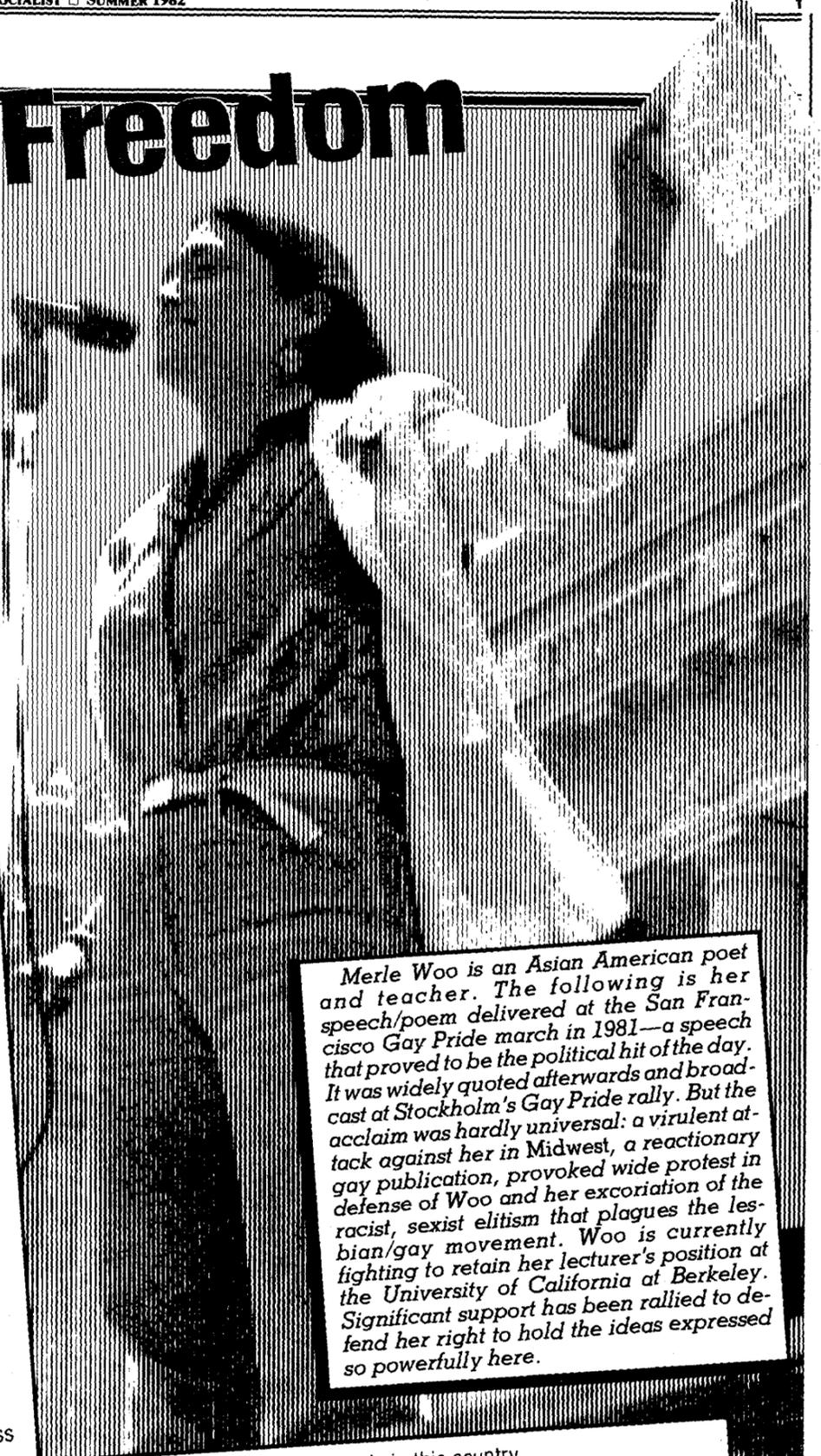


# Front Line of Freedom

by Merle Woo



*Merle Woo is an Asian American poet and teacher. The following is her speech/poem delivered at the San Francisco Gay Pride march in 1981—a speech that proved to be the political hit of the day. It was widely quoted afterwards and broadcast at Stockholm's Gay Pride rally. But the acclaim was hardly universal: a virulent attack against her in Midwest, a reactionary gay publication, provoked wide protest in defense of Woo and her excoriation of the racist, sexist elitism that plagues the lesbian/gay movement. Woo is currently fighting to retain her lecturer's position at the University of California at Berkeley. Significant support has been rallied to defend her right to hold the ideas expressed so powerfully here.*

And who will be with me on the Front Line of Freedom?  
Will it be the white lesbians and gays who oppress people of color,  
the poor and disadvantaged?

Will it be the people of color,  
my people,  
my Asian brothers and sisters who hate and despise gays?  
who look with disgust upon me,  
who see my lover as a ghost? a devil?

Will it be working men who are sexist? Who treat me with disrespect,  
call me names because I am a woman?  
An Asian woman?  
A Chinky China Doll? A Slant Cunt?  
Comparing me to a pug dog? with buck teeth?  
Dehumanizing me?

Will we be on the Front Line Together?  
I don't think so.

And yet, I am fighting for the rights of just these people  
who oppress me.  
Because I am a lesbian mother, an Asian, and a worker.

I stand with those who are the most enslaved—  
who have no say in the determination of their bodies' choices;  
their minds' wills.

Face to Face:

The Right Wing on the Front Line of Slavery calls their continued  
bondage:

Population Control  
Family Protection Act  
the Moral Majority—

Just listen to the White House Fathers on the Human Life Amendment.

On the Front Line of Freedom,  
I march and stand with all the women of color who have been sterilized:  
80% of the tribe in Oklahoma  
so that the U.S. will inherit (in one generation)  
the earth, rich with Uranium,  
gold for nuclear weaponry;  
42% of all Native American women,  
35% of all Puerto Rican women,  
25% of all Chicanas—have been sterilized—

(And of course you know that in 1945, a motion was up before Congress  
to have all Japanese American women, who were interned, sterilized,  
it lost by only one vote.)

Those poor young women of color who go in to deliver a baby  
and come out sterilized,

Those who go in for an abortion and can't have one.

I stand with the Black mothers and fathers of the children of  
Atlanta;  
The Black parents in Oakland whose babies are dying;

I march with the poor lesbians and gays who have no legal aid;  
who don't know what it's like to eat Veal Piccata  
and Chocolate Mousse Torte at Fife's on the Russian River;

The ones who hurt the most—  
Who can't keep cool on summer days, picking shells by the seashore,  
Who can't keep warm winter's nights, with chestnuts roasting  
by an open fire—

Who don't know what it means to have a regular checkup.

The old who are poor and sick and lonely, shunted from one  
hospital to another,  
Maybe a hip broken, and sometimes the spirit.

MediCal gals and guys.

I stand with the physically disabled,

And the clerical workers who type in asbestos offices (as if  
they had a choice),  
the factory workers who get brown lung disease  
the electronic production workers who are slowly dying  
in the Silicon Valley, because of constant exposure to  
noxious chemicals/carcinogens.

I stand with political prisoners, and those falsely accused and  
confined to penitentiaries  
because of the laws which protect the rich.

Because of the history of my people in this country,  
I stand with those who cannot immigrate because of race, sexuality,  
lack of profession, political persuasion.

We are called the Undesirables.

Finally, I stand with those who may not be oppressed because  
of their race, sex, sexuality, physicality, class, or age,  
but who know why discrimination exists and will attack  
the source: Capitalism.

I love the word "socialism"  
because of the root, "social"  
a focus on social relationships, community  
and the freedom to associate, recreate,  
rather than on capital and class, profit and not people.

I love the word "feminism"  
because when I say, think, and act it,  
I mean multi-issue  
Revolutionary Feminism, which attacks

white  
patriarchal  
mr. amerika  
judeo-christian  
heterosexual

models of hierarchy and exploitation  
that hold all women, men of color, poor, and gay men  
back and inferior,  
and with unfulfilled potential.

I march, stand, and fight with socialist feminists because  
in its purest  
most fulfilled definition  
in theory and action,  
it is Revolutionary Feminism which is a  
fight for everyone who is oppressed  
in one way or another  
and which has as its goal  
the certainty that

Those on the Front Line of Freedom will inherit the Earth.

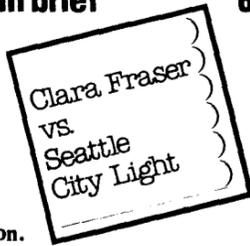
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Summer 1982

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Choice excerpts from the Fraser appeal brief display a stunning affirmation of democratic principles. Attorneys Valerie Carlson and Frederick Hyde, Jr. have written a memorable contribution to the legal literature of anti-discrimination.



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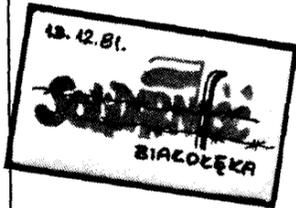
UAW's latest contract has no labor power under its hood. The editorial by Manny Sunshine and Karen Brodine condemns the defective 1982 model imposed on auto workers.

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The proper position for women in the movement is in leadership or there will be no movement at all. Black radical Julius Lester made the point in 1968. It hits home today.



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With the whole world watching, Poland's workers have survived their terrible winter. Sukey Durham's poignant poem sees more than buds on the trees when she speaks of the Polish springtime.

## Women and permanent revolution 7

No democratic struggle is older or more profound or wider-ranging than women's emancipation. Murry Weiss' great feminist paper, written a few years before he died last December, salutes the dynamic power of women to unite the oppressed.



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## the freedom socialist

On the cover: Abortion rights protest, March 28, 1969, Olympia, Washington. Photograph by Greg Gilbert and design by Doug Barnes.

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The Freedom Socialist (ISSN 0272-4367) is published quarterly by the Freedom Socialist Party, Freeway Hall, 3815 Fifth Ave., N.E., Seattle WA 98105. Phone 206-632-7449.

Subscriptions: 1 year \$3.00 (Institutions \$6.00), 2 year Supporting Sub \$15.00, 5 year Sustaining Sub \$50.00. Add \$2.50 surface postage outside the United States; add \$7.00 for overseas airmail. Back copies \$.75 each. Donations to defer publishing costs welcome. Subscriptions exchanged.

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## LETTERS

### Free Leonard Peltier

Thank you for the two recent articles on Native Fishing and Rocque Duenas. They were very well written and emphasize the ongoing fishing struggle as well as honoring an activist brother.

[Re] the Leonard Peltier case . . . we are waiting patiently for a new trial. Continued public awareness and constant letterwriting are an ongoing need to obtain his freedom. Eva Wolfsoldier  
Peltier Defense Committee  
Suite 674, 507-3rd Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98104

### Let's discuss it

Re your interview of Merle Woo and Nellie Wong (Spring, 1981), I am concerned with a particular passage: "Robert Chrisman, who is sexist and homophobic."

. . . I did not simply call for "Third World Unity above all." I can only assume that Merle Woo was piqued by a 45-minute discussion that concluded the panel presentations . . . a series of questions and assertions regarding sexism and homophobia in Cuba.

I informed the audience of Cuban measures to redeem the legacy of sexism and racism that any revolution inherits from the bourgeois state that preceded it . . . With reference to homosexuality, the most recent manual on sexual behavior in Cuba does not treat homosexuality as deviant, but instead stipulates that homosexuality is another sexual preference.

However . . . what seemed to be the premise of many in the audience was that socialist society as it presently exists continues the practice of sexual oppression and, thus, is an enemy of the people and women. While there is much improvement to be made in sexual freedom and civil rights for women and gay folks in socialist countries, the complete respect for a human being that characterizes a socialist society has already improved the conditions of the entire population (whatever sex or persuasion) in a way that is not possible in a capitalist system where individual peoples are seen as

competitors, enemies, rivals, and scapegoats.

So I was dismayed . . . this seemed to be a shortsighted criticism of a very powerful and positive force, the socialist movement. I recommended that we focus our discussion on community issues involving gays, straights, and the Third World in San Francisco, such as the harassment of gays by Third World folks and the penetration of the Black community in San Francisco by gay real estate speculation.

. . . I do not see how Merle Woo could come to the conclusion that I or my presentation was "sexist and homophobic . . ."

Robert Chrisman  
Publisher, *The Black Scholar*  
San Francisco, CA

*We've examined your concerns intensively within our Editorial Board and with our colleagues in San Francisco. We appreciate your letter and hope that indeed we were wrong about you. We seek to build a working relationship of mutual respect between us. Cooperation and bridge-building are survival necessities, and we are more than prepared to meet you half-way. We have enormous admiration for your historic publication, even though we feel it has not always been fair to Black feminism and to revolutionary socialist feminism. We look forward to a continuing dialogue.*

### Mujahadeen protest

We respectfully commend your thorough and factual analysis of the situation in Iran after the revolution. We find it a moral obligation to protest against the inhumane and torturous atmosphere imposed by the Khomeini regime, especially on religious minorities and women.

In order to unify our voices, the National Resistance Council has been formed. It seeks the support of every progressive and humanitarian organization. Your support of the NCR would be greatly valued.  
Seattle Moslem Students Society

*We agree with you completely on the moral and revolutionary duty to*

*battle Khomeini's nightmarish regime. Reports indicate, however, that the Mujahadeen has allowed Bani Sadr and the liberal bourgeoisie to take political leadership. All historical evidence demonstrates that capitalist control of revolutionary forces spells disaster for revolution. We believe strongly that only the unity of the Left, women, workers, and national minorities in Iran on a socialist program can lead the revolution to victory.*

*Shortly after we received the above letter, the SMSS asked us to publicize Khomeini's escalating atrocities. Since June 20, 1981, when a peaceful demonstration of half a million people was machine-gunned in Teheran by "revolutionary guards," over 13,000 people have died in front of firing squads, children and pregnant women included. Over 40,000 people have been arrested and tortured.*

*This massacre goes virtually unreported in the Western bourgeois press. The conspiratorial silence shrouding these atrocities is the only weapon left to the international capitalists who seek to throttle the Iranian revolution.*

### International admirer

I am an international student from Kuwait. I bought the *Freedom Socialist* in Seattle and I admire it. I am so interested that I want to buy the issues published after Vol. 7, No. 1.  
Hassan Al-Gharib  
Raleigh, NC

### We've gone network

You may be interested to know that FSP's banner in the recent march in Seattle—"Stop the War Against Working People at Home and Abroad"—made prominent play on the CBC *National News* this evening. Best Wishes.

