

Revolutionary  
Integration

Tijuana Open-Border Rally

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# HOUSTON Moment of Truth for Feminists

by Val Carlson, Monica Hill and Madlyne Scott

**W**e traveled to Texas for the National Women's Conference not to see the bourgeois politicians and media stars but to link up with the unprecedented convergence of the nondelegates—the outsiders and antifascists like ourselves.

We knew that the real show was not the government-financed and controlled confab, but the informal, unofficial gathering of the committed feminists seeking a post-Houston strategy against the rightwing assaults on women's emancipation.

We confidently expected that although the compromisers dominating the conference would preach patience and "equanimity," the militants and the uncorrupted would pressure the bureaucrats to recognize the needs of the most harassed.

What we didn't anticipate was a veritable *army* of intelligent and enthusiastic women hungry to share experiences, learn

from others, and prepare for the battles ahead. These fighters arrived predisposed to ignore the stacked-deck puppet show produced by the bureaucrats, and they were remarkably eager to sharpen their arsenal against the rightwing menace.

Houston was the arena where Right, Left and Center met and clashed. Like the state conferences preceding it, Houston glaringly revealed the viciousness of the neo-Nazi reactionaries and the calculated maneuverism of the feminist opportunists in the face of the fascist tide.

### Bible Thumpers Meet Anti-Fascists

Nineteen thousand maniacal Christians at the "Pro-Family" rally in the Astrohall listened raptly to gospel hymns and shrieked for "freedom from sexual perversity" and vengeance against those who "murder young people in the womb."

"This is not a battle of the sexes," roared one woman. "It is not a battle between women. It is a battle of philosophies."

The fervent audience rendition of "God Bless

America" which ended the rally conveyed such ferocity of emotion that a Swiss reporter present was incredulous at the hysteria of the right wing.

The next day, at the main convention site, a violent street battle erupted when a KKK-Christian Defense League unit marched to the hall carrying signs reading "*Who Needs Jews, Dikes, Abortian and Communism*" (sic). The marchers and their police protectors were challenged by women radicals, some of whom were attacked by the cops. The women protesters nevertheless succeeded in surrounding the bigots and driving them away.

### The Dance of the Sugarplum Liberals

Conference officials planned their strategy of control far in advance. *They were much more concerned with parliamentary outmaneuvering of the right wing than with ideological confrontation or group protest.* They ignored the neo-fascists outside

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# ...HOUSTON

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and would not permit debate with the conservative delegates on the inside.

The liberals' strategy was to generalize, as epitomized in the "Pro-Plan," the proposed National Plan of Action of the International Women's Year Commission. This plan watered down most issues into insubstantial promises, painfully reminiscent of typical Democratic party platforms.

Conference commissioners denounced the KKK once as a token concession while they whitewashed their crime of seating the all-white Mississippi delegation (including six men, allegedly Klansmen) from a state that is 37% Black. Overriding the delegate protest, the issue was cynically suppressed by appealing to the "rules."

## Conference rules decreed only one umbrella resolution for all minorities, causing severe injustice to each minority

The carefully rehearsed procedural pirouettes and manipulation of the microphones silenced most dissident voices, allowing officials to speed mechanically through the agenda. And this bureaucratic vise gripped all the major caucuses.

### Minority Caucuses

Four hundred Black women met in caucus, but the militants were kept in check by anxious officials. The rebels lacked enough cohesion to effectively counteract the bureaucrats; one group, including us, proposed resolutions condemning the Bakke decision and the South African regime, but this was ignored by the liberals. Congresswoman Yvonne Burke of California warned the caucus *against* supporting sovereignty for Native Americans, the rights of undocumented workers, and independence for Puerto Rico! The final caucus resolution was never shown to the caucus for approval.

Hispanic women faced similar bureaucratic controls. Deportations of mothers of American-born children were denounced in the final resolution, but the demand for an end to all deportations was killed. The caucus demanded an "adequate housing" plank, but the resolution failed to explain "adequate." A call to address the need for childcare was defeated. The resolution compiled by the officials was extremely general and vague.

