

Women and Revolution



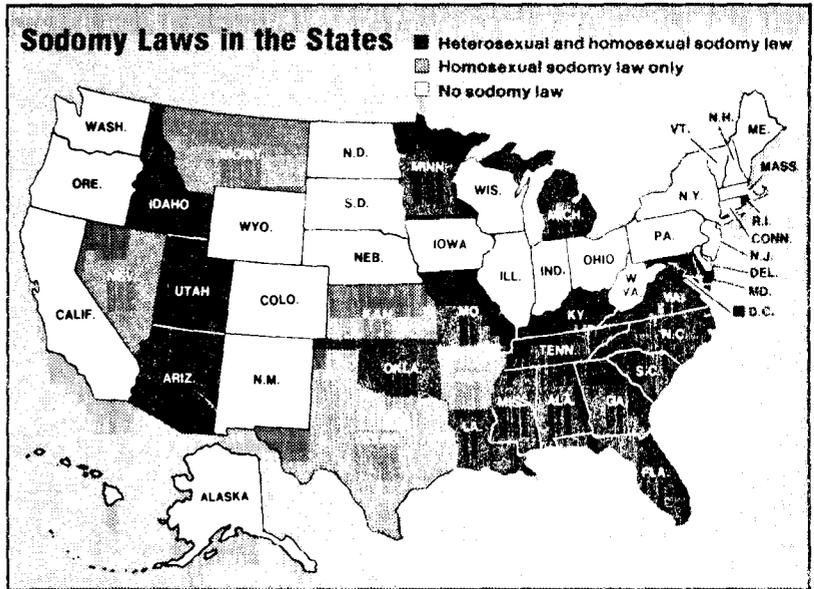
Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

50¢

Defend Busing, Abortion, Privacy! Meese Police Target Everybody



Workers Vanguard



New York Times

Government out of the bedroom! New York City demonstration July 1 protests Supreme Court decision upholding reactionary state sodomy laws (map, right).

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Letters

Neandertal Man: Friends We'd Like to Have

We print below correspondence on subjects the W&R editorial board has been thinking about lately.

17 October 1986

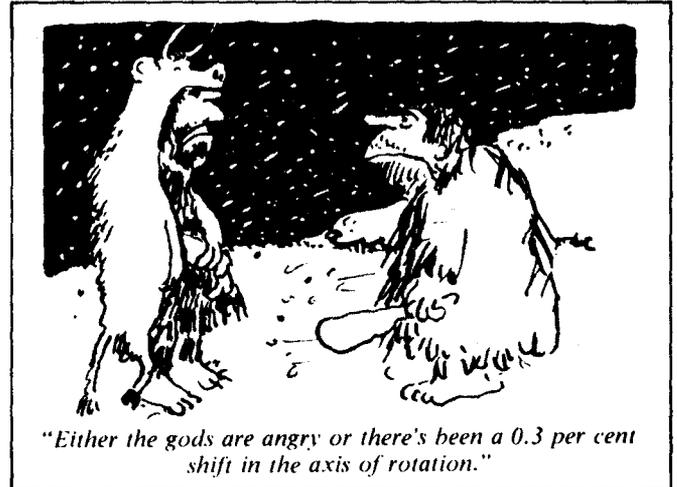
Workers Vanguard

Dear comrades,

In our article "Apartheid Capitalism Murders Black Miners" (WV No. 412, 26 September) we refer, quite rightly, to the barbaric and philistine character of Reagan and his gang. However, when we write of the "neanderthal political representatives in the White House," we are insulting one of our most interesting and attractive forebears.

Our Ice Age ancestor has been depicted as an ape-like, shambling brute ever since the first fossil remains were found in a cave in the Neander Valley near Düsseldorf in 1856. He got a bad name because nobody at the time wanted to admit that such a specimen could be the predecessor of the "racially superior" European Victorians, or in fact that any human could have been older than 4004 B.C. It took a mass of fossil evidence and the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* to get even the scientists of the middle 19th century to acknowledge that the origins of man predated the Biblical creation.

Neandertal man walked quite as well as we do, cared for his sick and old, buried his dead. To the extent he was anatomically different from modern man, it was to a purpose—although exactly what purpose is still a hotly debated question. His heavier bone structure made it possible to kill huge animals with only handheld spears; the giant brow ridge and protruding jaw probably facilitated the use of a more robust chewing apparatus and may have also been an adaptation to the cold climate; the longer and thinner pelvic



"Either the gods are angry or there's been a 0.3 per cent shift in the axis of rotation."

Austin/New Scientist

structure widened the birth canal, perhaps allowing the females to carry for eleven months rather than nine. In any case, all agree that Neandertal man was ideally suited for life in Europe in the last glaciation, a claim that cannot be made for any other hominid. As the eminent Finnish paleontologist Björn Kurtén noted in his collection of essays *How To Deep-Freeze a Mammoth*:

"Neandertal man is thus a very complicated being. On the one hand a fierce carnivore, on the other a being filled with love for his own and wonder about the mysteries of his world. In any case, something different from, and much more, than the savage cave man of popular literature."

Present day creationists of Reagan's ilk would no doubt prefer we keep Neandertal man in his Alley Oop comic cave-man closet. But one must think, while evolution has rendered a different verdict, that if we had Neandertal man around today, we'd like them as friends. In any event, if we're looking for a prehistoric analogy for the current arrogant, backward and crazed servants of the American ruling class, perhaps we could call them something closer to the truth: degenerated and depraved Cro-Magnons.

Comradely,
Women and Revolution
Editorial Board

* * * * *

Prometheus Research Library
14 November 1985

Institute of Human Origins
2453 Ridge Road
Berkeley, California 94709

Dear Sirs:

The recent special issue of *National Geographic* devoted to human origins happened to show the skull

Women and Revolution

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Commission for Work Among Women

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express the editorial viewpoint.

of an early hominid with the bone punctured in the characteristic spacing of a panther or leopard of the time. A recent issue of the magazine of the Natural History Museum reported that panthers in South America remain a deadly threat to hunter-gatherers. This sort of observation has been recurrent in the literature for a long time.

It would appear that there may well be two implications. One is that our forebears may well have experienced predation very heavily or even principally in the hands of these middling big and sometimes nocturnal cats. And, two, more interestingly, that there may be another and far more reciprocal side to the early man/canine alliance. Usually we are told that the evolving dog helped man in the hunt. Mayhap adjacent semi-domesticated canine packs protected men from the bigger cats, especially at night.

It would be interesting to know, if the evidence ever comes up, which came first to proto-mankind, fire or canine collaboration.

Very truly yours,
James M. Robertson



The Brover Family

The comrades of the Spartacist League extend our deepest condolences to Charles Brover and Kay Brover on the tragic death of their daughter, Molly, killed at age 17 when she was struck by a car on 26 July 1986. Charlie Brover was a central contributor to the work of the party for many years. Throughout their work with us, including Kay's membership on the editorial board of *Women and Revolution*, and Charlie's continuing work as co-chairman of the Partisan Defense Committee, many of us were privileged to get to know Molly and her sister Alice as they were growing up. Those of us who knew her feel keenly her tragic death.

For Free Abortion on Demand! Hands Off Dr. Morgentaler!

On September 24, Dr. Henry Morgentaler was arrested by Canadian police once again, together with his associates Dr. Robert Scott and Nikki Colodny, all of them rounded up at their Toronto homes. This persecution of a heroic man is gratuitously vicious: Morgentaler is *still* facing charges from a previous arrest. Along with his associates, he is out on bail, charges on hold, while prosecutors await a Supreme Court decision in the overturn by the Ontario Court of Appeals of his November 1984 acquittal.

For over 13 years Dr. Morgentaler has been the target of the most vicious state persecution. Morgentaler has put his livelihood and his very life on the line fighting for a woman's fundamental right to abortion against Canada's reactionary laws. He has faced four jury trials on criminal charges of "conspiring to commit a miscarriage," which carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. All four times he has been acquitted.

But this has not stayed the hand of successive governments, federal and provincial. In 1976 in Quebec, immediately on the heels of a jury acquittal, Morgentaler was thrown in jail for ten months, where he suffered a heart attack. Since opening abortion clinics in Toronto and Manitoba three years ago, the 62-year-old doctor and his staff have been subjected to repeated arrests. Both Tory and Liberal governments in Ontario and the ruling right-wing social democrats of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in Manitoba have sent rampaging cops against Morgentaler's clinics, where they have confiscated equipment and medical records.

This vindictive state persecution is combined with a campaign of terror by anti-abortion fanatics. Filthy anti-Semitism against the Polish-born Jewish doctor, a survivor of Hitler's death camps, is the rallying cry of these Moral Majority shock troops. Every day for two years they have surrounded the Toronto clinic, chanting "Killer" and "Auschwitz," forcing patients to walk a gauntlet of abuse, harassment and terror. These bible-thumping bigots, who "respect life" about as much as the nightriding terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan, have in their sights not only women, but every minority and every working-class gain, from unions to the Russian Revolution. The defense of Dr. Morgentaler is a touchstone in the defense of the most basic democratic rights and elementary human decency against the rampant social reaction flourishing in the climate of Cold War II.

We urge you to contribute to the defense of this courageous man and the doctors, nurses and staff at his clinics who have taken a determined stance in defense of women's rights. Contributions can be sent to: Pro-Choice Defense Fund, 238 Davenport Road, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1S6. ■

In Defense of Science, For Separation of Church and State

Spartacist Amicus Briefs

Taking its cue from the White House pulpit and the fundamentalist Christian right, the government is waging war on basic First Amendment rights of separation of church and state, freedom of religious worship and right of political association. The Spartacist League, a Marxist organization, and the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle non-sectarian legal defense organization in accordance with the political views of the SL, have intervened in the legal arena in defense of these fundamental rights.

On August 18 the SL and PDC filed an *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") brief in the U.S. Supreme Court against the teaching of biblical "creationism" in the public schools. The brief was filed on behalf of the Louisiana Board of Education in its opposition to the State of Louisiana's "Balanced-Treatment Act" mandating the teaching of so-called "creation-science" whenever scientific evolution is taught. The SL and PDC have joined many other organizations and prominent scientists in opposing the Louisiana law, which is a prototype for similar legislation in numerous states. At issue in this case currently before the Supreme Court, the brief states, "is the preservation of separation of church and state, the gains of the Enlightenment, and the education of future generations." This legal

document discusses the methodology by which the creationists peddle their pseudo-science to wage war on the gains of the American bourgeois revolution of 1776 and the defeat of slavery in the Civil War, and explores the development of these constitutional rights through social struggle.

In 1983, the Spartacist League had filed another *amicus* brief in the Supreme Court, this one in opposition to the government's attack on Sun Myung Moon, head of the "Unification Church," who was convicted of tax evasion and fraud through the use of a legal device by which the government declared that assets held by Moon and his group were taxable personal property. Though the Moonies are among our most bitter political enemies, we felt obliged to submit our brief opposing the ugly spectre of government intrusion into constitutionally protected activities. Moon is a Korean who says he's god, thereby deeply offending white Christian America. So the government denied the Moonies the protections afforded religious organizations, despite Moon's credentials as a right-wing ideologue and financier of counterrevolutionary terror around the world.

Reflected in the Moon case, which the Supreme Court refused to hear, is the government's arrogant declaration of sole authority to determine the legitimacy of a religious organization. The government's treatment of unincorporated associations as legal nonentities presents a grave threat to established rights

No. 83-1242

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States
OCTOBER TERM, 1983

SUN MYUNG MOON and TAKERU KANAYAMA,
Petitioners.

—v—

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES
COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

**BRIEF FOR THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE AS
AMICUS CURIAE**

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Order Yours Now!

- In Defense of Science: Spartacist League/Partisan Defense Committee brief against teaching of biblical "creationism" in the public schools, filed 1986.
- For Separation of Church and State: Spartacist League brief opposing government attack on Sun Myung Moon and intrusion into constitutionally protected activities, filed 1983.

\$4.00 each

Make payable/mail to:
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New York, NY 10116

No. 85-1513

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
OCTOBER TERM, 1985

EDWIN W. EDWARDS, in his official capacity as Governor of Louisiana, WILLIAM W. GUSTE, JR., in his official capacity as Attorney General of Louisiana, LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, and THOMAS C. CLAUSEN, in his official capacity as Superintendent of Education of Louisiana,

Appellants,

—v—

DON AGUILARD, LOUISIANA BOARD OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION, ORLEANS PARISH SCHOOL BOARD et al.,

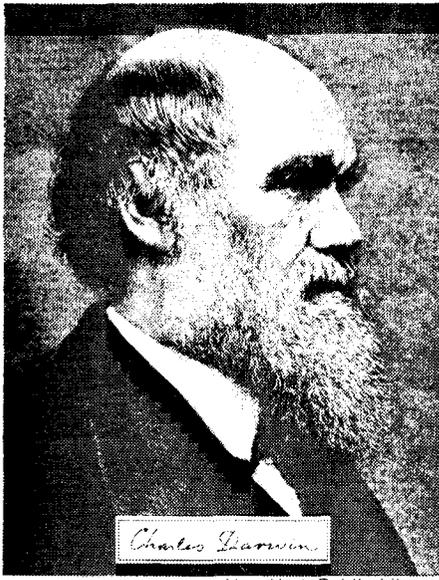
Appellees,

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT

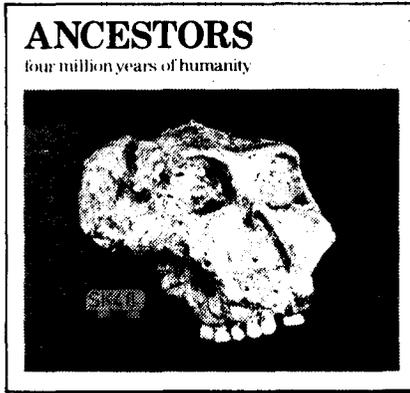
**BRIEF FOR THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE AND
PARTISAN DEFENSE COMMITTEE AS
AMICUS CURIAE ON BEHALF OF APPELLEES**

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Charles Darwin
New York Public Library



ANCESTORS
four million years of humanity



Musée des Antiquités Nationales

Where do we come from? Scientific study, not religious bigotry, provides answers. Charles Darwin, founder of science of evolution. Skull of *Australopithecus robustus*, two-million-year-old branch on our family tree, and cave art from Upper Paleolithic epoch (35,000 to 11,000 years ago), when Neandertals and Cro-Magnons intersected in Europe (from NYC Museum of Natural History exhibits).

of voluntary groups organized for every kind of noncommercial purpose from the religious to the political to the recreational.

Excerpts from the SL and PDC brief opposing biblical "creationism" in the classrooms are printed below:

* * * * *

A tidal wave of enforced intolerance is sweeping America. Government is pandering to the religious fundamentalist movement, politically bellicose with its program of action to rejuvenate the "moral fiber" of a demoralized and economically declining nation. Simultaneously, in the current social climate in the United States the terrorist ultra-right flourishes as seen in the bombing of abortion clinics and Ku Klux Klan mobilizations and attacks on blacks and Asians. Thus the attacks on the First Amendment and the growing reactionary terrorist threats are reflections of the tendency towards state bonapartism, part and parcel of the drive towards war.

