

# Women and Revolution



Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League X-523

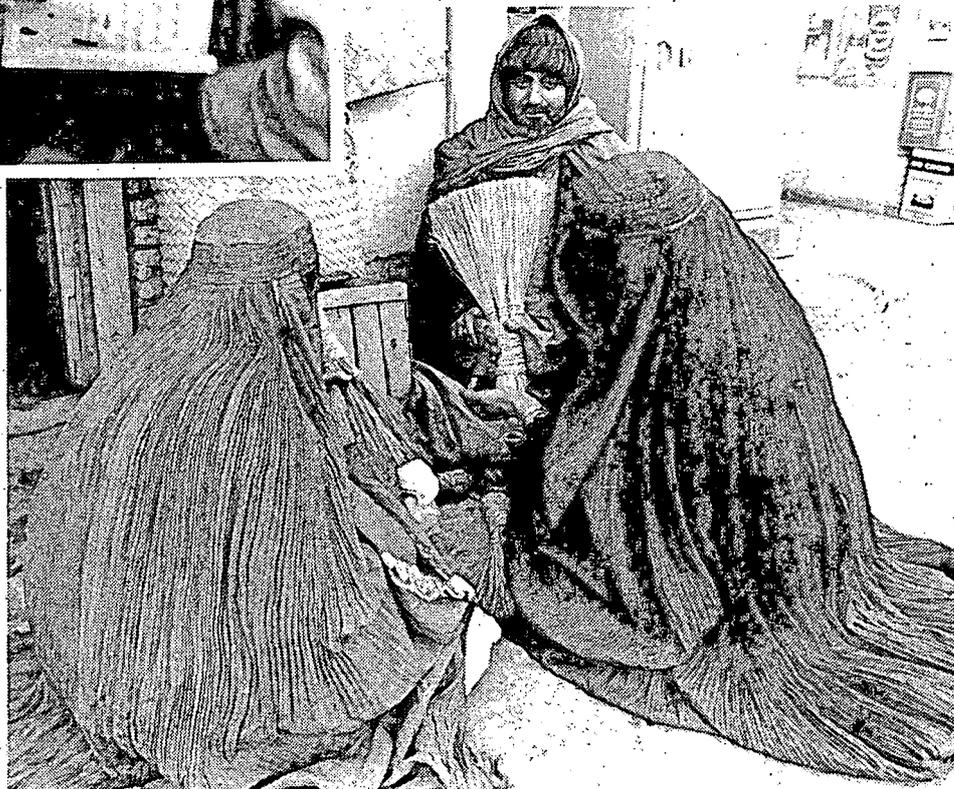
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## Women of the East— Proletarian Revolution or Slavery

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AP

# Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

# Editorial Notes

## For Free Abortion on Demand!

Medicaid funding for abortions was ordered resumed by the Supreme Court on February 19, following a ruling by Brooklyn Federal District Court Judge John Dooling that the Hyde Amendment—which prohibits Medicaid abortions—was unconstitutional. At the same time the Supreme Court has now begun hearings on the constitutionality of the Hyde Amendment and is expected to reach a decision by June.

Repeal of the Hyde Amendment would certainly be a step forward for poor and working women who, even after abortion was legalized in 1973, still couldn't afford the high price. While the Hyde Amendment was in effect, federally subsidized abortions dropped from 300,000 to 3,000 yearly, as poor women were forced back into dangerous abortions, some resulting in death.

But the cheers of the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) applauding Dooling's decision (and their appeals to NOW, CLUW and their other favorite reformist "mass women's organizations" to carry the struggle forward) are the most rotten hypocrisy. Back in the early 1970s, the SWP categorically abandoned poor women butchered in back-alley abortions by explicitly *refusing to struggle for free abortion* in its single-issue "abortion reform" Women's National Abortion Action Coalition (WONAAC) front group! And indeed WONAAC (pronounced "WUN-TRAC" by some) lost its *raison*

*d'être* when abortions were legalized in 1973—and disappeared completely.

In contrast, the Spartacist League fought for "Free Abortion on Demand!" as a *minimum necessary* defense of women's rights. But that was too "radical" for the SWP, afraid above all of alienating capitalist spokesmen like Bella Abzug and Mary Lindsay (wife of then-NYC mayor John Lindsay), whom it invited onto WONAAC speakers' platforms (while excluding us from meetings). As we have pointed out, legislative abortion reform can be granted or taken away at the bourgeoisie's whim according to which way the political winds are blowing. As an isolated issue, abortion reform does not directly threaten the nuclear family, which Marxists recognize as the main source of women's oppression. The fight for free abortion on demand (which must cover *all* women, including many not even on welfare, like so-called "illegal aliens") must be linked to the struggle for a socialist, working-class program for women's liberation.

But for the SWP, it's just a question of waiting for the aging black-robed Supreme Court defenders of capitalist privilege and "law and order" to hear the voice of the "vast majority." But suppose they choose not to hear? The SWP will play dead too, saying "the time isn't right" for more "radical" demands, just as they did in the early 1970s. Unlike the SWP, we don't need to hide our history. We raise today the same demands we fought for in WONAAC and the women's liberation movement: Free Abortion on Demand! Women's Liberation through Socialist Revolution! ■

## Fremont "Women's Lawsuit"—Where Are They Now?

February 29, 1980

To the Editors of *Women and Revolution*,

In August a supposedly temporary layoff of the entire second shift at the General Motors assembly plant in Fremont, California was turned into an indefinite layoff. We were among the first of over 100,000 United Auto Workers (UAW) members thrown out on the street this year. On January 3, Chrysler closed down the Dodge Main plant in Detroit while in Ohio entire towns are being deprived of a livelihood by the permanent shutdown of old steel mills. The capitalists have made a disaster area of auto and steel, and in their drive for a return to profitability they are making the workers pay with their jobs.

The United Steel Workers of America (USWA) and UAW International unions have not lifted a finger to

fight these mass layoffs. They have only clamored for government aid to Chrysler and protectionist measures against Japanese and German steel and cars.

The time is ripe and over-ripe for union tactics that unionized the big industries in the 1930s—strikes, sitdowns and factory seizures. It is to your credit that it has been the Spartacist League alone on the left that has fought aggressively for labor tactics that challenge the very right of the bosses to operate or close their plants as

*continued on page 22*

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Commission for Work Among Women

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Cover photos: Top: Jalalabad, 1980—Red Army means literacy for women. Bottom: In Kabul bazaar, typical veil of upper-class Afghan women.



Workers Vanguard

**San Francisco Is a Labor Town, Not a Nazi Town!**

**1,200 Stop Hitlerfest**

The Nazis boasted they would goosestep into San Francisco's Civic Center plaza April 19 to "celebrate" Hitler's birthday. But when the April 19 Committee Against Nazis (ANCAN) organized a massive counter-mobilization of labor and socialist groups, the race-terror creeps turned tail and ran. Instead the Civic Center on April 19 was a sea of militant anti-Nazi protesters. Signs reading "Hitler's Birthday Is No Holiday Here" made the point: the fascists would have gotten quite a thrashing if they had shown their faces.

Initiated by militant unionists and heavily built by the Spartacist League (SL), the demonstration was endorsed by some 35 union officials and nine Bay Area unions. In addition to the several local presidents and exec board members who addressed the rally, there were contingents of phone workers with their official CWA local banners, as well as militants in the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union who were instrumental in building strong support for the anti-Nazi action.

This is the second time that the SL has taken the lead in mobilizing labor and its allies to stop the fascist terror gangs. Following the Greensboro massacre, when the Klan threatened to march in Detroit, the SL organized a demonstration of 500, mainly blacks and auto workers, proclaiming, "The Klan Won't Ride in the Motor City!" But whereas black Detroit mayor Coleman Young took a hard line and tried to ban the anti-fascist mobilization, threatening to arrest the demonstrators, San Francisco mayor Dianne Feinstein dared not challenge ANCAN's support among union leaders head on. So the mayor, counterposing "education" to mass mobilization, told people to stay away. But despite a press blackout, upwards of 1,200 turned out to demonstrate their hatred of the Nazi/Klan race-terrorists and to applaud

the speakers who counterposed to the union-busting Democratic mayor the need for a workers party based on the unions.

Timid reformists call on these same city rulers to ban the Klan, but the racist Hitler-lovers were stopped by tenacious struggle against the capitalist politicians. The bourgeoisie will someday resort to the armed shock troops of race terror, union-busting and anti-communism in a desperate attempt to preserve its rule over the working class—the one force with the power and unified interest to smash the capitalist onslaught of depression and war. That is why the government cannot "ban the Klan."

As Carter whips up chauvinism in his mad drive toward imperialist war, as the economy goes to hell, the ultra-right grows bolder. Even as ANCAN rallied, four black women were wounded in Chattanooga as KKKers blasted shotguns into a group of blacks. The KKK/Nazis are the fascist fringe of the White House's perspective for a popular mobilization for thermonuclear World War III against the Soviet Union. With Carter on the warpath against Communism overseas, the KKK/Nazis feel it's open season on leftists, blacks, labor and Jews here. In working to interdict the fascists from carrying their terror into the major industrial centers, we are therefore also seeking to deprive the bourgeoisie of a rabid constituency screaming for war on the USSR.

As Spartacist League spokesman Al Nelson said at the April 19 rally:

"We need a workers party to get rid of the bosses, their courts, their cops, their armed thugs, their fascists—to get rid of them once and for all, to establish a workers society, a socialist society, a workers government."

ANCAN ran the Nazis out of San Francisco—let's keep them on the run! ■



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# Women of the East— Proletarian Revolution or Slavery



AP

## Down With Islamic Reaction! Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

Afghanistan today is "probably the first instance of a shooting war in modern history which was ignited specifically by the question of women's liberation," Dale Reissner told audiences in the Midwest and on the East Coast in a series of Spartacist League forums commemorating International Women's Day in March. Speaking with comrade Phyllis Anwar, who gave a vivid presentation on what life in Afghanistan is like for women, Reissner stressed that "there are only two roads for Eastern women—proletarian revolution or slavery," explaining why the Spartacist League says "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" It was particularly significant on this proletarian holiday, commemorating the struggle of working women—most notably the 1917 protest in Russia that sparked the overthrow of the tsar—that "there have been no demonstrations in defense of Afghan women from the feminists," Reissner pointed out.

Comrades Reissner and Anwar were warmly received in Boston, Cleveland, Ann Arbor and Oberlin in early March. We print below excerpts from their presentations on March 7 at Harvard University.

### Phyllis Anwar

I lived in Afghanistan from 1941 to 1944. Now, countries that have oppression of any sort oppress their women more than they oppress their men. I suppose that the most obvious misery was the veil. The veil in Afghanistan is not a simple thing over the head held

with the teeth or the hand the way it is in Iran. The first time I saw it was when we were met in Jalalabad after a day's trip in a truck with holes in the side.

My brother-in-law had come to meet us, and he had a bundle for me. I couldn't believe what I was looking at. He said this was the veil and I should wear it. I unwrapped this thing and here was something long enough to go over my head to the ground. The top was a very beautifully embroidered cap, and fastened on it was cloth like muslin bed sheeting dyed a pale blue. It was cut in lengths long enough to reach from the ear to the floor, and then it was folded in pleats—and only when the top of this pleating extended from ear to ear were you through and you fastened it onto the cap. Then in the front, unpleated, was a piece that came down approximately to the knees. And then after the embroidery was done they pulled out threads and left little holes—little more than one eighth of an inch of webbing to look through—so everything was kind of shadowed. This is where the Spartacist League got the slogan, "The sun never shines on Afghan women."