Walter Davis  
Saskatoon, Sask., Canada

*Readers are encouraged to submit letters, news stories, commentary, cartoons, graphics, photographs, and pertinent information on world and national affairs for publication.*

## Freedom Socialist Party

# National Convention

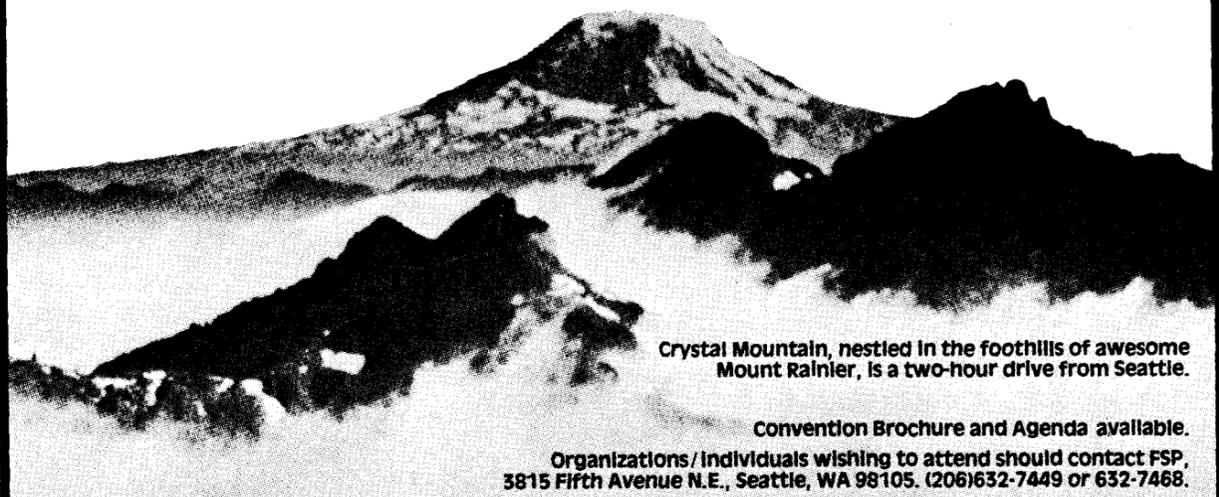
July 2 - 5, 1982



Crystal Mountain, Washington

### Key Discussion Topics

• State of the World Revolution • Black Revolutionary Integration Yesterday and Today • The Chicanos: Nation or Oppressed Minority? • Asian Americans and Native Americans • Whither the Labor, Lesbian/Gay, Feminist, and Antiwar Movements?



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Convention Brochure and Agenda available.

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# The trail of tears in Nicaragua



The autonomy of the Miskitu Indians is threatened by the Sandinistas.

BY MONICA HILL

As revolutionary torrents sweep through Central and South America, the battles of indigenous Indian nations there take on a ringing immediacy. And the growing debate over the Sandinista government's controversial treatment of the Miskitu tribe in Nicaragua brings this sensitive issue to a head.

The Miskitus, the largest tribe in Nicaragua, insist that the Sandinistas want to forcibly integrate the Indians of the Atlantic Coast region into the Nicaraguan economy, against Indian wishes and in violation of Indian rights to autonomy and self-determination.

The Sandinistas maintain that the Indians are "ethnic" Nicaraguans, not a distinct nation, that government integration policies are designed to "develop and enhance" Native cultural traditions, that autonomy or political separation are divisive and reactionary, and that all critics of its policies are counterrevolutionary or CIA agents.

Sandinista supporters, including (strangely) the American Indian Movement, the International Indian Treaty Council, and (not so strangely) the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, charge that indigenous leaders have "chosen alliance with imperialism."

Loving the uproar, Alexander Haig and UN representative Jeanne Kirkpatrick hurl charges of anti-Indian "massacres" and "genocide." These accusations are denied by most of the Miskitu leadership, and they can be dismissed as part of the Yankee effort to destabilize and destroy the Sandinista revolution.

Yet that revolution, and Indian participation in all Latin American anti-capitalist struggles, is jeopardized by continuing mistakes of the Sandinista leadership, mistakes which stem from a refusal to recognize the *nationhood and consequent right to self-determination* of the Indians.

## How not to make friends

The Nicaraguan government's August 1981 *Declaration of Principles* is adamant: "Nicaragua is but one nation. Territorially and politically it cannot be . . . divided . . . Spanish is the official language of the country."

Lenin was very clear on the obligation of socialists toward oppressed nations:

**Socialist parties which did not show . . . that they would liberate the enslaved nations and build up relations with them on the basis of a free unity—and a free union is a false phrase without the right to secede—would be betraying socialism.**

Lenin practiced what he preached. Virtually the last political struggle of his life was conducted against Stalin's Sandinista-style "integration" of the Georgian republic into the Federation of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Marxists who hedge on the right of sovereignty are issuing an *invitation to anti-Marxism among people who belong on the revolutionary side.*

## Stepping-stones to enmity

The Indians originally hoped that the 1979 FSLN victory over Somoza would spark better relations between themselves and the Spanish-speaking

Somoza, came under attack. The Sandinistas wanted it dissolved and wanted all Indian communities affiliated with government-controlled mass organizations. Heated Indian protest forced the regime to back down, and in November 1979 the Indian organization MISURASATA was approved as the representative of indigenous people in the government.

In Spring 1980, the government imposed a Spanish-only literacy campaign among the Indians. But by October, it gave in to demands that Indian languages be included as well.

More recently, the government has pushed industrialization and agrarian reform in the Atlantic Coast region; its *Declaration of Principles* claims the exclusive right to exploit the area's resources.

Indian leaders charge that these plans threaten Indian land claims, disregard Indian wishes to maintain and improve their tribal modes of production, and are designed to promote Nicaraguan economic development to the detriment of Native people. Indian identity, they say, is a dead letter without the right to control their own land and maintain their own economy.

## Concentration camp socialism

The more MISURASATA persisted in criticizing Sandinista policies through the latter half of 1980, the more the government feared an Indian move toward separation. These fears were exacerbated by increasing U.S. pressure on Nicaragua.

In February 1981, the Sandinistas suddenly arrested 33 MISURASATA leaders. Indians organized massive sit-down protests and their leaders were soon released. But the die was cast and bitter conflict would ensue.

Among those arrested was Steadman Fagoth, who the government later claimed was a longtime Somoza agent. Fagoth's current alliance with anti-Sandinista reactionaries is being used to discredit the entire MISURASATA leadership.

By late 1981, the situation had badly deteriorated. Some Miskitus joined Fagoth in active opposition to the Sandinistas. Thousands more simply fled into Honduras where half the Miskitu population lives. Meanwhile, reactionary Honduran government troops and ex-Somoza guardsmen began to mass along the Honduras/Nicaragua border. And in November, bloody Somozista raids reportedly killed 60 Nicaraguans.

In January 1982, Sandinista troops forcibly relocated approximately 10,000 Miskitu villagers from their traditional homelands near the border to camps 60

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The Sandinistas claim to be Marxists. But they deny in principle the inalienable right to self-determination—which includes the right to secede—of indigenous peoples.

By all Marxist-Leninist criteria the Indians are every bit as much a nation as the Mestizo majority of Nicaragua's population. The Miskitus, for example, are an historically evolved, stable, and distinct community with their own language and their own communal, naturalistic culture. They have their own territory. And their economy—hunting, fishing, agriculture—is separate and fundamentally different from the still capitalist economy of the rest of Nicaragua.

Sandinista efforts to portray the Indians as an "ethnic" group cannot change the truth. The Indians are a nation and *they have the right to a separate state if they so choose.*

Mestizos of Nicaragua. They expressed willingness to cooperate with the revolutionary government so long as they were accorded recognition and respect as a distinct people, and given a say in determining their own economic and cultural destiny. They have called for only a measure of autonomy in managing their own affairs.

But their hopes began to erode soon after the revolution.

Because the Indians took little organized part in the overthrow of Somoza, the Sandinistas underestimated the degree of Indian resistance to Somoza and imperialism. They translated the geographic isolation and historic cultural differences of the Indians into political antagonism toward the revolution.

ALPROMISO, a multi-tribal organization built in the 1970s to defend Indian territory and culture against

## MALICE BEFORE THOUGHT

by Ms. Tami

From time immemorial, the history and culture of England have revolved around sheep. Sometimes openly, more often disguised, sheep fill the mind of the average British ruler in a way that even general strikes cannot.

In ancient times, sheep were central to the cycle of life. Youngsters went out, alone and unarmed, to live among these noble creatures and learn their ways, needs, and vocal techniques.

Alas, other countries reviled the English for this form of worship. "Why *sheep*," they sneered, "why not an eagle with a bloody beak, or sharks with

bloody teeth, or at least a dragon with bloody claws?"

Shamed, but allergic to the word "bloody," the English rulers chose a symbol with lions rampant—sheep killers. And in the interests of national honor, they tried to turn sheep love into hate. But hate takes practice.

So for 400 years they practiced on the Irish.

They also instituted the Industrial Revolution to remove people from the proximity of sheep.

Then they tried another ploy. Under the guise of transporting people from

workhouses and jails to Australia, they tried to export every sheep in sight.

But nothing worked. An aura of sheep memory persisted. The people grew restive and hurled accusations of sheepicide.

Margaret Thatcher proclaimed that "Sin never fits on the British Empire" and rammed her anti-sheep campaign into high gear. All the remaining sheep were removed to the distant Falkland Islands, where advance elite troops, disguised as shepherds, had practiced on the local penguin population and reduced it from 10,000 to 50 in short order.

A few insults here, a few diplomatic barbs there, and the English had manufactured a war in whose shadow the sheep will perish.

And you probably thought the Falklands had something to do with oil! □

# Fascist butchers, compromising rebel leaders, and an electoral farce complicate the scenario in

# El Salvador

BY JAMIE PARTRIDGE

**R**elying on the same bogus electoral tactics used in the early period of the Vietnam war, the U.S. concocted elections in El Salvador in March that impressed nobody. Fascist death squad leader Roberto D'Aubisson was installed as head of the Salvadoran Constituent Assembly while Reagan and Haig hailed the voter turnout as a triumph for democracy and a repudiation of the rebel guerrillas.

The only decisive thing about this travesty of an election was its fraudulence.

D'Aubisson, dubbed a "pathological killer" by former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador Robert White, campaigned under the protective wing of his paramilitary "White Warriors," composed of military personnel and wealthy landowners. His Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (ARENA) party platform called for the napalming and eradication of 250,000 "subversives."

In contrast, the rebel opposition—the FDR (Democratic Revolutionary Front) and its military wing, the FMLN (Faribundo Marti National Liberation Front)—was forced to boycott the elections by threats of wholesale assassination.

Capitalist propagandists crowed over the "high" voter turnout. But anyone caught without a stamped voter identification card will now face automatic arrest, torture, and death. This little publicized fact, plus a two-and-a-half year state of siege, plus 32,000 political murders by the neo-fascist death squads, undoubtedly prompted many to vote for rightist candidates.

Nevertheless, according to the FDR, only 20% of the eligible voters actually cast ballots, and 10-15% of those were



El Salvador insurgents oppose negotiations with the rightwing regime.

*blank*—a silent vote for the rebels. No one in the territory controlled by the guerrillas (one-third of the country) voted, and refugees outside the country were not allowed to vote.

### Negotiations or victory?

During the elections, the rebels pinned down government troops in 13 cities simultaneously. And the farce of the elections actually won them thousands of additional recruits.

In recent months, the air force has been decimated, the largest telecommunications center destroyed, scores of major bridges and highways cut, tons of arms captured, and unprecedented pitched battles fought in the cities.

Also, since the elections, rank-and-file guerrillas have redoubled pressure on the FDR/FMLN leadership to end its maneuvering for a political settlement with the ruling clique. Despite

military victories, and the fact that rebel forces have *doubled* in the last year, the pro-capitalist rebel leaders continue their attempts to block the popular insurrection in favor of negotiations with the ruling junta of rightist butchers.

### U.S. compromisers

U.S. antiwar sentiment is vaulting ahead as hundreds of thousands of demonstrators pour into the streets to support the Salvadoran rebels.

Leadership groups, however, like the Committee in Support of the People of El Salvador (CISPES), are dominated by neo-Stalinists who uncritically echo the FDR's "limited war—negotiations now" perspective. CISPES claims that the elections show that Salvadorans want "peace at any price."

CISPES invites anti-revolutionary Democrats into its leadership and ex-

cludes radicals who advocate uncompromising victory for Salvadoran freedom fighters.

### For military victory!

Flag-waving cheers for democratic elections aside, the White House banks on a hugely expanded military force to defeat the leftist insurgents. Prior to the Malvinas (Falklands) crisis, the U.S. military was preparing an inter-American invasion force, with troops from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay to stop the revolution in El Salvador. And it is doubtful that the U.S. has dropped this plan even now.

It is obvious that neither "negotiations" nor compromise can reconcile the mass aspiration for control of the land and production with the interests of the giant landlords, industrialists, and U.S. imperialist investors who support the military dictatorship.

Now, as always, the Salvadoran struggle for independence and socialism depends on international solidarity and an unwavering determination to defeat the enemy in armed struggle.

**Military victory to the FMLN!  
No negotiations with capitalist terrorists!**

**For a socialist El Salvador! □**

Jamie Partridge is a health care worker in Portland, Oregon and a founding member of CRSP. He is a prolific writer on revolutionary events.

## Wear Red Ribbons!

American Indian Movement leader Dennis Banks has announced the launching of a Red Ribbon campaign to expose Reagan's "New Federalism" which would terminate Indian treaty rights and abrogate all federal responsibility to Indian nations.

Wear red ribbons to protest the government's genocidal attack on Native Americans!

Stop the transfer of Indian programs to the states!



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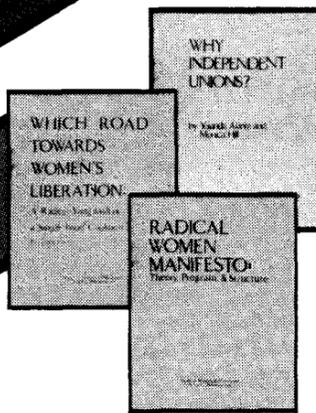
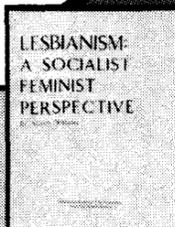
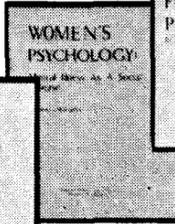
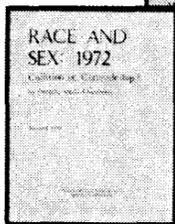
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## Letter from Australia

# How lucky can you get?



BY DAVID FAGAN

**A**ustralia. It calls itself "The Lucky Country." Land of surf and sun, great climate, and lots of fun. And if you're oh, so cosmopolitan, there's Sydney—the San Francisco of the south.

Sure it's the Lucky Country. Particularly for conglomerates like Broken Hill Proprietary, CST Ltd. (a holding company), and Australian Iron and Steel, which earn massive profits. And all of them are destined to benefit greatly from a recent 56% boost in government subsidies to big business.

The workers aren't so lucky. Living standards are being slashed. Unemployment is *officially* at 7%, inflation is 11.3%, and unemployment benefits—\$58.10 a week—are well below the poverty line.

Of course, some workers are "luckier" than others. Unemployment is 5%

for men, but shoots up to 8.9% for women. And despite "equal pay," average weekly earnings for women lag approximately \$55 behind those of men. This discriminatory differential saves big money for big business as women are 36% of the workforce.

It's not so good on the abortion front, either. In Queensland (Northwest Australia) abortion is illegal; many women have to fly to New South Wales for terminations. Even then, there is no statutory right to abortion and the high cost makes it out of reach for working and poor women. And women with medical insurance have to be wary—the company may just refuse to reimburse for abortion.

For the forces of law and order, Australia is truly the Lucky Country. In the last federal budget, parliamentary expenditures rose 65%, and police security and detention expenses rose 52%. And where was the budget

tightened up? Right—education and health were slashed 2% and 22% respectively, and funds for Aboriginal welfare chopped by a stunning 35%.

If you're lucky enough in this Lucky Country to be born Black, you are likely to be living in the poorest sections of the cities or shunted to an Aboriginal reserve where housing is generally dilapidated, sub-standard, and overcrowded. Much like Indian reservations in *your* country.

If you are Black, your chances of getting a job are slim. Unemployment reaches 60% to 100% in some areas. And the 1976 census showed that 726.5 per 100,000 Blacks were in prison, as compared to 60 per 100,000 for the population as a whole. That's just damn *unlucky*, isn't it?

