policy and in practice feminist equality before the revolution, like right now. Anything else is a cop-out.(7)

MC5 argued that:

Equality in romantic relationships under capitalist patriarchy is impossible ... No amount of “correctness” on the part of individuals can make their relationships equal in the current context ... Comrades should be held to the highest standards possible under capitalism.(7)

Meanwhile, MacKinnon says she wishes she had a dime for every “left” relationship that thought it was equal.

Lotus Blossom worked with MIM for a period of more than a year.

Then a key struggle on gender came and went. Who did the cop-out? As of today Lotus Blossom admits that s/he does not even know if s/he considers him/herself a feminist anymore. In fact, Lotus Blossom is now distributing Ku Klux Klan literature.

It all reminds one of Lenin:

The petty-bourgeois “driven to frenzy” by the horrors of capitalism is a social phenomenon which, like anarchism, is characteristic of all capitalist countries. The instability of such revolutionism, its barrenness, its liability to become swiftly transformed into submission, fantasy, and even a “frenzied” infatuation with one or another bourgeois “fad”—all this is a matter of common knowledge.(8)

The truth is a very powerful thing causing horrible ego-conflicts for Americans. Turning from MIM to the Klan is submission. Cheering for a Black woman just because the U.S. Senate gave her a chance on television to serve as an example of why to report Black men to the FBI is an example of a “bourgeois fad.”

Monogamy

Many people have argued against MIM's monogamy policy. Some argued that women did not know what they were about and should be allowed to experiment with different sex partners while in the party.

Others refused to support monogamy but did not know why they supported breaking up relationships; they could not come up with a consistent line. It's no coincidence that the people who see themselves and women as hopelessly unable to figure out what is going on in their own lives dropped out of the party or never joined after extensive recruiting and achieving unity on other questions.

Rape

The paternalist, state-expanding, psychiatry-promoting line finds women to be so weak that they need protection from words that are not threats of violence. "Emotional coercion" is a big factor in rape in their eyes. Women are taught to fear men's words and "emotional coercion." Trendy pseudo-feminist anti-violence organizations teach women to expand their fears of men infinitely, while leaving rape and battering rates unchanged. This is recycled sexism; it is also profitable for psychiatrists and organization administrators.

The anti-paternalist position holds that open "emotional coercion" is essential to having a process of consent in romantic relationships. Partners must spell out exact conditions under which a relationship continues or ends. Pseudo-feminists term the fact that everyone has conditions under which they end a relationship "emotional coercion."

Agreeing with MacKinnon that anyone can be influenced by pornography and that biology is not a social role, MIM holds that biological women can and do rape women and men. The paternalist camp comes back to saying that is just a "reverse sexism" argument, that women have no power to rape. The emphasis on power in the First World is misleading. First World women do not have to have romantic relationships with men. Saying women have no power to rape, but men do is accepting as fact that women are dependent enough on men that they can be put in the position of being raped. The paternalists will defend the right of women

to lie or otherwise defraud men to start or maintain a relationship because they say women have no power.

Rape of biological men by biological women is possible because women buy into rape culture. What is the vision of a woman who lies in order to obtain consent from her boyfriend? She accepts the images of women portrayed in pornography. In buying into images of women as powerless, women refuse to assert themselves honestly and prevent their boyfriends from consenting to sex.

When rape was defined the old fashioned way as penetration using a gun or knife or other physical force, the pseudo-feminists had a better case for saying women can't rape. Now that rape is defined more subtly, they claim that women can't do many of the things men do; this demonstrates a new kind of sexism which holds that women are much weaker than they are in reality. To paint women as too weak to rape and yet subject to rape even through words is glorifying the woman's supposed social role of victim and asserting femininity, not feminism. Instead of expanding women's fears and teaching women feminine responses to the coercion in sex, MIM criticizes paternalists and sets about eliminating the coercion underlying all sex.

Personal as political

This line is often used as an excuse to say that people should be nice to women and that's how to be political. The anti-arrogance critics of MIM chime in here as well to say that MIM people are mean.

MC5 has written that:

The reactionary side of the slogan "the personal is political" is the glorification of self-indulgence, part of the decadence of Amerikan imperialism.(5)

MIM has had plenty of experiences with friendships going bad and causing politics to go out the window. Many former friends of MIM have quit politics entirely as a result of personal conflicts.

The issue of paternalism—basic assumptions about what position women are in right now and what they are capable of—comes up again and again. It’s time to accept that MIM has had a mistaken paternalist past, that many people working with us and since burned out have a paternalist past and that it is a mistake to let paternalism continue, either inside or outside the party.

Notes:

1. Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, New York: Grove Press, 1965, p. 347.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 351.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
4. MIM Notes 40. March 1990.
5. MIM Notes 35.
6. MIM Notes 36.
7. MIM Notes 37.
8. V.I. Lenin, “Left-Wing” Communism: An Infantile Disorder,” Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970, p. 17.

6.3 “Doesn’t MIM Notes Art Attack Hill?”

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 61, February 1992 —

Dear MIM:

I have a question that I would like answered in the paper:

Why were Anita Hill’s actions re: Clarence Thomas questioned in the paper. I am referring to the front page graphic and the commentary.

There was a graphic/photo on the front cover of the last issue with Orin Hatch holding a book with an edited title, which included something akin to “the white man’s black woman.” There also was some reference to how she (or other women) should deal with the issue of sexual harassment. I would like more on that because the line that came out confused me.

[Signed,]

Confused Reader



MC7 Responds

MIM does not doubt the validity of most women’s claims to sexual harassment and assault. This is a part of everyday life in a patriarchal society: women do not control their sexuality. But MIM believes that there are ways to deal with this assault that causes more harm than good to the struggle for women’s liberation.

There is an unfortunate tendency within so-called feminist circles to herald anything a woman does as correct, but MIM has more respect for women than that. Women can understand politics well enough to hear challenges to their political ideas and strategies without falling apart—as the so-called feminists apparently think they will.

When a Black woman goes on television to charge a Black man with sexual harassment, there is no doubt that the media image of the scene will be that Black

men are obscenely sexual creatures, incapable of self-control. This image of Black men has historically been used by Euro-Amerikan men and women as an excuse to lynch Black men, and to terrorize the Black nation as a whole.

Anita Hill allied herself with a long line of Euro-Amerikan women when she chose to publicly charge Thomas with harassment. MIM does not support Thomas politically. But MIM recognizes that the results of this public charade can only be interpreted as a set back for both the women's movement and the struggle against national oppression.

For the women's movement, Hill proved most emphatically that when you go to the pigs to fight patriarchy you won't win. The system was never designed to facilitate such challenges.

MIM criticizes Hill most for her chosen course of action. There is no way that Hill could be seen as an ally of Third World women. Hill did not face a life-and-death situation when she chose to keep her job and not criticize Thomas publicly. She used whatever means she could to get ahead in her business. This included not making public complaints to or about Thomas at the time the incidents occurred. To say that she was "psychologically" powerless to stop him is the extreme in paternalistic attitudes that many pseudo-feminists support.

First World and upper-middle-class women in Amerika have the power to say no. Very few of these women need to stay in "harassing" professional relationships to survive economically. When survival is no longer the issue, MIM examines the motives and actions of women who "put up" with harassment at work. In Hill's case, the motive was one of class power and the action was upward capitalist mobility. She desired a greater share of imperialist super-profits, and chose not to challenge patriarchal oppression—she was complicit in its continuation.

As a member of the Black nation this puts Hill on a level with the comprador bourgeoisie, those members of the oppressed nation whose wealth and power is dependent on imperialism. The comprador bourgeoisie will never be an ally of the revolution.

Not only did Hill help to further the patriarchy, she came forward as a Black woman and complied with a public spectacle that put the Black nation on trial as a group of loose women and sex-crazed men in a public lynching of the entire Black nation.

The Euro-American power structure has demonstrated again that Black people have no place in white courts. This was not a hearing, it was a public spectacle used to trod on the image of Blacks and women.

MIM fears that the result of all this increased media coverage of sexual harassment which the pseudo-feminists cheered will result in increased violence against women, increased paternalism towards women, and greater oppression of the Black nation. The messages were clear: women are not strong enough to stand up to their oppressors and Blacks are sex-crazed fiends.

In all of this MIM sees nothing to support.

This is an important dividing point ideologically between MIM and the pseudo-feminists who led the cheering for Hill. These so-called feminists support women's rights when these rights are being gained for First World women. But those gains—in equal wages, access to better birth control and freedom from the need to prostitute themselves—are gained at the expense of the Third World.

The real feminists are the people who are fighting for the liberation of all women and the elimination of the patriarchy in all its forms. Those who fight for a shift in the oppression off of their own shoulders onto the Third World are supporters of imperialism and no allies of MIM.

6.4 To Tell the Truth

After about a month of struggle over the Hill/Thomas issue most comrades originally supporting the paternalist position had dropped their support and the debate moved on to other tangents of the gender question. A party majority rejected the following article for newspaper publication.

Objections raised included that the party majority already said it believed Anita Hill, that abortion was treated too much as the be-all-and-end-all for the bourgeoisie's plans for the Supreme Court, that economics was emphasized too much, that Hill was not pseudo-lynched, that white women were granted suffrage to unite whites in oppressing national minorities, and that women in the United States won't open their eyes to patriarchy because they possess too much sexual privilege relative to the world's vast majority of women. Nonetheless, the article represents many trains of thought within the party at the time and shows the basic unity reached on many questions of paternalism vs. victim-blaming.

Newsweek summed it up the best:

It pre-empted the game shows, it interrupted weekend plans of foliageing, it transfixed a nation. It was carnal, ugly and surreal. This was The Scandal With Everything—penises, power, intense emotional pain, and millions tuned. They watched an x-rated spectacle that was repulsive and irresistible at the same time.(1)

1991: what a television year. Before, during, and after the Super Bowl Americans were able to watch, from a safe distance, the incineration, live burial, and slow starvation of over one quarter million Iraqi people. Then the fall season opened up with a spectacle that publications as diverse as The Economist and MIM Notes each called a degrading "circus."(2)

MIM lays it on the line. The Clarence Thomas hearings were live, oral pornography. The patriarchy was caught with its pants down and millions were repulsed by the sight of fourteen white, rich, arrogant, camera-happy, imperialist pigs jerking off on national TV.

Amerika watched while mentally balancing the pros and cons of the particular levels of viciousness they could get away with as they figuratively lynched a Black man and a Black woman. It was Ku Klux Klan Heaven. It was a racist sexist double-header.

The game was rigged from the beginning. The bourgeoisie's war-horse, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, was getting too old to keep up his integrationist ways and Bush needed another Tom. He'd had an eye on Thomas ever since Clarence proved—as Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)—that a Black man could get ahead in Amerika by using his skin tone as capital.

What choice?

Everybody knew that Bush was stacking the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe vs. Wade* and force white women to produce more doctors and lawyers. Poor women in Amerika can go back to the coat-hanger days and the rich and middle-class people will still be able to buy an abortion on the sly in Amerika or openly in Europe and Jamaica. The main point of the ruling class's anti-abortion campaign is to terrorize all women, divide the people, and make one fact perfectly clear: men, not women, own women's bodies. Not surprisingly, a lot of women did not care to see Thomas in charge of their wombs. Even the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—one of Amerika's premier reactionary organizations—came out against Thomas. Liberal feminist groups like the National Organization of Women (NOW) were having fits. Thomas reassured the Senate patriarchs that he was qualified for the Supreme Court because his parents were poor.

Seemingly out of nowhere, Anita Hill, law professor, was given center stage and permission to accuse Thomas of having sexually harassed her while she was his subordinate at the EEOC—the organization charged with policing discrimination and sexual harassment claims. A Black man and a Black woman were on the auction block again in Amerika: this time selling themselves. The rest is history.

Truth or consequences?

Whose interest did this pornographic, brutal entertainment serve? What questions must Maoists ask and answer?

Let's be clear: it does not matter which puppet was telling the "truth." Both Thomas and Hill fashioned careers enforcing the apartheid and paternal standards that

Amerika imposes on so-called “minorities” and women. In the eyes of the proletariat, neither has a shred of credibility.

On Oct. 23, Thomas was anointed at “a hastily arranged private swearing-in ceremony at the Court. There was no public announcement of the event until after it had taken place.”(3)

On Oct. 25, the “feminist” National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC) paid tens of thousands of dollars for a full-page ad in the New York Times asking:

What if 14 women, instead of 14 men, had sat on the Senate Judiciary Committee during the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas? As long as men make up 98% of the U.S. Senate and 93% of the U.S. House of Representatives, women’s voices can be ignored, and their experiences and concerns trivialized.(4)

This type of political analysis asks the question: **Wouldn’t it be better to be oppressed by women than by men?** The machinery of the imperialist, patriarchal State thrives on the international oppression of women. The political ideologies and practices of 14, or 100, Margaret Thatchers, Marilyn Quayles, Indira Ghandis, Molly Yards or Anita Hills will never end gender or class oppression. Out-right militarists like Thatcher and “feminists” like Yard serve the same master as Bush: capital.

MIM calls feminists who work only to negotiate a better economic deal for themselves within the confines of imperialism “pseudo” (false) feminists. MIM does not consider women or men who gladly accept the privileges of a living standard based on parasitism to be true feminists. The only true feminists are those who work to end all women’s oppression; not to prolong it.

The majority of the world’s women live outside the oppressor nations. When women who are grateful citizens of an imperialist country win economic concessions for themselves from the patriarchy: they do so on the backs of the human majority. The relatively high wages and salaries paid by monopoly-capitalism to

privileged Amerikan voters are made possible by paying Third World women and men wages and piece rates that fall below the level of subsistence necessary for survival.

Consumer safety

When women who cheerfully buy colorfully packaged contraceptive devices—developed and tested in the bodies of Latin American peasant women—complain of sexual harassment in the workplace and appeal to the patriarchal system for redress they are not working to end gender oppression.

When privileged women accept the material benefits of posing on sexual pedestals, lord them over domestic service workers or agitate to join imperialist armed forces, they are not working to end gender oppression.

When Amerikan women “won” the right to vote shortly after World War One—and after seventy years of struggle—non-white women were, in practice, not included in that privilege.

The enfranchisement of women was seen both by politicians and by the suffragists themselves, as a means of controlling society in the interests of the ‘stable’ part of the population: the middle classes.(5)

Gender: the flip side

Despite the privileges that dominant-nation women exercise, they are still subject to the violence of patriarchal social relations. Within days of Thomas’ confirmation, George Jo Hennard shot fourteen women and eight men to death in a cafeteria in Texas. The authorities speculated that Hennard was aiming for women who he had labeled, in writing, “white, treacherous, female vipers.”(6)

No woman alive today is exempt from patriarchal oppression. All women who wish to end this oppression need to open their eyes and set their sights far higher than the pseudo-feminist agenda.

A post-Thomas Newsweek poll asked 704 AT&T customers the loaded trick question: “Do you think that women in the United States have been making gains unfairly at the expense of men or not?”(6) Revolutionary feminists reply: “Women in the United States have been making gains unfairly at the expense of the majority of women and men in the world.”

Death to the Patriarchy in all its forms.

Notes:

1. Newsweek 10/28/91, p. 54.
2. The Economist 10/19/91; MIM Notes 58.
3. New York Times 10/24/91, p. A5.
4. New York Times 10/25/91, p. A5.
5. R. Evans, *The Feminists*.
6. New York Times 10/17/91, p. A1.
7. Newsweek 10/28/91, p. 28.

Chapter 7

The Theories

7.1 Class, Nation and Gender

NON-MIM VIEWS

In this section, MIM takes a look at the points of view that oppose MIM's.

1. Reformism including its ultraleft and fascist varieties and separatism.

This most popular school of pseudo-feminist thought lacks confidence in the Third World proletariat and sees no hope for revolution, if the issue is raised at all. The newcomers to this school of thought are politically unconscious, as were all members of MIM at one time or another. This is especially true of international affairs, where reformists have no idea of the armed struggles in the Third World and the accomplishments they have made.

The veterans of this movement are liars, often paid as scholars or psychiatrists or professional organizers. Despite knowing the facts, they persist in saying year after year of no change that men can be reformed into providing good sex. MIM hopes that readers will pay close attention to figures such as those on rape and battering, figures that show no improvement though reformist efforts have spent hundreds of millions of dollars since the 1960s.

Lying reformists are worse to the movement than open reactionaries like Phyllis Schlafly, who are honest enemies. They are also worse enemies than the most male-chauvinist, revolutionary left, because at least the revolutionaries never claimed men could be reformed.

The ultraleft variety of reformists claim to want more radical change than MIM does, because they want it NOW. They don't believe years of independent political movement are necessary to change men and women. They don't think the system has to be changed. No, men just have to change their attitudes and we can have good sex immediately.

In the fascist variety of reformism, Amerikan individualism, pseudo-feminism and the state come together. These fascist variety pseudo-feminists see the reactionary potential of the state. They noticed the Willie Horton ads from George Bush and approved. They want stricter sentences on men and guilty till proven innocent for rape, harassment, battering and other issues. In contrast, MIM believes men are guilty, but so are First World women, and MIM has no use for the patriarchal, imperialist court system—not to mention the failed individualist approach in general.

Separatism as politics through lifestyle choice (as opposed to Maoist lesbianism) often arose in the reformist context as an alternative to both revolutionary politics and heterosexual reformism. It seemed to show more promise in the more radical 1960s, but since that time something of a political de-evolution has taken place. Many separatists are simply apolitical. Separatism has proved to be good business for others.

Many other separatists believe there is good sex to be had now—just among women. This school of thought shows some progress, because many of its adherents have noticed since the 1960s that rape, battering and harassment happen also within the separatist community. This hints to the need for revolution.

MIM would also add that the record for feminist separatism in accomplishing liberation is not as good as the national liberationist separatism that it imitates.

1. Reductionism.

These so-called Marxists give Marxism a bad name. Read on.

1. Overdeterminationism.

These opportunist Marxists will never lead a movement forward, because they think the oppressed can get away without making decisions on the kinds of tough issues raised in this document.

What is reductionism?

According to a class reductionist view, women are only oppressed as workers, and should join the (economic) class struggle to fight for the class as a whole. This approach denies the distinct historical, ideological, psychological, and physical features of gender opposition affecting all women.

Class reductionism is linked with economism in that it reduces political subjects produced in the broad, revolutionary process to class subjects produced at the economic level. In other words, it is “only by taking part in production” that women can overcome their backward views and develop revolutionary consciousness. Thus, the potential members of a revolutionary movement to overthrow capitalism are seen strictly

as the working class, narrowly defined by relations at the point of production.

Thus, women who are not engaged in production are seen at best, as unreliable allies in the class struggle; and the forms of oppression women suffer that are not strictly located at the point of production are considered minor and secondary concerns. This view enables economists to support child-care demands so that women can go to work outside the home, but not support demands for men to do equal amounts of child-care and house after work hours.

— “Anti-Sexism Work Group of the Boston Political Collective,”
Theoretical Review, p. 1, July–August 1981.

7.2 Reductionist Approach to Feminism

According to the Progressive Labor Party (PLP)—the first Maoist party in the United States, and later turned into a closet Trotskyist party:

The truth is that the oppression of women has no basis in anything but profit.(1)

As with the issue of racism where PLP went from supporting national liberation struggles to opposing them, PLP’s position is both gutsy and responsible, because PLP knows the difference between various positions that it has held or encountered.

PLP does not try to straddle fences and avoid the consequences of its line. Taking what it knows is likely to be an unpopular position among people attracted to communism, PLP says, “feminism divides workers” in the title of a section in the same pamphlet by the PLP...

Just as nationalism blames white workers for racism, feminism blames male workers for sexism. Both ideologies have workers fighting against each other instead of the boss.(1)

With less certainty and clarity, the Revolutionary Workers League (**RWL**) also compares radical feminist separatism to Black nationalism and indicates that radical feminist separatism is an even bigger failure in their eyes:

The radical feminist movement had the same weaknesses as the black nationalist movement. It turned away from the united action of working class women and men to separatism.(2)

Of course, RWL also criticizes liberal feminism. According to RWL, the oppression of women will end “through both the entrance of women into social labor and the socialization of childcare and housekeeping.”(2)

This point of view goes back to Engels, but it was not restricted to male socialist leaders. In disagreeing with MIM line, MA6 has often cited Clara Zetkin, a German socialist, who told the International Congress of Socialist Women in 1907 that socialist women should never ally with bourgeois women.(3)

The same viewpoint was also apparent in France after the near-Revolution of 1968. Within the women’s liberation movement (MLF), there was a tendency called the “class struggle tendency.” An instructor in women’s studies in England, Claire Duchen has identified this as one of the three major trends in Paris; even though it apparently disappeared by 1976.

A newspaper called Women Workers’ Struggle put it this way:

We see our struggle as an integral part of the struggle of the working class for socialist revolution. Our struggle against our bosses, against the oppression in our daily lives, against sexism, our taking charge of our own politics, all contribute to the unity of the working class.(4)

Notes:

1. Progressive Labor Party, “Smash Sexism!”

2. Revolutionary Workers League, “Perspectives and Tasks of the Revolutionary Workers League,” 1982, pp. 39-40.
3. Claire Duchen, *Feminism in France*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 3.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 28.

7.3 The Autonomous Position on Intersections

I. Comments

Reductionists believe “everything boils down to class” or “everything boils down to gender” or “everything boils down to nation.” For example, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) was so good as to say that all gender oppression boils down to making a profit.

Then there was the “overdeterminationist” position. They say, “nothing boils down to anything else, but everything is connected.”

The “autonomous” position in feminism has done the most to oppose Maoism. Adherents of this position are often unconscious of their own theoretical assumptions, but not always as words from leading theoreticians of the autonomous school will show.

Respect is due to consistent theoretical and practical efforts. The examples of PLP, Resnick and Wolff, and Johnston are admirable on a theoretical level of consistency, even if we can’t stomach the rest of their practice.

It’s the people who straddle the fences— usually unconsciously—who are dangerous to themselves and their movements. They end up contradicting themselves and being unaccountable to the masses, because it is impossible to pin down what they are saying and what they are doing. MIM takes clear stands so it can be held accountable for them.

Here I rely on Claire Duchen’s work *Feminism in France* to identify patterns in the First World struggle between separatist feminism and Maoism. Duchen’s

book is especially useful to MIM because it covers the attitude of French feminist activists toward Maoism, materialism and vanguard parties. It appears that much of feminism in France since 1968 has been formed in reaction to Maoism and Trotskyism; this history raises the level of debate.

II. What They are Saying: A Dialogue

National and feminist separatists are the exponents of the autonomous school of thought. Jill Johnston's *Lesbian Nation* is a case in point. Such separatism is well-known in the United States.

In France, an organization built around a journal called *Psych et Po* and originally organized by a psychiatrist—Antoinette Fouque—calls itself the women's liberation movement (MLF) in the utmost sectarian fashion. MIM would never organize a group and call it the entire women's liberation effort; the sentiment for real liberation—while rare in the First World—is not something one organization can monopolize. *Psych et Po* registered MLF as their legal trademark in 1979.

The most developed questioning about difference has taken place in the group *Psych et Po*, for whom it constitutes the heart of the revolutionary problem. They describe their "work" as the search to "get away from reproducing masculinity." Masculinity controls even at the level of the unconscious, and women operate within the confines of masculine unconscious structures and have been turned into misogynists, despising their own womanhood.(1)

Furthermore:

Psych et Po's work, their mission, is to make this existence possible, to bring the feminine into existence, and they have tried to develop a number of strategies aiming to defy and undermine masculinity. These strategies operate at different levels. First in group meetings and in individual analysis (frequently on Antoinette Fouque's couch), each

woman must try to understand how she has been made a misogynist—how the masculine elements in her head work against her.

The feminine element in us, radically other, can only be developed in autonomous female spaces; hence the founding of the publishing company, the bookshops, the group meetings, the magazine. *Psych et Po* provide physical and textual spaces in which the feminine can grow. They emphasise writing as a practice that defies the Logos—the male (Father's) spoken word.(2)

Indeed, according to H. Cixous, writing brings about a “de-censored relation of women to their sexuality, to their being-women, giving them access to their own strength.”(3)

Influencing *Psych et Po* is the work of Lacan and Derrida with its pessimism or neutrality toward the capability of individuals to comprehend and, hence, whittle away at the unconscious, which includes the hitherto unexpressed “feminine.” *Psych et Po* simply tries to do what might be impossible:

For our work on this lack of conceptualisation, lack of consciousness, we make use of current instruments of thought, particularly of psychoanalysis, which is the only discourse on sexuality available at this time...(4)

... says a major writer for *Psych et Po*.

It is possible to hold a revolutionary separatist position; there is nothing inherent to separatism that makes it non-Maoist. However, the search for a “how-to-live-without-patriarchy” by changing individual or small group attitudes and behaviors within the current system is something underlying most theories of gender as autonomous oppression. The people with the strongest rhetoric of women as a group are often the same people who act towards capitalism as individuals instead of as a group. Hence, most separatists are anti-Liberal rhetorically with regard

to gender, but Liberal with regard to class issues and ultimately gender issues. People thinking of themselves as tough anti-male hierarchy, anti-vanguard party, anti-theory anarchists often turn out to be reformists because they believe it is possible to live without patriarchy without overthrowing the system. This mixture of Liberalism and anti-Liberalism is not cohesive theoretically-speaking and usually ends in opportunism and burn-out.

Psych et Po is a case in point. In 1978 it was saying:

In a capitalist, imperialist, patriarchal state to vote is to reinforce the power system.(5)

As a “revolutionary” group not participating in “masculine” politics, while concentrating on nurturing the feminine, *Psych et Po* capitulated and endorsed Mitterand for the 1981 elections in the name of the entire women’s liberation movement.(5) *Psych et Po* didn’t really change; it just flipped from one kind of Liberalism to another. It never took a revolutionary outlook. After this and some mild internal divisions, all that is left of *Psych et Po* is a very successful business with three bookshops, a series of magazines and three companies.(6)

The MLF under *Psych et Po* is a psychiatric organization trying to create a patriarchy-free space for women within the current system. There could not be a higher expression of the contradiction between Liberalism and anti-Liberalism. Women in France use the middle-class pseudo-science of psychiatry to liberate themselves, one at a time.

Claire Duchen characterizes the situation in England as similar to that in the United States:

This feminism, probably the most familiar to women in other countries, and certainly the kind with which I feel most comfortable, lives in small collectives, individual research and collective actions, attempting

to get by from day to day and to work out any theoretical positions from daily experience, grounded in the reality of women's lives.(7)

“Non-aligned” feminists like Duchen mean individual First World women's lives when they say women's lives. Duchen is aware of this and many other correct criticisms of her brand of feminism:

The MLF is overwhelmingly a white women's movement.(8)

She also understands the criticism that it is not enough to ground oneself in individual lives: one must adopt a theory and move into political commitment and action.

[She writes:]

Non-aligned feminist insistence on refusal of structure, believing that to adopt a fixed structure would be to destroy the dynamism of the MLF, means that when organisation is needed, it is earned out by ad hoc committees which are dissolved once the action or event has taken place. There is no continuity of action, no overall strategy to provide a framework for action, no grand scheme for justifying them. The lack of a coherent revolutionary project partly explains the way that many militant feminists feel ineffective and frustrated and abandon their militancy; it means that it is capable of change and is more adaptable than other types of feminism.(9)

These “non-aligned” feminists are the ones who reject theory as inherently male.

A movement that bases its analysis on women's own experience and perceives the world as constructed by and for men will, to some extent, see theory as support for the seeking and maintaining of power.

Non-aligned feminism tends to be suspicious of over-arching, generalising tendencies, mistrusting abstractions and perceiving theory as a dimension of male repression, as justification of the violence inherent in rationality. As Rosi Braidotti says, feminism often considers theory to be “a power strategy whose objective is to support and justify the social practice of the oppression of women.”(10)

Duchen correctly concludes that there is no middle ground between the experiential approach and its validation of various subjective states and the “worldview” approach which has a plan of action. Action is and always will be a materialist undertaking. Anyone who takes political action takes a side. Whether they like it or not they take their political action with a view of what is most effective in material reality—theory—unless of course action is not important to them in the first place.

The only thing that Duchén gets wrong is failing to identify “non-aligned” feminism as a worldview. Where all women’s subjective states are validated despite being in conflict, the result is cross-cancellation and paralysis that leaves the patriarchy in place. In addition, where there are no organizations claiming credit for individual actions organized by non-aligned feminists, the bourgeois patriarchy steps in to claim credit, in the guise of a woman if necessary. Like it or not, “non-aligned” feminism has a theory, the tools of which support the patriarchy.

The fear of “generalising tendencies” necessary for production of theory reflects the naïve acceptance of the experiential approach as applied to middle-class women. It has nothing to do with feminism or women as biologically predisposed to avoiding theory. Petty-bourgeois women are extreme individualists. Even when a political leader arises from petty-bourgeois women, it is a Betty Friedan or an Antoinette Fouque—someone who accepts Freudian theory and applies it. The idea of a theory of a social group is anathema to the petty-bourgeoisie which likes to believe it is above the struggle for economic survival and class struggle in reality and above materialist methodology in philosophy. The same experiential approach applied to women in conditions of desperate life-and-death struggle against oppression would reveal women do not take such an individualistic view. It is their relative

lack of oppression and politicization which makes First World women especially susceptible to the patriarchy's lie that women can't do science, theory or logical thought generally and that women can't use theory as a tool to fight oppression. The unthreatened patriarchy just laughs it up all the way to the bank, going so far as to make a profit off of "women's literature." which in methodological approach and marketable appeal is often indistinguishable from potboiler romance novels.

Reading Duchen is extremely frustrating for Maoists. She understands how it is impossible to have a coherent movement without a worldview. Moreover, she recognizes the "materialist feminists" for criticizing the "essentialism" of those women seeking an ahistorical feminine essence—the feminine difference—like Cixous's idea that women did not have strength until they started writing for *Psych et Po* after 1968. How can someone like Duchen who struggled through so many issues not be a Maoist?

Duchen gives some common reasons why women did not hook up with Maoism in France in 1968. The first clue is that the Maoists were associated with Trotskyists. Maoist feminism was thought to be stupid reductionist Marxism:

The contradiction was evident in their texts. For instance, they were reluctant to name men as oppressors of women and tried hard to avoid it.(11)

This kind of reductionism opened the door to equally simplistic but classic Liberal feminist rebuttals:

You never say "I," and you always talk about other people, never about yourselves; you talk about the MASSES, whom, as you put it, you want to CONQUER...(12)

III. Response to Pseudo-Feminist Representation of Maoists

MIM replies firmly that men are oppressors as a group. It is true that talking about "I" is not as unencumbered a problem as the non-aligned feminists claim. MIM

has policies in place to deal with individuals, so MIM members do talk about the “I.” All people in the party engage in continuous criticism and self-criticism. But MIM is careful not to make hypocritical claims like Psych et Po does. There are no oases free from patriarchy and that includes MIM. Precisely because there is no oasis free from patriarchy in reality, MIM opposes the Liberal individualist strategy, which works solely on the “I,” and thinks in terms of a revolutionary overthrow of a whole system instead.

MIM also disagrees with the pseudo-feminist claim that settling right and wrong is not a feminist project. **Like avoiding theory, refusal to designate right and wrong is not an aid to women’s liberation and should be called out for what it is—patriarchal socialization to avoid power.** It is women who have the most to gain by struggling for a correct line and the most to lose by paralysis.

Hence, when the individual comes to MIM with an issue, the party votes on it, with majority rule. The party does not say, all feminisms are equal or all women’s perspectives are equal. Nor does MIM sanction only talking about individuals all the time if the individuals concerned are always white, middle-class women. Real feminism is not a guise for First World chauvinism, dating advice, gossip, Freudian psychoanalysis, avoiding political power or expansion of leisure-time activities by intertwining politics and romance.

If the Maoists in 1968 in France were really so simplistic as Duchén makes out, then let the Maoists be heard again: nation, class and gender are all oppressions. They are highly connected and cannot be entirely reduced to each other.

Notes:

1. Claire Duchén, *Feminism in France*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, p. 20.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 125.

6. Ibid., pp. 32-4.
7. Ibid., p. 40.
8. Ibid., p. 141.
9. Ibid., p. 46.
10. Ibid., p. 82.
11. Ibid., p. 28.
12. Ibid., p. 29.

7.4 Overdetermination Position

I. Comments

When it comes to Anita Hill the overdeterminationists might say, “Anita Hill was sexually harassed and oppressed by Clarence Thomas. She also lynched Thomas with white imperialist help. They are both oppressed and there is no determining who is right. We believe both. That’s the way the system is right now. Don’t try to boil it down to gender, nation, class or some combination of them. It’s all those things and more.”

Aside from class, nation or gender reductionist positions, the overdetermination position is popular as well. Overdeterminationists say you don’t have to choose which oppressions are more important than others and that so doing plays the oppressed off against each other. A feminist spin added in is to say that all oppressions are important, so just work on your own as women: do it for yourself. A parallel in anti-racism is that white people should get in touch with themselves first and work on their own racism.

At first overdeterminationism is attractive in practice, when activists see a lot of single-issue groups and don’t like their divisive narrow mindedness. It’s attractive to do a little of everything, both to learn things and to show that the oppressions are not separate. On the other hand, in theory, that type of activism can be reductionist, taking the position that the oppressions are not separate but part of one imperialist system.

This essay will quote some examples of the position that there are a multiplicity of factors causing all oppressions at all times and that none can be boiled down to one cause. This will help people in the party consider if this is where they are at. We should also be able to distinguish between reductionist, overdeterminationist and other approaches.

II. They Speak for Themselves

Much of the Marxist tradition has been understood to argue reductively that class structure (the ‘base’) determines social structure (the ‘superstructure’) and class struggle determines historical change ...

We find this reductionism to be problematic. It strikes us as unacceptably simplistic and one sided in its a priori presumption that some causes must outweigh others in determining an effect. Reductionism has, in our view, contributed to disastrous theoretical and political consequences as changes in one social factor—the presumed ‘most effective cause’—have been expected to usher in all manner of necessary effects which never materialized ... [*They refer to nationalization of property in the Soviet Union and even in France as not changing much.*]

It can be replaced analytically by a nonreductionist perspective. Class, however defined, can be understood as the effect of many different social aspects with none of them playing the role of ‘most fundamental’ determinant ...

A non- or anti-reductionist approach to class eschews in principle the analytical search for last, final, or ultimate causes or determinants. Hence it can never find class or any other social aspect to be such a cause. Instead, the goal is to explore the complex ways in which a chosen set of social aspects interrelate as simultaneous causes and effects.⁽¹⁾

Wolff and Resnick define “overdetermination” with reference to dialectics:

The term denoting this complex general approach to causation as a seamless web of cause and effect tying together all aspects of any social totality was the ‘dialectics’ so much discussed and debated in the pre-World War II Marxist tradition. That tradition has since been enriched by the particular contributions of Georg Lukacs and Louis Althusser who adapted Sigmund Freud’s term, overdetermination, to characterize a strictly non-reductionist (or anti-essentialist) notion of society causality.(2)

Then Resnick and Wolff get practical:

Is the change in class processes, from capitalist to communist, possible or securable without certain changes in the configuration of nonclass processes within a society? Marxist theory, as we understand it, must answer this question with a resounding “No.” Class processes are the overdetermined effect of all the other, nonclass processes in the society (the conditions of existence of the class processes).”

To take one example, it may be that specific changes in social processes concerned with gender relationship would provide conditions for a change in the class processes of Western capitalist societies today. A change in popular consciousness about what ‘male’ and ‘female’ mean (i.e., a change in certain cultural processes) alongside a change in the authority distribution process within families (a change in political or power processes) might combine with a change as women sell more of their labor power as a commodity (a change in the economic process of exchange) to jeopardize capitalist class processes.(3)

The most appealing part of what Resnick and Wolff say is “we believe that these ideas form a specifically Marxist basis for unity within current movements and thereby enhance the chances for success.”

Furthermore:

Such unity would not preclude significant differences among Marxists over which particular social processes occupy their analytical and practical energies. The differences would then concern what we have called 'entry points.' Some Marxists would continue to enter into their social analyses by a focus upon class, upon the forms and interaction of the fundamental and subsumed class processes within a society ... Other Marxists would analyze the society via different entry points, different foci.(4)

According to Resnick and Wolff, all Marxists must agree that class has to do with property, power or surplus labor appropriation, but they do not have to and should not agree that class is the most fundamental factor in a society's processes. Marxists do agree that class is important and affects other processes in society and they work to abolish class. That is all, say Resnick and Wolff.

Resnick and Wolff further worked through this kind of reasoning to some of its logical and provocative conclusions:

No longer could one sustain an economic theory in which the value of a commodity is reduced to labor as its underlying essence. No longer could one affirm a social theory in which societal movement is ultimately reduced to and governed by its economic base. The anti-reductionism of the Althusserian logic demanded a notion of value and societal change as, respectively, sites of mutually constitutive effects emanating from diverse economic, political, cultural, and natural parts of life. No one or complex combination of these parts could reign in the first or last instance.

Whether as a philosopher or as a social theorist, Althusser, like Marx before him and postmodernists today, tried to formulate an approach that would be free of the inherent conservatism represented by foundationalism, last-instance determinism, and reductionism in all of their different guises, from positivism and realism in philosophy to structuralism and humanism in social theory. The revolutionary implication

was that every object would be scrutinized, interrogated, and held up for grabs, whether that object took the form of a meaning of a text or a truth claim in science or a mode of production in society.(5)

III. Glossary

If I might put some words in their mouths, I believe Resnick and Wolff would label MIM “reductionist, determinist, rationalist, positivist and structuralist”—and not entirely without justification.

Determinism—the notion that something causes (determines) something else, without fail.

The overdeterminationists criticize this in Marxism as substituting economics for god. God used to be seen as the cause of everything and now it is economics.

Essentialism—boiling down a social phenomenon to its “essence,” usually its cause or character, especially as opposed to its “form.”

Materialist essentialism is criticized by overdeterminationists for mimicking Platonic idealism. Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao were all essentialists, to various degrees at various times.

Overdetermination—the idea in studies of society that social processes are all connected and that all of the aspects of society cause each other, with none as the most important.

Resnick and Wolff say the idea comes from Freud, but I believe Freud took the idea from mathematics—algebra.

Positivism—the belief that society can be studied scientifically, following successes in the natural sciences.

Rationalism—since the Enlightenment, the belief that all phenomena are comprehensible by human reason.

In the Marxist context, the label “rationalist” is an overdeterminationist critique that there is one scientific truth and that other opinions are subjective. Althusser criticized this idea saying that there is class struggle in theory. In other words, advance comes from the conflict of more or less subjective theories.(6)

Reductionism—an idea very similar to essentialism. The search for an ultimate cause.

Today’s Trotskyists are the most consistent reductionists, because they boil down national and gender oppression to class. Althusser claimed Mao as an inspiration, because Mao believed that national oppression could be the principal contradiction at times. Mao did not boil everything down to a narrow conception of class and always juggled various contradictions in mind. Perhaps for this reason, Resnick and Wolff, followers of Althusser, criticize Althusser for still believing in god by going along with Mao that there are principal contradictions and determinations in “the last instance.”

Notes:

1. Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick, “What Are Class Analyses?” *Research in Political Economy*, Vol. 9, Greenwich, CT: Jai Press, 1986, pp. 7-8.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
5. Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick, “Althusser’s Contribution,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1991, p. 14.

6. Etienne Balibar, “For Althusser,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1991; Louis Althusser, “On Marx and Freud,” *Rethinking Marxism*, Spring 1991.
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MIM VIEW

7.5 Definitions and Position: The Three Main Strands of Oppression

I. Class

A. The capitalist class is the enemy. Anyone who owns the means of production or has a controlling interest is a capitalist. Most of these are white; some are of other nationalities. We cautiously attempt to unite the national bourgeoisies of the oppressed nationalities behind the program of smashing imperialism.

B. The class enemy, beyond the imperialists, is the labor aristocracy. [See *MIM Theory, Volume One (Second Edition)*, Spring 2015, “A White Proletariat?”] They are the mass base for social democracy. The union leaders are the most dangerous of these enemies because they are paid in this position of trying to perpetuate this system and so are the lackeys of the imperialists— the compradors of class.

C. Individual masses in the unions can be won over and, so, are worth targeting since they have come to political activity in some form, though their political activity is in the interest of maintaining imperialism. These individuals can commit class suicide and join the revolution. As a group they will not do this now.

D. We recognize the ideology of social democracy as an enemy ideology tending toward fascism.

E. The petty-bourgeoisie has an individualist interest in revolution but not the material interest that the proletariat has. They could go either way as a group and ally with imperialism or revolution.

II. Nation

A. The highest national enemies are the imperialists, the principal oppressors of oppressed nations. Another nation enemy is the comprador bourgeoisie—those members of the nation who sell out and ally with the imperialists to oppress their own nation. Their wealth depends on imperialism. The oppressed nations must overthrow the traitorous comprador bourgeoisie to advance the national struggle.

B. There is also a Third World labor aristocracy, a section of the labor aristocracy discussed above. The Third World labor aristocracy, compradors and those aspiring to be compradors confuse and set back the national struggle, just as the Amerikan labor aristocracy is a group aspiring to be imperialists that sets back the class struggle. For theoretical purposes, it will be useful to refer to the Third World groups dependent on imperialism as a national aristocracy. They are the mass base for cultural nationalism and integrationism. The leaders of the national aristocracy are the most dangerous and most clearly enemies because of their material relation to imperialism.

C. Individual Third World labor aristocrats, cultural nationalists and integrationists may be won over and are worth targeting (they are politically active). These individuals may commit class and nation suicide and join the revolution. As a group they will not do this now.

D. We recognize the ideologies of cultural nationalism and integrationism as enemy ideologies tending toward fascism.

E. The national bourgeoisie is like the petty-bourgeoisie of class in that they both could either go the way of imperialism or ally with the revolution.

III. Gender

A. Clearly those who run the pornography or other gender oppressive capitalist businesses are patriarchal enemies.

B. We call the remainder of the gender enemy the gender aristocracy. First World biological women are bought off with class, nation, and gender privilege and have a material interest in maintaining imperialism. First World biological men, as a group, also have an interest in perpetuating the patriarchy and so can be defined as a patriarchal enemy; most of these men and women fall into imperialist or labor aristocracy camps. The gender aristocracy is the mass base for First World pseudo-feminism. Women who are paid leaders of the First World pseudo-feminist movement are analogous to the union leaders, and cultural nationalist leaders.

C. Individuals in the mass organizations concerned with gender might be won over and are worth targeting. Those individuals can commit class/nation/gender suicide and join the revolution. As a group they will not do this now.

D. Pseudo-feminist ideology is that of the enemy.

E. Separatists and those who profit directly from gender oppression are the gender bourgeoisie. A separatist running a whore-house would qualify here. They are analogous to the national bourgeoisie class as a potential ally or enemy.

Overview

The capitalists, the compradors, and the pornographers are roughly equivalent in terms of danger and unapproachability as enemies.

The labor aristocracy, national aristocracy, and gender aristocracy are the aspiring imperialists in class, nation, or gender; they are materially bought off.

The petty-bourgeoisie, national bourgeoisie and gender-female bourgeoisie are all potential allies depending on the principal contradiction and their conditions. All will be tested as allies or enemies.

People may ask, how is sexual privilege as the basis for the gender aristocracy separate from class privilege? In some senses it is not, just as national privilege is not always separate from class privilege. The billionaire who buys prostitutes' services is transforming one privilege into another. That transformation depends on the fact that it is possible to exchange money for prostitution. There is a definite link between class privilege and gender privilege.

Those aspects of sexual privilege that cannot be bought for money prove that gender is independent of class and that there really is such a thing as sexual privilege, the meat of which the patriarchal enemies thrive on. An example is reproduction. In some states it is possible to buy a mother's breeding services. In others it is not possible or it is restricted.

Another indication of sexual privilege is seen in the issue of rape. Two people from the same class, say the white working class, do not necessarily face the same sexual domination, although the difference will not be as great as between the imperialist men and the Third World women.

All along MIM knew that there was a patriarchal enemy. It also knew there was a bourgeoisie. The new phrases coined here are "national aristocracy" and "gender aristocracy." The gender aristocracy are those people who have high status in sexual privilege, regardless of their biology. MIM is unaware of any organization that has developed these concepts in the highly parallel forms cited here.

7.6 Polemics

Revolutionary feminists

MacKinnon is to feminism as Hegel is to Marxism—philosophically helpful, not a feminist (not a Marxist). There are very few real feminists in the United States. A real feminist recognizes women's oppression from the perspective of Third World women and works to end it. There are some Black lesbian (and non-lesbian) feminists in the United States who are working on this (also Latino, and other nationalities perhaps). They can be compared to the revolutionary national-

ists—revolutionary feminists who see the patriarchy as the principal enemy and are working effectively to overthrow it, under capitalism.

These are people MIM would ally with, just as we would ally with revolutionary nationalists, not reactionary nationalists. We ally with these revolutionary groups with an understanding of the shortcomings of their analysis.

First World feminists

Everyone is getting hung up on what this means about other First World feminist groups. All those rape prevention, domestic violence, pro-choice groups are not revolutionary feminist organizations; MIM would not ally with them. They contribute to the oppression of the Third World, specifically but not always Third World women, and in some cases to the oppression of First World women as well. They are reactionary feminists—pseudo-feminists.

Many comrades with a background in reformism have experienced working with pseudo-feminist groups. The Amerikan “left” allies with them to avoid addressing women’s oppression. They don’t have an alternative; there is no choice analogous to that between Malcolm X and Jesse Jackson. They are all Jackson or Jackson, perpetuating gender oppression in the Third World.

It is hard to accept that there is no strong feminist leadership in the United States; this is necessarily the most controversial part of our analysis of nation/class/gender.

If we accept the above analysis, we know that MIM is building feminism from the ground up. There is no Marx or Malcolm X of gender, no feminist revolutions, only nationalist and class revolutions on which to build. At least we have our Hegel.

In March 1990, we thought we were being risqué putting the title: “Are Third World women victims of First World feminism?” on a newspaper article. Now we know it should have been a statement, not a question.

So we deal with pseudo-feminists the same way we deal with the white working class. We can try to win individual adherents over, but we recognize that the organizations are bought off—many are state-funded.

Pseudo-feminism?

In MIM Notes 35, MC5 defined pseudo-feminism as the politicization of self-indulgence. But pseudo-feminism is a legitimate politicization that gains more than self-indulgence for women, it gains material benefits. Pseudo-feminists are in it for material benefits at the expense of the Third World.

Useful feminist movements

In a recent book review [*Ed. note: See “Between Feminism and Labor: The Significance of the Comparable Worth Movement,” this issue.*], I discussed the comparable worth movement as a possibly revolutionary force. It could be fighting the patriarchy at the expense of men OR it could be gaining white women more privilege at the expense of the Third World.

Rape prevention groups and domestic violence centers (DVCs) have an analogous choice. Rape prevention groups could take MacKinnon’s line and fight the patriarchy by promoting communication in relationships while holding that all sex is rape and identifying the patriarchy as its principal cause, OR they could promote rape in the search for perfect consensual sex, terrorize people out of communicating in their relationships, turn First World men to rape more Third World women, and generally confuse the issue while taking money from the state so the state looks good for trying to stop rape.

DVCs could be telling women that battering will continue until they overthrow the patriarchy, organizing women in the shelters to do it, OR they could just provide “support,” and offer counseling so that women can go out there and find a better man, and generally confuse the issue while taking money from the state.

Abortion rights groups could be telling people that the patriarchy is using abortion to keep women in their place, OR they could be advocating an individualist ap-

proach, pushing for legal reforms, testing drugs and birth control on Third World women, and generally confuse the issue while taking money from the state.

A good example of the choices First World women are offered in pseudo-feminist politics is in a recent issue of off our backs:

If you're a white lesbian activist, for example, it might be most important to emphasize sexual self-determination as the heart of the abortion struggle. You may be less interested in the issues raised by Billye Avery and others in the Black Women's Health Project, which include publicly funded prenatal care, less-demeaning childbirth procedures, and drug treatment for pregnant women ... However, beyond respect for difference, there are core themes that cut across many of what Jesse Jackson might call patches in "the quilt" of coalition politics.

The article advocates self-serving politics, and misses the fact that reformist political gains have to come out of *someone's back*.

For each of these campaigns there is a revolutionary option and a reactionary option. The comparable worth movement is the only one showing any evidence of taking the revolutionary path with any consistency—this may just be out of necessity due to the nature of the movement.

So the pseudo-feminists have put up all these reactionary strawmen that we have to knock down before MIM can even start to build a feminist movement.

With all this it makes sense why so many Black women cringe when they hear the word feminism. For most women of different nationalities it has been true that feminism=racism. Putting this in MIM terms, pseudo-feminism=class oppression, national oppression and gender oppression. Black feminists correctly identify the underlying current in all this so-called feminist activism. This is the same thing that the Black proletariat in Amerika recognized about the labor aristocracy long before MIM ever formed.

7.7 Against Reductionism

In the aftermath of the Hill-Thomas debate, the party supported this document which opposes certain theories as irresponsible or lazy and amounting to support for oppression if applied in practice.

I. Anti-Reductionism

Reductionism is the idea of explaining a lot of things in the world with one cause. In Marxism, reductionism usually means explaining everything in the world by boiling it down to class and class struggle.

In contrast to the idea of reductionism is eclecticism where there are no important causes, just an infinity of autonomous (meaning separate) causes of social behavior. In bourgeois sociology, Max Weber is someone who just picks whatever number of theories he wants to explain various historical situations.

The party should not equate all oppressions (or their causes) as equally important; MIM should just focus on a few causes. Class, nation and gender are important and somewhat related, and somewhat (somewhere between 1 and 99%) autonomous.

Class oppression is realized by exploitation, and superexploitation that results in profits. National oppression exhibits itself in extermination of the cultural psychology, something Stalin talked about, as well as the rape of the land's exhaustible resources by foreign powers. Gender oppression is distinct from these others in being sexual. As MacKinnon says, sex is to feminism what work is to Marxism. Class, nation and gender oppression are separable in theory, even though they intersect in the real world.