This slogan is true in much more than just a literal sense. In a climate that would be absolutely superb for a TB sanitarium—the air is so clear there that at night when the moon shines you can see color—there is a high level of TB, especially among the women. They don't get the sun and they breathe the dust that swirls up underneath when this approximately 30 yards of muslin moves with the breeze, and they choke on it. And in the rainy season the veil gets wet. If you could

imagine all that wet cloth hanging on your head—it's very tiring. And if you have a small baby, the baby is carried underneath this. It is an exceedingly unhealthy thing. Little girls at the school where I taught—which had to be called a hospital to fool the mullahs—also had to wear this veil, only in black, which was the color of the school uniform.

My husband, an Afghan who had been a student in America for eight years and a leftist (as I was), refused to let me wear it. He said that we would take our chances. Up to this time the veil was so strictly enforced that even foreign women married to Afghans wore the damned thing.

Well, the result of this refusal was that the prime minister called my husband into the office and asked him why he didn't make me wear the veil. My husband said, "She's an American citizen and I can't do a thing with her." So the prime minister said, "Okay, but no Afghan can walk through the bazaar with a foreign woman beside him. So after this when you walk through the bazaar together, she's to walk a hundred paces behind you."

So he would start out and after I'd counted to a hundred paces, I would start out. And in the middle of the bazaar he would meet a friend. Now in Afghanistan you do not say "Hi" and walk on. "How are you? How's your mother? How's your father? How's your brother? How's your uncle? I hope your father is well. I hope that your mother is feeling fine. Your brother I am sure has recovered." This goes on for ten minutes. Do I stop in the middle of the bazaar for ten minutes while men walk by whispering obscenities on the assumption that I don't know enough Persian to know it, or go on by myself? So I would walk up and join my husband, and then we would walk on together. And the next day the prime minister would call him, and I'd see him bicycle past the school and know that he was about to catch

hell again. And again the hundred-pace rule would be established. That was a battle that went on all the time we were in Afghanistan.

The day I arrived in Kabul there was a demonstration in front of the palace by the mullahs. They had gathered to protest the fact that the rich ladies were making their veils out of silk and that was sort of revealing when the wind blew. And anyhow women's ankles showed and the men standing on the corner could tell whether they were young or old or rich or poor. What the mullahs wanted was that the women should wear these big pants—they are kind of balloon pants, maybe ten feet

wide gathered in with string and with feet in them like kids' pajamas—and wooden clogs to keep them off the gravel. That way the men would not be overstimulated by seeing the women's ankles.

Another bad thing that women go through is the business of marriage. They are more or less bought. In fact, there is a brideprice that goes along with it. And the man can divorce his wife simply by writing three times, "I hereby divorce you." I was divorced in this way in order to get out of Afghanistan, because so long as I was married I couldn't get an exit visa. I was never allowed out of the city of Kabul.

Now you may think that all of this has improved, because after all it was 35 years ago. But three weeks ago I saw an interview by a *New York Times* reporter with a doctor among the tribes [*New York Times*, 24 February]. He was not involved with either tribe in a new area he was in, so that made him a mediator of the feuds. So a man of one tribe was killed and then his tribe was ready to kill someone in reprisal. The doctor suggested they

mediate this thing, and in the end they decided they wouldn't kill anyone. They would take what the other family offered. There was a sum of money, two mules—and two little girls!

The Iranian religious fanatic Khomeini says in his book that it is a great honor for a girl to get her first menstrual period in the home of her husband. Well, it at least makes sure that the wife is virgin. In any case, so much stress is placed on this that both families hang around on the wedding night to make sure the sheets are properly blood-smeared the next morning, and any wife's mother makes sure to have a fresh-killed chicken on hand to make the situation come out right.

When I was there I had many female relatives who used to talk to me about life for women in Afghanistan—how lucky I was that I didn't have to wear the veil, how lucky I was that I could read, how lucky I was to see, how lucky I was. And one of

them once said to me that she didn't care who invaded the country. *Anything* would be worth it to get rid of a life like this. Now I spoke to her about this recently and she's changed her mind because the Russians have come in and she says there's violence. She sees the tanks and the shooting and says it is violence, and she does not realize that every single day of her life has been violence. Violence of the most degrading kind. The thing that happens to women in Afghanistan is the destruction of the person—the complete destruction—so that when a 13-year-old girl came here from Afghanistan, it took three years before I could persuade

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**ANWAR:** "I had many female relatives who used to talk to me about life for women in Afghanistan.... And one of them said to me that she didn't care who invaded the country. *Anything* would be worth it to get rid of a life like this."

her to try to learn to read. She knew that women don't read!

The day after my brother-in-law brought me that veil in Jalalabad we got to the top of the pass where you go down into Kabul and there I saw what to me over these past 35 years has been a symbol of Afghanistan. We rounded the curve of the mountain, and there lying beside the road was a cow with the whole center of its stomach eaten out and two vultures standing there finishing it off. They looked as tall as I am. It was so horrible to look at that to me it has been ever since the symbol of what life in Afghanistan is like.

### D.L. Reissner

The question of women's liberation in countries like Iran and Afghanistan engages prejudices and fears so deep that even the mildest cosmetic reforms can evoke a murderous backlash. On February 9, I read a *New York Times* article on Afghanistan, and it started this way:

"Land reform attempts undermined their village chiefs. Portraits of Lenin threatened their religious leaders. But it was the Kabul revolutionary Government's granting of new rights to women that pushed Orthodox Moslem men in the Pashtoon villages of eastern Afghanistan into picking up their guns."

This was probably the first instance of a shooting war in modern history which was ignited specifically by the question of women's liberation. One man who was interviewed by a *New York Times* reporter said: "The moment women were invited to the meeting, the fighting started."

We in the Spartacist League, who are committed to the liberation of women throughout the world, want to present tonight the position that the fight for the most basic needs of Eastern women—and I mean literacy, education, contraception, an end to forced marriage, freedom from grinding poverty, from legal subjugation and the veil—the fight for the most basic needs of these women is an attack on the very foundation of capitalist society in these regions and poses nothing less than socialist revolution.

I want to begin by making reference to a revolution which occurred over 200 years ago, not in an Islamic country, but in France. The French Revolution and the other bourgeois revolutions which followed it embodied the great and progressive ideals of bourgeois democracy—equality before the law, separation of church and state, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and religion. To the extent that these were realized in the countries in which the bourgeois

revolutions occurred, they represented extremely important gains for women.

It is very important to realize that the whole question of women's liberation means something very different in the West than it does in the East, where these bourgeois revolutions never occurred. Soon after coming to power in 1917, the Bolsheviks undertook the enormous task of trying to liberate women in Soviet Central Asia. When they spoke of "martyrs fallen on the women's liberation front," they weren't talking about consciousness-raising groups. They were talking about thousands of women whose throats were slit by their husbands and their fathers and their brothers for daring to unveil their faces.

So the woman question in the East is a matter of life and death in the most immediate sense. And even in the most repressive Western society you can think of—and I was reading recently about women in Nazi Germany, where women's sphere was defined strictly as the kitchen, the church and the children—women even in that society suffered nowhere near the repression that Eastern women suffer on a daily basis.

Not even Hitler suggested that women be secluded and veiled, because a bourgeois revolution occurred in Germany and bourgeois revolutions have meant something for women.

Part of the reason that it is necessary to stress this point is to counter the prevailing ahistorical feminist approach to the oppression of women, which tends to believe that men simply oppress women. That's it: "they always have and they always will." There is a historical axis here. This is not to say that women are not also oppressed in Western society, because we certainly are, but the difference between conditions in a bourgeois democracy and in a feudal and pre-feudal society is a qualitative difference.

I find a certain irony in the fact, particularly since these crises occurred in Iran last year and in Afghanistan, that the Spartacist League, which is dedicated to the overturn of the whole bourgeois social order, has found itself in the position of constantly defending the gains

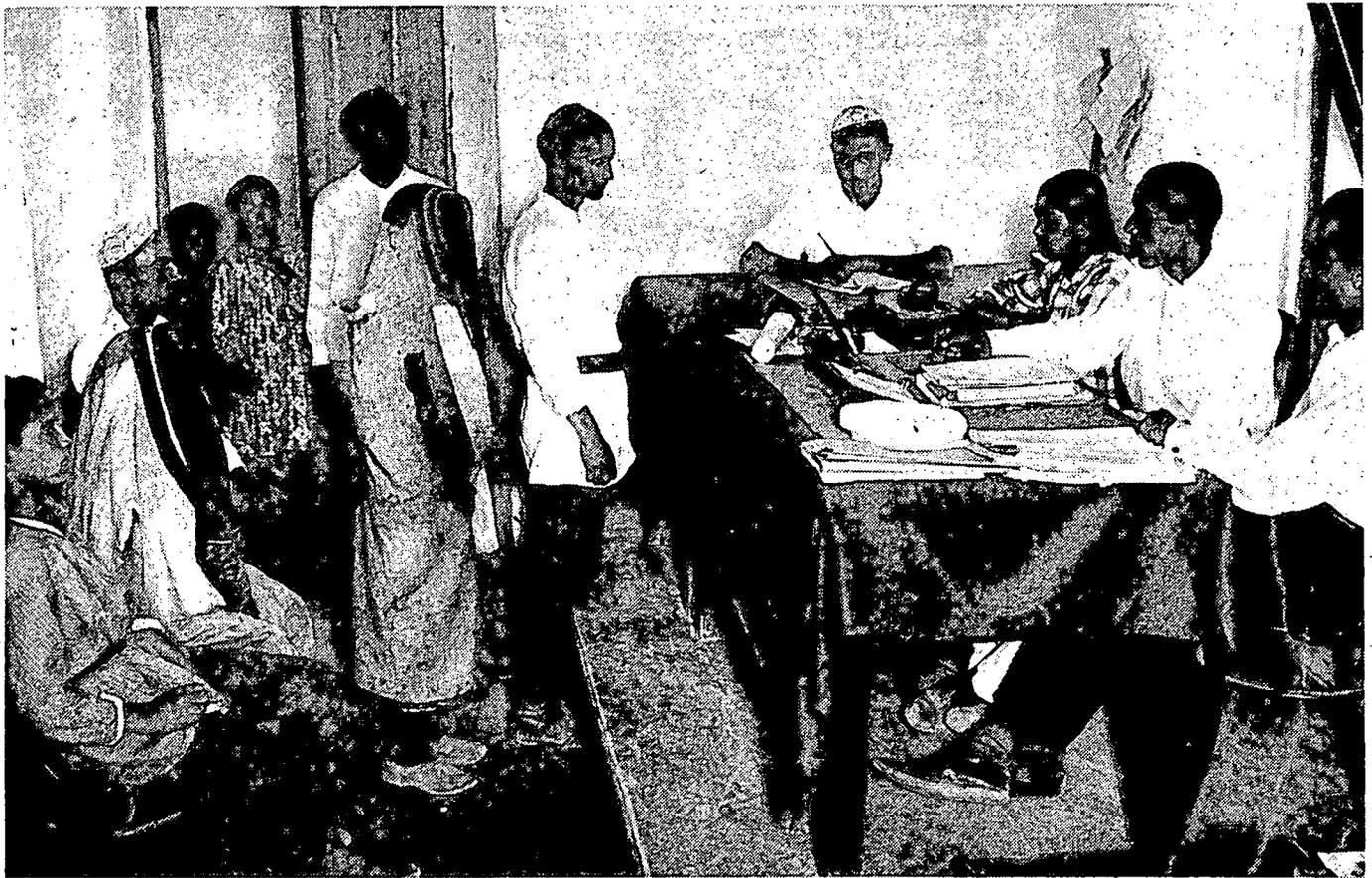
of the bourgeois revolution. Meanwhile Carter, who is the chief of the most powerful bourgeoisie on earth, is doing his best to make common cause with religious fanatics who want to impose the laws of a seventh century nomadic society.