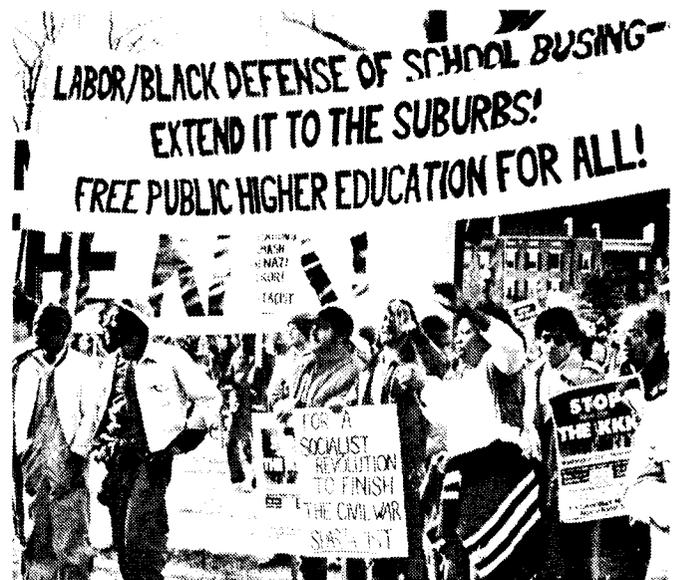
The gains of the American bourgeois democratic revolution of 1776 and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, codifying the defeat of slavery during the Civil War, were progressive developments in the history of mankind. They are part of the outcome of a long and complicated, and in the case of the Civil War, bloody struggle during which feudal fetters on political freedom, economic freedom, religious freedom and scientific freedoms were broken or transcended.

War has been declared on "secular humanism"... To the fundamentalists and Moral Majority everything from atheism to the United Nations, the writings of Hawthorne and Hemingway, from sex education to the theory of evolution are anathema as examples of secular humanism. Evolution, the science of man's "descent with modification" is the particular object of the fundamentalist religious attack.... To the organizations here filing as *amicus curiae*, the study of scientific evolution is fundamental to man's quest for a materialist understanding of our world and human society, not

the least because it provides material evidence that we are all part of the same human race, definitively destroying the myths of racial superiority.

As Marxists, *amicus curiae* are profoundly committed to education and knowledge. One of the hallmarks of any struggle for social emancipation is the struggle of the oppressed against the internal, mental stripes left by the master's whip: the fight for knowledge and for access to the culture hoarded by the privileged classes.

The Balanced-Treatment Act will inhibit the teaching of evolution, intellectually impoverish future generations of children and rob them of a scientific understanding. Whether or not a creator or some other religious or mystical power had anything to do with the history of life on our planet is a matter for the individual as his own private beliefs and not a matter for the public schools. ■



Workers Vanguard

Banner at 27 November 1982 Labor/Black Mobilization that stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in Washington, D.C.

Defend Busing, Abortion, Privacy!

Meese Police Target Everybody

The American ruling class today is on a rampage to "clean up" America. They've unleashed the Meese police to poke and pry into what they see as an unruly and sullen population's degenerate practices sapping the will of this imperialist nation to go out and smash Soviet Russia. Drugs, pornography, homosexuality, even "secular humanism" and teaching basic science are the new "enemy within," say our rulers, and they'd better be rooted out—at least among us masses, so we can be cheerful, obedient, sober and god-fearing cannon fodder for their wars.

So they're going after everybody they suspect of not being in sympathy with a white, Christian fundamentalist, English-speaking America where "deviance" will not be tolerated. If you're working-class, black, Asian, Hispanic, Jewish, female, gay, too old, too young, in bad health, or even if you just enjoy looking at a dirty movie or smoking a joint now and then, Reagan's got you in his sights. It's a shotgun blast of sinister dimensions that's reaching even into the most private and personal aspects of American lives.

And where the arm of the state does not directly reach, Reagan's policies are a green light to the terrorists of the Ku Klux Klan and the anti-abortion bombers. In this deeply racist society, blacks are in the bull's eye of Reagan's target: just as they're the last hired, the first fired, they're the first to feel the cop's club, the first to see the burning crosses of the KKK. Reagan began his presidency with the smashing of the striking air controllers union PATCO, an overwhelmingly white, elitist union—a message to any would-be challenger of the "Reagan revolution" of what lay ahead. If he would do it to PATCO, what would he do to the rest of us? For

blacks, the answer came in fire and blood: the signature of the Reagan years is written all over the hideous firebombing of the black MOVE commune in Philadelphia that murdered eleven men, women and children.

Bigots' Rampage

The fundamental contradiction in this society is that between the interests of the working people and their exploiting bosses, though this sometimes takes pretty peculiar forms. From smashing PATCO and grinding blacks in ghetto poverty, our rulers have gone on to rampage against drugs, sex and sin. In true witchhunting spirit they've even dragged in susceptible youth, as in the sordid story of the little California fink teenager who turned in her parents to the cops for using cocaine and marijuana and then got slapped into a state home. Two summers ago similar hysteria was whipped up over "child sexual abuse" in daycare centers, leading to modern-day Salem witch trials across the country. According to Reaganaut stalwart William Safire, a Los Angeles 11-year-old called the cops when she saw a marijuana plant in the backyard, and was also removed from her home "lest the parents speak harshly to her." This use of children as finks and spies on their families recalls stories of Hitler Youth turning their parents in to the Gestapo. Even Safire, who's confessed to buying *Penthouse* once in a while, finds this going a bit too far. But like they say in Texas, "You brung her, you dance with her." There's a genuine consensus in ruling circles on this crackdown, the private predilections of individual bourgeois types notwithstanding. The Democrats are if possible even more rabid advocates of the

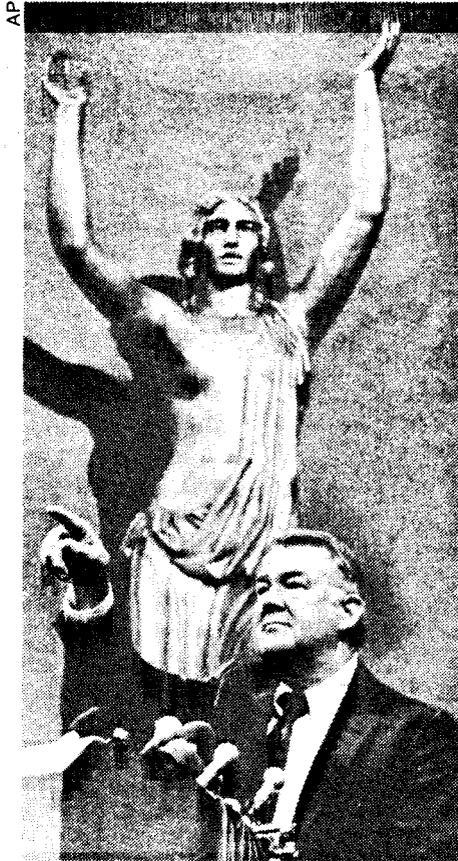


Durand/Sipa



Workers Vanguard

Cop terror invades home in Miami drug bust (left). SL and Labor Black League protest NYC cop rampage, Brooklyn, September 12 (right).



Reagan's top cop Edwin Meese reports on pornography.

anti-drug hysteria, while they feed racism and chauvinism through their campaign for anti-Japanese protectionism.

This isn't the first period of state-enforced social reaction in U.S. history. Following World War I, the U.S. tried to smash the triumphant Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 through invasion. This failed, and they were not able to stifle the inspiring effects of the revolution on workers and the oppressed the world over. So the U.S. rulers went after striking workers and Reds hard in the vicious "Palmer Raids." Prohibition, imposed in 1919, was a gigantic failure: its only effect was to create the wealth of the Mafia (and Kennedys). On the heels of the Palmer Raids came the reactionary charge against schoolteacher John Scopes in Tennessee for teaching Charles Darwin's scientific theory of evolution. Nativist racism was whipped up and KKK lynchings spread across the South: the parallels to the present are unmistakable.

After World War II, though the U.S. won the war, so did the Soviet Union, frustrating the U.S. rulers' desire to extend their system of exploitation around the globe. U.S. imperialism's invasion of Korea to militarily "roll back Communism" was a direct challenge to the USSR. The domestic witchhunts led by Senator Joseph McCarthy were for a time more successful in isolating and smashing domestic opposition to the U.S. rulers' attempt to assume the global imperialist mantle. Blacks and women had been pulled into the war machine and industrial production in huge numbers, but this capitalist state had no intention of allowing them any real social equality. At the end of World War II, women

were told to get out and return to the home, while Jim Crow segregation remained intact across the South. The anti-communist witchhunt was combined with enforcing extreme social conformity, an anti-homosexual witchhunt and "The Family That Prays Together Stays Together" sloganeering. It took the civil rights movement (in which black soldiers who went through World War II and Korea played an important part) and the Vietnam War to inspire a new generation of social struggle.

Today's attempts to regiment American society have their roots in the Vietnam War, in which the Vietnamese workers and peasants inflicted a most satisfying defeat on U.S. imperialism. Since Vietnam the American population has been cynical about the lying government and suspicious of moves toward more such imperialist adventures. It's the need to break this "Vietnam syndrome" which is behind the current flag-waving, nauseating Rambo macho "new patriotism" and its inevitable attendant vice squads.

Today's Reaganite/Moral Majority campaign to dictate repressive social values is eerily reminiscent of Hitler's ravings in *Mein Kampf*. The Nazi dictator attacked Weimar Germany as a "hot-house for sexual ideas and stimulations," and whipped up the AIDS hysteria of his day in pages of ranting against combatting syphilis as "the task of the nation." He proclaimed: "This cleansing of our culture must be extended to nearly all fields. Theater, art, literature, cinema, press, posters and window displays must be cleansed.... Public life must be freed from the stifling perfume of our modern eroticism." Hitler in power slaughtered six million Jews, a million leftists, hundreds of thousands of homosexuals and Gypsies, and launched a war against the "Bolshevik Anti-Christ" (Soviet Russia) that resulted in 20 million Soviet dead—and the destruction of Hitler's "Thousand Year Reich."

Today Reagan wants to carry out Hitler's program against the USSR, but this time with nuclear weapons—and it's a damn good thing that the USSR has the military might to stay his hand. Despite the bureaucratic



Columbia Pictures

1956 Cold War-era movie promo for George Orwell's 1984. Today, sinister Reagan/Meese police invade America's bedrooms.

counterrevolution led by Stalin, which must be overturned by workers political revolution in the USSR, the Soviet Union today retains the fundamental social gains made possible by the 1917 Revolution's smashing of capitalist exploitation. It remains today the urgent duty of American socialists to defend the USSR against the Republican and Democratic parties' war drive.

Moral Monsters

Surely the people running today's attempt at a witchhunt are pretty peculiar. We've got a U.S. president who literally believes in the biblical story of Armageddon. This summer's Supreme Court decision upholding state laws against "sodomy" (basically defined as anything except one legally married penis penetrating its spousal vagina), which gave the state the go-ahead to invade America's bedrooms, relied explicitly on the "Judeo-Christian tradition," a blatant assault on the separation of church and state. Every gain of America's two bourgeois-democratic revolutions—the colonial war against British rule and the great Civil War which freed the slaves—is under attack by the government apparatus with its police-state appetites.

The Justice Department ruled this summer that employers may fire at will anyone they "fear" may have the deadly AIDS disease. This horrible combination of sex panic and lynch law is fueling ultraright terror squads—and will certainly make finding a cure for the AIDS epidemic much harder. In California, the crackpot ultraright Lyndon LaRouche group got a referendum on the ballot for November calling on the state to quarantine millions of "AIDS carriers" (i.e., gays), while banning thousands of workers from jobs and keeping kids out of schools. AIDS is caused by a virus, not by sex. But the Reaganites have the vindictive, superstitious mindset of the Middle Ages, looking to god's plagues to punish their enemies. Degenerate capitalism has come a long way down since the Age of Enlightenment, capitalism's revolutionary years in which the eradication of medieval superstition by scientific knowledge began. Today they're going after basic education and science, too, as in the Moral Majorityites' attempts to impose the teaching of biblical "creationism" in the

public schools (see "In Defense of Science," page 4).

While Reagan's cabinet holds up their little vials of urine as proof of moral purity to ward off sin, his top cops seem to exhibit a peculiar fascination with the far side of pornography. Meese commissioned a \$734,000 study of *Playboy*, *Penthouse* and *Hustler* by one Dr. Judith Reisman, who stated, "Shaved genitalia has emerged as a troublesome new phenomenon" (*Penthouse Forum*, March 1986). The Meese porn commission's hairsplitting efforts to find the cutting edge separating "bad" hard-core porn from okay erotica (a preoccupation too of right-wing feminists) generated a lot of media ridicule this summer, since everybody knows the difference: like Lenny Bruce said, soft-core is what gives you a soft-on. Nonetheless, Meese's dirty-minded commissioners issued a mammoth report including 262 pages of hard-core descriptions, titles and even some transcripts of every raunchy magazine and video tape they could find.

This ridiculous search for the ultimate sex sin is dangerously hypocritical, quite in the spirit of the early Victorian Mrs. Grundys, whose beliefs were summed up in a British parliamentary debate by Lord Sandon: "The recreations of the rich affect themselves only, whilst the recreations of the poor affect society in general." About the only tape Meese didn't catalogue was the one supposedly showing Reagan's pal Al Bloomingdale and various Reagan appointees having sex with Bloomingdale's mistress Vicki Morgan—but then, Morgan was murdered four years ago and the infamous alleged tape mysteriously disappeared. We guess they thought it was just too tasteless to go into Bloomingdale's private practices. Indeed, so it is—but that goes for us poor folks too. Meese's porn commission blackmailed big chains like 7-Eleven to drop sex magazines from their huge networks of stores across rural America. It remains to be seen, however, if the American people really want to turn over their cable TV and video tapes to the Meese police. After all, according to industry statistics, three million more "adult" video tape transactions took place in 1984 than the number of alleged votes that re-elected Reagan.

Terror Against Blacks, Workers

The latest variant of the Reaganites' attempt to instill social fear and conformity is the attack on drugs. This witchhunt is intensifying precisely because so far the U.S. population hasn't bought the anti-sex hysteria. The U.S. rulers' "drug wars" fever, besides being blatantly unconstitutional, is also sheer hypocrisy: practically every one of their historic Third World dictator puppets—Batista, Somoza, Duvalier, Stroessner—is a big-time drug trafficker. From Vietnam to the Nicaraguan *contras* to Afghanistan today, the CIA is the world's biggest sponsor of the drug business. Reagan sends U.S. troops to invade Bolivia and Drug Enforcement Administration narcs to maraud in Mexico. It's got nothing to do with his "drug-busters" rhetoric and everything to do with reasserting the right of the U.S. imperialists to be the bloody cops of the world.

Domestically the anti-drug witchhunt is a cover for Meese's cops to sweep through the ghettos terrorizing blacks and an excuse to enforce labor fear and



W&R Photo

New York City Gay Pride Day, June 1986: Spartacists protest Reagan/Meese sex witchhunt.