Class reductionism

The good side of reducing all oppressions to class is that it provides an easy basis for materialist analysis. The bad side is that it ignores many gender and national oppressions.

At best, one could say proletarian men should not rape proletarian women, so as to unite the working class. But one could just as easily say proletarian women should overlook rape in the name of unity. One could also say that to do their part in allying the two classes, petty-bourgeois women should not complain about being raped by proletarians. And then of course, because they are the class enemy, rape of bourgeois women should be totally ignored by this view.

In abortion rights struggles, proletarian women should mobilize for abortion and not ally with bourgeois women unless there is a feudal enemy to oppose—which there isn't in the United States.

As for national oppression, with class reductionism one would not distinguish between a bourgeois Louis Farrakhan and George Bush. If all cultures in the world became white, McDonalds culture, but so what, as long as the proletariat ruled?

Class and nation reductionism: imperialism

So maybe class reductionism sucks. Try nation and class reductionism.

Can you say Edridge Cleaver? Rape of First World women by Third World men becomes a liberating act (strategically but not tactically when they get caught) as the ideological product of class/nation reductionism.

Third World men should not divide the proletariat by raping Third World women, but Third World women should not complain if they are raped.

Unite for Third World abortion rights, but do not ally with First World women to do so.

This starts to make some MIM comrades uncomfortable—uncomfortable to the point where they will not accept nation and class reductionism. When put to a vote, the party supported a three strand analysis.

II. Inconsistency as Opportunism and Lying to the Masses

Various trends have attempted to defend an ideological application of the notion of gender struggle with a class reductionist theory. Many comrades have used gender as a relatively autonomous strand in their analysis, but it is important to do this consistently and without the hangovers from pseudo-feminism. These comrades need to realize that there is no free lunch in theory. Once you accept a theory, you should be willing to struggle through its costs and not opportunistically close your eyes when there is a snag.

The gender reductionists are looking at your shit and saying it stinks. What's that you're saying about class? Women who aren't exploited or superexploited are not forced into sex? They can be asexual? Nonsense, they are psychologically raped and emotionally coerced by men, say the gender reductionists.

And what's this about divisions among women anyway? Class and nation don't exist, say the gender reductionists.

What's this about women saying yes when they mean no and no when they mean yes—you think they've adjusted to class and national oppression and patriarchal power by lying among other strategies? No way. Women's truth, whatever it is, and no matter how contradictory, is the truth. In fact, women are biologically superior to men, say the gender reductionists.

Comrades survive this attack because they never bought into oppression being subjective anyway. They'd be lying to the masses to say otherwise. But within the three strand theoretical contraption, there is still grumbling, even civil war.

The Third World men wonder why there are so many First World anti-rape and battering centers funded by the state. Don't they just serve to allow First World women to keep us in prison and sexually accessible?

The Third World women say the First World people are testing their birth control on us to the point of genocide. Where are our First World biological sisters when we need them? They are oppressing us in a sexual manner—independent of profits

or cultural extermination or resource rape (class and nation). Isn't that what gender is about—sexual access? So First World men and women are gender oppressing us.

The First World lesbians who tell you their lovers are raping and battering them put any doubts about the Third World women's charge to rest. Biology is not such a great guarantor against oppression.

So you toss biology (because no communist believes biology is destiny anyway) and agree with MacKinnon that gender is a social construction. Having the same biology does not guarantee a certain sexual relation among people. Some groups of biological women systematically oppress other groups of biological women.

So if First World biological women are socially constructed men to Third World women, who else is socially constructed as male relative to who else? Consistency, consistency, consistency. Who is sexually harassing whom ask the Third World men of First World women? Who has access to whose sexuality overall?

III. Friends, Enemies, Relative Autonomy and the Principal Contradiction

Mao Zedong decided nation and class are relatively autonomous. He claimed there was a national bourgeoisie that might support the revolution against imperialism sometimes. This also made him more sympathetic to merchants and other middle classes whose interests were damaged by foreign capital. He told the indigenous bourgeoisie it had no choice but to ally with him if it ever wanted to stand on its own feet, since the imperialists wouldn't allow it.

The class reductionists moaned that Mao was anti-Marxist. What? A bourgeoisie that is not strictly enemy? A national struggle that lands a blow against imperialism?

In the 1930s, Mao said the national contradiction and the contradiction with semi-feudalism were the principal contradictions. Sometimes it was just the national contradiction. As for the capitalist countries, Mao said:

The proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction.(1)

As for other contradictions in the capitalist countries:

They are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.(1)

The problem with this formulation is the development to which Sakai and Edwards point. There is no proletariat in Amerika. Indirectly recognizing this problem, the RCP has decided that for most countries what goes on outside the borders is the principal contradiction. Raymond Lotta raises the inter-imperialist rivalry to now theoretical heights. This is one solution, but it doesn't seem particularly useful at the moment

Within the borders of the United States, it seems that the national contradiction is the principal contradiction as it is on the world scale; MIM disagrees with comrade Gonzalo on the reasons for this. Gonzalo makes too much of a theoretical absolute out of the oppressor nation/oppressed nation contradiction—but with better results than Lotta because Gonzalo has the principal contradiction right. In this sense, Gonzalo is just helping us with our Lottas.

Thanks to seeing the principal contradiction this way, MIM sees that the Islamic nationalists are friends, including the Islamic bourgeoisie.

It appears that within the Black, Latino and indigenous nations, class struggle is rarely, if ever, the principal contradiction. No bourgeoisie from these nations holds real state power either. The principal contradiction is with imperialism.

Comrades in MIM should think about the issue of resolving what contradiction does the most to yank history forward. That is the principal contradiction. Which knot is the key to unravelling the others?

Note: Mao Tsetung, *Five Essays on Philosophy*, Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1977, p. 51.

7.8 Diagrams of Gender Oppression: A Picture Saves a Hundred Pages

The basic reductionist position:



1 is the oppressor, and 2, the bourgeoisie. That's class reductionism. Another way is 1 is biological men and 2 is biological women. The answer is workers unite! That's Trot reductionism. Another answer is women unite!

Then there is experiential-tokenist-liberal feminism:

(This feminism recognizes that cutting medicaid abortions affects poor and oppressed nationalities most.)



- 1 is white men.
- 2 is minority men.
- 3 is white woman.
- 4 is minority women.

Then there is University of Hard Knocks:

(UHK does not see any gender oppression separate from class and nation.)



This is what MIM says...

First is overall oppression and the overall composition of the forces for revolution:

1 2 3 4

- 1 is First World biological men.
- 2 is First World biological women.
- 3 is Third World biological men.
- 4 is Third World biological women.

Now for gender privilege.

1 2 3 4

- 1 is First World biological men.
- 2 is First World biological women.
- 3 is Third World biological men.
- 4 is Third World biological women.

The marker between 3 and 4 is the dividing line between male and female.

Note that the average First World person is male. The average Third World person is female, but the average Third World biological man is a man.

As you can see, just about everyone will put First World men on the top and Third World women on the bottom. What is controversial is what to say about FW women and TW men.

7.9 Class as a candidate for principal contradiction in the United States

If you want to hold up the essential lessons of Sakai and Edwards, but you're not sure if nation or class is the principal contradiction within the borders of the United States, this is for you.

It is possible to name class as the principal contradiction without making the Trotskyist and social-democratic errors of white chauvinism. This would amount to uniting the exploited and superexploited in the Third World outside the United States with the exploited and superexploited within the borders of the United States to fight the integrated bourgeoisie.

This would boil down to what is sometimes called a Third Worldist position. Unite the predominantly Third World proletarians. It might also tend to push a line of integrating Third World peoples in political organizations and neighborhoods.

In China, when class was the principal contradiction, Mao's party stepped up the struggle against the landlords and bourgeoisie, whether or not they were loyal to the country. At times they even laid off land reform when the war against Japan seemed to require it.

After imperialists were all routed from China, class struggle became principal. First emphasis was put on the landlords, then the national bourgeoisie was expropriated after China's economy surpassed pre-war levels in 1952.

Concretely, a class-as-principal-contradiction line would require struggles against religious influences in Third World communities—Islam and indigenous religions coming to mind immediately. Struggles against Stokely Carmichael, Louis Farrakhan, etc., would be just as sharp as those against Bush, Thomas, etc.

If you pick nation as the principal contradiction, you are saying you should lay off the national bourgeoisie somewhat so as to unite national forces against imperialism. In contrast, you could believe that the national bourgeoisie has no progressive role to play in the United States.

Supporting this view of class as principal contradiction in the United States would effectively eliminate the distinction between comprador and national bourgeoisie as useless. That would justify dropping the term comprador.

In supporting nation as the principal contradiction within the borders of the United States, a struggle against the national bourgeoisie is not really tops on the agenda

because it won't do anything to unravel a lot of problems. National liberation will unravel a lot of problems.

By naming national oppression as the principal contradiction within the borders of the United States, I mean to say that such an approach will do more for class and gender oppression than naming either class or gender as the principal contradiction.

Mao Zedong never named gender the principal contradiction, but his revolutionary struggle did much more for women more quickly than any struggle that named gender as the principal contradiction anywhere in China or the First World. Picking the right principal contradiction is essential to taking the fastest road forward.

Chapter 8

Intersections of Nation, Class and Gender

8.1 Firestorm Over Criticizing Existing Feminism

Before MIM ever existed, revolutionary groups found it rough going to criticize the state of feminism. Even in 1980, when it was already apparent that U.S. feminism had turned to pseudo-feminism and had led a lot of people down an apolitical road, one group earned national infamy for criticizing the reactionary movement.

The Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (**PWOC**) noted the sorry state of affairs and was attacked repeatedly by the Guardian and journals like Theoretical Review. Writers typically excerpted one phrase and then slammed PWOC. What did PWOC say? “Feminism is inherently racist.” That was the horrible thing to say at the time.

[PWOC:]

When we speak of feminism, we are not using the popularized term which has come to mean ‘for equality of women,’ but are speaking of feminist ideology ... Feminist ideology is an ideology which places the contradiction between men and women as primary, or at least equal to,

other contradictions, including the contradiction between labor and capital, and between the national majority and the oppressed national minorities. In this way it is inherently racist and anti-working class.(1)

Substitute the words national oppression for “racism” and Third World proletariat for working-class and MIM would agree with PWOC; although MIM accepts as members feminists (as defined by PWOC) as long as they uphold the Cultural Revolution, oppose the old Soviet state-capitalism and oppose the reactionary white working class in North Amerika.

In some ways, PWOC’s stand is more principled than MIM’s, because PWOC defines “feminism” at a very high theoretical level, while MIM chooses to duke it out at the “popular” level. We believe that we Maoists have been incorrect in the past not to educate First World women that Maoism is the most effective feminism of the age, just as it is the most effective proletarian movement. The historical record is so clear that MIM objects when various pseudo-feminists claim they are feminists.

PWOC had a sense very similar to MIM’s of the relative importance of social groups to the revolution in the United States:

In this united front the women’s movement, while less stable an ally than the oppressed nationalities, occupies an important place.(1)

Here, PWOC even uses the correct term “oppressed nationalities” instead of “race.”

PWOC was also very concrete in what it said about “feminist ideology and the white chauvinism which is so bound up with it.”(1)

[It said:]

The major struggle of the last period in the battle to protect reproductive rights was the fight against the Hyde Amendment. Seldom

was there agitation from the women's movement linking the right to abortion with the demand to end sterilization abuse. Only those most class conscious women brought to this campaign the view that the right to have children was as important a struggle as the right not to have them. In fact, leading spokeswomen on national press campaigned against the Hyde Amendment by direct appeals to white chauvinism: 'If poor women can't get abortions, we'll have to end up supporting all those babies on welfare rolls.'⁽¹⁾

PWOC was also a leader in the fight against white nation ideas on rape:

Nor was the racism of the 'Take back the night' slogan an isolated instance of feminism liquidating the struggle against racism in the issue of rape ... The dialectical materialist understands that the slogan does not exist in isolation from the rest of the material world, any more than the slogans 'law and order' or 'national security' or 'neighborhood schools' do.

In this society the word 'rape,' coming from white women, is directly connected to the lynching of Black men and the repression of the Black people as a whole. The movement against rape can only avoid racism by being explicitly anti-racist, so strong is the racist myth of the Black rapist in our society.

At the Philadelphia 'Take back the night' march, we never saw such smiles of support and cooperation from the police as on that night.⁽¹⁾

While PWOC was a little slow in coming to words to meet its critics correctly, it was generally more correct than its critics, maybe 70% correct. It's all fine and good to say that PWOC should have been working from the inside of the women's movement like one feminist purged from PWOC,⁽²⁾ but many comrades today know what it is like to work inside white women's groups concerning rape. In any case, MIM believes the great negative lesson of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) intervention in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) should have steered

PWOC in the direction of criticizing from the outside. For this reason, it is true that revolutionaries are going to be a little slow in the uptake when summing up what is going on in the mass organizations out there, but it's a price well worth paying. The political development of the mass movement should not hinge on narrow day-to-day happenings in the mass movement.

One valid critique of the PWOC is that it had a reductionist and hence economist view of gender oppression. It reduced the question to one of superexploitation. So while it saw women as allies of the proletariat, PWOC did not have a theory of gender in its own right, a theory of sexual privilege. MIM is the first revolutionary organization, so far as we are aware, to refer to sexual privilege and the notion of a sexual aristocracy. However, even PWOC's critics only meant that PWOC should talk more theory and politics when they cried "economism."⁽³⁾ The critics had no better theory of the roots of the women's liberation movement than PWOC did. Their weapons to criticize "economism" were rather weak. They had neither Sakai nor MacKinnon.

There are many links between national oppression, class oppression and gender oppression. MIM locates gender oppression as distinct from class oppression. It is outside of work-time, leisure-time and reproduction. Marxism does an excellent job covering work-time and an intermediate job on reproduction. What happens in leisure-time, especially the many conflicts that happen in leisure-time that are not just expressions of what goes on in the workplace—that is the legitimate subject of gender oppression as distinct from class or national oppression. MIM is forging ahead in these areas in order to really finish the job of criticizing "economism." In this way, we hope to go beyond PWOC and its critics.

Notes:

1. Sara Murphy for the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, *Guardian* 10/8/80.
2. Jenny Quinn, "Feminists Are Allies, Not Enemies," *Guardian*, November 1980.
3. John Trinkl, "PWOC: 'Feminism is racist,'" *Guardian* 8/20/90.

8.2 The Myth of the Black Rapist

The myth of struggle against the myth of the Black rapist: Why Willie Horton won the election for George Bush in 1988

One area of dispute between MIM and pseudo-feminists has to do with the pseudo-feminists' individualist approach to crime which says some sex is good sex and some sex is criminal sex. What happens when white women use the so-called justice system to accuse men of rape?

1986 breakdown of rape convictions where the victim is white(1)

Total:	100%
White:	68%
Black:	22%
Other:	5%
Mixed:	2%

What this table means is that 22% of the people convicted for raping white women are Black.

This table requires some reflection on the part of feminists. It is common knowledge that people tend to have sex with people of their own "race" and class. There is some mixing, but disproportionately people have sex with people most like themselves. Furthermore, pseudo-feminists and feminists alike generally agree that about three-quarters of all rape is by acquaintances so the figures on rape should show that women are raped by the type of people they date, unless there is bias in the women's accusations.

Twelve percent of the men available to white women as of 1986 are Black, but no where near 12% of the sex white women have is with Blacks. Hence, the 22% figure is very disproportionately high. Readers should also remember that since the population of white women is more than six times larger than the population of Black men, for each 1% of white women who have a Black male sexual acquaintance, it takes about 6% of Black men to be those acquaintances. Out of those acquaintances

charged with rape, the 22% figure means a very high proportion of Black men generally are accused of rape by white women, compared with white men generally.

As a result of these reflections, there are three possible interpretations of the figures above:

1. Imperialist George Bush and white chauvinist conservatives look at the figures above and conclude that Black men like Willie Horton really are a big problem in society—violent and out-of-control.
2. Pseudo-feminists say, yes, the figures are skewed, but “rape is the most underreported crime,” so we continue to support the decisions of all women who decide to prosecute rape.
3. MIM says that all sex is rape and the figures above represent gross bias by Amerikkkan women. Whatever intentions the pseudo-feminists have, no matter their speeches and no matter their flyers, the effect of supporting women who go to the courts with rape charges is white supremacy. White people using courts against Black people does more harm than good and Black people should only use the white supremacist courts with the approval of the Black community, something the Black Panthers said should not happen.

The whole line that “rape is the most underreported crime” is buying into the FBI’s and Justice Department’s white supremacist definition of crime, because the pseudo-feminists are only referring to government surveys when they say “rape is the most underreported crime.” These government surveys don’t include things like the bombing of Vietnam or the forced starvation of 14 million Third World children every year, who could be saved except for a capitalist distribution of food.

That is not to mention the white collar crimes that result in 400,000 air-pollution deaths and 200,000 cigarette-caused deaths that far outstrip the 30 to 50,000 murders counted by the police every year. The police are very good about counting the “crimes” of the masses against themselves, but not so good at counting the crimes of the upper classes.

This pseudo-feminist bid to gain legitimacy in the eyes of police including the FBI—i.e., legitimacy within the imperialist system—is at the expense of Third World

people, because the most underreported crime is the genocide committed by U.S. imperialism. The “support your sisters”—no matter how white supremacist—line is an excuse to obliterate the struggle against white supremacist violence.

For pseudo-feminists this obliteration of violence against the Third World is often a conscious decision based in a history of starting their women’s struggle as an excuse for not supporting the armed struggles of the oppressed nationalities.

For most First World women the choice in rape reporting does not involve as much conscious evil as is perpetrated by the theoreticians of white female solidarity. First World women do not have to sit around wondering, “How am I going to carry forward my time-honored role in lynching Black men?” Rather, white women report sex that they feel “violates” them. And being raised in a white supremacist system, white women feel violated by Black men who do the same things their white brothers do.

Accusations Biased

Further proof of the bias in rape charges is in the statistical breakdown of rapes reported to police by white women. From 1973 to 1987, white women reported that national minorities were 16% of their non-stranger rapists, not to mention 38% of stranger rapists.⁽²⁾ Again the issue is did white women really have acquaintances—i.e., boyfriends and husbands—who were national minorities 16% of the time (from 1973 to 1987)? That would mean almost perfect so-called interracial mixing in our society and the oppressed know that’s not close to happening. What it really means is that **white women are more likely to find both national minority acquaintances and minority strangers more threatening than white acquaintances and strangers.**

Even by police standards, which fail to count the vast majority of rapes that pseudo-feminists like MacKinnon and Dworkin talk about, white women are more likely to report rapes by strangers than non-strangers.

Stranger rapes are reported 57% of the time and non-stranger rapes 47%.⁽²⁾ That is not to say that women report white and Black strangers equally. There is no

evidence for that and all the evidence here points against that idea. Rather, it stands to reason that white women avoid reporting the sex-rape in their ordinary lives by the men of their kind.

So far, we have examined the figures from the perspective of the rape victim. This is to fail to realize the view of the Black men accused of rape and just how dominated by white women's concerns the whole issue is. Since white women are such a large group in America and Black men a relatively small one, 63.3% of the time a Black man is accused of rape, the accuser is a white woman.⁽³⁾ That is to say that 63.3% of the rumors, accusations and probably the arrests of Black men stem from white women, women who, as a group, are mired in the white-nation chauvinism of the day. If Black men had 63.3% of their sexual interactions with white women, then the accusations might be fair, but since this is far from the case, MIM concludes that there is white-nation chauvinism at work.

We can get an idea of how skewed women's accusations are by looking at "interracial dating." We can't give you a figure for what percentage of the dates people go on are interracial. Instead we can guess that it is similar to the figure for the percentage of people in interracial marriages. Black men married to white women account for 0.3% of total marriages in the United States as of 1989. In 1989, less than 4% of Black married men were married to white women,⁽⁴⁾ so we estimate that less than 4% of Black men's dating is with white women. Hence, less than 4% of accusations faced by Black men should come from white women. Instead the figure is 63.3%, so MIM has further evidence that white women are in the wrong in their approach to rape.

Unfortunately, the government does not publish a lot of statistics on the race of rape victims and offenders, comparing victimisation with arrest rates. Such figures would probably leave people with a lot of questions about the injustice system. The whole subject is a minefield that most pseudo-feminists like to pass over by saying that most rape victims are raped by people of their own "race." It's this kind of lazy or dishonest opportunism that makes pseudo-feminism so easily discredited in the eyes of the masses, whenever such discrediting is necessary for the patriarchy.

At other times, pseudo-feminists work hand-in-glove with the George Bush-type manipulators of the rape issue. Both conservatives and pseudo-feminists think there is good sex and bad sex. Both support a judicial system that has white supremacist results and no value in deterring rape. In their division of labor, the pseudo-feminists have a special role in fanning all women's fears, while Bush capitalizes on those fears politically.

Some of the pseudo-feminists and white women accusers even have Black male friends. MIM is not fooled. It looks at the figures. It sees the results.

What happens when First World women accuse some men of rape but not others? They accuse the men who do not fit their Hollywood images of romance. And they join a criminal justice system in perpetrating nation, class and gender oppression.

All sexually active women have been raped, because all men are oppressors and cannot be reformed. What the First World woman does about it—that's where the lying starts. Until we overthrow imperialism there is no "good sex" and there is no use of the "justice" system not tainted with nation and class oppression.

1. U.S. Department of Justice: Female Victims of Crime, January 1991, NCJ-1268826.
2. Female Victims of Violent Crime, ASI 1991, 6068-243, p. 10.
3. National Crime Survey, 1983, ASI 6066-3, Table 45.
4. Statistical Abstract of the United States 1991, pp. 43-4.

8.3 Using Women of Color for an Individualist, Pseudo-Feminist Agenda

Catharine MacKinnon is an acknowledged leader of the movement against rape and harassment in the United States. Her approach is fertile for discussion of the issues in a systematic way. What does she have to say about white supremacy?

I think women report rapes when we feel we will be believed ... They have two qualities: they are by a stranger, and they are by a Black man.(1)

Does MacKinnon conclude that First World women who report rape are white supremacists like First World women generally? No, she faults the media for following rules that many pseudo-feminists support:

Two of the victims of this current rapist are women of color. I think that the non-reporting of this aspect, although it may have been requested initially by the women victims and may be an attempt to preserve confidentiality, also plays into the racist image that what rape is about is Black men defiling 'our white womanhood.'(1)

This line of reasoning is paternalism, tokenism and white supremacy. Two women of color as victims do not erase the white domination of the so-called justice system. The fact that women of color are victims does not excuse the white supremacy of women who accuse Black men disproportionately for rape.

MacKinnon goes further. After telling the reader "Most rapes are by a man of the woman's race,"(1) MacKinnon goes on to say Black women "are raped four times as often as white women."(1) This is nothing but saying that Black men are four times more likely to rape than white men. This supremacist garbage is the kind the system used to lure Anita Hill into doing something to a (sellout) Black Supreme Court nominee that was never done to a white Supreme Court nominee—spend three days on television reviewing his sex life. The only thing accomplished was to leave the impression of Black men once again as being out-of-control, while leaving the impression that all the other people on the Supreme Court and the Senate are not pigs.

Pseudo-feminist groups try to avoid this issue by reporting that most rape victims are raped by people of their own race. They avoid the disproportionate reporting

of Blacks by white women and they avoid the fact that 63.3% of the time Black men accused of rape are accused by white women.

But even when someone fairly honest like MacKinnon tries to deal with the issue, she gets it wrong and skirts the real issues in victimization statistics. Black women report being victimized by rape at a rate of 2.7 per 1,000 annually. For white women the figure is 1.5 per 1,000 annually. Where did MacKinnon get the figure that Black women are raped four times as often as white women? It's not even double, and that is by the women's reporting.(2)

MacKinnon missed what is going on in the figures. If one looks at the arrest figures, then one will find what MacKinnon is talking about. Nonwhite men are arrested for rape at about five times the rate of white men. Throw out the white accusations against Black men and the arrest rate would fall to two times the rate white men are arrested.(3) MacKinnon probably just didn't account for the pull of white women on the figures, and she made the misleading and probably downright false statement that Black women are raped four times as often as white women.

There are a couple reasons that Black women may report relatively high rates of victimization of rape (not quite double) while finding white men responsible for only 10% of their rapes.(4) One reason is that Black women may really draw the line differently than white women. Another reason could be white women's influence. With 63.3% of the Black men they see dragged off for rape charges charged by white women, Black women's own views of rape can't help being shaped by the actions of their white sisters. That is to say that Black people cannot use a white supremacist justice system without perpetuating white supremacy.

MacKinnon is best off when she thinks on a theoretical plane, because her manipulation of statistics from various inconsistent studies is a mixture of FBI white supremacy and half-baked, pseudo-feminist definitions of rape. MIM has MacKinnon to thank for providing an anti-Liberal theory of why all sex is rape. Her insight on national oppression and her strategy for eradicating rape leave much to be desired.

The Sisterhood Lie is Amerikan Chauvinism

In Louisiana, over half of all white people voted for Ku Klux Klan/Nazi leader David Duke for governor in 1991. He only lost the election because of the Black vote. Polls show that nationally, Duke was more popular at the time than any Democratic party candidate for president. His support nationally runs in the 25% to 40% range among whites. That means at least one in every four white judges might as well be wearing a hood. At least one in four white jurors should too. And that is just counting the conscious white supremacists in Amerika.

In Mississippi, a law forbidding interracial dating was only just barely repealed by voters in 1986. Even so, 48% voted against the repeal of the “97-year-old constitutional ban on interracial marriage.”(5) How would you like to be a Black man on trial for raping a white woman in Mississippi where half the jury is going to oppose interracial marriage in the first place?

By 1973, the latest year we have national data for, the figure was up to 48% believing there should be no laws against interracial marriage. The other 52% still said it should be banned. Three-quarters of the people or more generally supported integration of the schools and other public places, but when it came to sex, even in words, it was the only issue where people still couldn't see integration.(6)

MIM thinks every court decision in Louisiana, Mississippi and every state in white Amerika should be invalidated until that day when Euro-Amerikans have lost their material interest in oppressing people of other nationalities and have gained a new view of humanity. There is no way MIM is going to legitimize the class, nation and gender oppression of the court system. MIM regards people who think they oppose white chauvinism but support the white-Black sisterhood rip-off as white nation chauvinists.

MacKinnon and many pseudo-feminists think women should always be supported in their decisions to interpret their individual rapes or sexual harassment and go to court. In direct opposition, MIM believes this is just another way that so-called feminism recycles sexism. How often it is said that women are either put on a

pedestal or treated as whores. Supporting the sisters who might as well be wearing hoods is putting women on the pedestal.

The sisterhood line as currently practiced (but not in the 1960s and early 1970s) is white, bourgeois sexist propaganda. Women just turn around from seeking approval from men that they never got to demanding unconditional approval from women. They put each other on a pedestal and imagine each other to be flawless goddesses.

Amerika has a long, long way to go before it knows right from wrong on sexual issues or anything else. The sooner people start working for revolution, the sooner the process of revolutionizing people can start.

Notes:

1. Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 81-2.
2. Female Victims of Violent Crime, ASI: 91, 6068-243, table 15, p. 8.
3. Age-Specific Arrest Rates and Race-Specific Arrest Rates for Selected Offenses, 1965-1989, ASI: 91, 6224-7, p. 299.
4. Female Victims of Violent Crime, ASI: 91, 6068-243, p. 10.
5. New York Times 11/16/87, p. 32.
6. *Towards the Elimination of Racism*. (An American Journal of Sociological article "Race, Sex and Violence" also sounds interesting, March, 1976.)

8.4 A Re-examination of the Shield Laws

Shield laws protect rape victims from having to review their sexual histories in court. In the past, people accused of rape would have their lawyers ask questions about the accuser's sexual past to prove to juries that she was "loose" and likely to give consent to sex with anyone—not likely to be raped.

This was a leap of male chauvinist logic that should have been obvious to all. From the point of view of the logic within the system, it is unfortunate that shield

laws were necessary at all to prevent defense lawyers from prejudicing illogical, male-chauvinist juries about “loose” women and their lack of rights to consent to sex. If there is proof that someone did not consent to sex, then it does not matter how frequently the victim switched sexual partners in the past. The fact that the shield laws had to be passed at all is yet another indication of how useless it is to redress male supremacy through the imperialist patriarchy’s own institutions.

Shield laws come up against challenge in various legal contexts, but usually for the wrong reasons. The real attack that the shield laws should face is regarding the class and national background in the accuser’s sexual history. This won’t happen much in the current court system, because it is a tool of the dominant class.

In the individualist United States court system, there is supposedly a principle called “equal protection of law.” The figures in “The myth of struggle against the myth of the Black rapist” show that “equal protection” is a fairytale constructed by the imperialists to soothe the petty bourgeoisie that is fooled by such myths. The bourgeoisie knows that for every myth of free speech, equal protection and trial by a jury of one’s peers—there is some fraction of the population that is going to believe that these “rights” exist. How great it is to have such principles on paper, so that the imperialists can brag about what a great society they have constructed compared with others, especially societies that openly call themselves dictatorships of the proletariat.

If women were asked in court why they accused uneducated, poor and disproportionately Black men for rape and not other men, the sexual histories of white women would reveal their gross white-nation chauvinism. **In most cases, we would find that white women accuse Black men of rape for subjective reasons.** If we took those subjective reasons and applied them to the white women’s sexual past with people more like themselves or more like the Hollywood image of the perfect man, we would find that even by the women’s own standards they were letting off their white friends who committed more egregious acts of male supremacy.

MIM sees from the figures on alleged Black rapists that white nation women are not capable of drawing the line between more and less heinous male chauvinism

fairly. MIM also sees from the perpetually high rape and battering rates that the way the line has been drawn so far hasn't helped women or other oppressed people. The line between rape and sex needs to be abolished and instead people should read the dictionary and remember that rape is simply coerced sex—which is all sex in the current system of inequality, a system women never chose to be born into.

8.5 Sentencing Bias in the United States

Once convicted of rape, Black men face sentencing biases from the white injustice system. When two people are convicted for the same crime, judges typically give a harsher sentence to Black people. The Supreme Court recently acknowledged this general pattern in its consideration of the death penalty, but it still decided the death penalty was OK.

From 1930 to 1964, 405 Black men received the death penalty for rape. Only 48 white men did.

From 1930 to 1985, the white courts not only executed Black murder and rape convicts at a rate several times that of white murder and rape convicts, it executed more Black people than white people in total.

In the 1960s, the courts stopped the death penalty for several years. Since its return, no one has been openly executed for rape: although many convicts are killed by other convicts or prison guards in the American dungeons.

A country that executed Black men for rape at such a heinous rate less than 30 years ago cannot be ready to give fair sentences today. The penalties for rape may have changed, but the bias stays the same.

Note: Correctional Population in the United States Annual 1988, 6064-26, p. 142.

8.6 MacKinnon's Flawed Methodology: China 1986-1988

MacKinnon's Flawed Methodology

For the most part, Catharine MacKinnon's work is the best of recent American feminism. In this essay, MIM develops an argument on how MacKinnon's methodology is patriarchal.

What MIM cherishes about MacKinnon is that she frames the question of rape and harassment correctly, not that she answers it. MacKinnon makes it much easier for Marxism to enter into dialogue with settler feminism. She notices that women are oppressed as a group and that all sex is basically rape. She also notices the complicity of First World women in their own situation.

What MIM disagrees with is rooted in what MacKinnon herself calls subjective methodology: "What women experience as degrading and defiling when we are raped includes as much that is distinctive to us as is our experience of sex."⁽¹⁾ This is a right-on point and leads to a materialist critique of First World feminism that MacKinnon never honestly faces, which explains all the lengthy circumlocutions against Marxist method in her newest book, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*.

MacKinnon cannot answer the questions she poses about women as a group, because her methodological approach is subjectivism, where truth is what a woman sees. This "truth" is inevitably a truth opposed to the uneducated, workers, peoples of different cultures and women themselves, at least in Amerika, which is MacKinnon's audience. The dominant culture teaches everyone to devalue the uneducated, workers, oppressed nations and other "deviants." All men sexually harass women, but only some are labeled as harassers, and only because these men come from sexual cultures too different from the accuser's. MacKinnon comes very close to recognizing this without ever following through on her own thoughts:

Men who were put in prison for rape ... they were put in jail for something very little different from what most men do most of the

time and call it sex. The only difference is they got caught. That view is non-remorseful and not rehabilitative. It may also be true.(2)

MacKinnon virtually says that all approaches of men to women are harassment:

I think we lie to women when we call it not power when a woman is come onto by a man who is not her employer, not her teacher. What do we labor under, what do we feel, when a man—any man—comes and hits on us?(3)

In the United States, where subjectivist feminists including MacKinnon attack Marxism, women's subjective truth is created by Hollywood. Subjectivists refuse to overcome Hollywood's classism and national chauvinism. As an individual, MacKinnon has grappled with these issues somewhat, but what she advocates for women as a group has nothing to do with her own individual subjective truth. What pseudo-feminist-instructed women fail to realize is that even if they do succeed in treating men of other cultures and backgrounds the same way as men from their own background, that will still mean discriminating against men not from their backgrounds. MacKinnon's book *Feminism Unmodified* should be subtitled *Imperialism Unmodified*.

Instead of facing the issue coherently, MacKinnon asks nihilist questions to oppose supposedly evil, patriarchal science—which promotes the point of view that rape can be objectively determined instead of being determined by any woman with whatever biases:

But what is the standard for sex, and is this question asked from the woman's point of view? The level of force is not adjudicated at her point of violation; it is adjudicated at the standard of the normal level of force. Who sets this standard?(4)

MacKinnon does not answer her own question here, probably because she answers it elsewhere and realizes it is a contradiction. The MacKinnon answer is that Hollywood/pornography sets the standard for both men and women, so Hollywood sets the standard, both from what she attributes to the male view and her own view. Yet according to her own analysis, a person's "point of violation" is determined subjectively. She lapses from talking about groups to talking about "the woman's point of view." She offers no way of assessing what that point of view is for women as a group, a fatal flaw in her attempt to oppose Liberalism with subjectivism.

In practice, MacKinnon correctly targets the profits of pornographers by setting up sex harassment and anti-porn legal suits. Yet her practice gains no support from her theory because if you were to ask American women the truth, they would not oppose either Hollywood or pornography.

In fact, MacKinnon holds that women are substantially sexist because they belong to a pornographic society and enjoy their own subordination:

I think that sexual desire in women, at least in this culture, is socially constructed as that by which we come to want our own self-annihilation. That is, our subordination is eroticized in and as female; in fact, we get off on it to a degree, if nowhere near as much as men do ... Such a critique of complicity does not come from an individualistic theory.(5)

She holds that having women judges makes no difference because a biological woman's perspective is still sexist and will be as sexist as a biological man's given the same structural role.

MacKinnon's methodology is so flawed that it simultaneously states that what women see is the truth while allowing that women's perspectives are sexist. Voila, the truth is sexist. Voila, women's views (the truth) of rape are sexist. Rape is not rape and what is not rape is rape.

That is the mess that every idealist (non-Marxist, non-materialist thinker) ends up in. It's just more apparent in MacKinnon because she thinks more consistently than most idealists. By contrast, MIM holds that patriarchy is a pattern of oppression existing in concrete reality that can be changed in concrete reality. The existence and possible overthrow of patriarchy have nothing to do with anyone's subjective experience. Women feel violated because underneath their subjective experiences is the reality of economic, military and governmental coercion. (While biology underlies some aspects of gender, it does not cause gender oppression.)

MacKinnon explicitly rejects the approach of finding visible resistance by the rape victim as necessary for rape to have happened. Nor does she uphold objectively male definitions regarding asking men to stop.(6) In harassment issues, the settler feminist definition is "unwanted advances." As for rape, it is "emotional coercion" and "persuasion" or just feeling "violated," says MacKinnon. Unless MacKinnon and other subjectivists mean to advocate across-the-board asexuality, this is all settler feminism because Amerikan women no doubt feel most violated by approaches different from their own.

Actually, MacKinnon states that she just wants more sex counted as rape in court, the same way many workers have good days sometimes but also want higher wages at some fraction of institutions.(7) What MacKinnon fails to notice in her analogy with Marxism ("sex is to feminism what work is to Marxism"), Marx never advocated that individual workers go to court to reach individual settlements of their wage disputes. He wanted a revolution of the oppressed to change the very institutions making the decisions on such law suits.

What MIM propagates is a scientific approach to rape and harassment. We tell women the truth: rape and harassment cannot be eliminated without the elimination of power of people over people. That has nothing to do with the feelings of individual women or men.

MacKinnon only goes half-way. She opposes individualism and tells women that rape is a group problem. Then her practice focuses on law suits involving individuals, the same way that some opportunist so-called Marxists focus workers on winning individual bread-and-butter struggles instead of political power. MacKin-

non avoids the revolutionary implications of saying that all women are oppressed whether they admit it or not. Ultimately, she lacks MIM's confidence that the Third World toilers will overthrow the system and bring about massive social changes. Instead she adopts reformism and a subjectivist methodology that match her strategy.

Anti-African Roots in China

It is difficult not to be defensive about one's own subjective ideas about rape and harassment. Perhaps it is easier to look at a conflict in a foreign country.

Thousands of Chinese workers and students marched through the eastern Chinese city of Nanjing today, shouting an extraordinary combination of racist and democratic slogans, after two days of clashes with African students studying in the city.(8)

The precipitating event for this incident, which caused the largest anti-government demonstrations in two years, was a student dance where two African men brought Chinese dates. There was a dispute over the Africans' identification. The Africans claim the Chinese started the fighting, but the Chinese claim the Africans started the fighting.(9) The identification issue was a pretext because there are so few foreigners in Nanjing that everyone knows who they are. Similar events involving women provoked riots again.

In Nanjing, in 1988, there were some African student men trying to date Chinese student women. What ended up happening in Nanjing and Tianjin in 1986 and 1988 were riots of Chinese students against the African students. In Tianjin, they forced all the African students to flee—halfway to Beijing—causing an international incident. The anti-African demonstrations had been the biggest student movement show of force to date. MIM interviewed overall students from both sides of this dispute and overall onlookers from uninvolved countries.

In the end, students in Tianjin overruled local party officials who told them to desist in harassing the African students, so passionate and dangerous was the brick and

bottle-throwing lynch mob in 1986. In fact, the Tianjin students distributed a leaflet telling the party that it would learn from the KKK how to deal with the African students if the party officials did not give in. The leaflet included the following:

We are walking towards our great aim on a broad road opened to [an] advanced and civilized world. It doesn't mean, however, that we will feed the whole uncultural Africa with the insults of our efforts and we will allow any Negro to hang about our universities to annoy Chinese girls and to introduce on our academic ground manners, acquired by life in tropical forests, offending our national hospitality and broad mindedness.

What had happened? An African student tried to bring a Chinese woman to a fancy party. The Chinese refused to let them enter. A fight broke out, quickly turning into riots. Another reason Chinese students cited for the turmoil was the fact that African students held a loud dance one night when the Chinese students wanted to study for an important academic competition with another school the following week.⁽¹⁰⁾

Not all Chinese students thought these reasons were great, but the predominant culture of China was on the side of the rioting students. This takes some explaining, because the very concepts of dating, harassment and rape differ quite a bit in the United States and China.

To speak in the language of the U.S. resident, in China, a foreign woman who talks to a Chinese man alone even in a public place (outside of a work context), say by meeting in a store—such a woman is regarded as having been raped and having accepted the life of a whore. Chinese realize that foreigners have different ideas about letting women be whores, so while they don't like this practice among foreigners, they probably will not riot.

When it comes to Chinese women, however, people feel that foreigners are asking the Chinese women to be whores or worse given the relatively benign view of prostitutes in the West. Particularly where the Chinese feel ill-gotten wealth,

party corruption and “uncivilized culture” (meaning culture denigrated by rich Westerners) is involved, they riot. Simply talking to a woman in a department store or on the street is liable to set off angry reactions of all kinds. People assume that the woman is setting up a rendezvous.

According to one female Chinese student, the riots were justified because the African students stood outside dorms and asked women for dates, “even though we don’t want dates.” The tradition in Chinese culture is for dating to occur after years of public interaction at school or work.

Pseudo-feminism in China of the late 1980s was quite obviously a disguise for anti-African chauvinism. Anti-African demonstrators in Beijing carried placards reading “No offend Chinese women!” “Punish Hoodlums; Protect Women’s Rights!”⁽¹¹⁾ Although the typical KKK-lynching in the Amerikan South often featured a call to protect white women, it is unlikely that those lynchings ever had quite the feminist veneer that anti-African rioting in China had. The slogans were a stark reminder of the role of protecting women and putting them on a pedestal accorded to men, and the passion underlying sexual politics can easily combine in a fascist direction. With a few feminist slogans thrown in, George Bush’s Willie Horton ads would be a good analogy to the Chinese situation.

One of the keys to whipping up this anti-African chauvinism was to obliterate the distinction between real violence (causing physical injury) and verbal interaction. This gave the Chinese the excuse to forget about the historical violence directed against African people by colonialists and imperialists and it laid the basis for using violence against the Africans. The anti-African Chinese pseudo-feminists repeatedly used the word “force” in describing various alleged sexual interactions with Africans that Chinese women had. After the riots and fighting, when asked about the meaning of the word “force,” the Chinese backed off in interviews with an American woman researching the topic. What was said in-between the lines was supposed to be enough to convince the American woman, Mira Sorvino, that there was something very evil being perpetrated by African men.

Many warnings to young women gleaned in interviews advised them to beware the African man and the way he coerces or bullies (*qifu*) women into sleeping with him. This word came up so many times that I asked several of my subjects whether it is a euphemism for rape.⁽¹²⁾

The Chinese assured Sorvino that they did not mean rape, but what the Chinese were trying to say remained unclear to Sorvino. In her own research on the subject, Sorvino could find no evidence to support any number of anti-African rape rumors; although she came to believe one such story.

Before the anti-African riots in Nanjing, Sorvino herself was warned by her English students that she should look out for African men. Some Africans in Nanjing were also warned by the Chinese before the riots that they should stay away from the area where an interracial dating incident was later used as a pretext for the Chinese riot. That is to say that some Chinese had it in for the Africans before the interracial dating dispute arose and some internationalist-minded Chinese warned their African friends.

Getting at what the Chinese mean about gender issues is extremely difficult for both the Chinese and the foreigner. A book MIM distributes on the counterrevolution in China (*Political Economy of Counterrevolution in China: 1976-1988*) explains that the idea of statutory rape in China is much more inclusive than in the United States.

Although all social ideas are changing in China, the usual mode of thought is that an unmarried woman who has sex (whether consenting or not) has been raped. The burden for that rape falls both on the man and the woman. A woman who has been raped will almost 100% of the time turn to a life of crime because she realizes that her social place of honor is gone, so she might as well live a materialist life outside the social norms.

If we were to listen to MacKinnon with regard to China, where the largest population of women in the world live, we would accept as truth what the Chinese women say. That would include that getting near individual men is the act of a whore. It would include that once raped, one must be a criminal and it would

include launching city-wide riots when African students ask for or go on dates with Chinese women.

Of course, Islam has a way of dealing with these issues too. Perhaps MacKinnon would have us hear the truth of women who say that those who do not wear the veil and segregate themselves from men in public life are decadent Western degenerates.

One reason the masses will never support what MacKinnon is saying is that people like to be fair. They don't believe that some men should be singled out and punished for what other men do with no consequences. Moreover, some men and women will take MacKinnon's "subjectivist" methodology a step further to its logical conclusion. If subjectivity is to be worshiped because it is impossible to communicate an "objective" standard of rape to men, then many men and women will simply separate themselves rather than carry on what can only be a pretense of communicating with each other. If women can't communicate with each other using an "objective" standard either, then some people will simply choose to isolate themselves from other people rather than attempt social interaction.

Perhaps women in the United States should separate themselves from men in public life (and private life if they so desire). Then they won't be harassed anymore, since MacKinnon obviously realizes there is no chance of men's understanding women's subjective points of violation. To this, MacKinnon would no doubt say women have a right to interact with men, just like she says they have a right to a workplace free of sexual harassment. Such a view, however, is just more Liberalism reminiscent of the right to free speech, maybe not even that good since MacKinnon is making an absolute out of the right to have professional interaction. It reminds MIM of the pro-CIA demonstrators on campuses who protest that they have a right to be interviewed by the CIA on campus.

The Hindu, Moslem and Chinese women constitute the world's majority of women. Why does MacKinnon speak of women as a group without discussing ideas of rape in these cultures? MIM is not surprised that she lacks in internationalism and hangs out with the white chauvinist DSA crowd.

In the exact same progression of verbal acts and physical acts of a man and four different women, four or more results are possible. The first woman may enjoy the sex but complain afterwards that the man was not aggressive enough. The second woman may seem quiet and ten years later complain it was rape. The third woman may cry rape right away. The fourth woman may start urban riots before it gets to the physical stage and claim a man was “forcing” her into some mythical sexual interaction. Currently there is no objective way to define rape and harassment that MacKinnon would accept. Any questioning of the woman’s account is considered selling her out. However, even in the case of the first woman who wanted a more aggressive man, the society viewing the act may still deem the act as rape and imprison the man and remove the woman from her job, as happens in China.

MacKinnon admits this problem of subjectivity and concludes that the problem is that objectivity is male and subjectivity should be celebrated. MIM sees this problem and holds that the objective factors underlying and conditioning the subjectivity of women and men must be changed. If class, nation and gender power are eliminated, people may start from subjective positions free of violent contradictions. However, women will never cease being objects until they take up science with a passion to seize control of their destiny.

Notes:

1. Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 87.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-8.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-1, 89.
8. New York Times, “Chinese in Nanjing Hold Racist Rally,” 12/27/88, p. 1.
9. *Ibid.*
10. International Herald Tribune 6/6/86.

11. Mira Sorvino, "Anti-Africanism in China: An Investigation into Chinese Attitudes towards Black Students in the People's Republic of China." Harvard University undergraduate thesis 1990, p. 15.
12. Ibid., p. 86.

8.7 Book Review: *Between Feminism and Labor: The Significance of the Comparable Worth Movement*

Linda M. Blum

Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991

The comparable worth movement merits Maoist attention. That could go the way of reactionary imperialist class interests, or revolutionary feminist interests. Revolutionary feminist influence is necessary to steer it on the correct course.

Comparable worth is a concept of equal pay for equivalent work. It is a method of evaluating jobs based on an assumption that equal pay is deserved for jobs that require equal training and labor.

Historically, women have been placed in a subordinate position in the labor force. Regardless of their job placement, they are paid less than men in the same or equivalent fields.

The effects of this patriarchal practice are different across classes. Those in the upper classes experience a far smaller wage disparity than do those in lower class positions. This is not surprising as upper class women often take the capitalists' side in reaping both class and gender privilege.

The movement for comparable worth has the progressive potential of taking from the overpaid men to give to the underpaid women within each class. Obviously not an overall solution to economic disparity, this movement could strike blows against the patriarchy and provide a context within which women will be educated in opposition to the concept of pay according to gender. This will make the problems

of pay according to class background much easier to grasp. This could expose the benefits of socialist society and the detriments of capitalist society, if revolutionary feminist leadership takes the movement to its correct conclusion.

The benefit to Maoists, besides the raised consciousness of those activists, is the advancement towards communism that this movement could provide. Under socialism we will still have to battle the patriarchy, and the more of that battle that is won under capitalism, the easier the fight will be under socialism.

In the converse, comparable worth could mean taking more from the Third World in the form of superprofits to raise the status of women to that of men. This would only serve to strengthen First World women's alliance with the imperialists and increase the patriarchal and class oppression of the Third World.

This book review criticizes the comparable worth movement from the revolutionary feminist perspective.

Between Feminism and Labor describes white working-class women's attempt to become equal with white working-class men. Blum premises her book on the assumption that working women in this country are oppressed based on their class position as well as their gender position. The women she studies are in clerical, library or equivalent positions. They were mobilized to work with their local union over the issue of comparable worth. Blum offers no evidence for their class oppression, perhaps because there is no material support for this class analysis.

While the comparable worth movement has potential within the white working class, it is important that activists see this as a gender inequality issue and not a movement of the proletariat. Activists should also realize that this inequality is, in fact, rather insignificant when one considers that even First World women as a group are receiving more than the value of their labor-power.

MIM understands that there are pay inequalities between men and women across classes. But the movement for comparable worth Blum describes has the typical white feminist slant that ignores the economic realities of the proletariat in and outside of this country.

White workers in the United States are receiving the benefits of the exploitation and superexploitation of Third World workers in the form of a wage higher than the value of their labor-power. The comparable worth movement Blum studies aims to raise American working women's benefits to the level of American men's. While a potential blow for the patriarchy, but no class victory, and certainly not a union victory for the working people of Amerika.

Organizing white people in Amerika around their class oppression will not create revolutionary consciousness. This activism will only result in a struggle for a bigger piece of the pie. Ironically, Blum notes that the comparable worth movement could result in a loss of income or jobs for some women while benefiting others because of the limited size of the pie.

Blum sees comparable worth as a radical leap from the affirmative action movement. The difference is that comparable worth allows women to stay in their jobs, recognizing the social influences that keep women out of male-dominated sectors, instead offering them equality with men in equivalent male sectors.

On the one hand, this approach is good in recognizing that we have to do the best we can under the current system while we try to change it.

It also recognizes that placing women in male jobs is often only tokenism that does not offer them better pay or status than the traditionally female jobs, since they are placed in the dead end areas of these traditionally male-sector jobs. It is also a step in the direction of recognizing the inequalities created by the capitalist wage system of evaluating the monetary value of different jobs.

On the negative side, Blum points out that comparable worth will bring men into traditionally female-dominated sectors of the job market as it becomes more economically acceptable for them to join these fields. From her brief look at this phenomenon, Blum found that these men tended to create more prestigious positions within the female-dominated fields so that even there they would hold more authority and enjoy higher pay and greater upward mobility.

Blum cues several successes of the comparable worth movement in which women were promised higher pay through periodic increases. She also noted a number of failed attempts.