*Native Alaskan women produced a strong resolution for Native American sovereignty, tribal rights, and hunting and fishing rights.*

The Asian caucus denounced the concept of Asians as a "model minority," condemned the sweatshop conditions of Asian labor, and advocated assistance to Asian wives of veterans.

Conference rules decreed only one umbrella resolution for all minorities, causing severe injustice to each minority. The original resolution proposed by conference commissioners was rejected and somewhat improved by the delegates.

### The Sexual Preference Up roar

The endorsement of lesbian rights created far more excitement than the ERA endorsement because this controversial issue was actually *debated*.

The highly-publicized changes of heart and mind on the subject were caused by the overwhelming pressure of pro-lesbian rights resolutions from 32 state conferences. Also, as one pragmatic NOW member told us: "It doesn't make any difference to ERA anymore, so we might as well vote for it. ERA won't pass in certain states whether or not we support sexual preference."

Some participants in the 500-member lesbian caucus pushed a resolution against the Bakke decision and for support of total boycott of South Africa. Caucus leaders, fearful of chances for the lesbian resolution, refused to accept amendments; nevertheless, a sub-caucus of nondelegates issued a public statement against racism.

## 19,000 maniacal Christians listened raptly to gospel hymns and shrieked for "freedom from sexual perversity" and vengeance against those who "murder young people in the womb"

Support for lesbian rights was less than for other issues. While the split on most controversies was 80%-20%, lesbian rights polled 60%-40%.

### Labor's Phantom Booth

A significant contingent of working women and unionists arrived as nondelegates, urging support for the Coors Beer boycott, the J.P. Stevens boycott, the United Steelworkers boycott of Pet, Inc., and other labor actions. A nurses' contingent sought help in organizing an independent union.

These efforts presented a decided contrast to official labor's participation. The AFL-CIO had a booth that was never staffed. Yet Addie Wyatt of the Coalition of Labor Union Women was one of the conference leaders!

### The Leftwing Presence

All too few radicals showed up in Houston. Most male-dominated leftwing groups still ascribe cellar-level priority to women's issues, even though the fascists mobilize and recruit around these issues.

Apart from the omnipresent *Militant* hawkers, Socialist Workers Party members passed incognito as NOW members or Pathfinder Press agents. They had no official SWP booth—but drove us out of a booth we were sharing with one of their associated groups!

We promptly set up shop in another booth, and thousands of people scanned and bought our literature. We sold hundreds of dollars worth of pamphlets and *Freedom Socialists*. **Lesbianism: A Socialist Feminist Perspective** by Susan Williams was a best-seller, and Constance Scott's **How Feminists Can Defeat the Ultra-Right: An Analysis of the Trials and Errors at the Washington State Conference for Women** was picked up by 500 readers.

We distributed 3500 special leaflets calling for political exposure of the right wing and a united front against the reactionaries based on a multi-issue program. The leaflet was warmly received.

Our visibility also attracted the opposition. A rabid anti-Semite assured us that "those Jews control

everything...the U.S. is a puppet state of Israel...and the Jewish Defense League excludes Black members!"

We participated in the Left-Feminist Caucus, together with Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, New American Movement, a dozen other groups, and

## Most male-dominated leftwing groups still ascribe cellar-level priority to women's issues, even though the fascists mobilize and recruit around these issues

independents. This caucus issued a strong feminist statement for lesbian and Third World liberation, and for struggle against Carter's immigration plan, deportation of undocumented workers, and the KKK. NAM unsuccessfully tried to convince the caucus that the right wing was a minimal threat and the main fight should be focused against the liberals.

### Alternative Rallies

We attended an antideportation rally of several hundred people. Unfortunately, the speakers had no mike and could only be heard by a few.

Another unscheduled rally we participated in, "Beyond the ERA," attracted 300 people, who heard radical speakers call for resistance to the incipient fascism of the right wing. The rally endorsed a multi-issue women's movement.

### Anti-Fascist Southern Women

The most inspiring phenomenon of the entire conference was the grassroots feminists, including large numbers of southern women who visited our table, surprised and thrilled to meet socialist feminists. To them, the struggle for women's emancipation is fundamental: life in the southern police states has molded them into fierce defenders of ERA and abortion rights because they are very aware of the fascist-like nature of the counter-feminists. These invincible southerners comprise a glowing new sector of militant feminism.