Cruising slowly along among the populace brings us to lesbians and homosexuals (dykes and poofers, they like to call us). There are no *laws*

against lesbians, just a lot of hassles, harassment, arrests, and beatings. For "offensive behavior," the cops say.

Gay men face different legal sanctions from state to state. There is legal equality in Victoria and in the Australian Capital Territory. But in the state of New South Wales, where the city of Sydney is located, consensual sex can bring sentences of 14 years—even though heterosexual *rape* carries a maximum of 7 years imprisonment!

Australia is the Lucky Country. Just make sure you're white, male, middle class, and heterosexual. If not, apply elsewhere. Some place like the United States, for instance. Someone once told me that *it's* the land of opportunity. □

**David Fagan is a library clerk and active unionist in Sydney, Australia. He's also a gay rights organizer, a Trotskyist since his early teens, and an informed participant in Australian politics.**

BY BOB HIPPLER

**T**he United States government is in headlong retreat from the principles of quality education, racial integration, and equal opportunity in the public school system.

The political reactionaries who serve the needs of capitalist economics have targeted education for massive, crippling cutbacks.

Crisis-ridden Los Angeles schools are no exception.

The battles being fought in LA between teachers and community activists on the one hand, and the sexist, racist Los Angeles school board on the other hand—battles over bilingual education, busing, overcrowding, and teachers' job rights—are critical to public education nationwide.

### Anti-bilingualist doubledealers

Chicanos make up the majority of students in the LA school district. And the 1846 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, under which the U.S. wrested California from Mexico, established California as a *bilingual* state.

But it took more than one century, and the pressure of the powerful Chicano and Black movements in the 1960s and '70s, before federal aid was finally used to set up bilingual education programs in the LA schools.

Now, under the aegis of the Board of Education, these programs are being dismantled.

In many schoolrooms where the children's primary language is Spanish, the teacher speaks only English. Bilingual teachers aides' benefits and hours have been cut drastically in the last year. And bilingual teachers are forced to work overtime at less than basic pay, under threat of transfer.

### Flunking the race question

Not only Chicanos, but all people of color in the LA school system, are shafted by the Board of Education.

In 1978, the Board was a prime mover in passing Proposition 1 which outlawed mandatory busing in Califor-



nia. The state Supreme Court's recent upholding of the Proposition sets an ominous precedent nationally against desegregation busing.

Busing exists in California now only as a means of alleviating tremendous overcrowding. And it mandates one-way shuttling of children of color into white areas.

School facilities for students of color are wholly inadequate. But rather than build new and better schools, the district is setting up "temporary" bungalow classrooms. It is also putting 25% of existing schools into year-round use in order to shove one-third more children through the educational mill and out the door of the system.

Virtually all the children affected by the year-round program are Chicano and Asian American, who sit confined all summer in poorly maintained classrooms with no air-conditioning.

Not surprisingly, the district fails miserably in imparting the basic academic skills which would help counter some of the class and race inequalities the students face.

And the students know it; the high school dropout rate is very high.

### Chicano protests

School deterioration and attacks by the school board have not gone unopposed.

Last summer, hundreds of Chicano parents protested the year-long schedule and won a reduction in the number of schools subjected to it. Parents organized a boycott of classes at one year-round school, and activist teachers and blue collar employees picketed another, notoriously overcrowded school.

These actions were reminiscent of the 1968 Chicano student walk-outs, which won some redress against inadequate school facilities and racist neglect of Chicano culture in the curriculum.

### Education is a labor issue

Teachers—traditionally low-paid workers in a "woman's" field—are being heavily victimized by the Board of Education.

But while the United Teachers of Los Angeles struggles against the Board, its support for bilingual education and integration has been lukewarm and it has refused to take a stand against year-round schools.

Although the union has a progressive past, and is unique in allowing substitute teachers full union membership, it is currently saddled with a stagnant, bureaucratic leadership that is selling out the teachers bit by bit.

In recent years the union has settled for contract "raises" at far less than the rate of inflation. Its most recent wage settlement mandated a pay *cut* for substitutes.

Sellout measures like this have lost the union over 1,000 members in the last two years! And barely 50% of LA teachers remain in the union. It has become too weak to stage a strike.

Union rank-and-filers are increasingly restive. Some fought bitterly with the leadership during the last contract dispute, and supported substitutes' job rights.

Heading up the resistance is a small progressive caucus in the union, Teachers for Change, which opposes the bureaucrats with a program based on bilingualism, integration, union democracy, and teacher/community cooperation.

These teachers are working to convince their natural allies—the labor movement and the minority community—that the public interest is best served by united opposition to attacks on teachers' jobs and school services.

This move toward unity, and the relentless exposure and defeat of the bureaucrats' fainthearted sellout to the school board, are the only way to build the union's strength.

### One last battlefield

The LA Board of Education has turned the schools into a battlefield and the students into cannon fodder.

This only reflects the capitalist decree that war, not social welfare, be the nation's overriding priority for the '80s.

In the long run, in LA and everywhere, only independent, anti-capitalist political power, hooked onto the struggles of the most oppressed, can defeat the war priority and extend the benefits of quality education for the children of this and every nation. □

Nuggets excerpted from Clara Fraser's appeal to Superior Court

# A cry for justice

3  
4 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON FOR KING COUNTY  
5 CLARA FRASER,  
6 Petitioner, NO. 80-2-12066-2  
7 v. BRIEF OF PETITIONER  
8 THE CITY OF SEATTLE: THE CITY OF SEATTLE  
OFFICE OF THE HEARING EXAMINER;

11 IN CLARA  
12 FRASER v. CITY OF SEATTLE, DEPARTMENT OF  
LIGHTING, Case No. A-E-2(063),  
13 Respondents.  
14 I. NATURE OF THE CASE  
15 Clara Fraser asks the court to correct the injustice arising from the rever-  
16 sal, by a split decision of a lay hearing panel, of the Hearing Examiner's  
17 decision in her favor in Clara Fraser v. City of Seattle, Department of  
18 Lighting, No. A-E-2(063).  
19 Hearing panelists Darlene Allison and Beverly Stanton violated the law  
20 which governed them as a hearing panel, and the law they should have ap-  
21 plied to decide the case, when they erroneously, arbitrarily and capricious-  
22 ly overturned Hearing Examiner Sally Pasette's 1980 decision that City  
23 Light discriminated against Fraser because of her socialist feminist  
24 political ideology.

Fraser turned in an excellent performance as Education Coordinator at City Light from 1973-1975. She also worked with more than 1,000 other employees to try to reform the publicly discredited and dysfunctional management system at City Light, described by its own officials as paramilitaristic.

Fraser's on-the-job expression of ideas, and her activities, behavior, and manner were not essentially different from those of other City Light employees. Yet, because of her political associations off the job, she was singled out for specially punitive, politically-motivated scrutiny and reprisals, culminating in her unprecedented termination without notice on July 11, 1975.

Like the First Amendment and other non-discrimination and labor laws, the purpose of the [city's] Ordinance and Rules is to limit management prerogatives and narrow the range of reasons for which adverse actions can be taken against employees.

Panelists Allison and Stanton did not accept these clear legal limitations on executive privilege and on stereotyping, and did not apply them to the facts in this case.

The decision has a particularly chill-

ing impact on the rights of and the need for public employees—the very citizens most likely to know of government abuse—to blow the whistle on corruption, mismanagement, misfeasance, incompetence or any other violation of the public trust and the law by government officials.

Allison/Stanton blithely overturned the core purpose of the Ordinance and the First Amendment, which is precisely to protect stated opinions, associations and related behavior that may be disagreeable, unwelcome, or irritating to management. Employees need no protection for agreeing with and being agreeable to a powerful employer.

The political ideology provision of the Ordinance rests on longstanding judicial protections against attempts by government to impose its view on citizens by rewards or punishment. As the United States Supreme Court recently reiterated:

**If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.**

Fraser and the 1,300 other City Light employees who walked off the job to protest Vickery's disruption of the public utility were the "dissident" and "radical" forerunners of today's mass public outcry against the gross mismanagement of public power systems and the skyrocketing utility rates imposed on the citizenry.

This outcry is certainly not polite, but it is protected. And so is Clara Fraser's conduct.

Allison and Stanton so obviously lacked the requisite impartiality and ob-

jectivity that it is evident that the Women's Commission failed to take appropriate precautions [in appointing them].

During the hearing, Allison exposed her prejudices against Clara Fraser and Human Rights Department attorney John Chen Beckwith by reacting to testimony favorable to Fraser with snorts, snickers, and comments expressing impatience, disgust and disbelief.

After the hearing, panelist Elizabeth Ponder told Fraser that Allison reacted negatively to Fraser's testimony about her socialist philosophy. Allison had declared to Ponder, "Nobody who talks like that should expect to hold a job."

Ponder also revealed that Allison had even objected to Fraser's right, as a radical, to seek redress under the city antidiscrimination ordinance.

In their deliberations with Ponder, Allison/Stanton took the position that Fraser "had no right to criticize City Light management in a way that was irritating to management." Allison tried to remove from the panel's findings the fact that Vickery stated he would hire Clara back if "she was as loyal to me as she is to Karl Marx." Allison believed it would "blow the whole thing" if this finding were left intact.

After the hearing but before the panel's deliberations, Allison... made a surprise phone call to KING-TV news commentator Don McGaffin. Allison criticized McGaffin for his editorial support of Fraser's right to free speech on the job. She asked for equal time, and demanded, "How the hell is any organization going to manage itself with people like Clara running around?"

The panel's twisted definition of political ideology would decimate that protective provision of the [Fair Employment Practices] Ordinance. The

whole purpose of the Ordinance is to defend and protect the right of all employees to express their ideas and beliefs freely about how all government and related institutions and agencies are organized and managed.

The underlying precept of the Ordinance is that a democracy should be a government of the people, and not over the people, and that democratic rights extend logically into the workplace. The prohibition against political ideology discrimination is precisely intended to prevent government bureaucracies like City Light's from imposing self-serving and self-perpetuating policies and ideas on employees by means of punishing them for exercising their citizenship.

The real basis of the utility's charge of insubordination is management disagreement with Fraser's pro-affirmative action beliefs. They did not like to have their duplicity and lip service in regard to affirmative action exposed. It was the content of Fraser's ideas, not her style or manner, that caused management to retaliate against her.

They tried to discredit her style because it was effective. . . Even top management witnesses acknowledged her leadership qualities and sophisticated skills, and a previous employer testified to her notable ability to work collaboratively with people.

Fraser is a teacher, and her style and manner would not have offended management if she had been a persuasive and unquestioning advocate of their political philosophy instead of a critic.

The personality traits and mannerisms of an individual have no bearing on whether his/her conduct is protected by the First Amendment. *Castleberry v. Langford*. . . Soft-spoken, mild-mannered people are not the only ones permitted to exercise free speech: "A biting approach may at times be most effective." *Pilkington v. Bevilacqua*.

In vindicating the rights of a socialist university professor to free speech on the job, the court found that it was "the severity of the criticism of the Board's action. . . and his social revolutionary Trotskyite interpretation of the role of the university administration. . . which is at the core of the charge of disrespect and disloyalty." *Starsky v. Williams*.

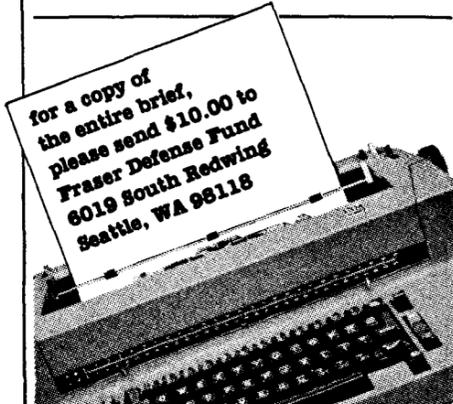
Allison/Stanton's quaint notion that Fraser, a non-policy making employee, owed loyalty to management, that she should love Vickery's repressive system or leave it, and that she should never dare to critique it, demonstrates a profound disregard for the most fundamental principles of political liberty.

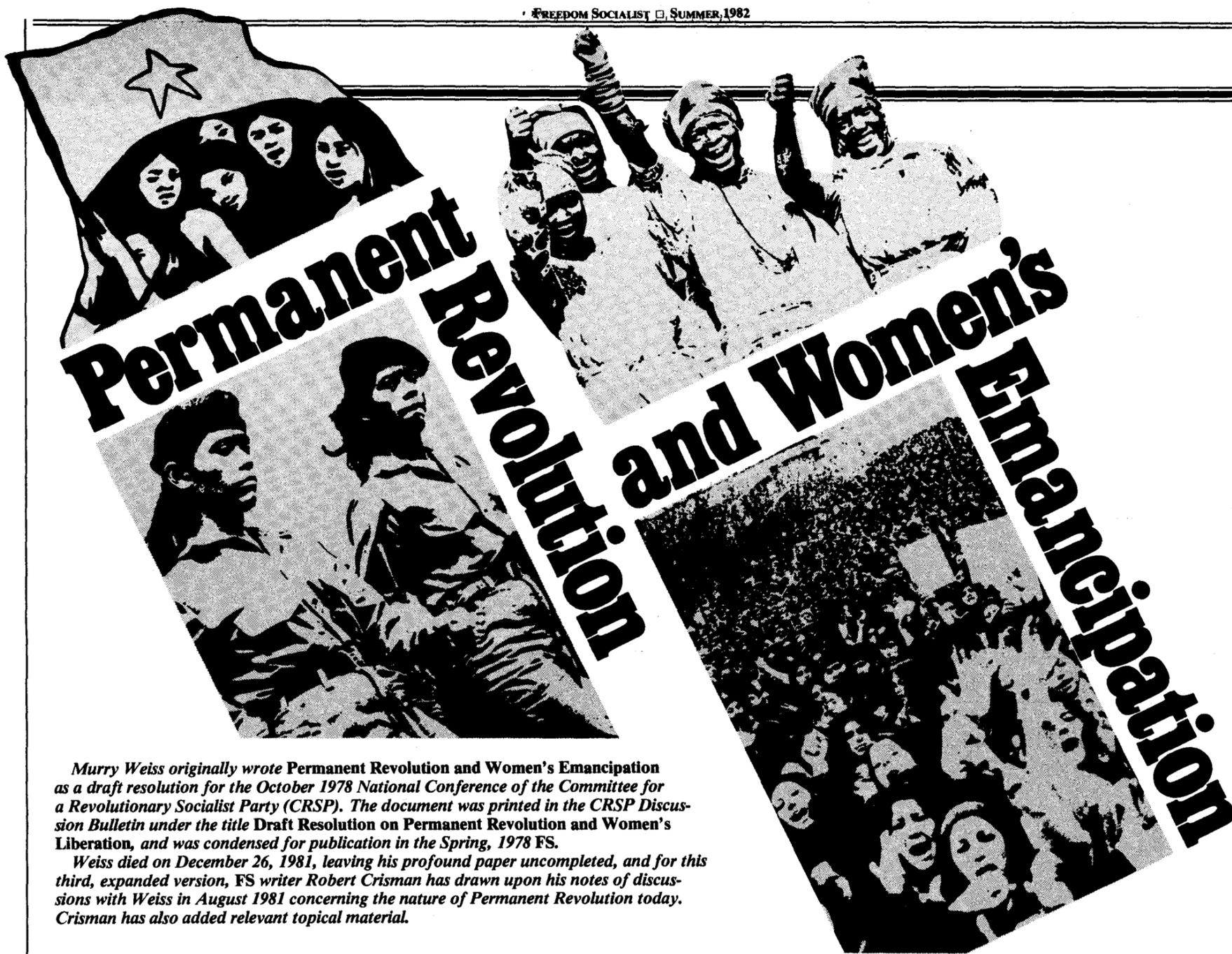
It is long past time for Clara Fraser to be made whole after eight long years of economic deprivation, humiliation and excruciating delay. It is time for Fraser and all employees. . . to be assured that their legal and constitutional rights will be protected and upheld.