The movement is hampered by a job evaluation process that assigns value to labor, and thus wages, based on capitalist values. These values are hierarchical, placing mental labor above physical labor, and traditionally male labor above traditionally female labor. But it is just this problem which could lead to a greater revolutionary consciousness among the women fighting for comparable worth. The women Blum studies recognize some of the problems with the job evaluation process and focus efforts on changing this system.

Even within the constraints, the job evaluations find significant pay inequality between inmate jobs and their “male counterparts” in male-dominated fields. Changing this inequality comes down to restructuring Amerikan wealth so that white women can get their “fair” piece of the pie. While MIM supports women taking from the patriarchy to receive a higher wage, MIM also recognizes that this movement does not challenge the fundamental structure of the patriarchy, nor does it attempt to help the truly gender oppressed.

Blum found that the comparable worth movement often does not enjoy the support of union men because they recognize that the pay the women are demanding has to come from somewhere, and the most likely targets are their pockets.

These contradictions and difficulties the comparable worth movement faces are indicative of the capitalist system it chooses to operate under, Blum’s analysis of the movement paints a picture of an internal struggle within the overpaid Amerikan “working class.” The women of this class are trying to eliminate effects the patriarchy has on them while leaving its symbiotic structure of capitalism as well as the patriarchal oppression of the majority of the world’s people intact.

Blum does not discuss a comparable worth movement among the Black or Latino proletariat in Amerika and MIM wonders if there is such a movement. There is obviously little class value in the comparable worth movement for the proletarian

women who would not be significantly improving their economic position if they were to win a battle to elevate their salaries to the level of “male-counterpart jobs.”

MIM understands that the current comparable worth movement is incorrect both in its practice within the capitalist system, and in its identification of gender as the principal contradiction. With these incorrect practices it will never achieve anything more than relative equality for white women in the First World.

A comparable worth movement working to eliminate the patriarchy for all people must be a revolutionary movement that seeks to destroy all class, nation, and gender inequalities, focusing on the principal contradiction at this time—between oppressed and oppressor nations.

8.8 Unremunerated Work

On Oct. 24, 1991 Barbara-Rose Collins (D-Michigan) introduced a bill to the House of Representatives “to require the commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics to conduct time use surveys of unremunerated work performed in the US and to calculate the monetary value of such work.”(1)

These surveys would account for household work, child care, agricultural work, food production, family businesses, volunteer work—forms of unpaid labor often performed by women. The monetary value of this unremunerated work would be included in statistics used to determine the Gross National Product (GNP).

Collins introduced this bill “so that housemakers will be recognized as workers.” She wrote:

If the value of housework were included in the GNP, the significance of these tasks would not be continuously debated and bills like the Family and Medical Leave Act, which help families survive, would be quickly enacted.(2)

In 1985 at the United Nations Decade for Women conference in Nairobi, Kenya, the U.N. agreed that unremunerated work in the home and on farms in the Third World as well as in industrial countries should be included in the measurements that countries use to gauge their economies, including GNP.⁽³⁾ In the wake of this decision, many countries have enacted unremunerated work acts such as the one proposed to the House.

MIM supports the intention behind this bill in the United States. It is a good structure for evaluating men's and women's labor. This type of structure helps revolutionaries because it is a method of counting and thinking about equality between people that is not hierarchical based on sex-based divisions of work. Within Amerika this would be a step forward for women in their fight for equality with men.

But MIM distinguishes itself from the women in the movement behind this bill who claim that this type of work contributes to the ultimate liberation of all women. This movement cannot hope to achieve an allied fight between First World and Third World women. This bill is only a step toward equality between First World women and First World men. The women in the movement who support this goal are following the correct practice to attain it.

But MIM works to achieve equality for all people. Third World women will never be liberated under imperialism. While imperialism uses gender structures to keep them down, the principal contradiction for these women is not the difference in pay between them and their husbands.

Even if they could achieve equality relative to their male counterparts, the value of their wages would remain small compared to the value of First World women's wages. (The current cost of hiring a worker to do the work of the unremunerated laborer is the proposed standard for analysis.)

Third World women recognize the overriding perpetrators of oppression to be imperialist aggressors like the United States. Women who wish to ally themselves with the majority of the women of the world should be working from the vantage point of these women and organizing to overthrow the imperialist structure which

will never allow Third World people to be liberated. A revolutionary fight for liberation must be waged by all allies of the oppressed people of the world so that the truly gender oppressed will be liberated.

Notes:

1. House of Representatives Bill no. 3625.
2. House of Representatives letter to colleagues 10/31/91.
3. Chicago Sun Times 9/13/91.

8.9 Black Panther Party Paved the Way

Using revolutionary theory and practice—the Maoist Panthers led by example—they struggled—often unsuccessfully—to combat gender oppression.

In February, 1970, Kathleen Cleaver, Communication Secretary of the Black Panther Party, living in exile in Algiers with her husband, Eldridge, was asked by a reporter from the Women's Page of the Washington Post what was a woman's role in the revolution. "No one ever asks what a man's place in the Revolution is," she replied in part.

Very early in the history of the Black Panther Party, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and others moved to eliminate male chauvinism from the Party. From the early period, too, Black women were important in the work of the Party. Nor was their activity confined to the typewriter and mimeograph machine. Panther women spoke at rallies and meetings and were interviewed in the underground press.⁽¹⁾

The Black Panther Party (**BPP**) was the Maoist party of the late 1960s in the United States. Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale wrote the 10-point platform in October of 1966 in Oakland, California. Suddenly, the Black community had a revolutionary party for organization and protection.

MIM learns from the work and the ideology of the BPP. They were the best revolutionary party in U.S. history. We must also learn from their mistakes. The BPP had faults. They exposed themselves too much above-ground to the enemy. They picked up the gun too soon and leaned towards focoist (adventurist) strategies. They supported a cult of personality and downplayed the evils of gender oppression. They failed to recognize the Patriarchy as part of the “power structure” which needs to be destroyed.

On the other hand, the Panthers were Maoists. They created a strong internal Party discipline. They criticized cultural nationalism and Black capitalist reforms. They built coalitions. They used their newspaper, *The Black Panther*, as an organizing tool. They carried out programs to improve material conditions in the Black community. They built a mass base of support and unity. They struggled, with limited success, to combat gender oppression.

Community Work

The BPP began as “The Black Panther Party for Self Defense,” and that is what it was. Under Newton’s instruction, Panthers learned some criminal law and the Bill of Rights and carried guns to help the Black community defend itself against daily police brutality.

Responding to the needs of the people, the BPP began community service projects: breakfast for children programs, free health care clinics, and revolutionary schools. They aimed to improve daily living conditions and develop revolutionary consciousness. The BPP used their newspaper, *The Black Panther*, to educate, politically stimulate and organize the masses.

Ideology

Contrary to popular distortions of Panther ideology, the Party openly identified itself as communist:

The Black Panther Party recognizes, as do all Marxist revolutionaries, that the only response to the violence of the ruling class is the revolutionary violence of the people.(2)

Although the Panthers studied the works of Frantz Fanon, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro: Maoism was the primary basis for Panther ideology. At the Party's founding, Newton and Seale had studied the four volumes of Mao Zedong's collected works, and *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (The Little Red Book) was required reading for Party members.

Seale:

We do not fight racism with racism. We fight racism with solidarity. We do not fight exploitative capitalism with black capitalism. We fight capitalism with basic socialism. We do not fight imperialism with more imperialism. We fight imperialism with proletarian internationalism.(3)

Above Ground: FBI Infiltration

The Panthers were destroyed by state repression. The FBI created internal conflicts within the BPP by forging letters and pretending to be Panthers breaking with the BPP line. This was easy for the FBI because the BPP was completely above-ground and very visible.

The Panthers made the mistake of relying on the same above-ground strategy that Mao and the Communist Party used during the armed struggle in China. But conditions in imperialist countries and oppressed countries are very different. China in the 1920s and 1930s had a weak government and communists could work openly in the countryside with few problems. Not so in the United States in the 1960s. The BPP either underestimated the impressive power of the state or overestimated their own power. Many of the Panthers were framed by the FBI and jailed or assassinated.(4)

Focoism (Adventurism)

Focoism is a theory that says small groups of armed revolutionaries can ignite the revolution by engaging in spectacular guerrilla actions. A tendency towards focoism was one of the Panthers' biggest weaknesses. Seizing on righteous militancy, FBI infiltrators were able to stir up adventurism in strategically bad situations. Maoism warns that taking up the gun too soon, and without the proper support of the masses, will result in fighting losing battles.(5)

Panthers and Gender

In *Revolutionary Suicide*, Dr. Huey P. Newton described his significant changes in attitude and practice concerning sexual relationships with women, marriage and "the family." First accepting "the institution of marriage," then trying free love—and later pimping—Newton and the BPP finally developed a communal way to live.

Capitalist production requires that all workers always fight each other for fewer jobs at lesser wages. Often these wages are not enough to feed a family. Capitalist Patriarchy forces women, teenagers and children to work for survival at pay rates even lower than men's wages. People are driven out of work and forced to compete with each other for ever lower real money. Huge armies of unemployed men and women and teenagers hit the streets all fighting for the McDonalds wage or black-market turf: and the family falls apart.

This happens all over the world. It's worse in Third World countries than here. And even though the pay falls, men, as a group, still get more money than women, teenagers and children as a group. That is a suspect privilege that capitalist patriarchy gives to men: so men and women will remain on unequal terms. Under stress, the family members go their separate ways.

The phony *Eight is Enough* [Ed. note: *Eight is Enough* was a popular comedy-drama television show that aired in the 1970s and 80s.] nuclear family is not the reality in most neighborhoods around the planet. But some sort of "family" is required for survival when wages are below survival levels. Many people try to hold onto the extended family network—so that the burden of survival is more evenly distributed.

In Amerika, people are forced to sneak in and out of their own homes so that the welfare-police won't catch them.

The Black Panther Party developed a communal living strategy. They formed a "fighting family" living together for a common purpose to fight for their existence and their goals.(6)

Kathleen Cleaver was held back in her revolutionary work by her husband, Eldridge, who was Minister of Information for the Party. In 1970, rallies—at which Kathleen was scheduled to speak—were set back, because "Eldridge changed his mind and refused to let her come." (7) Although Newton, Seale and Eldridge Cleaver himself all spoke out against "male chauvinism" in the Party.

Women Held Back—The Revolution Suffers

Women Panthers were in fact held back. The revolutionary movement as a whole cannot succeed without the full participation of all fighters.

This points to another problem in the BPP: a heavy reliance on individual leaders and personalities to keep the ball rolling. The "cult of personality" built up around some of the BPP leaders, like Newton or Seale, created a dependence on individuals and damaged the self-reliance of the revolutionary movement as a whole. The revolution in China also suffered from the cult of personality around Mao. MIM criticizes and avoids this tendency.

The BPP and Lesbian/Gay Movements

In the August 15, 1970 issue of the BPP's newspaper, *The Black Panther*, Newton wrote a letter to "the Revolutionary Brothers and Sisters about the Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements." This letter attempted to open the dialogue between the BPP and these (mostly white) movements.

This was the first time any non-gay black organization ... recognized the oppression of homophobia; connected that oppression to the plight

of Black people; and attempted—based on that connection—to build coalitions openly with lesbians and gay men.(8)

It must have been a hard letter for Newton to write. Both Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver had expressed their homophobia in their books (*Seize The Time* and *Soul On Ice*). Although there are many problems with Newton's letter—sexist overtones, ignoring Black lesbians and gay men, focusing on gay men—it can still be seen as a first step.

But only a few groups recognized it as such. Black newspapers ignored the letter altogether. Many gay and feminist groups responded antagonistically. Some of these groups showed themselves to be outright counterrevolutionaries. Others ducked under a “left” cover and insisted that the BPP was still sexist and homophobic and thus unfit for coalition or discussion—even if they were in agreement on other revolutionary points.

In fact, both sides were groping. Neither the Panthers, nor most feminist and gay groups of the time, built practices firmly rooted in an analysis of the actual intersections of gender, nation and class. The Panther analysis of oppression in the United States was incomplete without an understanding of how all women are oppressed across lines of nation and class—and how Patriarchy, enforced heterosexuality and the myth of the “nuclear family” all reinforce imperialism inside and outside the Black nation. The feminist and gay groups failed to comprehend how gender oppression is conditioned by the nationality of women and men. How dominant nation status lends extended class/social privileges to First World women and gay men at the expense of proletarian women and men.

Third World Gay Revolution

In November, 1970, three months after Newton's letter was published, The Berkeley Tribe printed the “Third World Gay Revolution” (TWGR). Echoing the format of the BPP Platform—this anonymous document detailed the sexist crimes of “the carnivorous system of capitalism” and called out the heterosexism of all sisters and brothers who “cling to male supremacy” and “still fight for the privileged position of man on top.”

The document expanded on the BPP's basic 10-Point analysis of national and class contradictions by infusing their content with revolutionary socialist gender-based demands. It is at least as realistic as the Panther Platform in recognizing that none of these demands can be achieved under capitalism.

On the other hand, TWGR claimed that the Panthers "struggled to maintain and to reinforce heterosexuality and the nuclear family." On this basis alone, TWGR labeled the Panthers "counter revolutionary;" a truly ridiculous statement in the face of overall Panther practice and no visible evidence of any practice at all by TWGR.

"Third World Gay Revolution" recognizes that the idea of the nuclear family is a bogus construct—not even practiced by the rich. Gender oppression is part of the rot caused by capitalism. Women are not less oppressed as a group because they serve individual men. Nor are they less oppressed by being made to serve many men. Women are oppressed, globally, because women's labor-power, including sexuality and reproduction—is appropriated by the capitalist Patriarchy for profit.

It is unfortunate that the "Third World Gay Revolution" was anonymously written and that the BPP never had the chance to openly struggle with and learn from the authors. Cooperation and struggle might have broadened the revolutionary-minded social base at hand, improved the analysis of both groups and strengthened our forces. MIM has a solid unity with the 13 beliefs and demands articulated in this Programme. The achievement of its goals would reflect the liberation of humanity from imperialism.

FBI at it again

But the Panthers' above-ground practice and lack of unity in their gender analysis gave the FBI an opportunity to attack them.

The FBI used [Newton's] open letter as an opportunity to discredit Newton's leadership. The FBI wrote bogus letters purporting to be from Party members saying "I have seen by last weeks paper that now Panthers are supposed to relate to cocksuckers. Huey is wrong.

Something must have happened to him in prison. Panthers got enough things to do in 10 point program and fighting for niggers without taking up with mother fucking queers. All power to the people.” Considering the FBI’s tactics, it is not farfetched to assume that it worked to undermine the organization and more directly the Panther–gay liberation alliance.(8)

The possibility of such an alliance must have scared the capitalists pretty good.

MIM does not glorify the Panthers. Individual Panthers suffered from outright male chauvinism and the BPP’s undeveloped gender line fractured opportunities to build united fronts with other revolutionary groups.

However, MIM does not doubt that a revolutionary unity between the Panthers and revolutionary queers could have been built upon an analysis of modern gender relations as social inequalities of power imposed and maintained by the capitalist Patriarchy. With such a weapon, Kathleen might have inspired the masses while Eldridge stayed home and made the coffee.

Contact MIM for more analysis on gender, nation, class theory and practice.

Long live the Black Panther Party!

Notes:

1. *The Black Panthers Speak*, Philip Foner (ed.), J.B. Lippincott: New York, 1970, p. 145.
2. *Ibid.*, pp.19-20.
3. Bobby Seale, *Seize The Time*, Random House: New York, 1968, p. 71.
4. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *Agents of Repression*, South End Press: Boston, 1988, Chapter 3.
5. **See MIM Notes 47 (12/90), for more on focoism.**
6. Huey P. Newton, *Revolutionary Suicide*, Ballantine: New York, 1973, pp. 99-105.

7. Ibid., p. 332.
8. Alycee J. Lane in BLK 3/91, pp. 11-15.

Chapter 9

Focus on Gender: Sexual Politics

9.1 Is there good sex in an imperialist society or is all sex rape?

Most Americans believe that there is such a thing as good sex, and they dedicate considerable efforts to finding it. MIM says this is the self-interested belief of the people with the highest level of sexual privilege in the world.

Some people seeing certain negative aspects of patriarchy are beginning to doubt that there is good sex. But will they follow the pseudo-feminists on their road to constructing a new femininity and good sex or will they go with MIM, which recognizes that all sex is rape under patriarchy and that patriarchy must be destroyed through revolution?

MIM's understanding of nation and class has helped it interpret the work of Catharine MacKinnon in a way not put forward by pseudo-feminists in this country. This interpretation is very unpopular, as more moderate views as expressed in Andrea Dworkin's book *Intercourse* alienate the vast majority of Americans. Dworkin merely tries to describe something at great length that MIM thinks is easily rationally understood: the dictionary describes rape as coerced sex. It is

clear to MIM that women did not consent to being born into a world with unequal power; hence, all sex is rape. People go to great lengths to lie to themselves about this essential truth by twisting simple words found in most common dictionaries.

Even more than the issue of exploitation of workers, sex makes people individually defensive as if individuals participating in sex were criminal. The same people who don't understand that you can't abolish exploitation by quitting your job don't understand that MIM is not trying to attack people personally for their sex lives. However, beyond the irrational reasons people resist the obvious truth, there are many self-interested reasons Americans, including self-labeled feminists, resist it as well.

Saying there is good sex:

1. Allows the white patriarchy and the pseudo-feminists to say sex with Black men is bad, which is why the effects of anti-rape, anti-harassment and anti-battering work fall disproportionately on Black men in the form of state repression and national oppression.
2. Allows petty-bourgeois and bourgeois women to put down less-educated men who don't use the right kind of language to approach them.
3. Allows opportunists, including pseudo-feminists of various kinds, to prove how good sex could be with them.
4. Allows people to hold a weapon to selectively criticize individuals for something in which all sexually active people partake.
5. Allows people to ignore how rape pervades their own lives.
6. Avoids the need for revolution as a way to deal with power that women have been socialized against having.

Most surprising is that so-called revolutionaries often act as if men can be individually reformed under capitalism. In contrast, MIM does not believe men can be reformed, only revolutionized. In Amerika, this view is very unpopular because the biological men and women of Amerika form a privileged sexual aristocracy of the world.

DATING AND MARRIAGE

9.2 Sexual Attraction and Sexual Harassment

I. Pick-Up Lines and Attraction

Someone has said it was one thing (sexual harassment) to issue a pick-up line on the street or in a cafe, but another thing to “get to know someone through shared work and deciding to work on a relationship.” This is a very common idea about sexual harassment.

The difficulty with what some political people say about sexual harassment is that there is still no inherent reason a work or political relationship should become romantic. For such a relationship to become romantic (sexual), someone still has to use a pick-up line. There is no zipless fuck even for the people who work for the same employer and join the same party.

There are better grounds for objecting to pick-up lines if one means that relationships founded on interactions at work or in comradeship have a more solid basis than the average passing-by-on-the-street-relationship. In other words, it may have a better shot at lasting a long time in a monogamous way.

This is still a long way from justifying calling other pick-up lines sexual harassment, which is what most pseudo-feminists have in mind. Either all pick-up lines are sexual harassment or they are not at all. Sexual harassment should not be equated with the probability—either real or perceived—of less stable romantic attachments. Nor should sexual harassment simply mean being approached in ways that the individual woman or men do not like. That will obviously rule out different cultural, class and education-level approaches.

As for the attraction in the relationship that some political women are talking about, this is more objectionable than the attraction in a relationship initiated by

the average passerby pick-up line. Relationships founded after two people work or study together a long time are more likely to have strong and direct components of eroticizing class oppression.

On average, women meeting men at work will be meeting men more powerful than themselves, often their direct bosses. Women may know such men a long time and have stable interactions, but attraction in this regard is most probably very high in adjusting to existing power relationships in the workplace. MacKinnon calls this eroticizing dominance. The same can be said of other organizations that people meet in besides work organizations—where there is an element of power.

Relationships starting in school are slightly different, but it is well-established how colleges serve as mating grounds that sort by class, nationality and educational attainment. When people say it's OK to meet in classes for instance, and pose that against meeting people in more random situations, they are eroticizing the elitism of our educational system. They are basically saying what the frat brothers and sorority sisters play on a smaller scale. They don't want to meet other people. They want to meet their own kind. Pseudo-feminism justifies this exclusionary practice by raising it to a political principle of opposing sexual harassment, pick-up lines, bars, etc.

Pseudo-feminism on pick-up lines amounts to the grossest form of social prejudice by educated, middle-class women that disproportionately punishes pick-up lines from disadvantaged groups. It also amounts to liberalism, because pseudo-feminism usually preserves some "how-to" way of having non-harassing sex. MacKinnon calls this the problem of "present company excluded," in which countless leftists believe they have found *the* way to freedom within the patriarchy.(1)

II. Tastes and Attraction

From the above, it should be clear that there is no politically righteous taste in sex in this oppressive society. If there is one, it is asexuality—an ideology and practice of not engaging in sex. (We would say celibacy instead of asexuality, but that only has to do with one sexual practice and has nothing to do with ideology. People who are celibate may consider themselves heterosexual or homosexual, but asexual

people consider themselves neither.) And even asexuality may amount to a simple hatred caused by experience in real world sexual relations. People may choose asexuality for as many bad reasons as people who choose sexuality. In the end, it is impossible to separate asexuality from non-asexuality. Asexuality cannot be an oasis in this sexual world. Asexuality is also permeated by patriarchy.

Having said that, I do respect people who hold that all sex is harassment or rape and carry out an asexual practice. That's consistent. Another consistent practice is to see all gendered interactions as sexual harassment requiring revolution to be overturned. That's also consistent. It's the people who claim their "how to have sex to avoid rape and harassment" who end up being hypocrites.

What real feminists need to do is uncover the social formation of pseudo-feminism. Pseudo-feminism should be shown for what it is—the politicization of self-indulgence for further indulgence.

There is nothing wrong with looking for your own kind for sex. Neither is there anything wrong with a taste for greater differences and randomness in romantic relationships. People's tastes come from their varying social (and possibly biological) environments, none of which are righteous under imperialist patriarchy.

As for the benefits of forever monogamy and solidarity amongst the masses, some backgrounds cause people to be more stable in highly selective relationships. Other backgrounds cause people to be more stable in relationships with more of the "opposites-attract" adage.

Imposing the tastes of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois women on all people as if they were politically righteous tastes is wrong. Such politically-correct dictatorship of educated middle-class women is a diversion from real change and an avenue for the imperialists to exercise their dictatorship in the guise of a pseudo-feminist movement.

In my reviews of Betty Friedan's work elsewhere, I show that part of Friedan's openly petty-bourgeois feminism is putting down women without educational attainment. A large part of her work called *The Feminine Mystique* is based on

interviews with college-educated women in the 1950s and 1960s. These women express the frustrations of not being able to use their educations, which is fine.

However, while Friedan usually goes out of her way not to blame individual men for the problems of the American housewife, there is an exception. She does blame men for their taste in women. When men choose women from working class backgrounds who are uneducated, Friedan blames them for not wanting wives who are their equals. At the same time, she says the life of a housewife is undesirable while the life of an educated professional is possible for all women. Friedan's work amounts to saying that all women should be petty-bourgeois women and all men should desire petty-bourgeois women.

These kinds of tastes of the petty-bourgeois women's movement are increasingly being imposed through the state in the United States. The "politically correct" or P.C. movement on sexual harassment is reminiscent of the corporatism in fascist Germany. In this strategy, organizations set up by the state sought to popularize the grievances of the masses and put a fascist spin on them. The same strategy adopted by a socialist state is one thing, but the current political economy of most of the anti-harassment movement is another.

III. Political Attractions

Righteousness as eroticizing politics

While there are forms a romantic relationship takes that are more progressive than others, there is no taste in attraction under imperialist patriarchy that is better than another. Saying that Mao and Jiang Qing fell in love with each other because of their particular political lines is dishonest garbage. (This line can be found in the *Revolutionary Worker* issue commemorating Jiang Qing.)

Most comrades are able to see how the ordinary mass-to-mass relationship is indicative of the patriarchy. Where we are fooled is by the P.C. people, and in a way someone like MacKinnon would never be.(1)

If falling in love with a particular political line were the righteous thing to do, then anyone who is not in love with Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing and who is not offering to fuck them is a political schmuck who does not belong in the party. That would be obviously gross degeneracy and privilege on the part of leaders.

Inner-party marriage is more selective than the frat–sorority mating game. There is nothing wrong with it, but getting righteous about it is actually worse than the Greeks’ getting righteous about their exclusivity. The party is more exclusive while claiming not to represent gross social prejudice.

People in love with each other’s lines are great comrades. What is wrong with being great comrades? Why must sex be involved for comrades to be great comrades? Why should we only be great comrades for only *one* other comrade?

Some political-minded people say, “I don’t care if I never have sex again.” If sex is not important and people can learn their way out of sex the way they learn to eat tofu, MIM should advocate group marriage, but it doesn’t because it knows that there is currently a sexual component in gender interactions that cannot be wished away. (Actually, Marvin Harris has done materialist work on why what you like to eat is also determined by economic factors. There are materialist reasons why hamburger is more popular than tofu in the United States. Tofu is rated last behind liver in U.S. tastes.) And if you are someone talking about “friendship” and you don’t have sex, you’re not talking about what I’m talking about. You’re talking about comradely relations.

Wishful ideology vs. theory

A mistaken line I hear often is that people in the party are mandated to be forever monogamous, so there is no problem from those sexual relations, right? No, this is an important mistake regarding inner-party romance that people make.

Historically speaking, this is not true in the party’s practice. Comrades can and do degenerate, often for reasons very much connected to dating, infraction and monogamy.

Theoretically speaking why should we be surprised? People in the party are subjected to the same pressures as anyone else in society, or else we would not need a revolution, just a choice of the party lifestyle to eradicate oppression. Another way to put this is that the rational powers of the party do not make it all-powerful in the current context. To explain this, in an article called “For Marx and Freud,” a French theoretician name Louis Althusser proclaimed the discovery of the unconscious by Freud as very important but undeveloped scientifically speaking, perhaps because it cannot be developed scientifically speaking. No matter how rational one is in current history there is a limit to what is possible, even and especially through psychoanalysis.

The problem with people’s eroticizing politics is the temptation to take out sexual problems in politics, either consciously or unconsciously. The party should not seek to influence the composition of the relationships in the party taste-wise. Instead, it should seek to have individuals see the problems underlying all kinds of tastes. Beyond tastes, the party should also examine factors of stability, security and progressive form—as outlined in MIM Notes 35. Doing so, the party should think a thousand times before making a liberal error that amounts to saying the party is an oasis free of patriarchy.

Notes:

1. Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Harvard U. Press, 1987), p. 218.

9.3 MIM Tells: How to Pick a Good Marriage

The pseudo-feminists often give dating advice in the guise of feminism, but even their dating advice is no good.

Many high-circulation women’s magazines on the grocery shelf tell how you can tell you’ve picked the right mate and how to keep him. The individualist and the

upholder of the hard-work ethic in each of us believes that somehow there must be some right way of going about picking a spouse—a spouse who is equal, sensitive, non-sexist, fun, etc.

Women are taught they should carefully scrutinize the characteristics of their potential spouse over a long period of time in order to make a rational decision. Also, it is best to “shop around” to get a good idea of what kind of men or women are available.

In another essay, MIM demonstrates that stable psychological characteristics do not exist (See “Abolish Psychology”). So MIM was not going to buy into any psychological approach to romance in any case. But suppose MIM could find a way to get people into happy marriages, shouldn’t it help do that? Maybe, so MIM investigated this question too.

Where’s the beef in the struggle to find a happy marriage?

It turns out that dating is irrelevant to marriage. There is no evidence that a particular dating strategy helps more than it hurts in producing a happy marriage. As many people will be hurt by a dating and marriage strategy as are helped. MIM’s finding comes from a study of hundreds of women done by a team of dozens of graduate students headed by professor Martin Whyte.

How is it possible to make such a rational statement about dating? Isn’t the topic too emotional and immune to scientific study? MIM says: hogwash. The more emotional the topic and the more scientific approach is criticized, the more flim-flam is occurring.

Preoccupying women with dating advice even disguised as feminism is one of the most important flim-flams of the patriarchy. Anything titled “How to ... xyz,” should be regarded with extreme skepticism. “How to find a boyfriend,” “How to keep a boyfriend,” “How to keep your mate happy,” “How to tell if he is ready to settle down,” “How to have good sex,” and “How to tell if your boyfriend is a potential monster of xyz variety,” are common themes in women’s magazines. These imply that our individual actions make a big difference, when they don’t. These kinds

of articles generally have a bias toward assuming that it is possible to adjust to an oppressive patriarchy and live a good life. Rarely do they ever conclude that patriarchy sucks and there is no adjusting to it, so you are justified to be miserable until it is overthrown.

So how can you study dating scientifically?

Simple, ask a representative group of people about dating. The psychology and women's magazines always focus on unrepresentative case studies proving their pet theories. Since they are always wrong in general, but right in their case study, they can always write more articles without anyone criticizing them and go on making money off of romantically dissatisfied people. Sometimes, they do studies where people who happen to return questionnaires are added up. In contrast, Whyte's team of researchers asked married women detailed questions about their dating history. Then they asked the women if they were happy in their marriages.

It turns out if you dated a short length of time before you got married and dated few people, you were just as likely to be happily married as someone who spent a long time and went through many dates. There was no ideal strategy for how long to spend dating. In fact, it turns out that how intimate people were before marriage does not matter! People who were very close to their boyfriends before marriage and people who were less close reported the same degree of happiness in their marriages.(1)

The actual causes of happiness and unhappiness in marriage are not what we were taught by the romance culture. Looking for compatibility with someone is a mistake. Even hiring psychologists at dating services to match you with someone with your characteristics is not going to work, except possibly by accident.

A final problem with the marketplace learning scenario, and thus with how our dating culture works, is that it assumes that the main problem is how to get two individuals who are well suited to one another together and then married. Implicit here is the idea that by the time you are a young adult your basic character, likes and dislikes, and personal

quirks have been fully formed, so that compatibility at age 20 or 25 will still be compatibility at age 40, 60, or 80. However, as numerous social commentators have told us in recent years ... this assumption of basic stability in character and psychology is unrealistic.(2)

The reason that psychological approaches to dating and marriage don't work is that it is not the individual who determines whether people are happy in marriage. **It is the social institutions underlying marriages that determine whether or not that marriage goes on happily ever after.** If the institutions are frayed, they will cause dissension in marriages without discriminating between people who used one strategy or another in dating.

Notes:

1. Martin King Whyte, *Dating, Mating, and Marriage*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1990, p. 247.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 251.

9.4 Cheating: More Proof that Coercion Underlies all Sex

Cheating in sexual relations is a kind of fraud or deceit that amounts to coercion. The person doing the cheating coerces his/her sexual partner into a kind of relationship to which s/he could not consent. Even a person using a gun is not likely to get the kind of compliance over as long a period of time as someone using a lie. Not surprisingly, just as part of our decadent pornography-ridden culture enjoys using guns to obtain sex, an even larger portion of the public enjoys cheating in sex enough to do it.

The difference between a gun and a lie is not the only issue of coercion in sex. Everyone knows that if you ask a cheater why s/he did it, s/he will say that s/he was "trapped." Yet any Martian landing on the Earth would say this is irrational. People aren't really trapped in their romantic relationships in Amerika except in rare cases

of abduction or slavery. What the cheater means is also very objectionable to the prisoner, who really knows what it means to be “trapped.”

Since MIM favors revolution and not advocacy of a certain lifestyle, MIM has little against people who are non-monogamous, which means that they frequently change sexual partners. MIM favors forever monogamy, especially for itself, for reasons explained elsewhere. However, monogamy vs. non-monogamy is a separate issue from lying. MIM would rather people who don't agree with the MIM monogamy line negotiate non-monogamy with each other than lie.

Someone who sleeps with several different people in a day may use less coercion than someone who sleeps with only two people in two years, but lies to one of them. For this reason, MIM advocates that people not lie to each other in sexual contexts and that they have frequently confrontational communication in their sexual relations.

The fact that people in the First World cheat is an indication that all sex is still rape, even in the First World where people generally do not need romantic relationships in order to survive. The cheater is both coercive and coerced. Only in a communist society where social power of people over people is abolished will the coercion underlying sex disappear.

We need to move forward to a revolutionary society where both men and women have conscious control of their sexual destiny in addition to their economic and national destinies. For that to happen, people have to recognize the reality of sex and stop lying to themselves about the supposedly high moral standards of Amerika, Christianity and other ideologies that have failed in every category of sexual behavior:

- Two-thirds of British people in a large survey said they had lied to have extra-marital affairs in their first marriage. This figure is an underestimate considering that you can't know how many people lie until they are done with all their marriages and dead.(1)
- There are several studies that show 25% to 10% of married people cheating. Two are cited in Time magazine.(2) Philip Lampe's book also finds many

studies in this range, so that Lampe can only conclude that a majority of people don't cheat.(3)

- There is one large survey that shows that people polled by telephone during the Christmas holidays only admit to cheating in 10% of marriages. (This survey is not credible because when family is around during the holidays, people are not likely to admit something destructive like that.)(2)

There is a lot of evidence pointing to cheating in the one-third to two-thirds range and increasing. If we add in the fact that marriages are dissolving faster and soon the stabler older generations will be none, then there is excellent evidence that even a majority of First World married people can't be honest with the people they "love." Cheaters are not people who fail to go to church: they are ordinary people. Cheating is just further proof that intimate sex is coercive.

In many cases, cheating has repercussions that go beyond the couple involved. Aside from the connection of cheating to murder and battering—so-called crimes of passion—divorce is especially damaging to poor children, because their standard of living goes down drastically on average after divorce. The First World may be rich and it may have a lot of leisure time to enjoy its family relations, so it may seem that the First World should have an easy time putting together harmonious social relations, but the First World can't because its people are sick with the decadence of imperialist patriarchy.

Notes:

1. USA Today 12/6/88, p. 7D.
2. Time 2/19/90, p. 91.
3. Philip E. Lampe, ed., *Adultery in the United States: Close Encounters of the Sixth (or Seventh) Kind*, Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1987.

9.5 Ideology vs. Theory: The Case of Rape

I. Ideology Dispensing with Theory

In another article, I explained that “no means no” is in fact a myth. This kind of statement would be quite inflammatory in most public contexts, but we are able to discuss it within the party context because the party is used to such challenges.

People want “no means no” to be true and don’t want to hear truth. Their values are etched in stone and so is their analysis.

That’s what I mean by ideology dispensing with theory. Some feminists want to dispense with the Texas study of undergraduate women who said “no means yes.”

That is the danger of ideology dispensing with theory. A theory is knocked down because it doesn’t feel right to people with allegedly feminist values. Actually in this case, a lot of theories were knocked down with an ideology, because the issue of “no means no” is a factual issue, even before it is a theoretical issue. By lying to ourselves about the facts, we kill off any chance of ever coming up with the right theory. Without the right theory, we cannot come up with the right solution to social problems.

There are times, however, when ideology should dispense with theory. If we don’t start from proletarian values—communist values—then we are not going to be talking about the same things. There are a lot of scholars doing a lot of work on subjects not relevant to anyone, except maybe the bourgeoisie trying to distract people from serious matters. Economists, for instance, exercise the mind but do little else in most of the economic models they build. The models start with outlandish assumptions and end up with coherent conclusions based on those assumptions. From a proletarian perspective most economists would be better off with fewer models based in more reality. Since “art for its own sake” and “scholarship for its own sake” are dominant ideologies, economists will go on doing what they do.

Those economists and other theorists should be criticized for not pursuing areas relevant to proletarian values. On the other hand, people theorizing about women, class and nation should never be dismissed for ideological reasons.

II. Theory Dispensing with Ideology

Ideology is often a hiding place for reactionary thinking in the guise of sentiments. What we really need is for theory to displace ideology rather than the other way around.

Catherine MacKinnon said:

To worry about co-optation is to realize that lies make bad politics. It is ironic that co-optation often results from an attempt to be ‘credible,’ to be strategically smart, to be ‘effective’ on existing terms. Sometimes you become what you are fighting.(1)

There are two subject areas that MacKinnon treats which demonstrate her exemplary responsibility as a theorist. (There is one area where MacKinnon probably knows she is being a demagogue, and that is the area of methodology.)

[Trigger Warning: This section describes graphic depictions of sexual violence. The editors recommend that readers who find this kind of content disturbing or triggering, avoid it. The end of the triggering content will be clearly marked.]

One is the issue of rape as violence. Just as every sexual assault organization in the country has accepted the notion that rape is violence, not sex. MacKinnon has the guts—derived from a special kind of loyalty to the women’s movement—to get up and say they have it wrong, rape is sexual.(2) She makes theoretical arguments connected to fact in order to dispense with the ideological dogma that rape is just violence.

She also has the courage to say that, yes, sometimes women are in the strange position of wanting to have sex forced on them. Again here the knee-jerk types will

oppose her: “Isn’t that what the male chauvinist pigs are saying?” But MacKinnon goes on to explain instead:

We also get many women who believe they have never been raped, although a lot of force was involved... Maybe they were force-fucked for years and put up with it, maybe they tried to get it over with, maybe they were coerced by something other than battery, something like economics, maybe even something like love.(3)

It’s not possible to say simultaneously that men enjoy non-violent pornography that causes rape and that rape is a crime of violence. Nor is it possible to say that men buy and enjoy a lot of violent pornography and that rape is not sexual.

MacKinnon correctly refuses to throw out the explanation of causation of rape, because she knows if she does, she has no solution for the problem of rape, only a lot of slogans.

It’s also not possible to say that women and men have had unequal power for centuries and then pretend that much of women’s behavior relative to men is not some kind of adjustment to that inequality. In other words, what we call “love” is in fact itself riddled with power inequality. Hence when women sound like they’ve been raped, but they enjoyed it, why should we be surprised? That’s how they’ve been trained for generations.

[End of Triggering Content]

What MacKinnon realizes is that theory is necessary in order to produce solutions for social problems. She thinks through what she is saying to make sure her allies have the right weapons in hand. **Theory is the weapon used by ideologists, who are the activists wanting to bring their value into being.**

A weapon that misfires, backfires or blows up in its user’s hands is a bad weapon. MacKinnon realizes that fashioning a good weapon is not as easy as writing down

every beautiful thought that comes to mind. A theory that says two conflicting things at once is a lie—and it misfires in application setting back the movement.

III. Theorists' and Activists' Social Responsibility and Rape

The key to unleashing the movement against rape right now is theoretical. There are a lot of people who want to do something about rape, but who have become frustrated or burned out with the issue. They don't see an opportunity to be effective, probably because they've been handed a lot of bogus weapons to fight with.

When the highly charged issue of rape attracts a lot of misfiring cannons there are a lot of activist casualties. I ask people to examine their local situations to see if this is not true. Does the anti-rape movement attract a lot of people—other than professional social workers paid by the government—who work through their activist commitment and stick with it?

For the issue of social responsibility, it's important to remember that activists without correct theory are actually promoting rape; they “become what you [they] are fighting.”

With rape, good intentions are not enough. With Trotskyism, maybe it takes a few decades to realize that good intentions are not enough to make a revolution. With rape, the figures stare you in the face every year and the rapes on the local level inform you of concrete problems. We know sexual assault is much more prevalent than what is reported to police or in the newspaper, and we all know the situation is not getting any better.

Having a wrong analysis of causes means more rapes will happen. Activists putting out their literature tend to make statements about how to conduct immediate behavior to avoid sexual assault. This kind of literature need not explain all kinds of theoretical issues to the masses, but it must have behind it the activists' correct understanding of the theoretical issues.

MacKinnon advances an unpopular theory when she says rape is caused by pornography, including what people find erotic about pornography. There are other unpopular theories as well. For example, if you label someone a criminal, s/he will perform criminal acts. MIM doesn't care whether or not the theories sound bad to people's ears. MIM just wants to know which theory is true. Having the wrong theory means falsely identifying the cause of a problem—and hence not having a solution that will work.

Notes:

1. Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified*, p. 91.
2. Ibid, p. 85-92.
3. Ibid, p. 88.

9.6 Theory vs. Biology

Biology is not destiny, so gender should be a concept that applies to social structure, not biology. MIM refers to some biological women as men and some biological men as women when it comes to gender. All First World peoples are men, because they have sexual privilege and power much greater than Third World people do. Men are people with higher sexual privilege. Women are people with lower sexual privilege.

In Amerikan history, you don't see white men lynching Black women with rape accusations (though Black women were lynched for other reasons). The nation/class privilege is there, but no lynching happens that way. It was not considered OK for white men to charge Black women with rape and then lynch them. The white biological man has many sexual privileges over Black women, but the common lynching after a rape rumor was not one of them.

Instead, the most prevalent Amerikan lynchings require all three—nation, class and peculiar gender privileges—to be in motion. In Amerikan history, lynching is a kind of privilege accorded to white nation biological men *and biological women*, by lawyers, racists and activists, but this power makes the white nation biological

women into men, people capable of sexually dominating women, in this case the Black biological men. While white nation people have many sexual privileges, often in Amerikan history if a Black biological man so much as looked at a white woman he would be lynched. So in this case, we see that actually white nation people were all men relative to Black biological men. This is proof of the need for a concept of gender that is not just biology.

Now let's put it all together in the current practice of the anti-rape movement. Expansive, vague and emotionally-laden sexual assault laws and movement propaganda are written to "protect" biological women, thereby socializing them to expect such a role. What women are allowed to have is fear—fear of everything from "emotional coercion" to tanks. They are rewarded for expanding their fears and for naming the patriarchal state their protector over their powerlessness in as many areas as possible. That's what socialized men want or don't want but obtain anyway: powerless women needing protection from men who may get charged with sexual assault, but are rarely convicted (unless of course they can't afford good lawyers or they are the wrong color).

9.7 Another Gutsy Quotation from MacKinnon: The Strength of First World Women

I. MacKinnon, A Role Model of Courage

What did MacKinnon do? She went to a rally against rape and said something at a time when there had been a series of rapes on campus.

To women I want to say: what do you really want? Do you feel that you have the conditions under which you can ask yourself that question? [Those conditions would have to be communism in MIM's opinion.] If you feel that you are going to be raped when you say 'No,' how do you know that you really want sex when you say 'Yes?' Do you feel responsible for men's sexual feelings about you? What about their responsibility for yours, including your lack of them? I also want to say that women need self-protection; we do not need more paranoia.

The Stanford police tell us, 'A little fear is a good thing right now.' I think we do not need more fear. We need to make fear unnecessary.(1)

In this one paragraph, MacKinnon really shows how she should be in MIM. First thing she does is question Liberalism and the whole idea of consent. Like MacKinnon, MIM knows that there will always be confusion talking about how a woman said "yes" when she is economically, militarily and governmentally unequal to men. A "yes" under inequality is as bad as when a woman says "yes" with a gun to her head. Consent without equality is always tainted (and not just the phony individual equality many try to attain now, but the real individual equality established with group equality in communism).

Second, she establishes that rape is a question of "sexual feelings," not violence alone, and she does this no doubt with anti-rape activists at her elbow telling people otherwise.

Third, she tells an anti-rape rally that emphasizing the scary side of rape is wrong. When all the anti-rape, anti-battering groups are telling women what to avoid in situations and which men with what psychological traits to avoid, MacKinnon says in the midst of a rape crisis that fear is unnecessary. In fact, she identifies the police as an agency conditioning women's sexuality. It fits in very well with her theory, the patriarchy conditions women's sexuality, not just men's, in order for women to adjust to a lower power position and be happy with it.

She says self-protection, not fear is necessary. You can almost hear her saying, "We have strategic confidence." Self-protection almost means "women, seize power." And her line against the politics of lying (quoted in another document) is almost: "Look First World women, you *are* strong! You can be even *stronger* by joining MIM to raise your gender relative to men. The international proletariat does not need a detachment of First World women who believe the bullshit that they are weak."

Clearly, MacKinnon has some kind of strategic confidence. She knows that fear sets back the movement. She's also got enough of her own theory worked out so that she's confident she can deal with criticisms of her theory—even in the midst

of a rally of women who are probably scared. **She knows that from *Playboy* to the police, the patriarchy is telling women they are powerless and should enjoy that.** That enjoyment extends from being happy in sexual intercourse and relations generally to feeling righteous about being fearful and demanding police and other state intervention. It all boils down to justifying a powerless role for women—a role they don't need and can reject.

MIM is quite at odds with many First World feminists who talk like they were the French Resistance or Warsaw Jews battling the overwhelming Nazi juggernaut—if they decide to risk battle at all given their conditions.

II. Learning from MacKinnon on Recruiting

MIM's message to itself must be clear: we must be theoretically armed like MacKinnon to be able to walk into any potentially hostile situation and win people over to the correct line or retreat politely to study the matter further.

There will be all kinds of road-blocks along the way. Working on these issues reminds ourselves of our own personal difficulties, as gender issues hit close to home. For men there is the fear of being tokenistically labeled sexist for not being a biological woman while making challenging statements. For women there is the fear of appearing unfeminine in standing up. And perhaps all of us remember the day when we said or did some things as stupid (or worse) than what we are criticizing now. That's to be expected. But progressive people don't make the same mistakes; they move on.

MIM has been making it clear that it doesn't stand with everything out there calling itself feminist. However, MIM's message to First World women recruits needs to get even sharper.

If we can tell someone what is wrong with Deng Xiaoping's phony communism, based on the facts of an economy thousands of miles away, we can tell somebody what's wrong with phony feminism, at least in our own cities.

Feminism is not the tea room of yesterday

MIM can date a sharp advance in our recruiting of women to the time when we targeted anarchist feminism as patriarchal socialization in disguise—the tea room syndrome promoted by pseudo-feminist bookstores. MIM tells women that they can understand and seize power and not to believe the patriarchy otherwise. People recognized that because of socialization men join parties to overthrow power-holders much more easily than women, and just realizing this problem has helped considerably in getting around it.

Feminism is not accepting the feminine role in pornography

Still there is some residual anarchist feminism that MIM is not dealing with enough. MIM should start comparing more hardened cases of anarchist feminism to pornography more often. Miss Playmate of the Month always says she likes being overpowered and enjoys aggressive men. Mr./Ms. Anarchist of the Amerikan left believes it by telling people how powerless women are, especially in the romantic context.

Feminism is not dating advice

Women used to be told that the choice of boyfriend is the center of their universe, so pick Mr. Goodbar and do everything to keep him. Now the Amerikan left individualists are putting this fixation in a new form: date the right person with the right psychological traits and the right level of power, and as a woman you will live happily ever after, having done your bit to advance gender equality.

The party should decisively and militantly put forward that the middle or end of an Amerikan relationship may feel “powerless” to its participants, but in reality that is just what the patriarchal romance culture wants you to think. To become revolutionary feminists, we must work through why it is that perfectly middle-class Amerikan privileged people feel they are powerless in a romantic context.

Sure, there is necessarily a gloomy, self-critical side to criticism, struggle and self-criticism, but that’s how we produce newer and better weapons to advance struggles with higher levels of unity. MIM should also say that with the issues that hit close to home, it wouldn’t be right to be happy all the time, because that

would simply indicate that a person is well-adjusted to oppression. No one in the party has the right to be happy all the time! That's part of what makes the people in our party so great! Our ideas are sometimes no better than the masses' most reactionary ideas to begin with, but we are dedicated to struggling through the issues to reach higher heights. While other people get stuck in their reactionary ideas, we practice, learn from practice and move on.

III. Everyday Applications

Has anyone ever encountered anti-rape groups trying to tell men individual behaviors that are scary? Did you know that men are not supposed to walk down the street with their hands in their pockets because that is threatening to women? They should keep their hands out exposed? Did you know that when a man crosses the street when there's a woman on the other side, he is scaring her?

A woman I know stopped going out with men at night—for dinners, drinks, for anything. Didn't you know, if you don't know the guy, or if you do (in the P.C.-version) you never know what he might do? (I had the guts to talk this one out of it, successfully.)

P.C.-man and P.C.-woman are taught to be "sensitive" in such a way as to recognize and legitimize the fears of women. P.C.-man and P.C.-woman with their long lists of individual behaviors to avoid and criticize are part of the socialization of women as powerless. What they enjoy in bed or think they don't enjoy in bed or *Playboy* magazine, they enjoy to the point of righteousness in politics. P.C.-man and P.C.-woman are part of the problem, not the solution.

Amerikan leftist feminism which focuses on behaviors without an approach to building power independent of the system is a prop of the patriarchy. People facing the patriarchal enemy in day-to-day life have to have strategic confidence and tactical respect for the enemy. Without strategic confidence, learning tactical respect turns into paralyzing fear, and an ever-longer string of defeats.

Note: *Feminism Unmodified*, p. 83.

9.8 Marriage and Murder

Study of murder in Philadelphia, 1958:

Wives killed 47 husbands.

Husbands killed 53 wives.

Study of murder in Houston, 1969:

Husbands killed 13 wives.

Wives killed 24 husbands.(1)

Only 42% of police-defined murders are by strangers or people of an unknown relationship to the victim. Most police-recognized street crime murder is by family and friends. The husbands and wives killing each other is the most common pattern in murder. That's how great Amerika is.

Men are murdered three times more than women. As a result, boyfriend/spouse murders of women account for a very high percentage of all murders of women, but girlfriend/wife murders of men are only the plurality of murders of men. (The 29% unsolved murders figure creates an additional problem for saying exactly what is going on here.)

Note: John E. Conklin, *Criminology*, Third Edition, New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1989, pp. 36-7.

9.9 Philosophical Idealism: A Deep Root of Paternalism

In *Feminism Unmodified*, Catharine MacKinnon said:

Objectivity is a stance only a subject can take.

Believing that women are always objects—victims—MacKinnon sees it as impossible for women to seize control of their destinies. That's what she means when she says women are not subjects. A subject is an actor, not a receiver of acts, which is the object.

MIM disagrees and believes that women must struggle to win release from their status as objects and that they can never do so by assuming that they are objects in need of protection by men (subjects). Women must assume that they too can be subjects.

9.10 RCP and MIM Split over Homosexuality

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 35, January 1989 —

Dear MIM:

The fall of our society and the destruction of our society and all life on this planet will be from the high technology that MC5 thinks can replace heterosexual intercourse in the propagation of the species. Using a lethal tool to eliminate Nature, the system which brought us life on this planet to date, scares me to death.