Voltaire, who wanted to strangle the last king with the entrails of the last priest, would spit in Carter's face if he were alive today. And we who are striving to be the vanguard of the working class today have been put in

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**REISSNER: "The fight for the most basic needs of Eastern women is an attack on the very foundations of capitalist society ... and poses nothing less than socialist revolution."**



**Soviet Central Asian court in late '20s: 16-year-old woman in veil (left) has complained that her husband beats her. Judges include one of the first Tadjik women to discard the veil after the revolution.**

the ridiculous position of having to defend Voltaire and the ideals of the French Revolution against the degenerated liberalism which is currently finding expression in Carter's anti-Soviet crusade.

The real tragedy is that we have to defend the gains of a 200-year-old revolution not only against hardened bourgeois ideologues like Carter, who are going to make any deal with any scum from Marshal Ky to Pinochet to General Zia to the Ayatollah Khomeini if it will help to "roll back" communism. We have to make this argument also against self-proclaimed leftists of all stripes who have argued that Khomeini is a "progressive" or that we don't have a right to impose our culture on a "Third World" country. Meanwhile, as comrade Phyllis pointed out, the women in those cultures—the women suffering, the women dying under their "Third World folk costumes"—were *praying* for someone to come in from anywhere and intrude into their culture and liberate them.

So the Spartacist League for the last year and a half or so has had to stand up and fight with ostensible leftists over questions like equality before the law and the separation of church and state and sexual equality, because these ostensible leftists were looking for ways to capitulate to Khomeini. This is embarrassing—the necessity of having to seriously debate within the Marxist movement whether a clerical reactionary program should be supported. And this embarrassing necessity flows out of a culmination of New Left despair in the possibility of really having a proletarian

revolution. Because once you give up that fundamental tenet of Marxism—the possibility of *proletarian* revolution—then anything is seen as progressive, because at least it will be a change, at least something will be happening, at least masses will be marching in the streets. Of course, for opportunists it is always unthinkable that these mass mobilizations, even against a reactionary force, could also be reactionary and not progressive, although history is full of such examples: I'll just point to the mobilizations which Hitler led against the Weimar Republic—reactionary mass mobilizations.

Now, of course, it is permissible to say in public that Khomeini is a clerical-reactionary fanatic. Most people don't disagree with that anymore. But at the height of Khomeini's rise as the champion of "Third World" peoples' struggles against imperialism this was a very unpopular thing to say. At that time the Spartacist League stood alone in telling the truth about the so-called "Islamic revolution." We raised an unambiguous slogan from the beginning of that struggle: "Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!" We called for the exploited and oppressed sectors of Iranian society to break from Khomeini and to fight for a workers and peasants government. And we took a lot of abuse for that. We were called CIA agents, we were called SAVAK agents, we were physically attacked, we received a death threat, *but we were not about to capitulate to Khomeini over the bodies of Iranian women!* And when

hypocritical reformists like the Socialist Workers Party ran a headline in their paper, "Victory in Iran," and when their spokesman described the black chador as a "symbol of resistance against imperialist oppression," they capitulated over the bodies of those women.

And I will tell you something that every socialist since the time of Fourier has understood: that the social progress of any society can be precisely gauged by the freedom of the women within it; not by the amount of anti-imperialist rhetoric which its leaders spout, because anti-imperialist rhetoric is cheap.

### The First Dictatorship of the Proletariat

I want to talk about the revolution of 1917 because if the bourgeois revolutions had a profound importance for women in the societies in which they occurred, then the proletarian revolution which took place in October 1917 had much more. Lenin had said, "The first dictatorship of the proletariat will be the pioneer in full social equality for women. It will radically destroy more prejudices than volumes of women's rights." And it did. In the very first months of Soviet rule marriage became a contract in law between free and equal citizens, divorce was granted at the request of either partner, illegitimacy was abolished in law and all children were protected and provided for. Legal abortion was established and there was an end in law to the persecution of homosexuals. Education and participation in government and the labor force were opened equally to men and women for the first time.

These accomplishments were quite impressive, not only because the Bolsheviks did insist on trying to implement them immediately under the most desperate conditions, but also because they were achieved in what had also been a very backward society. The literacy of Soviet women as a whole in 1917 was less than 15 percent, and the Orthodox church had taught for centuries that women must be subordinate. In fact, part of the traditional Russian marriage ceremony involved the father of the bride handing a whip to the new husband as a symbol of the woman's continued subjugation.

The Bolsheviks not only fought for the liberation of Russian women, but they heroically undertook to carry

the October Revolution to the women of Soviet Central Asia, because they hoped that women, who had the most to gain from this revolution, would be the link where they could break the feudal chain in the Soviet East. So dedicated activists from the newly formed Department for Work Among Women actually put on the veil to go into the Soviet East—put on the veil just so they could get close enough to the women there to talk to them. And it was a very dangerous assignment. Many were killed and, in fact, it was the dismembered corpses of some of these women activists which persuaded the Soviet government to reinstate the death penalty specifically for murders of this type although the death penalty had already been abolished for crime in general.

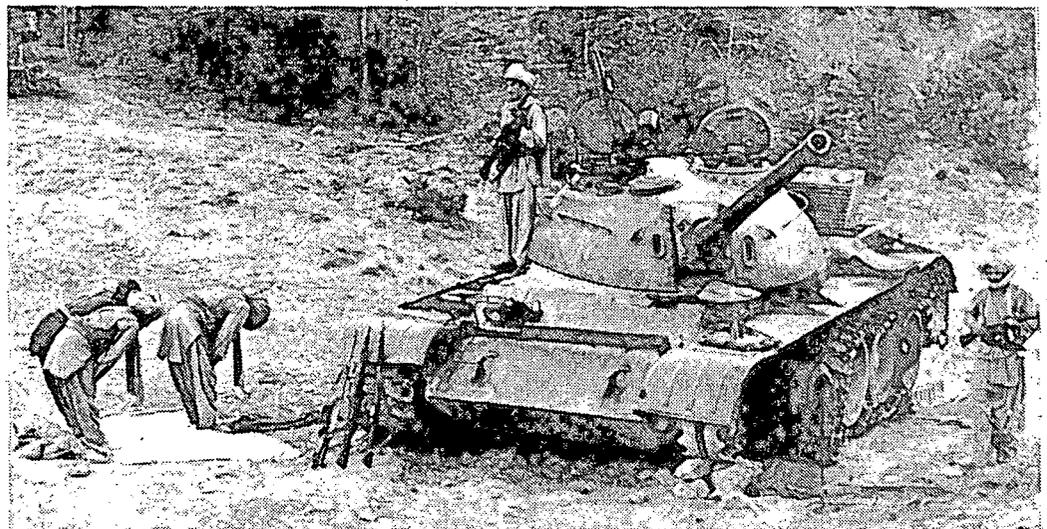
So for us it is a very important model, because the situation was very similar to the situation which confronts us in some Eastern countries today. And in confronting the enormous tasks that still lie before us of liberating women from poor, backward, ignorant countries, riddled with superstition and wracked by ancient tribal warfare, in the death grip of a pervasive and systematic degradation of women, it is very encouraging to be able to see what has been achieved in Soviet Central Asia.

I'm not talking about ancient history now. I'm talking about 60 years ago—within the living memory of many of the people in that area. The achievement becomes very clear when you compare the living conditions of Soviet peoples in Central Asia today with their cousins just across the border in Afghanistan.

The literacy rate in Afghanistan is about 5 percent, perhaps the lowest literacy rate in the world. In Uzbekistan, which is the largest of the Soviet Central Asian republics, the literacy rate is about 100 percent. The life expectancy in Afghanistan is about 40 years. The life expectancy in Uzbekistan is about 70.

Beyond this it becomes difficult to make any comparisons because the differences are so enormous. As of 1975 in Uzbekistan there were 18 women of cabinet and subcabinet rank in the government of the republic. There were 116 Uzbek women who were heads or assistant heads of major industrial enterprises and 1,727 PhDs—this is six times the number of

**Afghan rebels bow to Allah for miraculously delivering a Soviet tank. But it's Brzezinski and the CIA they really count on for aid in upholding brideprice, veil, illiteracy and feudal slavery.**



# Soviet Central Asians Support Red Army

*The Spartacist League has insisted that, despite bureaucratic domination of the USSR, the transformation of Afghanistan into a society like that of Soviet Central Asia would be a tremendously progressive development for the Afghan masses. This elementary Marxist proposition is fiercely resisted by most avowed "leftists," but evidently not by the peoples of the Muslim regions of the USSR. In a recent article in the New York Times (11 April), Craig R. Whitney revealed that in his travels through Soviet Central Asia he could not find a single soul who supported the CIA-armed Afghan rebels—not even a mullah! We reprint below some excerpts from his article, "In Soviet Asia, Afghan Thrust Finds Wide Acceptance."*

DUSHANBE, U.S.S.R.—A young man, 23 years old and a student at the university here, close to the border of Afghanistan, will have to do three months of active military duty this summer.... In December, he recalled,..."Reservists were given secret orders, at night, to return to active duty.... They weren't told where but after a few days it was clear—Afghanistan."

"The reservists are all back home now," he went on: "And most of them were glad to go to help—it's a very backward country and we are neighbors, after all."

\* \* \* \* \*

"We remember the Basmachi rebellion here," commented a university professor in Dushanbe. "They were also a bunch of mercenaries and gunmen, much like the Afghan rebels. Ibrahim Bek, the last Basmachi leader, was caught near Dushanbe only in 1931, a decade after Soviet rule had been proclaimed in Tadzhikistan. We know the barbarism and the suffering of that kind of war, and any Tadzhik would be able to sympathize instinctively with the supporters of the revolution in Afghanistan."

\* \* \* \* \*

Moslem religious leaders here preach political loyalty to the Soviet state so Islam is officially tolerated. Moslems, when they are asked to express their feelings about Afghanistan in private, say their duty is to help their fellow Afghan Moslems reach the same levels of economic progress and social emancipation that they have in the Soviet Union.

In Bukhara's 16th-century Mir-Arab Medresseh, or Moslem theological seminary, one of two still permitted in the Soviet Union, the director, Abdul-Kakhar Gaparov, said:

"Wherever there has been a revolution, there have been people who are against it. Here, after our revolution, the Basmachi rebels fought against it for a long time. Many of the rebels in Afghanistan are from the Moslem brotherhood, an extremely reactionary group."

"If they were truly patriots," he went on, "the Afghans outside their country would support the revolution, for bringing social progress to their people at home."

\* \* \* \* \*

Out in the desert at Khiva, Bakhadyr A. Rakhmanov, an irrigation engineer born in the town, remembers that there was a slave market there until the Soviet authorities deposed the last Khan of Khiva. He added: "The Afghans are our neighbors. Where there is poverty and backwardness it is our duty to help."

\* \* \* \* \*

At a park in Dushanbe, a truck driver was no less fiercely loyal, as William R. Carter, a Harvard graduate student, found out when he was having an innocent conversation with a friend of the driver.

"Carter!" roared the truck driver, a Tadzhik. "Carter is a warmonger, a menace, worse than a gorilla! Don't give him your address."

doctorates held by black women in the United States in proportion to population. Eighteen percent of the judges in Uzbekistan are women, as against 3 percent in the United States. In 1975 there were 88 female governors, mayors, county managers and heads of Communist Parties in Uzbekistan, 50 women district attorneys and assistant district attorneys, 4,414 female heads of labor unions. Forty-five percent of the members of legislative bodies from the village level up in Uzbekistan are women.

Now how can you even begin to make comparisons with the situation for women in Afghanistan? There are no figures for women with PhDs in a country where, according to one Afghan man also interviewed by the *New York Times*, "The government said that our women had to attend meetings and our children had to

go to school. This threatens our religion. We had to fight."

The drinking water in Afghanistan is polluted with excrement. Khomeini says that such water is still pure and drinkable if you can't actually see the particles of excrement—nevertheless half of the population in Afghanistan suffers from intestinal disease. Few people bathe—it is very hard because it is very cold; it's simply too cold. The infant mortality rate today in Afghanistan is over 25 percent—259 deaths per thousand—and half of all children die before the age of five.