Submitted this 15th day of March, 1982.

*Valerie A. Carlson*  
Valerie A. Carlson

*Frederick W. Hyde*  
Frederick W. Hyde  
Attorneys for Clara Fraser





Murry Weiss originally wrote *Permanent Revolution and Women's Emancipation* as a draft resolution for the October 1978 National Conference of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP). The document was printed in the CRSP Discussion Bulletin under the title *Draft Resolution on Permanent Revolution and Women's Liberation*, and was condensed for publication in the Spring, 1978 FS.

Weiss died on December 26, 1981, leaving his profound paper uncompleted, and for this third, expanded version, FS writer Robert Crisman has drawn upon his notes of discussions with Weiss in August 1981 concerning the nature of Permanent Revolution today. Crisman has also added relevant topical material.

BY MURRY WEISS AND  
ROBERT CRISMAN

**P**ermanent Revolution is the process of world-wide, uninterrupted, and unintermittible struggle of all oppressed people, led by the proletariat, for economic, social and political liberation.

Its main tenets are:

1. *The unfinished bourgeois-democratic tasks of humanity can only be carried through by proletarian socialist revolution.* This is the gist of the theory.
2. *Revolution does not stop at the proletarian dictatorship* but continues as political clashes in the cultural, social, and economic spheres throughout each successive stage on the way to classless society.
3. *Permanent Revolution is international in character and scope.* The objectives of national liberation and democratic struggles in all countries are indissolubly bound up with the success of proletarian revolution in the advanced industrialized countries.

These three laws of social development are inter-related and they outline and illuminate the shape, tasks, and perspectives of world revolution in our era.

Permanent Revolution today takes aim at the capitalist state, its institutions, and the vast interlocking system of human and social relations that form the matrix of world bourgeois oppression. It recognizes the proletariat as the motor force of world economy and the strategic spearhead of international revolution. And it bases itself on the *mutual interdependence* of proletarian and all other liberation struggles.

#### Women under capitalism

No democratic struggle today is older, deeper, or wider-reaching than that waged by women.

Everyone, except blatant male chauvinists, agrees that women in every strata—oppressed nationalities, the peasantry, the working class, the middle class, and even some from the ruling class—are conducting an uninterrupted, permanent struggle for equality.

Women are the oppressed of the oppressed: unpaid domestic slave laborers, breeding machines for capitalist factories and armies, the bulk of industry's reserve labor, and primary victims of the sexism that divides and paralyzes the proletariat and the world's liberation movements.

Age-old sexual and familial constraints on women remain the central life-supports to the established order. Not for an instant can capitalism survive real liberation for women. Nor can any reforms accommodate the aspirations for true equality of a total sex!

Consequently, women's emancipation depends on the forward march of Permanent Revolution and its impending victory over the profit system. *The reverse is equally true: Permanent Revolution will grind to a*

*halt without the momentum of women's accelerating struggle for equality.*

Women's massive entry into the modern proletariat, their continuing existence as the most oppressed within each repressed sector, their age-old common affliction as women—and their demonstrated will to fight it—have conjoined today to make female fighters the radicalizing, unifying *leaders* of world anti-capitalist struggle.

#### Dictatorship of the proletariat

In grappling with the problems of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky and Lenin extended and enriched the theory of Permanent Revolution which had first been formulated by Marx.

All Russian Social Democrats agreed that the industrial West was ripe for socialism, but that Russia had yet to achieve a capitalist order. Lenin and Trotsky insisted, however, that the Russian bourgeoisie was too socially and politically insignificant, its interests too tied to the landlords and the semi-feudal order, to play anything but a reactionary role in the coming revolution.

Only the proletariat, they said, in alliance with the peasantry, could topple the Czar.

Trotsky went even further. *Workers' leadership in the revolution meant proletarian dictatorship over the bourgeoisie after the seizure of power.*

This in turn meant the imposition of socialist measures to accomplish the uncompleted democratic tasks caused by Russia's pre-capitalist conditions. Prime among these democratic demands was the emancipation of women and oppressed minorities.

The February and October revolutions in 1917 provided stunning verification of the theory of Permanent Revolution. They demonstrated conclusively that for all backward countries the road to democracy passes into the dictatorship of the proletariat. The struggle of every stratum of the oppressed in these nations can only be resolved through socialist revolution.

What is not often recognized is that women's emergence into leadership of the proletariat during the 1917 uprising not only proved crucial to the Bolsheviks' victory but previewed the role women would come to play in contemporary workers' and liberation struggles.

#### The international core

The Soviet Union emerged from the revolution bled white from the slaughter of World War I. Civil war further decimated its proletariat and destroyed virtually its entire economy.

This devastation, superimposed on centuries of economic and social backwardness, was the enforced

starting point for socialist reconstruction in the Soviet Union.

The Bolsheviks issued blizzards of measures designed to revive the prostrate country, and by the early 1920s, the USSR began to edge toward recovery.

But the Soviets lay isolated in a hostile and encircling capitalist sea. The West stood on an incomparably higher level industrially, technologically, and militarily, with its guns trained on the first workers' state.

Trotsky warned that unless the Soviet Union broke through its isolation and the revolution found its way into the imperialist heartland, the proletarian dictatorship would eventually be strangled.

The profound importance of international revolution, he taught, had its roots in the character of world economy, the world development of class forces, and the world scale of class struggle. Capitalist development had created an international division of labor among nations based on the uneven world development of industrial technique and the unequal distribution of resources. All national economies were now subordinated to the world market.

This fact was of overriding significance to the Soviet Union, awash in the meagerness and inadequacy of its own capitalist development. Trotsky ridiculed the idea of a "national socialism" based on a "pre-capitalist inventory." He insisted that the inherited backwardness of the Soviet state and its continuing inability to gain access to world resources, international credit, and financing constituted an insurmountable obstacle to economic development.

Consolidation and growth of the economy, moreover, were all that could insure a modicum of social stability, provide for a widening of democratic freedoms, and unleash the human and material resources necessary to liberate women and oppressed minorities from the institutional constraints of prior Russian barbarism.

The sole solution lay in workers' revolution beyond the Soviet borders.

#### Single-state socialism

Internationalism was the guiding perspective of the Soviet Union and the Communist (3rd) International from their beginnings until the early 1920s, when the rising Soviet bureaucracy began to agitate for a turn away from the workers of the world.

In 1924, Stalin counterposed "socialism in one country" to Permanent Revolution as the prevailing Communist ideology.

The prospect of revolution in the West had ebbed with the defeat of the German revolutions of 1918-19 and 1923. This reinforced the isolation of the USSR,

to next page

as well as the conservatism of the Soviet bureaucrats who owed their power to the privation, exhaustion, and backwardness that shackled the first workers' state.

Single-state socialism had been cut to suit these stand-pat reactionaries, grown fond of their privileges and fearful of any disturbances that might jeopardize them.

Stalin's theory artificially separated the national from the international revolution, and deemed the Soviet Union capable of achieving socialism in autarchic isolation from world economy. The Bolshevik seizure of power, it seems, had not opened but closed the era of socialist revolution, and, thereafter, gradual and peaceful reforms would lead the USSR to the Valhalla of classless society.

In the international arena, "socialism in one country" fostered another theoretical abortion—the "two-stage" theory of revolution.

This theory postulated that while the industrial West was ripe for socialism, and the Soviet Union had already achieved a workers' dictatorship, the colonial countries must limit themselves to bourgeois-democratic struggles—the "first stage" of revolution. The second, socialist, stage was separate and was postponed to an indefinite future.

Hence, Stalin repudiated the theory, dynamics, and strategies that had midwived the Soviet state itself!

In this way, by insuring in advance the defeat of colonial upsurge, the Stalinists hoped to develop a tranquil equilibrium between the USSR and the imperialist West.

"Socialism in one country" paved the way for a series of disastrous defeats for world revolution. The 1923 German revolution, the 1925-27 revolution in China, the British General Strike of 1926, and the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet Union itself all fell victim to Stalin's treacherous theory. Fascist counterrevolution in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s and a prolonged setback for colonial liberation were the further fruits of Stalin's anti-Marxist strategies. And with them came the demoralization and theoretical disorientation of the world proletariat.

### Shattering the Stalinist monolith

Trotsky undertook to continue and advance Marxist science. He applied and developed Leninism in response to every fresh turn, mutation, and vicissitude of the struggle for democracy and socialism. He fought throughout his life to extend world revolution under the banner of Permanent Revolution, despite the twin pincers of Stalinist and capitalist slander, vilification, and murder.

By the end of the '30s, the Stalinist police state and the fascist barbarism that arose and fattened on the corpse of the defeated European revolution seemed to the timid, weary, demoralized, and cynical to have rung down the curtain forever on international proletarian struggle.

But the cataclysm of World War II exploded the vise-like grip of the reaction and unleashed Permanent Revolution anew on the world arena. The post-war defeats of imperialist dictatorship in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, and Vietnam kicked off, in turn, the inexorable disintegration of the Stalinist monolith.

The rise of workers in other lands provoked revolts in the Eastern European deformed workers' states created by Soviet bureaucratic and military dictate after World War II. These revolts threatened time and again to infect and unleash the Soviet workers themselves, whose rulers could no longer claim the isolation of the USSR as justification for repression.

Permanent Revolution today sits perched on the doorstep of every Stalinist bureaucracy. In every workers' state, whether degenerated because of isolation and overwhelming problems, or deformed at birth by Stalinist leadership, the residual oppressions inherited from class society fester in every arena of life, and breed resistance. Revolts in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland in 1956, 1970, and today, irrepressibly hold forth the promise of Bolshevism in the homeland, and graveyard, of Stalinism.

How wonderfully ironic that within the Soviet orbit itself, the simultaneous fight for democracy and socialism—Permanent Revolution—attains its highest expression.

### The hidden question

Since World War II, Permanent Revolution has struck deeply and boldly inside the imperialist heartland in new and unexpected ways, and *in advance* of the long-delayed proletarian overthrow itself.

Fierce liberation struggles on issues of sex, race, sexuality, and human relations exploded in the industrial countries. The attendant social, familial, and moral upheavals, which even Trotsky tended to regard as matters for post-capitalist society, battered again and again at the rotten hulk of bourgeois society.

And these sex and race fights swiftly infiltrated and integrated themselves with the proletarian struggle, becoming in fact its motor force (to the dismay of Stalinists and sexist radicals everywhere).

Permanent Revolution, and the Trotskyist dictum that within its framework the *most oppressed* would rise from the depths to become the backbone of workers' and colonial struggles, provides the key to understanding the contours and dynamics of world revolution in our era.

An entire new generation of Marxists is awakening to the fact that Permanent Revolution is inextricably linked to the question of women's liberation.

Permanent Revolution has often been confounded and ignored. It bursts into clear view only at the highest point of a revolution. Similarly, women's emancipation is only now starting to be seen as key to contemporary politics.

This centrality has always existed. But it has been drowned too often beneath the surface of even the highest Marxist consciousness.

Feminism—women's all-encompassing struggle for equality—is hardly a new reality. More than half the human race has been engaged for millenia in a passionate

Men, the owners of the new wealth, became the first owning *class* and women the *first oppressed class*, the earliest harbinger of the modern proletariat. That's why Engels called the sex struggle the earliest class struggle. The degradation of women is intertwined with and basic to all class societies—ancient slavery, Asian despotism, feudalism, and capitalism.

The true herstory of women was submerged as class society took painful root in the world, marked by fierce female resistance every step of the way. The general exclusion of women from power prevailed until the 19th century, when the internal convulsions of bourgeois society and the rise of the industrial proletariat began to rip at the entire fabric of human oppression.

Women took the leadership of suffragist, abolitionist,



Soviet Life

war to throw off the shackles of humiliation, super-exploitation, and grimly institutionalized exclusion from every significant area of leadership and decision-making.

Again and again this majority of the human race has arisen to attack the pre-historic crime of male supremacy.

### Return of the first revolutionaries

Women led the earliest revolution: the vast leap in productivity caused by advances in agriculture, domestication of animals, tools, medicine, and the arts. This revolution engendered the communal ownership of property and its derivatives: freedom and equality.

But women's leadership was overthrown by the inexorable encroachment of surplus wealth and accrual of private property. The first surplus was in cattle, and herds were in the hands of men who used them in trade relations with other tribes. Barter grew into buying and selling, and cattle became the money economy. A new economic, social, and sexual imperative arose that conflicted with the matrilineal communal tribal system and overthrew it.

and workingclass struggles throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. But all too often their interests were subsumed or sacrificed to the "larger," "central" struggles; the explosive power of feminism was rarely accorded the respect and recognition it deserved.

And it still isn't. A significant portion of the Left today refuses to come to terms with women's emancipation as *the connecting link and detonator of proletarian, race, and national liberation struggles*. Women, say the pundits, are secondary to everyone else—and a revolution or two away from the pundits' agenda.

But the composition of the world proletariat has changed since WWII. Women now compose a staggering 45-50% of the working class in all imperialist countries, and their numbers have skyrocketed in colonial countries.

A global liberation network has formed, calling due all the unpaid bills from long ages of unresolved oppression, and women are threaded throughout this network. The newly-arisen feminine linkage between the proletariat and all other struggles is enormous.

All the oppressed must eventually turn toward proletarian leadership and socialist revolution as a solution to their otherwise insoluble problems. The problem of problems, however, is the crisis of leadership *within* the working class. And consideration of this problem constitutes the cutting edge of revolutionary theory and practice today, and the one on which most of the Left has emasculated itself by defeminizing itself.

Women not only seek their democratic rights but are *radical catalysts within all other oppressed groups* and furnish indissoluble links between them!

Rising from the depths of every democratic struggle, insistently acting as a spur and a model, women are truly *the unacknowledged leadership of the proletariat today*, despite the sneers and disbelief of the Left chauvinists!

Our assessment leads to an unavoidable conclusion: *the solution to the revolutionary leadership crisis is wholly dependent upon and inseparable from the struggle for*

Dedicated to the regroupment of U.S. Trotskyists. The workingclass women, gays, people of color, and white male radicals who compose the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party engage in freewheeling discussion and social actions on a widespread front.

#### ALASKA

Juneau: P.O. Box 1325, Juneau, AK 99802. 907-586-1617.

#### CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles: 744½ S. Sycamore Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90036. 213-935-8638.

San Francisco Bay Area: 431 Lee St. #5, Oakland, CA 94610. 415-836-3759.

#### NEW YORK

New York City: P.O. Box 475, Village Stn., New York, NY 10014. 212-929-0210.

#### OREGON

Portland: 2342 N.E. 14th, Portland, OR 97212. 503-284-9884.

#### WASHINGTON

Seattle: 3701 S. Dawson, Seattle, WA 98118. 206-632-7449.

Grays Harbor: 917 Garden Road, Aberdeen, WA 98520. 206-532-0452.

#### AUSTRALIA

Darlinghurst: 146 Liverpool St., Darlinghurst, Australia 2010. 02-336389.

For information, contact Dr. Susan Williams, National Coordinator, P.O. Box 475, Village Stn., New York, NY 10014. 212-929-0210.

men's emancipation. Moreover, the great changes taking place among revolutionary women are breeding color changes in revolutionary parties. This is as it must be! Trotskyism hails these changes in impact of women, and bases itself upon them.