In addition, sanitation-wise, placing one's genitalia in a waste pit makes people sick. Ergo AIDS.

All the sins of the patriarchy must not be placed at the door of heterosexuality. That would be reverse discrimination, would it not? It is very shaky ground to politicize sexuality. (Two wrongs don't make a right).

Because the patriarchy over most of recorded history used the sexuality of women for their own power and wealth, it is hard to say that heterosexuality is to blame for everything. Sex is a tool of Nature: the patriarchy didn't invent it. It was the development of the post-hunting and gathering stage, I believe, which put the male in control—in short—something unnatural.

(I must follow this up with my theory that mankind is a poor experiment of Nature's—one that turned out to be destructive. Mankind has gotten just smart enough to mess things up and not wise enough to straighten it out.) It is modern medical science that has overpopulated the Earth, as it is capitalism that is fast destroying the rain forests which will cause drought, famine, etc.

If people have a homosexual orientation, that is their right. It is not their right to mess up the natural system that brought mankind to the 20th century.

[Signed,]

A writer from the South

MC5 Replies

The writer is responding to the review of the Revolutionary Communist Party's theoretical position on homosexuality in the last issue.

I never blamed heterosexual sex for the crimes of the patriarchy. I only raised the connection because the RCP commonly compares homosexual ideology with communism instead of to heterosexual ideology.

Since that issue came out, MIM has learned from a Detroit member of the RCP that the RCP intends to criticize both heterosexual and homosexual ideology, and eliminate them both.

On the other hand, in a shocking revelation to MIM, the RCP apparently does not allow practicing homosexuals in its party, but it does allow practicing heterosexuals. Such is the unwritten rule in the RCP and contradicts the RCP assertion that homosexuality is not a dividing line question in its party.

In this comrade's opinion, that position of the RCP alone is sufficient to demarcate the RCP from MIM. As stated in the review in the last issue, the question of sexual orientation alone is not a dividing line question of the proletarian revolution. However, bourgeois opportunism and the exclusion of communists from the RCP based on sexual practice is a dividing line question. The international proletariat

cannot afford the luxury of having a revolution against war and imperialism led only by heterosexuals.

Comrades, we must openly call on the RCP, and the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement of which it is a member, to explicitly abandon this provincialist outlook and put forward a coherent position on sexism and heterosexism. MIM comrades have pushed the RCP on this question for several years, only to encounter incoherence, delay and excuses that the question is not a dividing line question! As it turns out, more than five years after MIM's initiating discussions of homosexuality with the RCP, the question is quite literally a dividing line question for the RCP.

MCØ Replies

To term heterosexual relations “natural” dilutes the social constructs of gender relations which are particularly focused in heterosexual relations, intercourse. The economic, social and political forces which compel women to have intercourse are not the products of nature. The same forces exist in sex, sexuality, and sexism. Catherine MacKinnon elaborates on the assumption that women control sex:

Feminism has found that women feel compelled to preserve the appearance—which acted upon, becomes the reality—of male direction of sexual expression, as if male initiative itself were what we want as if it were that which turns us on. It is what pornography eroticizes and prostitutes provide. Rape—that is, intercourse with force that is recognized as force—is adjudicated not according to the power or force that the man wields, but according to indices of intimacy between the parties. The more intimate you are with your accused rapist, the less likely a court is to find that what happened to you was rape. Often indices of intimacy include intercourse itself. If ‘no’ can be taken as ‘yes,’ how free can ‘yes’ be?

9.11 Gender Correspondence

This item is in response to an article in MIM Notes 35 [Ed. note: See “Romance, Gender and the Party,” this issue.].

Dear MIM:

Just thought I would add my view of the three items in the latest issue which are up for vote by members. I think that all three show a prodigious amount of work and are excellent. While I am no expert they sound very practical, sensible, useful, and—Maoist!

However, I would question point B of “Romance, Gender and the Party.” This refers to the fact that sexual liaisons are not equal, cannot be equal “in this context,” etc.

This sounds like a cop-out to me. If party members can’t practice equality in their sexual relations, “in the current context,” when the hell are they going to begin? Or, why should anyone bother with anyone if it’s going to be a slave/master relationship, and not equal? My first thought to such a relationship would be, F.U.! Perhaps I do not understand this correctly, but it certainly turns me off.

The way to deal with inequality anywhere is for the woman, or unequal person, to put her foot down and say, “No way!” However, that means that she must be financially and emotionally independent. The problem here is dependency, both in a financial way and in the emotional way.

Too many women do depend on a romantic relationship for survival when they shouldn’t!

As for work-related romances, it seems impossible to have people work together and not become romantically or erotically involved or both. It is doubtless best if political workers, especially in left movements do not become emotionally involved. Also best if they have their romances or erotic experiences outside the movement. Probably it’s impossible to enforce. Gossip should certainly be excluded at all times.

How about this asexual business? Human beings who are asexual may have low sex drive physically or have mental blocks to sex. Usually people with a single-minded devotion to a cause are not terribly romantic or sexually-minded anyway.

We are all sexual creatures in one way or another. It is up to each person to know where to draw the line in work situations. I for one never discussed

my personal life with people at work—only a very few people that I had known for a long time.

I can see why the Third World women proletariat are the key to the revolution in some ways. They are the most exploited. Must we count men out, are they not interested, or do they not have as much to be disenchanted with as women?

In addition, I wonder if it would be a good idea to add something to the Draft Constitution on religion. They are infiltrating most socialist organizations now. I do not trust them.

[Signed,]

Ally in the South

February 1989

MC5 Replies

As Maoists, we oppose expert-rule, so we hope that everyone who has something to say about MIM's work will write in as you have done so well.

On the issue of party romances, the fuck-you option is very important. In fact, the article in question explicitly says that people should keep in mind the benefits of asexuality at all times. Is he fucked up? Then tell him fuck off. That is the best way to keep men inside or outside the party from engaging in practices of inequality. Is it a consuming project to be a part of romance? Then fuck it! That is as far as the discussion of most of the problematic Amerikan individual romances should go, especially given the possibility of diverting valuable energies from the revolutionary movement.

Unfortunately though, it is not possible to be consistent if one believes that there is structural inequality in Amerikan gender relations and one believes that communists may and should participate in romantic relations of equality. It's appealing to have it both ways, to say that communists should be different as individuals from other people and at the same time criticize the patriarchy.

Nevertheless, the structure of American gender relations is either unequal or not. Individuals are either constrained by that structure or there is no point in talking about structural inequality. There is no point in overthrowing the patriarchy if one could merely reform it as individuals. Talking as if communists could somehow initiate romantic relationships of equality before a revolution sets back the day when the patriarchy is consciously dismantled.

It is important to note that all sex in the United States occurs in a context of gender inequality as MacKinnon, Dworkin and others have pointed out. Even individual upper class women are not isolated from the impact of a sexist culture—everything from music and dating practices to American notions of what is pleasurable in romance.

Of course, the experience of upper class women is not the same as that of lower class women. In fact, the party has also had discussions of educational, political and age inequalities in romance. One idea that came up was that communists should try to date people who are their equals in these categories in addition to class.

In the past few months, I have come to change my ambiguous and probably overly complicated position on this question. (That's self-criticism for not working through this issue and attempting to exert political leadership in this area as communists should.) The problem with this line of "date-only-your-equals" thinking is that it is fundamentally based on a petty-bourgeois illusion.

It fits in with the attitude of "making it on one's own" and "rugged individualism." Magically, somehow communists are able to rise above the entire structure of gender inequality according to this petty-bourgeois view. MacKinnon once remarked to the effect that if she had a dime for all the leftists who thought that *their* romances were correct, she would be a millionaire.

If a male chooses not to have a relationship with a female who has less education, political experience and/or income, etc., that does not solve the problem of gender inequality as a whole. Women as a whole are not accorded equality in this society.

On the whole, women will go out with men who are paid more, have more experience in politics, etc. Individuals who go out with their exact equals do so at the expense of others who will make up for that equality by having relations with above average inequality.

The exception to this inequality may be homosexuality. In particular, lesbianism as a part of the solution to patriarchy is worthy of its own separate discussion.

Indeed, there is something to be said for romance and marriage as an equalizer when it comes to mixing people of unequal classes, races, educations, etc. During the Cultural Revolution (an entirely different context), the Maoists encouraged people to marry beneath their educational status. College youth sent to the countryside were thought to be narrowing urban/rural and mental/manual inequalities by marrying peasants.

This is not an argument that every individual should engage in a relationship with its share of inequality. It merely counters the idea that individuals can resolve a problem inherent to a system of group relations.

In other words, it does not matter if communists, in the current context, date people from their same class or radically different classes. Either way, gender relations are unequal. For a communist attempting to overthrow the patriarchy, to pretend otherwise is hypocrisy.

This is true even where communists and other individuals adopt an asexual orientation. Just as keeping one's money under the mattress does not destroy the banking system, so adopting an asexual orientation does not destroy the patriarchy. At best, the asexual option is parallel to the workers' option of going on strike, something that is necessary from time to time but not a fundamental solution to a structural problem.

It is possible now that women are in the labor force that they could organize an asexual/lesbian movement that could make demands for women as a whole. What are the existing male responses to the failure of their relationships that might become more prevalent during an asexual strike? First, the gay option might see

more action. Second, men might go abroad more in search of wives seeking the Amerikan lifestyle. Third, prostitution might increase as men pay more for sex. Fourth, men might also become more asexual. In these four ways, the sex strike implicit in female asexuality is contained and prevented from addressing overall gender inequality.

The fact that this discussion is speculative points to another difficulty. Why hasn't there been a massive sex strike, especially in the countries that have had women in the labor force for some time? This question of false consciousness is discussed in the review of MacKinnon [*Ed. note: See "Book Review: Feminism Unmodified", this issue.*]. It is possible that MacKinnon would say that the movement against pornography would have to succeed before an asexual movement could have great success.

The reason the party should ask people to keep in mind the possibility of an asexual orientation is to compare it with the standard options, not because it can overthrow the patriarchy. Ultimately, the whole line of thinking that focuses on the individual in romance is reformist at best and more than likely a reflection of the decadence of Amerikan imperialism. It does not advance the struggle one iota.

As for the point on Third World women, the MIM Draft Constitution states that the view that Third World women are the key is an acceptable point of view to hold within MIM. Others are acceptable as well. The point is that there are various ways of working on the same problem.

One might disagree with this formulation if one believed that one particular kind of oppression, say gender, was the bedrock of all other oppressions. Then one would want the Constitution to set the priorities straight.

This raises another question. While it is acceptable in my opinion to see Third World women as key or Third World peoples as key, some views do contradict internationalism and hence all strategies for social change. For example, one cannot be a feminist and not oppose imperialism in my book. Why? First, the majority of women are oppressed by imperialism. Second, imperialism's symptom of militarism affects women on a scale exceeded perhaps only by draft-age men, and that's only

during direct military conflict. The waste of resources by militarism brings women disproportionate poverty, even in the imperialist countries themselves. Third, without imperialism, many feudal regimes keeping peasants under landlord control would collapse for lack of military and economic aid. If capitalism is bad for women, feudalism is worse with its range of oppressions that include the literal buying and selling of women into marriage, foot-binding in some societies, the right of first night (first sex) reserved for landlords in other societies, etc.

Women are disproportionately disowned from the land in agrarian societies that make up the Third World. They starve disproportionately as a result. They also lose reproductive options as their children starve. Forced to continually bear children just so that some survive, Third World women do not gain control of their bodies without eradicating imperialism and the feudalist regimes backed by imperialism. For this reason, it is impossible to be a feminist without being internationalist and anti-imperialist.

9.12 Romance, Gender and the Party

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 35, January 1989 —

Ideological Aim

Communists favor the abolition of all power of people over people in the long run. That includes the elimination of class, gender and racial/national inequalities.

Communists desire to be, and are engaged in, leading life-and-death struggles concerning the issues of war, violence, starvation, health care, homelessness, etc.

Factual Generalizations

In the United States, women have made great strides in entering the work force.

As of 1989, most women in the United States do not depend on their romantic relationships for their day-to-day survival.

For most people in the United States, romance is a leisure-time activity, not an issue of life-and-death. (See Shulasmith Firestone's *The Dialectics of Sex* on the impact of romance culture in diverting the feminist movement.)

Logical Distinctions and Definitions

When speaking of romantic relations, MIM is referring to relations with an active sexual component.

It is possible (and desirable) for comrades of the opposite sex to interact on a platonic basis.

Many people work to eat; in some cases women have maintained oppressive family relations in order to eat. Leisure refers to activities that do not involve serious physical harm or working for money or survival. While there are contradictions within leisure-time activities, they are generally non-antagonistic. Class contradictions are most evident in leisure activities that are part of bourgeois mass culture—organized spectator sports, the music industry, etc.

Propositions of Line

- Since most people in MIM and anti-imperialist/militarist movements generally can survive without romance, communists do not waste time discussing romance or sexist attitudes within individual romances. Comrades' leisure-time activities should not interfere with their political activities.
- To set up an elaborate line on leisure-time activities would be time-consuming in both its construction and even more so in its application. The investigation of personal relations is an arduous task.

In order to do a thorough job investigating sexism in romantic relations, it would be necessary to make public many time-consuming details of everyday and personal life. In the current context, such an investigation is not even possible because of the capitalist context it occurs in. Such investigations fail for the same reasons the kibbutz or the Amerikan hippie/commune does. Since sexism in individual romantic relations is inseparably intertwined with assorted personal details, many of innocent interpretation, investigations

of sexism in romance would wrongly focus party energies into analyses of individual acts of sexism, individual lifestyles and personal details of no importance. In itself, the focus on the individual creates cynical individuals and corrosion of the party and the movement.

- The criticism of individual romances and setting of examples in romance is even less important than the criticism of rock and roll music. What occurs within individual leisure-time relations has much less impact than the cultural standards set in the rock industry. Time devoted to criticizing each other's individual romances is much better spent dedicated to exposing and criticizing structural gender inequality.
- Catherine MacKinnon refers to pornography as the eroticization of inequality. There is also a lot of pseudo-feminism that is merely the politicization of self-indulgence. (MacKinnon is excluded here; see numerous women's magazines sold at grocery stores near you.)
- The political/ideological criticism of individual romances within middle class Amerikan radical circles is an extension of leisure-time activities into the time that should be reserved for political activities. It is self-indulgence in the name of politics. Such blabber is an expression of the decadence of Amerikan imperialism, not a criticism of real gender inequality. It does not occur extensively within movements genuinely engaged in life-and-death struggles. It does not occur within those classes of people with more important things to do.
- The reactionary side of the slogan "the personal is political" is the glorification of issues of self-indulgence, part of the decadence of Amerikan imperialism. Personalizing everything, viewing issues from an individual viewpoint and inability to understand the concrete existence of classes, nations and genders—groups—is especially Amerikan. The material basis for this problem is well-described in J. Sakai's book *Settlers*, in which the reader sees that most white Amerikans have throughout most of Amerikan history had a chance at middle class existence—and hence "making it on one's own" and all the attendant attitudes of "rugged individualism."
- Inequalities within current Amerikan (and hence middle-class) romantic relations that do not involve physical harm or economic survival are not important, period. The relatively voluntary nature of most Amerikan middle-class romantic relations is proved by a simple test: most of the problems

in such relations that could be endlessly discussed would be solved by a simple asexual orientation. Adopting an asexual status would not have dire consequences for most Americans.

MacKinnon is right that all male/female relations contain a component of inequality. However, the existence of the possibility of asexuality for most people indicates that the coercive element in most romance is low.

Many people obviously prefer to take their chances with date rape, economic inequality, verbal harassment and emotional letdown than choose asexuality.

- Under communism, inequalities within romance will not exist; however, attempts at hippie/commune/love culture in a capitalist context will inevitably fail in their aims and involve considerable hypocrisy.
- The loss of a single comrade from political life because of concerns in leisure-time activities renders that leisure-time activity a life-and-death threat to the international proletariat. Division of the forces of the international proletariat over leisure-time activities is criminal.

The ultraleft is particularly prone to dividing the party and movement on the basis of issues and so-called principles with less than life-and-death importance. When the ultraleft focuses on sexism in romantic relations, it finds that, lo-and-behold, men are guilty of sexism. Consequently, the ultraleft in practice does not trust or work with men in the party or the movement because of sexism found in daily life.

The ultraleft's lack of priorities or strategic focus results in a corrosion of party and movement discipline/unity, which often the ultraleft does not value in the first place. One of the first things that should be ascertained in such situations is just how far petty-bourgeois ideology has set in. Some ultraleftists openly say that there can only be individual activists, and that group association and discipline have no value. This trend of thought has an especially strong material basis in the United States with students in particular. There is no point in talking about sexism with ultraleftists who do not value group unity/discipline in the first place. Such people are not going to trust anyone but themselves anyway.

After wreaking havoc in the party and movement, the ultraleft is left with individuals or cliques of individuals that it "trusts." "Overthrow all and suspect all" was the popular slogan of the ultraleft in the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Many people in student anti-racist, anti-sexist movements implicitly take

this stance.

Since no one is ever pure by the ultraleft's standards, demoralization and rampant individualism inevitably set in.

- As part of their distrust-everybody-equally mentality, ultraleftists and pseudo-feminists often spread their wares through informal networks—gossip. Such gossip when connected to movements is most pernicious.

Historically, the bourgeoisie has employed covert slander campaigns to discredit bourgeois politicians and movement leaders.

- The FBI attempted to show that Martin Luther King was a womanizer; it went so far as to hire women to seduce him in front of secret cameras.
- In his books, Nixon and his cronies admitted that he hoped to catch the Kennedys with similar means.
- Gary Hart was run out of a race for sexual liaisons.
- When Jesse Jackson was the front-runner in the Democratic primaries, there was talk in the press of a womanizer story about to break.

If the bourgeoisie plays dirty tricks within its own ranks like this, revolutionaries should understand the role disinformation campaigns can play against themselves. Indeed, one of the documented FBI strategies is to inform individuals of the movement that their co-leaders are FBI informants!

In any case, people who charge sexism within romantic relationships through informal networks are guilty of working through the most patriarchal of means. The often-unrecognized power structure involved in informal networks is much worse than encountered in a democratic centralist procedure where power-holders are formally accountable to the majority.

- Selling out the international proletariat is also selling out the majority of women in the world. While middle class men and women may have an interest in verbally getting off on their romantic relationships, it is not an issue high on the agenda of the international proletariat.

Policy

- MIM seeks to avoid having its members or allies involved in romantic relations that involve life-and-death dependency. Only where such relations exist does MIM monitor the situation carefully.

- Even among poorer sections of the population, where life-and-death dependencies do exist more often, MIM does not automatically oppose romantic and marital relations of inequality.
- MIM opposes gossip within party or movement ranks—conversation and judgements about other people’s leisure-time activities. When gossip occurs, MIM members and allies are expected to apologize directly to the parties affected. It is important that not a single person be alienated from the party or important movements because of gossip concerning leisure-time activities. See Mao’s essay, “Combat Liberalism.”
- MIM will not investigate to assure the following behavior in leisure-time activities, but will nonetheless expect such behavior:
 - Comrades and allies should never lie to each other or the masses, only to the enemy.
 - Comrades do not pretend that sexual relations in the current context can happen in a context of equality. They therefore avoid hypocrisy if they do engage in sexual relations.
 - Comrades should realize that they are likely to hold social views outside the social mainstream. Therefore, they should assume responsibility for communication on issues of principle within any romantic relationship.
 - In addition to not lying or engaging in hypocrisy, comrades are expected not to be mean or otherwise unnecessarily cause the alienation of other comrades, allies or masses from the causes of the international proletariat. Wherever possible, comrades should work to avoid causing the masses to identify comrades’ personal foibles with the causes of the international proletariat. MIM stresses that no individual perfectly incarnates the international communist movement.

Although MIM will not scrutinize romantic relations for the above, should a violation of these principles come to light, the party will expect self-criticism by the comrade involved, an apology and any other appropriate act of correction.

- MIM will investigate to enforce the following policies where necessary:
 - The issue of discrimination is apart from that of romance. MIM members or allies who do not work with others (and hence set back the revolutionary movement) because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or individual romantic proclivities may be purged.

- MIM members or allies who discriminate (by race, gender, sexual orientation or for the purpose of obtaining romantic/sexual benefit) through the use of violence or power over another’s career or economic survival generally may be purged.

9.13 Pornography in Prison

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 36, March 1989 —

In Anamosa, Iowa, a federal judge ruled that prisoners must be allowed access to pornography and to comply with the order for the Iowa Men’s Reformatory to set up a “porno reading room.”

While Liberals hailed the choice, many decried the bogus danger of giving pornography to prisoners. In *Feminism Unmodified*, Catherine MacKinnon demonstrates that men serving sentences for sex crimes or rape are exceptions only to the extent that they were caught and convicted, not in their behavior toward women or pornography.

Warden John Thalacker made the standard establishment claim:

In most areas, criminals are just like us. They go to work. They go to church. They engage in social organizations. But when it comes to sex, that’s where the problems become obvious.(1)

These comments on people’s character rather than their social and economic conditions were contradicted in the same article.

[Thalacker:]

Most inmates don’t like pornography. They think it’s junk, just like the rest of us.

As can be seen below, it is likely that the reason pornography is termed junk may not be that it injures women and turns degraded women into a profitable commodity.

Assessing the view in the article requires backing up several steps. First, as will be demonstrated, pornography constitutes a violation of women (most women in pornography are forced; see Andrea Dworkin's *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*). This does not mean that pornography in prison is the problem or that prisoners are somehow deviant. They are exceptional only in that they are in prison. The majority of prisoners know that pornography is crap and are not interested in misogynist literature. People who have this understanding are against the violation of women and pornography. The supporters of the right of pornography are the advocates of the right to degrade women and sell them as such. In other words, pornography has no value if it shows women doing empowering, important, and meaningful things. Its value is tied to portraying a bitch ready to be raped. MCØ suggests that those who uphold this "right" are the same people that argue prison is humane and rehabilitation works.

Second, to place the blame on the deviant prisoners misses the point. The problem is not that these men are different or deviant. The problem is that they are in prison and unable to realize any part of, let alone their full, human potential. MacKinnon points out that men in prison are one of two groups of men who come close to occupying the gendered social position of woman: prisoners and sexually abused boys. Prisoners are demeaned as women. This is not some difference between them and other men; it is the power exerted over prisoners that make them women.

In the United States one woman is raped every three minutes, one wife is battered every eighteen seconds. Obviously, all the men who rape and assault these women are not in jail. Prisons are overcrowded, but not *that* overcrowded.

Note: New York Times 2/6/89, p. 6.

9.14 NO to Pornography

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 36, March 1989 —

[Ed note: This section was written by a MIM Associate, and published by MIM.]

Flipping through copies of this week's Ann Arbor News, I read the headlines: "Woman serving record time in jail to keep child away from ex-husband;" "State police seeking three in assault on waitress;" "Woman beaten with phone;" "Woman says boyfriend tried to drown her," etc. In the United States, male violence against women is the accepted norm.

The pervasiveness of male violence against women and the power relationship between genders that is implied by it is not, of course, unique to the United States. Nor is it unique to capitalist societies—but capitalism has institutionalized, sanctioned and escalated the degree of male supremacy in ways that non-capitalist societies have not.

One of the ways that the sexuality of male supremacy is institutionalized is through pornography. Robin Morgan has said:

Pornography is the theory, rape is the practice.

Pornography is the media of sexual objectification and violence against women. Its message is...

... a lie about women, that we exist to pleasure and service men and that our deepest pleasure lies in enslavement and subordination.(1)

Pornography is different from other forms of sexual assault because it is...

.... a collective representation of objectification and violence against women.(1)

All women are victims of pornography; it attacks women as a group rather than as individuals.

An understanding of pornography is essential to an understanding of the construction and reproduction of gender inequality and how male supremacy defines sexuality. Pornography legitimizes forced sex; forced sex defines gender; and gender defines the status of women, which, clearly, is far below that of men. The power of men over women—the power to own through higher wages, to rape through male oriented laws, and to objectify through pornography—this power means that force is inherent in sex. Forced sex defines woman; the same woman who must do the wash, raise the children, and engage in coitus with her husband. It's the law.

Pornography is everywhere. It is not just snuff films; it is not just Playboy. Pornography is the Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue and it is commercials and movies and TV shows. Much of pornography is visible, because it is accepted as normal. Women are defined in the multi-billion-a-year pornography industry as sexual objects, and a socially constructed definition of gender validated and protected by that much money is hard to destroy. The brutality and force used to create the image of degraded, subordinated women who enjoy the violence done to them, however, remains conveniently invisible. And the idea that women might want to redefine the sexual valuation perpetuated by pornography is a direct economic threat to the men creating, marketing and profiting from the exploitation and economic coercion of the women who participate in making it.

Pornography should not be protected by the First Amendment. Women are forced to participate in the making of pornography through economic and physical violence. To define pornography as free speech is to equate free speech with males' right to free sexual access to women. To assert that pornography is "free speech" is to condone the legitimation of forced sex. The abstract concept of free speech cannot be separated from the system of socially constructed gender/power relationships in which it exists; free speech concepts should not be used to justify the

exploitation and objectification of women so that men can be free to choose to consume pornography.

The First Amendment defense of pornography is laced with false assumptions, the primary one being that all members of society have equal power to express themselves freely. It assumes, falsely, that women have the same access to a means of expression as do men. But freedom of the press belongs to those who own one, and given the economic inequality between the sexes in capitalist societies, the press or the advertising agency or the production company is much more likely to belong to men. Pornography restricts women's choices. Pornography silences women. Pornography has no right to exist, much less be officially sanctioned by the state through laws such as the First Amendment.

Whether or not pornography should be banned is not the crucial issue. Pornography will not cease to exist simply because the state deems it illegal, and since those with political power are usually white men with the same perspective as the white men who capitalize on the pornography industry, there is no reason to believe that they would use their power to delegitimize it. The issue instead is how women can gain power in the realm of sexuality, how women can revolt against male supremacy, how we should work to create a society in which we are free to construct our own definition of sexuality and gender. Not until then will pornography disappear.

Note: Kathleen Barry, *Beyond Pornography: From Defensive Politics to Creating a Vision*.

9.15 Party Building Requires Policy on Romance and Gender

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 37, April 1989 —

The articles below are a follow-up to a discussion of romance and gender in issues 35 and 36 [of MIM Notes].

Dear MIM:

I have not thoroughly studied MIM Notes 36, but I think that we have gone off on separate tangents on the issue of equality within an organization and the “F.U.” exclamation. I was speaking more of personal power in a romantic relationship if and when a male tries to exploit a female (or vice versa).

MC5 seems to have taken it as a class equality thing whereas I was going off on the feminist political struggle for equality and was really not thinking of class equality. The issue of cross-religious, cross-cultural, and cross-age liaisons are a whole subject unto themselves. I was thinking of male members of an organization expecting their girlfriends within an organization to make the coffee, cook, clean and do the clerical work—that sort of thing.

Of course, people become emotionally bonded regardless of class. I can see Mao’s point in telling college students to marry the peasants they were working with in the countryside. Both have a lot to learn from one another.

I am a veteran of a cross-cultural marriage and it is, within this society, fraught with hazards. But basically it is a good thing.

I have come to the conclusion that the party I can work with has to have in policy and in practice feminist equality before the revolution, like right now. Anything else is a copout and will attract only the most gullible. In addition, the party I work with has to have a strong environmental policy statement.

[Signed,]

Former ally in the South

March 1989

MC5 Replies:

It appears that the author above has cut off contact with MIM at least partly because of statements I made on the question of romance and gender. The heart of the problem is that I argued that equality in romantic relationships under capitalist patriarchy is impossible; therefore, those individuals who believe that they can

rise above the structure of capitalist patriarchy and have romantic relationships of equality here and now are kidding themselves. Overthrowing capitalist patriarchy is a prerequisite for equality in gender relations. No amount of “correctness” on the part of individuals can make their relationships equal in the current context.

This is an unpopular position because people like to think they can have sexual relationships without being a part of the inequality between genders. People like to believe that their individual efforts can be heroic enough to overcome gender inequality.

The former MIM ally writes off my position as the “class equality thing” and believes that this is somehow separate from “personal power in a romantic relationship.” This is an example of individualist thinking that must be overcome for revolution to succeed and patriarchy to be abolished. Where does “personal power” come from? Is it a coincidence that men usually have more “personal power” than women in relationships? Is it a coincidence that my critic talks about girlfriends, but not boyfriends, doing the clerical work, cooking, cleaning and coffee-fetching? Of course not. These are not personal issues. They are group issues, and not just economic group issues. Despite romance culture brainwashing to the contrary, romance is not an issue of individual emotions but of what choices the social structure will allow.

Does this mean that MC5 sanctions giving women the job of making coffee for men in MIM? No, only that equality is impossible under capitalist patriarchy.

This negative statement has caused critics some concern, yet it is not equivalent to saying that women will be chained to their beds without food until the revolution. Within capitalist patriarchy there is more equality than under many other forms of patriarchy.

It is MC5’s opinion that comrades should be held to the highest standards possible under capitalism, standards with support from structures that exist within capitalism. For example, there is already considerable opposition among women, especially younger women, to being housewives without careers. The material basis for eliminating the role of women as domestic task workers already exists.

Right now there is a struggle going on in households across Amerika to distribute the chores more evenly between men and women.

In order to take account of struggles for equality that are possible under capitalist patriarchy, MC5 would like to add the following to the section called policy in the MIM Theory article in issue 35 [Ed. note: See “Romance, Gender and the Party,” *Policy*, this issue.]:

- While inequality in romantic relationships is currently inevitable, MIM comrades struggle for the highest degree of equality possible within the current capitalist context. For example, ideologically advanced people in two-career relationships in the United States seek and actually carry out equal shares of various menial kinds of labor in domestic and political life. MIM comrades will also carry out these most advanced practices that are demonstrated possible under capitalism.
- MIM also recognizes that it is possible to seek equality in current day-to-day life in such a way as to set back the cause of equality between the genders, namely when there is no structural support within capitalist patriarchy for eliminating the inequality in question. For example, free love is the long-range goal of many communists. The ideal of free love fits a society with no property relationships and hence less or no jealousy in romantic relationships. Pursuit of free love in capitalist society, however, will result in damaged feelings and disproportionately hurts women because of the power of men in the current context.

Another example is the pursuit of various equalities in romantic relationships that cannot exist yet—race, class, age, education and political experience to name a few. To require sameness between two people on these questions is out of the question on the group level no matter what efforts MIM cadres make.

- To dissolve romantic relationships that come into existence because of a political value requiring equality in these areas would have two consequences..
 - First, it would not affect equality unless the result is that both people then seek an asexual lifestyle because the people in question would

simply go on to other relationships, which on average would still be unequal.

- Second, to dissolve a relationship because of such inequality is to provide an ideological excuse for engaging in shallow, selfish and brief relationships, something men are particularly inclined to because of their material position.

Other consequences of pursuing equality where there is no material basis for that equality can be mental illness, isolation and hence repression by the patriarchy and the promotion of reformist and individualist ways of thinking that set back the cause of real gender equality.

- Within MIM as an organization, men should not use their romantic relationships to manipulate women into doing menial political or domestic work.
- On a structural level, MIM will support any reform within capitalism that might possibly mitigate the inequality between men and women— comparable worth, the ERA, laws against rape in marriage, legal judgements allowing wives to kill their batterers, etc. MIM cadres will uphold the most advanced laws that exist in the United States in their personal practices.

Discrimination will be defined as any oppression enacted by men against women that is recognized as illegal by the most advanced city, state or federal laws or any oppression enacted by men against women that does not exist in the most advanced relationships between men and women in comparable situations.

- *(MIM will seek to build a program and day-to-day practice that clarifies the meaning of the above, particularly what is “advanced” and what is not.)*

On romantic criteria

One subject that comes up again and again in MIM circles is what do we find attractive in terms of sex? In particular, to what extent should political criteria define what we find beautiful?

This comrade supports those of us strong and clear enough to say that sex does not matter to human relationships. There is no end to the amount of love that can

be dedicated to the international proletariat, and no limit to the love that will be reciprocated by that class which constitutes most of the people in the world.

Those of us who have worked in political struggles know that working with other people, talking with other people and serving other people is indeed a high. When we get a high from politics work, we glimpse the possibilities of loving the entire people.

The asexual leader happily dedicated to revolution deserves the greatest admiration. On the other hand, those motivated by guilt in asexual service to the people will be unhappy in their dedication to the revolution and may burn out.

It is perhaps a sign of selfishness to seek individual romantic relationships. Yet MC5 does not care to advocate a policy requiring asexuality of comrades. There is little structural support within capitalism for an asexual lifestyle and to demand it of comrades would be counterproductive.

Those romantics among us should make contributions to the revolution to the best of our ability. Yet, those of us without some political criteria in mate selection are probably missing something somewhere.

Attraction and Politics

A related subject is the power of ideas. Those of us attracted to people with well-thought out ideas can be making a mistake.

From the professor's point of view, what is going on? Surely, professors would not want students to accept or dismiss their views merely because of their power in grading and giving recommendations. Likewise, a romance sparked by the love of authority is not worth much.

It is important for students and everyone else to think for themselves and evaluate ideas independently of who utters them. This is especially clear when romance and thinking intertwine. This power exerts attraction the same way money does.

In this society, those with money usually deserve no special awe. Intellectuals may or may not be right, but they deserve no respect independent of a critical evaluation. The ideas of intellectuals should be evaluated independently of who espouses them.

Revolutionaries, and having children

Having children is a similar question for revolutionaries as the one of having romance. In MC5's opinion having children is selfish on the part of revolutionaries.

Many people say that raising a child is the ultimate in giving to the world. After all, a parent has greater control of the environment of a child, than over the U.S. political situation. Perhaps a child raised by politically advanced parents is more likely to come out advanced than a child raised by backward parents.

In this comrade's book, this is bogus individualist thinking, similar to that behind those doing charity work at the expense of enacting wider political change. What stands out is the illusion of control in highly individual circumstances, as in the case of people seeking to correct social inequality through their own romances.

Indeed, there is nothing to say that the children of revolutionaries will be revolutionaries. Mao and the Gang of Four explicitly repudiated this line during the Cultural Revolution, although both Mao and Marx had children. In fact, it was the children of the capitalist-roaders who promoted this "hereditary redness" theory so that they could avoid service to the revolution by claiming automatic political purity.

Neither the genes nor environment provided by revolutionaries guarantees anything about a child raised by revolutionaries. The child will face many of the same social pressures to become a Reaganite as anyone else.

The whole line of having children to better the world also smacks of genetic fallacies. How many of those progressive parents seeking to better the world through having children adopt someone else's child, a child who may starve otherwise? What about donating money that would otherwise go into raising children to a cause

like saving the Eritrean children who have faced famine and military attacks by both U.S. and Soviet imperialist-backed regimes?

When it comes down to it, many parents and would-be parents view children as their property— something to please them, something they can mold in very controlled circumstances. The property view is behind the desire to have someone created with their genes in them. This child then carries on the family property into future generations.

Question for readers: is there a material basis for wanting to have children? Is it structurally necessary? Is it too much to ask revolutionaries to do without having more children or is it the duty of revolutionaries to do without children if they have the option?

Then there is the question of why one child deserves so much attention. No parent can possibly dedicate as much time to saving each of the hundreds of millions of children on the Earth from nuclear war and improving their environment as they spend arranging the environment of their own children.

The only justification for exerting such efforts on behalf of one child or a handful of children boils down to selfishness and property. All the children of this world deserve equally to live in a world without imperialism and war, without starvation, homelessness and unnecessary disease, and with an environment conducive to personal growth and humanity.

What do you think?

9.16 Might Agree with the RCP?

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 42, June 1990 —

Dear MIM:

I feel that the RCP, USA's criticisms of radical feminism in the Revolution article on homosexuality and women's oppression is applicable to MacKinnon.

[Signed,]

A foreign comrade

MC5 Replies:

The bullshit published by the RCP on homosexuality MIM reviewed in a previous issue. MIM's position is that all forms of sexuality are conditioned by the decadence of imperialism. Sometimes the RCP sounds the same as MIM on this question, but the RCP's practice is to deny homosexual people membership while accepting heterosexual members. Any position other than MIM's on this question is both effectively Liberal reformism—the RCP implies that heterosexuals can be reformed in the party, while gays and lesbians can't—and a watering down of the importance of the Cultural Revolution and the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union.

MIM's man:woman ratio.

Would it compromise MIM security to reveal the ratio of women to men (in the party) (in the cadres)?

[Signed],

Lotus Blossom

May 1990

MC5 Replies:

What if the ratio of male to female party members was 10 to 1? Does anyone have any suggestions? What if it was 1.5 to 1? What about 1 to 10? How would the suggestions differ? MIM would love to hear about this one.

This can be said, however: there are a number of young women who fit into a pattern of disempowerment in relation to preparing for revolution. Women come to the party as art history, science, literary theory, journalism, cultural criticism, religion and foreign language experts, but often, especially younger women, end up saying they “do not know enough” to be Maoists or revolutionary activists. Even when asked as experts in their fields, they do not respond to the challenge of revolutionary work.

This is a message for young women. The real issue is not whether you have a Ph.D. or a million dollars. (Even some of these women seem disempowered.) The issue is who would be better in state power, you or the imperialists?

All people, and especially women, are trained to say they don’t know that much about politics. It makes it easier for a small oppressor group to run things.

Not surprisingly, people learn things from trying to obtain and exercise power as well. When women say they “don’t know enough,” it’s only one more step to give up trying because they “don’t know enough” anyway and can’t possibly obtain the power that men can and do hold.

9.17 Longtime Coming—Too Little, Too Late

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 44, September 1990 —

Movie Review: *Longtime Companion*

In the case of a gay person’s obituary, when the newspapers acknowledge the existence of a lover in that person’s life, the tasteful euphemism generally applied to the survivor is “longtime companion.” Hollywood took a stab at “the gay issue” with a summer blockbuster of this title.

The purpose of the movie is to illuminate in a sympathetic light the collective experience of a community who for the last nine years has dealt with AIDS in an immediate, personal and all-consuming manner. It also intends to involve the

audience in the emotional and psychological reactions of that community. The movie purposely relies on its subject alone to constitute its politics. In other words, if you make a movie in which gay people are portrayed as human beings worthy of sympathy then you have made a political movie. As far as it goes this humanism is an OK thing, but covering a political subject in a psychological manner inevitably fails.

Assuming you did want the only movie made about AIDS to focus on the rich, white male sector of the gay population, *Longtime Companion* disappoints with stale dialogue and empty characters played by actors who (with a few notable exceptions) can't act. The plot is entirely predictable from the first minute. MIM would not fault a movie for these flaws alone (except as constructive criticism), if it espoused a more correct political line.

But marketed as progressive, or even progressive "for Hollywood," *Longtime Companion* has some implicitly reactionary messages. One is, gay people are victims who deserve understanding and pity for their helplessness; there is no answer to the AIDS crisis other than passive acceptance of a terrible fate. Also, by choosing wealthy, white imperialist men as the gay community of focus the movie effectively ignores, or silences, the people who have suffered the most from the disease and the activism that has surrounded this issue since the crisis hit.

Of course this group has suffered immensely, but what about those who have no access to healthcare at all? Much less the luxury of dying at home with a paid servant, as one character so poignantly does in the film. While ignoring the thousands of Black and Latino people who have been affected by the combined attack of narcotics and AIDS, this film doesn't even choose to discuss those white gay activists who have brought the political realities of AIDS to the attention of the world, through relatively large-scale protests and civil disobedience campaigns.

Privileged economic status enabled the group of friends in the film to escape a good deal of the daily oppression faced by gay men and lesbians in this society, by simply isolating themselves socially in country clubs, condominiums and exclusive resort beaches. For a blockbuster movie—in many ways seeking to define public reaction

to homophobia on a large scale—this limited portrayal of real-life oppression is especially dangerous.

9.18 Marriage as Slavery?

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 43, August 1990 —

Dear MIM:

Just rereading MIM Notes 37 where MC5 asks, “is marriage revolutionary, counterrevolutionary or neither?”

Marriage is so the pediatrician, diaper service, stroller retailer, and bottle companies know where to send the bills. Marriage is a system of slavery or semi-slavery for women (and children).

Amerika is in a transformation period, from rotting capitalist empire into revolution and socialism/communism where women will finally be free of the patriarchy. No one will wear wedding rings anymore; the badge of slavery is antiquity. Women will cease to be chattels and will have equality and power, which they will have fought for and won with revolutionary comrades.

In Mao’s China great gains were made for women. In the present USA there is a lot of lip service pro-woman, but the proof of the pudding is shown in the plight of single women and mothers, lack of affordable day care and pay inequality—all imposed within the context of impossible Madison Avenue standards of “glamour” to enrich the profiteers as women run themselves ragged to snag a male provider as the only way to survive impossible odds.

So it seems that marriage is counterrevolutionary under that definition. To carry this one step further with another of MC5’s ideas, it may well also be counterrevolutionary to have children in the present U.S. system. Perhaps, as MC5 suggests, comrades should be asexual and concentrate on freedom from capitalism and patriarchy before having children anymore.

Which brings us to another question dear to MC5's heart, should all men have vasectomies after one ejaculation into a sperm bank for future procreation? Why not begin with MIM, now? Let MIM be revolutionary in deed as well as word and theory.

Then we must say that accidents do happen and what would be the process if a child were conceived? Right there we begin community day care in a communal and cooperative project—setting an example.

So now the question is, are those ideas practical, feasible and according to Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought?

[Signed],

Lotus Blossom

April 1990

MC5 Replies:

In this regard I rather doubt I have the party's backing, but in my opinion, to say that marriage under capitalism is slavery is not the same thing as saying that MIM should favor people's dissolving marriages in the current context.

Within the system of capitalism, marriage has seen an accelerated dissolution in recent decades. Most of this brittleness in marital relations has not come with a liberation of women but in fact an increase in their oppression reflecting the decadence of imperialism. Particularly in oppressed communities, marriage as a stronger institution would play a progressive role. Problems such as malnourished children, children and mothers increasingly on welfare and drugs all at least partly relate to the raw assertion of male, anti-marriage self-interest in the economic conditions of recent decades.

Having said that, I still believe in the long-range communist goal of abolishing marriage. Above all else, I agree with the writer that none of these problems will be really resolved without revolution.

9.19 MIM for Monogamy

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 50, March 1991 —

MIM's analysis of gender relations under capitalism is the basis for our practice, and one of the practices MIM advocates, for both party members and non-party members, is engaging only in monogamous sexual relationships, if they are going to engage in sexual relationships at all.

Though she is not a Marxist or a communist in practice, MIM subscribes to Catherine MacKinnon's theory that gender equality is impossible under capitalism. Under capitalism and the patriarchy, men as a group have more power than women. That power has a material base: men have more money than women. They also wield state power. Heterosexual relations are therefore power relations, and in romantic/sexual relationships, power becomes eroticized. Men are socialized to enjoy subordinating women, women are socialized to desire their subordination. Sex itself is defined by the context of the power relations in which it takes place; sex equals dominance under capitalism.

Given this analysis, the only way under capitalism for women to avoid being oppressed in their sexual relationships and for men to avoid oppressing women is to be asexual. However, there is little structural support within capitalism for an asexual lifestyle. To demand it of comrades would be unproductive, and would likely make hypocrites out of us. Non-members would probably have a harder time with asexuality, as they would not even have the structure of the party to support them.

The party advocates monogamy as the next best thing to asexuality, given the conditions under which romantic relationships take place in our society. By monogamy, MIM means forever monogamy: once you enter into a sexual relationship, you should expect to stay in it forever. Of course, MIM does not advocate keeping monogamous couples together if the relationship is destructively abusive. And

this is not to say that MIM is against dating. But once a relationship has been established, it ought to be permanent.

Some complain that this does not allow for people who just stop liking each other. But the party believes that subjective tastes are molded by material factors, and it is men who will, far more often, decide they “just don’t like” someone anymore, when it is materially convenient for them to move on. Similarly, women’s socialized tendency to eroticize power may make them decide they don’t like the partner they are with when another, more powerful man comes along.

Monogamy is the practice which best minimizes the effects of the patriarchy in the context of romantic relationships. Men’s interest in not sharing their wealth with women, and therefore not sustaining relationships with any commitment, is reflected in the consistent increase in the number of U.S. households headed by single women. This puts women at an even greater material disadvantage. Additionally, a recent study by the Center for Disease Control found that infant mortality rates are higher for the children of single mothers than for those born to married women in the United States.

These trends show that women at this time are more economically secure in monogamous relationships than in a system of “free love” or in serial monogamy. Upper class white women have tended to oppose this policy, largely because they are the privileged few who may have the same economic mobility as men, and therefore want the “freedom to choose” serial monogamy with several different men. But this is a freedom that few can afford.

Another important reason the party advocates monogamy for its cadres is to guarantee the stability of the party. We are taught from an early age to play power games with sex that often incite anger and hurt between sexual partners and their associates. The Black Panther Party was plagued by problems arising from conflicts over romantic relationships, as were the Weather Underground and Students for a Democratic Society.

For women to be liberated and sex to take place in a context of gender equality, women must seize state power through a socialist revolution. History has shown

that successful revolutions have always been lead by a vanguard party. To ensure the party's survival, then, MIM mandates monogamy so that it doesn't fall apart over sex-power games.

MIM recognizes that monogamy is difficult given people's socialization. For this reason, MIM has set up structures within the party that help to maintain monogamous relationships, working in the material interests of women and the practical interests of the Party. But, recognizing the need for these structures, MIM also acknowledges that monogamous practice for those not in a party is even more difficult.

Under communism, sex will have a wholly different meaning. Perhaps "free love" without exploitation will actually be possible. But until then, monogamy is the form of sexual relations that best minimizes the gender inequalities created by the capitalist patriarchy.

9.20 A Cultural Revolution to End Patriarchy

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 50, March 1991 —

"What's in it for us?" many women (justifiably) demand to know when asked to fight for a socialist revolution. What's to guarantee socialism won't just be the same old male dominance in a different form?

With men's economic power over women stripped from them, the structure of the family reorganized, and production based on need, not profit (no one "needs" the subordination of women, although it is extremely profitable under capitalism), women as a group have more power in society and control over their own lives than they have ever had under systems of private property ownership.

Maoists believe that in addition to eradicating the material basis for sexism, a cultural revolution is also necessary to erase the stereotypes and socialized tendencies to degrade and subordinate women. Although there is not enough space here to

fully outline the process by which patriarchy will be eliminated under socialism, China under Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party was the closest a society has ever come to liberating women and serves as a good historical model.

The first major law passed after the communists took power in 1949 was the Marriage Law. This legislation had been formulated and reformulated since 1931, and was finally made state law on May 1, 1950. The law banned concubinage, bigamy, child betrothal, giving or receiving of gifts or money in connection with marriage, and interference with the remarriage of widows. The minimum marriage age for women was raised from 16 to 18. Divorce was by mutual consent and available to either partner through an application to the courts. Men could not apply for divorce if their wives were pregnant or the couple had children under one year of age. Women retained all the property they owned before they entered the marriage.(2)

Of the 21,433 divorce cases reported in China in 1951, 76.6% of them were initiated by women.(3)

What distinguishes these divorces from bourgeois divorces in the West, divorces which MIM struggles against, maintaining that right now the most progressive situation for women is asexuality or a monogamous relationship? The party granted divorces if it was determined that the reasons for the request were anti-feudal in nature. The party was not allowing men to trade in old women for new but it was allowing women to leave marriages which were abusive.

During and immediately after the Great Leap Forward in 1957, masses of women entered the industrial work force. Structural conditions such as on-site childcare in most factories, and community dining rooms to take care of cooking chores, made it possible for women to break through their traditional roles. By 1975, women composed 20-30% of the workforce in rural industry. In Lin County of Henan, up to 40% of the workers in industry were women.(4) The labor productivity of women outside the home increased an estimated 30% in Henan Province.(5) Abortion and contraception were made free during those years, and in some cities women were afforded time off from work after an abortion.(6)

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Chinese Communist Party sponsored ideological campaigns such as the “Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius Campaign,” which sought to destroy sexist ideas about the family, motherhood and female subordination to men. Elisabeth Croll, who travelled extensively in China during the Cultural Revolution, said that the campaign was:

... the most concentrated and analytical attempt to date to integrate the redefinition of the female role into a nationwide effort to change the self-image and expectations of men and women and combine a consciousness of both women’s and class interests. Through a nationwide study programme the campaign has aimed to identify and trace the origins and development of the ideology responsible for the oppression of women, and identify, criticize, and discredit the remaining influence of the traditional ruling ideology.(7)

Women were organized into Marxist–Leninist study groups. The party encouraged men to stay home and take care of the children to enable the women to study in peace.(6) The number of women heading the party and government grew steadily throughout the Cultural Revolution, although it has significantly declined since the restoration of capitalism in 1976.(8)

Traditional images of women in advertising were banned during the Cultural Revolution. No longer portrayed in their relationship to men, women were shown in their relationship to the country and the revolution.(9)

The Cultural Revolution addresses the important and valuable concern that feminist would-be communists have, which is that there will still be sexist ideology after the revolution—even though the profit motive has been eliminated. This is true. But the conclusion to that shouldn’t be “no revolution,” but rather a revolution led by a Maoist party which understands the dialectical relationship between the mode of production and culture.

Notes:

1. *Fundamentals of Political Economy*, People's Republic of China, 1974
2. Delia Davin, *Woman Work*, p. 84.
3. Ruth Sidel, *Women and Child Care in China*, p. 22.
4. Phyllis Andors, p. 167.
5. Elisabeth Croll, *The Family Rice Bowl: Food and the Domestic Economy in China*, London: Zed Books, 1983.
6. Sidel, p. 58.
7. Elisabeth Croll cited in Rita Helling, "Women in China," in *China in Transition: Where to Next?*, South Australia: Adelaide Anti-Imperialist Study Group, 1979, p. 42.
8. Beijing Review, March 7-13, 1988, p. 25.
9. Sidel, p. 40.