### Beyond Houston

The "lobotomized euphoria," as one commentator described the mood of the mechanical, rigged conference, didn't fool most rank and filers, who saw the Houston skirmish as a technical but not ideological victory.

Speaking at an open mike provided in the "Seneca Falls" Room as a concession for nondelegates, Monica Hill projected our future tasks:

*"Complacency will spell the end of the movement. We must go home to battle the rightwingers and debate all the halfhearted feminists who constantly compromise with them. Success on any one issue, like ERA, at the expense of all the other survival issues, is a hollow victory. Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party urge a united front against our enemies based on a multi-issue program that will not sell out minority women, the poor, women workers, lesbians and political radicals."*

Houston was indeed an advance for multi-issuism. The conference dealt directly with racism and sexual bigotry, paving the way for the basic questions of labor and class to be confronted by women's liberationists.

Thousands came to Houston knowing that the official conference was a shuck. The upper echelons of the federal government already know what women want and need, and the conference was cynically engineered to deflect protest into exclusively legislative channels and to mobilize the right wing. The resolutions to Carter and Congress will go the way of the dinosaur unless and until feminists construct a powerful left wing and conjoin with the general movement for radical social change. ■

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**ON THE COVER: Feminism vs. Fascism: Confrontation at the Houston Women's Conference.**

This issue features fewer pages of news than usual in order to create space for the conclusion of Revolutionary Integration. In the Spring 1978 issue, we will return to our regular format.

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## "Buy American" Jingoism Affronts Worker Solidarity

**A**s free enterprise in the U.S. falters under the challenge of cheaper foreign products, corporate moguls in sugar, steel, textiles, shoes, and television sets renew their seasonal chorus of "Buy American!"

They want higher tariff walls to keep out overseas imports, and to gain support for their punitive program, they shed crocodile tears over "lost jobs." But lost profits are the issue.

President Carter is apprehensive that restrictions on imports will trigger more inflation as well as foreign economic retaliation. So the great compromiser seeks at one and the same time to preserve the image of Free Trade and accommodate the protectionists.

Carter has appointed non-economist Robert Strauss as his Special Trade Representative, and Strauss claims that he is "scooting forward bit by bit" on the Free Trade front. Actually, he is scooting backwards. He pressures other countries to voluntarily limit their exports to the U.S. and he pushes "Orderly Marketing Agreements"—cartels designed to cut competition, but which could severely hamper international trade.

Domestic labor leaders, meanwhile, echo their industrial overlords and clamor for more jobs and short-term profits through higher tariffs. AFL-CIO official Lane Kirkland wails

that the shoe industry is "served up on the holy altar of Free Trade," and he is right. But the answer is not prohibition of foreign goods or myopic demonstrations of textile and garment workers protesting imports.

For themselves, American workers should demand factory retooling and subsidized employee retraining, job-identification, and family relocation. They should demand the thirty-hour week for forty hours pay. And they should support efforts to unionize workers in other countries and seize every opportunity to express solidarity with low-paid foreign labor.

The U.S. worker, as a consumer, pays astronomical prices for domestic products, and forcing workers overseas into starvation will hardly lower prices here.

Workers of the world must not blame each other for their hardships while the real culprit—U.S. imperialism—goes unchallenged. All workers are sacrificial victims on the capitalist altar.

America once staged a revolution against the very type of protectionist mercantilism which it now embraces. The practical principle of international proletarian solidarity desperately needs to be affirmed today, two hundred years after that original economic showdown.

—Janet Sutherland



## Clara Fraser

### Media Revisited

**I**n my last column, "A Message to the Media," I described the product of a press conference I called to announce a victory in an employment discrimination case involving on-the-job civil liberties.

I described the shallow and rushed treatment afforded the story on television, and the personalized slant adopted by the morning paper.

I expressed my admiration for the working press, and annoyance at conservative editors who use words and pictures to afflict the afflicted and comfort the comfortable.