Drop the Charges Against Pamela Monson! State Vendetta Tortures Mother

The terrifying, wanton cruelty of life in Reagan's America has claimed its latest victim: Pamela Rae Stewart Monson is facing criminal charges in San Diego after the tragic death of her infant son. She began hemorrhaging at home the day of the birth. Her son was born with brain damage and died six weeks later in the hospital. Now she's accused of allegedly failing to summon medical help fast enough when she began to bleed! The San Diego cops wanted to try her for *murder*. Instead prosecutor Harry M. Elias is dragging her through a monstrous, unprecedented court case that could put her in prison for a year. She's already spent six days in jail because she couldn't make the \$10,000 bail.

Monson is being charged with child neglect under a 1926 law that deems a fetus a person. The case reeks

with Moral Majorityite totalitarianism. The prosecutor has made vicious moralistic assaults on her, including claiming that she had sex with her husband late in pregnancy and that the infant's blood reportedly showed traces of amphetamines and marijuana. Her lawyer has denounced this "prenatal police patrol" and "nightmarish intrusion" into her life. American Civil Liberties Union spokesman Janet Benshoof added, "The next thing you know women will be prosecuted because they failed to leave their homes because their men were smoking and smoking isn't good for fetuses" (*New York Times*, 9 October 1986). We suppose they will now start rounding up every teenage mother whose babies are all too often born too early, too small and too malnourished to live.

In the name of "pro-life" the state is destroying Pamela Monson's life. In the name of "preserving the family" they're destroying the Monson family—her husband and her two children she lives with. The government doesn't give a damn about poor mothers or babies' lives—spiraling infant mortality rates in inner city ghettos are the direct result of savage cuts in welfare and health programs. And let us not forget the five-year-old black child Patrick Mason who was wantonly gunned down in his home by an Orange County cop, and whose mother was also charged with child neglect. Pamela Monson is innocent—it's the monsters in the White House who are the baby killers!



Pamela
Monson

discipline in the workplace. While KKK firebombings against blacks are on the rise and the inner cities continue to decay, every capitalist politician from Reagan on down to Jesse Jackson is preaching the grotesque lie that the oppressed are to blame for their situation!

The trade unions, too, are being heavily targeted by the Meese police. Drug raids and urine tests bring the cops into the workplace and provide employers with a handy excuse for harassment, intimidation and firings. This drug witchhunt is a gross violation of the constitutional statute against invasion of privacy and illegal search and seizure. The capitalists have run basic industry into the ground, throwing whole sections of the working class on the scrap heap. Now they'd have you believe falling productivity is the fault of doped-up workers. If that's true, they might look to their yuppie wheeler-dealer brokers on Wall Street, who get high as kites as they loot, trade and raid industry after industry.

One of the particularly insidious aspects of this drug witchhunt is that, unlike the sex and porn bombast, it appeals to many blacks' and workers' justifiable fears. The ghetto Democrats who are mobilizing against crack are appealing to those who hate lumpenism, hate the

degrading, fearful lives they lead in their neighborhoods where they worry that they or their children will be blown away by some junkie. For them it's not a question of simply being able to smoke some pot while looking at *Playboy* with a lover, as it is for college students. But Reagan is not interested in ending the despair of lives shattered by drugs in the ghetto—it's fine with him if black people die from overdoses! The rulers' only "answer" to blacks' aspirations for a decent education and future is to abolish school integration through smashing busing programs, and to send cops and narcs to terrorize black communities. Their "answer" to exploding teenage pregnancy rates is to abolish sex education and contraceptive programs, while abandoning a whole new generation to malnutrition, illiteracy and hopelessness. Meanwhile, Reagan's embrace of the "Right to Lifers" gives a green light to the vicious abortion clinic bombers.

Speaking in Harlem the summer of 1985, Spartacist candidate for NYC mayor Marjorie Stamberg addressed the need for a revolutionary program to eliminate the loathsome conditions which breed drug addiction:

"Our starting point is that we cannot reform, in any kind of piecemeal way, the system—the whole system is



UPI

October 1986: ILA strikers at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey, stop scabs on the docks.

set up to exploit and oppress the working people and minorities. We need a socialist revolution that overturns the whole basis of the oppression in this society. You see, you're going to want an education if you have a job out there. If you don't have it, and you have no possibility of doing anything, except being drafted into the army and being cannon fodder in some damn war against your class brothers in Nicaragua or Vietnam, what life is there for you? That is what we want to change."

Our underlying approach toward these questions was summed up in the Spartacist document *Youth, Class and Party* (1971):

"...we call for an end to all laws against what are known as 'crimes without victims' (e.g., prostitution, pornography, gambling, drug addiction, anti-liquor laws). In calling for an end to laws against 'crimes without victims' we do not believe that these practices should be a matter of indifference to the socialist movement. Rather we maintain that such practices should not be subject to the repressive arm of the bourgeois state, where they often serve as a source of police corruption and individual victimization. Widespread drug addiction and alcoholism sap the revolutionary energy of the working class and other sections of the oppressed. However, the social milieu producing widespread alcoholism and drug addiction should be fought through the moral authority of the proletarian socialist movement, and not through state coercion. Further, prostitution and drugs spawn a group of social parasites (pimps, pushers, etc.) who generally act as the shock troops of reaction in periods of intense social struggle. On the other hand, laws against gambling and various sexual practices reflect official puritanism allied to organized religion, which acts as an important ideological pillar of capitalism, convincing the masses there can be no happiness this side of the grave."

For Workers Revolution!

Basic human rights and social gains are not ideal abstractions—we know that every advance won was the product of struggle by the workers and oppressed against their capitalist masters. There is the will and appetite to fight back against American capitalism's attacks on working people and blacks. In early October, the International Longshoremen's Association East Coast port shutdown and strike flare-ups

across the country exposed a break in the pattern of Reagan reaction. As we stated in *Workers Vanguard* (No. 413, 10 October 1986):

"But today it looks like Reagan could be on the edge. A little over a year ago he shocked Americans by commemorating Nazi SS war criminals at Bitburg; now even most of Reagan's Republican Party has deserted him in overriding his veto of token sanctions imposed on Botha's apartheid South Africa. And with the Supreme Court headed by arch-bigot Rehnquist, one of the leading witchhunters behind the recent sodomy decision, even white middle-class Americans are worried about the sex police snooping around their bedrooms. Reagan and Rehnquist, Bitburg and Botha: a lot of people are plain fed up with the Reaganites and ready to say, screw you! And just when the bosses think it's lockout city, union struggles flare up on the East and West Coasts. The objective possibility exists to bring Reagan down through sharp class struggle, with the working class at the head of all the oppressed."

It is the stifling of militant class struggle which has allowed reactionary poison to spread in society generally. Time and again the conservative trade-union bureaucrats and the black Democratic Party front men for capitalism have tried to tie their constituencies to the capitalist system, selling out fight after fight. This can and must change—it's going to take revolutionary leadership to break the pattern of defeats shoved down the working people's throats by the gutless bureaucrats who support the capitalist system. Today, defense of the scientific, cultural and social achievements of civilization, from the Renaissance through the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions (including the French Revolution and the American Civil War) to the conquests of the proletarian October Revolution, is one inseparable task as the choice of socialism or barbarism starkly confronts mankind. ■

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Stop INS McCarthyite Deportation! Residency for Margaret Randall!

The Reagan/Meese thought police have struck again. On August 28 in El Paso, Texas, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) judge Martin F. Spiegel ruled that leftist author Margaret Randall is to be deported from the country of her birth because her writings "advocate the doctrines of world communism." This sinister government witchhunt, based on the McCarthyite 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, is part of a drive to regiment the U.S. population in the anti-Soviet war drive. The labor movement and all defenders of democratic rights must demand residency for Margaret Randall.

Randall, a professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, is the author of more than 40 books, many dealing with the struggles of women and Third World social revolutions against imperialism. She left the United States in 1961 and moved to Mexico City, marrying the poet Sergio Mondragón. In order to work, Randall acquired Mexican citizenship through her husband. When she advised the U.S. embassy of this fact, she says, "they literally renounced my American citizenship."

With Mondragón, Randall founded the bilingual literary magazine *El Corno Emplumado* (The Plumed Horn), which denounced the government slaughter of hundreds of protesters at Mexico City's Plaza de Tlatelolco in 1968. She was harassed by the police, and when paramilitary cops broke into her house, taking her passport at gunpoint, the government refused to issue her another. Randall went into hiding, sent her children to Cuba, and then joined them several months later, living there until 1981. After Somoza was overthrown, she was invited to Nicaragua where she conducted the interviews with women which are the basis of her book, *Sandino's Daughters*.

In 1984, Randall returned to Albuquerque on a visitor's visa. She is now married to an American citizen and one of her daughters is likewise a U.S. citizen, but her own application for resident alien status was denied last October by the INS. This ruling has now been upheld in court, and December 1 has been set as the deadline for Randall to leave the country, after which she will be subject to deportation. Randall's lawyers at the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) are appealing the decision.

INS judge Spiegel based his decision on Randall's alleged advocacy of "communism" in *Spirit of the People* (a book about the Vietnam War), *Cuban Women Now* and other books. Randall says, "I do not believe that I've advocated the doctrines of world communism in my writings," but adds, "what if I had?" (During a four-day hearing in March, the INS also wanted to know about Randall's once working in a gay bar, and posing as an artist's model some 25 years ago.) As Randall put it in an interview:

"I'm to be deported for having spelled America with three K's in the 1960s, for having called the Attica



Margaret Randall

Marilyn Humphries

prisoners 'my brothers' during that prison uprising, for being against U.S. policy in Southeast Asia and against U.S. policy in Central America today. These are the kind of things mentioned in the INS decision."

—*The North Star*, Spring 1986

The CCR and the ACLU filed a complaint in federal district court in October 1985 challenging the INS' refusal to grant Randall's resident visa. Other plaintiffs in the suit include PEN America Center and prominent liberal writers. In a telegram to the INS in April, the Partisan Defense Committee stated, "Vindictive apartheid-like exclusion from land of birth for opposition to U.S. imperialism evinces government assault on democratic and human rights. PDC demands permanent residency for writer Margaret Randall."

In Reagan's America there's plenty of room for anti-communist scum like the Nicaraguan contras, but none for those fleeing death squad terror in "free world" countries like El Salvador. Even among the world's many reactionary regimes, Reagan's America stands almost alone with Pinochet's Chile as a land where the native-born can be *stripped of their birthright* and deported for political opinions. Stop the witchhunt against Margaret Randall!

Protests should be sent to Alan C. Nelson, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Room 7100 Chester Arthur Building, 425 I Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20536. To contribute to the defense, send checks made out to "CCR-Randall Case" to the Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, New York, NY 10012. ■

—Adapted from *Workers Vanguard*
No. 411, 2 September 1986

Support the Partisan Defense Committee!

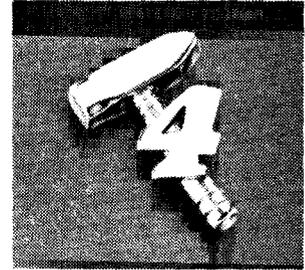
The Partisan Defense Committee is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal defense organization in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League. You've read about many causes and cases the PDC supports in *W&R*, including in this issue its joint filing with the SL of a brief against the teaching of biblical "creationism" in the classrooms. Recently, the PDC has begun publishing its own newsletter, *Class-Struggle Defense Notes*, which details its ongoing work. This includes sending monthly stipends to class-war prisoners, including those jailed for standing up to racist capitalist oppression, such as Ramona Africa of MOVE and former Black Panther leader Geronimo Pratt. To contribute, to become a regular sustainer, and to receive the PDC's newsletter, please write to: Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

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Fourier's Phalanx, Reich's Sex-Pol: The Trouble with Sexual Utopias

By Jack Shapiro

"It is a curious fact that with every great revolutionary movement the question of 'free love' comes in to the foreground. With one set of people as a revolutionary progress, as a shaking off of old traditional fetters, no longer necessary; with others as a welcome doctrine, comfortably covering all sorts of free and easy practices between man and woman," Frederick Engels noted in an article on the biblical "Book of Revelation" (printed in *Progress: A Monthly Magazine of Advanced Thought*, Vol. 1.2, 1883). Certainly the early, pre-Marxian socialists projected in elaborate detail what life, including sexual life, would be like in their ideal society of the future. The New Left of the 1960s, too, revived a radicalism centering on changing lifestyles. Herbert Marcuse, for example, criticized Marx as insufficiently radical for not directly linking the overthrow of capitalism to individual sexual fulfillment. Marx and Engels adamantly refused to engage in

speculation on this question, however, insisting that their position was essentially *negative*, aimed at eliminating economic and social coercion in personal relations. As Engels stated in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884):

"Thus, what we can conjecture at present about the regulation of sex relationships after the impending effacement of capitalist production is, in the main, of a negative character, limited mostly to what will vanish. But what will be added? That will be settled after a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in all their lives have had occasion to purchase a woman's surrender either with money or with any other means of social power; and of women who have never been obliged to surrender to any man out of any consideration other than that of real love, or to refrain from giving themselves to their beloved for fear of the economic consequences. Once such people appear, they will not care a rap about what we today think they should do. They will establish their own practice and their own public opinion, conformable therewith, on the practice of each individual—and that's the end of it."

This position was not a matter of intellectual modesty on Marx's or Engels' part. Rather it flowed organically from the dialectical materialist outlook. Under communism people will be genuinely and truly *free* to reshape their interpersonal relations. Of course, this freedom is not absolute. Man cannot transcend his biological make-up and relation to the natural environment. Communist man, too, will grow old and die. Neither can mankind sweep the slate totally clean and build society anew. Communist humanity will inherit for good and ill the accumulated cultural heritage of our species:

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."

—Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1851)

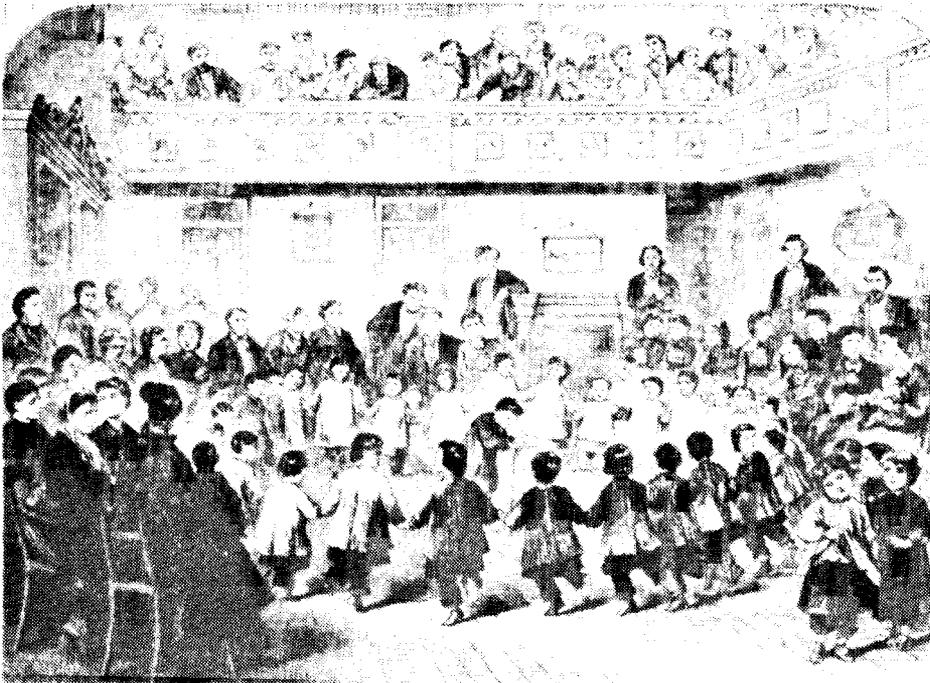
Nonetheless, men *do* make their own history, including the history of their sexual practices. We cannot know the sexual practices of communist society because these *will be determined* in the future. Any attempt to project, much less to prescribe, such sexual practices is an expression of attitudes, values and prejudices shaped by a repressive class society.