Particularly onerous for both men and women in Afghanistan is the institution of the brideprice. A woman on the market in Afghanistan currently goes for \$1,800 to \$3,500, which represents for most people a lifetime of savings or a lifetime of debt to moneylend-

ers, who charge usurious rates while giving a cut to the mullahs. For women this means chattel slavery. For men, no money means no sex, at least—in the words of one of my comrades—"not with females of their own species."

Overwhelmingly, the Soviet troops which were sent into Afghanistan were not Russian but Central Asians of Muslim background—Uzbeks and Tadzhiks. And Tadzhik women were so oppressed [before the Russian Revolution] that they not only had to wear a heavy black horsehair veil in public without even eye slits, but even in private no woman outside their immediate family was allowed to see them unveiled because there was a fear that a woman might describe their faces to some man. These young soldiers, Central Asian soldiers who were sent into Afghanistan, in confronting the abysmal squalor and backwardness confronted their own past.

### The Russian Question

This brings me to an important question: Has women's liberation been achieved in the Soviet Union? And the answer is no, it has not, not even in the most advanced regions of the Soviet Union. Just as many of the initial gains of the bourgeois revolutions were later reversed, and even the monarchy was restored in France, so also many of the initial gains of the Bolshevik Revolution were reversed during decades of Stalinist degeneration in the Soviet Union. Today the Spartacist League calls for political revolution in the Soviet Union to throw out the parasitic bureaucratic caste which rules there and to restore workers democracy. Nevertheless, the Bolshevik Revolution has achieved historic gains for the working class and, just as we continue to defend the historic gains of the French Revolution, we defend the historic gains of the Bolshevik Revolution. In particular, private ownership of the means of production was replaced in the Soviet Union by collective ownership, and this has never been reversed. Capitalism has never been restored. We, therefore, define the USSR as a degenerated workers state.

Now this question of the class nature of the Soviet Union, which is often referred to as the Russian Question, was always considered by the New Left in its heyday as some kind of irrelevant academic topic of debate among the "Old Left" which had no particular significance to events today. The Cold War was seen as a dead issue. The Soviet Union was seen as some kind of sellout superpower just like the United States. In fact, the Russian Question has dominated politics on the left and never more so than it does today. The events in Afghanistan pose the question again pointblank: Which side are you on? U.S. imperialism or the Soviet Union? There is no middle ground.

The so-called anti-imperialist Khomeini knows which side he is on. He's with Carter, and don't believe anything else. Incidentally, it is interesting that while feminists had a generally good position on Iranian women—that is, they defended Iranian women generally against Khomeini's attacks, although they had no effective program with which to defend them, but they came out and demonstrated and rallied in defense of women—so far, and I've been reading the feminist

press and looking for similar demonstrations defending Afghan women, they're silent. There have been no demonstrations in defense of Afghan women from the feminists, because to defend Afghan women now means to stand with the Red Army, and people know that.

With regard to Iran, there is again no middle ground as Carter and Khomeini attempt to unite in a holy war against godless Russia. Carter and Khomeini have been looking for ways to resolve whatever problems stand between them. What they have in common now is much more important than what separates them.

This is not the first time that the mullahs have chosen to back U.S. imperialism over the so-called Red menace. In 1953 when Mossadegh was overthrown in Iran and the shah was put in, the "anti-imperialist" mullahs backed the shah, who was, in turn, backed by the CIA. The mullahs only became "anti-imperialist" later when some of the butcher shah's cosmetic reforms cut into their land holdings and threatened to give a few legal rights to at least a privileged stratum of women.

From a military point of view, the Soviet intervention may or may not have been wise, but there can certainly be no question that revolutionists in this conflict must stand on the side of the Red Army, because a victory for the mullah-led rebels means a victory for the bride-price, it means a victory for the veil, it means a victory for usury, for feudal serfdom and the continuation of the enslavement of women.

Nevertheless much of the left, having supported Khomeini last year, is now supporting Carter this year. Maoists, for instance, in the United States have generally called upon Carter to increase aid to the Islamic insurgents. Anti-Soviet hysteria has gone to such lengths that in Frankfurt, West Germany, Maoists joined with Afghan ultra-rightists in a murder attempt on one of the leaders of the *Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands*, which is the German section of the international Spartacist tendency, on January 26 of this year. They stabbed him in the back and he was very nearly killed.

The invasion of Afghanistan has very clearly exposed the flowering alliance—not just diplomatic but military as well—between U.S. imperialism and China. Washington has now openly agreed to rearm the People's Liberation Army with modern weaponry. If there are any Maoists here tonight, I have a word of warning: The forces which imperialism would unleash against the USSR, and which Maoists encourage them to unleash, will be eventually directed against China. Despite the counterrevolutionary policies of its Stalinist rulers, China is still what we call a deformed workers state. In 1949 capitalism was overthrown in a historic victory for the Asian masses. Peking's current alliance with the U.S. poses a direct threat not only to the USSR, but to the gains of that revolution. Thus we call for the overthrow of the bureaucratic cliques from Peking to Moscow and the establishment of socialist unity in the face of imperialism's appetite to reconquer the entire planet for capitalist exploitation.

Our position on Afghanistan is embodied in our slogan "Hail Red Army!" In Afghanistan today the Red

Army alone stands between women and the perpetuation of feudal and pre-feudal enslavement. This is not to argue that the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan for altruistic purposes. It intervened in Afghanistan to protect its flank from stepped-up military threats from the United States and to stabilize its long-time client state. But in this particular case the Soviet state's concern for its own security happens to coincide with the interests of proletarian internationalism. If Afghanistan is transformed into anything resembling Soviet Central Asia, this would be an enormous leap forward—especially for women.

So the bourgeois press talks about the treachery of the Soviet Union invading Afghanistan, and the Spartacist League says the treachery would be pulling



Robert B. Luce, Inc.

**Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai (center) with Central Asian women, drinking wine in defiance of teaching of Koran.**

out, if they do it, under pressure and abandoning those people to the perpetuation of the slavery under which they live.

I want to point out that while we say "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" we don't say "Hail Red Army" everywhere and every time. We opposed the Soviet intervention into Hungary in 1956 where there was a proletarian uprising against the bureaucracy. We opposed the Soviet intervention into Czechoslovakia in 1968 where a Stalinist regime had been forced to liberalize. But in Afghanistan we stand with the Red Army and against the mullahs.

### Permanent Revolution

I want to conclude by returning again to the premise that there are only two roads for Eastern women—proletarian revolution or slavery. I would like to say something about Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

The bourgeois revolutions that I mentioned were won by an alliance of bourgeois-democratic forces in those countries with peasants and artisans. But in countries like Iran and Afghanistan, countries that had a belated capitalist development, the bourgeoisie is too small and too weak and too dependent on imperialist powers to lead the masses in a thoroughgoing struggle for even democratic rights. It was a very similar situation

which confronted Russia in the period before the Bolshevik Revolution.

In analyzing the tasks that confronted the Russian revolutionists in tsarist Russia, Trotsky asked, if there was no bourgeoisie capable of leading such a revolution, who could lead it? He concluded that since the bourgeoisie in Russia was unable to provide revolutionary leadership, the workers would have to take charge themselves. But in order to uproot the feudal autocracy that oppressed them and to uproot colonial domination, the working class would also have to uproot the native bourgeois order which propped up these institutions. So that, in other words, just to achieve basic bourgeois-democratic goals the working class would have to place its own goals immediately on the agenda and go all the way toward socialist revolution. This, in fact, is what did occur in the Soviet Union in 1917.

Now the woman question in "Third World" countries has repeatedly demonstrated for us the correctness of Trotsky's theory. All so-called revolutions in "Third World" countries which have stopped short of overturning capitalist property relations have been unable to provide even elementary democratic rights for women. This is true even in those situations where masses of women participated in the movement.

Algeria is a very good case in point. Thousands of Algerian women came out into the streets in 1961. There was lots of anti-imperialist rhetoric. Everybody wanted to get rid of colonial domination, and the veil was also talked about as the symbol of resistance to imperialism. Now 15 years have gone by and Algerian women are still wearing the veil. Nobody calls it a symbol of resistance anymore. Women's inferior status has been codified in the laws of Algeria.

Iran is one more negative confirmation of the validity of the theory of permanent revolution. The so-called revolution which occurred there did not liberate women and cannot liberate women.

There is no middle road. For the liberation of women to take place feudalism must be replaced, first in the economic structure and then in the ideology. In this historical epoch it can be replaced *only* by a workers state.

What role can the women of the East play in the construction of a society based on genuine equality? In 1924 Trotsky wrote this about Muslim women in the Soviet East:

"...the Eastern woman, who is the most paralyzed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak, will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress. She will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas and new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the Revolution and for the ideas of Communism than the awakened woman worker."

We look forward to the day when awakened women workers from Iran and other Eastern countries will take their places as cadres in an international proletarian party and will join with us in the struggle to liberate not only themselves but all the exploited and all the oppressed of the world. ■



SL/SYL contingent at Washington, D.C. anti-draft demo March 22.

Young Spartacus

## Bourgeois Feminists Take Up Imperialist Arms

# No to the Draft!

"It is more urgent than ever that the women in America have full and equal rights under the Constitution," said president Carter this February as he announced the first steps toward reinstatement of the draft, registration of all 19 and 20-year-old men—and women. Hardly a new-found commitment to women's equality, this. Carter wants an army to fight the USSR—and to uphold brideprice and the veil, Islamic reaction and female slavery in Afghanistan.

Carter's efforts to militarize the American public in the service of his "holy war" against the Soviet Union have met with mixed success. Anti-draft protests erupted immediately following Carter's "State of the Union" address and demonstrations have polarized campuses across the country. His request for funds to implement registration of young men was initially rejected by Congress and then in mid-April narrowly passed by the House Appropriations Committee. It still has a long way to go to become law.

Although Carter's bill on registering women was killed in an Armed Services subcommittee, this is the first time in the 204-year history of the U.S. that the question of drafting women has been broached. The issue is deeply controversial. The American Civil Liberties Union has threatened to challenge in court any draft that does not include women. Liberal bourgeois politicians like Bella Abzug oppose any draft in "peacetime." The National Organization for Women

(NOW) has wrapped itself in the stars and stripes, advising the Pentagon on how to get more women into the "All-Volunteer Force." Liz Taylor may well be on the way to her umpteenth divorce as a result of her staunch position in favor of women in the trenches, while right-to-lifer Phyllis Schlafly was furious: "President Carter has stabbed American womanhood in the back.... If this Administration can't stand up to women's lib, they can't stand up to the Russians" (*New York Times*, February 9).

"Radical" feminists like the ex-New Leftists of *off our backs* or *Big Mama Rag* decry the prospect of their peace-loving, gentle younger sisters marching off to a "male-inspired, male-dominated" war—yet while claiming to be against conscription do their best to evade the reasons for it. They utter barely a word about U.S. support to the woman-oppressing homosexual-killing mullahs in Afghanistan or the war drive against the Soviet Union. But you can't effectively oppose the draft if you accept the rationale for the war!

### The Fight Against Imperialist War

The Spartacist League is unalterably opposed to reimposition of the draft. Carter's Selective Service registration is part of his Cold War II campaign to lay the basis for World War III. The workers and oppressed have no interest in taking up arms against the Soviet Union, which despite its bureaucratic degeneration still

rests on proletarian property forms and must be unconditionally defended. We hail the Red Army's fight against the CIA-financed reactionaries in Afghanistan! While we understand that the ruling class will never abolish its armed forces so long as it maintains state power, we oppose the draft as a measure which further facilitates the mobilization of the population in the service of imperialist plunder.