**Menshevik schemas vs. Bolshevik dynamics**  
When Permanent Revolution exploded in the streets of Petrograd in 1917, its most implacable enemies were the Mensheviks, the anti-Bolshevik minority of the party. Like their Stalinist descendants, the Mensheviks insisted that world revolution must arise in distinct and not-to-be-avoided stages. Only the industrial West, they maintained, was "ripe" for socialist revolution. Backward agrarian Russia would have to settle for a bourgeois revolution led



Women textile workers of Petrograd went on strike on International Women's Day 1917 (above) and ignited the Russian Revolution (left).

by the distinctly unrevolutionary bourgeoisie. The proletariat would have to fight its way to socialism later. As Lenin and Trotsky had predicted, however, reality rejected this lifeless recipe. February 1917 found the workers at the head of the insurrection. They were in alliance with the peasantry, but against the bourgeoisie, whose profits were too securely tied to the landlords and the semi-feudal order to support the fundamental changes needed. Within 8 months the revolution would find it necessary to expropriate the bourgeoisie and grow over into socialist revolution. Only this agenda could insure the elementary freedoms supposedly gained with bourgeois democracy. From February to October 1917, Permanent Revolution "grew over" from theory to blazing, ineradicable life.

**The women of February**

Five short days in February were all it took for workers in the streets of Petrograd to win the masses to their side and tumble the monarchy forever. Astonishingly, the Bolsheviks furnished no leadership in those opening days. Lenin and Trotsky were in exile, and the timing, scope, and magnitude of the insurrection caught the party totally unprepared. Who, then, led the workers' overthrow of the monarchy? Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* provides us with an answer: worker-Bolsheviks educated and trained for this moment by the party of Lenin. But what were the inner connections and interactions among the different layers of Petrograd workers? Who among the proletariat took the decisive leadership? Trotsky again offers invaluable insights. And an examination of revolutionary forces and leadership today takes us even further in answering this question than could Trotsky's necessarily limited estimate at the time. The *History* illuminates the events and dynamics of February and enables us to recognize those forces that drove the revolution into high gear.

The 23rd of February was International Women's Day . . . Not a single organization called for strikes on that day. What is more, even a Bolshevik organization, and a most militant one—the Vyborg borough committee, all workers—was opposing strikes . . . any strike would threaten to turn into an open fight. But since the committee thought the time unripe for militant action . . . they decided not to call for strikes but to prepare for revolutionary action at some indefinite time in the future.

How far even the Bolsheviks lagged behind events! But the revolution waits for no man. Nor do revolutionary women!

On the following morning, however, in spite of all directives, the women textile workers went on strike, and sent delegates to the metal workers with an appeal for support. "With reluctance," writes Kayurov, "the Bolsheviks agreed, they were followed by the workers—Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries."

What is evident, Trotsky notes, is that "the February revolution was begun from below . . . the initiative being taken of their own accord by the most oppressed women textile workers." [Our italics. Eds.]

The February insurrection was not a "spontaneous" outbreak, as portrayed by superficial historians. A conscious act of revolutionary initiative by Bolshevik women workers touched off the entire train of events.

The Vyborg women prepared the moment. They developed the closest, most sensitive contact with the metal workers and other workers. They drew to themselves women of all sectors and classes. They consulted in daily and hourly caucuses, and dared to weigh the party's directives against their own superior sense of the situation.

When the time was right, they struck. And they brought the other worker leaders along with them.

The Bolsheviks, faced with this consummate boldness, reluctantly agreed to join them. Thus was the entire class brought in on the action.

Then the problem loomed of what to do next. Trotsky quotes Kayurov: ". . . once there is a mass strike, one must call everybody into the streets and take the lead." The leaders were now face to face with the problem of how to win the soldiers to the side of the insurrection.

Trotsky offers the following account of the boldness which tipped the balance in favor of the revolution:

. . . About 90,000 workers, men and women, were on strike that day . . . The movement began in the Vyborg district with its large industrial establishment; thence it crossed over to the Petersburg side . . . A mass of women, not all of them workers, flocked to the municipal duma demanding bread . . . Red banners appeared in different parts of the city, and inscriptions showed that the workers wanted bread, but neither autocracy or war. Women's day passed successfully; with enthusiasm and without victims. But what it concealed within itself, no one guessed even by nightfall.

No one? Not quite. The women, "among them, no doubt, many soldiers' wives," had guessed and now matched strength with the soldiers.

A great role is played by women workers in relations between the workers and the soldiers. They go up to the cordons more boldly than men, take hold of the rifles, beseech, almost command: "Put down your bayonets—join us!" The soldiers are excited, ashamed, exchange anxious glances, waver; someone makes up his mind first, and the bayonets rise above the shoulders of the advancing crowd. The barrier is opened, a joyous and grateful "Harrah!" shakes the air. The soldiers are surrounded. Everywhere arguments, reproaches, appeals—the revolution takes a forward step.

These opening gambits were repeated countless times in those five days and afterwards. And they are a microcosm of the Permanent Revolution itself, actions of the masses in interaction with their authentic leaders. The Vyborg women were the authentic leaders.

The revolutionary statesmanship of the women textile workers was remarkable.

1. They seized the initiative and acted as the highest conscious force in the February insurrection. Their special viewpoint, formed from their independent and collective experience as women workers, enabled them to discount the directives of leaders who lagged far behind the onrush of events. And their decisiveness won over the rest of the leading

cadre and welded them into a cohesive force.

2. They attracted women from all strata and classes and involved them in revolutionary action.

The immediate issue that sparked the insurrection was bread. This issue soon became extended to and linked with issues of the highest revolutionary order: an end to war and the overthrow of autocracy.

3. On the decisive question of winning over the soldiers, the women were the primary agents of victory.

When the soldiers were sent to crush the workers, the women went up to them and the soldiers refrained from direct conflict. The strike thereby gained courage and enthusiasm, and broadened into outright insurrection.

The vanguard stance of these women was neither an isolated occurrence nor an accident. But the story of the February insurrection has been passed down and refracted through the filter of the male's superiority complex. The lessons of those days, and their meaning and inference for the future, have gone too long ignored.

Trotsky's study, however, forms the basis of the message we must grasp: liberated and liberating women, lodged irreversibly in the vitals of the proletariat and all the democratic movements, play the pivotal role in conditions of upsurge.

**And then came October**

The Vyborg women spearheaded the February victories. But February was only half a revolution. What role did women play in paving the road from insurrection to the Bolshevik seizure of power in October?

Trotsky poses this question along with the leadership problem that confronted the workers:

Who led the February revolution? We can answer definitely enough: conscious and tempered workers educated for the most part by the party of Lenin . . . this leadership proved sufficient to guarantee the victory of the insurrection, but it was not adequate to transfer immediately into the hands of the proletarian vanguard the leadership of the revolution.

When Lenin arrived in Petrograd in April 1917, he found that the power the workers had wrested from the autocracy had been turned over to capitalist proprietors.

This was the work of the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary leadership in the Soviets. While the workers were out making the revolution, these compromisers had contracted for a capitalist state. Immediately, against the growing revolutionary tide, the petty-bourgeois socialists set about building the respectable edifice of a liberal bourgeois state.

Even more horrifying, the entire right wing of the Bolshevik party—its most powerful wing in every crisis—was scrambling to fuse with the Mensheviks in support of the bourgeois Provisional Government!

Lenin opened up a polemical broadside. His April Thesis demanded an end to support for the Provisional Government and called for the open seizure of power by the working class.

The Bolshevik old guard was aghast. Lenin stood virtually alone against the entire party leadership. Yet he prevailed, and swiftly. Says Trotsky:

Lenin found support in another layer of the party, already tempered, but more fresh and more closely united with the masses. In the February insurrection, the worker-Bolsheviks played the decisive role. They thought it self-evident that the class which had won the victory should seize power.

to next page

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# Our Polish Winter

Winter  
has arrived, Mama  
the house  
stays cold  
most of the time  
the rain  
just keeps coming  
everyone  
is on edge

On the phone  
the receptionists  
and law clerks  
and nurses  
and secretaries  
are getting sick and tired  
of the whole damn thing  
their lives are  
one long hassle  
you can hear it  
in their voices

It's winter  
coming in the front door  
Mama  
with bad news  
and sour breath  
outside  
heavy boots crunch on gravel;  
there he is again  
waving a semi-automatic rifle  
and grinning

Mama  
why is it I keep  
thinking of you  
seems you left us  
only yesterday;  
now we go about our daily tasks  
and hope for a break  
in the weather  
I remember your calm  
like the stillness  
before the thunder cracks

We come and go quickly  
stepping over  
our unwanted guests  
where he has fallen  
into a drunken sleep on the floor  
no one wants him  
but it's clear  
we will have to outlast him

The spring, Mama  
the spring will be yours  
and mine

**Sukey Durham**

January 1982

Who was Trotsky specially referring to? The Vyborg women, the first to strike, the first to challenge the soldiers, the most closely united with *all* the masses in Petrograd.

And among the Bolshevik Party leadership itself, only Alexandra Kollontai supported Lenin. She wrote in her autobiography:

**When in April, Lenin delivered his famous programmatic speech within the frame of the soviets, I was the only one of his party comrades who took the floor to support his thesis.**

Lenin's overpowering theoretical, strategical, and tactical command, plus his tremendous moral authority, carried the day and rearmed the party. Once again, the women of February were decisive to his victory.

## Bolsheviks of today

The tempered consciousness of the Vyborg women and other worker leaders was not enough, by itself, to carry the revolution through to the end. And the Bolshevik leadership fell far short of the requisite grasp and determination. Without Lenin, February would not have passed over into October.

But how often does a Lenin or Trotsky come along in a century? What guarantees every revolution a leadership comparable to theirs? And what bearing

has this leadership question on the tasks and perspectives facing the American revolutionary party today?

The party that leads the coming American revolution will be Bolshevik in theoretical outlook and organizational methods. It will be thoroughly grounded in the heritage of Lenin and Trotsky. But the tasks of the American party can by no means be measured in terms of the overthrow of the Czarist monarchy and the Kerensky government.

Revolution in the U.S. means nothing less than the overthrow and dismantling of the mightiest, richest, most advanced, and most horrendously destructive imperialist power in history.

Hence, with or without a Lenin and Trotsky, we must be *better* than the Bolsheviks of 1917. We must be more alert and perceptive, more steeled and prepared, more intent on carrying through.

*We must be a Bolshevik party in which the right wing has been neutralized or sloughed off.* Only a leadership that reflects, expresses, and bases itself upon the kind of brilliant interaction that prevailed between the Vyborg women and the Petrograd masses can hope to lead the American revolution to victory.

This means a leadership rooted in the masses, attuned to every major twist and turn in world revolution, cognizant of the radically altered racial and general balance within the proletariat and other revolutionary cadre, and, above all, determined to weld this cadre into a strike force capable of beating

back and destroying the U.S. imperialist enemy.

## Twilight of the gods

Women textile workers live in the Vyborgs of today. Co-mingled with them are the racially, sexually, and nationally oppressed. The Vyborgs are assuredly the gravitational centers of world revolution.

Standing as a counterweight within the working class, however, is the U.S. labor bureaucracy, long-time bulwark of U.S. imperialism and the chief transmission belt for reformism in the labor movement.

Lenin dissected the international labor bureaucracy in his preface to the 1920 edition of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

*... it is quite possible to bribe the labor leaders and the upper stratum of the labor aristocracy. And the capitalists of the "advanced" countries are bribing them; they bribe them in a thousand different ways, direct and indirect, overt and covert.*

*This stratum of bourgeoisified workers, or the "labor aristocracy," who are quite philistine in their mode of life, in the size of their earnings and in their outlook, serve as the principal prop of the Second International, and, in our day, the principal social ... prop of the bourgeoisie in the labor movement ...*

*Not the slightest progress can be made toward the solution of the practical problems of the communist movement and the impending social revolution unless the economic roots of this phenomenon are understood and its political and sociological significance appreciated.*

Lenin's description and analysis hold doubly true for the U.S. labor bureaucracy today. Not even the vast capitalist bureaucracy cements U.S. imperialist power so tightly as do its bought-and-paid-for labor skates.

The labor bureaucracy functions as the organized carrier of racist, sexist, homophobic, and imperialist standards and culture into the working class.

And just below the bureaucracy stands its conveyor belt, the aristocracy of labor.

This huge, privileged, predominantly white male sector identifies with and supports the union misleaders and engenders enormous political approval of the bosses and the government.

Roughly analogous to the labor bureaucracy are the reformists who afflict all the movements for social change—the Betty Friedans and Jesse Jacksons who prescribe pabulum for the starving.

The bureaucrats, bourgeoisified workers, and opportunists of all races and both sexes are parasites feeding on the misery of poor workers and the oppressed. As the economic and social equilibrium of global capitalism begins to totter and crumble, these worthies dig their spurs ever deeper into the flanks of their beleaguered movements.

## The byword is audacity

The power of militant women will break their stranglehold! It will neutralize the intransigents and win over the many who are fast losing their privileges, faith, and hope.

Women impel the proletariat and the social movements. They continually exhibit an unmatched audacity, more audacity, and still more audacity!

They will unleash an incalculable revolutionary power which will bolster and inspire the working class to defeat the union bureaucrats and destroy the imperialist butchers who sponsor them.

Revolutionaries of both sexes and all skin colors and nations, with the sense and sensibility to link up with the most downtrodden of our age, will together forge a mighty socialist feminist party.

This is the promise that crowns the present reality and foretells the paramount role in Permanent Revolution enacted by women who dare. □

# FSP

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# THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

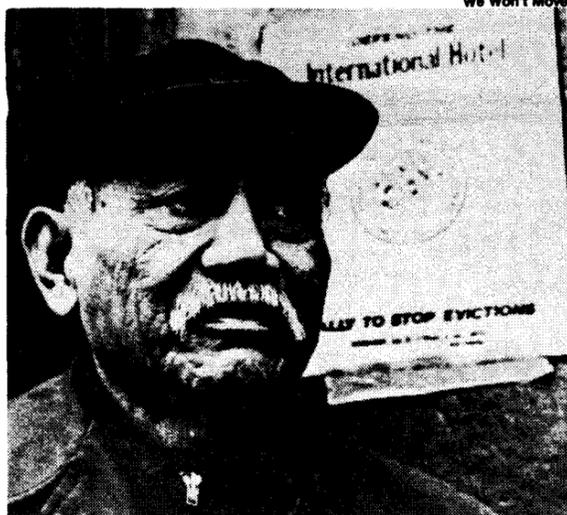
Nellie Wong presented this speech in February 1981 at the San Francisco "Left-Write Conference: A Unity Conference of Writers on the Left." Subsequent sexist, racist, and anti-radical attacks on Wong's presentation, however, belied the "unity" of the conference. Reviews in *Contact II* and *Black Scholar* castigated Wong for employing "pop images," and being "weak," individualist, and "too broad," as well as "self-affirming, immature, and betraying barely disguised hostility."

The Left-Writers Union, formed out of the conference, split over the refusal of virulent anti-Trotskyists in the group to defend Wong. *Contact II* and *Black Scholar* have received many letters protesting their unfair and distorted reviews. *Contact II*, in its Spring issue, printed a defense of Wong by the Women Writers Union.