9.21 Cops Crack Down on Gays

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 45, October 1990 —

The cops wore camouflage and carried special video equipment able to record in the darkness of the secluded woods in this small midwestern town. They dug trenches a short distance away from the sycamore tree, they took cover in them and they waited. It was the evening of June 12, the end of a two and one-half month surveillance operation involving three police departments and the Lenawee County sheriff's department. It was not a drug seizure. It was not an organized crime bust. The goal of the operation, of all of the elaborate preparations, of all the time and money spent on the stakeout, was to arrest some gay men for having sex. The operation was successful.

Close to 300 demonstrators marched in Adrian, Michigan in September to protest the arrests of the 17 gay men arrested and charged that night with gross indecency between males. One of the defendants was sentenced to 40-60 months in prison by a judge who openly condemns homosexuality. Organized by the Adrian 17

Defense Committee and endorsed by 13 local and national organizations, the demonstration's demands included dropping all charges against the 17 men and repealing the state's sodomy and gross indecency laws. Members of the Adrian Christian Complex shouting ("*Get out of our town! We don't want your kind here!*") met the demonstrators at the courthouse.

The Adrian arrests are but one example of typical police behavior toward gay men and lesbians. A similar incident took place in San Francisco in June, when police arrested 70 gays during a raid of a well-known gay meeting place.(1)

At an April anti-ROTC demonstration at the University of Wisconsin, police wore rubber gloves as they arrested students who were occupying a university building (the implication being that people demonstrating against ROTC's discriminatory practices against lesbians and gays must have AIDS). Two Wisconsin police officers are currently being prosecuted for beating up a man while they were off duty because they thought he was gay.(2)

The U.S. government has unleashed other weapons besides its police force on gays and lesbians. In a July 24 memo not intended for public disclosure, the U.S. Navy announced a campaign to "root out" lesbians from its ranks.(3) The memo warned the recipients that it might be hard, since some lesbians were "top professionals" who are "willing to put in long hours."

And in yet another forum of government repression, Bush Supreme Court nominee David H. Souter may very well become one of the most dangerous weapons against gay and lesbian rights. Though Republicans and Democrats alike are trying to pass Souter off as a "blank slate," a "loose cannon," Souter has a record of upholding discrimination against gays and lesbians. In May 1987, Souter voted to uphold the constitutionality of a bill before the state legislature prohibiting anyone who had ever engaged in a homosexual act from adopting a child or serving as a foster parent, on the basis that a gay parent would be a bad role model.(4)

Agents of the state are not the only group openly persecuting gays and lesbians. Violent crimes against gay men and lesbians are on the rise nationwide.(5) In the first five months of 1989, bias crime against lesbians and gays had risen 122%. At

the end of the year there were a total of 7,000 documented incidents of violence and harassment against gays and lesbians in the United States.(6)

All over the country, chapters of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP), Queer Nation and other gay rights groups are staging protests against this sort of violence, while trying to challenge discriminatory laws and demand more government attention to the AIDS crisis. On June 16, an anti-bias march in New York City organized by Queer Nation drew over 1,000 demonstrators.(6) Anti-ROTC demonstrations are on the rise, spurred by the Department of Defense's recent refusal to change its policy of discrimination against homosexuals. And lesbian and gay rights activists continue to lobby in several cities—Minneapolis/St. Paul and San Francisco recently—for cohabitation ordinances which would allow gay and lesbian couples to be given the same rights as married couples such as health insurance coverage.(2)

MIM supports the reforms gay activists are demanding, but is skeptical of the apparent integrationist ideology behind some of the struggles. Gays and lesbians are oppressed in large part because capitalist society depends on the rigid definitions of sex, gender and family to maintain its current structure.

Sexual freedom is not possible in the current sexist and heterosexist American culture. Although gay and lesbian rights may ultimately be able to be reformed into the system, getting ordinances passed and sympathetic politicians elected takes much time and work, and often fails. (Only eight cities have domestic partner ordinances, and only 70 places in the U.S., including cities, states and counties, have implicit gay rights measures). Gay liberation, with the liberation of all oppressed people, is a necessary goal of socialist revolution. Having experienced the high degree of state repression and the lack of effectiveness of reformist efforts, MIM encourages gays and lesbians to take up the cause of the international proletariat with their own struggle.

Notes:

1. The Advocate 9/11/90.

2. Heartland 10/90.
3. New York Times 9/2/90.
4. New York Times 9/11/90.
5. New York Times 9/3/90.
6. The Village Voice 8/8/90.

9.22 Is Monogamy the Best Practice for Lesbians and Gays?

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 51, April 1991 —

In MIM Notes 50, gender was discussed in terms of the best practice for those in relationships. MIM argues that heterosexual practice requires monogamy.

Due to the nature of the patriarchy those reasons are not as simply applied to gay and lesbian relationships. Men having more money and power than women manifests itself in a more complicated and subtle manner. But this is no reason to discount the practice of monogamy in homosexual relationships. The following analysis deals with lesbians with the understanding that this applies to gay men and bisexuals as well.

MIM's theory on power inequality in relationships is as applicable to lesbian relationships as it is to heterosexual ones. Capitalism socializes women to enjoy subordination and men to enjoy power. If this socialization did not extend into all relationships then lesbians would be right in advocating separatism as a utopian solution to the problems of the patriarchy. But if it did not extend into the lives of lesbians there would be no lesbian battering, an unfortunately all-too-frequent occurrence.

The argument that men as a group are more powerful than women does not apply here, but it is clear that power differences are pervasive in every type of relationship. Lesbian relationships have not escaped corruption by patriarchal, heterosexual society. Lesbian battering does not just happen between women of different income

brackets. The power of age, race, experience, and actions can all contribute to a dominant role in a relationship. Even between two women who appear externally equal, there is no escape from the socialization that teaches each of them to eroticize power and to enjoy subordination.

Physical, material, and psychological abuse are not going to end under capitalism. The system is teaching, and in fact necessitates, these practices. But with this understanding it is still important to build the best possible practice in relationships. This practice must force people to recognize their socialization and question the reasons they are in a relationship before it becomes destructive to themselves or their partner. The option of running away impedes this process.

By advocating a forever monogamous practice MIM hopes to force people to recognize the problem with power inherent to relationships. The effects of this power cannot be eliminated, but they can be reduced by reducing the potential for abuse.

One response to this is that the potential for abuse is in fact increased because people in abusive relationships are forced to stay and this is even more destructive than the one-night (or one-week) stand syndrome. It is important to point out that MIM does not support people staying in relationships that are destructive to either partner.

The freedom to choose “serial monogamy” does not afford freedom in any relationship when it translates into a freedom to abuse power over your partner by beginning and ending relationships at your convenience regardless of the needs of your partner.

The final question that needs to be addressed with respect to lesbian relationships is that of culture. Many argue that there is a separate lesbian counterculture that is challenging the patriarchy and MIM is threatening its existence with its policy of monogamy. The existence of this culture is a legitimate claim, but the point must be contended on the question of the foundation of this culture. If it exists out of a reliance on a sexual practice that encourages power games and exploitation of

power, then the value of the culture as truly counter to that which is created by the patriarchy must be questioned.

9.23 Monogamy Debated

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 51, April 1991 —

This letter from a friend of MIM was edited for space and broken into separate arguments; we hope the original arguments were preserved. MIM's responses, by MC17, follow each argument.

MIM Associate: Monogamy is the standard that is expected and enforced (at least for women) by the “mainstream” society. By this fact alone, something is probably wrong with it.

MIM: This is not an argument. Drugs are also illegal in mainstream society. Is it then wrong for us to make a rule against drug use by Party members?

MA: Monogamy is a “negative” approach to the problem. It tries only to minimize damages to members and to the Party as a whole, based on narrow assumptions about women, men and the world. It doesn't allow for different situations, possibilities, or more creative solutions. By taking a more “positive” attitude, we might improve people's lives by change and forward motion, rather than just trying to “hold our ground” and keep things from getting even worse.

MIM: What are the narrow assumptions? Is MIM wrong to assume that power plays a role in all relationships? That in heterosexual relationships men overall are more powerful than women? It would be a victory if we could “hold our ground” and stop any more abuse of women.

MA: It seems that the main goal of this Party is to act as a strong support-system and an organized network of encouragement in the face of our daily inundation by capitalism's socialization ... the Party is supposed to combat and confront mainstream

values and propaganda, thereby sustaining us in the face of this overwhelmingly bourgeois moral structure.

MIM: MIM's main goal is to overthrow the state, not to act as a support group for its members. MIM combats mainstream values by promoting our own—the mainstream does not attempt to make policies that equalize power in relationships and confront sexist power dynamics. MIM does.

MA: If this Party wants to be a disciplined organization of dedicated and strong people, it needs to provide attitudinal support for its members. Women need to be empowered, not protected; men need to understand where their male power comes from and eliminate that behavior which gains for them these male privileges. Women also need to eliminate their behaviors which encourage their own victimization.

MIM: Male power is a structural problem in our society, not an individual or psychological one. Understanding where their power comes from does not make it possible for men to eliminate it. Only structures can combat structures. One of these male behaviors is “serial monogamy” or polygamy. MIM's monogamy policy would eliminate that behavior, behavior which disempowers women.

MA: The Party needs an atmosphere supportive of women, where we can talk freely and feel safe and strong. MIM is indirectly telling women that they're just too stupid and weak (because of capitalist society's influence) to protect themselves, so we'll do it for them.

MIM: MIM isn't saying women are stupid and weak. MIM is saying that capitalism objectively subordinates women and we want to structurally minimize the effects of this so women will be able to work more effectively.

MA: Mainstream monogamy mostly applies only to women because men still have less to lose by “cheating.” Men can do whatever they want, as usual, because as a group they have the economic means to be “free” (to sleep around), and men derive power from this freedom.

MIM: Exactly, which is why we don't advocate mainstream monogamy, but, rather, MIM advocates forever monogamy for both partners.

MA: The institution of prostitution, rape, female genital mutilation, sterilization abuse, inaccessible birth control and abortion, and women's low-paying or unpaid labor all exist either to enforce monogamy or because of it. The toleration of a dangerous "outside" world (full of rape, pimps, drugs, etc.) rationalizes women's need for safety within the "nuclear family." This reality keeps women afraid and powerless.

MIM: A large part of this powerlessness comes from the women's enforced dependency on men who, being more economically mobile and less stigmatized, are free to leave at any time. MIM's rule forces responsibility on men.

MA: Would single mothers be better off if the father of their children had stuck around? Not necessarily.

MIM: Why not? Economically they would be—except the few privileged women who can support themselves and their children, but not the vast number of economically dependent women living in poverty because men left them alone.

MA: Even if "forever monogamy" might apply to lesbian and gay relationships ... bisexuals obviously cannot exist in any way. Sexuality only comes in one flavor; you have to decide what gender you want to love and you only get one chance, so you better pick the right one.

MIM: Is this an endorsement of the definition of bisexuals that says they only exist if they are sleeping with both a man and a woman at the same time?

MA: Power is eroticized. Men are taught to subordinate women and women are taught to like their own subordination, even to desire it. Monogamy cannot defend women from male power, violence and sex. People are attracted to each other based on their attitudes and tastes, which like everything else are originally shaped by mainstream standards (of "sexy," "successful," etc.). If the Party agrees that "subjective tastes" shaped by capitalist values cause us to suddenly not like our

partner anymore, are not these same tastes the ones which make us like that person in the first place? It seems contradictory to try to minimize the damage from some of our “subjective tastes” while letting other tastes run rampant, instead of trying to combat our destructive values by changing our most basic attitudes about relationships.

MIM: We try to minimize the damage from all of our subjective tastes. Subjectivity is used as power when a person randomly decides to leave a relationship because they no longer “like” their partner. Monogamy cannot defend anyone absolutely against power, but MIM hopes to reduce the effects of its abuse.

MA: The Party needs to be safe from disruptions from within. Other vanguard parties which failed to confront sexuality and relationships were ultimately destroyed by these factors. Although it is admirable that this Party agrees that confrontation is necessary, the monogamy rule may be an over-reaction.

MIM: Then propose another solution.

MA: Sexuality is such an intrinsic part of being human that I find it offensive to even mention the possibility of no sex. Would we consider eliminating other basic elements of our lives? Food, sleep, play? Maybe we will for the revolution, but we’re obviously not there yet. Therefore, our sacrifices today must be worthwhile and carefully thought-out so we don’t waste our limited time and energy.

MIM: Sex is not a biological need. Asexual people do not die from not having sex. We may not be having a revolution yet, but it is a waste of time and energy to allow the Party to be destroyed by power games in relationships by its members. So yes, it is a necessary and carefully thought-out sacrifice for today.

9.24 Challenge Compulsory Heterosexuality

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 52, May 1991 —

Comrades,

Your viewpoint on gender most intrigues me, particularly your very progressive attitude towards the queer nation—especially bisexuals. Your very bi-friendly position is unique, and your pro-gay views are remarkably different from most so-called Marxist organizations with the RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party) being a case in point.

I write to you troubled, however, by your position on monogamy—not because I dispute your notion of “forever monogamy” being among the “less” oppressive options available to wimmin—but because I believe we must work towards creating structures that can enable wimmin to live with and love themselves.

*Female friendship, as described in the book *A Passion for Friends* by Janice Raymond is, in my view, the very definition of feminism. To borrow Mary Daly’s words, it is essential for wimmin to “Remember” their “Selves,” and see through the lies, in order to challenge the phallogocentric empire successfully.*

If you will accept Ann Ferguson’s assertion that capitalism and patriarchy constitute dual systems that often, but not always, reinforce each other, you will see that, while patriarchy pre-dates capitalism, and capitalism is a patriarchal construct, we cannot honestly challenge patriarchy within a capitalist society. Lesbian-feminists, however, do not advocate a capitalist society. Capitalism is correctly viewed as a stumbling block undermining the struggle against patriarchy. Not a diversion as such, it must be destroyed, not ignored, if sexual constructs established through violence are to be dismantled—to free the path towards female friendship.

This does not repudiate a continual effort to work for female friendship. On the contrary, wimmin will not successfully challenge patriarchal systems within a post-revolutionary state without an established “wimmin’s community.”

This community, more than anything else that I have to date witnessed, has the resources available to wimmin who choose to leave the privileges afforded them by heterosexual relationships. Obviously, most wimmin will not have access to these resources so long as we live under capitalism,

but no post-revolutionary state—aiming to end all oppressions—can afford to dismiss Lesbian-feminism because of that. If such a state intends to smash patriarchy, the state will remove all impediments remaining to female friendship, abolishing compulsory heterosexuality—which reinforces gender roles.

Your prescription of “monogamy” does not challenge either gender roles or the myth of heterosexuality—a construct that cannot exist but through violence. Rather, you seem to discourage efforts at expanding the wimmin’s community—deeming it a diversion from the battle against capitalism.

I find this upsetting—that MIM will not work at present point in time to challenge compulsory heterosexuality. The facts are that most relationships, period, are quite abusive—but I believe such abuse is more prevalent in heterosexual relationships, and other relationships based on a patriarchal model. We do have minds, and an essential belief in a biophilic self, obscured by ties.

[Unsigned]

9.25 Gender and Revolution

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 50, March 1991 —

Every day 4,800 women are battered in the United States.(1) Every day, 300 U.S. women are raped.(2) Every day, more and more mothers are left to feed and clothe their children without the father’s financial assistance, a condition which significantly reduces the child’s chance of survival.(3) Every day, millions of women in the Third World go hungry, die from lack of medical care, or go to work for multinational corporations that pay them a few cents an hour—just enough so they can live and come to work the next day. Every day, capitalists make enormous profits by marketing women’s bodies as products to be bought and sold, as tools to help sell cars and cigarettes and hundreds of other consumer goods. Every day, in countless ways, women are subordinated and degraded and disempowered because in our current capitalist world system, gender is an inequality of power.(5)

And every day thousands of people who are horrified at the massive violence sized at women all over the world, and angry at the lack of control women have over their own lives, have worked to improve the position of women in the world. But despite the enormous effort that has gone into fighting for women's empowerment, the condition of women has only gotten worse. Reforms have failed to make the world a more just and equal place for women. **Decades after the beginning of the First World women's movement, more women are raped, more women are battered, and more women are poor than ever before.**(6)

MIM's goal as a revolutionary party is to end the power of all groups over other groups. The party sees ending the subordination of women as an urgent priority. But we see it as one that cannot be realized by working within the structure of the capitalist system because capitalism thrives on the subordination of women and acts to perpetuate it. The only way to end the oppression of women is to fundamentally transform the economic, social, political and cultural basis of the capitalist world system through a socialist revolution.

Under capitalism, production is based on profit, and the subordination of women is profitable. Until it is made unprofitable women will continue to be subordinated. This material basis for women's oppression, re-enforced by a capitalist-run culture industry which consistently pumps out movies, songs, TV shows and other cultural forms that legitimize women's lack of power in society, will never be reformed away. Yet partly because women are socialized not to desire power (in fact, women are socialized to enjoy their own subordination), many women are drawn to working on reforms that do not get at the root of the problem.

Women are taught that they can only make a difference on a personal level—helping individuals and educating people on “women's issues” is allowed and even encouraged, because such actions do not threaten the structure that keeps women economically and politically disempowered. If women are to have real power over their lives, they must seize state power and reorganize society. “Women's issues” are all the issues involved in overthrowing the system that keeps some groups oppressed by other groups, and the best way to work for the sweeping changes necessary to liberate all oppressed groups is through a vanguard party that addresses all of those issues.

Notes:

1. FBI statistics cited in Cynthia Gillespie, *Justifiable Homicide: Battered Women, Self-Defence, and the Law*, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1989, p. 12.
2. U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1990.
3. Ann Arbor News, 8/3/90.
4. Catherine A. MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 8.
5. Robert L. Hamptan, Ricard J. Gelles, and John W. Harrop, "Is Violence in Black Families Increasing? A Comparison of 1975 and 1985 National Survey Rates," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 51, November 1989, pp. 969-980; U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1990.
6. U.S. Statistical Abstract, 1990.

9.26 Marital Rape in China

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 53, June 1991 —

A Chinese farmer recently received a six-year prison term for raping his wife in 1988.

This conviction parallels the creation of laws in the United States against rape of women by their husbands. In both countries this idea is quite controversial with actual convictions rare.

However, in China it is quite possible that a combination of reactionary steps backward is at work in causing the rape situation to begin with. Since the restoration of capitalism in China in 1976, rape has skyrocketed. (See *The Political Economy of Counterrevolution in China*, available from MIM.)(2)

Divorce is also skyrocketing in a country where divorce used to be very rare. In some sense divorce can reflect a positive move away from the arranged marriages of China's feudal past still haunting the countryside.

On the other hand, in this case the woman left her husband six days after the wedding. What causes a marriage to last six days and result in divorce?

In China's countryside there has been a resurgence of outright female slavery and borderline slavery through bride exchanges since the restoration of capitalism. Whereas before such monetary elements in marriage were strictly regulated to make marriage a modest affair, today China's peasantry spends large portions of its income buying and selling wives, literally or semi-literally.

It is within the context of reactionary marriage customs in the Chinese countryside that such a brittle marriage and rape occurred.

Notes:

1. UPI in China News Digest 4/22/91.
2. Naturally, this book is no longer available from MIM; it can be found on MIM(Prisons) website here:
<http://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/country/china/pecc88/index.html>

9.27 NO Means YES Confuses Liberals

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 54, July 1991 —

Thanks to the usual lack of originality in the U.S. media, there was a wave of copy cat features on the issue of rape in June.

The June 3 issue of Time magazine featured date rape as its cover story. In typical capitalist sales-come-first fashion, Time put a woman in tight clothing on the cover to portray a rape victim.

Of greater concern in the publicity is that anti-rape centers across the country are often led by well-meaning, but inept, liberal feminists who are easily made to appear either dishonest or removed from reality by reactionaries. One example is the simplistic discussion of the slogan “no means no.” As far as communists are concerned, “no should mean no.”

However, anti-rape activists often take “no means no” as a real representation of the factual situation of women. The argument is that men are prone to sexual aggression but women are a reservoir of sexual clarity and values. (Perhaps this is another version of biology as destiny.)

While this may be true in some cases, women as a group do not fit into this ideal. Thanks to simplistic sloganeering and a lack of real concern for the issues, some pseudo-feminists have set up the anti-rape movement for a big fall.

Across the country, conservatives are on the offensive on this issue. Included in their ammunition are two studies of over 1,000 women in Texas. Forty percent of these women admitted that they said “no” when they meant “yes.”(*1)

If liberal feminists across the country had been prepared with the correct theoretical weapons, the conservatives would not be making such great hay [*Ed. note: making the best of an opportunity, making hay*] right now. As with the abortion issue, liberal feminists find themselves on the defensive. Once the right gets done with the pro-choice movement, it is going to move in on the sexual assault and rape centers, even more than it has already.

The studies of women in Texas are actually great proof of how messed-up gender relations really are, but liberal feminists are missing the chance to make that point. **What they really show is that love and power are so closely intertwined that language itself is corrupted into a doublespeak: women lie and men use force. That’s what our great culture of “freedom” is all about.**

Part of the problem is outdated values which say women should not be aggressive in seeking sex and should only participate reluctantly, so they say “no” when they mean “yes.”

In any case, as long as men have any power over women as a group, there will be a gap between the women’s subjective wishes and their reality.

What the feminists could bring home about reality is that “no means yes,” but also “yes means no.” One feminist trying to defend “no means no” says:

What kind of man wants to sleep with a woman who doesn’t want to sleep with him?(*2)

What she misses is that until men and women are equal economically, militarily and politically, every “yes” is coerced. Right now, the value of “yes” from a woman regarding sex is about as good as the “yes” from a slave who says s/he wants to go pick the cotton now.

Ironically, by focussing on what a woman “wants,” liberal feminists end up taking a blame-the-victim approach. The conservatives simply come back and say:

There it is: 40% want to be coerced into sex over the objections of their “no.”

What the liberal feminists and conservatives share is Liberalism, a philosophy which focuses on the individuals desires and freedoms. Ultimately, Liberalism and feminism are incompatible because women are oppressed as a group, not just as individuals.

One of the reasons Liberalism and feminism get mixed together in such unfortunate ways is that the system profits from implementing reforms that appear to help women. With government and university grants for rape prevention, and local

government resources to prosecute rapists, anti-rape activists often end up fixating on individual cases while losing sight of the overall picture. They get co-opted.

In the charade of the courts—which cannot solve gender inequality—lawyers and feminists have to argue that their clients said “no” and meant “no.” The court does not decide based on the oppression of women as a group. The court only decides about one individual at a time. The system makes impossible a communist approach of considering the oppression of women as a group.

[Ed. note: MIM neglected to number above, the sources listed below. We’ve made our best guess above by marking appropriate parts of the text with an asterisk and a number, but this may not be correct.]

Notes:

1. Detroit News 6/2/91, p. 1.
2. USA Today, 6/11/91, p. 1.

9.28 *Thelma & Louise is Close*

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 54, July 1991 —

Thelma & Louise

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1991

Thelma & Louise is a fun movie about women in which, for once, the fun is not embodied in the rape, mutilation, or even stupidity of the two women leads. The film also sends some powerful messages about sex: what it means to women and what they can do about it. The film makes clear that when women are raped or assaulted (battered or divorced, fired or harassed, etc.) they are just as victimized by the courts as they are by their assailants.

Most of the men in the movie come off as utter morons. Thelma's husband, and only source of income, is a beautiful example of what economically dependent women deal with just to get food and shelter. The man who rapes Thelma outside a bar is a jerk from the start, and uncompromisingly so. Best of all, even though Thelma and Louise may appear interested in men once or twice temporarily, when it comes down to it they don't hang around to get treated like dirt.

The movie takes Hollywood a huge leap forward in recognizing rape as a sexual experience rather than solely an act of violence, the line many pseudo-feminists promote. When Thelma is raped, everything in the pick-up scene leading up to it is sexual, Louise lets Thelma and the audience know that the law—in its response to rape victims—shows no understanding of the intimacy between sex and rape. If the courts detect the slightest “attraction” for the rapist on the part of the victim, then no kind of evidence is going to help the victim's case against rape.

But seeing Thelma “finally get laid properly” and love it weakens any solid analysis of rape and its role in the way women have sex. Though the film condemns the social constructs that encourage rape, it also perpetuates the implicit claim that MIM is so wary of: that “good” sex is any compensation for what sex really means, and that rape is violence, not sex.

In the current reality of sexuality, gender defines a power relationship; sexual desire and relations are based on the eroticization of domination and submission. Rape, as it is recognized, is an extreme but integrated part of sexual experience—the gender relationship. Sexuality occurs within the confines of gender; sex cannot be ungendered. Because gender defines them both, it is impossible to neatly distinguish between experiences of what is called “sex” and what is called “rape.” *Thelma & Louise* is worth seeing in spite of the liberal analysis of rape. Keeping misogyny to a minimum in Hollywood is a commendable feat.

9.29 Madonna Dares to Exploit the Subordination of Women for Personal Gain

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 54, July 1991 —

Truth or Dare

Miramax, 1991

Madonna carries her own objectification to new extremes in *Truth or Dare*, her latest (successful) attempt to cash in on capitalist culture's unlimited appetite for pornography. The film follows Madonna on- and off-stage during a concert tour, echoing the theme she has embodied since her rise to stardom with *Like a Virgin*: sex is liberating.

Idolized by 14-year-old girls all over Amerika and the imperialist world, Madonna's message is doubly deceptive. By appearing to flaunt her disregard for society's sexual codes (wearing underwear in public, hinting at bisexuality, giving head to a bottle on screen), Madonna gets credit for being subversive of mainstream values. But the ideology she conveys in her songs and acting serves to enforce those values.

Women cannot achieve power through sex, or exert power in sexual relations, as Madonna would have her admirers believe—but building up the illusion that they can may indeed help forestall their search for real liberation.

Truth or Dare aims to perpetuate the cult Madonna has built around herself, glorifying her life on- and off-stage to the point where whatever she does takes on a distorted significance and value—a good capitalist ploy otherwise known as commodity fetishism, and one that will no doubt augment her future profits.

9.30 Spike: YES to Monogamy

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 54, July 1991 —

Jungle Fever

Universal, 1991

Writer/director/actor Spike Lee jumps back onto MIM's turf with his newest film. *Jungle Fever*, which has been widely hyped as tackling interracial sexual relations, about a rich Black architect from Harlem who has an affair with his white temp secretary from Bensonhurst. His wife finds out and his whole life, kid, etc., are flushed down the drain.

While part of the film centers on the difficulty of the Black-white thing, its realistic portrayal of male interest—an ability to screw around with any available woman—makes for a more powerful statement than the trials and tribulations of interracial dating.

On the way, Lee slams religion, takes a tour de force of life with crack and holds a pow-wow amongst Black women. In the film's best scene, the women denounce the class interest of Black men who succeed in a capitalist world, and the racist Amerikan society—where one-quarter of all brothers are in jail, prison or on probation—that makes their success so unlikely. Just more support for MIM's position that monogamy is the only “romantic” structure that can unify people in this decadent capitalist world.

9.31 TV with a Pro-Gay Image?

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 61, Feb. 1992 —

The Canadian Radio Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) banned any radio or television depiction of lesbians and gay men that could be construed as abusive and pornographic.⁽¹⁾

The move followed a complaint from a Toronto man after Vision TV, a Hamilton, Ontario station, broadcast a fundamentalist Christian program that claimed AIDS

was a punishment from god, and that homosexuality is a sin that cries out to heaven for vengeance.

Individuals violating the new regulation can be fined up to \$20,000 (Canadian) for a first offense and \$50,000 for repeat offenses. Corporations can be fined up to \$250,000 for a first offense and \$500,000 for a second.

As revolutionary feminists, we recognize the destructive power of pornography and its role in the oppression of heterosexual women, gay men, lesbians and children. As in China during the Cultural Revolution, we seek to ban all degrading images of women in the marketplace. Those who share our goal: do not be fooled by this seemingly progressive legislation.

These bans are based on notions of morality, obscenity, or at best “women’s empowerment.” We have to ask ourselves, what is—and what is not being banned here? Beer or cola or car advertisements which portray women solely in relation to men or as objects are not deemed “pornographic” by this new bill. By defining pornography in this very narrow, moral way, legislators (and complicit “feminists”) are protecting and approving the pornography of everyday life.

Just as MIM refuses to accept the distinction between “good sex” and rape under capitalist patriarchy, we will not accept the reactionary distinctions between pornography as it is being defined here, and good old-fashioned business.

Note: Gazette: For Lesbians and Gay Men in Atlantic Canada, December 1991, p. 14.

REPRODUCTION

9.32 Sterilize all Men!

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 36, March 1989 —

Having accepted the scientific truth that human life starts at birth and having accepted that ending that life is unacceptable morally-speaking as the New Right proclaims, MC5 proposes the sterilization of all men. This is the only way to ensure that abortion does not occur, even in cases of rape or incest.

Sterilize all men: we have the technology. It is a simple office operation. Every male upon reaching a certain age will put a lifetime's supply of sperm in a sperm bank and then have his tubes tied for the good of humanity.

Sterilize all men: the Ten Commandments outlaw murder, not artificial insemination.

Sterilize all men: this would be a much less controversial way to resolve the abortion issue once and for all—no back alley abortions, no court fights and no lengthy political mobilization pitting feminists against born-again Christians.

Sterilize all men: murder in the womb will never happen again under any morally difficult circumstances—rape, incest, etc.

Sterilize all men: the anti-abortionists who do not support this solution reveal their hypocrisy and the truth of every leftist and feminist criticism about the real motives for opposing choice—namely to put women in their place by keeping them home raising kids and not risking too much sex.

Sterilize all men: in a few years it may be too late. Already France has a birth control pill that automatically aborts the fetus or non-fetus every month in a way that makes it impossible to tell if an abortion happened.

Comrade anti-abortionists: the time is now! Sterilize all men before it is too late!

9.33 Sterilize all Men: Response

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 37, April 1989 —

Dear MIM:

The suggestion to sterilize all males makes me shudder. Does someone there hate males? What do the MIM males think of this? Must study this more. I have often had the wild idea of returning men to the status of sex use and breeders only in a colony run by females, but that is a nice exploratory fantasy only.

[Signed,]

Former ally in [the] South

March, 1989

MC5 Replies

I maintain that sterilizing all men would be better than banning abortion—both more thorough (preventing pregnancies from rape and incest) and more enforceable (given new birth control technologies that will make abortion impossible to detect some day, not to mention the coathanger in the current context). For those who did not read the last issue, this is possible because it is possible to refrigerate the sperm of men before they are sterilized. Men can then have children later through artificial insemination.

Those who oppose abortion and do not favor sterilizing all men are hypocrites. They clearly just want to put women in their place and aren't serious about preventing abortion.

They find nothing wrong with advocating the control of women's lives—their sex lives, their decision when to raise kids, their careers and even their option to live or die—but they think it's a joke when someone suggest that men undergo a simple physician's office operation that takes less than an hour.

A lot of people have asked MIM if it is serious about sterilizing all men. Yet, the real question is what the people want. If the people want to prevent abortions they should favor free and accessible birth control, sex education in schools, the development of birth control technology (especially for men) and the distribution of what technology already exists. If this is not enough, they should support the sterilization of all men, not the control of women.

People who think that sterilizing all men is a ridiculous idea should realize that banning abortion is even more ludicrous.

9.34 Roe vs. Wade is Not Feminism: Power Struggle Not Privacy

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 37, April 1989 —

On April 9 [1989], there will be a rally to defend abortion expected to draw at least 100,000 people in Washington D.C. MIM is of the opinion that the failure of the pro-choice movement up to this point is largely a result of its acceptance of the terms of a bourgeois, patriarchal debate. This debate turns off millions of people who should be mobilized to support the practice of abortion.

The Supreme Court's *Roe vs. Wade* decision was never a solid basis on which to defend the practice of abortion. It held that a woman's "right to privacy" outweighed the "rights" of the fetus. This has allowed pro-lifers to portray pro-choice people as selfish sex-crazed, money-grubbers who don't care about the family or so-called murder.

Courts cited that same distinction between public and private to stop federal funding of abortions by poor women in the *Harris vs. McRae* (1981) decision. (See Catherine MacKinnon's *Feminism Unmodified* for more on the weakness of the *Roe vs. Wade* legal reasoning.)

When restricted to the U.S. Constitution, which 18th century white, male slave-owning landlords wrote, it is not surprising that the Supreme Court justices could not come up with a very good argument to support abortion.

The language of rights obscures what is going on in real life—a power struggle, partly between men and women and partly between two contending visions of the Amerikan family. To defend the practice of abortion, it is important to stop pretending that a piece of paper interpreted by the ruling class, some abstract right or some God-given value is going to protect women wishing to have an abortion. Only political struggle will ensure the practice of abortion.

In this political struggle, MIM believes it is important to show how abortion fits in with a view of the family for the 1990s. First, the pro-lifers are wrong to believe that women will ever voluntarily return to the home from their careers. Instead of dragging women back to the 1950s, people wishing to strengthen the family should support requiring employers to give husbands and wives jobs together. Under socialism there is no reason that the state would not ensure that a husband and wife could obtain jobs in the same locality. People's lives are more important than profits.

Socialism would also eliminate unemployment in the first place. Unemployment causes extreme stress in family life. It is proven to cause mental illness, suicide and divorce. Naturally unemployed people struggling to survive themselves cannot support families.

Instead of asking women to return home to their traditional role of raising children, pro-family people should face reality and support childcare.

Instead of withholding information about birth control in the hopes that women will not have sex except within the traditional family and only for procreation, birth control should be free. This will help curtail AIDS transmission, prevent teenage abortions and remove stress from the lives of two-career couples who cannot afford to take care of children.

Abortion itself helps two-career couples to stay together. When people are struggling in their jobs, often to make ends meet or to keep from becoming unemployed or separated by job transfers, couples need to be able to control when they have children just in order to stay together. This will help couples provide better for children when they do have children.

Another policy that would relieve stress on two-career couples would be for employers to give paid maternity and paternity leave. Then career-minded people could have children with fewer competitive fears from the job. They would also have a little breathing room to arrange their lives to have children.

The average marriage now lasts only seven years. Three out of five marriages end in approximately five years and the trend is toward even more brittle marriages. Pro-family people should come up with solutions to help people have less brittle marriages. Clearly the old values and old solutions no longer work.

The power struggle over abortion is also between men and women. Men may find it easy to support *Roe vs. Wade* because it upholds the patriarchal power structure. Implicit in basing women's right to abortion on their right to privacy is the false assumption that privacy is empowering to women. In fact protecting most women's "privacy" also means protecting male supremacy and domination. In the old vision of marriage and the family, men had the decision-making power because women were economically dependent on them. Sex and labor were exchanged for economic security. Enabling women to have real control over their bodies is a goal worth struggling for, but for most women that goal has yet to be attained. With women still making only 64 cents for every dollar that men make, privatizing abortion means allowing men to retain their economic and sexual control over women's choices. In order for abortion to be liberating for women it must be separated from the nonexistent ideals of privacy and autonomy.

By arguing one abstract concept of rights against another, pro-choice people set back their cause. What needs to be done is to show the public that pro-lifers are out of touch with reality.

The public generally has no strong feelings about murder of fetuses vs. privacy. The public does know that people arguing to send women back home are out of touch. People need the income and women want the right to a career. To take women out of the economy now would wreck the economy.

It is impossible for pro-lifers to re-establish old values that are not in line with the times. Capitalism with its profit-motive undercuts the incentives to have child-care, maternity leave and jobs for men and women both. Only a socialist future is fully consistent with allowing people to have stable families and equality for women.

9.35 Abortion “Rights” and Free Speech

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 53, June 1991 —

The Supreme Court delivered another attack on access to abortion on May 23 when it ruled that federally funded “family planning” clinics can no longer give their clients advice about abortion. The decision (*Rust v. Sullivan*) continues along the path of *Harris v. McRae* (1981), which held that the government has no obligation to fund abortions, even if they are legal.

Prior to the decision, federally funded clinics were already banned from giving abortions. This system never provided the necessary health care for pregnant women. But this decision forces about 4,000 clinics to stop mentioning abortion or lose most of their funding. At least 4 million of the women served in the clinics are defined as poor by the government, and one-third of them are adolescents.⁽¹⁾

The decision is first and foremost an attack on poor women. As a threat to doctors, its effects are at most slight.

Major liberal pro-choice groups are challenging the decision and proposing new legislation based on the court’s abridgement of doctors’ free speech (and the women’s right to hear free speech), and the professional standards of medicine.

In the most literal sense, the clinic doctors' right to speak about abortion is being curtailed. This ruling prevents the doctors from being true to their professional edict of discussing health problems openly with their patients. But what is being defended here? Doctors' speech and ethics are the tools the (male) medical profession uses to maintain its grip on medicine as an industry.

It is absurd to defend these rights in the case of publicly funded clinics because so much of the medical industry's mission has been to limit access to medical care. Medical advances are geared toward justifying the most expensive, technology-intensive treatments with the highest profit margins, and away from providing the basic medical treatment millions of people in this country have no access to—including, of course, abortion.

The liberals are responding to an attack on a small percentage of doctors by defending a tradition of denying health care to the poor in the name of ethics. This is more icing on the cake of profits the medical industry could well do without. These same so-called ethics institutionalize the worst side of capitalism—the reaping of profits from the sale of basic needs without regard to the well-being of the people.

The most narrow definition of speech—the one used here in the case of doctors—denies the real attack on women's lives and power. Denying rich professionals the physical act of speaking a few phrases is considered antithetical to the great American restrict for freedom. But forcing women and children to live in poverty and desperation, denying them the ability and means to express and represent themselves effectively—a crime far worse than the infringement on doctors—is the widely accepted practice of a market economy and could not be considered more true to human rights.

Understandably, pro-choice groups are desperately attempting to stop the roll-back of access to abortion. But refusing to consider the role of economic oppression in the abortion question has all along played into the anti-choice strategy, which has viciously attacked abortion from the bottom up. Even when abortion was illegal, it was accessible to rich women.

Privacy Versus Rights

The much-revered *Roe v. Wade* decision never gave anyone the *right* to an abortion, it only said women must be permitted to make the decision on abortion *privately*. It was a defense not of abortion, but of privacy rights, which are the quintessential property of the upper classes and men. Privacy rights are of little value to the economically oppressed, especially women, whose little privacy is legally considered the property of their men. In many states, the legal system does not consider a husband forcing sex upon his wife rape. What value is there in defending this concept of privacy?

Relying on privacy from state intervention ignores the relationship—the partnership—between public and private spheres in class society. The private sphere is not free for women. But the law says it won't invade the (heterosexual) bedroom—a policing job that is left up to men.

Privacy “rights” are the same rights that protect battering, marital rape and the extraction of women's domestic labor.

The big lie of the *Roe v. Wade* decision was that if government stayed out of the private sphere a woman's freedom of choice would be protected. The result of this doctrine—carried to its logical conclusion—is the same situation for women as before: privileged women get rights.

By liberal reasoning, if everything but one option is blocked, individuals can still call what's left “free will.”

The new decision is no more than the continuation of the *Roe v. Wade* legal reasoning. The law is not fair. People who want to argue that the fascists of the Court misinterpreted the law are living in a liberal dream world.

When abortion is illegal, only the rich can get abortions. The current use of *Roe v. Wade* is already putting abortion out of reach for poor women. Protecting *Roe v. Wade* does not equal protecting the rights of women—but defending men's rights to control women in privacy.

As long as the movement to defend access to abortions refuses to confront the structural support for the oppression of women, the movement will remain an agent of women of the upper classes. And it will be forced forever deeper into the hole of defensive legislative battles and isolation from the reality of life for the majority of women in this country, not to mention the rest of the world.

Note: New York Times 5/24/91, pp. 1, 12.

9.36 Silicone Breast Implants

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 61, Feb. 1992 —

Last month, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) effectively banned the sale of silicone gel breast implants in the United States. The FDA wants to decide whether the “public health need” for the implants outweighs new information on the medical risks associated with them.⁽²⁾ The two main problems with the implants are that they can hide tumors otherwise detected by mammograms, and silicone often leaks from the implants, migrating to other parts of the body, and possibly causing an inflammatory disease.

The “public health need” for breast implants in Amerika is apparently defined as women’s desire to fit sex-object stereotypes, and men’s desire to have women look a certain way. The researchers who first developed the implants in 1962⁽⁷⁾ described it this way:

In a time when increasing emphasis is placed upon the female breast in fashion, movies, advertising, and personal affairs, it is not surprising that many women are unhappy with small or flabby breasts and become interested in augmentation.⁽⁶⁾

The discussion of the “need” for breast implants and the debate over women’s “right” to have this surgery reveal the decadence of the First World. Here capital-

ist/patriarchal socialization dictates health decisions, so that appearance becomes all-important and safety is not the issue.

Surprise! Dow says Silicone is Safe

Internal documents from Dow Corning suggest that the company was long aware of the health risks of silicone, but failed to do critical safety tests, and began using the implants in women before the first results from animal tests were even reported.(3)(1)

In December 1991, a California woman with an arthritis-like autoimmune disease won \$7.3 million in court—the jury said Dow Corning failed to disclose the risks of silicone breast implants.(1) This case probably opens the door for many similar lawsuits.

“Dow Corning and the plastic surgeons have conducted a massive experiment on women under the guise of selling a commercial product,” said Thomas Talcott, who quit Dow Corning in 1976, in what he called a protest of the company’s safety practices.(1)

Between one and two million U.S. women have received breast implants since they were developed in the 1960s.(4) About 20% of the implants are for reconstruction after cancer surgery. The remaining 80% are for breast enlargements.(1) This statistic is significant because it shows that the majority of women who use the implants are getting cosmetic surgery, with no prior cancer-related surgery. Yet it is a false distinction—between cosmetic and “medical” use. The reconstructive use of implants— following mastectomy—is cosmetic as well.

Silicone’s Sordid History

Following World War II, silicone was injected directly into the breasts of Japanese women who worked as prostitutes. Japanese cosmetologists realized that the prostitutes’ clients, Amerikan soldiers, preferred women with larger breasts. It wasn’t enough to nuke Japan and rape its people—the Amerikans also forced their prostitutes to fit the U.S. standard of beauty.

American plastic surgeons followed the trend, and during the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. women also suffered the consequences of these injections: drifting bits of silicone causing problems in the abdomen, chest, arms and back—and if it got into the lungs, it could cause death. Direct silicone injections are technically illegal today in the United States.(7)

Although today's implants are considerably safer—with a rubbery silicone envelope surrounding the silicone gel—the leaks and ruptures which still occur pose a serious health threat. But some U.S. women and doctors think that the socialized “need” for ideal breasts, is a “right” which must be defended—to the death.

The same culture which dictates that some women enlarge their breasts says that all women must have breasts, even when their breasts are no longer functional. It is the decadent socialization of capitalism and patriarchy which labels women freaks who have had breasts removed for their health.

Hazards of Using Silicone

Several studies have found that breast cancer patients with silicone implants do not discover their illness until their cancers are five to six times the volume of those usually found by mammograms in women without implants.(3)

The implants can also leak silicone into the body—possibly causing scleroderma, an arthritis-like autoimmune disease.(1)(7) In 1976, doctors complained to Dow Corning that women were experiencing severe inflammatory reactions from the implants,(1) as well as silicone leaking into many organs, including the spleen, liver, and bone marrow.(3)

As early as 1967, scientific studies documented that gel implants leaked a lot of silicone and ruptured in about 16% of cases. This evidence was presented to the FDA in 1978 by a California plastic surgeon, with a request that the implants be taken off the market until proven safe. But the FDA declined.(3)

Warning labels say that formation of stiff scar tissue, know as capsular contracture, can be caused by the implants.(1) But the many other complications—some known, some untested but suspected—have not been disclosed.

Alternatives to Silicone

Alternatives, like saline-filled silicone implants, have been available since 1967, but have not been very popular. Saline allows better X-ray images and is not dangerous if it leaks, but the implants rupture 20% more often than silicone and many plastic surgeons say the silicone implants “feel more natural” than saline.(3)

Peanut oil implants, which are still being developed, might also be safer than silicone.(3) The *best* alternative, of course, is to avoid all implants and breast reconstruction entirely. A good “self-image” should not come from your looks, but from your actions.

Notes:

1. New York Times 1/13/92, p. 1.
2. NYT 1/14/92, p.1
3. NYT 1/15/92, p. 9.
4. NYT 1/16/92, p. 13.
5. Vasconez, L., Lejour, M., Gambo-Bobadilla, M., *Atlas of Breast Reconstruction*, J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia, 1991.
6. Lemperle, G., Jürg, N., *Plastic and Reconstructive Breast Surgery*, Springer-Verlag, Germany, 1991.
7. NYT 1/18/92, p. 1.

MOVEMENT POLEMICS

9.37 Pseudo-Feminism: A New Assertion of Femininity

Self-labeled feminist socialist Nancy Fraser identifies and criticizes a gender role—to protect or be protected—in her discussion of J. Habermas. To give an example of the role of protection, which MIM has not discussed yet, Fraser mentions laws protecting biological women workers from threats to their reproductive capacities. The implication is that ordinarily workers' conditions do not receive such attention, but the role of protector falls on the patriarchy even at work.

The view of women as in need of men's protection underlies access not just to the means of destruction, but also [to] the means of production—witness all the “protective” legislation that has surrounded women's access to the workplaces—and [to] the means of reproduction[—witness] women's status as wives and sexual partners.(1)

The protection role specific to gendered interactions also explains why oppressed nationality women can even accuse white nation imperialists of rape in First World courts. They won't often win, but when they do (mostly because First World men found the accused to be threatening to the average First World man) the message is still that women get protection from the patriarchy, even across “races.” And the First World enjoys this kind of sexual message. The First World imperialists could find other ways of putting away men that threaten themselves, but they prefer this method. That's gender.

Activities that are biologically male dominated tend to prescribe this role of needing protection for biological women. This includes politics and even scientific discussions such as these. Such protection serves to enhance sexual pleasure among men and biological women. The First World would get bored without difference between men and biological women going, so they play various games.

To vary their pleasures in the sexually privileged First World, the men divide into various groups. Heterosexually-speaking, there are biological men and biological

women. Biological men have the contradictory role of aggression and protecting. Biological women have the contradictory role of being protected and drawing the lines. Biological women who do not draw the line in Amerikan culture are thought to be diminishing the fun by being too direct, but if they overdraw the line then they are threatening and not passive enough. It's a "fucked if you do, and fucked if you don't" situation. But regardless, this society will find a way to enjoy its gender roles no matter what—as Anna Hill and William Kennedy Smith rape trial TV ratings indicate. There is no Liberal escape of actually changing gender roles in the current society.

Amerikan gender relations have the kind of confusion that could only arise in a society of fulltime advertisers, pornographers and movie-makers straining every nerve to come up with ways to vary their sexual pleasures. The Third World people who don't live such a parasitic life look on all this with contempt—this moralizing "crisis," which always happens to enrich someone's pockets and capture hours of spell-bound attention.

The Material Basis for Subjectivism in the Women's Movement

This section was inspired by Fraser's further examples of protection as a gender role and Duchén's book on France. I think they help sum up the history of revolutionary struggle in the First World since the 1960s.

In the 1960s, a million students and several million Blacks proclaimed their desire for revolution according to polls.(4) Why couldn't they have it? Neither white nation labor nor white nation women wanted it, both for material reasons. Of the two potentially decisive allies, white nation labor didn't budge. MIM has been ranting about this since 1987.

In contrast with white nation labor, white nation women moved, stirred both by their secondary oppression but also by their principal role as oppressor. So white nation women did move, but only to create a *new femininity* which coincidentally resulted in a new crackdown on the oppressed nationalities.

Historical View

In France, the contemporary women's movement formed in reaction to the Maoism and Trotskyism of 1968. Even subjective-experiential-feminism supporter Clare Duchon admits this.(5)

The cutting edge of the U.S. women's movement has been in reaction to predominantly male radicals since at least the 1960s. Those of us who read the BLK March, 1991 article, "Newton's Law: Historic Black Panther letter tries for coalition with black lesbians and gay men," remember that some gay and lesbian groups copied the Panther program. It's important to remember that Stonewall of 1969 was only after fifteen years of solid Black social movements.

People like Jill Johnston openly spoke of the "lesbian" nation. Within the settler left, women were forming caucuses and raising doubts that were to leave the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) descendants predominantly male.

Another feminist put it this way:

The early radical feminists as moral fellow-travelers of the anti-imperialist Black Movement within the United States, fully discovered their gender interests at the time the Black movement became separatist and bluntly told white friends to go make their own movements. Many New York Radical Women came from SNCC [*Ed. note: Student Nonviolent Co-ordinating Committee.*]; the first document (1965) of the entire nascent movement, published in *Liberation* by Casey Hayden and Margaret King, complained about sexism in Southern Black movement organizing.

There is nothing wrong with reacting to something, as long as that something is reactionary. However, as the BLK article details (without intending to), white women were reacting badly to the Black Panther Party (**BPP**). And it is not an issue of fault lying half with the BPP and half with white women who went on to

form their own subjectivist world-views that allowed them to work their “own” oppressions as central while ignoring those of the Third World and internal colonies.

The white nation women’s movement reaction to the Black liberation struggle and the settler left loyal to it (over half of SDS voted to view the BPP as the vanguard of the United States) resulted in the construction of a new femininity. The direct approach to power of the gun-toting BPP and other Black Power organizations profoundly affected First World women, who unconsciously set out to preserve gender roles which they sensed were threatened.

Neither the Black nor the women’s movement originated in the 1950s or 1960s. However, the new femininity created in the 1960s and still in force to this day preserved gender roles in a way unique to the struggles launched in the 1960s.

What were the salient features of this time period and the new feminine role?

1. The BPP and SDS say vanguard parties, disciplined organizations with hierarchy are necessary? Oh, well women need structureless consciousness-raising groups.
2. The BPP and SDS say class and nation are really closely tied together? Oh well, women’s oppression is separate.
3. The men say revolution and armed struggle is necessary? Oh, well virtually none of our women’s organizations advocate armed struggle.
4. Men say there is a science of revolution. Oh, well that is their male notion. We have separate meetings to discuss our feelings that protect us from male criticism—the Logos as Duchen says.