We are certainly not pacifists, however. We continue to oppose utopian draft resistance schemes which isolate the middle-class antiwar militants and abandon the working-class draftees. Spartacist League supporters in the army during the Vietnam War put out a half dozen issues of *G.I. Voice*, a newsletter carrying a working-class socialist program against the war into the ranks of draftees. We opposed class-privileged student deferments, too, and would oppose exclusion of women (and homosexuals) from any new draft, as part of our opposition to any discrimination within bourgeois society. If there is a new draft, the task of revolutionaries must be to fight for socialist politics in the services, alongside young working-class men and women.

**Female Recruits and Feminist Recruiters**

NOW's *National Times* newsletter ought to be getting overtime pay from the Defense Department recruiting bureau for its insistence on raising "the quality of our military forces" through getting more effective female killers for imperialism. Poor Phyllis Schlafly! She's worked so hard to get her brand of reactionary flag-waving to take hold, and now she's outflanked by her life-long enemies, the feminists. Schlafly, after all, wants to deprive her army of 51 percent of the population; the bourgeois feminists are itching to channel women into the military in "defense" of the motherland.

There are in fact already 150,000 women in the U.S. volunteer armed forces, representing 8 percent of the total. The rapid increase in female enlistment is in large part due to the bourgeoisie's dissatisfaction with the largely minority composition of its volunteer army (not

surprising given the hideous poverty and high unemployment among blacks and other minorities). But the Pentagon wants a better educated, more reliable bunch—and to some extent they're getting it. It's estimated that women recruits have both a higher educational level and present fewer disciplinary problems than men.

Of course there is discrimination against women in the military—they are presently limited to non-combat roles and denied some 75 percent of higher military positions. There's recently been scandalized outcry over sexual harassment and discriminatory hazing of female cadets. We oppose such discrimination even within the most reactionary capitalist state institutions, just as socialists in 1894 opposed the court-martial and imprisonment of the French general Dreyfus, a Jew framed up on the charge of passing secrets to the Prussians. But whereas the Dreyfus Affair was the launching pad for a general backlash against Jews in French society, the harassment women soldiers face is not qualitatively different from what many male soldiers face. And in contrast to the feminists—who have taken up the plight of military career women with such vigor—we stand with the Red Army soldier who has marched to liberate the masses of Afghanistan, rather than with the U.S. female officer who may one day direct bombing raids over Soviet Central Asia.

There's nothing new about bourgeois feminists' support to imperialist war. During World War I in Russia, bourgeois feminists threw themselves into the tsarist war drive. Mariya Bochkarëva, a flamboyant adventurer, even formed a women's battalion and enlisted to fight the Germans. The radical feminists of the day, who were initially pacifists and not interested in giving up their lives in a "male-inspired" war (how familiar!), quickly gave up their "principles" when they saw the women's battalion in action and were swept up in the bourgeois war fever. Less than a year later, these women's units became the Woman's Battalion of Death—the last defenders of Petrograd's Winter Palace against the proletarian revolutionary masses led by the

*continued on page 21*

# Women and Revolution

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## Union Key to Jobs, Safety for All!

# Women in the Coal Fields

When the top shifted in a tunnel of the Rushton coal mine one afternoon last October and a 20 by 16 by 3 foot block of shale came crashing down, there was one person, a roof bolter helper, who couldn't get clear in time. By the time co-workers rushed back to the site of the roof fall, the young coal miner was dead.

Ordinarily, a single death in America's most dangerous industry attracts little attention. But the deadly cave-in at the Rushton mine near Osceola Mills, Pennsylvania on October 2, 1979 was reported in newspapers across the country. It was "news" because the victim, Marilyn McCusker, was said to be the first woman ever killed in an underground American coal mine.

Marilyn McCusker was typical in many ways of the nearly 3,000 women who have gone to work underground during the last several years. Following an unhappy marriage in upstate New York, 30-year-old Marilyn Williams moved to Coalport, Pennsylvania with her 12-year-old son Michael and took a job in a nursing home for \$85 a week. When it closed down she got a job as a barmaid. Then, in 1974, at the urging of a friend, Mrs. Williams applied for work at Rushton, a deep "captive" mine owned by Pennsylvania Power & Light. Women were already working in other pits in the area around Clearfield County but none had ever worked at Rushton and the bosses intended to keep it that way. "I'm a hundred percent against 'em in a coal mine," superintendent Blair Rickard stated (*New Yorker*, 12 November 1979).

By 1976 she had remarried, but Mrs. McCusker still hadn't been given a mining job, so she and two other women decided to sue Rushton on the grounds that they were denied employment on the basis of sex. In May 1977 the company settled out of court. Mrs. McCusker received \$30,000 in payments spread over a year and went to work in the mine as a general laborer. Despite the dangers, Alan McCusker said his wife was pleased to have the job. Her proudest day, the 28-year-old widower recalled, came when she earned her mining papers and won the "black hat" of a certified miner. Fellow miner Mary Louise Carson, who had worked previously for minimum wage in a clothing factory, felt the same enthusiasm: "Spending all day at a sewing machine can make a coal miner's job seem almost liberating—particularly when it pays nine and a half dollars an hour." With an adequate income, Marilyn McCusker became the sole breadwinner in the family. Her husband quit his job to build the house the couple hoped to occupy this summer and together they planned to open a carpentry shop. But the dreams came to a sudden end when the Rushton office phoned Mr. McCusker to say there had been an accident in the mine.

At least one company spokesman blamed the fatality on Mrs. McCusker's sex. The firm's safety director said a man "would have been ten steps away" when the roof came down (*New York Times*, 8 November 1979), while superintendent Blair Rickard, unsatisfied with production, claimed women had jinxed the mine which "ain't been the same since they came." A Rushton official told Alan McCusker that Pennsylvania's law prohibited the payment of survivor benefits to a man "unless he is incapable of self-support." "Marilyn didn't win everything she thought she did," Mr. McCusker said. But United Mine Workers (UMWA) attorneys represented Mr. McCusker and benefits were finally approved, reportedly because Pennsylvania had ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

### For a Union Fight for Safe Jobs for All!

The McCuskers' tragedy highlights capitalism's "Catch 22" for working women. Despite the hazardous and exhausting work, women want and need these coal mining jobs. Betty Jean Hall of the Coal Employment Project (a non-profit group helping women get mining jobs) told *W&R*: "At least two-thirds or three-fourths of the women we work with are single heads of households." By the end of 1979 the total mining workforce of 20,000 included nearly 3,000 women. But while female hiring has inched upward, the gains are tenuous and subject to immediate reversal with every downturn in the economy. Though precise statistics are hard to come by (in 1968 the Labor Department stopped tabulating layoff data according to sex within separate industries), a spokesman for the UMWA International acknowledged that women, who generally have lower seniority, are being hit hard by the heavy layoffs now taking place in the mining industry.

It is not just low seniority which is throwing women miners out of their jobs. Sexual discrimination often makes women doubly vulnerable. Many women complain of being tracked into unskilled jobs such as rock dusting (spreading powdered stone to prevent explosions) or shoveling coal onto the belt, while men with less seniority are advanced to more skilled and better paying classifications. Shuttle car operator Cosby Totten of Tazwell, West Virginia told *W&R*: "At our mines most of the women get channeled to the belt and that way they never even get to see the face. They don't ever get to know what a section is and how it runs... And then when the layoffs came, all the women, just about, got it." The UMWA contract loophole basing seniority on length of service and "the ability to step into and perform the work or job..." means that an unskilled laborer, male or female, can be discriminatorily sacked while a less senior worker stays on the job.



Earl Dotter/UMW Journal

The operators' contractually allowed "right" to lay off selectively hurts men and women workers alike by weakening the seniority system for the whole union. But it is the labor movement itself, and not the capitalist government, which must fight these layoffs. In some mines women were hired as a result of court action which retroactively established the plaintiffs' seniority dates to the time at which job applications were first submitted to the companies. Though these "super seniority" schemes are frequently hailed by ostensible leftists as a means to rectify sexual and racial discrimination, any judicial subversion of the seniority system is in reality an attack on the union and must be opposed. The Labor Department is sometimes happy to order a few women hired in exchange for an invitation to intervene in the union. Particularly in the coal fields, where Jimmy Carter tried to use the Taft-Hartley law in 1978 to smash the coal strike, workers know that any gains they have made have been through their own independent, militant class struggles.

In a shrinking job market, the bosses will inevitably pit men against women and black against white: The fight against sexual and racial discrimination in the coal industry cannot be separated from the struggle for full employment. Union militants must answer layoffs with a call for a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to provide jobs for all. Hiring, training and upgrading must not be left in the hands of the coal operators but should be placed under the exclusive control of the union. And to ensure that parents can work and participate fully in union affairs, the UMWA should take the lead in fighting for 24-hour childcare centers at the bosses' expense.

The UMWA bureaucracy supports the Equal Rights Amendment to establish formal equality in law, and

moved last December's convention out of Florida in part because that state had not ratified the amendment. But new UMWA president Sam Church has no intention of leading a fight against the bosses and the capitalist state necessary to secure lasting gains for women. He is just as committed as was Arnold Miller to the sellout policies which mean setbacks for women miners and defeats for the union as a whole. At the Denver convention Church pushed through resolutions allowing a 120 percent dues increase and the "right" to fill the union's vice presidency by appointment. In defiance of a 30-year tradition of industry-wide strikes, Church rammed through a one-at-a-time policy which allows the bureaucrats to target only a single company for shutdown when the national contract expires next year.

### Militant Women in the Coal Fields

Women are not actually newcomers to American coal mining. In the 1930s, owners sometimes contracted with men who then put their families to work. Some women started mining as little girls and today suffer from black lung. Others dug coal during World War II only to be laid off afterwards as depression-level conditions spread through the coal fields. Thus it is doubtful that Marilyn McCusker was actually the first woman to die in an underground mine—and already she is not the last. Another woman, Ellie Bowman, the mother of two, was killed this March in West Virginia.

Nor are women strangers to coal miners' struggles. "Arm yourselves," Mother Jones told Cabin and Paint Creek strikers in 1912: "Return home and kill every goddamned mine guard on the creeks, blow up the mines and drive the damned scabs out of the valleys." Florence Reece, author of "Which Side Are You On?", is herself a veteran of "Bloody Harlan" 50 years ago and remains a union stalwart at age 79. Women have played central roles in more recent coal field struggles as well. In the course of a 13-month strike against the Eastover Mining Company members of the Brookside Women's Club walked picket lines, fought scabs and went to jail before the union finally won a contract in August 1974 (see W&R No. 7, Autumn 1974).

In the coal field battles which lie ahead, militant women miners must lay claim to the best of these fighting traditions, and, standing shoulder to shoulder with their brother unionists, fight for a class-struggle leadership in the UMWA. ■

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## Big Sister is Watching You!

# Feminists and Feds in Anti-Porn Frenzy

by Clair Greenwood

Back in the '60s there used to be a group called the Eulenspiegel Society, or something like that, which aimed to instill "masochist pride" in its members and to wipe out the historic oppression of masochists. People tended to snicker, but the little group did have a point. There is no accounting for tastes—and no justification for making laws against people or locking them up or killing them just because you don't share their sexual predilections. As somebody once defined "perversion," it's whatever you don't happen to be into.

There seems to have been some slippage since those halcyon days of "sexual liberation" on the left. The feminist establishment has recently taken to the war-path against pornography under the slogan: "Pornography Is the Theory, Rape Is the Practice."

### Abscam, Brilab, Miporn: The Ugly Faces of the "New" FBI

This latest outburst of petty-bourgeois moralism among feminists closely parallels a renewed and major government offensive against sexual "deviance" of all sorts. In late February of this year the FBI announced the indictment of some 50 big pornography distributors as a result of "Operation Miporn" (Miami pornography), the biggest sweep ever. It all began in Anita Bryant country, with the Dade County Public Safety Department's own private investigation. Like its two ugly siblings, "Brilab" (bribery-labor) and "Abscam" (Arab scam), Miporn employed the "new" FBI's old methods of entrapment, cynical deceit and corruption.