Consider two representative figures who sought to combine socialism with a positive program of sexual libertarianism: Charles Fourier and Wilhelm Reich. One of the greatest of the early socialist thinkers, Fourier developed a program for an ideal community—



New York Public Library

Charles Fourier



Utopian socialists like Fourier inspired communal experiments including Oneida Community in New York State, which practiced group marriage. Etching shows children dancing.

Bettmann Archive

the phalanx—which would gratify all human passions. Wilhelm Reich, as a member of the Austrian and then German Communist parties in the late 1920s-early 1930s, attempted to fuse Marx and Freud both in theory and in practice.

Fourier and Reich were passionate and often insightful in denouncing the sexual repressiveness of bourgeois society. Yet as soon as they sought to positively prescribe codes of presumably liberated social/sexual relations, they went off the rails. They believed they knew what “human nature” is, but their efforts to establish lifestyles appropriate for free men of the future only shows that Fourier and Reich each brought to the notion of “human nature” a lot of the ideological baggage of his own particular time and circumstances, shaped by repressive, class-divided society. Fourier’s phalanx, to eliminate sexual frustration, would institute mechanisms of sexual slavery. And Reich’s “non-repressive” society would have sexual activities monitored by a central agency of bureaucrats.

Fourier: A Utopia Based on Passionate Attraction

Fourier described himself as being “born and raised in the mercantile shops.” He existed in the netherworld of French commerce (traveling salesman, correspondence clerk for an American firm, unlicensed stockbroker). While never absolutely destitute, Fourier knew poverty. He lived in cheap travelers’ pensions, boarding houses, dingy apartments. He was a recluse and may well have been a life-long celibate. Added to his personal isolation was his political isolation. His first work calling for the total reorganization of society was published in 1808. For the next 20 years he was totally ignored, a prophet unhonored and unacknowledged. Only in the last decade of his life did Fourier attract a small band of devoted followers. Fourier’s was a lonely and miserable life. In his ideas of utopia one sees the pent-up longings of this deeply frustrated man. This

gives to his vision its passionate force and imaginative vividness. It also accounts for his fantastical and often downright weird ideas.

In this age of *Penthouse* and “adult” home videos, it is easy to be condescending toward old Fourier. Yet this neurotic dreamer was a towering figure in the struggle for social and sexual emancipation. Early in the 19th century it became apparent to those still committed to the ideals of the French Revolution that liberty, equality and fraternity were not compatible with private property in a competitive market economy. Fourier, the most incisive of the pioneer socialists, noted, “Philosophy was right to vaunt *liberty*; it is the foremost desire of all creatures. But philosophy forgot that in civilized society liberty is illusory if the common people lack wealth. When the wage-earning classes are poor, their independence is as fragile as a house without foundations” (quoted in Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu [Eds.], *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier* [1971]).

The status of women represented the most acute and manifest expression of the contradiction between capitalist society and its own ideals. The importance Fourier gave to women’s liberation is exemplified in his famous statement:

“Social progress and changes of period are brought about by virtue of the progress of women toward liberty, and social retrogression occurs as a result of a diminution in the liberty of women. . . . In summary, the extension of the privileges of women is the fundamental cause of all social progress.”

—*Ibid.*

At a time when women were universally regarded and treated as nothing more than babymakers, Fourier championed not only complete social and political equality for women but also their right to sexual fulfillment. He was uniquely responsible for making the demand for the liberation of women from the oppressive nuclear family an integral part of the

socialist program, a penetrating insight which the young Marx and Engels embraced. At a time when fathers exercised total authority over their families, especially their daughters, Fourier spoke for the freedom of children.

Even today reading Fourier would give Jerry Falwell or Pope John Paul Wojtyla apoplexy. He exposed the sexual boredom of monogamous marriage with a hitherto unheard-of savagery:

"This is the normal way of life among the mass of the people. Dullened, morose couples who quarrel all day long are reconciled to each other on the bolster because they cannot afford two beds, and contact, the sudden pin-prick of the senses, triumphs for a moment over conjugal satiety. If this is love it is the most material and the most trivial."

—quoted in Frank Manuel,
The Prophets of Paris (1962)

He flayed the petty tyranny of the patriarchal family, especially the stifling of the sexual needs of children and adolescents:

"The children at the age of puberty think only of escaping the insipidity of the household: the young girl lives only for an evening when she is at a ball; the young man, preoccupied with parties, returns to his paternal home as to a place of exile. As to the children below the age of puberty, they are not satisfied except when they manage to escape the eye of the father and the eye of the tutor to enjoy everything that is forbidden to them."

—quoted in Nicholas V. Riasanovsky,
The Teaching of Charles Fourier (1969)

Fourier's Phalanx: Outlawing Sexual Frustration

Fourier's answer to the repressiveness of bourgeois civilization was a system called Harmony, based on the phalanx. The phalanx was a basically self-contained social and economic unit of approximately 1,700 people. It would contain roughly two each of 810 basic psychological types. This would insure the necessary variety and complementarities. Life in a Fourierist phalanx is attractive. All work is voluntary and not for monetary reward. There is a great deal of sexual freedom and variety. Children especially are intended to enjoy life in a phalanx. They would be subject to little parental or other authority, and would spend most of the day with peer groups (the Little Bands and Little Hordes). Returning to the bosom of his parents at night, the child is overwhelmed with love and affection.

Yet Fourier's utopia has oppressive and sexually abusive features. Fourier believed that homosexuality, both male and female, would disappear under his system of the phalanx. In the phalanx, "harmonious armies" of young men and women would engage in nonviolent warfare. The losers would for a brief time serve as slaves to the victors. These youthful captives would be expected to meet the sexual needs of older members of the phalanx so that "no age capable of love is frustrated in its desire." Fourier's difficulties arise from two interrelated factors: the problem of work and the guarantee of sexual satisfaction, not merely the pursuit of such happiness as Thomas Jefferson (Fourier's older contemporary) put it in the American Declaration of Independence.

In the Fourierist phalanx, work is not only voluntary but positively pleasurable as well as more productive

than under capitalism: "in a societal state varied work will become a source of varied pleasures." Yet this work is crude manual labor, mainly agricultural. One of the great advances of scientific socialism (Marxism) was the understanding that technological progress, which under capitalism is used by the ruling class to further enslave and immiserate the working people, will when freed from the fetter of private property provide the material basis for human freedom.

Fourier, with his passion for mathematical exactitude, projects that the phalanx economy will be four-fifths agriculture and one-fifth manufacturing. And by manufacturing he means literally production by hand: "The industrial revolution passes Fourier by; he failed completely to appreciate its significance.... [D]ivision of labor meant to him the simple form well illustrated in market-gardening, not the complex form associated with the machine technique" (E.S. Mason, "Fourier and Anarchism," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 1928).

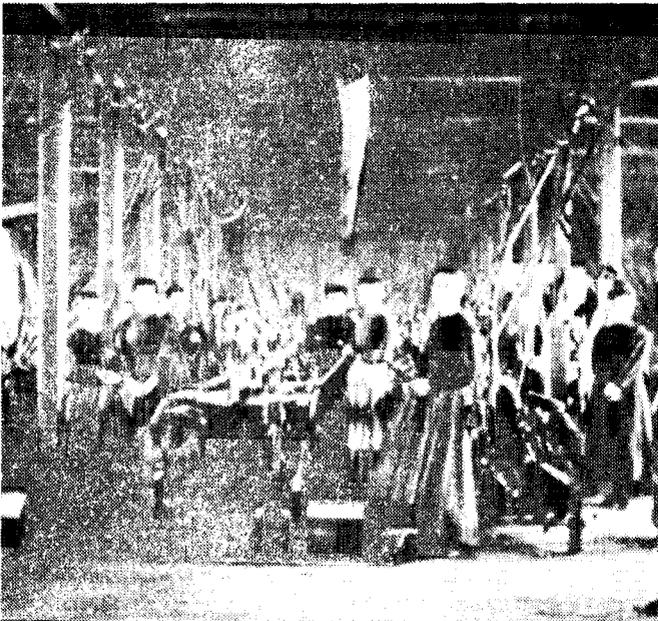
The pre-industrial nature of Fourier's utopia is not simply a reflection of the relative economic backwardness of France in his day. His great French contemporary Henri de Saint-Simon projected a socialized system based on continual technological progress. Fourier, however, deliberately rejected this program: "The Saint-Simonian vision, as well as the subsequent

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Marxist dream, of mechanized socialist mankind wresting a bountiful living from a stingy and hostile environment would have seemed a horrible nightmare of rapine to Fourier, for he knew that the natural destiny of the globe was to become a horticultural paradise, an ever-varying English garden" (Introduction to Beecher and Bienvenu [Eds.], *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier*). In addition Fourier feared that scientists and technical experts would exercise a new guardianship over society, establishing a new theocracy.

Given the primitive nature of work in the phalanx, Fourier could only offer variety, satisfying the "butterfly passion" to flit from one thing to another. In a typical day a member of the phalanx would care for the



Drake Well Museum

Women workers in New England spinning mill, circa 1850. As against Fourier's primitivism, Marx saw the industrial revolution creating the basis to overcome scarcity under proletarian class rule.

animals, engage in forestry, vegetable gardening, beekeeping and so on. Nicholas Riasanovsky, himself a sympathetic student of Fourier's doctrines, has nonetheless pointed out: "In general Charles Fourier's promise of most enthusiastic and most fruitful work by all in Harmony has aroused much skepticism.... [S]witching in rapid succession from one unpleasant job to another would hardly improve anyone's productivity."

Marx's view of work is directly counterposed to Fourier's. For Marx, socialist economic planning would lead to a fully automated economy in which the "human factor is restricted to watching and supervising the production process" (*Grundrisse*). Work then becomes increasingly creative artistic and scientific activity. At the same time, Marx insisted: "This does not mean that work can be made merely a joke, or amusement, as Fourier naively expressed it in shop-girl terms. Really free work, the composing of music for example, is at the same time damned serious and

demands the greatest effort" (*ibid.*). We see here the difference between the Rousseauian and the Marxist outlooks. For Fourier, happiness meant a return to the spontaneous playfulness of childhood. Marx recognized that mankind had *developed a real need* to fully utilize and extend all its capacities. Artistic and scientific work is not and cannot be made fun in the sense that sex, eating good food and playing games are fun. But this kind of work has also become an object of passionate attraction.

It is not true, as Riasanovsky implies, that Fourier offered no motivation for enthusiastic work effort in the phalanx. In part, he solved this problem in his usual manner: by asserting that there is a psychological type in sufficient numbers to perform any and every needed social role. Who, for example, would do dirty work like collecting the garbage and spreading manure on the fields? Fourier's answer—little boys:

"Two-thirds of all boys have a penchant for filth. They love to wallow in the mire and play with dirty things.... These children will enroll in the Little Hordes whose task it is to perform, dauntlessly and as a point of honor, all those loathsome tasks that ordinary workers would find debasing."

—Beecher and Bienvenu, *op cit.*

Fourier himself was city born and bred and so sentimentalized rural life. Children actually raised on farms, who have milked cows at 4 a.m. and slopped the pigs, can hardly wait to escape to urban civilization.

More fundamentally and generally, Fourier replaced money with sex as a reward for work effort. Sexually integrated work groups (the series) were to be an occasion for amorous dalliance. The connection between sexual fulfillment and work effort is especially clear and important in the recruitment and maintenance of industrial armies, huge bodies of tens of thousands which would clear new land, drain swamps, build dams and the like. Accompanying these industrial armies would be beautiful virgins (!) (the Vestals) of both sexes. Work performance in the industrial army would be the primary form of courtship: "the female Vestal is surrounded by her suitors, and she can watch them displaying their talents in the work sessions and the public games of the army." One can hardly imagine work conditions better designed to *create anxiety and frustration* than this intense, public sexual competition.

Nonetheless, Fourier assures us that the rejected suitors would not suffer sexual frustration. Indeed, eliminating sexual frustration is a basic principle of Harmony. Also accompanying the industrial armies are young women and men (the Bacchantes and Bacchants) who freely give their sexual favors to those wounded in love. Thus this passionate believer in women's equality is led by the logic of his system to project a class of free whores to meet the sexual needs of men. Fourier of course insisted: "Most women of twenty-five have a temperament suited to this role, which will then become a noble one." At the same time, he chastises attractive women who want a life-long monogamous relation with their loved one:

"What is reason in the state of harmony? It is the employment of any method which multiplies relationships and satisfies a great number of individuals without injuring anybody. A beautiful woman operates in

contradiction of this rule if she wants to remain faithful and to belong exclusively to one man all her life. She might have contributed to the happiness of ten thousand men in thirty years of philanthropic service, leaving fond memories behind among these ten thousand."

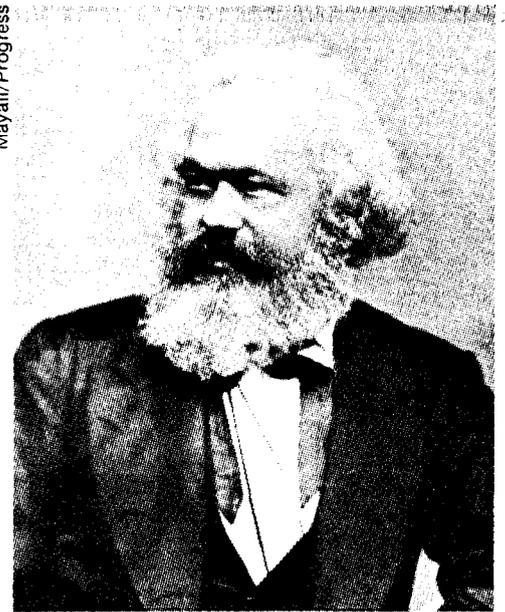
—quoted in Manuel, *op cit.*

Sexual libertarianism here becomes its opposite: social pressure toward promiscuity in the name of satisfying everyone's desires.