All of these positions bought into the socialization of women by the patriarchy.

The crucial aspects in which the women’s reaction bought into old feminine roles in new forms are:

1. Women cannot get power and use it well. Hence they don’t seek it like the male radicals do. Instead they focus on reform and charity work.
2. Women are emotional, not rational.

3. Women depend on their boyfriends and do not have their own reasoning processes, hence they must have separate organizations. If a woman commits to a disciplined organization it could only be on account of her boyfriend.
4. Women require expansive protection from rape, battering and bad working conditions.

Just doing the opposite of what the male radicals did is seen as asserting independence instead of reinforcing that traditional dependence and gender roles. And the new femininity was not satisfied with just doing the opposite of what the men wanted. New movements concerning battering and rape had to arise calling for protection from men by men. Thousands of new state-backed organizations formed across the country instilling various fears in women, fears requiring tough criminal law approaches and lots of protection.

Before it was done, the movement for a new femininity had eclipsed Maoism, as even some Maoist well-wishers admitted. Some male Maoists switched to pseudo-feminism. After all, hadn't the First World men just ceded vanguard leadership to Blacks? How could they tell First World women that they were wrong to go off and form their own separate movement based on feelings, structurelessness, etc.?

To be fair, the BPP and SDS were not ready to really take on white nation women on their turf. The reductionist Progressive Labor Party (**PLP**) made up about half the membership of SDS. The BPP had a mixed but unworked out, sometimes patriarchal line. Reductionism ruled and failed, giving added fuel to the flames of subjectivism and Liberalism in the white nation women's movement.

However, the principal blame for what was an inevitable leadership error lies not with the various predominantly male organizations that could have helped develop feminism. These organizations had it basically right: revolution is necessary to make change and liberals, including pseudo-feminists *are* hypocrites for partaking in what they cannot change but profess to hate.

Principally, it was the theorists of the First World women's movement, reacting to their boyfriends and brothers, who failed to do their share of revolutionary work; they created a worldview that *substituted* (much like revisionism) for the politics of

the BPP or SDS descendants. It was not a new worldview and ironically it was not a worldview that promoted women's autonomy. There was a BPP, a Young Lords and an SDS, but there was no Women's Panther Party persuading tens of millions of women to revolution. (The failure of the Redstockings to attract widespread support is the proof.) In fact, the partisans of the new femininity not only did not challenge the power structure, they attacked their sisters in SDS, the BPP and the "class struggle" tendency in France, as women fronting for men. They succeeded in persuading or demoralizing many women who would have been revolutionaries, but they failed to bring about change, even in the areas of rape and battering, where more women are victimized than ever.

The next time things heat up, MIM will not fail to take on the autonomous women's movement on its own turf. It is one thing to recognize the self-determination of Third World peoples. It is another thing to allow First World women to slip away into separatism or apolitical counterculture without confronting the principal contradiction and what it means for women's liberation.

The Historical Basis for Hope

Not all is bleak in the gender intersection of the First World. The experience of the women's movement is not lost on all its participants who know of or remember its history in relation to the male left.

In France, the split from the male left was voiced this way:

Women became angry at the disparity between male revolutionary speech and their behavior where women were concerned ... Men didn't seem to realise that the revolution starts at home and involves treating women—including "their" women—differently ... "The revolution that allows me to be me, to laugh and to think for myself—well, I've got to do it differently, and do it myself."(3)

Duchen cites childcare and chores as areas where revolutionary men failed women. One assumes that she means right now. In response, MIM does not support any

Maoists who did not do their share of chores. If a male comrade were making too much money for the party to do chores, MIM would have shared the work in order to free the woman for revolutionary activism. Otherwise, the party would expect equal division of chores, even under capitalism, and women can hold their men accountable through the party. It's Neanderthal to have to even raise the point, because no matter what society or restructuring, there are going to be chores and they must be divided. There should be a struggle over what chores are necessary, but not a struggle over the division of chores between men and women. Hopefully MIM is well-beyond the men of the 1960s, when it comes to chores, one of the few oppressions that it is possible to address right now.

As for childcare, the approach is not to have children in the first place, because children are a major commitment. Unlike chores—some of which have to be done no matter what—having children is a choice. Shifting the burden of childcare onto the party in a society not designed for raising children and doing work at the same time would be an unacceptable burden on the party. While children would definitely benefit from a collective child-rearing, they would not benefit enough for it to be worth it to the revolutionary cause. The cause right now requires that lots of people be trained right now for revolution, not raised over a period of 18 years.

The issues that the French autonomous feminists cited aside, it was never the revolutionaries who said that patriarchy would disappear one person at a time and without revolution. Call the revolutionary men domestically useless harassers, rapists and batterers who control the very laughter of women, but it was never the revolutionary men who said the system was great. It is the people who think change can come about individually who are the hypocrites.

Since the 1960s, women who had bad experiences with leftist men have gone autonomous. However, these women sometimes go on to see or have further bad experiences, this time with biological women. As fearless materialists, we Maoists recognize the silver lining of this cloud. The experience of women since the 1960s is a historical basis for getting the women's movement back on revolutionary track. The women of the 1960s and 1970s who discovered date rape and battering are now finding a pattern of lesbian rape and battering, even within the organizations and leaders of the women's movements. People are just beginning to realize that

even in its most oppressive forms, the patriarchy cannot be escaped in daily life under the current structure. The autonomous reformers can't reform themselves. In the 1990s, MIM will not let any young women go uninformed of how rape and battering have increased and how there is no oasis anywhere free of patriarchy. *All sex is rape. All child-care relationships are patriarchal.*

The women's movement now has something to compare: Its experiences with revolutionary men and its experiences with countercultural but apolitical separatist women. Like any other group of people, both revolutionary men and separatist women have unreformable elements of patriarchy, and realizing that is a major step toward revolutionary consciousness.

Notes:

1. Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989, pp. 126-7.
2. Tiresias, "Feminism Tries to Ignore its Marital Relationship in the House of Empire," *Green Mountain Quarterly*, no. 2, February 1976, p. 44.
3. Clare Duchon, *Feminism in France: From May '68 to Mitterand*, London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1986, p. 8.
4. See Philip Foner, ed., *The Black Panthers Speak*, Lippincott: New York, 1970. Introduction.
5. See Duchon, the section called "The Theories."

9.38 Redstockings: Maoist Feminists of the 1960s

Review of *Feminist Revolution* by Redstockings

The Redstockings were at least part of the original vanguard of radical feminism in the United States. Their work started in the late 1960s and it consciously owed its ideas to the Black Liberation movement. The dedication of the Redstockings book, *Feminist Revolution*, cites the Black men and women of the Black Liberation movement as having shown them how to get their own movement started.

MIM has a high degree of unity with the Redstockings: in many regards it is difficult to tell their line apart from our own line. The first two pages of the book refer to Mao Zedong and the need for a scientific approach to social change. MIM readers are not surprised by this, because they know that all the great movements of the late 1960s were led by Maoist organizations—the Black Panthers, Redstockings and SDS, for example.

There are so many similarities with MIM that MIM would have to say the Redstockings probably rate a 70% in our book. Some differences might be in the following areas:

1. While the book adopts much of the language and methods of vanguard parties, including most essentially a struggle for scientific truth, it is unclear what the Redstockings thought of the need for a vanguard party. On the other hand, it appears they may have regarded themselves as such.
2. The Redstockings lacked the correct political economic analysis of the white working class and believed that white working class men had hope because they could see through their own class exploitation and then hence the oppression of white nation women. (Even so, what they write about class is interesting because it details some history of women's intersection with the labor movement.)
3. The Redstockings leave unclear their final relationship to the "male left" that they often condemn but quote.
4. Their appreciation of China as a model is somewhat murky because the book in question does not sum up the history of the women's movement there and the lessons it holds for women in the United States. It appears toward the end of the book that the Redstockings have some vaguely specified criticism of the Chinese revolutionaries.

Despite these areas of criticism, readers will find that MIM has a high level of unity with the Redstockings.

Throughout the Redstockings book, there are references to how Chinese feminism is superior to liberal/left feminism in the United States. As development of line, the Redstockings' book is as worked out as any so-called Marxist-Leninist sect's work.

In fact, with their obvious connection to the Black struggle, the Redstockings still had some perspective on the interests of proletarian women and hence it reached many of the same conclusions MIM did 20 years later. For example, their article “The Male Supremacist Attack on Monogamy,” says that the line supporting free love (loose romantic attachments) “suggests that females can escape their oppression by males by exchanging their masters more frequently.”(1) This is clearly written and excellent thinking on men and women as groups as opposed to individuals. The Redstockings go on to say the only difference between the oppression of monogamy and the oppression of free love is that in free love the chances for building significant non-sexual parts of a relationship are less.

The Redstockings were also excellent in attacking the liberal sell-outs of feminism. They called Gloria Steinem a “CIA-agent” for her CIA spying at international women’s and socialist conferences. Furthermore, they thoroughly trashed Ms. magazine for the bullshit it was at the time. In fact, even today with Ms. magazine’s more serious rebirth under Robin Morgan, MIM discovers that Robin Morgan is not all that she is cracked up to be. Crucially, from our point of view, she supported a woman who informed on the Weather Underground, a group of focoist revolutionaries and semi-Maoists of the 1960s and 1970s.

Perhaps most important is the Redstockings’ insistence on a scientific approach—a stand that gets them in trouble with the liberals again and again. They slam psychology throughout the book. And having pioneered a consciousness-raising group they look at what they spawned in disgust:

In the beginning we had to fight the left and others who put down our consciousness-raising groups as therapy groups; unfortunately today the opportunists have perverted the original purpose of consciousness-raising until it is almost therapy. In many cases groups have become social gathering places where women get and give support for their immediate problems and try to “develop” themselves. Consciousness-raising for political action still goes on, of course, but among those who are in basic agreement that the purpose of consciousness-raising is for theory and action.(2)

Connected with this view of consciousness-raising as essential to the development of a theoretical understanding is the view that intellectual challenge is an essential part of women's empowerment.

There are those who even tried to revise sisterhood, again making it a means of control, and totally changing its meaning. For the record, the phrase "Sisterhood Is Powerful" was coined by Kathie Sarachild. As she herself said recently upon hearing the opening words to the Helen Reddy song, "I Am Woman," ("I am woman, hear me roar in numbers too big to ignore..."), "That's what sisterhood is powerful really meant!"

Today hardly anybody uses it that way. It has been changed from a means to power to a means to control women, to keep them worried about how they relate to each other—looking for approval again rather than figuring out what can be done to eliminate male supremacy. To challenge another woman's ideas is "unsisterly." Hogwash! The only way that we are ever going to achieve real sisterhood so that we can roar in numbers too big to ignore is to challenge other women's ideas by putting forth our own and pointing out where we think others are wrong and having them point out where we are wrong politically. The internal struggle of our movement makes the external struggle with the real enemy possible. It's not easy and it's not pleasant, but it is necessary.(2)

1. *Feminist Revolution*, New York: Random House, 1978, p. 128.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

9.39 Recent Roots of the MIM View

MIM's analysis of women's oppression is very rare in the United States today. Revolutionary feminism of the MIM kind seems so odd after the reactionary 1980s that it is often stifled with vehemence by those calling themselves feminists. Now that the Soviet bloc has clearly gone capitalist, it is much harder for the revisionists to squelch what was a once unpopular analysis—the Maoist one—that the Soviet Union was on the capitalist road.

When it comes to feminism though, the facts are in since the 1960s, but the Amerikan women's movement continues to lie to itself that it is possible to reform men. Men cannot be reformed, only revolutionized. No matter how much women rewrite the Ten Commandments, preach, get money from the state and "educate," only changing the organization of society through aimed revolution against established interests will enable the process of changing men (and also women) to begin.

This view is not totally without precedent, even though it is hardly existent since the 1980s. In the 1960s there was a revolutionary upsurge in which many feminists turned to Marxism. For example:

Interpersonal relations under present conditions are liberating only in so far as the participants recognize that freedom which they have gained must release their energies to unite in large collectivities for struggle against capitalism ... in common with Engels, we should not allow ourselves to think that the full realization of personal equality and love freely entered into will be possible under capitalism.(1)

Historically, there have been many revolutionary feminists in the United States who base themselves firmly in Engels's work on women. They consider gender as it connects to production relations.

MIM's line is different than the classic Marxist line on women, because MIM finds it useful to talk about gender not just in its connection to production but also in its own right. However, the quote from Grabiner and Cooper above provides a useful interpretation or development of Engels's thought.

By looking at gender as sometimes apart from class or nation, MIM does not mean to support the bourgeois, white feminist position that biology is destiny. In order to accomplish their own agenda, bourgeois white women call on all biological women as their sisters to support all their sisters, no matter what, and not to "invalidate" them or "sell them out."

By the early 1970s, some women were already beginning to see through this trick. MIM already distributes an essay by Joreen called the “Tyranny of Structurelessness,” which shows that bourgeois women and the patriarchy benefit from having women in informal and hence unaccountable organizations.

Ann Leffler, Dair L. Gillespie and Elinor Lerner Ratner developed this point as well by starting their essay this way:

This is not a sisterly essay. We believe the women’s movement is in danger of co-optation from the right, from small groups of women whose institutional affiliations give them disproportionate power within it. We believe academic women constitute one such group.(2)

Leffler et. al. go on to describe what the women’s movement was like then (and still generally is today):

Members of nascent political movements attack only external targets. Internally, despite differences—on intellectual, behavioral, and organizational questions—they mainly tolerate each other.(2)

As time goes on however, people start to realize that broad unity of all biological women is not real.

This tolerance no longer works once large-scale recruitment begins and opponents mobilize. Seeking support for their views, members notice that incompatible perspectives exist within the movement ... Myriad factions develop, propose new ideas, criticize those of other factions, in the process delineating their own and their antagonists’ politics.(2)

They generalize the problem this way:

Women's Liberation can no longer afford to ignore, under the policy of laissez-faire tolerance, the distribution of power within the movement, and the use to which that power is put in the movement's name.(2)

It was 1973 and some women were already saying that academic feminists were paid by the patriarchy and selling out the movement for liberation—but who was listening? In 1992, it is clear that women's studies departments and female academics in general do exert too much influence in the women's movement. The other even more odious source of co-optation is the state itself, which has pumped millions annually into anti-battering, anti-rape and other work which more rightly belongs to the independent forces of women's liberation.

MIM agrees with Leffler et. al. about the process that the women's movement has gone through. In this painful stage of faction fighting, MIM has decided that "the movement's name" should only be applied where the world's majority of women advance their cause. That majority is Third World women, women who are predominantly peasants and workers.

MIM attacks as pseudo-feminists all so-called feminisms that do not oppose imperialism, because it is U.S. imperialism backing the institutions that keep Third World women down. It is U.S. imperialism that is the main international prop of the status quo and reaction. Everywhere people try to change the existing order, the U.S. imperialists intervene to nip change in the bud.

Notes:

1. Virginia Engquist Grabiner and Lynn Barbara Cooper, "Towards a Theoretical Orientation for Understanding Sexism," *Insurgent Sociologist*, Fall 1973, pp. 12-3.
2. "Academic Feminists and the Women's Movement," *Insurgent Sociologist*, Fall 1973, p. 45.

9.40 Comments on Marlene Dixon's "Women in Class Struggle"

The transformation of the small group from its original political consciousness-raising function into a mechanism for social control and group therapy was a result of the predominantly middle-class character of Women's Liberation.(1)

Comment: Certainly the role of state funds and psychiatry has increased in the women's movement, since the days when it was a movement starting from the grassroots.

The fact that there were so few women in Women's Liberation who were directly experiencing material deprivation, threats of genocide or enforced pauperization—that is, so few who were driven by conditions of objective exploitation and deep social oppression—made it almost inevitable that the search for cultural and life-style changes were substituted for revolutionary politics.(1)

On the Quest for "Good Sex"

A preference for one sexual style over another is principally irrelevant, and all the more so for the general alienated state of sexual relationships in contemporary society. Opposition to separatist politics if principled, should be based upon class analysis and political analysis. Thus, we should oppose those groups organized around petty bourgeois class-based reformist demands; we should oppose those groups that make sexual oppression the principal contradiction, whether these are groups of women or groups of homosexuals; we should oppose all those groups holding that the first priority of proletarian revolution should be "sexual liberation" (for example, the contemporary Reichians with their various forms of sex-pol therapeutic politics, etc.)

In the end, we do not aspire to make revolution in order to free people to enjoy any sexualstyle they please, nor do we agitate for revolution in order to justify the practices of one group or another.(2)

On the history of the women's movement in which she participated:

While in the beginning, roughly from 1967 to 1969, the left was in a relatively powerful position, by 1973 a coalition of the center and right had gained control of the women's movement.(3)

The most destructive consequence of the left-wing sexism has been to drive women and homosexuals into "sexual politics" ... The consequence of left-wing anti-feminism was in this way profoundly reactionary, contributing to the rise of reformist and even fascist social movements ... In time, women themselves undertook to engage in a Marxist analysis of themselves, but only after having spent years of confusion engendered by the self-interested sexism of petty-bourgeois male chauvinists in the left.(4)

Comment: Here Dixon could be referring to how the revolutionaries drove some women into Moral Majority pro-family politics or state-backed sometimes fascist corporatist organizations, organizing against rape and battering, that consciously or unconsciously played into Reagan-Bush-Duke-Buchanan anti-crime fascism. MIM's only disagreement with Dixon is that it does not believe that a majority of Amerikan workers or women are naturally revolutionary. Hence, "sexual politics" would exist no matter how sharp the gender line of the 1960s revolutionaries. However, Dixon is correct that objectively male chauvinist leftism will drive more women into "sexual politics" than would be otherwise attracted to it.

The early and primitive ideology of Women's Liberation stressed psychological oppression and social and occupational discrimination. The

politics of psychological oppression swiftly transmuted into the bourgeois feminist ideology of “men as enemy,” for psychological world-views pit individual against individual and mystify the social basis of exploitation ... Women, being in most cases without a political vocabulary, could most easily respond to the articulation of emotion.(3)

Comment: In some ways, men as a group are enemy, but the question is what strategy most effectively reduces oppression. Reformism and individualist sexual politics contribute to patriarchal oppression while revolutionaries of both sexes contribute to the day when men and women will be revolutionized in their gender roles. Men as a group may be drawn to revolution for reasons different than women; hence, they may contribute to the demise of patriarchy on their way to accomplishing other goals. Third World men are much more desperate for change in general than First World women, because of starvation, genocide and war. Third World men just want to live and are impatient for the day First World women really do shake things up in the First World. Compared with First World biological women, Third World biological men have a greater stake in a real feminism that would free their Third World sisters and themselves.

Given the predominantly apolitical disposition of women in general coupled with their initial fearfulness and lack of political experience, the task of revolutionary political education was an uphill battle from the beginning. The articulation of a class analysis in both Canada and the U.S., too often in a style inherited from the competitive and intellectually arrogant student left, frightened women away or left them totally confused and unable to understand what the fuss was all about. In a purely agitational sense, the feminists’ anti-male line had the beauty of simplicity and matched the everyday experience of women; the left-wing radicals had the disadvantage of a complex argument that required hard work and study, an “elitist” sin. However, the anti-male line had its difficulties too, rooted in a fundamental contradiction which faces all women ... Women were unwilling and unable to actualize anger against sexism into a hatred of men.

Because of this contradiction there existed a predisposition to take a rhetorical anti-male stand (throwing men out of meetings to keep them from being obstructionist, expressing anger and contempt towards men to display defiance and thus give moral support and courage to new women, etc.), overlaying a profound ambiguity regarding what was, or ought to be, the relationship between men and women.(5)

Comment: The only part MIM disagrees with is that it finds few leaders from disempowered groups—students, oppressed nationalities, youth and women—to be arrogant enough. These groups must after all be arrogant enough to overthrow the bourgeoisie, which is much more arrogant.

We must teach women and all disempowered people not to fear revolutionaries by getting them to improve their analysis, instead of getting revolutionaries to tone down their attitude. Fear of criticism is often at the root of fear of struggle with revolutionaries, but this fear is a crucial ideological barrier to overcome to engage in any collective struggle as opposed to individualist self-aggrandizement.

Criticism by the ruling class always has the purpose of oppression of one kind or another. In contrast, revolutionaries do not have any power, cannot oppress the people they seek to influence and hence should not be feared until they have military power—when it becomes a different story.

Many of us, after more than ten long years of experience in a series of movements, and especially the Women's Liberation movement, have become Marxist-Leninists—not because we read books, but because we fought and lost too many battles, then read the books.(6)

The cold truth of the matter is that the women's centers often differed very little from the standby of the suburban housewife—community work, complete with good deeds, exciting activities, lively gossip and truly thrilling exercises in intrigue and character assassination.(7)

The prolonged existence of the autonomous movement, with its penchant for psychological theorizing, made it difficult to see that the defeat of sexism and racism *in the left* was an *organizational*, not attitudinal, problem.(8)

Notes:

1. Marlene Dixon, *Women in Class Struggle*, Synthesis Publications, Summer-Fall 1977, p. 60.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

9.41 Anarchist Feminism vs. Marxist–Leninist–Maoist Feminism

OK, it's time to put a finger on this in writing, mainly from a number of comments on group process in MIM and from observations regarding the pattern of young women and MIM. First, a few definitions.

A bourgeois feminist is someone who wants an equal position for women within the existing system of oppression of classes and nations.

A Marxist-Leninist-Maoist feminist seeks state power for women. The M-L-M feminist always carefully distinguishes between the road to power and the status quo of imperialism.

The anarchist feminist is likely to treat oppressor groups within revolutionary organizations the same way they treat oppressor groups holding power in society

at large. The reason is that they do not want to replace one power with another. They just want power abolished.

The M-L-M feminist on the other hand is likely to point out how the anarchist feminism boils down to the socialization of the status quo. An M-L-M discussion of gender dynamics within the party can never occur outside the context of its impact on the road to power.

An example of this conflict is the feminist bookstore that would not distribute MIM Notes because it does not have exclusively women's issues content. To this bookstore there is no difference between men in MIM and men in the imperialist government. The bookstore is practicing anarchist feminism. It makes sense to focus just on women's issues if one believes it is possible to liberate women by abolishing power.

In contrast, MIM would say the feminist anarchist bookstore was actually reflecting the reactionary socialization that says women cannot seize power. What makes this especially clear is that the feminist bookstore believes women can abolish their oppression without understanding the world beyond "women's issues," whatever those are.

Once upon a time in dominant-nation societies, women drank tea in the other room while the men talked about politics in the smoke-filled room next door. Today, women talk about themselves in entire bookstores while men continue to control the guns.

MIM likes real anarchist feminists. At least they are for the end of all oppression of groups by groups. They have the same goal as us. However good their intentions/morals though, their practice isn't any different than the status quo of imperialism. Show us the progress anarchist feminism has brought the world? In practice it is not distinguishable from bourgeois feminism.

Pacifism is like anarchism. Pacifists want the end of violence now. Maoists want to end violence by using violence to seize power.

Maoists believe that by seizing power they can eradicate the sources of violence in group oppression and the socialization that comes with exploitation of groups by groups.

This is only true if the Maoists are right that the groups that seize power in the name of Maoism have an interest in abolishing all power. The proletariat, women and Blacks have an interest in abolishing group power rather than just re-establishing patriarchy and imperialism.

The anarchist feminist might retort that these groups can simply re-establish oppression, maybe even the exact same oppression as existed before. To them, nothing in the Soviet Union or China is any better than what would have existed under capitalism and semi-feudalism as it existed before. This is one reason studying the Soviet Union and China is important. Is it true that seizing power automatically corrupts a movement and ends its progressive phase? We can't answer this from looking at U.S. history, so we want to know what has happened in other countries.

Some discussion of MIM group dynamics reflects patriarchal socialization. Women need to decide where they stand. Which is the road forward, anarchist feminism or Maoist feminism?

MIM says women can understand war, diplomacy, economics, socialist economic construction, etc. In other words, MIM says women can understand the power of the imperialist patriarchy the same way the proletariat can understand the bourgeoisie's state. Women can wield that kind of power and wield it to reorganize society so it does not have to be wielded again.

Social Basis and Results of Anarchism

Student politics has a natural bias toward anarchism. When students do decide to work for the abolition of oppression they consciously and unconsciously lean toward anarchism because students in this country come from the petty-bourgeoisie and aspire to the class position of the petty-bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie and the proletariat understand discipline and organization, but the petty-bourgeoisie believes in "making it on your own," etc.

MIM's foundation had an anarchist tilt, not surprisingly because we all came out of student groups, most of which focussed on not acknowledging leadership. Much of the original work was even done anonymously so that no one could get credit for it.

It's that kind of tilt that plays into the system, which buys people out and side-tracks them out of politics after graduation in particular. Once the natural and unconscious organization/discipline created by being together in a college setting is gone, everything falls apart.

SDS is a great example. Look at how many students must have sold out for us to have ended up in the 1980s the way we have!

The realization of the need for M-L organizations came too late. For example, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA did not form as a Leninist party out of SDS until 1975. The Weather Underground elements never formed a party. Progressive Labor formed a party, but it dropped Maoism and splintered into Trotskyist hell. Of course, material factors like the end of the Vietnam war and the death of Mao were more important, but a well-organized left would have moved on from the victories of the 1960s and 1970s to other winnable battles. Instead, SDS was like early MIM and its predecessors. It undervalued organizational discipline and did not carry its momentum over after a few graduations.

We all learn things from bourgeois women's studies departments and feminist consciousness-raising groups—things that are appropriate for that context but not others. It's one thing to fight within capitalist educational institutions for processes that give women breathing space to build academic careers. It's another to say that a revolutionary organization out to seize state power should be governed by the same processes. It's one thing to talk about leaderless feminist consciousness-raising groups where the object is to gain collected experience. It is another to use that process in a group with a specific task of building public opinion in order to seize power.

In the past MIM has studied Joreen's "The Tyranny of Structurelessness." Joreen's work fits in well with Lenin on the need for vanguard parties, but it owes a contem-

porary twist to the argument that many anarchist-minded activists will recognize. That Joreen article is a major step forward for us. This essay is just developing the problem a little further.

9.42 The Independent Woman: Pseudo-Feminism on Homophobia

MIM's members have been fighting discrimination against gays and lesbians since prior to the foundation of MIM in 1983-4. MIM has a policy of not publishing all the details of its practice. However, MIM members have never shirked from taking principled stands against discrimination on sexual orientation and they have at times led demonstrations and illegal activities on behalf of gay/lesbian liberation.

MIM's struggles against homophobia from the early 1980s onward have received little notice from large segments of the gay/lesbian community. Many bookstores refused to carry our paper because it did not have exclusively gay/lesbian or women's content, as if gender liberation could occur without struggle in all realms of politics. When in addition MIM exposed white nation chauvinism in San Francisco and Baltimore gay-lesbian organizing, (See MIM Notes 60 and 62) two gay/lesbian organizations that worked with us before cut us off. MIM only regrets that it hadn't sharpened the struggle to clarify that national oppression is the principal contradiction sooner.

Despite the acts of gay/lesbian groups that don't want to hear about national oppression, MIM continues to stand for an end to national oppression and gay/lesbian oppression. While some gay/lesbian organizations will attempt to punish MIM for exposing white nation chauvinism in the gay/lesbian community, others will redouble their dedication to working with us. In addition, the oppressed nationalities will recognize that MIM is not going to abandon them in order to gain the support of a community that is both richer and whiter.

The letter below is one of many from a series of polemics on homophobia with *The Independent Woman*, a pseudo-feminist publication.

Dear Independent Woman:

We have read the past few issues of your periodical and have found them generally useful and progressive, which is good. It is with surprise, therefore, that we read occasional homophobic barbs in your newsletter. In particular, on page 13 of your winter 1987-88 issue you have an article titled, quite inappropriately, "Some Implications of Gay and Lesbian Politics" in which you talk about child sexual abuse.

There are numerous problems with this article. There is absolutely no connection established in your article between liberation based on sexual orientation and child sexual abuse. You merely insert it.

In fact, the way you insert the discussion of child sexual abuse is itself frightening. By your reasoning, if we found a heterosexual organization naming itself after the Red Guards of Cultural Revolution China, and someone found that a Red Guard had needlessly destroyed an ancient cultural relic worthy of a museum, you would have concluded that an implication of heterosexual politics is opposition to art and museums.

Furthermore, you would have implied that gay/lesbian opposition to art and museums is OK by treating the subject in this way.

Surely child sexual abuse is not caused by gay/lesbian liberation efforts. Indeed, facts would seem to indicate that child sexual abuse is a phenomenon of the patriarchy that liberation by sexual orientation would seem to undercut.

In any case, is the slogan "sex by eight is too late" so awful by itself (as you quote it by itself as the sole indication of wrong doing)? Are you one of the parents that told her kids not to touch anything down there or it would fall off? Does "sex" in this slogan necessarily mean intercourse between children and adults? Please address the flaws of logic in your argument laid out above and inform us on the context of the slogan discussed in this last paragraph.

Sincerely,

MIM

Bluntly, women's liberation, as well as the monetary redemption of ordinary male and female labor, as we know them in the United States, have been gained from the possessing class and gender in America as a "price" of industrial and domestic peace. It has most definitely been "at the cost" of the laboring classes of the economic colonies ... This first mass eruption of women's rights consciousness in world history was financed by the seeped-down wealth of empire. Only comparative study of history enables us to ask the useful questions: for instance, why have the women's movements in England and France remained pitiful compared to ours? Both have been great imperial nations; but the colony-extracted wealth was far less, because it occurred earlier, and it sufficed only to finance a small aristocracy of males and females, who as a class were so antagonistic to the nation as a whole that on no account could the aristocracy split apart in gender-war. The unparalleled productivity as well as commandeering of resources by the United States empire has been enabled by domestic peace brought in part by the sowing of the conditions for women's liberation.

"In this way the imperial background to radical feminism can be understood as essential to its strength but also to its weakness."

— Tiresias, "Feminism Tries to Ignore its Marital Relationships in the House of Empire," *Green Mountain Quarterly*, no. 2, February 1976, p. 38.

9.43 Anarchist Feminism Misses the Revolution

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 50, March 1991 —

Disillusioned with and victimized by the existing power structure, many women turn to anarchism—the immediate abolition of all power—as an attractive alternative. Though MIM's goals and the goals of anarchist feminists are very similar on the surface, ultimately MIM sees anarchist feminists as reflecting the reactionary socialization that says women cannot seize power.

The term anarchist feminist will be used here to describe those women who, like MIM, want all oppression of people, and its roots in power, abolished. Anarchist feminists, unlike Maoist feminists, believe power and oppression are rooted solely in the patriarchy. And because all men are part of the patriarchy, according to them, no men can be trusted—even if they, too, are fighting for the end of all oppression.

With this as the basis for their actions, anarchist feminists conclude that a structureless separatism is the only way to fight the patriarchy, because they do not believe, as MIM does, that one power must be replaced by another in order to pave the way for the eventual abolition of all power, anarchist feminists treat oppressor groups within revolutionary organizations the same way they treat oppressor groups holding power in society at large.

To equate the power of communist men with the power of George Bush or the male executives of the Fortune 500 corporations ignores the material basis of power and oppression essential to an understanding of how to overthrow the patriarchy. Men as a group have historically received better education, better jobs, and more money than women. They are thus empowered to control world events, placing women in a subordinate position.

But Black men as a group do not have such power. Latino and Native American and poor men as a group do not wield the power of the state: they are the victims of it. And communist men who devote their lives to working for the liberation of women and other oppressed groups certainly do not have power equal to that of men in the imperialist government.

To use biological sex instead of power as the criteria by which to distinguish allies and enemies is to ignore the essential role of power in constructing gender relations and all relations under capitalist society. To think, for instance, that there would be no wars if aggressive males were not the heads of state, and to think that subordination would not exist if women were equally empowered is to ignore such women as Margaret Thatcher and Sandra Day O’Conner. Women are as capable of abusing power as men. For those who desire the end of all oppression under capitalism, the crucial factor in separating

friends from enemies ought to be a group's actions and material interests, not what sort of genitals they were born with.

While men are strategizing about war on a global level, anarchist feminists are restricting themselves to talking about "women's issues" rather than integrating this discussion with one of the powers that is behind the oppression. Limiting the discussion keeps women in "their place" as they accept their enforced impotence to fight the larger power structure.

This amounts to supporting imperialism because it ignores the importance of all liberation struggles whether or not they are led exclusively by women.

From an understanding of power, the tactics of the anarchist feminist become ridiculous. Anyone who recognizes power as the basic problem should be an ally in the fight against it, and in order to effectively fight against so powerful a system as exists in support of the patriarchy all who oppose it must work together.

Yet even the anarchist feminists who admit to differing degrees of power between men ultimately refuse to work with men in a vanguard party, criticizing the structure and discipline required by the organizing principle of democratic centralism.

MIM believes that in a group whose goal it is to seize power from the bourgeoisie, discipline and unity are essential if it is to have any chance of success. The government and capitalism's ruling classes are working from an extremely well-fortified and entrenched structure. The only effective way to fight it is to create another more powerful structure that works to dissolve power on the same level. This is the function of a vanguard party. While working within its ranks to create the most progressive actions on women's issues possible in this society, it creates an organization that can challenge and eventually overthrow the system that supports the patriarchy.

The structurelessness advocated by anarchist feminists is exactly what will continue to keep them from presenting a threat to the patriarchy. MIM believes that by seizing power we can eradicate the sources of violence in group oppression and the socialization that comes with exploitation of groups by groups.

This is only true if we are right that the groups that seize power in the name of Maoism have an interest in abolishing all power. And the proletariat, women and Blacks do have an interest in abolishing group power rather than just re-establishing patriarchy and imperialism.

The anarchist feminist might retort that these groups can simply re-establish oppression, maybe even the exact same oppression as existed before. To them, nothing in China was any better after the revolution than what would have existed had capitalism and semi-feudalism continued. What anarchist feminists fail to address are the gains for women after the revolution that were concrete steps towards women's equality and an elimination of the patriarchy.

Clearly women will not automatically be liberated after a revolution. Extensive feminist struggle is needed, both before and after the revolution until this can be accomplished. But just as clearly, women will never be liberated if we do not challenge the system that props up the patriarchy with a structure capable of overthrowing it.

9.44 White Privilege Exposed

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 62, March 1992 —

Baltimore held its first Black Gay Pride Day recently, drawing several hundred people. The city's mainstream pride day in June became a center of controversy when community members protested the fact that the pride day program was composed almost entirely of images of white gay men.

Despite the fact that the population of Baltimore is almost 80% Black and includes other oppressed communities as well, the pride day committee was made up exclusively of white men. The pride day program also contained a full page advertisement from a mayor who was running on a blatantly racist campaign platform. The committee admitted that, "most of us, when putting together a volunteer committee, ask our friends."

Many gay and lesbian pride rallies across the country are organized by white men and do not project an anti-patriarchy and anti-imperialist program. Instead, organizers call for yuppie job protection against gay discrimination. And like the pseudo-feminists, these gay men simply fight against their own particular oppression, oblivious of their First World privileges and most importantly, of the oppression of Third World people.

MIM welcomes members of all sexual orientations; we fight against all oppressions, including oppression of gay men and lesbians. But MIM refuses to cheerlead for gays and lesbians who do not fight against patriarchy and imperialism, but only want a bigger piece of the imperialist pie. We ask all progressive and revolutionary gay and lesbian activists to circulate this statement and distribute MIM Notes.

Chapter 10

Feminist “Icons”

10.1 Betty Friedan’s Work Reviewed

The Feminine Mystique

New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1963

The Second Stage

New York: Summit Books, 1981

Betty Friedan “was the founder and first president of the National Organization for Women, and the original convener of the National Women’s Political Caucus. In recent years, Ms. Friedan has been a leader in the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment.”(1)

Betty Friedan’s work in *The Feminine Mystique* is exemplary petty-bourgeois feminism and *The Second Stage* reveals her as a leader of left-wing petty-bourgeois politics generally. In this regard, Friedan has nothing to hide, unlike many leftists MIM must argue with:

It had more vitality than most volunteer activity because we were truly acting *for ourselves*. I was always irritated at the accusation that

there was something *wrong* with the women's movement because it spoke to the condition of 'white middle-class women.' That was its strength, of course, in a country where all women (and men)—except for the Marxist daughters and sons of the rich—would like to think of themselves as, at least, middle-class.(2)

What she has to say about communism is brief and ignorant. Suffice it to say that Friedan blames communist countries for not being rich like imperialist countries. Household chores in communist countries were done "with fewer conveniences than their capitalist sisters" had.(3) Sorry, Betty. China couldn't afford Hoovers when it freed itself from decades of imperialist and capitalist exploitation and centuries of feudal backwardness.

Friedan also mentions Maoism once as another expression of unauthentic sexuality that does not recognize "basic human needs." Referring to the alienation of capitalism that destroys love, Friedan says:

The anti-sexual stance of Stalinist and Maoist communism may perform the same function.(4)

As we shall see, with lovers like Friedan, the Third World does not need enemies.

The Feminine Mystique has two basic messages that MIM would like to treat. One is that women do not have to be housewives and that being a housewife is destructive to society. The other is the psychological theory underlying all of Friedan's work.

I. Women as Housewives as the Principal Contradiction

Friedan is correct that for the most part her message on life as a housewife hit home in 1963 and has succeeded. Most women now work and many have a choice as to whether they become housewives or "superwomen," juggling career and home responsibilities.

Friedan is 90% correct in what she says within the limits of the subject matter of *The Feminine Mystique*. Perhaps that subject matter should be called "white studies," because so much of what she is talking about is a penetrating description specific to the First World. For example, she provides a blistering critique of the idea that cleaning the house and a career are either/or choices. She shows that where basic survival needs are seen to, house chores still expand infinitely if allowed and have a mind-closing dynamic all their own. Pointing to the idiocy of suburban life, Betty Friedan is a foremother of the radical white countercultural movements like the punk rock critique of life in the 1980s.

As for the 1950s, Friedan shows many social ills were connected to women's being psychologically restricted to the role of housewife. Ironically, while Friedan condemns communism, evidencing very little study of the question in the process, she and Engels are really birds of a feather. They both think that women's equal participation in the economy with men would solve many of their problems as women. Friedan simply goes a little further than Engels by holding that women's participation in the economy would solve social ills from cheating and drug abuse to suicide.

Amerikan women have proved Friedan wrong in these predictions. As they have increased their economic role outside the home, many aspects of gender oppression have remained the same or increased. For example, Friedan herself is aware that the occurrence of the typical female "nervous breakdown" simply changed from later years to younger years.(6)

Still, Friedan was able to prove that some problems of U.S. women were new to the 1950s and hence possibly resolvable. These problems followed a decline of women's enrollment in college, their role in the work force and images of independent women in the media—even compared with the 1920s, but especially the 1930s and 40s.(7) One of the strengths of her first book is that it shows that the relative strength of women to men has changed at various points in time and that the 1950s were definitely a setback. The march forward has zigzagged as we Marxist dialecticians would say.

II. Psychological Theory

The petty-bourgeoisie is a class that believes it is independent of both the capitalist and working classes. Members of the petty-bourgeoisie appear to succeed economically through their own efforts, because they neither hire workers like capitalists nor work for capitalists like workers. Not surprisingly, the petty-bourgeoisie is the most favorable breeding ground for individualism and its pseudoscience called psychology.

In advancing a feminist agenda, Friedan is loathe to cede the petty-bourgeoisie to the patriarchy, so she makes psychology a centerpiece of her work.

It is the same kind of political mistake for feminists to abandon the family to reaction as it was for liberals and radicals to abandon individualism to the right... That beleaguered demand for some personal control of one's life is basic. I believe, to the strong appeal of both feminism and 'pro-life,' 'pro-family' groups.(8)

Friedan spends many pages detailing a mild critique of Freud. In the end, however, she accepts the Freudian framework of analysis, something not widely recognized in this supposed feminist leader. She merely prefaces her critique by saying:

No one can question the basic genius of Freud's discoveries, nor the contribution he has made to our culture. Nor do I question the effectiveness of psychoanalysis as it is practiced today by Freudian or anti-Freudian.(9)

Like the worst of psychologists trying to out-Freud Freud, Friedan seeks the roots of Freud's sexism in his sex life. In so doing, it is not surprising that she insults other women along the way. Speaking of Freud's wife, Martha, Friedan says, "she never dreamed of sharing his life as an equal." Later, Friedan compares Martha with another woman who was "much more intelligent and independent than Martha."(10)

Elsewhere Friedan quotes women frustrated by men who choose women with less education than themselves for romantic involvement.(11)

Attributing intelligence and ability only to certain women in a mistake typical of psychological reasoning concerned with the uncovering of personality traits, Friedan insults all housewives as a group.

I went as a reporter from suburb to suburb, searching for a woman of ability and education who was fulfilled as a housewife. I went first to the suburban mental health centers and guidance clinics ... and stating my purpose, asked them to steer me not to the neurotic, frustrated housewives, but to the able, intelligent, educated women who were adjusted full-time housewives and mothers.(12)

Friedan's favorite concept from Freud is the "ego." According to Friedan, society conspires to crush women's ego. Freud recognized that the crushing of the ego either by the superego (moral pressures from society) or the id (basic biologically rooted "needs" for sex and other "drives") would result in a sick individual.

This Freudian theory of Friedan's amounts to saying that the role of housewife does not allow for the ego development of women. It essentially retards the adult development of women to keep them as childlike dependents and sex objects.

Aren't the chief characteristics of femininity—which Freud mistakenly related to sexual biology—passivity; a weak ego or sense of self; a weak superego or human conscience; renunciation of active aims, ambitions, interests of one's own to live through others; incapacity for abstract thought; retreat from activity directed outward to the world, in favor of activity directed inward or phantasy?"(13)

At other times, Friedan simply substitutes the word "identity" or "private image" for Freud's "ego" and "public image" for superego:

I think that this has been the unknown heart of women's problem in America for a long time, this lack of a private image. Public images that defy reason and have very little to do with women themselves have had the power to shape too much of their lives. These images would not have such power, if women were not suffering a crisis of identity.(14)

In 1981, Friedan saw women as ready for the second stage of development and modified some of her earlier findings, but she still retained the Freudian notion of the ego:

The personhood of women, that's what it's really all about, first and finally. I say now to younger women, trying to separate the essence of the women's movement from the rhetorical chaff of 'women's lib.' Twenty years ago, breaking through the feminine mystique, it seemed as if the personhood of women meant only what a woman does and is, herself, not as her husband's wife, children's mother, housewife, server of her family.(15)

More directly, Friedan says:

It is recognized now that Freud never gave proper attention, even in man, to growth of the ego or self: 'the impulse to master, control or come to self-fulfilling terms with the environment.'(16)

From reading Friedan, it is easy to see why the Progressive Labor Party (**PLP**) and later the Revolutionary Communist Party (**RCP**) criticized feminism from the 1960s onwards as "me-firstism."

Except for middle-class women trying to become top executives for a bigger slice of the profit pie for themselves ... the feminist movement

will decline again until a real working-class surge develops. Then the bosses will trot out their politicians and thinkers—feminists, pacifists, nationalists, and phony ‘socialists’—to try to sidetrack people.(17)

Friedan-style feminism was literally me-firstism as a prescription for the mental health of women.

III. Friedan's Paternalism

As Friedan was to admit in *The Second Stage*, the struggle against the role of women as solely housewives had astonishing success. The feminine mystique fell without a gunshot. It made one wonder what was stopping women from having their own careers all along.

A disturbing answer from *The Feminine Mystique* is that women are easily manipulated. Whether it be as educators or advertisers, Friedan maintains that men dupe women into what they do.

Criticizing Margaret Mead, Friedan shows little respect for women's thought processes:

It was, perhaps, not her fault that she was taken so literally that procreation became a cult, a career, to the exclusion of every other kind of creative endeavor, until women kept on having babies because they knew no other way to create.(18)

It was a fine line that Friedan walked in advocating that women continue their formal educations and take on mind-expanding careers on the one hand, and not making elitist criticisms reflecting the outlook of the petty-bourgeois intellectual on the other. She did not succeed in walking this fine line, but she and others have succeeded in pushing women into the world outside the house.

At other times, Friedan more correctly points out that women are not just dupes. Often they make a choice, just not a very brave one.

"I live through my husband and children," a frank member of my own generation told me: "It's easier that way. In this world now, it's easier to be a woman, if you take advantage of it." ... We found excuses for not facing the problems we once had the courage to face ... Women went home again just as men shrugged off the bomb, forgot the concentration camps, condoned corruption, and fell into helpless conformity ... It was easier, safer, to think about love and sex than about communism, McCarthy, and the uncontrolled bomb.(19)

MIM translates the above: fighting women's oppression did not seem a life-and-death issue to women at the time. In fact, nothing in politics seemed that important. It wasn't worth rocking the boat.

Going back to criticize some of the rhetoric in *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan says it is especially wrong to view women as concentration camp victims of genocide today, when the second stage of struggle is necessary. She also says:

Did we exaggerate their power when we were not in touch with our own?(20)

This is a point that MIM agrees with. The result of an underestimation of First World women's strength will be the paternalist thinking that portrays women as weak—the kind of sexism especially important to avoid now that women are vying with men in many spheres of life.

IV. Friedan Against P.C.

In both books, Friedan takes a correct approach to a problem found at the root of the Politically Correct (P.C.) concept on Amerikan campuses today:

"The point of role-playing, a technique adapted from group therapy, is to get students to understand problems on a feeling level." Emotions

more heady than those of the usual college classroom are undoubtedly stirred up when the professor invites them to "role-play" the feelings of "a boy and a girl on their wedding night."

There is a pseudotherapeutic air, as the professor listens patiently to endless self-conscious student speeches about personal feelings ("verbalizing") in the hopes of sparking a ("group insight"). But though the functional course is not group therapy, it is certainly an indoctrination of opinions and values through manipulation of the students' emotions; and in this manipulative disguise, it is no longer subject to the critical thinking demanded in other academic disciplines.(21)

How ironic that the academic field most likely to co-opt the method described above is women's studies. Today students are told not to think scientifically, but to listen to token in-house representatives of various social groups describe their emotions as representing the next best thing to truth.

V. Friedan's Homophobia

But the homosexuality that is spreading like a murky smog over the American scene is no less ominous than the restless, immature sex-seeking of the young women who are the aggressors in the early marriages that have become the rule rather than the exception.(22)

One of the reasons Friedan attacks homosexuals is her academic elitism—perhaps better described as "classism".

Kinsey found homosexuality most common among men who do not go beyond high school, and least common among college graduates.(23)

In contrast, she notes repeatedly that the Kinsey study showed that women with greater education obtained greater sexual satisfaction in life.(24)

Friedan accepted the Freudian theory that housewives overmothered their boys thus producing homosexuals. The immaturity of men caused by mothers overly dedicated to being housewives paralleled women's immaturity and overly strong heterosexual drive according to Friedan.

In the 1980s, Friedan was still lumping homosexuality into a grab-bag of evils caused by the lack of feminist success in society—"rape, sadomasochistic pornography and violence against women, escalating homosexuality, male impotence, divorce."(25)

VI. Friedan on Sexual Politics and Alliances

Friedan's view of homosexuality is only a part of a larger view that the women's movement should not define itself with an emphasis on sex. By the 1980s, Friedan was consistently criticizing people she saw as extremists that set back the women's movement. Just as MIM is vigilant against phony communists and phony feminists, Friedan is vigilant against phony feminism in her own way—what even she labels as "feminist reaction."(26) She criticizes a tokenist line of thinking, saying "*men may be at the cutting edge of the second stage.*"(27)

The errors of sexual politics prompted Friedan to define a second stage of the women's movement. In the press, Friedan comes off as conservative or just stale as a NOW-type feminist. However, The Second Stage reveals Friedan to have a line that she is willing to hold come what may. She has a clear sense of responsibility as a leader—what some Chinese dissidents call a "second loyalty" where one is loyal enough to a movement to criticize it for its own good.

Still accepting Freudian psychology, Friedan attacks all the emphasis on pornography, lesbianism and "taking back the night."

I think we must at least admit and begin openly to discuss feminist denial of the importance of family, of women's own needs to give and get love and nurture, tender loving care.(28)

Where MIM draws the line between reactionary and revolutionary feminisms based on their analysis of social structure and their impact on the patriarchy, Friedan draws the line against self-destructive feminism based on a theory of psychological needs. The result is an analysis often parallel to MIM's; where MIM sees inflexible social structure in need of revolutionary transformation that is causing problems, Friedan sees basic unchanging human psychological needs that must be recognized and obeyed lest feminists set themselves back.

For women to live their personal lives as a political scenario as some radical feminists tried to do (man as enemy, motherhood and family as oppressors of women, sexual surrender to the enemy as betrayal of self, treason to women) surely violates basic human needs for intimacy, sex, generation. It also vitiates will and energy for real political changes.(29)

In this, Friedan sounds much like MIM, but it is important for MIM comrades to repudiate the Freudian aspect of what Friedan says. The energy that is lost in the struggle from this approach is a result of taking on the structure with the strategy of an individual, not the result of ignoring Freudian-defined psycho-sexual needs.

In this sense, both MIM and Friedan do not take a pie-in-the-sky attitude toward the possibilities of change within the current time period. This is in contrast to the school of sexual politics, New Age thought and various spiritual approaches that believe change comes about one individual at a time as soon as that individual wants to start change.

Despite the parallels in thinking between Friedan and MIM, Friedan draws the line too far to the right, criticizing phenomena that MIM believes should not be criticized. In the last section, we saw her criticizing homosexuality, which is incorrect.

At further extremes, Friedan labels what MIM would call anarchist feminism, pseudo-feminism and other reactions as "pathological."

The power of those needs, and the pathological consequences of their distortion or denial, has occupied a century of psychological researchers and therapists.(30)

This kind of reasoning is behind Friedan's seeing homosexuality as a mental illness.

MIM has always opposed the psychiatric approach to anything except purely medical cases of brain damage. Friedan's theory—a popular one even on the so-called left—leads no where but diversion and repression disproportionately aimed at women.