**Even though the capitalist-owned media is a private enterprise rather than a public service, it still has no ethical right to deprive workers of the elementary information needed to survive in a world where knowledge is power and lack of it is crippling.**

A case in point is the superficiality of TV news. The once-over-lightly treatment of vital affairs is so superficial that it turns frivolous and finally becomes contemptuous of news itself. The newscasters make a mockery of the news.

Nobody can object to newscasts that are clever and visually arresting—conflict, especially, can be well-portrayed. But the most dramatic confrontations—the **clash of ideas**—are handled like hot potatoes. The facts spoon-fed to the viewer are too sparse and distorted to convey the nature of an ideological dispute authentically. The lack of impact cheats the audience.

Newspaper articles lend themselves much more to in-depth analysis than do video news flashes. But stories in the press are often slanted out of perspective by the political bias or dollar-sign opportunism of the editor/publisher.

The press won high public favor when it finally found the nerve, during the Watergate deluge, to admit the truth about government that most of us already knew or suspected anyway. But the lords of the press exploit this new populist glamour to perpetuate their untouchable, sacrosanct status.

There are no publicly-adopted canons of ethics to govern the press, no public tribunals to offer recourse to aggrieved readers, no legislative committees to investigate the investigators. There is no public relations person, no ombudsman, no equal rights official at any newspaper or TV office whose job it is to mediate with or represent the consumer.

**Would regulation violate freedom of the press? No. Press freedom isn't the only principle around. What about fair play? Social responsibility? Truth-in-packaging? These are interlocking principles, and highly endangered ones.**

The problem is that "freedom" is reserved for the owner of the medium, and not for the subject or person under discussion, or the reader, or the reporter. The First Amendment shelters all speech, but its prime beneficiary is the giant information industry dominated by corporate moguls who are no mean slouches at the game of intensive labor exploitation. Translated into economic terms, freedom of the press becomes sheer license for millionaire publishers and network czars to lard their own preserves and preserve their own class.

No, there is nothing sacred about their right to mold and twist public opinion at our expense, especially when we have no equal access to their technology and pervasive influence.

The airwaves belong to the people, not the networks, and immeasurably more workers than entrepreneurs buy the dailies. We should affirm our rights to the opinion makers, those henchmen of privilege who trample the equal-time ethic into the mud.

**Readers and video viewers of the world, Arise! You have nothing to lose but show-biz news accounts, and the dynamic world of reality to gain!**



*Revolutionary  
Greetings!*

Christmas postcard distributed by the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement (MFA), December 1974. Tags on the packages say, **PEACE, LIBERTY, FREE ELECTIONS, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY.**

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## The David Kopay Story

**D**ave Kopay was a tough professional player in the National Football League for ten years. Before that, his days were filled with glory as the star of the crack University of Washington Huskies who won the 1963 Rose Bowl.

Kopay, a fraternity man who dated beauty queens, relished every dirty and dangerous position assigned special squad players until they become too mutilated to continue.

He struggled with homosexuality and hypocrisy from his college days, until he decided that a life of degradation was all he could anticipate if he continued to play the desperate game of trying to appear "normal."

Professional football is the "last bastion of masculinity," says Kopay—yet this typical American hero blasted open his agonizing closet through a nationally syndicated newspaper interview, proudly revealing his homosexuality. His book, *The David Kopay Story* (Bantam, 1977), is a true profile of courage—his own.

The main strength of Kopay's book is his unsparing account of his molding into the classic he-man of American myth.

His youth was one long subjection to the gross, brutal, and sexist mentality of victory-hungry coaches; to the mindless cruelty of fraternity tradition; to the pervading guilt, repression, and deep unhappiness of his Catholic family. He sees clearly the blood-tie between male chauvinism, religion, and sex bigotry.

But Kopay omits any mention of the pioneer role of radicals and militants in launching and publicizing gay demands.

He lauds political hacks and opportunists who would still be echoing conventional platitudes had not the radicals forced them into token support of gay liberation.

Kopay has turned his back on sham and shame. He hopes "for a time when we won't have to change the names of our friends to protect their lives and jobs"—but he is mistaken if he assumes that capitalism and its bourgeois morality will permit such freedom for all those it subjugates.