Sexual coercion outright enters Harmony through the problem of old people, something Fourier felt keenly. He once wrote, "life, after the end of love affairs, is nothing but a prison to which one becomes more or less adjusted according to the favors of fortune." Fourier was realistic enough to recognize that while old people still sexually desired the young, the reverse was not usually the case. His system therefore contains elaborate measures to solve this problem. As we have seen, the youthful captives in the nonviolent war games serve for a short while as slaves to older members of the phalanx. Sexually servicing the aged was also a penalty for transgressing the rules of Harmony. While Fourier's utopia contains what we would call open marriage, there are also by mutual consent monogamous relations. If one partner in these engages in secret infidelity, he is brought before a "court of love." To expiate this transgression, he or she may be sentenced to a few nights with older members of the phalanx.

Fourier's "ideal" society was certainly shaped by his own neurotic idiosyncracies. But his views also directly reflect the assumptions of his time. Fourier (and Reich)

Mayall/Progress



Karl Marx

held that human passions or, in Freudian terms, instinctual drives, were unchanging and unchangeable. Fourier and, more narrowly and dogmatically, Reich believed they knew what was natural and healthy sexuality and what was depravity and perversion. Their program was to adjust social institutions around an emotional make-up conceived as unvarying. Fourier wrote to his disciple Victor Considérant: "I am the only reformer who has rallied round human nature by accepting it as it is and devising the means of utilizing it with all the defects which are inseparable from man."

Fourier and Reich belong to the intellectual tradition of Enlightenment naturalism, whose greatest representative was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Late in life Rousseau wrote that all his doctrines were based on the "great principle that nature made man happy and good, but that society depraves him and makes him miserable." Fourier constantly counterposes the happy and natural man in the phalanx society to the artificial and miserable creature of existent civilization. For Reich, the Freudian concept of id corresponds to Rousseau's "state of nature," man not yet depraved by repressive civilization.

Social utopias based on Rousseauian naturalism have an inherent tendency toward totalitarianism. If man is naturally good, then "unnatural" social orders can be maintained only through false ideas and ideologies (e.g., religion). Fourier insisted that a society based on the phalanx could have been established any time in the past two millennia—if only someone had thought of it before. Social liberation thus becomes a struggle against bad ideas—rooting them out and preventing recontamination.

The first attempt to establish a Fourierist phalanx was made in what is now Romania in the 1830s by a noble landowner for his serfs. Local Moral Majority types were outraged and launched an armed attack to destroy the phalanx. The peasants valiantly defended their "free love" commune though in the end they were overwhelmed by superior force. The Socialist Republic of Romania has built a historical monument to

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Wilhelm Reich
in 1927.

no credit

commemorate the last stand of the Fourierist peasants of Scâni.

Wilhelm Reich's Sex-Pol

Wilhelm Reich died in 1957 in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania federal penitentiary. He was imprisoned for violating a court order on a charge brought by the Food and Drug Administration that he had transported an empty box, the Orgone Energy Accumulator, across state lines. Medically, Reich had become a quack. Politically he was a rabid red-baiter, an outspoken supporter of McCarthyism.

Yet a quarter century earlier, Wilhelm Reich had attempted to fuse Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis. Reich was simultaneously a member of Freud's inner circle of followers and of the German Communist Party, a mass workers party, at a critical moment in modern history: the rise to power of Nazism. In the 1960s the New Left rediscovered the early Reich and made him into a minor cult figure. A selection of his writings between 1929 and 1934, entitled *Sex-Pol*, was published in English in 1966, edited by Lee Baxandall of the defunct *Studies on the Left*. An introduction by Marxoid academic Bertell Ollman declared: "The revolutionary potential of Reich's teachings is as great as ever—perhaps greater, now that sex is accepted as a subject for serious discussion and complaint virtually everywhere."

Many of the activities of Reich and his supporters (who called themselves the Sex-Pol movement) within the Austrian and German Communist parties were entirely commendable. They agitated against sexually repressive legislation and campaigned for the greater economic independence of youth. The Reichian clinics in Vienna and Berlin provided working-class youth with information about contraception and preventing venereal disease, and doubtless performed useful individual counseling. Some of his early writings on character analysis and "body language" remain today standard texts for practicing analysts. Reich became

attracted to Marxism by his work in the free psychoanalytic clinic in Vienna, where he became convinced that poverty and oppression contributed to neuroses, and thus that their cure demanded the restructuring of society.

In a 1932 work written for the German Communist Party's youth group he concluded: "In capitalist society there can be no sexual liberation of youth, no healthy, satisfying sex life; if you want to be rid of your sexual troubles, fight for socialism. Only through socialism can you achieve sexual *joie de vivre*. . . . Socialism will put an end to the power of those who gaze up toward heaven as they speak of love while they crush and destroy the sexuality of youth." This bouncy, bombastic rhetoric endeared Reich to the New Left. Rejecting the Marxist understanding that sexual life is essentially a private matter, Reich insisted that the Communist movement must struggle for a "satisfying sex life" both for its own members and for society at large.

Reich's basic message can be baldly stated as follows. The sexual repression practiced by the patriarchal, nuclear family (e.g., preventing children from masturbating) produces submissive adults, fearful of bourgeois authority. Thus the struggle against sexual repression—itsself a deep-felt source of discontent throughout society—is of strategic importance in releasing the revolutionary energy of the masses.

In opposition to orthodox Freudianism, Reich refused to accept the patriarchal, nuclear family as a cultural given. The Oedipus complex, the frustrated desire of a child to possess the parent of the opposite sex, he wrote,

"must disappear in a socialist society because its social basis—the patriarchal family—will itself disappear, having lost its *raison d'être*. Communal upbringing, which forms part of the socialist program, will be so unfavorable to the forming of psychological attitudes as they exist within the family today—the relationship of children to one another and to the persons who bring them up will be so much more many-sided, complex and dynamic—that the Oedipus complex with its specific content of desiring the mother and wishing to destroy the father as a rival will lose its meaning."

—"Dialectical Materialism and Psychoanalysis"
(1929)

Reich's particular recipe for "a satisfying sex life" was rigid and bizarre. At the core of his psychoanalytic theory was the function of the orgasm as the sole release for dammed up sexual energy. The failure of the orgasm to perform this function produced mental illness. He maintained that orgasmic impotency was the sole cause of all neurotic and psychotic behavior.

Reich's fellow psychoanalysts objected that many neurotics had quite normal sex lives. But, to paraphrase George Orwell, for Reich some orgasms are more equal than others. To fulfill its function an orgasm must be heterosexual, without irrelevant fantasies and of sufficient duration:

"Orgasmic potency is the capacity to surrender to the flow of biological energy, free of any inhibitions; the capacity to discharge completely the damned-up [sic] sexual excitation through involuntary, pleasurable convulsions of the body."

—*The Function of the Orgasm* (1927)

In 1939 Reich invented the Orgone Energy Field Meter

to measure sexual energy and its discharge. He had long since abandoned both Marx and Freud for the realms of science fiction.

Reich's reasoning is circular. He hypothesizes that mental illness is produced by undischarged sexual energy. But, since the latter is unmeasurable, he then deduces genital incapacity from psychological distress: "Not a single neurotic is orgasmically potent, and the character structure of the overwhelming majority of men and women are neurotic." The psychoanalyst thus becomes the supreme arbiter of sexual health and unhealth. This opens the door to subjective arbitrariness and outright bigotry.

For example, Reich maintained the orthodox Freudian position that homosexuality is arrested development, the failure of the child to overcome primary narcissism and develop love objects outside himself. He went further than Freud and also identified homosexuality with political reaction:

"The more clearly developed the natural heterosexual inclinations of a juvenile are, the more open he will be to revolutionary ideas; the stronger the homosexual tendency within him and also the more repressed his awareness of sexuality in general, the more easily he will be drawn toward the right."

—"What is Class Consciousness?" (1934)

His New Left admirers understandably turn a blind eye to this aspect of Reich's sexual theories. (To its credit, the Sex-Pol movement continued to call for an end to state laws against homosexuality.)

Like Fourier, Reich's view of what people are "really" like was shaped by the particularities of his time. Reich's brief career in the Communist movement coincided with the greatest defeat for the world proletariat in modern history: the triumph of fascism in Germany, then the strongest industrial power in Europe. Reich's analysis of Nazism was his only effort to apply his theories to a contemporary political problem—and the results are revealing.

Reich's response to Hitler's coming to power was the direct cause of his break with both Marxism and Freudianism. *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, published a few months after Hitler became chancellor in early 1933, was denounced by the official Communist leadership as "counterrevolutionary." The official psychoanalytic movement likewise disavowed this work, and Reich was secretly expelled from the German Psychoanalytic Association in 1933.

Everyone in Germany recognized that the social base of the Nazi movement was the lower middle classes—small tradesmen, farmers, civil servants, white-collar workers. The German industrial proletariat remained loyal to the Social Democracy and, to a lesser extent, the Communist Party right up until and a good while after Hitler was appointed chancellor by the old Prussian aristocrat von Hindenburg.

Reich thus begins his famous *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* with an attempt at a class analysis. He maintains that children from a petty-bourgeois background are subject to a more authoritarian and sexually repressive upbringing than proletarian children. A typical German petty-bourgeois family—on the farm or running a small shop—was also an economic unit. The father was

literally a boss who directed and supervised his children at work. Subjectively, a proletarian father might be as authoritarian and sexually repressive, but he had far less control over his children. He left the home for work while they went to school. In adolescence working-class children escaped into the factory, exchanging the tyranny of the family for the rigors of wage-slavery. Obviously such an analysis, even if valid, produced no useful course of action. The millions of Nazi supporters could hardly be psychoanalyzed to remove the neurotic character structure imposed by their upbringing.

A socialist revolution—if it is to be made at all—has to be made by people as they are shaped by an oppressive class society with all its deforming effects. Rejecting the possibility of progressive social struggle by such

Reich's fatalistic views were shaped by the rise of Hitlerite fascism in Germany. Photo shows Nazis publicly humiliating a woman for having a Jewish lover.



people, and positing individual psychic health as the precondition for collective political struggle for liberation, Reich was profoundly fatalistic.

In the critical year of 1923 the German petty-bourgeois masses veered sharply to the left and would have followed an aggressive Communist leadership. At that time fascist influence was marginal. Witness the almost comic-opera debacle of Hitler's "beer hall putsch" in Munich. The failure of the German Communist Party to provide genuine revolutionary leadership during the stormy years of the early 1920s left a strong residue of distrust among both the more conservative workers who supported Social Democracy and the petty-bourgeois masses, who turned to fascism under the catastrophic impact of the Great Depression.

That is not to imply that the German Communist Party in the early 1930s was helpless to prevent Hitler's eventual triumph. While Reich is highly critical of the official Communist leadership in many respects, he has little to say about the insane and suicidal policies of the so-called "third period" as laid down by Stalin. The German Communists not only opposed united-front actions with the Social Democrats to combat the fascist terror squads; they labeled the mass reformist party of the German proletariat as "social fascist" and at times treated the Social Democrats as the main enemy.

In 1934 Reich did retrospectively criticize the Communists' refusal to engage in united actions with the Social Democrats against the fascists, but he treated this as a question of third- or fourth-rate importance. One gets no sense reading *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* that there were millions of German workers, Social Democratic as well as Communist supporters, who were prepared to resist Hitler by civil war if necessary. On the contrary, Reich is obsessed with the "submissiveness" of the working class no less than of the petty bourgeoisie, with its respect for authority and fear of revolt:

"From the standpoint of the psychology of the masses, Social Democracy is based on the conservative structures of its followers. As in the case of fascism, the problem here lies not so much in the policies pursued by the party leadership as it does in the psychological basis in the workers." (emphasis in original)

Within months after Reich wrote this, the Austrian working class, overwhelmingly supporters of Social



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Sigmund Freud

Democracy, rose in armed insurrection against the clerical-fascist regime of Dollfuss.

In the course of writing and constantly revising *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Reich moved further and further from any kind of Marxism. Increasingly, a class analysis gives way to a mass-psychological approach. The terms worker and petty bourgeois are replaced by "the average unpolitical person," the proverbial man-in-the-street:

"Experience teaches that the majority of these 'nonpolitical' people can hardly be made to listen to anything about their socio-economic situation, whereas they are very accessible to the mystical claptrap of a National Socialist, despite the fact that the latter makes very little mention of economic interests. How is this to be explained? It is explained by the fact that severe sexual conflicts (in the broadest sense of the word), whether conscious or unconscious, inhibit rational thinking and the development of social responsibility."

At every level Reich shifts historic responsibility from political leaderships and social elites to the neurotic character structure of the masses. Paul A. Robinson, who is generally sympathetic to Reich in his Marxist period, observes that his view of fascism dovetails with that of certain German bourgeois rightists: "Ironically, Reich's mass-psychological analysis of the German

problem bore a striking resemblance to the apologies of such German conservatives as Friedrich Meinecke and Gerhard Ritter, who, in their anxiety to excuse the German élite (whether cultural, political, or military), were quick to put the blame on the hoi polloi" (*The Freudian Left* [1969]). In a 1942 preface to *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Reich accepted fascism as essentially inevitable: "'fascism' is the basic emotional attitude of the suppressed man of our authoritarian machine civilization and its mechanistic-mystical conception of life." In fact, Reich's prescription for a supposedly nonrepressive society provided his own version of totalitarian Big Brother: "sexologically well-trained functionaries" to supervise sexual life "in conjunction with a central sexological agency."

Freud and Marx on Work and Love

Paul Robinson, in *The Freudian Left*, has stated that there was an underlying logic to Reich's break with both Freud and Marx in the mid-1930s. Freud believed that socialized man was beset by basic instinctual conflict; Marx saw civilization as it existed as fundamentally riven by class conflict. Reich, says Robinson, tended to regard man as naturally both sociable and productive, and therefore came to view both psychological distress and social conflict as easily and immediately solvable. Robinson concluded, "Freud and Marx may indeed have been fellow-revolutionaries, as Reich had argued in 1929, but they were also realists. Reich, on the other hand, was a romantic, as much in his politics as in his psychology."

While Robinson is probably correct about Reich, his coupling of Marx and Freud as fellow revolutionary realists is misleading. Freud was a historical pessimist; Marx was not. To understand the difference it is necessary to consider Freud's theory of instinctual conflict, or, rather, his two *different* theories of instinctual conflict.

Freud's original theory was the conflict between the pleasure and the reality principles. A child's striving for the *immediate* gratification of his needs and wants is blocked by social reality, initially represented by his parents. His desire to monopolize the affection and attention of his parents is frustrated with the birth of a sibling. His desire to defecate whenever he feels like is suppressed through toilet training. To live in society a child is taught to *postpone* immediate gratification. The socialized human being has learned to pursue by *roundabout paths* the satisfaction of his needs, especially his sexual needs.

The Marxist response to *this* Freudian concept is twofold. To a considerable extent we can *change* social reality to accommodate instinctual gratification. And to the extent there is an ineradicable tension between instinctual gratification and organized social life, why should this be a barrier to psychological well-being? Marxists have never believed that this is or can be made into the best of all possible worlds. But neither do we assume that the price of civilization is universal neurosis.