Both the President's and U.S. Attorney General's offices have sent out memos saying that the fight against pornography, and particularly "kiddie porn," are going to be the "front issues of the 1980s," according to U.S. Postal Service detective Bud Peterson (*Gay Community News*, February 9). Peterson is one of the men who helped put away a Boston-area professional photographer for 39 years for "sex crimes." George Jacobs, whose published work includes a book on the large Portuguese community of Massachusetts, was sentenced in late January to 20 years for statutory rape—he'd confessed to having sex with a 14-year-old male who was living with him—and 19 years for taking and distributing photos of nude boys. He was forced to take tests to determine if he was a "Sexually Dangerous Person" and could have ended up incarcerated in a mental institution for life (*Gay Community News*, 26 April).

This is very nasty stuff, but a lot of rad-lib types think



Janie Eisenberg

Feminists rage at dirty pictures in Times Square. The anti-porn campaign unites Ms., the FBI and...

it's just great. The *Village Voice*'s Jack Newfield, for example, is standing up and cheering the post-Hoover heroes of the FBI with their jazzy electronic spying equipment and sneak tactics. "The Miporn sting should be cheered," he wrote (*Village Voice*, March 3) in a lengthy paean to the good judgment of the G-men in leaving him and his buddies alone at last and going after corrupt labor officials and "dirty" pornographers.

Another member of the new "clean up America" brigade, Robin Morgan, wrote that guys like Jacobs are just "seedy entrepreneurs slobbering along society's lunatic fringe" in a diatribe entitled "How to Run the Pornographers Out of Town (And Preserve the First Amendment)" in *Ms.* (November 1978).

And for Democratic Party politicians like Bella Abzug, coming out against organized crime and

...anti-homosexual right-to-lifer Anita Bryant, who prays for the preservation of the family and capitalism, the real cause of women's oppression.



Bob Sherman, Camera 5

cleaning up Times Square never hurts—and god knows she hasn't won an election in a long time.

Susan Brownmiller, current Women Against Pornography (WAP) president, asserts in her book *Against Our Will* that rape is the essence of male sexuality, and she calls for more cops to combat it. Other prominent WAP spokesmen include Gloria Steinem and Jane Alpert, both famous collaborators with the government's spy/police agencies. Alpert "cooperated fully with Federal investigators in providing details of her years as a fugitive" (*New York Times*, 15 November 1974). She had gone underground in 1969, accused along with boyfriend Sam Melville of anti-war bombings of government buildings. She turned herself in in 1974, claiming she had discovered feminism and hence it was okay to turn on her male comrades. (Melville died in the bloody suppression of the 1971 Attica prison rebellion; what feminism meant to Alpert was summed up in her famous remark on Attica: "I will mourn the loss of 42 male supremacists no longer.") As for Steinem, she never did see anything wrong with taking CIA money.

And today's would-be scourgers of sin don't even have the courage of their convictions. What is all this liberal bleating about preserving the First Amendment when they claim that women's very lives are at stake in this battle against dirty pictures?! The Ayatollah Khomeini could teach them a thing or two. They really respect women in Iran: no porn there—you can (literally) bet your life on that.

### Hello to All That: Feminists in Reaction

Robin Morgan once wrote a famous piece, "Good-bye to All That," an extended scream of hatred which defined much of the radical feminism of the late '60s/early '70s. Although a streak of self-righteous moralism was evident in such acts as the storming of Grove Press and Rat in those glory days of Lower East Side New Leftism, radical feminists also attacked the Catholic Church, enthused over Third World revolutions, castigated the nuclear family, hailed Bernardine Dohrn and the "underground" and generally claimed to be

the most right-on revolutionary movement that ever was on the face of the earth. Today the "revolution" is long forgotten, and we're back to whipping up outrage that *Playboy* magazine actually shows pictures of naked women: 1950s revisited.

As Marxists, we have consistently opposed feminism because it undermines class solidarity and is an obstacle to the only hope for the genuine liberation of women—international proletarian revolution. But the feminists of the old New Left at least saw themselves as fighting in some sense for human liberation. With them, we could at least have an argument. The WAP campaign is something else. In October, when WAP, led by Abzug, Steinem, Morgan and Brownmiller, staged a march through New York's seedy Times Square porn/pinball/kung-fu-killer fantasyland, we wrote:

As Marxists we oppose attempts at puritanical censorship, whether launched by open reactionaries seeking to smash whatever (limited) civil liberties formally exist, or by this new feminist 'Legion of Decency'.... Pornography is not the source of violence against women.... It is this capitalist society with its enforced poverty, rigid family structure and straitjacket morality which breeds the poisonous frustrations that explode in violence."

—"Feminists in Alliance with Reaction,"  
*Workers Vanguard* No. 243, 9 November 1979

We refused to go near that march through Times Square—even to sell our paper. It's one thing to support Appalachian coal miners during a wildcat strike. It's quite another to try to sell them a paper when they put on white sheets and go on a religious book-burning spree against teaching the theory of evolution in the schools.

This anti-porn campaign is disgusting, dangerous and reactionary, putting feminists in an objective political bloc with the most conservative forces of this society—the bible-thumping book-burners, the anti-abortion, pro-death penalty "right-to-lifers," the Anita Bryants and the FBI.

### Erotica vs. Pornography or Why Can't Sex Be Nice?

What is the difference between porn and erotica? This is a question that weighs heavily on the minds of

the anti-porn feminists. WAP and Ms. seem to feel that porn is what those nasty men like, whereas what women like is erotica. Seems to be all in the eye of the beholder. As we said, "perversion" is whatever you don't happen to be into.

WAP has a porn slide show which W&R forced one of its oppressed reporters to sit through under admittedly trying circumstances. (No smoking: "It's a conspiracy against women, you know," muttered one sister darkly.) One of the first slides looked like something out of a grade Z Helmut Berger spaghetti-fascist movie: a man dressed like Hitler spanking a woman in black garter belt and stockings. "This is what we mean by sexual fascism," solemnly explains the moderator. Nobody laughs. Click. Something that looks like a mummy, clothesline all over. "Severe chastisement of college girls," the moderator gives the title. Click. A woman's nipple held by a pair of pliers, blood dripping. Gasps of horror. Click. A series of a barely pubescent

girl welcoming a hairy man into her little white bedroom and screwing away doggie style with a horny grin on her face. "It's a real lie that girls this age are sexually experienced," hisses the moderator angrily. Another slide, a dreamy red-headed young girl on a green hillside, holding what looks like a silver airplane or car ornament in her hand: "It could be a penis." There was more: the Dracula poster of Frank Langella hovering over a prostrate woman like a lovesick bat, gross jokes, the *Playboy* cartoon of the precocious little girl swaggering cynically out of an obviously exhausted dirty old man's apartment, sneering, "You call that being molested?" and so on.

A very mixed bag, obviously. Some was sickening, some innocuous, some funny or sexy or whatever. The WAP conference workshops, particularly one by Gloria Steinem, were striking in their simple self-righteous bigotry. A woman timidly brought up the chic-porn, very popular *Story of O*. "It's not erotic," snapped Ms.

## The Cruising Controversy

Reprinted from *Young Spartacus* No. 75  
September 1979

*Cruising*, latest project of Hollywood director William Friedkin (*The French Connection*, *The Exorcist*), has been the target of angry demonstrations and sabotage of actors and crew during its on-location shooting in New York City. With the Shachtmanite, neo-New Leftists of the Revolutionary Socialist League taking the lead, gay protesters say *Cruising* (the plot involves a mass murderer of homosexuals set in the "heavy leather, S&M" gay bars of the West Village) is "creepy," "the people in it have no humanity," it is simply a "snuff movie"—and they want to drive it off "their turf." Protesters have been severely beaten and arrested by the New York cops. We demand that all charges be dropped and protest the beatings—which the corrupt thugs in blue are always happy to hand out to any homosexuals they can catch (a lesson some of the younger protesters, more used to playing softball with the police, have suddenly learned).

But we oppose attempts to censor or stop this movie: whether through calls on NYC's racist mayor Koch to revoke the film's shooting permit or through "mass action," such attempts are fundamentally anti-democratic and downright dangerous. *Cruising* is a piece of fiction, entertainment; not real life—a distinction which unfortunately much of the left in this country seems unable to comprehend. Admittedly, producer Jerry Weintraub's "moral" justification for this movie is outrageous. After seeing *Cruising*, he says, "Maybe when a young man who is gay gets off the plane from Omaha, he...won't get killed at the Anvil" (*Soho Weekly News*, 2 August 1979). No, maybe he'll just stay home and get queer-baited or even beaten to death by the local punks—the normal expectation of open homosexuals in America. Regardless of what one thinks of the "leather scene," a casual passerby is far safer in the

Village than uptown on 42nd Street (or in some of New York's subway stations), because what goes on downtown is essentially consensual sex.

A lot of homosexuals would like to hide the "seamy side" of gay life—the protesting gay activists say they are sick and tired of being portrayed as weirdos, criminals, victims and bizarre freaks in the popular media. They have a point—but who isn't sick of it? The stereotypes of popular culture (of blacks and women too, of everybody in fact—even white heterosexual WASP males occasionally must get tired of John Wayne/Clint Eastwood macho) flow from the social reality of racist, repressive, decaying capitalist society. But as homosexual author John Rechy puts it ("A Case for Cruising," *Village Voice*, 6 August 1979), the answer is not to show "our oppressors how happy they've made us" by embracing the stereotypes of "success" in bourgeois society. One recalls those early sixties Sidney Poitier movies about the impeccably-clad/Harvard neurosurgeon/cognoscenti of Italian movies and French wines "who just happens to be a..." you-know-what (black, in this case. But why not homosexual?)

All those well-meaning liberal "positive images" didn't do anything to stop the pain and horror of racial oppression in this country. Sidney Poitier is not the answer to an America which produced D.W. Griffith's pro-Ku Klux Klan *Birth of a Nation*. Nor will stopping *Cruising* overcome the deep-rooted prejudice against "deviant" sex. The illusion that censoring popular culture (which homosexuals or blacks can't do anyhow) will end oppression must be smashed. The shadows cast on movie screens are not the enemy. The enemy is the social institutions and authorities (from President Jimmy "life is not fair" Carter on down) which perpetuate the real suffering, degradation and exploitation of "deviants," the poor, minorities, the powerless and the working class: capitalist society.

Steinem, and that was the end of *that* discussion.

So what do these feminists *like*? What is "erotica"—besides, that is, a codeword for upper-class, fashionable fantasies? (What turns off so many Ms. types to "hardcore" is not the naked bodies and their activities but those tacky duck-tail greaser hairdos, the beehive bouffants, the thick pancake makeup, the cheesy basement "rec room" decor.)

Ms. laid down the line on what's okay sexually in a special front-page article entitled "Pornography vs. Erotica: A Clear and Present Difference" (November 1978). The sinister title is a play on "clear and present danger," the bourgeois legal language used to justify censorship or worse. What is good, it turns out, is "warmth," "positive choice," "subjects involving 'romance,' itself a metaphor for emotional contact, affection, passion, tenderness; in other words, *relationships* between persons, not mere organs." Ms. Steinem's personal turn-on, she informed an audience at the September WAP conference, is the movie *Cousin Cousine*. (We bet she finds raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens very nice, too.) She also informed people that it is "pornographic at its root" to think your sex partner should be bigger than you are.