Moreover, in the midst of organizing for the ERA, Friedan said:

... it seemed irrelevant, wrong, for women to be wasting energy marching against pornography—or any other sexual issue—when their very economic survival was at stake.(31)

MIM sees this as white middle-class hysteria. Women as a group were not struggling for survival, especially the women that Friedan is proud to represent—the majority of Amerikan women.

With the bulk of the Amerikan feminist establishment, Friedan later joined a legal case in defense of pornography against Catharine MacKinnon. Her group was called the Feminists Against Censorship Taskforce (**FACT**). Friedan and others came off defending free speech and women's erotic side; but Friedan's position was a much more worked-out opposition to MacKinnon's.

With regard to rape, Friedan argues that women get stuck in the first stage of the movement that she takes responsibility for unleashing. They see men as still holding all the cards.

Some women who still are afraid of their own aggression exaggerate the feared-hated power of men. Without denying the progress of

the women's movement in enabling women to protect themselves against rape, and to demand police protection without humiliation, I suspect that the current obsession of some feminists with pornography and rape plays into, and is itself an acting out of such reaction and projection.(32)

Slamming sexual politics again, Friedan says:

In the first stage, the women's movement directed too much of its energy into sexual politics, from personal bedroom wars against men to mass marches against rape or pornography to "take back the night". Sexual war against men is an irrelevant, self-defeating acting out of rage. It does not change the conditions of our lives. Obsession with rape, even offering Band-Aids to its victims, is a kind of wallowing in that victim-state, that impotent rage, that sterile polarization. Like the aping of machismo or obsessive careerism, it dissipates our own well-springs of generative power.(33)

In place of sexual politics, and sounding very much like the Democratic Socialists of America or Jesse Jackson on moving from the politics of race to the politics of economics, Friedan hammered on the problems of inflation and two-income families—making ends meet, the architectural design of housing meant for 1950s families and child care for instance.

It now seems to Friedan that women no longer have the choice to be housewives. Whereas in the 1950s, women were not supposed to be workers, now they must be to survive. In the second stage of the movement, Friedan found it necessary to argue for giving women the choice between life as a housewife and a career.

To address these economic concerns of women, Friedan seems unable to relate to Third World women or men, but she does give an approving nod to American labor as a potential ally several times in *The Second Stage*. This is what makes her "left" petty-bourgeois. She vaguely sees her class's interests allied with that of

First World labor. Her distrust of capitalists, Third World despots and communist governments equally and her conscious individualism also make her a natural ally of anarchism—the ideology that all governments are bad.

VII. Friedan on the Third World

Criticizing reactionary pro-family ideology, Friedan lets all her all-American wares be displayed:

In the name of the family, they would destroy the new equality that gives the family strength to resist dehumanizing forces that are emerging in the seeming importance of capitalist America, in the resurgence of fundamentalist religion, in neofascism and in autocratic communism, and in the chaos of the Third World.(34)

This is truly an incredible litany of evils conceivable and connected only in the mind of a great white petty-bourgeois feminist like Friedan.

Naturally, at international conferences, Friedan has no patience for women arguing that in their countries the principal contradiction is with U.S. imperialism, can the American women please help? Friedan comes down especially hard on the Palestinian and Iranian women as simply fronting for men.

It seemed clear that an alliance of Communist, Moslem and Latin despots, now in control of the U.N., was threatened by the world spread of feminism and was using the U.N. to co-opt it and manipulate women for their own political purposes.(35)

In defense, one Iranian woman said:

At our stage of development, it is all right for us to take leadership from a man if we want to.(36)

VIII. Conclusion

Given the parallels between Friedan and MIM, who is correct? Unlike the case of many activists who claim to share MIM's goals, Friedan is explicitly anti-communist. She is a reformist. MIM cannot just ask "where's the beef?" of internationalist liberation strategy because Friedan doesn't want beef and never claimed to want it.

Friedan has led a successful movement on reformist terms for white, middle-class women. She is spokesperson for her class and country par excellence. So to answer the question, Friedan is correct for the petty-bourgeoisie. Here is her answer to the "where's the beef?" taunt:

A sacredness, a reverence, an awe, a pride beyond arrogance and an incredulous humility that we who made this movement share truly as sisters, overriding our ideological differences and power battles: the grandiose heroics of knowing that in our own lifetime we have changed history more basically than women ever before, and more than most men; the grounding certainty that the women's movement "changed our whole lives," and the very terms by which the new generations of women and men approach life.(37)

Those seeking equality for all women should stick with MIM. Middle-class women, especially housewives who require psychological liberation— should seek Friedan.

It is, after all, in capitalist America that the flexibilities inherent in our own system, our democratic tradition, even our individualism, could produce the women's movement as the first stage of the sex-role revolution.(38)

It is unfortunate only that in 1991, what Friedan said about the first stage is not entirely irrelevant yet.

Unknown to Friedan, those seeking transformation of the conditions of most of the world's women have succeeded more definitively in China, the Soviet Union, Eritrea and other places. Maoist strategy has done more than Friedan's to effect women's liberation.

Notes:

1. Betty Friedan, *The Second Stage*, New York: Summit Books, 1981, bookjacket.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 266.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
5. See "On Contradiction" in Mao Tse-Tung, *Four Essays on Philosophy*, Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1968, pp. 23-78 for the definition of principal contradiction.
6. *The Second Stage*, pp. 52-3.
7. Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique*, New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1963, pp. 12, 32.
8. *The Second Stage*, p. 178.
9. *The Feminist Mystique*, p. 96.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 224.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 275.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
15. *The Second Stage*, p. 59.
16. *The Feminist Mystique*, p. 109.
17. Progressive Labor Party, "Smash Sexism!"
18. *The Feminist Mystique*, p. 139.
19. *The Second Stage*, p. 178.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
21. *The Feminist Mystique*, p. 161.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 265.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

25. *The Second Stage*, p. 243.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-3.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

10.2 Gloria Steinem

In a talk at the Ford Hall Forum in Boston in 1971, Gloria Steinem, anticipating the usual male hysteria over the future of sex as affected by feminism, quoted a colleague as saying in response to similarly agitated audiences: “Listen, you know the trouble with you guys is you think if the women’s movement succeeds you won’t be able to screw as much.” After a pause during which the audience waits suspensefully, she finishes with: “Well I want to tell you, you’ll be able to screw more and better.”

— Abby Rockefeller(1)

As much as MIM admires this direct manner of speaking, the content of the statement is a dead end for women. Gloria Steinem is a woman set up by the capitalist class to lead a movement for good sex. The capitalist patriarchy fully realized that a moderate, so-called feminist movement would be a good thing. As long as people

stayed in the rut of arguing over how to have good sex, the broader power structure in society would remain unchanged.

What a relief to the ruling class that white women dumped their training in anti-imperialism and Black Liberation from the 1960s to set up good-sex movements in the name of "working on our own oppression first." There could have been some serious divisions in the Amerikan nation in the early 1970s, but the capitalists organized a white labor-aristocracy/middle-class-unity movement to prevent it.

There are few times in history when the connection between the bourgeoisie and the co-optation of a movement are so evident as with Gloria Steinem. Gloria Steinem cut her teeth for the bourgeoisie at international women's and communist conventions in the 1950s when she served as a spy for the CIA. She admits her trips involved "American participation ... partially funded by foundations that were in turn funded by the CIA"; she also admits to taking information on individuals at these conventions for use in files.(2)

Steinem correctly disparages those seeking more on her CIA ties. Radical feminists quit Ms. magazine as a result of her failure to deny involvement with the CIA, but Steinem knows that the things she did were quite normal behavior for a professional. Anyone who could see all her bourgeois connections with Rockefeller money and J.F.K. government people, Ted Sorenson, J. K. Galbraith, Viking Press president Tom Guinzberg, Rafter Johnson, director Mike Nichols and so on should have known that it was impossible to have so many of those kind of bourgeois, male backers and not also have CIA connections. Steinem's indignation on the question of her CIA ties is understandable. After all, how could the feminists expect to have all this bourgeois backing and support without CIA connections in the background? In a sense, MIM agrees with Steinem. What is more important than her CIA connections is the general nature of her backing.

In the early 1970s, Time magazine decided Gloria Steinem was *the* spokesperson for feminism. But attaining this pinnacle required the right credentials from the 1960s. Based on Steinem's incredible background in heavyweight political journals such as Redbook, Vogue, Ladies Home Journal and House and Gardens, Time decided to devote a page to the author in 1969—who was "one of the best dates to take."(3)

The article, supposedly dedicated to her political ideas and her intellectual pursuits, also discussed her relationships with Ted Sorenson, J K Galbraith and Saul Bellow. She earned the title "Thinking Man's Shrimpton," as an intellectual version of the highest paid woman model of the time. After all wasn't she the one who wrote "Paul Newman: The trouble with being too good-looking"?(4) And what about "Crazy Legs, or the Biography of fashion"?(5) Since that time, Steinem has been on the up and up—a critic who could not be faulted for sour grapes for men; someone long-described as having the longest "list of more impressive men wanting to marry her"(6); a critic stunning enough so that Playboy chose her as a bunny in 1963; and still ready to show all her oppressed sisters how they could do it all too, in several easy steps as her magazine and book articles always demonstrated.

As the feminist movement rose around 1970, Gloria Steinem was the object of Time magazine adoration. The leaderless and structureless feminist movement could only watch while it was suddenly co-opted by a bourgeois media-created star who supposedly spoke for women's concerns. In 1971, she admitted that she had come to feminist consciousness at a 1968 meeting of the Redstockings, a Maoist-inspired radical feminist group. "Before that Redstockings meeting, I had thought that my personal problems and experiences were my own and not part of a larger political experience."(7) Steinem had all the perfect credentials, including an awareness of the kind of radicalism that she would have to co-opt in order to be of any use to the bourgeoisie.

In 1972, Rockefeller-connected capitalists gave Steinem millions of dollars to set up Ms. and other endeavors to co-opt the radical feminist movement that had been in motion for five years already. Within a few years, the capitalists had an established anti-communist women's voice in Gloria Steinem. So valuable was this dependent of the bourgeoisie, who made Ms. magazine into semi-pornographic dating advice, she didn't even have to come up with the neat trick of promoting women to turn in the Weather Underground to the state in the name of sisterhood. Even without such valuable services, Steinem was worth a lot of money.(8)

The voices of protest like the Redstockings were too small to make themselves heard once the bourgeois media decided Gloria Steinem was it. This points once again to the need for a structured movement with accountable leaders, but also for

an independent media. Relying on Time magazine to expose the capitalists and their pawns is not "effective" media-grabbing politics, but opportunist stupidity. Whether it be Central America, student rights or abortion, the strategy of gaining the bourgeois media's attention through demonstrations or even spectacular acts is not "effective," but instead just what the bourgeoisie wants—a movement that panders to its media.

Now in 1992, MIM is in some ways fortunate that things are not that much more complicated than they were in 1972. The only thing that has changed is that the bourgeoisie essentially succeeded in crushing the early radical feminist movement with a liberal-psychology-based "movement" of the type Steinem was most responsible for leading. An early March 1992 issue of Time magazine features the name old large-scale, bald-faced corporate intervention in the women's movement.(9) The cover story is on the backlash against feminism with Gloria Steinem and Susan Faludi photographed alone in the corner of a room.

Now apparently Susan Faludi is a spokesperson for the 1990s the way Steinem is still the spokesperson for the 1970s. Faludi gained some journalistic experience working in Steinem's Ms. magazine.

Faludi plays a crucial role in buttressing Steinem. Faludi reinterprets the decline of Ms. magazine as occurring after "Anne Summers took over from Steinem in 1987."(10)

The fall of Ms. magazine from a feminist magazine into just another beauty-advice magazine was widely known. As a result, the leaders of co-optation decided they were losing their credibility as spokespeople against oppression. They brought in Robin Morgan to work on Ms. and they cut out all the slick cosmetics ads. Faludi's role is to back up existing pseudo-feminism by showing that a new generation of women agrees with Steinem.

MIM does not mean to say that the Steinem clique bolstered by Faludi's book promoters, Barbara Ehrenreich, Alice Walker and NOW president Eleanor Smeal, is wrong just because the book is now promoted by the Time-Warner \$18 billion

giant.⁽¹¹⁾ Rather, the pseudo-feminism represented by the likes of Steinem receives a big push from corporate sponsors.

Forever seeking ways to promote the individualism of the oppressed so that they never unite in a disciplined way and so the powerful can stay powerful. Time-Warner and other capitalists could hardly ask for better from Steinem. Here is an anti-revolutionary, anti-communist whose recent book is called *Revolution From Within*—published by a Time-Warner division called Little, Brown & Co.⁽¹²⁾ Who better than Steinem to promote the illusion once again that women's problems are psychological or emotional in nature as opposed to structural? The subtitle of the book exalts "self-esteem."

Not all feminists were asleep at the wheel while pseudo-feminism moved in for the kill in the women's movement. Two authors from the 1970s that MIM distributes, the Redstockings and Joreen came to realize from the Steinem experience that structured organizations with accountable leaders are better than having structurelessness and no leaders. Otherwise, opportunists like Steinem would claim credit for work done by the leaderless masses. It's quite easy when the capitalists giving you money to make you a feminist leader are the same people publishing your book and the same people then promoting your book by putting you on the cover of their magazine. "Leaders" with such backing easily move in to fill the vacuum left by individualist organizers.

Notes:

1. Abby Rockefeller, 'Sex: The Basis of Sexism,' *No More Fun and Games: A Journal of Female Liberation*, May 1973, Issue 6, p. 5.
2. Mary Perot Nichols, 'Ms. Steinem, are you now, or have you ever...?' *New Dawn*, May 1976, p. 37.
3. *Time*, 1/3/69.
4. *Ladies Home Journal*, April 1968.
5. *New York Times Magazine*, 11/8/64.
6. *Newsweek*, 5/10/65.
7. Nichols, p. 38.

8. Redstockings, *Feminist Revolution* NY: Random House.
9. *Time*, 3/9/92.
10. Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* NY: Crown Publishers, 1991, p. 109.
11. *New York Times*, 3/5/89.
12. *Books in Print*.

10.3 Book Review: *Feminism Unmodified*

The strength of this book is its examination of the structure of gender relations. Instead of examining issues on a personal level through anecdotes, as too much American writing does, this book analyzes and theorizes on the subject of women as a group.

Comrades should be aware of certain facts about the condition of women in the United States that MacKinnon makes constant reference to in this collection of slightly repetitive speeches:

- 44% of women in a San Francisco survey had been a victim of rape or attempted rape in their life-time.(1) (People should keep in mind that that figure is probably higher because one can never get an accurate figure until a woman is dead and the women interviewed probably had many years of patriarchy ahead of them.)
- Only 7.8% of the women in the survey said they had never experienced sexual assault or harassment.(2)
- It is estimated that between one-quarter and one-third of married women experience serious violence in their homes—some studies find as many as 70 percent.(3)
- Four out of five murdered women are killed by men; between one third and one half are married to their murderers.(4) The figure is 60 to 70% if lovers and ex-lovers are included.(5)
- Modelling and prostitution are the only jobs in which women make more money on average than men in their field.(6)
- 13% of women are or have been prostitutes.(7)
- 38% of girls and 10% of boys experience sexual assault.(8)

- Some 4.5% of all women are victims of incest by their fathers, an additional 12% by other male family members, rising to a total of 43% of all girls before they reach the age of 18, if sexual abuse within and outside the family is included.(9)

From these figures, one must conclude that while there are individual exceptions to every generalization, on the whole, women in the United States are oppressed by rape, sexual assault and job discrimination among other things. It is pointless to talk about individual experiences of people who say they are not oppressed. Whether an individual man or woman knows it or not, women are oppressed as a group in the United States.

What does MacKinnon cite as the cause of this oppression?

The mainspring of sex inequality is misogyny and the mainspring of misogyny is sexual sadism.(10)

According to MacKinnon, the standards of sexual sadism are established by pornography.

The first theme is the analysis that the social relation between the sexes is organized so that men may dominate and women must submit and this relation is sexual—in fact, *is* sex. Men in particular, if not men alone, sexualize inequality, especially the inequality of the sexes. The second theme is a critique of the notion that gender is basically a difference rather than a hierarchy... The third theme identifies pornography in America as a key means of actualizing these two dynamics in life. Pornography turns sex inequality into sexuality and turns male dominance into the sex difference. Put another way, pornography makes inequality into sex, which makes it enjoyable, and into gender, which makes it seem natural.(11)

MacKinnon deviates from the accepted feminist line, which is implemented by sexual assault centers: that rape is an act of aggression, not a product of sexual frustration or an act of pleasure for the rapist. According to MacKinnon, men are encouraged by the system to enjoy dominance of women sexually and rape is part and parcel of that eroticization of power.

In most cases, however, society accepts the inequality of the sexes because it appears consensual, even enjoyable.(12) MacKinnon's argument on this parallels Marx's analysis of exchange.

Sexuality is to feminism what work is to Marxism.(13)

While it may seem that workers agree to a contract with capitalists in exchange for wage payments, in reality, such an agreement covers up coercion underneath. The consequences for workers not to work are more severe than for capitalists.

This raises some difficulties in MacKinnon's arguments. While it seems reasonable to say that the eight-billion dollar a year pornography business, sexist advertising, etc. set standards for male pleasure, one has to wonder about this as an explanation for why women take part in romance.

MacKinnon believes the issue is one of power. On the subject of lesbianism, MacKinnon says:

... but so long as gender is a system of power, and it is women who have less power, like any other benefit of abstract equality, it can merely extend this choice to those women who can get the power to enforce it.(14)

MacKinnon believes that most women are not in positions of power where they could abstain from sex or turn down sex.

To MC5, this seems a little out of line with reality in Amerika of 1989. Women in the United States who choose not to have sex will not starve most of the time or die from other consequences. The life-and-death dependency of women on men has been severely undercut by women's entry into the work force.

Now, one can say that women may be "emotionally dependent." MacKinnon does speak of a continuum of coercion as if there were no fundamental difference between Playboy magazine and the production of snuff films. She states that:

... feminism stresses the indistinguishability of prostitution, marriage and sexual harassment.(15)

Some feminists working against sexual assault in the United States say sex obtained by men through physical force and sex obtained through "emotional coercion" are the same thing. In arguing against calling rape non-sexual, MacKinnon says:

In other words, in all these situations there was not enough violence against them to take it beyond the category of sex.(16)

To MacKinnon all sex is roughly equivalent:

Maybe they were forced-fucked for years and put up with it, maybe they tried to get it over with, maybe they were coerced by something other than battery, something like economics, maybe even something like love.(17)

On this point, MC5 deviates from orthodox feminism including MacKinnon because it is not useful to see "emotions" as the cause of oppression. Those who take the materialist approach to knowledge will immediately agree, but another way to examine the same question is to ask what would eliminate "emotional coercion" from society?

On the social level, it is not really fruitful to just tell people that their emotions are wrong. Some will get the message, others will not. What needs elimination is the capitalist romance culture—the sick advertising, “love” songs, pornography etc.—which conditions people to have sick gender relations. This romance culture must be replaced with something that conditions people to have healthful social relationships.

Yet, even seeing the need to replace today’s romance culture is not enough. One must see that this will not be possible without overthrowing the interests that romance culture protects.

While MacKinnon’s theory is coherent, it is not in line with reality. Women’s dependency on men in the United States is not strong enough to force them into being sexually available to men. (One might wonder if it is true that sexual availability of women is higher in countries where that dependency is greater.)

Even if one were to say that dependency is of an “emotional” nature, one must still rely heavily on the argument of false consciousness to back it up. Why do women remain emotionally dependent on men if the result is sexual assault, rape, high divorce rates, etc? One could say that women have bought into this culture mistakenly, that they have false consciousness.

[MacKinnon:]

What I’ve learned from women’s experience with sexuality is that exploitation and degradation produce grateful complicity in exchange for survival.(18)

This is as problematic as saying that Amerikan workers are conservative because of repression and false consciousness. In previous issues, comrades have argued that Amerikan workers are not proletarians because they have a material interest in allying with imperialism. Similarly, it is not useful to make assorted individual excuses for the majority of women who could choose to resist but do not.

Parallel to Marxism

Sexuality is the social process that creates, organizes, expresses, and directs desire. Desire here is parallel to value in Marxist theory, not the same, though it occupies an analogous theoretical location. It is taken for a natural essence or presocial impetus but is actually created by the social relations, the hierarchical relations, in question. This process creates the social beings we know as women and men, as their relations create society. Sexuality to feminism is like work to Marxism, socially constructed and at the same time constructing. It is universal as activity, yet always historically specific, and jointly comprised of matter and mind.(19)

MacKinnon reveals that the dominance of men is a matter of dictatorship covered up with the illusion of free speech.

Thus, a woman is not someone with female biological characteristics. Women are people with a certain social role. Prisoners who are forced into sexual availability are women, whether or not they are biologically men. Defining women by their biological characteristics has little use to MacKinnon, or MIM. MacKinnon says that male students also identify with women because of their powerlessness in society and their ability to identify with others in a similar position.

Financial dependency, motherhood, and sexual accessibility (our targeted-for-sexual-violation status) substantively make up women's status as *women*.(20)

By viewing gender as a social role, something that is part of a structure, MacKinnon is able to draw her most radical conclusions, many of which parallel Lenin's thinking. Her conclusions on what individuals can do about their sexuality are revolutionary and unheard of to the point that the *off our backs* reviewer who asked where MacKinnon stood on lesbianism missed the meaning of the following,

which is an answer to all individuals who ask if "all women are oppressed by heterosexuality."(21) —

The question is posed as if sexual practice were a matter of unconstructed choice. If heterosexuality is the dominant gender form of sexuality in a society where gender oppresses women through sex, sexuality and heterosexuality are essentially the same thing. This does not erase homosexuality, it merely means that sexuality in that form is no less gendered. Either heterosexuality is the structure of the oppression of women or it is not. Most people see sexuality as individual and biological and voluntary; that is, they see it in terms of the politically and formally liberal myth structure.(22)

What MacKinnon means here is that no individual gets the choice of having correct sexual relationships in the current historical situation. Individuals' choices are constructed by the system/structure.

On this structural outlook—looking at power relations between groups and the impossibility of individual choices that somehow reform the patriarchy—MC5 goes further than MacKinnon: No one in the United States is having "correct" gender relations. Revolution is the only answer.

Parallels with Lenin

MacKinnon is most well-known for her work to pass a city ordinance against pornography in Minneapolis. It encountered opposition from free speech advocates.

In her book, MacKinnon reveals that she does not oppose free speech for the same reason Jerry Falwell does. According to MacKinnon, pornography promotes women's silence.

The First Amendment essentially presumes some level of social equality among people and hence essentially equal access to the means of expression.(23)

MacKinnon reveals that the dominance of men is a matter of dictatorship covered up with the illusion of free speech. What is dictatorship? It is the repression of a group by another in deeds, not just words.

As MacKinnon points out, the production of pornography involves dictatorship (a word she does not use) over women models. Some die in its production. Others are forced into sexual acts for money, the way coal-miners are forced into contracting black lung for money.

She also argues, perhaps with less evidence (she only footnotes it, but we are not reviewing all of MacKinnon's work here), that pornography causes violence against women. Leninists see that as an act of dictatorship also.

Problems of Methodology

MacKinnon demonstrates the scientific thinking needed to liberate women. This makes her lapses into demagoguery clearer.

In trying to demonstrate the relationship between pornography and violence against women, MacKinnon goes into graphic detail about the rape and assault of a 14-year-old. The assailant was found to have pornography on his person.(24)

As MacKinnon knows, however, no length of details about the sickness of various rapes proves that pornography causes violence against women. It could very well be that the same people who would commit such acts also read pornography. Both pornography reading and acts of rape might be caused by the same thing—unemployment or other sick aspects of society.

No protests by prostitutes, rape victims or police prove that pornography causes sexual violence. Real knowledge is not a privilege of any particular group. It is accessible to all.

To answer this, MacKinnon indulges in a little me-firstism. She argues that the male dominated courts do not require causal reasoning to establish a case.(25) Men may establish in court that a damage is done through mere association, not

causation. (This may be reasonable if it would take too long to come to a scientific determination of the question.)

MacKinnon says that because men are allowed to use flawed reasoning, women should be too. This is fatal to the mobilization of a movement. The masses should not be confused by the crap that passes for reasoning in the status quo.

In fact, one might speculate that MacKinnon may actually believe that pornography is *not* the cause of rape and sexual assault. She probably knows that in some countries the rape rates are a lot lower than in the United States, which is number one in the industrialized world in rape.

MacKinnon sees her theory as a call to action against pornography. She admits that the oppression of women exists in societies without pornography. This is not a fatal admission: capitalist imperialism may be the cause of war in the 20th century, but not in the 1st century when capitalist imperialism did not exist. The causes of things may change over time and place.

MacKinnon argues that even though eliminating Nazi's or the Ku Klux Klan would not eliminate racism or anti-Semitism, no one would say that action against them are unnecessary.⁽²⁶⁾ Yet, people taking action against the KKK do not claim that it is the source of racism. MacKinnon has accorded pornography a privileged position in her theory that is not accorded to the KKK in anyone's theory of racism.

It seems that someone with MacKinnon's outlook should have shown the reader more comparative evidence. Her theory leaves obvious questions unanswered. Although she claims to be a post-Marxist, MacKinnon doesn't treat the simple theory that capitalism is the cause of rape.

The final problem with MacKinnon's theory is that it does not fit her political practice. Many implications of her theory are easily construed as revolutionary. Yet while she is known for her work on a Minneapolis ordinance, she is not known as a member of any revolutionary organization. (One gathers that she goes to radical conferences.)

She constantly complains (and rightly so) how the media have distorted her position on pornography. What did she expect? Does working through the legal system really work? Can her law be an educational tool if there is no appropriate organization and press to publicize its meaning?

Conclusion

MC5 agrees with much of what MacKinnon says. All sex occurs in the context of inequality between the genders. There is in some sense merely a continuum of coercion. It is important not to attribute the oppressions of gender relations to biological differences between men and women; that oppression is socially constructed.

Just as consensual gender relations are a myth, free speech, the right to privacy—the whole Liberal framework—is a myth that conceals power relations underneath. Dead people have no free speech; that includes women killed by pornography. Male, bourgeois dictatorship is the reality.

MC5 doubts, however, that there is as much false consciousness as MacKinnon says. Just as J. Sakai demonstrates in *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat* the material basis for what appears to be the false consciousness of white American workers, there is a material basis for the behavior of American women. As class, nation and gender are often closely intertwined, Sakai’s analysis should be a starting point to explain the apparent complicity of American women in their oppression.

Anyone with a comparative analysis of women’s oppression—for example rape and sexual assault rates, especially in China under Mao or in other socialist countries—is encouraged to enlighten MIM for future issues. The centrality of pornography in MacKinnon’s theory should be held up to the test of reality.

[Future issues of MIM Theory will continue the discussion of MacKinnon’s work. All are invited to contribute.]

Notes:

1. Catharine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 23.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 24.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 52.
6. Ibid., p. 24.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., p. 41.
9. Ibid., p. 51.
10. Ibid., p. 5.
11. Ibid., p. 3.
12. Ibid., p. 7.
13. Ibid., p. 48.
14. Ibid., p. 14.
15. Ibid., p. 59.
16. Ibid., p. 88.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 61.
19. Ibid., p. 49.
20. Ibid., p. 72.
21. Ibid., p. 60.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 129.
24. Ibid., pp. 185-6.
25. Ibid., pp. 191-2.
26. Ibid., p. 222.

10.4 Book Review: *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*

In October, 1991, The New York Times Magazine featured pseudo-feminist scholar Catharine MacKinnon as the subject of a flattering cover story. The article noted that:

Even some of MacKinnon's allies suggest that her polemical fervor sounds, as one put it, "Stalinist."

In the following week, the Hill/Thomas spectacle [*Ed. note: The Anita Hill vs. Clarence Thomas court battle*] erupted and hypnotized millions. Suddenly, MacKinnon was On The Air being consulted by television anchor-men as an expert in feminist legal theory and issues of sexual harassment. Regarding Hill's witnessing against Thomas, one Media-Mind asked MacKinnon, "Is one alleged instance a pattern?" She replied. "He's not dead yet."⁽²⁾ Short, sweet analysis like this had caused Judge Richard Posner, a "leading legal theorist," to accuse MacKinnon of "depict[ing] the United States as a vast conspiracy of men to rape and terrorize women."⁽¹⁾

To her credit, MacKinnon has developed and promoted a theory of sexuality which describes rape as a sexual act inextricably linked to a continuum of coercive social activities marking all sex as shades of rape and all rape as acts of sex. MacKinnon espouses a theory of gender as a socially constructed hierarchy of power based on socially imposed inequalities. "Sexual pleasure is the experience of power," she says.⁽³⁾

Her writings, based on a comprehensive synthesis of liberal feminist theory from John Stuart Mill to Shulamith Firestone, treat women as an oppressed group dominated by a Patriarchy that maintains its economic supremacy through force and social/cultural intimidation. Disregarding male-biased theories of gender as rooted in biological difference, MacKinnon demonstrates that pornography *is* sexuality. She holds that male-supremacist, culturally-conditioned acceptance of never-ending

violence against women, and sexual sadism, are the social norms around which Amerikan social codes and jurisprudence orbit.

In MacKinnon's Amerika, men need not "conspire" to rape women; normal, everyday interaction between the genders is rape itself.

MIM agrees with this analysis. Based on the evidence of gender oppression and the world-wide exploitation of women as a group, MIM advocates the overthrowal of all capitalist states, the armed suppression of the Patriarchy in all its forms, and the continuing up-lifting of social consciousness through the material annihilation of capitalist and patriarchal institutions.

MacKinnon, on the other hand, implicitly denies that gender oppression is the direct result of historical modes of production that have overwhelmingly restricted the ownership of private property and means of production to men as a group. MacKinnon supported the mass-murder of the Iraqi people.⁽⁴⁾ MacKinnon is not a Stalinist—she serves imperialism.

More specifically, her theories and her practice stop light-years short of ending gender oppression and, by relying on bourgeois dictatorship and bourgeois law as vehicles for social change, she is complicit in the daily horror that is life for all women oppressed by patriarchal imperialism. Hence MIM labels her a "pseudo," or false, feminist.

Her strategy and tactics are predicated on the gender interests of well-to-do white women in Amerika and the class interests of the Amerikan bourgeoisie as a whole. MIM has found her analysis to be useful in breaking open the ground for discussing the intersection of class, nation, and gender contradictions from the perspective of the most oppressed and exploited: women living in the Third World, and in the internal colonies within imperialist countries. Now MIM finds it useful to expose MacKinnon's methodology and practice as supportive of the continued rule of men. Unfortunately, her aim is set but little higher than the profit-seeking sights of the common, capitalist pornographers she so effectively exposes as enemies of all women.

MacKinnon's *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* correctly criticizes Marx and Engels for treating the division of labor known as "women's work" as "natural" and biologically determined. MacKinnon remarks that:

... to define women's status solely in class terms is entirely to miss their status as women defined through relations with men...(5)

MIM recognizes that Marx and Engels were not Gods. They were men subject to the gender brainwash of their time. Despite this limitation, they recognized that:

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common...(6)
[glorified prostitution]

They called for communist revolution...

... to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production...(6)

Marx and Engels could not benefit from the advances in gender theory made possible by the mass movements towards women's emancipation that have occurred since their day. They tended to an analysis in which "consequence is presented as cause."(7) They saw women's role in the reproduction of labor-power, in agriculture, and in housework, as naturally derivative from biological givens, as opposed to labor-roles historically enforced on women through social control and sexual terrorization. Marx and Engels tended to one sidely see Patriarchal relations as primarily feudal, guided by the transference of private property through male lineage, and as remediable by bringing women into the public work-force.

Today, we can see that the rule of men over women is, itself, a necessary aspect of all capital accumulation and growth. Even under socialism, patriarchy will not

be instantly wiped away through laws mandating equality or comparable pay for comparable work. The feminist political economist Claudia von Werihof describes the insidious process of gender-domination more accurately than Marx could or MacKinnon can.

Three-hundred years of witch-hunting, running parallel with the colonization of the world, were necessary to snatch from women—as from Third World people—their power, their economy and their knowledge, and to ‘socialize’ them into becoming what they are today: housewives and ‘the underdeveloped’ ... artificial product(s) resulting from unimaginably violent development, upon which our whole economy, law, state, science, art and politics, the family, private property and all modern institutions have been built. The Third World is the ‘witch’ of witch-hunting days and is ... ‘the world-housewife’ [of] today, including Third World men. The relation between husband and wife is repeated in the relation between the First and the Third World.(8)

Unraveling the political economy of capitalist “super-profits”—derived from below subsistence waged labor in the oppressed nations—and “housework” and unwaged labor, in general, is essential to understanding how monopoly-capitalism has infested every nook and cranny of the Earth.

The ability of Third World women to reproduce cheap labor, through birth and unpaid domestic work, provides the material basis upon which First World women enjoy a standard of living—of class, nation, and gender privilege—which allows them to partially free themselves from dependence upon any one man; even as they remain dependent upon their ability to sell their sexuality on the job market to all men as a group.

In her critique of Marxism, MacKinnon accurately notes that:

It is exactly by seeing the relations between women and men as a system that feminism has grasped the systemic indifference to the

specificity of which woman works for and services which man or many men, such that sexual relations are social relations.(9)

Despite insights critically derived from studying Marx, MacKinnon devotes one-third of her book to demolishing "post-Marxism." In her frenzied attempt to annihilate Marxist political economy as a basis for social change, she relies upon the logic of bourgeois, "classical" economists and confuses abstract *value* with the *price* of a concrete commodity. She fails to grasp Marx's essential thesis that value is determined by the socially necessary labor-time it takes to produce a commodity.(10) Consequently, she also fails to reach the understanding that capital itself is produced by the masses and not by individual capitalists.

MacKinnon's tortured and futile compulsion to disprove Marx leads to a gradual reduction of her grip on the essence of gender oppression. She throws away the most effective scientific tool for social revolution and is left with no greater plan for social change than advocating "conscious[ness]-raising," and petitioning the State through law-suits. She hopes that by achieving a legal status equal to men, women will somehow influence the Patriarchy to reform itself.

Trapped in her own self-imposed, limited construct, she half-heartedly exclaims that:

The military draft has presented the sameness route to equality in all its simple dignity and complex equivocality: as citizens, women should have to risk being killed just like men. Citizenship is whole.(11)

MacKinnon represents class, nation and gender-privileged woman whose interests are directly tied to Amerikan imperialism. Her intelligence, wit, and analytical abilities notwithstanding: her heart and pen lie with the enemy. Despite touching on many provocative and mind-expanding subjects, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* demonstrates a flaw fatal to any practice that would end gender oppression.

In a key passage, MacKinnon says:

Objectivity assumes that equally competent observers similarly situated see, or at least report seeing, the same thing. Feminism radically questions whether sexes are ever, under current conditions, similarly situated even when they inhabit the same conditions... The line between subjective and objective perception ... presumes the existence of a single object reality and its noncontingence (sic) upon angle of perception.(12)

By denying the existence of an objective reality, in which the motion of matter produces the life processes we understand as rationally knowable contradictions, MacKinnon sinks into the very swamp of idealism she claims to be floating above. Karl Marx, a bourgeois intellectual who committed class suicide, commented that:

It is not the consciousness of men (sic) that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.(13)

It is a cornerstone of Maoism that all oppression is a material force and that the rule of any group over other groups may only be usurped by revolutionary material forces. Today MIM looks to find, ally with, and lead these material forces. The revolutions of oppressed nations, the revolutions of oppressed classes, and the revolutions of the gender-oppressed go far beyond MacKinnon's feeble attempt to excuse imperialism as a state of mind.

Notes:

1. NYT Magazine 10/6/91, p. 30.
2. Network TV 10/11/91.
3. Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, p. xiii.
4. Rally in Ann Arbor MI.
5. MacKinnon, p. 9.
6. Marx/Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, FLP, 1975, p. 56.

7. Feminist State, p. 25.
8. Maria Mies, *Women: The Last Colony*, Zed, 1988, p. 177.
9. MacKinnon, p. 77.
10. Ibid., pp. 78-80.
11. Ibid., p. 221.
12. **The source was accidentally left out of the original print of MIM Theory #2-3.** The quote can be found in MacKinnon's *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*.
13. **The source was accidentally left out of the original print of MIM Theory #2-3.** The quote can be found in Marx's *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977.

Part III

Cultural and Sectarian Reviews

Chapter 11

Magazine Reviews

William Kennedy Smith, Bill Clinton, U. Mass. Gang Rape, Mike Tyson...

MIM could sell a lot of magazines or tabloids dancing around the issue of gender, but MIM knows that people can fixate on the trees and lose the forest. Taking on gender oppression case-by-case will never solve a thing.

When Engels organized exploited workers in the 1800s, he opposed organizing purely economic struggles that pitted employees against individual employers. Such an approach by organizers who assumed workers could not understand political struggle has been called “economism” by Marxists–Leninists.

In the decadent United States, the problem of economism is more severe than anything Engels ever knew. Individual worker struggles simply make worker conditions better for workers in the United States, and that makes U.S. workers even more loyal to U.S. imperialism.

What is true in worker struggles is even more true in gender struggles. Most of the public impact of various individual gender struggles is titillation. The pornography that is an expression and cause of gender oppression is a self-feeding spiral. Pornography is the cause of some forms of rapes. Aired once in Hollywood

or magazine form, pornography gets a second life in trials, tabloids and television news.

The proof is that the people who have nothing to say about things like Third World contraceptive testing, the arranged marriages that the U.S. supports through military aid to reactionary institutions, and women's liberation movements globally—these same people and organizations are the ones running pages and pages of news stories or hours of television shows about Clinton, Mike Tyson or William Kennedy Smith.

The left-sexual-liberals and pseudo-feminists play into this pornography by acting as if all sexual oppression would disappear if everyone just talked about every individual fact in every individual case. The sexual liberals don't believe there is anything wrong with the system. There are just some individuals that need their attitudes changed and then everyone can go on and have good sex, according to the sexual liberals, Freudians and pseudo-feminists.

In contrast, MIM members study sexuality in Amerika and they know that there are many severe and general problems with Amerikan sexuality that can never be fully addressed in individual struggles. MIM will not allow the patriarchy to divert MIM from building the independent power of the oppressed to seize power through armed struggle. Only that way can we do something real about gender oppression.

11.1 The Fab Feminist 'Zine

This magazine [issue 1] is self-described by the Fab Feminist Network (FFN) as "feminist, activist, anarchist" and in favor of direct action.

Our hope and our fantasy is to begin an international network of radical women interested in performing coordinated direct actions against the oppressive capitalist, patriarchal, racist society we live in.(p. 2)

Women with guns and women kicking men in the groin are repeated graphics in the 'zine. This is not to say that the magazine advocates a consistent strategy for armed revolution. Rather it seems to support individual acts of resistance and direct action ranging from spray painting sexist billboards to killing men. "Dead men don't rape," reads page 16. A very militant spirit pervades the whole issue, which is an important reason for MIM to be in touch with FFN circles.

The paper also has a strong anti-imperialist emphasis with articles on the indigenous peoples of North America and women prisoners of war. For this reason alone, MIM has a lot to agree with in the FFN mag. First World feminist movements traditionally ignore the U.S. imperialists propping up institutions that oppress Third World women, institutions that would often be overthrown if it were not for U.S. aid to supporters of arranged marriage, female slavery, forced sterilization and female infanticide.

Points of difference and struggle between the FFN and MIM

One disagreement that MIM has with the magazine is its eclectic view of revolution. It makes approving references to the Russian Revolution and includes a graphic of the Peruvian Maoist women. However, the magazine is anarchist and doesn't totally say where it stands on the communist road forward. What has the FFN learned from the history of various radical women's movements besides that they exist?

Another difference between MIM and FFN is the magazine's support for reformism. For instance, working through the court system to get restraining orders on husbands and convictions of rapists. Nowhere does the FFN treat the fundamental failure of the criminal injustice system to solve any social problem, sexual or otherwise. Nor does the FFN point to the underlying coercion in all acts of sex, a fundamental necessity to taking a radical approach.

The magazine talks about patriarchy as if it were a system, but then it always talks about individuals as if men were reformable with restraining orders, rape convictions, etc. Militance in this case boils down to supporting every individual act of resistance without a larger plan. For example, KPN [*Ed. note: KPN is an FFN*

comrade] writes about the Tawana Brawley case without addressing why it is that the Amerikan masses, including women, did not believe her or why it is or is not impossible that Tawana Brawley lied.(p.3) Why did the prosecution in the case end? The FFN implies it was just a case of experts snookering the masses.

The theme of the elite manipulating stupid men and women is seen in other articles as well. One article blames cosmetic surgeons for the oppression of women and suggests direct action and violence against cosmetic surgeons. No where in the article inspired by the Dow Corning breast implant story does FFN deal directly with the women who choose breast implant surgery.

This approach represents what MIM calls paternalism—the role of protecting women no matter what they do, a role reserved for traditional men but also adopted by many feminist-minded people. Paternalism is closely bound up with pedestalism. The revolutionary feminist Redstockings [*Ed. note: Redstockings of the Women's Liberation Movement, a second-wave feminist organization co-founded by Shulamith Firestone*] explained the basic idea behind pedestalism very well: feminists put women on the pedestal in order to obtain the approval they desired but never obtained from men. The approach appoints women as existing angelic reservoirs of non-oppressive sexuality, instead of yearning for the revolution that would help men and women get beyond the roles that they play both consciously and unconsciously.

This pedestalism in the FFN forms a potent mixture with the direct action approach which caters to the imperialist patriarchy's press. Why does FFN imagine so many direct action stunts to pull, stunts like kidnapping plastic surgeons or hanging William Kennedy Smith in effigy? Part of the answer from the FFN is: "make the news."(p.1)

What FFN fails to realize is that such stunts are in essence no different than posing as models for pornography, except that models at least get paid for what they do. It means whitewashing the media by catering to it, catering to a medium controlled by the imperialist patriarchy instead of forming an independent movement with its own independent media to inform the public.

While FFN notes that pro-choice movements must be pro-choice not just for race and class-privileged women, FFN misses the sexual privilege of predominantly First World women. Compared with their Third World counterparts, First World women collaborate with gender oppression through their enjoyment of cosmetics, cosmetic surgery, Third World tested birth control, expensive clothing and the hiring of psychiatrists at \$70 an hour. First World women as a group regularly enjoy these privileges, privileges open to Third World women only as individuals and usually only upper class Third World women. The basic reason that First World women do not revolt against the patriarchy is that First World women receive too much sexual privilege and control over Third World women and men from going along with the game.

Of course, many would retort that MIM is blaming the victim, in this case the victim of the beauty standards created by men. However, there is no beauty standard issue in cosmetic surgery where there is no privilege of cosmetic surgery. It is only the privilege of First World women that makes the whole issue possible in the first place.

One might as well organize a movement supporting millionaires injured in yacht or golf cart crashes. Sure, capitalists perpetrate fraud when they can get away with it and they make unsafe products. The point is that when a bourgeois drowns because his defective yacht sinks, no movement does or should arise to get the professional yacht seller or blame the prestige connected with owning yachts. Instead, the person oriented toward the Third World proletariat will conclude “it was just another day in a wasteful, dying, meaningless and decadent imperialist society.”

The case of cosmetic surgery raises very acutely what it is women are fighting for. Cosmetics are a luxury. Anyone who says that they are a necessity of life because of the coercion of men underestimate the privileged position of First World women in the first place and implicitly finds women so hopelessly stupid that they need protection from their every whim and fancy in the second place. It boils down to saying women are too weak to resist the solicitations of the imperialist patriarchy to indulge in luxuriant but decadent sexuality.

In contrast, MIM knows that it is not possible to reform men through individual acts of resistance and it is not possible to forge a feminist movement by overlooking the sexual privileges of First World women. Whatever happened in the Tawana Brawley case and whatever people were really inquiring about and what standards of fairness they were trying to apply, MIM knows that all sex has coercion underlying it. There is no need to deny any facts that might arise in individual cases of oppression— to deny the objective facts, for instance that “hair B matches hair B” might have some meaning in rape cases.(p.3) All sex is rape and only those individuals who fail to understand that gender oppression is a system will seek to exclude certain types or cases of sex as untainted by coercion.

Anger and a sense of justice do not lack in the Fab Feminist ‘Zine. What is missing is a determined effort to sort out what strategies and movements have gone forward historically and which ones have simply recycled the patriarchy. Perhaps future issues could address:

1. What has proved historically effective to accomplish the FFN’s correct and worthy goals?
2. Why does the FFN agree or disagree with the Maoist approach?

11.2 Wingspan: Journal of the Male Spirit

Wingspan does not claim a Marxist or leftist orientation of any kind, but MIM cannot ignore it because its subject is an important one in these times of struggle and contradiction for women’s liberation. This periodical already has a circulation of 110,000 and may be part of an emerging trend in U.S. society.

With the collapse of so-called socialist states around the world, many bourgeois commentators have said that Marx’s ideas are dead dogmas and that socialism is finished. Instead the 19th century ideas of Marx appear vanquished by 18th century ideas of Adam Smith, not to mention Thomas Jefferson.

When the communist movement fails to drag society forward and capitalism rules in all its contradictions, some in society will turn to ideas prevalent before the 18th

century. This is especially true where capitalism seems to fail, but socialism has yet to arise.

Wingspan is an example of an escape toward pre-scientific thinking in order to soothe the suffering of the current world. While some ideas, like pre-capitalist notions of respect for the environment, may have some merit, on the whole, the turn to pre-scientific thinking is reactionary and can only worsen social problems, such as those concerning the role of men in contemporary society. By itself, all the best-mentioned pre-scientific thinking can never solve society's problems.

By pre-scientific thinking, MIM means something not explainable. Ultimately Wingspan's ideas cannot be communicated. An example is Wingspan's call to drumming. Somehow drumming is supposed to have some value for men. (p. 2 letters, "Excerpts from 'Drumming on the Edge of Magic,'" p. 10, "War Drums/Life Drums," p. 11) What value drumming has cannot be said or repeated in effect from man to man. In this light, drumming as a therapy of some kind is vastly inferior to acupuncture, which is not well understood but has a demonstrable and repeated effect from one person to the next.

Not surprisingly, the author of one article for drumming is a percussionist for the Grateful Dead who advocates putting together a New Age beat. Ads for drumming also fill the paper.

Not far beneath the call to magic and mysticism is the commercial rip-off. The great preponderance of advertisements is for psychology or psychiatry—counseling, books or tapes. Sometimes the psychiatry is called spirituality, sometimes some exotic name from the mystical past. In all cases a flim-flam awaits an individual seeking a solution to social problems—conflicts with fathers, loss of female companionship or repressed male sexuality being some of the major ones. [See MIM's article "Abolish Psychology" (p. XX of this volume) on the 0% effectiveness of psychiatry and psychological counseling.]

In this sense Wingspan is not much different from many women's papers that advocate spirituality, witchcraft, psychology and various treatments for the individual spirit. The preponderance of women's papers like this reflects the socialization

of women to retain an isolation from power—state power and economic power. Society channels women into focussing on spirituality, magic, romance, bourgeois fiction— anything but power. There are many more Wingspan-type papers for women than there are for men.

In the case of Wingspan, however, the dynamic is partly reaction to the pseudo-feminist movement and partly a simple conscious or unconscious exploitation of people's personal problems in current society. In the sense that society often purports to have liberated itself and granted women equality, to the extent that many women claim such liberation and to the extent that all such claims are incoherent nonsense at present, men will start to have a consciousness of themselves as men. In response to all the contradictions of patriarchy, capitalism and inherently hypocritical pseudo-feminism, men may choose social escape from the problem, reactionary backlash or revolutionary change.

It's comic how just as the women's movement sometimes claims to have independence from men, Wingspan desperately reaches to write an article on how the men's movement has nothing to do with reacting to women:

The mythopoetic majority are apples that co-exist peaceably enough with women's-issue oranges. (p. 3)

The article goes on to sketch a little history of all-male secret societies.

With the dissolution of traditional family structures and roles in Amerika, one can expect more publications like Wingspan. Their only value is to take some of the edge out of male anger that might be channelled into more dangerous directions like wife-beating, the anti-choice movement and various religious movements.

11.3 off our backs

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 37, April 1989 —

off our backs presents a thorough and international feminist view of the news. This issue [vol. xix, no. 3] features articles on the International Conference of Jewish Feminists and women against the occupation, both Palestinian and Israeli. The conference was initially planned by the American Jewish Congress and the World Jewish Congress and deliberately excluded all discussion of the occupation and political issues. A second article (authored by Marcia Freedman, former Knesset [Ed. note: Knesset is the Israeli parliament, or legislating body.] member and founder of the Israeli feminist movement) discusses the protest of the Conference by women dedicated to ending the occupation and insisting that feminism is political.

An interview in this issue is with a member of *Angry Women*, a British underground movement which bombs pornography and sex shops. The group was active from 1978 to 1984 and was never apprehended by the state in spite of numerous bombings. Yet the interview still shows the failure of the Weather [Underground] line and the dangers of advancing to armed struggle too soon, without adequate support. The feminist interviewed concluded:

[The bombings] didn't have a lasting effect. By the very nature of the activity, it couldn't. Not unless there is a strong nation-wide feminist campaign that will campaign on every front.

Other highlights include an interview with an African feminist, a section on lesbians in Cuba, and numerous national and international reviews. *off our backs* is excellent except for the section on abortion which simply supports the Roe v. Wade decision rather than offering an analysis of why it fails to protect the practice of abortion. For example, privacy—the mainstay of the Roe decision—is also used as the basis for denying welfare funded abortions in the Harris v. McRae.

Overall, *oob* is revolutionary and free to women prisoners (not to men though).

11.4 “The Last Days of Madame Mao”

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 60, Jan. 1992 —

Roxanne Witke, author of *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*(1) contributes an update to the psychoanalytical sex-gossip saga of Jiang Qing in Vanity Fair's December issue. We recommend that everyone check it out at the supermarket. But be sure you don't pay a penny for it. The article is a mixture of Readers' Digest-style history and National Enquirer-style gossip, featuring sensational accounts of scandal, rumor and innuendo surrounding Jiang, Mao and the sex lives of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members.