In 1920 Freud published *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in which he posited the existence of innate

aggression or "the death instinct." The dating of this work is anything but accidental. A mood of profound historical pessimism swept over European bourgeois intellectuals in the wake of the First World War, which shattered their seemingly stable civilization. This was especially pronounced in German-speaking Central Europe which had lost the war. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was written in the same intellectual climate as, for example, Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West*. Writing several years later to Albert Einstein, who was a pacifist, Freud maintained that a major cause of war was "a lust for aggression and destruction," that is, "the death instinct."

Freud's "discovery" of a death instinct in man was thus not simply, or even primarily, based on clinical experience with individual therapy but was rather an attempt to explain mass destruction on a political and historical plane. For Marxists, the explanation is class and national conflict ultimately rooted in economic scarcity. We thus do not accept that the human species has an inner drive toward self-destruction. Reich, incidentally, never accepted the death instinct and squarely based his own theories on the original Freudian concept of the pleasure versus reality principles.

Freud's most developed and comprehensive statement of historical pessimism is *Civilization and Its Discontents*, published in 1930. Reich maintained this work was a direct response to his own views. Whether or not this is the case, it does contain a polemic against communists, to whom Freud attributes the view that "man is wholly good and is well-disposed to his neighbour; but the institution of private property has corrupted his nature." In opposition to this he insists "that the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man...." Therefore he concludes that even the most radical and far-reaching changes in social institutions cannot alter the human psyche:

"If we do away with personal rights over material wealth, there still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relationships, which is bound to become the source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility among men who in other respects are on an equal footing. If we were to remove this factor, too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus abolishing the family, the germ-cell of civilization, we cannot, it is true, easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take; but one thing we can expect, and that is that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there."

However, even if we set aside the concept of innate aggression and "the death instinct," Freud still remains a historical pessimist toward the goals of communism. He was convinced there was a fundamental conflict between the enjoyment of sexual love and the work effort needed to create and sustain civilization. "When a love-relationship is at its height," he wrote, "there is no room left for any interest in the environment; a pair of lovers are sufficient to themselves, and do not even need the child they have in common to make them happy." By contrast, he maintained:

"... as a path to happiness, work is not highly prized by men. They do not strive after it as they do after other

possibilities of satisfaction. The great majority of people only work under the stress of necessity, and this natural human aversion to work raises most difficult social problems."

What kind of work is Freud here talking about—plowing a field in the broiling sun, operating a machine on an assembly line, typing business letters at a hundred words a minute? Naturally people don't strive after this kind of work as a path to happiness.

The debate between Reich and Freud in the late 1920s over love and work was *scholastic* in the sense that the vast majority of people have *neither* the option of a rich, fulfilling sexual life nor of creative, self-expressing work. Most people have to do dull, tiring and often body-destroying labor. It is entirely illegitimate to speculate about communist man on the basis of the few, exceptional, creative individuals—a Leonardo da Vinci, Charles Darwin or Sigmund Freud—in oppressive, class-divided society. At the same time, most people cannot lead a gratifying erotic life. This is prevented not simply by repressive laws, ideologies (e.g., religion) and mores but also by basic economic factors—being physically exhausted after long hours of labor; youth forced to live with their parents long after puberty; the practical burdens of raising children.

For the Communist Future

Marx and Engels did not counterpose human nature to civilization, the individual to society. The individual's capacity for gratification and fulfillment is based upon the development and wealth of society. The oppression and degradation of the individual in class society has its roots in economic scarcity, ultimately in man's lack of sufficient control over nature, including his own nature:

"... it is only possible to achieve real liberation in the real world and by employing real means, that slavery cannot be abolished without the steam-engine and the mule and spinning-jenny, serfdom cannot be abolished without improved agriculture, and that, in general, people cannot be liberated as long as they are unable to obtain food and drink, housing and clothing in adequate quality and quantity. 'Liberation' is an historical and not a mental act...."

—Karl Marx and Frederick Engels,
The German Ideology (1845-46)

It is this understanding which separates Marxism from the radical advocates of sexual liberation here and now.

Only under communism, when people have access to creative work and a rich erotic life, will it be possible to determine the relation between these two spheres of human activity. Is work always and necessarily a deflection of sexual energy as Freud believed? Or is a satisfying love life in the long run a necessary condition for work capacity as Reich insisted? Let's create a society in which we can find out.

The great 19th century French revolutionary Auguste Blanqui had little patience for the disputes among the utopian radicals of his day. He once wrote that the debate between Cabet and Proudhon over the future ideal organization of society is like two men who "stand by a river bank, quarrelling over whether the field on the other side is wheat or rye. Let us cross and see." ■

Harriet Tubman...

(continued from page 32)

Although slavery was their pre-eminent concern, these radical bourgeois egalitarians also fought for many other pressing political issues of the time, such as free education, religious tolerance and workers' rights. The women's suffrage movement first began as a fight within abolitionism over the role of women anti-slavery activists. The most deeply committed and politically astute of these revolutionary democrats, like Frederick Douglass, understood that the fight against slavery must be generalized into a struggle against *all* oppression. As the abolitionist and women's rights leader Angelina Grimké said at the May 1863 meeting of the Women's Loyal League, a convention of support for the North in the Civil War, "I want to be identified with the negro; until he gets his rights, we shall never have ours" (see "The Grimké Sisters: Pioneers for Abolition and Women's Rights," *W&R* No. 29, Spring 1985).

The situation of the triply oppressed black woman slave more than any other cried out for liberation. Even the right to raise their own children was often denied to these women, whose masters could sell them or any member of their family at will. The life of Harriet Tubman illustrates in a particularly acute fashion the tremendous obstacles black women faced regarding even the elementary decencies of life. Despite her courageous work for black freedom—which included years as a soldier in the Union Army—she lived in poverty all her life.

A fugitive from bondage, black and a woman, Tubman triumphed over exceptional odds to become a leader of the second American Revolution. Like Frederick Douglass, she was able to generalize her bitter and brutal experience of oppression into a revolutionary social consciousness and a determination to fight for all the oppressed. She was an advocate of militant political action and revolutionary insurrectionism. As opposed to the "moral suasion" Garrisonian wing, she was part of the revolutionary vanguard of the abolitionist movement. As the "Moses" of her people



Yale University Press

Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass advocated militant political action and insurrection against slavery.

on the Underground Railroad, Tubman was famous throughout the U.S. and beyond by the time of the war.

However, many details about her work are obscure, since she operated in the secrecy of what was essentially a revolutionary underground. She was illiterate, and much of what is known about her life comes from a biography of her by Sarah Bradford, who interviewed Tubman as an old woman (quotes from Tubman which were originally printed in dialect are here transposed into modern English spelling). Thus much of the story of her life must be told by others, especially by Frederick Douglass, with whom she shared the conviction, through the bleak decade of the 1850s, that the coming war must crush the slave system and break the bonds of black oppression. She was a co-worker and friend not only to John Brown and Douglass, but to many other key figures of her time, from abolitionist William H. Seward, Lincoln's secretary of state, to Sojourner Truth, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Wendell Phillips and Gerrit Smith. She knew Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott and most of the leading women's rights activists of her day.

Douglass honored Tubman's role in a letter written in



William Still

Slaves escaping from the eastern shore of Maryland. Many fugitives became activists for abolition and black rights.

1868, in which he defended her right to an army pension as a Civil War veteran:

"The difference between us is very marked. Most that I have done and suffered in the service of our cause has been in public, and I have received much encouragement at every step of the way. You, on the other hand, have labored in a private way. I have wrought in the day—you in the night. I have had the applause of the crowd and the satisfaction that comes of being approved by the multitude, while the most that you have done has been witnessed by a few trembling, scarred, and foot-sore bondmen and women, whom you have led out of the house of bondage, and whose heartfelt 'God bless you' has been your only reward. The midnight sky and the silent stars have been the witnesses of your devotion to freedom and of your heroism. Excepting John Brown—of sacred memory—I know of no one who has willingly encountered more perils and hardships to serve our enslaved people than you have. Much that you have done would seem improbable to those who do not know you as I know you."

—quoted in Sarah Bradford, *Harriet Tubman: The Moses of Her People*

Slave vs. Free in the Antebellum U.S.

Like Frederick Douglass, Tubman was born a slave on the eastern shore of Maryland, probably in 1820. At that time the country was embroiled in the first of the major fights over slavery and the expanding U.S. territory, "resolved" in this instance by the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

Since the founding of the U.S. in the late 18th century, when the slave system was left intact throughout the South, two economic systems, capitalism and slavery, coexisted within one country. The inevitable clash of economic interest which must lead to the victory of one over the other was postponed in a series of "compromises" centering on the maintenance of control by the slave states over the relatively weak federal government. But the underlying economic conflicts between the two systems eventually reached the point at which compromise was no longer possible. The development of large-scale industrial capitalism required wage labor to exploit, the source of its tremendous profits, as well as a mobile and at least somewhat educated working population. Key to capitalist expansion was control of a growing home market. In contrast, the slave system was based on primitive, labor-intensive agricultural production; the slaveowners sought new lands to increase the highly profitable slave trade and to move plantations to fresh, non-exhausted soil. The clash came to a head over the huge, expanding territories of the West: would they be slave or free?

Karl Marx described the slow but inexorable sweep of political power by the slave states in their effort to increase control of the growing U.S.:

"The last Continental Congress of 1787 and the first Constitutional Congress of 1789-90 had legally excluded slavery from all Territories of the republic northwest of the Ohio.... The so-called Missouri Compromise (1820), in consequence of which Missouri became one of the States of the Union as a slave state, excluded slavery from every remaining Territory north of 36°30' latitude and west of the Missouri. By this

compromise the area of slavery was advanced several degrees of longitude, whilst, on the other hand, a geographical boundary-line to its future spread seemed quite definitely drawn. This geographical barrier, in its turn, was thrown down in 1854 by the so-called Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the initiator of which was St[ephen] A. Douglas, then leader of the Northern Democrats. The Bill, which passed both Houses of Congress, repealed the Missouri Compromise, placed slavery and freedom on the same footing, commanded the Union government to treat them both with equal indifference and left it to the sovereignty of the people, that is, the majority of the settlers, to decide whether or not slavery was to be introduced in a Territory. Thus, for the first time in the history of the United States, every geographical and legal limit to the extension of slavery in the Territories was removed."

—Karl Marx, "The North American Civil War," *Collected Works*, Vol. 19

In 1820, when Tubman was born, news of the first of these bitter debates undoubtedly reached even the slave quarters, however isolated the slaves were kept



Culver Pictures

Nat Turner led heroic revolt of slaves in 1831.

from news of the day. Perhaps the slaves with whom Tubman lived as a child heard rumors about the deep split in Congress over the Tallmadge Amendment, which would have prohibited the introduction of more slaves into Missouri and provided for gradual emancipation of those already there. This first great debate on slavery was a harbinger of things to come. Abandoning even his earlier, contradictory anti-slavery position altogether, Thomas Jefferson strongly opposed the Tallmadge Amendment. In 1821 he wrote, "All, I fear, do not see the speck on our horizon which is to burst on us as a tornado, sooner or later."

As a child Tubman was acquainted with all the horrors of slavery. By the age of five or six she was at work and suffering from whippings on her face and neck by a vicious mistress. Later she worked as a field hand. She was still a child at the time of Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, put down by the slaveholders swiftly

and ruthlessly. In 1832, the opposition of the agricultural South to the federal tariff designed to protect Northern industry led to the Nullification Crisis, in which South Carolina threatened to secede from the Union. The slaveholders' fear of black insurrection, sparked by Nat Turner's revolt, fueled their intransigence against the federal government.

Tubman was around 15 years old when the incident that literally marked her for life occurred. While trying to defend a fellow slave from the vindictiveness of the overseer, she was struck on the head with a two-pound iron weight which cracked her skull. For months she lingered between life and death, lying on rags in her family's slave cabin. The injury left a deep scar on her head and left her subject to spells of unconsciousness, sometimes three or four times a day, which plagued her for the rest of her life.

But instead of being crushed by the brutality of her life, Tubman hardened and determined to fight. When she recovered, she built up her physical strength until she could lift huge barrels of produce as well as a man, despite her small size. Her master would exhibit her strength as one of the "sights" of the plantation. She let



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The 1856 beating of abolitionist senator Charles Sumner by a Southerner in Congress outraged anti-slavery forces.

people think her half-witted because of her brain injury, and plotted her escape. She began to experience daily visions, which inspired her driving commitment to black freedom as part of a deeply personal religion.

In 1849, although it meant leaving her husband, a freeman who refused to go with her, Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery. Rumor had reached her and her family that their owners planned to sell them to the deep South, a dreaded fear of every slave in the border states. Already two of her sisters had been sent off in a chain gang, separated from their children. Her brothers lost courage for the escape; Tubman went on alone. As she later told Bradford: "I had reasoned this out in my mind; there was one of two things I had a *right* to, liberty, or death; if I could not have one, I would have the other; for no man should take me alive; I should fight for my liberty as long as my

strength lasted, and when the time came for me to go, the Lord would let them take me."

Aided by a white woman who gave her the first address of the Underground Railroad, Tubman made her way North, traveling at night. "I had crossed the line of which I had so long been dreaming. I was free; but there was no one to welcome me to the land of freedom, I was a stranger in a strange land, and my home after all was down in the old cabin quarter.... But to this solemn resolution I came; I was free, and they should be free also." Cooking and laundering to support herself, she began the life of a fugitive slave in the North.

The 1850s: The Irrepressible Conflict at the Boiling Point

Tubman arrived in the North on the eve of the biggest struggle yet over the question of slavery. Congressional debate sparked over California's petition for admission to the Union as a free state continued for months, while legislatures and mass rallies North and South adopted fiery resolutions. Mississippi called for a convention of Southern states. Over time a compromise satisfactory to few on either side was worked out, largely due to the efforts of Henry Clay, Stephen Douglas and Daniel Webster, who was voted out of his Senate seat by an enraged Massachusetts legislature in 1851. Webster was replaced by the uncompromising abolitionist radical, Charles Sumner. Later a leader of the Radical Republicans, in 1856, after a stirring anti-slavery speech, Sumner was beaten into unconsciousness on the Senate floor by a Southern Congressman.

The terms of the Compromise of 1850 centered on a series of tradeoffs: while California would be admitted as a free state, no restrictions on slavery were to be made in the Mexican cession; and while Washington, D.C. ceased to be a depot for the slave trade, the 1793 fugitive slave law was to be replaced with a much tougher version. This new law was an unspeakable atrocity, a threat to the lives and freedom of black people in every state. In his scathing indictment of hypocritical American "democracy," "July Fourth and the Negro" (5 July 1852), Frederick Douglass described it:

"For black men there is neither law nor justice, humanity nor religion. The Fugitive Slave Law makes mercy to them a crime; and bribes the judge who tries them. An American judge gets ten dollars for every victim he consigns to slavery, and five, when he fails to do so. The oath of any two villains is sufficient, under this hell-black enactment, to send the most pious and exemplary black man into the remorseless jaws of slavery! His own testimony is nothing. He can bring no witnesses for himself. The minister of American justice is bound by the law to hear but *one* side; and *that* side is the side of the oppressor. Let this damning fact be perpetually told. Let it be thundered around the world that in tyrant-killing, king-hating, people-loving, democratic, Christian America the seats of justice are filled with judges who hold their offices under an open and palpable *bribe*, and are bound, in deciding the case of a man's liberty, to hear *only his accusers!*

—*The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. 2



Crown Publishers

Free blacks rout slave-catchers at Christiana, Pennsylvania; flyer issued by the Boston Vigilance Committee in 1851 to warn blacks against catchers.