Kopay's spectacular admissions are a good beginning and one hopes he will move ahead to the discovery of political courage.

— T. A. Turner

## Bordertown Rally for Undocumented Workers

# Mexicans and Americans Meet in Tijuana to Denounce Carter Plan



Youthful participant in Tijuana demonstration carries sign saying "NO! To Carter's Law."

TIJUANA—In an impressive display of international solidarity and the contagious enthusiasm engendered by it, over 500 Mexicans, Chicanos and Anglos rallied at a major intersection of downtown Tijuana, Mexico on Saturday night, November 19. Singing with great spirit, two hundred proudly marched two-and-a-half miles to the U.S. border. They held aloft picket signs that condemned Carter's immigration plan and demanded open borders, an end to massive raids and deportations, and amnesty, civil and human rights for undocumented workers.

Startled immigration authorities watched uneasily as vibrant speakers called for international workers' solidarity against the punitive immigration policy of the United States.

"With unity we can win!" said Jorge Conde, a leader of the Partido Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores (PRT), Mexican section of the Fourth International. "This action, the first in recent history, marks but the beginning of stronger international actions."

Conde condemned the KKK's "racist, anti-union and anti-worker attempts to patrol the border."

### A Traffic-Stopper

Protesters roared out chants for a workers and peasants government as the crowd initially gathered in the busy Constitución y Segundo intersection. A pickup truck served as the speakers' platform.

"The border never exists when U.S. capitalists need large numbers of cheap laborers," said Francisca Manuel Acuna Barbolla, a PRT leader. "But workers are deported when it meets big business needs."

Jesus Mena, Los Angeles coordinator of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP), a U.S. Trotskyist tendency, and a Chicano member of the Call for Action Committee, also addressed the crowd. "This is an international problem," he said. "Deportation is used to divide us all. Undocumented workers are forced into a sub-class of the working class with no rights, without social services and without union protection. They become slaves of big business. And Carter is a false leader of human rights."

Other speakers explained that global capitalism is at the root of the massive unemployment and poverty

of Mexican workers. All speakers called for solidarity among workers and students of both countries and all races to win open borders guaranteed in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

The rally was the first such demonstration in Tijuana in several years, and it held special significance for local residents. The city's population is largely composed of transients living in cardboard shacks, landless peasants and unemployed workers from the Mexican interior who travel to the border town in the hope of entering the U.S. and finding work. Spectators at the demo were manifestly pleased by the number of Americans involved and by the English-language picket signs.

Earlier in the day, fifty demonstrators marched in front of the San Diego Federal Building, pressing the same demands as the Tijuana rally. This group crossed the border in a car caravan to become the American contingent of the Tijuana protest.

### Behind the Scene

Endorsers of the two demonstrations included officials of the L.A. Newspaper Guild, the California Social Services Union, and the Mexican American Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

A highly successful press conference preceded the rallies, resulting in good public announcements of the event in the media. The article in the Los Angeles *Herald Examiner* featured extensive quotes from Mena and Andres Torres, spokesman for La Raza Unida party. They said that Mexico's problems originate with U.S. multi-national firms, whose stronghold on the Mexican economy drains the country's resources but prevents full employment.

### CASA Boycott

The San Diego rally was organized by the local Call for Action Committee. Chairpersons Javier Bautista and Lucia Robledo said that a split in the support movement for undocumented workers had resulted in a smaller turnout in San Diego.

The schism developed at the National Conference on Immigration and Public Policy held in San Antonio, Texas in October. CASA, a Chicano organization, red-baited and race-baited "white socialist" participation in the conference and in the Chicano community, singling out the role of the Socialist Workers Party. CASA left the conference, vowing to work only with Chicanos.

### Nationwide Rallies

CASA opposed the "Call for Action" from the conference, but the Call nevertheless resulted in the establishment of the L.A. and San Diego Call for Action Committees, as well as similar groups throughout the country. Demonstrations were organized in New York, Miami, Houston, Denver, Albuquerque, Phoenix, San Francisco, and Detroit, in addition to the Tijuana border rally. ■

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