Jiang Qing did not look kindly upon this type of gossip the way some supposed feminists would. Instead she backed an essay called "Gossip is a Fearful Thing" by China's famous writer Lu Xun.(4) Knowing this, Roxanne Witke proceeds to repeat gossip stories anyway.

Witke also errs in saying that Mao did not accept responsibility for national disasters during the Great Leap.(5) Quite the contrary, unlike leaders of state elsewhere who rarely admit to being wrong, Mao made self-criticism for the errors of the Great Leap, while holding it was still more of a good thing than a bad thing.

Without fanfare, Witke reveals something MIM did not know, that Premier Zhou Enlai arranged for Witke's interviews with Jiang Qing. The same faction of the party that Zhou Enlai headed then supposedly released the interviews in a book titled *Empress of the Red Capital* to make it appear that Jiang Qing had betrayed the country in order to become "empress." Witke mentions the book only by rumor and it appears that she does not know if its contents are genuine or not.(6) Many communists in the West have been confused by Zhou Enlai's popularity and the comparisons between Zhou and Jiang; they should note Witke's revelation.



Figure 11.1: Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing, 1946.

The article does push the limits of the traditional Amerikan corporate-media version of Chinese history by mentioning Deng Xiaopeng’s crimes, although this is becoming more mainstream in the Liberal press in the wake of the Tiananmen massacre of 1989. Witke observes:

One of [Deng’s] worst worries was that she would outlive him to tell the full story of his numerous betrayals of Mao.(2)

The article covers ten pages of *Vanity Fair*—with plenty of big glossy ads for designer jewelry and exotic resort hotels. Despite covering many important subjects, this

article serves the patriarchy by perpetuating a trick against the masses identified by Catharine MacKinnon:

There is an urgent need... to define women by who they have sex with—without that, people don't seem to know how to read.(3)

Notes:

1. Roxanne Witke, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1977.
2. Roxanne Witke, "The Last Days of Madame Mao", *Vanity Fair* 12/91, p. 134.
3. Catharine MacKinnon quoted in *New York Times Magazine*, October 6, 1991, p. 53.
4. "The Last Days of Madame Mao", p. 144.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Chapter 12

Book Reviews

12.1 Backlash, the Undeclared War Against American Women

Backlash is an excellent resource for information on the patriarchal policies and practices of many major U.S. corporations, figures, and organizations. Filled with historical data, thorough case histories, and many personal interviews. [Susan] Faludi's book reads like a mixture of sociological studies and politically-correct gossip on the patriarchy and sold out ex-feminists.

Faludi bases her book on the idea that American society experiences a series of feminist upsurges which are inevitably followed by antifeminist backlashes, a process that she describes as a spiral of progress and retreat for the feminist movement that never reaches its goal of equality.

Faludi backs up this bleak historical outlook for American feminism with some convincing statistics. Her case is based on studies from all sectors of American life that show progress and then retreat for women, particularly focussing on what she says is the most recent backlash after the advances made by the women's movement of the 70s and early 80s.

The reader's interest in what could be a dull sociological study of historical trends in feminism is held by the many stories of real life anti-feminists. From leaders in the garment industry to pop-psychologists to female right-to-lifers. Faludi depicts their motivations for personal power through interviews and anecdotes of their lives, presumably attempting to explain to the reader the pervasiveness of this anti-woman campaign.

This is not a bad book for people to be reading. It is much better than most best sellers. The tactic of individual life stories and motivations is not the only evidence offered by Faludi of the obstacles presented to women, but unfortunately a number of sections in the book are just anecdotal without statistical evidence. For instance, Faludi cites the many anti-woman movies (and the motivations of their producers) of the past decade as evidence for the complicity of the movie industry in the current backlash, but she never offers any statistics on the preponderance of such movies compared over time.

As a sociological review of American women, the book presents a lot of useful data. And the book contributes to looking at the patriarchy as a problem of group power in society rather than individual incidents. Although Time magazine pointed out some errors of Faludi's work, the book is particularly useful for refuting incorrect anti-feminist theories by correctly criticizing their method and data. Faludi describes how the media and the government use these incorrect theories to create public opinion.

MIM believes that it is possible that Faludi is correct that there is a rise in anti-woman propaganda and actions in America after women make advances against the patriarchy. But MIM asks, what is the significance of this phenomenon? It is important to understand that the bourgeoisie and the patriarchy often resort to increased fascism in the face of opposition. But it is even more important to develop an understanding of the most effective way to fight the bourgeoisie and the patriarchy through historical experience.

Faludi's book fails to provide any useful analysis, instead falling into the patriarchal paternalism that she professes to hate.

To expect each woman, in such a time of isolation and crushing conformism, to brave a solitary feminist stand is asking too much.(1)

As Faludi develops the story of patriarchal dominance of different sectors of society in each chapter, she also develops a story of women unable to resist, forced to give in to whatever that sector demands. From clothing to marriage, Faludi portrays women as pawns, forced to take part in whatever the patriarchy offers up.

It is exactly this paternalistic view of women that will doom any women's movement before it begins. Faludi's weak conclusion that women should form a women's party and pursue electoral reform—but don't because of the backlash—is a good demonstration of the failings of this paternalist attitude.

Faludi sees women as victims of an overpowering system. Rather than asking why women in Amerika have not risen up in revolution to overthrow the patriarchal demon that is the cause of their agony, Faludi describes women's oppression as unavoidable, in fact often women do not even realize they are being oppressed.

A cursory reading of history will show that people who are oppressed and suffering so that they have little to lose by rising up and overthrowing their oppressor are easily organized against their oppressor. These people are not duped by the propaganda of the oppressor forever: they are easily convinced of the correct ideas of revolution, at least relative to bought-off Americans.

Rather than wistfully wishing for a more successful feminist movement, Faludi should be questioning why Amerikan women are so unaware of their oppression. Faludi is playing into the biological determinism that she disparages—if women don't get it they must be inferior: all the men know what's up. Faludi even admits this:

All of these men understood the profound force that an American women's movement could exert if it got half a chance. It was women, tragically, who were still in the dark.(2)

Fund for the Feminist Majority founder Eleanor Smeal agrees:

The reason men 'overreact' is they get it.(2)

MIM understands that women in Amerika are not inherently stupid. They are not just "in the dark" and unable to act because they don't understand what's going on. Women in Amerika, the women that Faludi talks about—mostly white women—don't overthrow the patriarchy because they do not want to lose the privileges it gives them.

Women of the white nation receive certain privileges from the patriarchy. By using women and men of the Third World to test contraceptives, First World women can rest assured that their contraceptives are safe. First World women can accuse Third World men of rape to control Third World men and gain privilege in First World society.

First World women are oppressed by the patriarchy. But First World women are also able to use the patriarchy to their benefit. While Third World women are forced to work long hours just to feed their family, First World women can use the patriarchy to gain access to certain jobs and advancements.

If the abolition of the patriarchy were truly in the overall interest of First World women, they would refuse to use their sexual privilege to get ahead in society, they would refuse to accept the exploitation and oppression of all women, and they would ally with all women in a movement to destroy their oppressor. MIM understands that this will not happen. There are strong women's movements in the Third World, but they are not organizing against men, they are allied with the men of their nation, to fight imperialism and the patriarchy.

Material interest will not cause First World women to join the movement to overthrow the patriarchy which feeds off of Third World people, supported and used by imperialism. Material interest can only cause First World women to ally with the imperialists while trying to achieve relative equality with their men. This is a

delicate fight: don't overthrow the patriarchy, just eliminate its negative effects on First World women while preserving the privileges gained from it.

MIM does not wonder why there has not been a successful feminist movement in Amerika. Overall, First World women are on the privileged end of the oppressors in relation to the patriarchy. MIM works to expose the myths of First World pseudo-feminism that is setting back the real fight against the patriarchy and against imperialism.

Notes:

1. Susan Faludi, *Blacklash, the Undeclared War Against American Women*, New York: Crown Publishers Inc., 1991, p. 59.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 459.

12.2 Jung & Feminism: Liberating Archetypes

[Ed. note: This review takes a critical look at *Jung and Feminism*, a book by Demaris S. Wehr; in *Jung and Feminism*, Wehr is criticizing the views/work of C. G. Jung (a Swiss "psychiatrist" and "psychotherapist"). In other words, this is a criticism of a criticism.]

I originally intended to review *Jung and Feminism* as part of an article on psychology and its reactionary uses and uselessness to the proletariat. Unfortunately, there is so much to say about the book that it requires its own review.

I. Where Jung and Wehr Fit In

Wehr proudly labels herself a feminist and hints that the book, a distilled Ph. D. dissertation, is a much toned-down criticism of C. G. Jung's work, which is a substantial branch of psychology descended from Freud. The Freudian school of psychology was once dominant, but has since surrendered first place to the cognitive school of psychology. Another major school of psychology with less popularity is behaviorism, one with some affinities to Marxism, that I will not cover here.

Cognitive psychology has its attraction for students, especially socially constructed women because it concerns the development of mental processes. This is of obvious concern to mothers and teachers. The notion that there should be a science to improve human learning capacities is a very attractive ideological draw for psychology. In society today where women are taught that their respected role is to raise children well, psychology appears to give women the best of both worlds—a chance to fit into traditional roles and be scientific about it while getting a college degree.

Freud, on the other hand, focused on sexual motivations and sex-derived behaviors. While cognitive psychology is attractive to women. Freudian psychology's very subject matter is of direct concern to feminists.

Jung and Feminism contains no empirical material, no experiments or studies of histories of people. It is mostly a theoretical work, with lots of generalizations and stories relevant to women, all of which fall within the Freudian tradition.

II. Idealism

Wehr addresses the reasons Jung is popular among women:

The primary appeal of Jung's psychology to women, it seems to me—based partly on my own experience—is that it is a “meaning-making” psychology... Analytical psychology offers a balance to an overly rational, materialistic world and can shed light on the darkness of a soul lacking meaning. It can be the path to a person's spiritual awakening.(1)

The translation for the above should be “Jungian psychology takes women away from the issues of political, economic and military power in society and channels them into areas where they will have no power, but where they will feel unchallenged by men, or anyone else for that matter.” The attraction of Jungian psychology is part of the socialization of women in this society.

As if to underscore the point, Wehr writes:

... The religiousness of Jung's psychology is an important part of its appeal and strength.(2)

Furthermore, according to Wehr:

Jung's view of the contemporary world situation offers the most complete psychological/spiritual explanation of it I know.(3)

Throughout the book, Wehr demonstrates hints of awareness that Jung's psychology is an exercise in what Marx criticized as idealism. But idealism is what Wehr is proud of in following Jung.

MIM critics will often say that going back to a 19th century thinker like Marx is not progressive. Yet, in 1987 people still publish books as if it were 1787. In fact, Wehr is kind enough to point out that Jung's philosophical roots are in Kant, an 18th century philosopher, and Plato, an ancient Greek philosopher.(4)

Until everyone recognizes that ideas stem from material conditions, it will be necessary to refer to the 19th century to refute the thinkers of centuries prior to the 19th century. Jung in particular is a particularly clear-cut idealist, in the Marxist sense of the word.

When Wehr speaks of "archetypes of liberation," she is referring to ideas that can be discovered in collective psychic life. This kind of approach comes from Kant:

James Heisig [*Ed. note: Heisig is a religious philosopher noted for his books on the notion of God in Jungian psychology.*] notes that "Kant had already demonstrated, at least to Jung's satisfaction, that 'there can be no empirical knowledge that is not already caught and limited

by the *a priori* structure of cognition.” Kant’s demonstration seemed to Jung to pave the way for his own concept of an inherited, collective, psychic structure that “conditions all experience, conscious and unconscious.”(5)

Ultimately, the ideas or archetypes to be found through psychological investigation come from God and are called God-images. For this reason, some Jungists, including Wehr, have simplified Jung to say that the collective unconscious is God and that Jungism is another religion.(6)

Psychology is left to discover those ideas or images left by God in the collective unconscious. That is to say those ideas are already there, just as God-given rights are granted to every individual, according to the founding fathers of the United States.

This kind of philosophy is very compatible with psychology’s search for fixed traits in individuals as an explanation for the existence of the status quo. These fixed traits, or “images” in the individual are so permanent that “reason and will are nothing against it.”(7)

One of the results is that “internalized oppression in women has the power of this kind of image. It is far deeper than rationality and thought can reach, and therefore, rational thought, or even mere insight, is not powerful enough to silence it. In women, by the time oppression has been internalized, it has the character of fervent conviction.”(8) Such is also an explanation for why women cannot simply adopt a rationalist method for liberating themselves, as Marxist feminists would. In Wehr’s thinking, women must essentially come to grips with God before they can liberate themselves. Such a plunge into mysticism is a diversion from the rational processes women need to achieve equality, and a further reinforcement of women’s powerlessness in the real world.

Long ago Marx criticized the Jung of economics who applied Kant’s philosophy:

He does not regard economic categories as the theoretical expression of historical relations of production, corresponding to a particular stage of development in material production, but arbitrarily transforms them into pre-existing eternal ideas, and that in this roundabout way he arrives once more at the standpoint of bourgeois economy.(9)

Wehr asks some damaging questions about the idealist approach in examples concerning women without following through:

If a prostitute were to come to a Jungian analyst's office, the analyst's goal would be to free her from an identification with the unadapted aspect of the hetaira archetypal image [the "characteristic" of someone who forsakes emotional commitment while carrying on brief sexual relations]. The question I raise is, why archetypalize (sic) the experience of such a person in the first place? Doing so always gives a cosmic dimension to social arrangements.(10)

Here, at least in this case, Wehr recognizes that searching for individual character traits in a prostitute would not have a liberating effect. What she suggests instead is in fact not an endeavor in psychology, but something more akin to the study of social institutions. So the real question Wehr should ask is, "Why do psychology in the first place?"

III. Therapy

From Wehr's point of view the liberation of women is a matter of conducting the proper struggle in psychiatry, which is the practice of psychology. She hammers home the following statement twice in the book:

Sexism and its psychological companion in women, internalized oppression, are still so widespread in our society that any psychological theory and practice which does not take those facts into account and oppose them unrelentingly is not a freeing therapy for women.(11)

Here Wehr starts with the assumption that it is possible to solve the oppression of women through individual treatment. In reality, there is no evidence that psychiatry has any effectiveness in treating individuals for their many diagnosed problems, unless it is medical treatment for which no psychological theory or psychiatry *qua* psychiatry is necessary.

IV. Women's Self-Hatred

Referring to inner voices in women which tell them they have no worth and that their lives have no meaning in the world, Wehr starts to reveal the reactionary agenda in so-called feminist psychology. According to Wehr these voices in women, brought about by society, are part of the internalized oppression of women.(12)

Therefore, it is on the inner level that this voice wreaks the most havoc, since it paralyzes women from within, causing them to collude in their own destruction, or at a lesser degree of intensity, to accept their own lack of development.(13)

In this statement Wehr holds some implicit assumptions common in psychology. One is that a sense of self or self-esteem is a good thing for the individual. Two is that to obtain that self-esteem critical voices must be squelched or balanced out with positive ones. That is to say what is necessary is an adjustment to existing forces that cause degrading images in women's minds.

From a Marxist point of view, this is simply individualist ideology masquerading as the theory behind "therapy." In contrast. Marxists believe the individual is the product of ever-changing material circumstances and institutions—class position, educational institutions, the family, etc. The concept of the "self" is a hangover from religious thinking where God-given integrity and conscience are placed in every individual. There is no scientific evidence that such a thing as the "self" exists.

Wehr can help an individual to adjust to and enjoy existing society and its institutions, but she has nothing to say about the kind of self-criticism that puts an

individual within a current seeking to transform society. On the contrary, Wehr's approach precludes the ideological radicalization of women and hence does women profound damage.

Again on the subject of women's negative self-images, at the end of the book Wehr shows how not to criticize Jung while trying to adopt a fence-sitting position:

By advocating awareness of the social oppression of women, I am not suggesting that women need not be self-critical, that they are innocent and guilt-free, or incapable of doing wrong or wielding power over others in harmful ways. People with poor self-esteem can inflict great harm on others, and indeed often do. But I am pointing to the wounding effects of a misogynist society on women's self-esteem and the corresponding effect of Jung's psychology when he echoes patriarchy's attitudes.(14)

Wehr nowhere explains how self-criticism is positive in her scheme of things despite this fence-sitting disclaimer at the end of her book.

What is more, Wehr does not distinguish between revolutionary criticism and self-criticism and reactionary criticism. Of course women are going to face lots of nonsense criticism from the patriarchy. Such criticisms must be invalidated, but this is not possible in a thoroughgoing way without simultaneously undergoing revolutionary criticism and self-criticism. Accepting reactionary criticism is bad, but so is simply avoiding it without a real rebuttal. Conservative women will buy into reactionary criticisms of women. Feminist reformist women will simply avoid the criticisms or "balance" them by building "self-esteem." However, the only way to thoroughly destroy reactionary criticism is to defeat it with the revolutionary criticism of arms, as Marx would say. That way women will no longer have to balance their lives between reactionary criticism and idealist escape.

V. Individual

Women who adopt the individualist approach of psychology also damage themselves by coming to believe that they have stable personality characteristics. Rather than mastering their environment and circumstances, women simply adjust to fit into their environment given certain assumptions about their supposedly permanent personality traits. Those assumptions generally cannot help but be determined by the patriarchy at this time.

The concept of the individual is also reactionary in its own right, not simply for its consequences. While it is indeed reactionary for women to tie their lives to romance with men, it is also reactionary to promote individualism as the solution. The individualist answer precludes collective and cooperative arrangements in life.

The reader can see the anxiety dispersed in Wehr when she explains that it is unnecessary to imitate Jung as if he were Jesus Christ, because Jung himself did not want it that way.

To imitate Jung, then, would be to fall into the same folly. Theoretically, as the self manifests itself increasingly in a human life, the individual becomes uniquely herself or himself—not an imitation of any other.(15)

Phhewww! God worked it out so each of us would be different, implies the idealist Wehr.

What the book ends up recommending should be relabeled selfish narcissism for women. Men are supposed to become a little less selfish and women are supposed to be more selfish. That would be the perfect balance in Wehr's view. Even men would benefit from this adjustment, according to Wehr.(16)

VI. Adjustment

Individuation [the process of becoming an independent person] is the core process in analytical psychology. It is the goal of life and the way

one becomes truly oneself—the person one was always intended to be. Individuation is both process and goal.(17)

The above quote is quintessential individualist, idealist adjustment ideology. It's individualist because it says the goal of life is to become an individual. It's idealist because it speaks of becoming "the person one was always intended to be." Wehr should have added "intended to be by God." Finally, the statement is adjustment-oriented in its totality because its goal is to fit into what God had in mind, which is obviously the status quo.

Another sign of Wehr's inclination to have patients adjust to systematic oppression, instead of overthrowing it, is her stance on sex between the psychiatric analyst and the client. Criticizing Jung, she says:

[He] omits consideration of the power differential between analyst and analysand [a person undergoing psychoanalysis]. If a male analyst has intercourse, or even engages in flirtation, with a female patient, he will be playing into her social conditioning to find her worth in her attractiveness to a man. This confirmation of her sexual attractiveness will not help her emerge to full personhood, since any therapy that does not challenge internalized oppression in a woman is not a freeing therapy for her.(18)

Jung had had a longterm romantic relationship with at least one client.

In the above quote, Wehr unintentionally gives the system of oppression credit. Wehr writes as if analysts were the only men with more power than women. She then proposes a solution that implies the solution is changing of individual practices concerning sex. Yet the very practice she proposes reinforces the problem she is speaking of. Having sex with the analyst does not help the woman, says Wehr, but not having sex does, again confirming that the woman's self-worth has to do with her individual sexual behavior. Wehr leaves out the reality that the whole problem of the woman's oppression is located somewhere outside the question of having

sex with an analyst. The adjustment that Wehr suggests for clients is that they sometimes build a self-image apart from sexual attractiveness, a self-image hinging on withholding sex.

Adjustment number two that Wehr proposes is that somehow the power differential between men and women can be modified so that powerful men do not have sex with powerless women. If society prevents analysts from having sex with analysts, that's one step forward, says Wehr. Other inept feminists have applied the same logic in targeting professor–student relations or boss–employee relations for prohibition. Feminists in each area have their favorite power differential for prohibition. None of these feminists propose communism with its equality of classes and genders, the only real solution to the problem.

Feminists supporting adjustment number two never stop to think through the implications of what they are saying. In society there is a group of heterosexual men and there is a group of heterosexual women. (By the way, the argument is unchanged for lesbian and gay relations stratified by class.) The two groups are unequal in power regardless of sexual policies concerning analysts, professors or even employers. Prohibiting sex between any individual woman and any individual man or any subgroup of women and subgroup of men does nothing to solve the power differential. Any individual heterosexual woman who manages to have a more “equal” romantic relationship can only do so at the expense of other women who must then choose from men even more powerful, or not have sex. In the United States today, the vast majority of women do not choose asexuality, and end up with men much better-off economically and an average of five years older. Equality is not a matter of individual choice, so it is not the fault of any individual. The contradiction of the power differential and “self-esteem” in sex cannot be solved on an individual basis or a policy basis. The only solution is equalization of the genders overall.

Another example of Wehr's adjustment ideology, which is common in psychology as a whole, comes in her discussion of neurosis. We have seen that Wehr sees thoroughgoing criticism and self-criticism as unnatural. She never really considers that maybe women should be angry with themselves and with society and not

simply adjust to it by balancing whatever pair of opposites comes along even if both are oppressive—having and not having sex to build selfhood for example.

Neurosis, according to Jung, is a conflict between the individual's conscious being and the unconscious being. Neurosis is something people need psychiatrists for, according to psychiatrists.

People experience neurosis under many guises in their lives, perhaps as a relationship conflict, or as depression, or as inability to do work.(19)

It is typically assumed in psychology that one should not have relationship conflicts, get depressed about the oppressive system we live in or find work unappealing. When these things happen, the psychiatrists say the individual has a neurosis, instead of saying imperialism should be overthrown. The thinking of psychiatrists on this point is both self-interested and protective of the status quo. They make money trying to help people who are square pegs fit in round holes.

Notes:

1. Demaris S. Wehr, *Jung and Feminism: Liberating Archetypes*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1987, p. 6.
2. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Ibid., p. 8
4. Ibid., p. 28.
5. Ibid., p. 78.
6. Ibid., pp. 77-97.
7. Ibid., p. 94.
8. Ibid., p. 22.
9. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1978, p. 217. **Original emphasis removed.**
10. Wehr, p. 160.
11. Ibid., p. 11.
12. Ibid., p. 18-21.

13. Ibid., p. 20.
14. Ibid., p. 121.
15. Ibid., p. 96.
16. Ibid., p. 114.
17. Ibid., p. 49.
18. Ibid., p. 72.
19. Ibid., p. 58.

12.3 Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease

I highly recommend Joan Jacobs Bromberg's book *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease*. Thousands of women in the United States die each year by starving themselves to death to meet dominant cultural beauty ideals: thin is beautiful, fat is ugly. This book is valuable because it traces the origins of anorexia from the second half of the 19th century to the 1980s, and compares the disease with women's religious fasting during the European Middle Ages. This review will focus on the historical methodology Bromberg employs.

Anorexia is found mainly among upper middle-class women in the United States, Western Europe and Japan. It is uncommon in the Third World except among elite women educated in the United States or Europe. In the United States, it is rarely found among working-class white women, and almost never among Black women.(1)

Brumberg makes a number of observations concerning historical methodology that every reader ought to memorize because they are so important to critical social analysis. Some writers have made glib comparisons between religious fasting by women and anorexia today; these commentators have claimed that such behavior has a biological basis in "women's nature." Brumberg writes:

Just because a behavior occurs across cultures or times does not necessarily mean that it has the same cause or that it is biologically based.(2)

She then explains:

The story of anorexia nervosa lays bare the extent to which disease is a cultural artifact, defined and redefined over time, and therefore illustrative of fundamental historical transformations. Consequently, my response to the frequent question, “is anorexia nervosa a new disease?” must be somewhat ambiguous: anorexia nervosa is a historically specific disease that emerged from the distinctive economic and social environment of the late nineteenth century.(3)

Brumberg shows that anorexia is not the same disease that it was 100 years ago because society has changed.

[T]here are significant new behavioral symptoms that mirror contemporary culture—namely, pervasive hyperactivity and competitiveness. Among affluent young Victorians food and eating were at the center of a web of associations that had a great deal to do with gender and class identity. The same is true today, but broad social and cultural forces, particularly the intensification of messages about the female body, have prompted the urgency of appetite control and generated a new experience of the disease in the twentieth century. Anorexia nervosa used to be an isolated and idiosyncratic disorder; over the past few decades it has become both more familiar and more formulaic, and its physical symptoms are now more acute.(4)

Brumberg quotes Charles E. Rosenberg in a pioneering study of cholera in the nineteenth century:

A disease is no absolute physical entity but a complex intellectual construction, an amalgam of biological state and social definition.(5)

There are three major explanations of anorexia:

1. biomedical;
2. psychological, and
3. socioeconomic (what Brumberg calls the cultural model).

Brumberg clearly emphasizes the socio-economic or cultural model. The only criticism I have of Brumberg is that she does not clearly explain the dialectical relationship between culture and economic institutions; although in practice she does emphasize the relationship between anorexia and class/gender social relations in a capitalist economy. Brumberg does an excellent job of tearing apart biomedical explanations of anorexia. Some doctors have linked anorexia to imbalances in hormones that occur mainly among women.(6) Brumberg agrees that women who are anorexic may well have hormonal imbalances, but she demonstrates that these biomedical indicators are the effect of anorexia rather than the cause. It is hard to argue that anorexia is primarily caused by genes or hormones when only upper class women in the United States, Europe and Japan get the disease. No one has seriously suggested that working class white women in the United States have different hormones than upper middle class women; although some bourgeois scientists probably would put forward genetic explanations for why Black women rarely contract the disease.(7)

Brumberg demolishes psychological categories of anorexia:

The psychological paradigm is incomplete, just as the biomedical model is, in that it fails to provide an adequate answer to the same thorny problems of social address, changing incidence, and gender. After reading the psychological literature, one still asks: Why is the anorexia nervosa “epidemic” restricted by class and confined to societies like our own? Why are we experiencing more anorexia nervosa today than we did fifty or one hundred years ago? Why is it that adolescent girls and not adolescent boys engage in this form of development struggle?(8)

Brumberg shows anorexia has changed over the last 100 years as class/gender structures have changed in response to socio-economic developments in United States, English and French capitalist societies, although the main focus since 1900 is on the United States. During the second half of the 19th century prosperous middle class families could afford to keep their female children out of the labor force. Young women stayed at home until they married, typically in their early 20s.(9) What we now call adolescence was created by the burgeoning prosperity of middle-class families during the late 19th century. Before this time women married younger and all but members of the higher aristocracy performed at least some domestic work. Obviously, working-class women started laboring at a very early age. Middle-class adolescent women were privileged in one sense because they did not have to work or yet reproduce, but they were highly dependent and controlled by their parents unlike their brothers, who had far greater educational and employment opportunities. Starvation was one socially acceptable way for middle class young women to rebel against parental control.(10) To some extent Victorian women fasted to meet cultural values about beauty, but those social pressures were weaker then than they are today.(11) Ideal female body size in Victorian culture was larger than today and women were required to wear such bulky clothing, that it was more difficult to tell whether a woman was thin or not.(11)

Brumberg provides information on how American popular culture since 1900 has put pressure on women to be very thin. The ideal female body size as presented by mass media has become much slimmer than it was in 1920. Thin movie and television stars have become models for many young women.

Brumberg goes beyond mere generalities about cultural ideals in the mass media. She points out that food today is usually loaded with sugar and fat. Just go eat a Big Mac at McDonald's. Fast food and prepared food are loaded with calories.(12) People have the choice of getting fat or constantly dieting to stay thin. Dieting itself is big business with all kinds of pills and dietary supplements offered to help people lose weight. Some of the emphasis on changing diet and increasing exercise is positive, but all the media hype about getting in shape can lead at least some people into dangerous diets.

Brumberg makes a valuable point about the competitive aspect of modern anorexia in the 1980s. Women are entering the labor force in record numbers today; although on average they earn far less than men. Women today are educated in competitive behavior to get ahead in the business world, this is especially true among upper middle-class women. It is not surprising that competitive values spill over into dieting and beauty. Distorted capitalist values about individualism and competition contribute to anorexia.

Beware of bourgeois genetic, hormonal or psychological explanations for behavior that is really socio-economic in origin.

Notes:

1. Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, p.280 n. 14.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-28.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 188.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 188, 254. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

Chapter 13

Film and Video Reviews

13.1 Barbarian Queen

By the end of this movie, it is clear the director is seriously attempting a Marxist-feminist happy ending. Led by a vanguard of women fighters of an oppressed tribe, the peasants, slaves, gladiators and oppressed tribes generally rise up to overthrow a king and his slave-owning guard of men. The difficulties of getting each of the oppressed groups to trust each other and time their attacks comes out toward the end, as each group of people is mobilized to act in its interests.

That includes mobilizing the athletes, men used in sport—gladiating. These men are used just for their bodies and their leader is the love-object of the “barbarian queen,” who herself is the best fighter of them all.

Other interesting features of the film are women rising up in arms to stop rape by slaveowners, and a battle between a revolutionary daughter child and an older and pragmatist reformist father. The child ends up persuading the father back on to the revolutionary road and playing a major role in battle herself.

Mulling the ending of the movie, and also its opening with a rape scene, one comes to a second impression that this movie is revolutionary indeed. However, rethinking first impressions still leaves strong doubt.

That one doubt can be boiled down to one word—dress. The women warriors wear a variety of clothes from a time set somewhere back in the barbaric past. But sometimes they seem to be dressed in bikinis with their shoulders and thighs covered with other garments.

Gorgeous women dressed so provocatively make this a film that panders to gendered male viewer interests. That especially includes the barbarian queen who somehow manages to keep her hair extraordinarily clean, blonde and flowing, unlike everyone else in the film. It's as if Eros triumphs over drab Evil.

If the director had good intentions either as a male chauvinist Leftist or as a pseudo-feminist, it was a case of Freud meets the box-office. How appealing feminism and leftism can be if it just keeps that sex going! Keep those women erotic!

At the end of this grueling movie of murders, tortures and rapes, the barbarian queen, who is seen pining for her imprisoned gladiator love-object, briefly in the midst of battle, gives her gladiator a kiss. See how those strong women can still be sexual?

Yet, even this bit of Freudian de-repression theory, as Catharine MacKinnon would say, would be a minor problem taken just at face value. It is only combined with other facets of the movie that the erotic side is ultimately so damning of the movie.

Repeated scenes of rape and murder mixed in with the male pleasures and fantasies make this a dangerous film. It will teach people to eroticize violence, perhaps all the more convincingly because of its pseudo-feminist political veneer.

It would be nice to be able to write this film off as a joke caricaturing revolutionary feminism; however, the director gives no clues in that direction. The hint of sex is not inserted that ludicrously in the midst of a lot of serious fighting.

It is a difficult task, even for supposed feminists, to draw the line between women as helpless, fearful objects on the one hand and Freudian de-repression reaction on the other hand. MIM does not wish to downplay the importance of a confident sexuality and the freedom of women to adopt such a sexuality, but *Barbarian Queen*

errs in the opposite direction of depicting revolution as too close to a male wet dream.

13.2 Starship

This movie begins with a few scenes of covert classrooms for children, where a resistance movement is educating them in correct politics. Interspersed with scenes of youth culture and recreation (mostly video games), the resistance is portrayed as a core of battle experienced youth. The leaders, two women, a man and a droid robot, all have advanced technical skills and undying commitment to Liberation.

This is a low budget sci-fi film made in the 70s or early 80s. The plot is centered on a resistance movement made up of youth, fighting evil, highly sophisticated robots who are controlled by a few ruling humans on a planet inhabited for mining. The rulers are exploiting the labor of the youth, labor that will soon be replaced with much more efficient robots, making the youth unnecessary and therefore dispensable.

The only older human characters we meet are the two evil men who work with and control the robots. Clearly a parallel to the anti-war resistance of the Vietnam era, this movie does a good job of demonstrating the effectiveness of planned armed resistance by the people and their power to overcome difficult odds.

The leadership and skill of the women in the resistance movement were given at least equal play with those of the man. Aside from the leaders, the youth shown as actively supporting the resistance are primarily women. The message of the strength, ability and conviction of women to the revolution is an important part of the film.

The value of many lives over the value of one is a major theme in the revolutionary sacrifices made by our heroes. In an odd addition to the plot, the revolutionaries are helped along by a nihilist character who killed everyone it saw—fortunately for the resistance, more enemies than friends. It is not suggested that the heroes would have failed without this twist of fate. They correctly took advantage of the

circumstances and were able to recognize nihilism when it became their direct enemy.

In spite of its often too predictable dialogue and difficult to follow turns of events, this film should have been an inspiration to the revolutionary youth movement when it was released, and it retains its value today.

13.3 The Little Thief

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 40, March 1990 —

This movie rambles through the life of 16-year-old Jiennie Costang. Raised in poverty by her aunt and uncle, she is a thief first order. She drops out of school after being caught in many thefts and takes up life as a house maid. An older man pushes her into secretarial school because “you need more education.” She meets a man her own age while he’s robbing the secretarial school office. The two pull a major heist then flee to the country, but the police catch up with them and Jiennie is off to a women’s prison run by nuns.

The realistically harsh prison is the best part of the movie. Jiennie takes up with another woman there and they escape together. Then Jiennie discovers she’s pregnant. When she and her prison friend part, her friend gives Jiennie her most precious possession: a camera. She returns to the town where she grew up to a greedy old woman who charges exorbitant prices for back-ally abortions. Jiennie hawks the camera, but then goes back the same night to steal it. With the pregnancy unresolved she gets on a bus which disappears into the landscape.

The movie really suffers from a shitty ending. It leaves the audience with the message that from now on all Jiennie will steal are images; this contradicts the reason people steal. No greater opportunity is seen on the horizon for an indigent, pregnant, 16-year-old fugitive from justice.

Truaffault [*Ed. note: the film's director, François Truffaut*] does a good job painting a picture of a woman who has a positive outlook in spite of having nothing. Jiennie's kleptomaniacism is believable. But the political content ends there and for the most part the movie is a boring romance. As mass culture goes there are a lot of worse movies and this one is certainly not counterrevolutionary.

13.4 Little Vera

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 40, March 1990 —

Little Vera follows a Russian woman just out of high school as a vehicle for understanding the conflict between modernizing forces of Soviet life and her family's more traditional values. Her father's alcoholism is symbolic of conflict between the old and new generations—when he is drunk he rants about the state of his family, his daughter and his job.

Vera and her one woman friend use sex as an escape. It represents both their value to men and something new and hopefully better than the traditions their parents offer.

Little Vera is a strong, woman-centered view of Russian life. It does not have the heartstring manipulations or emotional rollercoasting of a Hollywood movie. It is more documentary. It's worth seeing for its detailed view of the family and relationships in Russian society. As fiction, the main message is obtuse, but the treatment of women and general alienation of the family show the failings following the world's first existing socialism. Hopefully not too many Americans will ignore the existence of these problems under capitalism. The difference is wealth.

13.5 The Handmaid's Tale

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 41, May 1990 —

A lot of people who read Margaret Atwood's book were disappointed by the film. The movie doesn't live up to the book, and it makes a lot of Hollywood-style compromises. But the basic structure of the story survives, so it's still got a lot more going for it than most Hollywood crap.

The story is about the United States after a fascist fundamentalist Christian takeover—in a society where women have been stripped of all power, in the name of protecting them from pornography, and are openly ruled and controlled by men. Women—like everyone else—are divided into castes, depending on their reproductive capabilities.

Some women live as (non-child-bearing) 'wives' of rich men, some women serve as rape-victim-mothers, some are laborers, and some are banished to the "colonies," where they have to clean up toxic waste until their limbs fall off. The child-bearing women are called Handmaids, and they live as sex slaves to men—if they don't succeed in producing children they get shipped out. The concept of men's impotence has been abolished to lay responsibility solely at the Handmaids' feet.

The drama, which takes place only a handful of years in the future, involves one Handmaid's attempts to keep from falling into the dead mental state demanded of her. She eventually joins the revolutionary movement.

One of the advantages of the film is that in creating visual imagery for the story, it helps make clear that it's taking place in Massachusetts virtually in the present day. This is easy to forget in the novel because of the tortuous, introverted, first-person narrative.

Major disappointments include the dramatizing of the Handmaid's "love" affairs, the glorification of her maternal "instincts," and her dependence on the men in the revolutionary movement.

13.6 Swept Away

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 43, Aug. 1990 —

In this movie, a male Southern European follower of the Communist Party and a Northern European wife of a bourgeois [man] become shipwrecked and make their way to an isolated island in the Mediterranean.

The first half of the movie is the woman yelling haughty insults at all lower class peoples of supposedly inferior intelligence including the sailor she is with. Once shipwrecked on the deserted island, however, she becomes enslaved to the sailor in order to survive.

[Trigger Warning: This section describes graphic depictions of sexual violence. The editors recommend that readers who find this kind of content disturbing or triggering, avoid it. The end of the triggering content will be clearly marked.]

The sailor uses repeated violence to bring his slave into line. Finally he assaults her sexually, yelling political statements the whole while. He tries to make her admit that she wants to be fully penetrated, but he fails to carry through. Instead he demands love and asks her to think about it.

She discovers that rape is what she wants. She likes being “mastered” and makes references to “primitive” impulses.

The whole enslavement scenario is typical of decadent imperialist culture, eroticizing violent domination and other forms of power. Both the man and the woman enjoy brutally forced sex.

When the woman sees a boat pass by the island she hides from it for fear of being rescued and losing her “master.” She has fully eroticized her enslavement and feels that she is in love with a real man for the first time in her life.

The movie, however, is more insidious than having two simply flawed and contradictory characters. These characters are realistic.

The movie is made to help the viewer become an accomplice to the enjoyment of sexual violence.

A man and a woman are trapped on a paradise island where they fish with wooden spears and wash their clothes to survive. Included in this is everything from the flowers that appear throughout sex and the sand dunes where the man assaults his slave.

The filming technique amounts to repeated and various scenes of the couple on the island. In the midst of violence, the film-maker cuts to very specific scenes of enjoyment, rushing in to an ankle caressed by a hand here and a back embraced there. A person would almost have to be crazy not to enjoy what was happening, which is more credit to the insane.

[End of Triggering Content]

When the two are rescued, their confusion of eros and power continue. The woman claims to continue to love the sailor, but only in private where the husband won't hear.

The sailor arranges for the two to go back to the island, but she refuses after initially accepting. She never articulates any reasons for opposing anything that happened before the rescue and just cries a little. This may be realistic, but it means that in the whole movie the film-maker decided never to release her audience from complicity.

In the end, the sailor is left cursing upper-class bitches just as in the beginning and he returns to his wife.

The movie makes out communists to have this confusion of eros and power, which of course they do but consciously struggle against. This message is insidious here because the producers have access to many more media resources to reach and confuse people about communism than the communists have to undo the propaganda.

Swept Away is unfortunately very realistic. Love of power is conflated with “natural” love under capitalist patriarchy, and movies like this one help perpetuate the problem.

13.7 The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 44, Sept. 1990 —

This movie is centered around a posh, decadent restaurant and the patriarch who owns it. The anti-capitalist, anti-materialist message is clear, culminating in a feminist-worker alliance to smash the boss.

The “thief” who owns the place, Albert, has the resources and the inclination to terrorize anyone who gets in his way, as we see in the first scene when a man who apparently owed the thief some money gets badly beaten, stripped, covered with dog feces, pissed on and abandoned. That man and many others like him are rescued and aided by the cook, who is a key organizer in the struggle of the poor masses against the ruling class.

The restaurant is a microcosm of capitalist society, portraying the masses as exploited kitchen labor under the thumb of a wealthy clientele. The kitchen is dark and ominous; on the other side of a massive wall, the dining room is plush red velvet. Set in contemporary England under a French Revolution-era motif, the movie boils society down to the two extreme classes, eliminating the complication of the so-called middle class.

The thief is a batterer, and his pig friends are ready and willing accomplices to the repeated rape, physical torture and public humiliation of his wife, Georgina. But one evening, Georgina’s eye is caught by a stranger across a crowded room, and the two of them slip away to the bathroom for a quick fuck between the soup and salad. The affair proceeds in this pattern.

The initial appeal of the affair is in the escapism of dangerous deception and anonymous lust. (It is several days before Georgina and Michael introduce themselves.) Eventually, Albert gets wind of the situation and plots a grisly revenge.

Aesthetically, this is a difficult movie to stomach. Some reactionary violence-ridden movies serve to anesthetize the public to violence and oppression-dampening criticism of the violent capitalist status quo. While these movies show violence of the excessive, impersonal, shoot 'em up variety, *The Cook* has numerous personal, designed-for-the-situation, humiliating torture scenes. The upshot is that the movie correctly presents violent oppression as ugly as it really is. It should be difficult to stomach, not fun to watch.

13.8 Mo' Better Blues

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 45, Oct. 1990 —

Black filmmaker Spike Lee has produced another controversial movie which few critics have correctly analyzed. Like his others, it's been called sexist, with anti-semitism added to his crimes.

Cultural criticism is a useful vehicle for discussion and analysis of social practices and how they are influenced by political-economic factors. Here we examine *Mo' Better Blues* in the context of a "monogamy vs. free love" debate, given the overall oppression of women by men, and the economic realities of women and power under capitalist patriarchy.

What the critics are calling sexist in this movie is the assertion that, as a result of Amerikan oppression and domination, Black men are in such a state of moral crisis that they don't deserve Black women, who are held in higher moral esteem. There is a differentiation here between the state of Black men and women in Amerika today, and this makes a lot of people uncomfortable.

This whole idea of crisis is not to be confused with the “state of crisis in the Black family” which Daniel Patrick Moynihan believes to be the cause of suffering of the Black nation, instead of the symptom it is.

Expose the Patriarchy

People eager to ascribe the sexist label to Lee’s protective and paternal attitude implicitly maintain that under the current circumstances women can and will attain genuine power, if individual men clean up their personal practices.

MIM asks: Is it inherently sexist to create a female character who is up-front and honest about the way she gets what she wants, (a singing career) by sleeping with a man who promises her just that? Spike Lee is exposing an ugly reality, which is that although women have the talent to succeed in powerful positions, the system is not set up for them to attain that power based on their merits. Movies like *Mo’ Better Blues* portray portions of patriarchal reality, that doesn’t mean they uphold it.

Just showing oppressed women is not a progressive thing; if it were, pornography would rule. But in *Mo’ Better Blues* the women recognize and challenge their oppression, and the man with the misogynous practice meets a fable-like, poetic justice—to a point. This shows a conscious realization of systematic oppression. Likewise, showing women succeeding in impossible, fantastical ways suggests that women could make it if they try hard enough, within the patriarchal status quo.

Bleek Gilliam, the trumpet-playing hero played by Denzel Washington, leads a self-centered life as a fiercely dedicated musician, subordinating all other aspects of his life to his work. In one scene Indigo, one of Bleek’s two womanfriend/sex objects, tells him that her mother warned her that getting involved with a musician would surely mean a broken heart. He assures her that he’s not the guy her mother was talking about. As both she and the other woman reach the end of their tolerance and dump Bleek, the movie becomes the story of Bleek’s decline and fall. In retribution for his selfish, sexist lifestyle, Bleek gets dumped by both women and then has his mouth broken in a fight. His career is ruined.

But the movie, and especially the ending, is ambiguous. He is rewarded in the end when Indigo agrees to “save his life” by marrying him and having his son. Why is Indigo still waiting for him a full year later, and why should she save his life when he seemed set on ruining hers?

One could infer from the rather vague and hurried last few scenes that *Mo’ Better Blues* is encouraging a life of monogamy/marriage. MIM doesn’t want to put words in Lee’s mouth that he didn’t intend. But if this is indeed the message, then MIM supports it as the most progressive one for women next to advocating asexuality.

Time with the Kids

Although MIM recognizes child rearing as an important tenet of Black nationalism—part of the effort to rebuild strong community bonds—the Party maintains that women will not be revolutionaries, nor be in a position to seize state power, while their time is almost fully consumed by children. Because MIM insists that Black women are an important revolutionary force, this line extends to them as well.

MIM agrees with Spike Lee’s own response to the charges of anti-semitism as articulated in his Aug. 23 letter to the *New York Times*. How does 10 minutes of screen time devoted to a real phenomenon compare with the long history of Hollywood’s racist depiction of Black people? Some Jewish capitalists who have made money off the direct exploitation of Black entertainers. Again, another ugly reality is exposed and hammered home in the name of the night club: “Beneath the Underdog.” Jews as a group, including owners Mo and Josh Flatbush, may be an underdog overall in Amerika, but Blacks are beneath them—clearly worse off as a group in this country than Jews.

Why Monogamy?

Mo’ Better Blues comes closest to MIM’s proposed theory that monogamy is the best alternative to asexuality—a personal practice of no sexual relationships—under capitalism and the patriarchy.

Because women, with few exceptions, are economically dependent on men, this oppression is inseparable from class struggle. As a communist party, MIM seeks the abolition of all group power and oppression.

Men as a group have more money than women do, and it is mens' interest not to share money with women, thus not to have forever-commitment relationships in which this would be required.

It is upper-class women who have defined the feminist position as anti-monogamy because they have their own economic resources, and indeed their own choices. They don't want the domination of one man. The freedom they are advocating is a privilege few can afford. The overall sexual paradigm under capitalism is still one of eroticization of power and subordination even if in some individual couples both partners are economically independent. MIM refers readers to Catharine MacKinnon's *Feminism Unmodified* for a more in depth explanation of the eroticization of power theory.

Audre Lorde, *Black Feminist Lesbian "Warrior"* puts it this way:

Poor and third world women know there is a difference between the daily manifestations and dehumanizations of marital slavery and prostitution, because it is our daughters who line 42nd Street.(1)

Economic Security

More revealing evidence is found in infant mortality rates, which are higher for single mothers than for married women in Amerika. According to Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics, this is true for both whites and Blacks. The CDC proposes that "... the principle benefits of marriage to infant survival are economic and social support."(2)

Women are more economically secure in monogamous relationships than in either serial monogamy (one relationship at a time, but without forever commitment) or free love situations.

MIM is not telling single women to go out and get married. Nor is MIM encouraging battered women of any class to stay with their assailants. The theory on monogamy is rooted in wanting to secure the immediate material interests of women, and challenging the notion that in non-monogamous relationships women have any kind of freedom from sexual exploitation. What is the freedom in sexual exploitation from a series of men who make no commitments, and provide no financial support? Those who insist, “We don’t want men’s fucking financial support!” are, most likely, able to support themselves under the patriarchy.

Under communism, when power of groups over other groups is abolished, conditions will be correct for sex and romance to mean something other than dominance and subordination—and then maybe we can have really free love.

Right now, the best choice is still to be a loveslave of the international proletariat.

Notes:

1. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master’s House,” Comments at “The Personal and the Political” Panel Second Sex Conference, October 29, 1979.
2. AP in Ann Arbor News 8/3/90.

13.9 Wild At Heart

— Reprinted from MIM Notes 45, Oct. 1990 —

[Trigger Warning: This section describes graphic depictions of sexual violence. The editors recommend that readers who find this kind of content disturbing or triggering, avoid it. The end of the triggering content will be clearly marked.]

It’s hard to tell what David Lynch is up to. Do the scenes in *Wild At Heart* that so disturbingly link violence to eroticism make a critical statement about how sex

is defined as rape in American culture? Or are they simply meant to eroticize violence, to turn the audience on—with a touch of titillating horror at itself—at the sight of women's sexuality being molded and dominated by violence?

If it is the former, Lynch is certainly wildly inconsistent in his critical outlook (so long as sex and true love coincide, he infers, the violence is okay). And the fact that such a fundamental question exists seems evidence for the latter explanation: if he wanted to make a critical statement, he could have made it emphatic enough to expunge such doubts. But Lynch's overt connection of sex to violence is sufficient to warrant some examination.

Lula, his 20-year-old heroine, leaves her hometown with her boyfriend Sailor to escape her mother's jealous clutches. She's already been raped once, by her uncle, and had an abortion. Hot in their pursuit are a gang of hit-men and women, controlled by a man named Reindeer, about whom we know only that he is very rich and likes to surround himself with topless sexslaves. (Sex is overtly portrayed in the flashback rape scenes and in the Reindeer scenes as a manifestation of and a means to enforce women's subordination. The links between sex and physical violence and economic coercion are hard to miss).

While Lula is laying in bed in a hotel room that stinks of vomit (she has just figured out she's pregnant), Bobby Peru, a Vietnam vet in the employ of Reindeer, knocks and asks to use the bathroom. Lula, uncomfortable, gets out of bed and lets him in. He assaults her. She struggles, but he forces her to press against him. He holds her chin up so that his lips almost touch hers. "Say 'f— me,'" he says, "and I'll leave. Say it. F— me, f— me, f— me." And he repeats it until Lula, trying to resist, whispers "f— me," and has an orgasm. Peru laughs and leaves the room. Lula, stricken, stares at herself in the mirror and goes back to bed.

Feminist author and lawyer Catharine MacKinnon says women are socialized to enjoy their subordination. What better an example of the twistedness of capitalist society's construction of gender than a woman who, despite her effort at struggling against it, orgasms as she is raped?

Scenes like this paint an ugly and realistic picture of gender relations in Amerikan culture, but no matter how accurately they reflect reality, they deserve criticism for bordering too closely on glorification of the power dynamic they portray. Any critical edge the movie may have is significantly dulled by the steamy and apparently equally earth-shaking sex scenes between Lula and Sailor. *Wild At Heart* offers love as a refuge. It ends with the reunion of the star-struck lovers, and the literal message “don’t turn away from love.”

So—surprise, surprise—Lynch hasn’t made a revolutionary feminist movie. But he has made a thought-provoking one, and MIM would recommend it over most other mindless and oppressive Hollywood goop out there.

[End of Triggering Content]