CAUTION!!
COLORED PEOPLE
OF BOSTON, ONE & ALL,
 You are hereby respectfully CAUTIONED and advised, to avoid conversing with the
Watchmen and Police Officers
of Boston,
 For since the recent ORDER OF THE MAYOR & ALDERMEN, they are empowered to act as
KIDNAPPERS
AND
Slave Catchers,
 And they have already been actually employed in KIDNAPPING, CATCHING, AND KEEPING SLAVES. Therefore, if you value your LIBERTY, and the Welfare of the Fugitives among you, Shun them in every possible manner, as so many HOYDENS on the track of the most unfortunate of your race.
Keep a Sharp Look Out for
KIDNAPPERS, and have
TOP EYE open.
 APRIL 24, 1851.

Many Northerners vowed to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter. Congressman Joshua Giddings of Ohio, a long-time anti-slavery radical, defied even the army to enforce the statute: "Let the President... drench our land of freedom in blood; but he will never make us obey that law" (quoted in James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*). When the fugitive slave Anthony Burns was kidnapped in 1854 under the law in Boston by a gang of thugs organized by the federal government and Burns' Virginian master, the city erupted in seething conflict from the halls of government to the men in the street. The local vigilance committee, dedicated to helping fugitive slaves, organized mass rallies; a badly coordinated assault on the federal courthouse failed to rescue Burns. The federal government and the slaveholders succeeded in returning Burns to slavery. But he was the last fugitive to be returned from anywhere in New England. In fact, nine Northern states passed personal liberty laws, effectively nullifying the Fugitive Slave Law. In 1859, the Southern-dominated Supreme Court struck down the personal liberty laws as unconstitutional.

One of Harriet Tubman's most publicized actions was the courageous rescue of a fugitive slave, Charles Nalle, from the Troy, New York court where he was pronounced guilty in 1860 under the Fugitive Slave Law. For several hours a battle raged between the abolitionists and the authorities until Tubman, with the help of others, seized Nalle and started him off on the journey to Canada.

But the North was by no means free of pro-slavery or racist forces. Many states had "black laws"; Indiana, Oregon, Illinois and Iowa all eventually passed statutes banning black migration into the state. These measures reflected not only the racism of many whites in the states, but were an open conciliation to the South, stating in effect that fugitives would not be welcome.

Indeed, opposition to slavery was all too often based on the wish to exclude blacks altogether. And throughout the 1850s, as the abolitionist movement grew in strength, so did the pro-slavery mob. Tubman had firsthand experience with the violence of the Northern racists when she was part of a defense guard for Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison at a Boston meeting in 1860, raided by pro-slavery hooligans.

The Underground Railroad

Under these conditions of mounting assaults on blacks, free and slave, Harriet Tubman began her work with the Underground Railroad. Marked by her scarred head and subject to spells of unconsciousness, she faced incredible dangers which grew greater as the years passed. She raised money for her trips through her own labor and by fundraising among abolitionists. Given the secrecy of her missions and the price on her

Dred Scott sued for his freedom in 1851; U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1857 that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

Culver Pictures



head—the slaveholders offered rewards totaling \$40,000, an enormous sum in those days—there were few records of her 19 trips back South. She always carried a pistol and threatened to use it on those whose courage failed, on the principle that dead men carry no tales. In her native Maryland, where she returned many times to rescue dozens, including all but one of her entire family, so many slaves escaped that a panic broke out among the slaveholders, leading to the 1858 Southern Convention in Baltimore. Ancient laws were resurrected to crack down on escaping slaves; 89 free blacks were re-enslaved under a new law.

But Tubman continued her work up to the Civil War. She personally brought out some 300 people altogether, from all parts of the South. In the 1880s, she spoke of



Library of Congress

John Brown:
His heroic raid
on Harpers Ferry
was the opening
shot of the
Civil War.

these years at a meeting of women's suffragists in Rochester, New York: "Yes, ladies... I was the conductor of the Underground Railroad for eight years, and I can say what most conductors can't say—I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger."

As Frederick Douglass said of the Underground Railroad:

"I never did more congenial, attractive, fascinating and satisfactory work. True, as a means of destroying slavery, it was like an attempt to bail out the ocean with a teaspoon, but the thought that there was one less slave, and one more freeman—having myself been a slave, and a fugitive slave—brought to my heart unspeakable joy."

—*Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*

Indeed, the political impact of the Underground Railroad spread beyond the comparatively small numbers it freed, which have been estimated at probably less than 1,000 a year out of a total slave population of four million. As an interracial network of activists who were willing to risk imprisonment or death in their work, it was a rallying point in abolition work. Speaking tours of ex-slaves, who described the horrors of their lives in bondage, won over many to abolition.

The vigilance committees not only helped to settle newly arrived blacks, but tried to fight the racism of the North.

Most importantly, the Underground Railroad effectively allowed the crystallization of a black abolitionist vanguard in the North. As the black historian W.E.B. DuBois wrote:

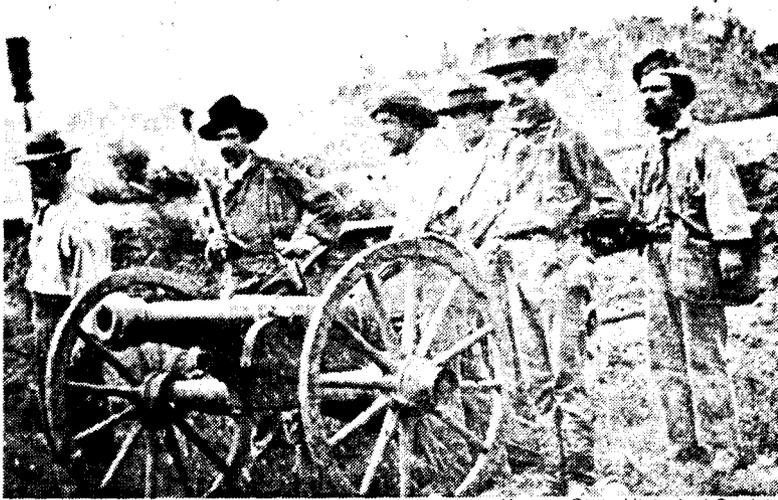
"Nowhere did the imminence of a great struggle show itself more clearly than among the Negroes themselves. Organized insurrection ceased in the South, not because of the increased rigors of the slave system, but because the great safety-valve of escape northward was opened wider and wider, and the methods were gradually coordinated into that mysterious system known as the Underground Railroad. The slaves and freedmen started the work and to the end bore the brunt of danger and hardship; but gradually they more and more secured the cooperation of men like John Brown, and of others less radical but just as sympathetic."

—W.E.B. DuBois, *John Brown*

It was becoming more and more clear that liberation for the American slave was a national task beyond the scope of local slave insurrections like Nat Turner's or Denmark Vesey's. Leadership for black emancipation thus developed in the North, among the core of militant ex-slaves, free blacks and white abolitionists—people like Douglass, Tubman, Brown, Wendell Phillips and Charles Sumner. A small but crucial element of experienced radicals existed in the "Red 48ers," European refugees from reaction following the crushing of the 1848 revolutions. Black, white, foreign-born, many of these later formed the left wing of the Republican Party.

The abolitionists were by no means a homogeneous group. One of the most famous abolitionists, William Lloyd Garrison, opposed all political activity—running for office, petitioning the government—on the grounds that the U.S. Constitution was pro-slavery. Advocating "moral suasion," Garrison opposed the use of force in the fight against slavery. He finally ended up by proposing the secession of the North as the "answer"—which needless to say would have done nothing to end slavery.

Although Douglass and Brown originally subscribed to "moral suasion," they both soon realized that it was doomed to fail. Even the Underground Railroad, although constantly defying the slave system and the federal laws which protected it, was not a critical weapon to end slavery and as such was more inspirational than strategic. Douglass, Brown and Tubman embraced all means to fight slavery, from petitioning and agitation to armed self-defense and insurrection. As Douglass commented in 1852 at a national free-soil convention, "The only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers. A half dozen more dead kidnappers carried down South would cool the ardor of Southern gentlemen, and keep their rapacity in check" ("The Fugitive Slave Law," *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. 2). When the war broke out, it was Douglass and the other radical abolitionists who argued for the immediate freeing and arming of the slaves. Black insurrection at last would



Kansas State Historical Society

FREE STATE CONVENTION!

All persons who are favorable to a union of effort, and a permanent organization of all the Free State citizens of Kansas Territory, and who wish to secure upon the territories the maintenance of all the rights upon the past, are requested to meet at their several places of holding elections, in their respective districts on the 5th of August, instant, at one o'clock, P. M., and report the delegates to such representatives to which they were elected at the Legislative Assembly, in the said county or district.

Big Springs, Wednesday, Sept. 5th '55,

to be held at 10 o'clock A. M., for the purpose of selecting a Executive agent which all parties are unanimously who prefer Freedom to Slavery.
 The maintenance of a Union to Congress, and also to secure upon the territories the maintenance of all the rights upon the past, are requested to meet at their several places of holding elections, in their respective districts on the 5th of August, instant, at one o'clock, P. M., and report the delegates to such representatives to which they were elected at the Legislative Assembly, in the said county or district.
 Let us remember to party which is desired to prevent the partial organization of Free State men. Union and harmony are absolutely necessary to success. The Whig party, party and all other parties are requested to meet at their several places of holding elections, in their respective districts on the 5th of August, instant, at one o'clock, P. M., and report the delegates to such representatives to which they were elected at the Legislative Assembly, in the said county or district.
 All Free State men, without distinction, are requested to meet at their several places of holding elections, in their respective districts on the 5th of August, instant, at one o'clock, P. M., and report the delegates to such representatives to which they were elected at the Legislative Assembly, in the said county or district.
 By order of the Executive Committee of the Free State Party of the Territory of Kansas, as per resolution of the Free State Convention in session in Lawrence, Aug. 18th and 19th, 1855.
J. K. GOODIN, Sec'y. **C. ROBINSON, Chairman.**
Head of Freedom Press.

“Bleeding Kansas”: Free-soilers fought pro-slavery marauders through armed self-defense and political action.

destroy the slave power: only that way could the Union Army win the war.

Harpers Ferry: The First Battle of the Civil War

As the years passed, to anti-slavery forces it seemed that the slaveholders were winning every battle. Every “compromise” increased the power of slavery. In 1857 the Supreme Court ruling on the Dred Scott case effectively extended the boundaries of slavery throughout the country. Chief Justice Roger Taney, a Southern Democrat, led the court decision that residency in a free state did not free a slave and that the Missouri Compromise barring slavery in the Northern territories was unconstitutional. As Marx said, “... now the Supreme Court of the United States, by its decision of 1857, tore down even this political barrier and transformed all the Territories of the republic, present and future, from nurseries of free states into nurseries of slavery” (“The North American Civil War,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 19). Most notoriously, Taney wrote that blacks had no claim to U.S. citizenship under the Constitution because blacks “had no rights which the white man was bound to respect.”

But many abolitionists and free-soilers were determined to fight with every weapon available. To the free-soil farmers of the West, the expansion of slave-based agriculture was a direct threat. The South hindered by every possible means the colonization of the territories by free labor, seeking instead new lands for the plantation system and for the immensely profitable slave trade. Outraged free-state settlers organized in self-defense. When the Kansas-Nebraska bill opened Kansas to slavery under the dubious slogan of “popular sovereignty,” border ruffians from the neighboring slave-state of Missouri spread terror and murder throughout the area to prevent a free-soil government from forming. John Brown and his followers, armed with rifles and the determination that slavery would not triumph, were key in the eventual victory of freedom in Bleeding Kansas.

It was shortly thereafter that Brown began to finalize and execute his plan to initiate a slave insurrection to

found a black republic in the South. When Brown approached Gerrit Smith, Frederick Douglass and others (among whom were the Secret Six) in 1858 with his plan for launching a guerrilla war against the slavocracy, they recommended Tubman as the key to recruiting followers among the many freedmen who had settled in Canada, beyond the reach of the Fugitive Slave Law. Her work in bringing slaves out of the South gave her not only detailed knowledge of the terrain throughout Brown’s planned Appalachian route, but invaluable military experience. Brown went to meet the woman he called “General Tubman” at St. Catherines in Canada; she enthusiastically embraced his plan for arming the slaves and setting up mountain strongholds from which to wage war against slavery.

Tubman agreed to recruit followers and raise money for the plan. She also may have attended the Chatham, Ontario convention in May 1858, where Brown and his followers discussed the constitution for the new black republic. A sternly religious man not given to superlatives, Brown wrote to his son: “Harriet Tubman hooked on *his* whole team at once. *He Harriet* is the most of a man naturally; that I ever met with. There is the most abundant material; & of the *right quality*; in this quarter; beyond all doubt” (quoted in Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land With Blood*).

But when the time came to launch the raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry which was to begin the guerrilla war, Tubman was ill and out of reach. Only sickness, brought on by her toil and exposure, kept her from being with Brown at Harpers Ferry. Thus Tubman was not there when federal troops dispatched by President Buchanan and under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart rounded up Brown and his men. A few escaped; of the rest, those who were not killed on the spot were railroaded and hanged by the vindictive courts of Virginia. At his execution in December 1859, John Brown’s last, prescient words spoke of the years to come: “I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this *guilty, land*: will never be purged away; but with *Blood*. I had as I now think: vainly flattered myself that without very *much* bloodshed; it might be



W&R Photo

Monument by Saint-Gaudens memorializing Robert Gould Shaw and his heroic black troops still stands in Boston Common.

done" (*ibid.*, emphasis in original). In the North John Brown's martyrdom was a rallying cry for abolition, while hysterical fear of insurrection swept the South and led to lynchings of suspected agitators. In later years Harriet Tubman spoke of Brown, "We Negroes in the South never call him John Brown; we call him our Saviour. He died for us."

The Civil War Years

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 out of the struggle for Kansas. For the 1860 presidential election the Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln as a moderate capable of winning wider support than more radical candidates. Although he opposed the expansion of slavery, Lincoln's platform did not call for its elimination in the states where it already existed. Lincoln explicitly denounced John Brown's raid and declared his execution just. But Lincoln was still too anti-slavery for the South, and the secession of (eventually) eleven states led to the Confederate States of America. The Northern government, hoping for yet another compromise, had to be dragged kicking and screaming into the war, which was forced on them by the slaveholders' cannons at Fort Sumter. To Lincoln and the majority of the Northern ruling class, the goal of the war was not to end slavery but to put down the secession of the South.