BY NELLIE WONG

*We are the multitudes, the world over, millions everywhere  
in violent factories, sordid tenements, crowded cities,  
in skies and seas and rivers, in lands everywhere;  
our numbers increase as the wide world revolves  
and increases arrogance, hunger, disease and death.*

*We are the men and women reading books,  
searching  
in the pages of history for the lost word, the key  
to the mystery of living peace, imperishable joy;  
we are factory hands field hands mill hands  
everywhere,  
moving creating building structures, forging  
ahead. . .  
guarding the imperishable will of man to live in  
grandeur.<sup>1</sup>*



The Asian American community of San Francisco mobilized to save the International Hotel, a haven of multi-ethnic, low cost housing for elders and the poor.

The words of Carlos Bulosan, Filipino writer, migrant worker, and union activist, eloquently remind us of the indomitable spirit and will of Asians in America. Embodied in that spirit and will is the act of writing that flows from the heart.

Asian Americans are a community of people with common interests linked to our history as people of color, as workers. Within our communities, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, and others—we struggle for the freedom to participate in and change a society which has historically oppressed us because of our race, our sex, our sexuality, and our labor.

Our writing arises from and through political struggle, through the "imperishable will of man"—and, I might add, the imperishable will of woman—"to live in grandeur."

Bulosan describes his vision of grandeur:

*Once when I was a little boy in that village  
where I had been born, I dreamed that we could  
remake this world into a paradise. In such a  
world there would be no darkness, no ig-  
norance, no brutality. . . In such a world there  
would be no inhumanity, no indignity, no  
poverty. . . there would be mutual assistance,  
mutual cooperation, mutual love. This is the  
dream which has sustained me down the terrible  
years, and it is with me still; only it is more lucid  
now, more terrifying in its vastness.<sup>2</sup>*

In this spirit, then, in this desire to reap the beauty of dreams, Asian Americans have left us a legacy that

## WHO WE ARE

gives us the hope to continue writing and fighting.

We write for the joy of creating beauty as well as to document our experience in our own words, in a language that is not distinctly white American or distinctly Asian. Our writers describe inter-generational conflicts, cultural antagonism, identity, sexuality—the whole range of human expression.

We have many writers—Shawn Wong, Fay Chiang, Merle Woo, Kitty Tsui—and our earlier writers Louis Chu, John Okada, and Carlos Bulosan . . . Our writers directly challenge the racism and sexism and class oppression of the system, and they must be heard. Adversity pushes us forward to see with clarity, to act as a community.

The Chinese American pioneers carved poetry on the walls of the immigration station on Angel Island. One poem states, "Over a hundred poems are on the walls. . . Looking at them, they are all pining at the delayed progress. . . From ancient times, heroes often were the first ones to face adversity."<sup>3</sup>

Japanese Americans are now articulating and publishing for the first time the art that was forged in the American concentration camp experience during World War II. Among those writers are Hiroshi Kashiwagi, Janice Mirikitani, Lawson Inada, Wakako Yamauchi, and Hisaye Yamamoto.

Mitsuye Yamada, a Nisei, wrote from her experience as an internee in Idaho:

To The Lady

*The one in San Francisco who asked:  
Why did the Japanese Americans let  
the government put them in  
those camps without protest?*

*Come to think of it I  
should've run off to Canada  
should've hijacked a plane to Algeria  
should've pulled myself up from my  
bra straps  
and kicked'm in the groin  
should've bombed a bank  
should've tried self-immolation  
should've holed myself up in a  
woodframe house  
and let you watch me  
burn up on the six o'clock news. . .  
Then*

*YOU would've  
come to my aid in shining armor  
laid yourself across the railroad track  
marched on Washington  
tattooed a Star of David on your arm  
written six million enraged  
letters to Congress*

*But we didn't draw the line  
anywhere  
law and order Executive Order 9055  
social order moral order internal order*

*YOU let'm  
I let'm  
All are punished<sup>4</sup>*

For the Asian American community, politics and art are indeed intertwined. We fight for decent, low-cost housing not only in Chinatown, Manilatown, and Nihonmachi in San Francisco, but in Seattle, Los Angeles, and New York. And we know whom we are fighting: the corporate interests of capitalism.

In *We Won't Move: Poems and Photographs of the International Hotel Struggle*, Genny Lim writes:

*the Big Black Ball sways  
from Chinatown to Rhodesia  
it bangs and bangs like distant thunder  
it bangs  
sidewalks, paving death  
each time it crushes a manong  
it grunts  
each time it eats a chinaman alive  
its belly is lined with silver coins  
its tongue the color of green<sup>5</sup>*

Writing and other forms of art affect us deeply. We workingclass writers know we must continue the legacy left us by our Asian American pioneers. Like any other oppressed group, we cannot afford to bathe in the complacency of individual pursuits without regard for the community.

Writing is the political expression of beauty, of human joy and suffering. We must write in order to live.

Are we not the dangerous, the radicals, the working class, the gays, the lesbians, the people of color who gather here today to begin an essential creative dialogue, to fight the repression of the right wing?

Janice Mirikitani writes:

*We who fill the secret bed,  
the sweat shops  
the laundries.*

*And they would dress us in napalm,  
Skin shed to clothe the earth,  
Bodies filling pockmarked fields.  
Dead fish bloating our harbors.*

*We, the dangerous,  
Dwelling in the ocean.  
Akin to the jungle.  
Close to the earth.*

*Hiroshima  
Vietnam  
Tule Lake*

*And yet we were not devoured.  
And yet we were not humbled.  
And yet we are not broken.<sup>6</sup>*

And to the forces that are trying to silence us, to kill us, I say, "they ain't seen nothing yet!" □

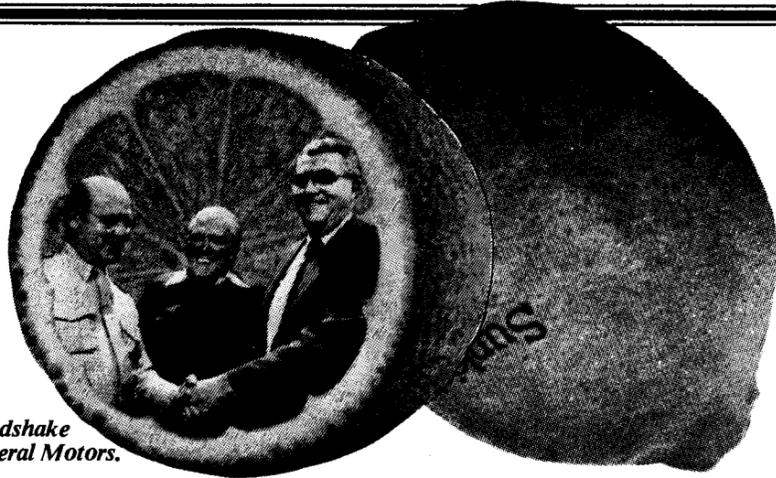


In a massive memorial-protest to win reparations, Japanese Americans reenact the forced trek to WWII concentration camps.

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## EDITORIAL



*Labor-management handshake between UAW and General Motors.*

# UAW buys a lemon

U.S. labor skates are showing what they're made of.

Shaken by the economic crisis and terrified by Reagan's wholesale firing of the PATCO strikers, union bureaucrats are lining up to hand back all the gains workers have fought and bled for in the last half-century.

United Auto Workers chieftain Douglas Fraser was one of the first in line.

When the auto industry threatened to shut plants down unless employees gave "concessions" at the bargaining table, Fraser touted givebacks as a means of saving jobs and saving the industry. In March and April, the UAW leadership approved contracts with Ford and General Motors that took away billions in wages and benefits from auto workers.

### Something for nothing

The concessions, however, will save neither jobs nor plants. They merely bail out the capitalists at the expense of the workers. And they set an ominous precedent for the labor movement! Management nationwide now has a blueprint, and the confidence, to gouge the proletariat ever more deeply.

It's all give and no take in Detroit. Wage increases, job conditions, even jobs are traded for promises of job security.

The GM contract freezes wages, delays cost of living adjustments, eliminates holidays, and reduces wages for new hires. And local contracts can also be opened up for additional cutbacks and speedup. Job training, affirmative action, and safety will be lost.

All this means that an estimated 3 billion dollars will be heisted from workers' pockets over the next two-and-a-half years.

Meanwhile, GM rakes in profits, pays out dividends to stockholders, and expands into runaway, non-union shops.

### Lies, fakes, and cover-ups

The auto industry's threats of imminent collapse and plant shutdowns are blackmail. The government colludes in the scam by refusing plant subsidies unless the workers give in. And the labor mis-leaders commit class treachery in their insistence on class collaboration in pursuit of a "common" goal.

Labor skates and auto moguls have concocted a

"Buy American" campaign (at \$8,000 per auto, no less!). They circulate the racist, anti-worker myth that the industry's decline is due to Japanese imports. They then shift the blame for lack of jobs onto workers of other countries rather than *capitalism itself*, which, in the meantime, takes its investment capital and jobs to countries where rightwing dictators guarantee slave wages and high profits.

Ford and General Motors have no intention of stopping their overseas investments or of guaranteeing job security, no matter what advertising or promises they've exchanged for givebacks.

### Mad as hell

Many auto workers realize this. They're furious about the union giveaways. The most recent GM contract vote was very close, with many locals overwhelmingly rejecting it. And management can expect a donnybrook in the locals when it tries to force the next round of concessions.

UAW workers in Ontario, Canada have refused the givebacks and have occupied their plants in a sit-down strike!

This harks back to the magnificent history of American auto workers, and should spark sitdowns on this side of the border.

Labor history reveals that workers get and keep benefits only by fighting for them. Crisis-ridden capitalism is out to squeeze the workers drip dry, and

the unions need to organize concerted, militant resistance, not Munich-style treason.

Labor must build a mighty vehicle beyond the bargaining table to uphold its own interests. Rank-and-file caucuses must be built or expanded, based on a fighting program of 30-for-40, open the company books, and internal democracy. These caucuses will be instrumental in preparing the groundwork for a Labor Party.

For unions need a new mass party of their own—a *Labor Party* based on the unions and including all the oppressed—that presents a clear electoral choice between capitalists and workers.

The bosses are the thieves of our labor and of the products of our labor. They are not our "partners" and their political parties are not our parties. The huge concessions that unions are granting today are crimes against us, crimes initiated by the bosses. Workers have to rise up and fight back, not give back. A Labor Party is the vehicle for workers to begin taking back what is theirs, this time for keeps.

—MANNY SUNSHINE AND KAREN BRODINE

**Karen Brodine, organizer for San Francisco Radical Women, is a typesetter who helped bring her shop into Western Graphics Local 14. Manny Sunshine, Machinists Local 68, is on the San Francisco Labor Council and is a leading member of CRSP.**

## Dear PATCO...

You have staunchly defied federal government strikebreaking and union busting for nine long, harrowing months.

Thousands of labor militants around the country, and the world, have rallied to your defense and called upon their unions and their feminist, gay, or civil rights organizations to support you.

Thousands of rank-and-filers are on your side, you know, and they will mobilize swiftly on your behalf if you issue a call for action—for mass demonstrations, public protest meetings, expanding



the boycott of U.S. airways.

You will never win over the Republicans or officialdom. Your victory lies in your will to battle it out and in your faith in the hands and feet and minds of other workers anxious to stand alongside and struggle with you.

The world is waiting to hear from you. Now. And the rank-and-file of U.S. workers look to your ranks to lead us all in a common assertion of workers' demands and workers' power.

In solidarity,  
**Radical Women and  
Freedom Socialist Party**

## VOICES OF COLOR

# A Black male radical looks at feminism

*Julius Lester, a Black writer, penned this tribute to women's struggle for freedom in his Guardian column of July 20, 1968. He was one of the first male radicals of the '60s to sound a warning to the movement: welcome and support feminism or come to grief on the shoals of your own sexism! The fate of the New Left and the Black Power movement provide eloquent testament to Lester's prophetic vision. His article, "Women's Liberation," has lost none of its relevance and we are proud to republish excerpts from it.*

Several years ago the question of women's liberation came up during a meeting of a Black radical organization. The first person to speak was a prominent Black male of the organization: "The position of women in the movement should be prone!" That was the sum total of the discussion, and the meeting went on to "more important" matters.

Undoubtedly quite a few men in the movement would agree with that assessment as to the position of women. Fortunately, women don't agree. It is sad to think that any man who wishes to be considered radical, not to mention revolutionary, would not want for women what he wants for himself. Yet many men are finding the concepts of women's liberation groups. . . difficult to contend with.

After all, within this society men comprise a privileged class, and the ideology which this society

inculcates into us dictates that the man shall lead and the woman shall follow. That is all very well for an oppressed society, but for those of us who are (according to informed sources) trying to destroy the oppressive society and build the human one, it is unthinkable that men within the movement would fail to take seriously the necessity for women's liberation.

Of course, a privileged class is always unwilling to relinquish its privileges. It must be made to do so, and this is just what is beginning to happen with the formation of women's liberation groups around the country. . .

The usual male reaction is: What is it these women want? What're they talking about? That is a cop-out response, seeking to shift the responsibility of oppression to the oppressed. The reaction should be: What is wrong that has made it necessary for women to organize their own groups? And to answer the question, the man will have to look to himself and at society.

Not so strangely, it has always been men who have said that a woman's function in life was to serve a man. Now the women. . . are talking to each other and seeking to define who they are, first in relationship to themselves. Any man who cannot see the beauty in this should question any claims he may make of being anything more than a liberal.

Many men. . . would prefer to defer the entire

matter until that great day "after the revolution" and then, of course, women will automatically be liberated. Unfortunately it doesn't work that way. It is apparent that women cannot achieve liberation under the present system. None of us can. *However, the present system will never be laid to rest unless the dynamics of personal relationships begin to change at the same time the system is fought.* [Our emphasis]

At present the movement tends to view women as necessary appendages. Women are no longer being considered as little more than an afterthought. The socialist revolutions of the 20th century have demonstrated that women are a vital necessity in the revolutionary struggle. The revolutionary potential of women cannot begin to be realized, however, as long as they are chained to this society's conception of what a girl friend, wife and mother should be. If the revolutionary potential of women is not realized, the revolutionary potential of men remains unrealized.

As long as men accept this society's definition of women and male-female relationships, then men remain oppressed by this society. To the degree that a man views a woman as an object, he himself is an object. No man who is fully human can be threatened by women's liberation. Rather, he is overjoyed by it and realizes that women's liberation is also his responsibility.

—JULIUS LESTER

MOVIE REVIEW

Guess who's coming to bed

Once "the love that dare not speak its name," homosexuality today is big-time boxoffice, and gays, for the gilded moment, are the toast of the silver screen.

Hollywood wants to capture that lucrative lesbian/gay market. But it also wants to placate the straight white establishment and titillate the voyeuristic fringe.

The flurry of current gay movies are not all bad. "Victor/Victoria" at least succeeds as a burlesque of sex roles and treats gay men sympathetically.

"Making Love," this year's Big Gay Movie, is a slushy coming-out soap operetta. Nothing here at all to offend anyone. Nothing here at all, in fact.

But in "Personal Best" there is something—exploitative, moralistic garbage.

"Personal Best" is a double travesty in its portrayal of lesbians and women athletes. If they were as wimpy, vapid, and passionless as Mariel Hemingway in the leading role of Chris, the straight white male establishment could rest easy.

The picture opens with a nice girl meets girl theme. Chris, after unsuccessfully competing in the 1976 Olympic track trials, faints in a bar. Tory, a competitor in the pentathlon (excellently portrayed by Patrice Donnelly, a real-life Olympic pentathlete), offers her a ride home. After smoking a joint and indulging in some intense arm wrestling, Tory apprehensively kisses Chris. To Tory's surprise, Chris enjoys it.