What is going on here is an avoidance of certain aspects of human sexuality, admittedly a difficult and disturbing subject to deal with even with the best of intentions. An interesting article in *Radical History Review* (Spring/Summer 1979) by Ann Barr Snitlow helps shed some light on what pornography is all about. Disagreeing with the "erotica vs. porn" dichotomy, Snitlow writes:

"This distinction blurs more than it clarifies the complex mixture of elements that make up sexuality. 'Erotica' is soft core, soft focus; it is gentler and tenderer sex.... Does this mean true sexuality is diffuse while only perverse sexuality is driven, power hungry, intense and selfish? ... [This] leaves out too much of what is infantile in sex—the reenactment of early feelings, the boundlessness and omnipotence of infant desire and its furious growth."

Her article, "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women Is Different," also sheds a not very flattering light over that "romance" which Robin Morgan finds such a pleasant aspect of female sexuality.

Snitlow analyzes the popular, cheap mass-market Harlequin line of "romance novels" sold in supermarkets and drugstores. Asserting that they are essentially pornography for women ashamed to read the real thing, Snitlow exposes their sex-saturated atmosphere, quoting a typical encounter:

"Sara feared he was going to refuse the invitation and simply walk off. It seemed like an eternity before he inclined his head in a brief, abrupt acknowledgment of acceptance, then drew out her chair for her, his hard fingers brushing her arm for a second, and bringing an urgent flutter of reaction from her pulse."

And so on until the chaste but fluttering heroine, heart (and other organs) throbbing away to the hard touch of fingers (and other organs?), finally gets the cold, cruel-seeming man to marry her. If this is the stuff women like (at least they *buy* it in huge amounts), how is it any healthier than "male" porn? And what's so great about "romance"? Where are the radical feminists who used to tell us with so much righteous indignation that fairy-

tale romance was a male conspiracy to mask the tyranny of the bourgeois family and the drudgery of housework?

## Is There Sex After Socialism?

What is particularly ironic about the current feminist anti-porn campaign is that its supporters include many of the very same people who vehemently attack Marxism for its supposed "straitjacket morality" and censorship of "liberated lifestyles."

Of course, a lot of pornography, a lot of movies, a lot of literature reflect ugly and frightening aspects of human behavior. How could it be otherwise in this violent and class-divided world? But those reflections are not the enemy!

As Marxists, we are trying to achieve a classless society based on material plenty in which people have the freedom (and the leisure) to figure out what they really want to do, sexually and otherwise. If people ask, "Will there be leather bars under socialism?" our answer must be that it is really not up to us. Censorship and state repression will never be the instruments of sexual liberation. We can only presume that, with the dissolution of the oppressive nuclear family and the artificial restraints and frustrations which are imposed on human expression, sexuality will become more free, more open, more tolerant, more rich and more diverse. May the day come soon. ■

## Government Out of the Bedrooms!

This January, New York's repressive sodomy law was overturned by a state appellate court. Declaring that "personal sexual conduct is a fundamental right," the court ruled in favor of Ronald Onofre, a minister convicted of sexual "crimes." The case is now being appealed.

The present statute defines as a crime all oral and anal sex between unmarried individuals, heterosexual or homosexual. Those convicted are subject to up to three years' imprisonment. Used most often to persecute homosexuals, such laws were the springboard for Anita Bryant's anti-gay mobilization in 1977 and have provided a legal framework for the vicious witchhunt against teachers in California and elsewhere.

The state has no business interfering in consensual sexual activity! What takes place in the bedroom between individuals with mutual agreement and understanding is purely their own concern. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund has made an emergency appeal for funds to continue the fight against New York's sodomy law in court. The Partisan Defense Committee is supporting the case and has contributed to the defense fund. We urge readers of *Women and Revolution* to send tax-deductible contributions to: Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, 132 West 43rd Street, New York, New York 10036.

## Jane Margolis Interview

Women and Revolution interviewed Jane Margolis by telephone May 4 for an update on UCASSH and the Militant Action Caucus:

**W&R:** What kind of support has UCASSH gotten in the labor movement and on the left?

**Margolis:** The case has become quite well known in the labor movement. UCASSH has raised over \$13,000 to date, with numerous contributions from labor, the left and individuals concerned with constitutional rights. In my own local we raised over \$1,000. In addition to the 70 delegates at the convention who signed protest petitions to the White House demanding an apology, 700 members from my local signed the same petition in the first week after the convention. Several CWA locals—from Local 1150 in New York to Local 5011 in Illinois to Local 9201 in Portland—exec boards and presidents around the country have endorsed the case. We've received support from many unions, including striking Oil, Chemical and Atomic workers in Houston, River Rouge auto workers in Detroit, postal workers from all over, striking professors in Boston, and internationally. I see this as an important case against union-busting, government harassment and intervention into the unions, and so do they.

The Partisan Defense Committee and the Spartacist League have been the most active in aiding UCASSH fund raising and publicizing the case. This stands in dramatic contrast to the Socialist Workers Party, which has printed not one word—and actually had a goon squad to prevent me from attending one of their public forums to make a three-minute announcement on the April 19 anti-Nazi demonstration I was helping build. They are interested in promoting free speech for Nazis, while suppressing union representatives who are speaking out against vicious government attacks against labor and minorities.

**W&R:** There's another CWA convention this summer, and we understand that you're running for convention delegate again on the MAC slate. Could you tell us what you project, and what MAC's doing now?

**Margolis:** The Militant Action Caucus is running a slate of eight for convention delegate. The International will be trying to turn this convention into a rally to re-elect Carter and keep all discussion of fighting the phone company off the floor. This convention occurs about six weeks before our contract expires, and in preparation for the contract fight Ma Bell has already been trying to bust our union. Many union stewards of our local have been fired and officers put on severe discipline, like myself, and the members are unprotected—while company profits are steadily on the rise. We desperately need a strong, well-organized national strike against the phone company for protection of our cost-of-living clause, for wages that'll give us a decent standard of living, against the absence control plan, and against company harassment. And this is what we are going to be fighting for on the convention floor. We don't want to see one local hanging out alone like in New York in '71—we want everyone out to win our demands! We will be fighting for an elected strike steering committee and mass picket lines—no scabbing!—the necessary

tactics to win.

Of course we know where the International lines up. Glen Watts actively supports Carter and doesn't want to mess up his campaign by putting a national phone strike in his lap. Carter said in 1977, when there was a possible national phone strike, that he would use government action against us. So the International will do everything to force a sellout contract down our throats. It's so blatantly clear in the CWA, the relationship between the labor leaders' support for the Democratic Party and their stab-in-the-back policies during our contract fight. That's why we will raise the need for a workers party at the convention.

The International will also want support resolutions for Carter's war-mongering over Iran and Afghanistan. Under the rule of Afghan mullahs women are half alive, wrapped in the veil's strait jacket—minorities were killed, and schoolteachers were shot in the back for teaching women to read. But the CWA International doesn't mind, because what they really want is to mobilize the country behind Carter's war drive against Russia. Siding with the U.S. government against the Soviet Union is like siding with the bosses' attempt to destroy the union. The Soviet Union is deformed by a parasitic bureaucracy, just as the unions are here. But the economy is run for social need, not profit, and the tremendous advances made for the working class, women and minorities since 1917 must be defended by all unionists, and that's what we're going to fight for. Do these CWA delegates want the world blown up and their sons and daughters to go to war over Jimmy Carter's attempt to get elected?

**W&R:** Just one more question. If Jimmy Carter shows up again at the convention, are you planning on speaking against him again?

**Margolis:** Absolutely! ■

## Labor Militant...

(continued from page 24)

ex-Mayor Alioto's Zebra campaign; she has recently called for labor/minority demonstrations to protest the murderous Ku Klux Klan assaults in Greensboro. Margolis has worked to break her union's ties to the CIA labor front, the American Institute for Free Labor Development. She has also campaigned for the right of the union membership to elect its own stewards and other representatives. In short, Margolis has fought for a union movement which relies on its own strength, and uses that strength to defend its members and all the oppressed.

### Government "Dirty Tricks" Against Labor

The case of Jane Margolis vs. the U.S. Secret Service concerns a special form of government intervention into the labor movement, intended to control the political climate of the trade unions. Jimmy Carter is trying to mobilize support for policies which will impose hardship and austerity on the American people, especially the working people. President Carter and his aides wished to use the platform of the CWA Convention to try to show union support for these anti-labor policies at the precise time when his popularity

had fallen to its lowest point according to nationwide polls. For Carter's "town-meeting" charade to be effective, no expression of political opposition to his address to the convention could be tolerated. The Secret Service was mobilized to identify, isolate, defame, and suppress sources of militant political opposition at the convention. Following her release by the Secret Service, Margolis got back on the convention floor and was recognized as one of 20 CWA members who wanted to ask a question of the President. However, clearly wishing to avoid answering Margolis, Jimmy Carter cut off the questioning after hearing only 12 of the 20 scheduled questioners.

Since the convention, a pattern of Secret Service harassment against dissent from the labor movement has emerged. The Secret Service repeatedly harassed members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) who attempted to demonstrate against Carter's energy policy. IAM President William Winpisinger wrote to Secret Service Director Stewart Knight protesting the mistreatment of his members by Secret Service agents acting as "political agents" of President Carter. Knight's internal "investigation"—whitewash—had to admit that the IAM demonstrators' rights had been violated—but he still tried to claim that this intimidation of only anti-Carter unionists had not been intentional.

Government harassment, frame-ups, and violence against political dissidents have been increasingly exposed in the last five years. The admitted activities of the FBI, from slander and attempted blackmail of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to complicity in the KKK murder of Viola Liuzzo, are only the tip of the iceberg. Only a fraction of its COINTELPRO activities of illegal wiretap, mail cover, and covert burglary has been brought to public scrutiny. Attempting to avoid further exposure and public outcry, the government today claims that these secret police operations have been abolished. But the stench of Watergate and COINTELPRO belies the cover-ups. The Secret Service seizure of Jane Margolis and its harassment of IAM members point clearly to the fact that the government has not given up these methods and that labor is also their target. An important goal of the Margolis suit is to expose the depth and extent of these government "dirty tricks" against the unions.

### Union Committee Against Secret Service Harassment Formed

It is difficult for working people to file suit—especially against the Secret Service. The government has almost unlimited resources. **We are depending on your support to raise the thousands of dollars needed to wage this fight.** It will be expensive, but at stake are fundamental individual and labor rights. There are no kings in America—we must not now allow presidents the right to silence those who would criticize them. The U.S. Secret Service must be called to account for its violation of Jane Margolis' constitutional rights. Labor must oppose this government encroachment on its right to assemble freely. Your support, endorsement, and contributions are all vital to the defense of these rights—and to your own. The defense of democratic

rights is truly indivisible, and the defense of one strengthens all. **Support the Margolis suit—Secret Service, hands off the unions!**

Make checks payable to:  
UCASSH, P.O. Box 12324, San Francisco, CA 94112.

—Excerpted from UCASSH brochure.

## No to the Draft...

(continued from page 13)

Bolshevik Party, the real liberators of Russian working and peasant women.

### Which Side Are You On?

The reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is clinging to NOW's skirts, trying to act as the loyal left wing of that bourgeois formation. "Where NOW Position Paper Goes Wrong," the *Militant* (21 March) says politely, is that it's for Carter's imperialist army! Just a little "mistake," no doubt, among sisters—like the "Woman's Battalion of Death"? The SWP above all evades the key aim of Carter and Brzezinski's war drive—to crush the Soviet Union—and refuses to call for defense of the USSR.

But you can't hide from the Russian Question. Afghanistan poses it point-blank. While more "radical" feminists try to evade it too, nonetheless the stark oppression of veiled, illiterate Afghan women—and the fact that today the Red Army in Afghanistan is defending women's rights—has shaken them. A short article in *off our backs* (April 1980) by Carol Anne Douglas uneasily raised the question: "Of course we as feminists cannot support any superpower seeking satellites, nor do we necessarily trust socialist revolutionaries to fight male supremacy; however, we must avoid war fever and try to find out what the position of Afghan women is." The interesting hedge here is "necessarily"—perhaps these ex-New Leftists remember the heroic example of armed Vietnamese women fighting alongside their class brothers against U.S. imperialism. Those who are serious about women's liberation must support the extension of the social gains of the Russian Revolution to Afghanistan!