Harriet Tubman again saw further, earlier: that the war for the Union must become a war to free the slaves. The abolitionist Lydia Maria Child quoted her words in a letter to the poet John Greenleaf Whittier (quoted in Conrad, *op. cit.*):

"They may send the flower of their young men down South, to die of the fever in the summer and the ague in the winter. . . . They may send them one year, two year, three year, till they tire of sending or till they use up the young men. All of no use. God is ahead of Mister Lincoln. God won't let Mister Lincoln beat the South till he does the right thing. Mister Lincoln, he is a great man, and I'm a poor Negro; but this Negro can tell Mister Lincoln how to save the money and the young

men. He can do it by setting the Negroes free. Suppose there was an awfully big snake down there on the floor. He bites you. You send for the doctor to cut the bite; but the snake, he rolls up there, and while the doctor is doing it, he bites you again . . . and so he keeps doing till you kill him. That's what Mister Lincoln ought to know."

But in the early months of the war Lincoln was opposed to the abolition of slavery in the U.S. in a military/political maneuver to woo secessionists and would-be secessionists into the Union. When General John C. Frémont, commander of the western department, declared in August 1861 that all property of Missourians in rebellion was confiscated and the slaves emancipated, Lincoln fired him and rescinded the order. It took two years of ignominious defeats at the hands of the rebels to convince Lincoln of the necessity of freeing the slaves. When it became clear by late 1862 that the North could not win the war in any other way, he made plans to issue the Emancipation Proclamation—finally ending the spirit of compromise which had immobilized the North:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom."

Although the Emancipation Proclamation expressly left intact slavery in Union-loyal states like Maryland, January 1, 1863 was a day of rejoicing among all anti-slavery people. Douglass described his reaction:

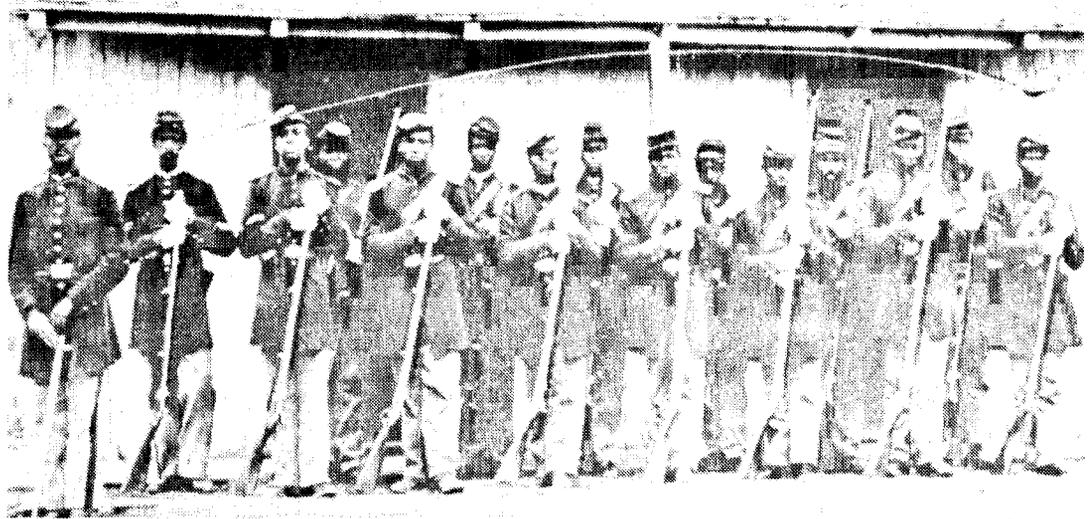
"...I took the proclamation, first and last, for a little more than it purported, and saw in its spirit a life and power far beyond its letter. Its meaning to me was the entire abolition of slavery, wherever the evil could be reached by the federal arm, and I saw that its moral power would extend much further."

—*Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*

Almost as important as freedom itself was the government's decision to form regiments of black soldiers. Harriet Tubman herself was within earshot of one of the first battles employing blacks in combat: the heroic assault on the Confederate Fort Wagner, South Carolina, in July of 1863. It was here that the Massachusetts 54th, the first regiment of free Northern blacks, led by Tubman's friend Robert Gould Shaw, demonstrated before the eyes of the nation the courage and commitment of black soldiers. It was probably this battle Tubman was describing in her dramatic words: "And then we saw the lightning, and that was the guns; and then we heard the thunder, and that was the big guns; and then we heard the rain falling, and that was the drops of blood falling; and when we came to get in the crops, it was dead men that we reaped." From then on black soldiers were thrown into the fighting on all fronts, tipping the balance of power for the ultimate Northern victory against the slavocracy.

Fort Wagner was quite near to Port Royal, South

Black soldiers tipped the balance for Union victory in the Civil War. Members of the "107th U.S. Colored Infantry" at Fort Corcoran near Washington saw action late in the war.



Library of Congress

Carolina, where Tubman spent most of the war years working for the Union Army. One of the earliest Union victories had liberated the lush Sea Islands from the slaveholders; from here the Union Army ran its Department of the South. Control of the port allowed Union gunboats to patrol the coastline from Savannah to Charleston and begin a blockade of Confederate shipping, cutting off trade between the cotton South and the textile merchants of Great Britain. Fugitive slaves and freedmen flocked to the protection of the Union Army. Abolitionists set up schools to teach the blacks, young and old, to read and write.

Here Tubman worked in the army's service in many capacities. Her authority as the "Moses" of the Underground Railroad was enormously important in reassuring the freedmen of the trustworthiness of the Yankees. As a nurse she first ministered predominantly to the blacks suffering from malnutrition. Later she nursed both black and white soldiers, going from camp to camp where men were dying of dysentery, smallpox and malaria. She set up a laundry and taught women to earn a living, while supporting herself by baking pies and brewing root beer at night after her hard

day's labor.

Tubman's outstanding contribution to the war was as a Union spy and scout. General Hunter, the commander at Port Royal, recognized her expertise, tempered by her years in the Underground Railroad; under him Tubman organized a scouting service of black scouts and river pilots who surveyed and patrolled the Combahee River area in South Carolina.

In this capacity she was integral to a celebrated military action on the Combahee on 2 June 1863. Three ships under the command of Colonel James Montgomery, a veteran of the guerrilla battles in Kansas and a trusted comrade of John Brown, raided deep into South Carolina in a blow pointing forward to Sherman's march on Georgia. The *Boston Commonwealth* described the battle:

"Col. Montgomery and his gallant band of 300 black soldiers, *under the guidance of a black woman*, dashed into the enemy's country, struck a bold and effective blow, destroying millions of dollars worth of commissary stores, cotton and lordly dwellings, and striking terror into the heart of rebeldom, brought off near 800 slaves and thousands of dollars worth of property, without losing a man or receiving a scratch."

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The liberated slaves were brought back to Port Royal, where the able-bodied men among them were inducted into Montgomery's regiment.

Reconstruction Betrayed

At the war's end in 1865, over 600,000 Americans lay dead—almost equal to the number of American deaths in all the rest of the nation's wars combined. It took this bloody conflagration to resolve two key questions in American history: the Civil War forged a loose confederation of individual states into a modern nation. And underlying this question of political power lay the conflict between slavery and capitalism. The black question is the linchpin of American history.

Northern industrialism, unfettered at long last from the opposition of the slaveholders, wasted no time. In 1869, the transcontinental railroad was completed. A federal protective tariff fostered the growth of domestic industry. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided for the free-soil colonization of the vast territories of the West.

But in 1865 the question of what position the newly liberated slaves should occupy in American society cried out for an answer. The initial conciliationist policy of the federal government under Andrew Johnson was strenuously opposed by the Radical Republicans under the leadership of Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner. Congressional legislation provided for full political equality for blacks: the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution are the legal codification of the gains of the Civil War. Slavery was wiped from the American Constitution, and blacks were made full citizens by law. The 15th Amendment, as well as the Civil Rights Act of 1866, was passed to provide federal protection of blacks against Southern counterrevolutionary violence. Black rights were enforced at riflepoint by the interracial Union Army.

But the foundation upon which black equality must

rest was never laid: only confiscation of the huge plantation holdings of the ex-slaveowners and their distribution among the ex-slaves would have laid the economic basis without which "equality" remained a legal formality. Having completed their revolution against slavery—the last great bourgeois revolution—the Northern capitalists turned their backs on the blacks. Although they may have been opposed to property in human flesh, the robber barons of the late 19th century allied with Southern landholders for private property in the means of production. Even the most basic of political rights, the right to vote, was denied to all women at this time, both black and white. The capitalist reaction flowed from the inherent inability of a system based on private ownership of the means of production to eliminate scarcity, the economic source of all social inequality. Only abolition of private property will remove the social roots of racial and sexual oppression.

Radical Reconstruction was destroyed in a political counterrevolution which stripped blacks of their newly won economic and political rights. Nightriding race-terrorists intimidated and murdered the freedmen; the Ku Klux Klan was founded shortly after the war by ex-Confederate officers. The Compromise of 1877 codified the rollback of Reconstruction: the Republican Party bought the presidency of Rutherford B. Hayes in exchange for the removal of Union troops from the South. Over the years a new form of rural repression developed to replace the slave plantations. The Jim Crow system of segregation and disenfranchisement bound the liberated slaves to poverty and oppression as landless sharecroppers.

The betrayal of the struggle for black freedom was certainly experienced by Harriet Tubman. At the war's end, almost 50 years old, she was at last able to head for her home in Auburn, New York. Exhausted by her years



Schomburg Collection



Valentine Museum, Richmond

"You wouldn't think that after I served the flag so faithfully I should come to want in its folds," Harriet Tubman commented scornfully late in life. Radical Reconstruction attempted to carry out liberating goals of Civil War, including building schools for black children, but was destroyed through political counterrevolution, leading to renewed black oppression and poverty.



Workers Vanguard

Finish the Civil War! Spartacist League-initiated Labor/Black Mobilization of over 5,000, centrally black trade unionists, stopped KKK march/provocation in Washington, D.C., 27 November 1982.

of labor, subject to increasing bouts of sickness, and with family members looking to her for support, her active political life was essentially over. En route North she was beaten by a train conductor who ridiculed her Union pass, entitling her to free transportation as an army veteran. She was thrown into the baggage car, badly hurt and humiliated by this racist and sexist attack. She suffered from the effects of this injury for years. Then began a decades-long battle for the pension to which her three years of war service entitled her. Tubman commented scornfully, "You wouldn't think that after I served the flag so faithfully I should come to want in its folds." She did not receive a penny until after the death of her second husband, Nelson Davis, in 1888, when she was awarded \$8 a month. In 1899, when she was nearly 80 years old, the government made some recognition of her service to the Union. She received a full pension, much of which she used to establish a home, named in honor of John Brown, for indigent elderly blacks. Harriet Tubman died in 1913, over 90 years old.

Finish the Civil War!

At the time of Lincoln's re-election in 1864, the International Workingmen's Association, of which Karl Marx was a leading member, sent the president a letter of congratulation:

"From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class... When an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, 'slavery' on the banner of armed revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century;... then the working classes of Europe understood at once... that the slaveholders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labor...."

But the stars and stripes, the proud banner of the Civil War, has long since become mired in the filth of racism and imperialist war. Only the working class, under

revolutionary socialist leadership, can lead mankind out of the putrid decay that is capitalist society today.

Marx said, "Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded." The destruction of slavery signaled the birth of the American labor movement, the rise of unions and agitation for the eight-hour day. Blacks today play a strategic role in the American working class. Over the years mass migration from the rural South into the cities, both North and South, has transformed the black population from a largely rural, agricultural layer into an urban, industrial group. As an oppressed race-color caste integrated at the bottom of the U.S. economy, blacks suffer from capitalist exploitation compounded with vicious racial oppression—for them, the "American dream" is a nightmare! In precise Marxist terms black people are the reserve army of the unemployed, last hired, first fired, a crucial economic component of the boom/bust cycle of the capitalist mode of production. Thus Marx's words are all too true today: the fight for black liberation is the fight for the emancipation of all working people. It is the race question—the poison of racism—that keeps the American working class divided. As long as the labor movement does not take up the struggle of black people, there will be no struggle for any emancipation—just as the Civil War could not be won without the freeing and arming of the slaves.

Today the oppressed and exploited must look to the red banner of socialist revolution for their liberation. The Spartacist League raises the slogans, "Finish the Civil War! Forward to the Third American Revolution!" to express the historic tasks which fall to the revolutionary party. A workers party as the tribune of the people will fight for the interests of all the oppressed. Liberation for blacks and women can be won only by a workers government which will smash the capitalist system and reorganize society on the basis of a planned socialist economy. Key leadership in the revolutionary struggle will be provided by the Harriet Tubmans and Frederick Douglasses of our time. We honor these great black leaders for their role in bringing the day of liberation one giant step closer. ■

In the Revolutionary Vanguard of the Civil War



New York Historical Society



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Harriet Tubman: Fighter for Black Freedom

Toward the end of her long life, the black abolitionist Harriet Tubman commented on her years of service to the liberation of black people in a conversation with a journalist:

"She looked musingly toward a nearby orchard, and she asked suddenly: 'Do you like apples?' On being assured that I did, she said: 'Did you ever plant any apple trees?' With shame I confessed I had not. 'No,' said she, 'but somebody else planted them. I liked apples when I was young, and I said, 'Some day I'll plant apples myself for other young folks to eat,' and I guess I did it.'"

—Frank C. Drake, *The New York Herald*,
22 September 1907, quoted in
Earl Conrad, *Harriet Tubman*

In this simple metaphor, Tubman recognized the vanguard role she played in laying the groundwork for black freedom in the United States in the revolution that was the Civil War. As a conductor on the Underground Railroad and a military strategist and spy during the war, "General" Tubman, as John Brown dubbed her, stood in the revolutionary insurrectionist wing of the abolitionist movement in the struggle against the Southern slavocracy. Like John Brown, the heroic martyr of the 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, and the outstanding political leader of the abolitionist movement, Frederick Douglass, Tubman knew that freedom for the slave would come about only through blood and iron. Harriet Tubman's life is a microcosm of the struggle for black liberation in the

19th century; her life directly reflects the issues of the time.

Although the hope for a complete liberation of black people was later defeated in the cowardly betrayal of Reconstruction, Tubman's "apple orchard"—freedom for the slave—was a tremendous historical advance. The abolition of slavery and the fight for full citizenship for the black population was the great historic task of the Civil War, the second American Revolution, which carried forward the unfinished business of the first American Revolution.

The abolitionist movement was part of a broader bourgeois radicalism, the 19th century descendant of the 18th century Enlightenment, Protestant religious ideals and the American Revolution so dramatically unfulfilled in the "Land of the Free" where four million suffered in slavery. The abolitionists were part of the religious and intellectual upsurge which swept the United States after 1820, encompassing such movements as Transcendentalism and Unitarianism. Particularly among the most politically radical wing, the abolitionists were motivated by a vision of human emancipation profoundly rooted in religion. To men like the clergymen Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Theodore Parker, slavery was an abomination to god and the Christian Bible and a gross betrayal of the rights of man as put forth in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

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