Writer/director/producer Robert Towne ("Chinatown," "Shampoo") then offers a few scenes showing Chris and Tory making love, a first in commercial film. The scenes are "sensitively" done, but they still come off with Hollywoodian exploitiveness and offensiveness.

After a few idyllic scenes of Chris and Tory jogging, the movie goes even more steeply downhill. The lovers begin to compete against each other and Tory becomes the Evil Woman—jealous, manipulative, and dangerous.

Girl then loses girl. Tory is accused of deliberately causing a pole vaulting accident in which Chris is injured. Male coach to the rescue! In his expert hands, Chris undergoes physical and men-

tal reconditioning: the coach trivializes her lesbianism, severs her communication with Tory, tells her a "faggot" joke, and gives Chris a lustful, therapeutic kiss.

Next, boy wins girl. Denny, a water polo player, is so overcome by Chris' legs kicking in the water that he smacks headfirst into the edge of the pool. It's a laff riot. Denny soon inspires Chris, and Chris inspires Tory, to qualify for the 1980 Olympic team.

Everyone is happy now that Chris has passed over into the sexual mainstream.

"Personal Best" commits a deep disservice to women athletes. It depicts them as dominated by their emotions and dependent for their achievements on the approval of sex partners. And it isolates Chris and Tory in a sea of heterosexuality, with no contact with other lesbians and no sense of the lesbian/gay community.

Towne spices his script with words like "pussy" and "cunt" and fills the screen with the nude bodies of female athletes. He also uses people of color as easy targets for comic relief; a particularly nauseating joke is told in a women's sauna to the effect that an "Oriental" man's "slant eyes and buck teeth" are caused by his perverse sexuality. The joke is told by a Black woman, presumably to make the racism more palatable. Throughout, people of color are stereotyped and peripheral.

"Personal Best" could have been a frontrunner in the race for lesbian and gay liberation. But it comes in as a loser for everyone. If this is director Towne's personal best, it's time for him to scratch filmmaking and try out for a different event.

—EMILY WOO YAMASAKI

Emily Woo Yamasaki is an actor studying at New York University. Her credits include roles in two independent films: "Chan is Missing," the first all-Asian produced and acted U.S. feature-length film, and "The Departure," a 10-minute, all-Asian short. She also performed in "And the Soul Shall Dance," produced in San Francisco by the Asian American Theatre Company. She is a mainstay of NYC Radical Women.



Clara Fraser

FOURTH OF JULY ORATION

CURRENT FASHIONS in world leftism decree that our very own, home brew, red-white-and-blue working class be regarded with lofty arrogance. No fullblooded anti-imperialist can pass the course in Revolution II without sneering and sniping at U.S. workers.

Indeed, my sisters and brothers in the shops and offices and mines and mills of the USA have been endowed with a new and hyphenated moniker—the "backward-Americans."

We're retarded. Furthermore, we're no damn good at all. The fate of the world is in other, older and better hands, and made-in-USA radicals should shut up. What do we know, anyway? What insurrections and guerrilla operations have we ever mounted? Besides, even if Yankee radicals gave a revolution, none of the workers would come. They're too dumb.

U.S. toilers, it seems, have yet to shed their diapers. We haven't got mass socialist or communist parties. We've never made it to the little leagues, the Labor Party. We're even short on syndicalists, anarchists, and other such trade unionists who hate Marxism and political parties but expect The Workers to lead an anti-capitalist revolution for non-socialism. Or something.

Anyway, we're abjectly bereft of Europe's perennial kvetches, revisionists, opportunists, accommodationists, ritual radicals, social democrat bureaucrats, and Stalinist hatchet men.

THIS IS BAD????

SUCH BACKWARDNESS, you might demur, might not be such a bad thing. Thinking *dialectically*, it could even be a boon and a benefit. You might say this. Please do.

What's so great about the "advanced" radical movements in other countries that never get anywhere or that go haywire?

Who needs the world-weary compromisers in the mass reformist parties who have mouthed off about socialism for 100 years and never got close to making a revolution? Or to making one that didn't end up degenerated, deformed, aborted, diseased, distorted, sexist, racist, homophobic, cruel to oppressed nationalities, and hellishly undemocratic?

Call me an American chauvinist if you like. But I infinitely prefer the tumult of my own working class, a class that *leaps* into battle when it finally decides to fight and makes up most dramatically for its late start. This conservative-minded class has the startling habit of suddenly erupting into militance and brilliant innovativeness. It moves further and more swiftly on the strike front than faster-than-a-speeding-bullet you know who. On strategy and tactics it is a world leader.

Ours is an historically youthful class, a self-confident, even smug, class, a practical and pragmatic and yet refreshingly romantic class. And it is an *undefeated* class.

Let's give credit where credit is due. North American employees have won some of the best conditions, benefits, and pay scales on the face of the earth—wrested them from slavers, robber barons, giant monopolies, and assorted plutocrats in command of the flagship of imperialism. No small feat, that. Attention must be paid. And respect, too.

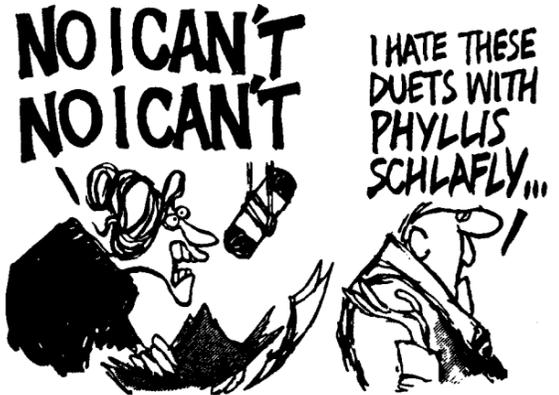
THE FIRST AMERICAN REVOLUTION of 1776 inspired soaring hopes among huddled masses everywhere yearning to be free. The second American Revolution, the Civil War, further electrified the exploited millions of the earth; the determination of the workers in the northern and western United States to smash the "peculiar institution" of slavery wove a unique and glorious chapter in human history.

The saga of U.S. labor—from its thrusts at organization even before the Colonial Revolution, through its thunderous development into the National Labor Union of the 19th century, then the AFL, later the IWW, and finally the audacious and irresistible CIO—is a thrilling story of heroism.

Workers of North America, who are of all races and stem from widely diversified nations and cultures, have nothing to be ashamed of and much to be proud of.

But my working class, of course, is really no better or worse than anybody else's working class. My class is equally the product of its own particular history, geography, and culture, and equally the victim of its own lieutenants who labor for the generals instead of the privates and non-coms.

NEVERTHELESS, OUR REVOLUTION can and must be made, with a little help, and a little less intolerance, from our friends abroad. Every revolution today flounders and sours because the U.S. colossus co-opts, encircles, starves, bombs, or subverts it. That is why the North American revolution is everybody's revolution. Don't sell it short.



BY SANDY NELSON

**T**he dearly-won freedom to choose a safe, legal, and inexpensive abortion may soon be disastrously reversed.

Not even ten years have passed since the feminist movement won back this precious and ancient practice. How swiftly has the unholy trinity of church, state, and Big Business retaliated with its regressive crusade to wipe out women's reproductive rights!

On the smoldering ashes of female emancipation, the right-to-lifers, supply-siders, and assorted reactionaries plan to dismantle *all* democratic and human liberties. They focus on the politically weakest and yet most profound link in the chain of workers' rights—legal abortion and protection from forced sterilization.

Already, federal funding for abortion is being gutted. And the right wing is hounding legislators at the national, state, and local levels for laws such as the Human Life Amendment that define conception as the beginning of human life and punish abortion as murder.

America's capitalist class is fiercely determined to restore the straight white male as king of the nuclear family castle and re-enslave women as breeding machines and seasonally available cheap labor for the profit system. The plutocracy has the president, Congress, the courts, and billions of dollars in its pockets, and is working full throttle to abort women's biological freedom—women's control of their own bodies for their own reasons.

Once women are knocked back into sexual slavery and economic hopelessness, male workers will get the ax also. *The abortion issue is clearly the launching pad for all the current attacks on the needs of working people.*

The sinister Family Protection Act, for example, is a sweeping assault on much more than reproductive rights. It singles out for persecution all female-headed households; shelters for battered women; childcare facilities; public education; social, health, and legal services for people of color and the poor; desegregated schools; progressive labor laws; and lesbian and gay rights!

To make matters worse, the petty bourgeois liberals, and other fair-weather friends of women and democracy are ducking for cover just when they should be gearing up for a united defense. Seeing only political blitzkrieg on the horizon, the erstwhile friends of feminism have lost all will to fight, and are sacrificing the needs of their multiply-oppressed sisters.

The liberals are incapable of a multi-issue, all-encompassing program that raises aloft the bold demands that won abortion in the first place.

Social revolution no longer entails the fun, glitz, and euphoria of the '60s and '70s. Today, it's a tough political swim against the current. Nonetheless, militant mass action is a *must*.

Those who ignore the lessons of history are doomed to repeat its mistakes—and do they ever! But those who respect history are privileged to reproduce and extend its victories.

### Race, class, and sex morality

Under common law inherited from England, abortion and birth control were legal in the U.S. throughout much of the 19th century.

An estimated one out of every three pregnancies ended in abortion, and by the end of the century women had succeeded in cutting the birthrate in half.

It was not until the Civil War was over that the U.S. ruling class began in earnest to take control of reproduction away from women.

The American Medical Association led the campaign. It wanted all health care, and the profits derived therefrom, in the exclusive hands of doctors. And it derided as "dirty" and "unsafe"

abortions by midwives, the salvation of women for centuries.

The tremendous post-war industrial boom and the colonization of the West had created the need for more workers. The capitalists wanted (white) women in the home to breed labor power for the factories.

The boom forced the U.S. to throw open its doors to millions of European and, later, Asian immigrants. And the powers-that-be feared that this sudden influx of non-WASPs would choke out the white Yankee stock.

Hence, in the last quarter of the 19th century, the effort to control women's reproduction through the state, church, and medical profession took on a *double-barreled sexist and racist character*. And anti-abortion laws became the paving stones for sinister methods of population control directed primarily against women of color.

In 1922, a national eugenics law to "control the breeding of undesirables" provided the means for thousands of forced sterilizations. During the Depression, federally-funded birth clinics were established in the South to

were barred by hypocritical hospital committees from receiving abortions.

Pro-abortion activists like Lawrence Lader, author of *Abortion II*, and Patricia Maginnis began to agitate around the country for legalized abortion. And by 1967, a few physicians were willing to test abortion laws.

In 1969, Dr. Milan Vuitch, the first to challenge abortion laws on constitutional grounds, won before the District Court of the District of Columbia. Washington, D.C. became the first place in the U.S. to legalize abortion.

The civil disobedience of a few courageous doctors and individuals, however, would have been powerless to alter the laws had not the growing feminist movement leapt into the struggle.

Young women from the Civil Rights movement began to fight for women's rights as well, and they infused pro-abortion groups in San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Boston, and Seattle with the vigor and determination necessary to shake the nation out of a century of ignorance and complacency. Once again, as the liberals flinched, the radicals stormed into action.

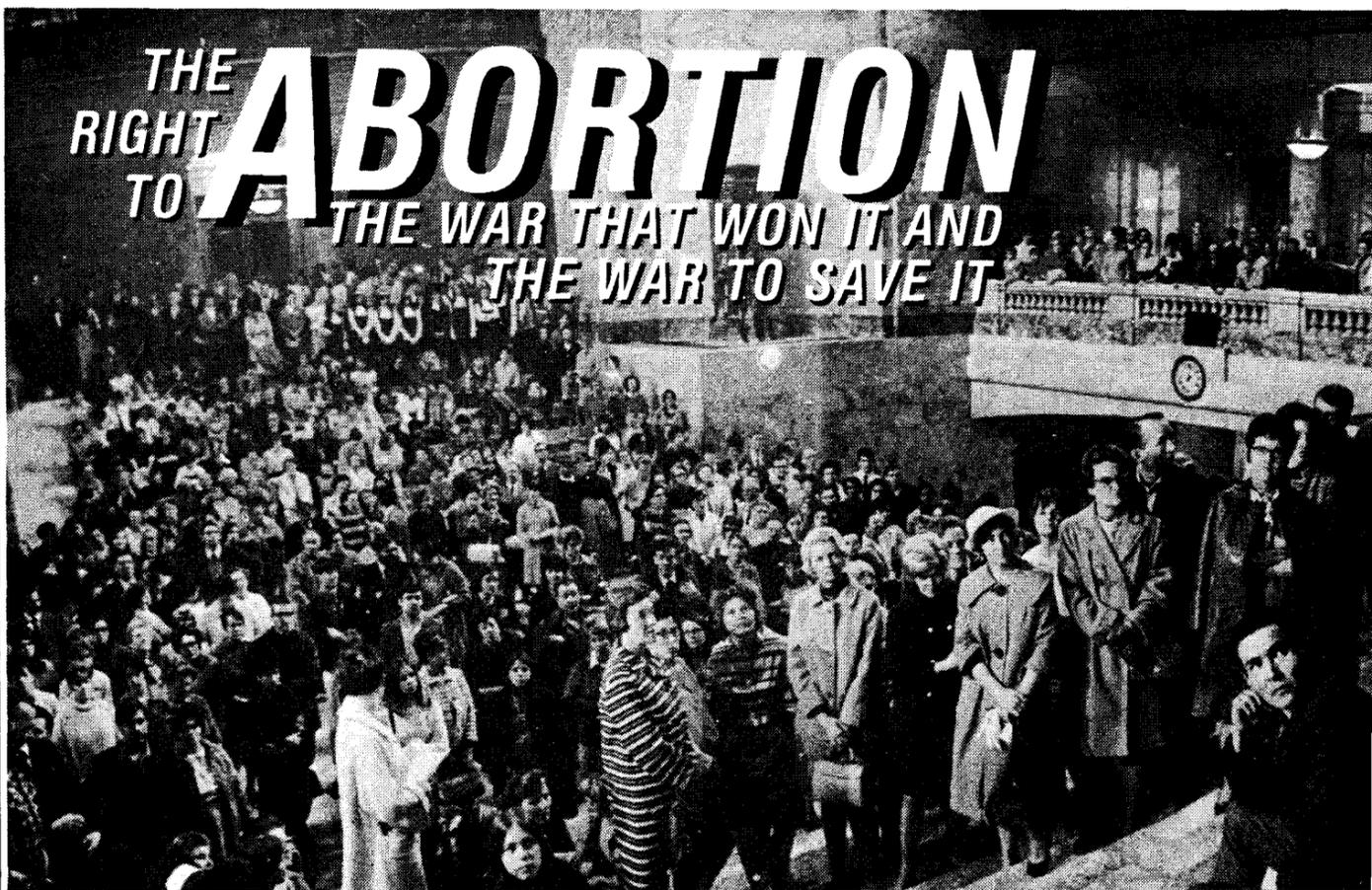
lawyers, including Flo Kennedy, invited the press to hear depositions in a New York test case from women who had suffered the degradation of illegal abortions. Not long afterward, in March 1970, the New York Legislature repealed the state abortion law.

### Pioneer struggle in Washington

It has never been sufficiently recognized that it was Black women in the Civil Rights movement who initiated the fight for legal abortion in Washington State. These militants knew from ghetto life how women of color were butchered by back alley abortionists or consigned to coathanger surgery.

In 1968, when women were radicalizing the Civil Rights and anti-war movements, a small group of Black activists from the anti-poverty programs and members of Radical Women working in these agencies formed a coalition called *Abortion Action Now* and launched a powerful public campaign.