Women will take sides—the bourgeois feminists have already taken their place at the side of their capitalist class brothers. We take our stand with our class, the proletariat, and hail those heroic women who have taken up arms for the revolutionary movement—from the women who battled on the barricades of the Paris Commune in 1871, to Larissa Reissner and the many other heroic women who fought alongside their male comrades in the Russian civil war, to the Brookside women who beat back the scabs and shut down the coal mines in 1974. We heartily endorse the words of V.I. Lenin, written in September 1916 during the first imperialist world war:

"Today the imperialist bourgeoisie militarises the youth as well as the adults; tomorrow it may begin militarising the women. Our attitude should be: All the better! Full speed ahead! For the faster we move, the nearer shall we

continued on page 22

be to the armed uprising against capitalism....  
 "A certain bourgeois observer of the Paris Commune, writing to an English newspaper in May 1871, said: 'If the French nation consisted entirely of women, what a terrible nation it would be!' Women and teen-age children fought in the Paris Commune side by side with the men. It will be no different in the coming battles for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Proletarian women will not look on passively as poorly armed or unarmed workers are shot down by the well-armed forces of the bourgeoisie. They will take to arms, as they did in 1871, and from the cowed nations of today—or more correctly, from the present-day labour movement, disorganised more by the opportunists than by the governments—there will undoubtedly arise, sooner or later, but with absolute certainty, an international league of the 'terrible nations' of the revolutionary proletariat."

—"The Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution," *Collected Works*, Volume 23 ■

## "Women's Lawsuit"...

(continued from page 2)

it suits them. I have particularly appreciated the *Workers Vanguard* articles on Chrysler such as "No Government Handout for the Bosses! Whatever Chrysler's Worth—Give It to the Workers" [WV No. 238, 17 August 1979]

In contrast to the revolutionary approach of the Spartacist League, the reformist left (Maoists, Communist Party, Socialist Workers Party, etc.) does not propose to fight layoffs at all. They have spent too much of their political lives adapting to the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy to stop now. They may read books and show films on the militant tactics of the 1930s, but none of them has called for putting those tactics into action when they are needed.

As a substitute for class struggle, the reformists' "tactic" is lawsuits against the unions to maintain post-layoff quotas of women workers in the plants! This completely gives up on any fight to stop layoffs at all!

The February 22, 1980 issue of the SWP's misnamed *Militant* has an article titled "Layoffs Threaten Job Gains of Women in Industry" in which they propose to "modify seniority":

"...the unions could move to modify seniority provisions so that layoffs would not reduce the proportion of women (and Black) workers at a given site.

"This could be accomplished with dual seniority lists, for example. Thus at South Works, of 800 workers who were laid off, such a provision would allow for only 85 of them to be women. That would maintain the 8 percent female

work force. Unlike under the current setup, women would not suffer disproportionately from the layoffs."

And in the event that the unions are not so obliging as to do this voluntarily, the SWP (and every other left group in the country save the SL) is prepared to sue them in the capitalist courts to overturn seniority provisions of the contract. In effect they pray to the judge, "Your Honor, if there be layoffs, let them lay off higher seniority white men and keep a few women in their stead."

Exactly such a suit was filed by eight laid-off women, who were supported by the Maoist Communist Party-Marxist/Leninist, from the Fremont GM plant during the last round of auto layoffs in 1974. Our UAW Militant Caucus leaflet issued in the plant in November 1978 exposed the pathetic failure of this reformist, anti-union strategy to accomplish anything at all for Fremont workers. We believe that the best defense of the rights and livelihood of the woman worker is a strong union under militant new leadership capable of leading mass struggle to stop the layoffs of all workers.

Ruth Ryan, for the UAW Militant Caucus  
 P.O. Box 19015, Oakland, CA 94619

\* \* \* \* \*

W&R reprints below excerpts from the UAW Militant Caucus leaflet, titled: "Down with the Consent Decree! Down with the Women's Lawsuit! For Militant Union Action to Fight Discrimination!"

Liz Stanley and Charlotte Casey, initiators of the notorious Fremont women's lawsuit, issue leaflets complaining that the cash settlement in the case is "chickenfeed." They gathered statements against the consent decree on the grounds that they didn't win enough money. The truth is that their talk of fighting for "more money" or a "shorter work week" is a dishonest attempt to cover up for the legal remedy that lies at the heart of their lawsuit; seniority-busting and government intervention in the union!...

### Back to Basics—What Was the Women's Lawsuit?

In August 1974, 8 women from this plant filed suit in Federal Court charging GM with violation of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They asked for a court order to keep women working in the plant during layoffs out of the line of seniority. Lawsuits like this usually wind up naming the union as co-defendant because federal affirmative action guidelines are set up to punish unions, not companies. Since we have a union contract that requires GM to lay off in order of seniority, the lawsuit women sued the union so as to empower the court to overturn those contract provisions....

Having failed at breaking the contract for this, the lawsuit women then shifted ground and attacked Paragraph 63 of the national contract. They asked for a court order to promote women into Material, Inspection, etc., bypassing higher-seniority men. The judge did not grant this, but GM seized upon it as an excuse for wholesale seniority-busting through "secondary openings."

In the end, the suit focused on things like cleaner bathrooms and smaller-sized work gloves. The consent decree boils down to one new bathroom and a tiny cash

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settlement. The lawyers made more money off the suit than anyone.

**What's Wrong with the Women's Lawsuit?**

—If the lawsuit women won their demands, the government would re-write our contract and destroy what little seniority protection we have. The seniority system is a hard-won if limited gain of the labor movement that protects women, minorities and unionists from victimization by the company. ... **We need strict plantwide seniority! No secondary openings!**

—By making demands for women workers at the expense of the jobs of men workers, this lawsuit worsens the divisions between men and women workers, white and black, while letting the company off the hook! The union should be fighting to stop layoffs, speedup, and forced overtime for *all* workers, not just women. The remedy for discrimination must come out of GM's hide and not penalize the other workers. Take the power to discriminate out of the hands of the auto companies. **Fight for union control of hiring & job upgrading!**

—The lawsuit strategy invites the government to interfere in union affairs. It builds illusions in the government as a supposedly "neutral" arbiter between labor and capital, when in fact the government is the servant of the richest, most powerful ruling class on earth. Government control of unions means union-busting. **No anti-union lawsuits! No government interference in the unions! For the complete independence of the unions from the bosses and the bosses' state!**

—Affirmative action lawsuits do not fight discrimination because they don't create new jobs. They only pit groups of workers against each other for the few jobs that exist. ... Over 40% of black urban youth is unemployed! As long as you leave intact the "management prerogatives" that let the companies hire or lay off at will, workers will be left to fight among themselves for a shrinking number of jobs. A real strategy to fight discrimination and unemployment is to mobilize the power of our union to fight for a sliding scale of hours to reduce the work week at full pay. **30 for 40** is the only way to emancipate the millions of jobless women and black and chicano youth who stand condemned under capitalism to poverty and powerlessness. ... Using the methods of labor; strikes, sitdowns, plant occupations, we can take the jobs by force! **30 Hours Work for 40 Hours Pay! No Layoffs! Jobs for All!**

—This lawsuit doesn't even address the most burdensome oppression faced by women workers, and that is the care of their children. ... **We need company-paid childcare services!** Again, no court will grant it, we must take it.

—Last, but most important is this: the major obstacle to a fight against company discrimination and unemployment is our own do-nothing union bureaucracy. A program to fight the auto companies demands a struggle within the UAW to throw out our weak-kneed pro-company union officials. This anti-union lawsuit is a *substitute* for the necessary task of organizing the membership to dump the bureaucrats. The UAW

Militant Caucus has consistently opposed this dangerous strategy of suing the union. We counterpose the fight to build a new union leadership, based on a firm program of class struggle against the auto companies—a program capable of winning over and uniting all sectors of the union membership. There is no other way. There are no shortcuts to this strategic task—it cannot be done by running to the bosses' government....

Stanley, Casey and other supporters of the *Call* along with the rest of the fake-radicals (Resistance, Auto-workers United to Fight) have never done anything to organize Fremont GM workers in 6 years except to sue the union and suck up to the union bureaucrats. Although they claim to stand for changing the union mis-leadership, in fact they have pursued a policy of "left-center coalition" with one or another wing of the local union bureaucracy....

More than anything, fake-radicals crave appointments to office and committee titles after their names as a shortcut to winning authority. In return they implicitly agree not to publicly criticize the pro-company bureaucrats who are their benefactors, much less organize to throw them out. ... The policies of the fake-radicals serve to build illusions in the government and to strengthen the pro-company, pro-Democratic Party union leadership that is the main obstacle in turning the UAW into a fighting union.

We of the UAW Militant Caucus have no such illusions in the bureaucracy. We believe the membership will rise up in a fight for its own interests and dump this rotten leadership in the process. Our caucus aims to build a new leadership in the UAW based on a program of class struggle against the auto companies. Join us. ■

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# Labor Militant Fights Secret Service Harassment

On July 16, 1979, the United States Secret Service invaded the floor of the National Convention of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). They seized Jane Margolis, an elected delegate from San Francisco, and dragged her from the convention floor—all to prevent her from speaking against the anti-labor policies of Jimmy Carter. Through her attorney, Charles Garry, Margolis has filed suit against the Secret Service for violation of her constitutional rights. The suit seeks damages in excess of \$1 million. It challenges in principle the government's interference in and attempts to politically control the trade union movement.

## Jane Margolis Vs. The Secret Service: A Campaign To Defend Free Speech And The Independence Of Labor

Delegate Jane Margolis, an Executive Board member of Local 9410, had been elected to represent thousands of CWA members. Unlike Carter and the Secret Service, she was on the convention floor by right. Yet she was forcibly dragged from the hall, denied legal counsel, handcuffed, interrogated, and threatened with imprisonment. The Secret Service alleged receiving a report that she was a "threat to the life of the President." However, the agents who arrested Jane Margolis did not even bother to search her. They were more interested in examining her notes for an intended denunciation of the anti-labor policies of the Carter administration.

The questions of a local newsman who witnessed Margolis' detention, combined with protests from the



Jon P. Fishback

**Secret Service goons drag Margolis from CWA convention, July 1979.**

convention floor and a threatened walkout by some delegates, forced the Secret Service to release Margolis. Within a week of the convention, 700 members of Local 9410 had signed telegrams and petitions protesting the White House's heavy-handed action.

The "crime" of Jane Margolis, in the eyes of the Secret Service, was her vocal and militant defense of her union and opposition to the wage-freezing program of Carter. Her intention to speak against the President was known and expected. Margolis had been a delegate at the 1978 CWA Convention, where she spoke in opposition to CWA support for "strikebreakers, anti-labor politicians, Jimmy Carter who brought the Taft-Hartley against the miners' strike...." In 1979, she was elected as a delegate on a program calling for a national phone strike to "Smash Carter's Wage Freeze" and save phone workers' jobs.

## Jane Margolis: Eight Years As A Union Activist

Jane Margolis is a steward and Executive Board member in CWA Local 9410, San Francisco, and has served on the Executive Board of Local 9415, Oakland. She has been a leader of the Militant Action Caucus (MAC) in CWA for seven years. MAC is a group of CWA members who seek to lead their union with a fighting program. Margolis, as a leader of MAC, advocates ending labor's subservience to the twin parties of the corporations, declaring "Not a dime, not a vote, to the strikebreaking Democrats and Republicans." She has campaigned for union action against the apartheid-style search and seizure of black San Franciscans during

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