They hounded the media for publicity and agitated statewide for abortion on demand.



1,000 abortion rights demonstrators held a groundbreaking protest in 1969 at the Washington State Capitol in Olympia.

reduce the Black birthrate.

A 1945 Congressional motion to sterilize all Japanese American women interned in concentration camps failed by only one vote!

### Century of struggle

Who began the 20th century struggles for reproductive rights? The radicals, the socialists, the anarchists. Fearless women like Emma Goldman and countless others braved arrest and prison to publicize the plight of an entire sex shorn of its historic and inherent right to limit its own progeny.

Sixty years of battle eventually culminated in the legalization of contraception in most states, but abortion remained off limits.

It was precisely by exposing the *immorality* of the anti-abortionists that feminists and civil libertarians won vast public support for repeal of abortion laws in the '60s and early '70s.

Two mid-'60s horror stories helped pave the way. Thalidomide victim Sherri Finkbine, who had been denied an abortion in Colorado, made national headlines when she traveled to Sweden and aborted a horribly deformed fetus.

Next, an epidemic of rubella, which increases the danger of fetal deformity, hit thousands of U.S. women. Because they lacked money and influence, they

Even NOW backed abortion law repeal in 1967, although the issue split the organization. Other feminist groups lent their voices and pens to the defense of individuals prosecuted under the abortion laws, and they hit the streets and state capitols to pressure the courts and legislatures.

By 1969, pro-abortion strategies won reforms in ten states. These reforms, however, still left formidable barriers to women's access to abortion, and even *decreased* the total number of abortions performed in this country.

The polite lobbyists for abortion who tried to avoid provoking religious opposition were outgunned by the friends-of-the-fetus and right-to-life groups who decked their children in "I'm glad I was born" signs and paraded them around the statehouses.

But feminists were not about to be stopped on the doorsteps of the legislature.

In February 1969, women from NOW, the October 17 Movement, and Women's Liberation broke up a meeting of New York State's Legislative Committee. The committee's "experts" consisted of fourteen men and a nun. The women picketed, distributed leaflets, and demanded to speak. After they were ejected, they sat-in until three of them were allowed to speak.

Public furor deepened when feminist

They pioneered the demand for an end to non-consensual sterilization of women of color, the mentally and physically "disabled," and poor whites. They denounced the racist double standard and sexism that prescribed genocide for women of color and "social undesirables" but mandated compulsory pregnancy for white women.

They linked reproductive rights to affirmative action and free, round-the-clock childcare—reforms enabling women to support themselves and raise the children they chose to bear.

Mass demonstrations (which included a donnybrook with capitol guards at the legislature), public education, petitions, and hearings catapulted the abortion issue from the obituary page to the front page. A bill to legalize abortion that lay moldering in the Senate Rules Committee was hastily resurrected.

After two years of bucking Catholic resistance in committee hearings, the bill was put to a popular referendum vote in 1970. It won by a landslide, a full three years before the U.S. Supreme Court made legalized abortion the law of the land in 1973.

### Latter-day compromisers

Cushioned with privilege and concerned primarily with the needs of white middleclass women, most of to-

day's "pro-choice" activists have divorced themselves from the pioneers who won abortion rights and from the militance decisive to keeping them.

The liberals, fancy feminists, social-democrats, Stalinists, and vaguely Maoist folks who dominate the pro-choice and reproductive rights groups are bargaining away the right of all women to biological and sexual self-determination through their compromises, concessions, and soft-pedaling of feminism, radicalism, lesbian and gay rights, and the special needs of women of color.

The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) is steeped in dangerously narrow single-issuism, bureaucratic traditions, and courting of opportunistic politicians. NARAL restricts itself to back room lobbying of Democrats and Republicans—those same pro-capitalists whose parties co-sponsored the Human Life Amendment and collaborated with Reagan to slash social services for women.

This blind worship of "quiet" lobbying led NOW president Eleanor Smeal to seek out Phyllis Schlafly and offer to

### Racist double standard

For minority and poor women, the right to an abortion is a life or death issue. And the male chauvinist cultural nationalists who label abortion for women of color as genocide have nothing in common with the male civil rights fighters who originally endorsed the struggle for abortion.

In 1969 alone, when abortion was illegal in all but a few states, 75% of the estimated 2-5,000 women who died in underground abortion mills were women of color. Thousands more were hospitalized with peritonitis, gangrene, air embolism (from pumping air into the uterus), and other deadly repercussions. In the meantime, 90% of all legal abortions went to white women in private clinics.

Before the 1973 Supreme Court decision, thousands of Black and Indian women, Chicanas and Puertorriqueñas were slaughtered by unskilled abortionists. Millions confront a similar fate today if they cannot afford a legal abortion.

This is genocide—the *opposite* of the right of minority women to control their reproductive destiny. Government refusal to give safe, legal, and free abortions to poor women amounts to a monstrous racist crime.

### Sterilization—final solution

Withholding legal abortions to poor and minority women sets them up for government-funded sterilization programs. This is the establishment's final solution to the "race problem."

Legal force, medical deceit, and economic coercion are used to steal reproductive autonomy from the most oppressed women.

Today, *mandatory* sterilization of all female welfare recipients is being proposed. But lack of access to legal abortion drives women into the sterilization clinics.

In Chicago, where 6,000 welfare abortions were recorded in 1980, the Hyde Amendment cut the number to 10 in the first half of 1981. Sterilizations, meanwhile, skyrocketed to 6,000!

When federal funding for abortion was cut in Puerto Rico, where 35% of the women of childbearing age were already sterilized, the rate of sterilization went up another 50%.

A full 24% of all Native American women have been sterilized.

Forced sterilization is population obliteration by racist, sexist rulers. It is the very opposite of women's right to *choose* their childbearing destinies. Forced sterilization is the genocidal program of capitalism, while abortion is a woman's defense against its ravages.

### Dues to pay

The whip of counterrevolution always forces confused freedom fighters to face reality.

The inspiring history of the abortion movement is the key to its future and poses a bottom-line challenge to all feminists and radicals.

The reproductive rights organizations must turn left and embrace a multi-issue and anti-capitalist militancy, or they will turn right and play directly into the soiled hands of the enemy.

Loss of reproductive rights will grant an undeserved new lease on life to those institutions—Big Business, the nuclear family, the patriarchal church, racial segregation—that form the basis of this exploitative system. But victory for the pro-abortion movement will strike at the heart of capitalism.

Victory will spearhead the climb toward a socialist society that can finally free women to control their own futures, unhampered by financial destitution or the dictates of church, state, father, husband, or lover.

We must assume our rightful place in the war for abortion and against sterilization abuse. Our debt to our radical foremothers has come due. □

## ... Miskitus

from page 3

kilometers away. The government claimed it did this to protect the Indians from the raids. Presumably the Indians would return to their land once the raids were stopped.

The relocation camps, however, appear to be permanent. The government has invested millions of cordobas in planting subsistence and commercial crops there, and has established production quotas for the coming year.

In a March 1982 government document, *Tasba Pri* (Free Land), issued to explain the relocations, the Sandinistas stated that the idea for these camps "is not new nor improvised" but goes back to a *November 1980* "feasibility study" undertaken "for the purpose of improving and dignifying" the lives of the Miskitus!

It is apparent that the relocation was not to protect the Indians from border terrorism but to lay the groundwork for their absorption into the larger economy. Most damning is the *duplicity* with which the Sandinistas compound their original mistakes.

### A self-fulfilling prophecy

The Sandinista insistence that the Indian call for autonomy is counter-revolutionary may well turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Government refusal to respect the Indians' land rights and culture is rapidly destroying any possibility of mutual cooperation and may yet drive the Indians into the camp of reaction.

History is replete with examples of oppressed nations, like the Kurds in Iran, pushed into conflict with revolutionaries who refused to live up to basic democratic principles. Sandinista policies, *not* Indian separatism, are

widening the divisions in Nicaragua and serving to aid counterrevolution.

The FSLN victory over Somoza was a titanic victory that inspired oppressed people all over the world. But the Stalinist notions of "socialism in one country" and peaceful coexistence with capitalism—notions that guide much of the Sandinista leadership—threaten to derail the triumph.

Today, 75-80% of production in Nicaragua remains in capitalist hands. And Nicaragua is preparing to negotiate away its right and duty to aid other Central American revolts against Yankee depredations. This kid glove treatment of capital is based on the empty hope that "coexistence" will secure Nicaragua from imperialist siege.

Hence, as fortress Nicaragua frantically tries to stabilize its economy and foreign trade, its capitalists remain relatively undisturbed, while thousands of Indians are relocated and workers are forbidden to strike. The Sandinistas are trying to make friends out of class enemies at the expense of class allies.

Only revolutionary self-defense and international protest and aid can stop imperialism from destroying the Nicaraguan revolution. It is suicidal for the Sandinistas to drive away potential Indian allies and thereby discredit Marxist revolution among all indigenous people.

### A common goal

Indian peoples are assuming leadership in the revolutions in El Salvador and Guatemala. Nothing could be better for Marxism, which espouses the recreation of the classless, democratic, and humanistic Indian world.

All true Marxists must defend Indian nations and rights if socialism is to remain true to itself. Such a defense will be reciprocated by the great Indian peoples who have always sought to live in peace and harmony with humans from other cultures. □



Greg Gilbert

*bargain away* abortion rights in exchange for a "cease-fire" on the ERA.

But abortion one-issuism will prove no more effective than ERA obsessionism. There are too many people whose lives do not allow the luxury of isolating single demands out of context of their own skin color, class, nation, or sexual orientation.

Compromise and capitulation also afflict the leftish wing of the abortion movement. These alleged radicals never acknowledge that laws against abortion serve the system by keeping women under the heel of the male-dominated nuclear family, state, church, and employer.

They shun or silence outspoken radicals who think that sexism is a cornerstone of capitalism, not a byproduct.

This evasion helps them acquiesce not only to their own sexism but to anti-feminist cultural nationalists in the people of color movements who spread the canard that abortion is "genocide," like forced sterilization, and is only a white women's issue.

Instead of building grassroots united fronts of mutual self-defense with other afflicted people, these not-so-radicals create dictatorial and disjointed committees that separate the abortion and forced sterilization issues, and perpetuate an artificial enmity between women and minorities.

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# The Malvinas: comic opera or prelude to World War III?

BY SANDY NELSON

**F**rantically waving the Union Jack, imperialism has just completed a fierce and deadly war over a barren archipelago in the South Atlantic.

From the time Argentina reclaimed the Malvinas (Falkland Islands) from British colonialism on April 2 until its defeat on June 15, the English carried on like something out of Gilbert and Sullivan—and Hitler.

Britain has historically held the Malvinas through force. And the Argentine bid to regain its territory was valid, despite the fact that it was launched by rightwing dictator General Leopoldo Galtieri in a futile effort to win popular support.

Britain bases its claim to the islands, which are 300 miles from the Argentine mainland and 7000 miles from London, on a short-lived colonization attempt in 1769. When Argentina won independence from Spain in 1816, Argentina settled the islands. But Britain seized the islands in 1833 and deported the Argentinians, who never stopped disputing this theft.

Britain first responded to the Argentine invasion with attempts to negotiate a "settlement." But when Argentine troops refused to budge unless the issue of sovereignty was settled, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher rapidly sent her armada steaming toward the South Atlantic. The shooting started on April 30, soon after the U.S. sided with Britain.

On May 21, the British invaded.

Almost a month later, Argentina surrendered. In the meantime, hundreds of Argentine and British troops died in the icy ocean as the United Nations refereed and the Pope remonstrated.

## Company islands

Economics, not the proclaimed opposition to a "fascist junta," prompted Britain to launch the fleet.

The Malvinas represent one of Britain's remnants of empire, strategically located near mineral-rich Antarctica and the oil-laden Straits of Magellan.

British companies have operated the island outpost like a company store for 149 years. Until April, the multi-national corporation Coalite owned more than half the territory and operated the sole in-

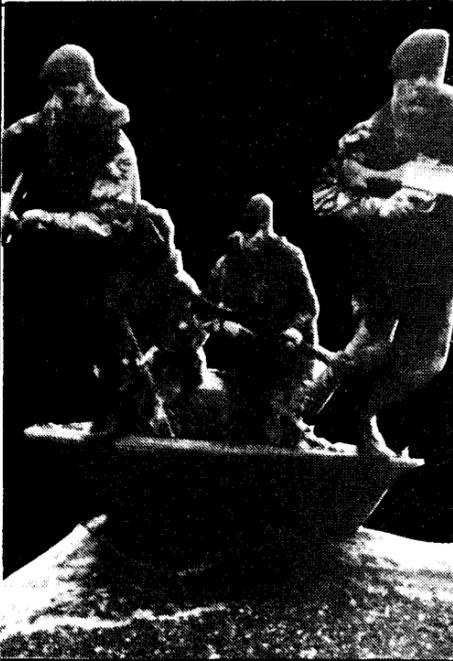
dustry, wool production, which accounted for a sizeable portion of the company's \$40 million profits.

## Anti-imperialists and pro-Tories

Solidarity against British imperialism gained Argentina some unlikely allies in its struggle to regain the Malvinas, among them Cuba and Nicaragua.

But in the pro-imperialist world, journalists and politicians obscured the issue of colonialism by deploring Argentina's "rightwing aggression."

And most British Labor Party bureaucrats overruled the anti-war sentiment in their own party and endorsed Tory piracy.



## Deadly distraction

Galtieri also employed jingoism to fuel his country's war effort. And he staked his political survival on restoring sovereignty over the Malvinas. Even his most militant opponents chafed at British refusal to negotiate a speedy transfer of rule.

For weeks before the takeover, strong opposition to Galtieri's regime was mounting steadily. Leftists and unionists protested the economic mismanagement and virulent political repression. The murder of a female Argentine Socialist Workers Party (PST) member drew

30,000 demonstrators onto the streets of Buenos Aires on March 30.

Since Isabel Peron was ousted by a military coup in 1976, thousands have disappeared or been assassinated or jailed by successive military cliques. Thirty-percent of the population is unemployed or working less than half-time. Even the capitalists are wearying of excessive military spending and the world's worst (130%) inflation rate.

Galtieri needed the Malvinas embroglio to take the pressure off at home. But the war proved a costly panacea. It accelerated inflation and further crippled the government's ability to repay its \$32 billion debt to British and U.S. financiers.

On June 17, Galtieri was ousted by the junta to appease the rioting thousands who rampaged through Buenos Aires after the surrender.

## Gamblers' choice

Forced to choose between its imperialist allies in Europe and its counterrevolutionary cohorts in South America, the U.S. at first pretended a neutral stance.

The Pentagon feared losing Argentine support for its revolution-busting programs in El Salvador, Nicaragua, etc. But the U.S. also had to support Britain's grab for oil in the South Atlantic. U.S. rulers value their marriage with world imperialism far more than their courtship of south-of-the-border dictators.

Britain is the USA's closest ally, and a cornerstone of the NATO alliance in Europe. Both countries saw the Malvinas crisis as a test of the imperialist military resolve to stop any challenge to its interests. Better to slap down third world Argentinian "upstarts" and gamble on finding another dictator to help throttle communism in Latin America than to jeopardize the basic structure of world imperialist partnerships.

Britain has replanted its flag for the moment. But who knows where the next colonial protest will explode?

In the Malvinas battle lay the gigantic risk of sparking international conflagration and bequeathing WW III as the final legacy of a dying British empire.

*British out of Malvinas!*

*U.S. out of Latin America!*

*For a socialist Argentina! □*

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