

UPROAR at Ellensberg  
Regroupment Conference

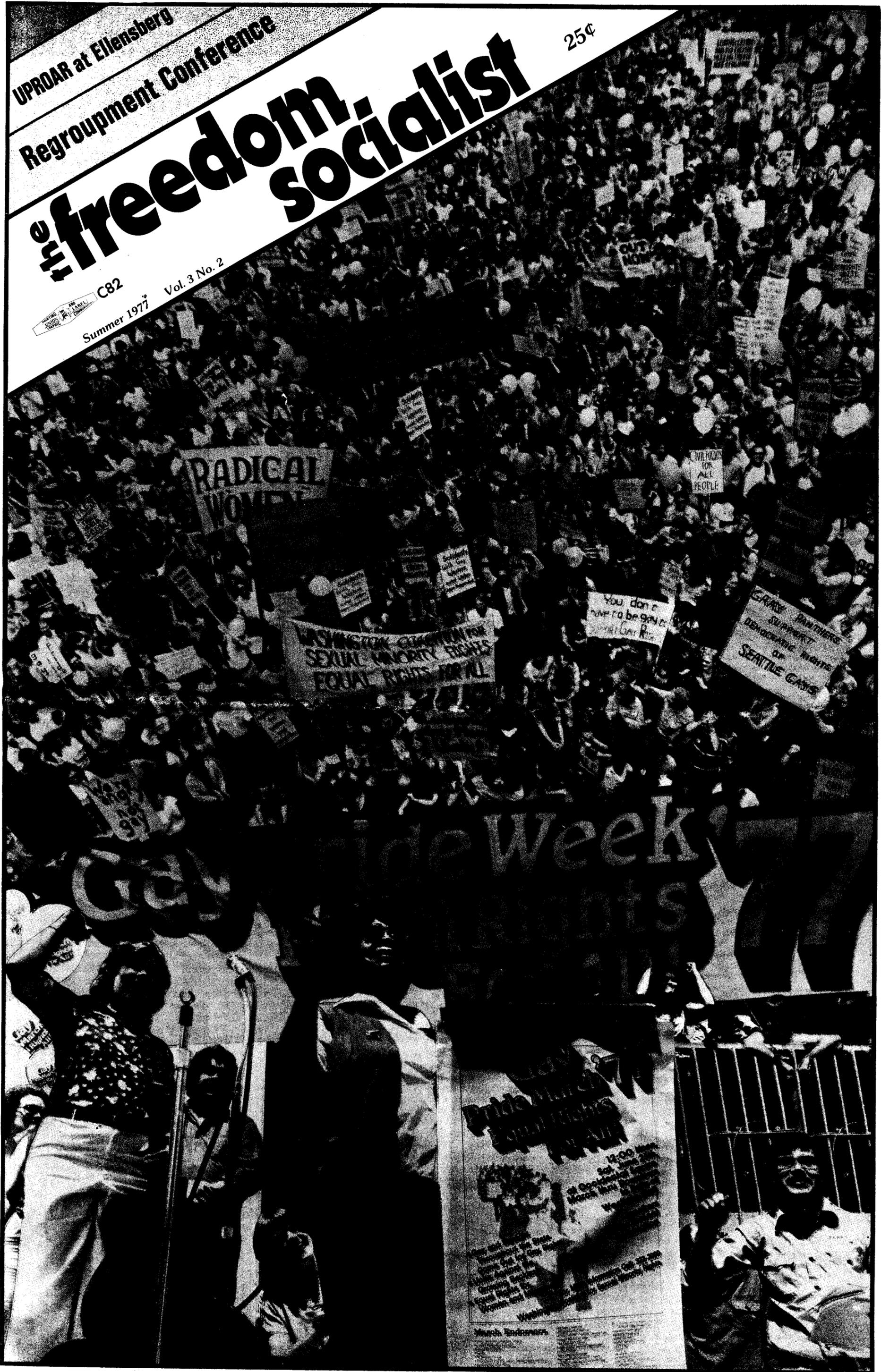
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# the freedom socialist

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Summer 1977

Vol. 3 No. 2



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2,000 ANTIFEMINIST CHURCHWOMEN INVADE the Washington State Women's Conference. Liberals and the SWP are paralyzed, leaving minority women and radicals to engage the enemy on the issues.

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LANDMARK CONFERENCE ON REVOLUTIONARY REGROUPMENT attracts experienced Trotskyists to Los Angeles, and an inspiring thing happens: the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party is inaugurated, dedicated to the reconstitution of American Trotskyism.

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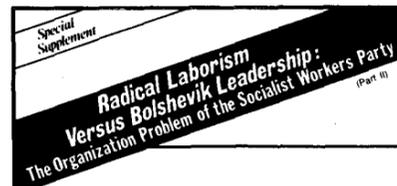
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GAYS MOUNT THEIR MOST MASSIVE PROTEST IN HISTORY in response to Anita Bryant's holy rightwing crusade for bigotry.

## the freedom socialist

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ON THE COVER: Thousands turn out in Seattle for Gay Pride Week demonstration.

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# letters letters lett

Dear Comrades,

The Women's Place Resource Center very much enjoys receiving the *Freedom Socialist*. I appreciate the work you are doing for us all and the model the Party provides for alternatives to a distressed and depressing capitalist system.

In work and friendship,  
Diana Lobo  
Portland, OR

Dear Clara,

I do not understand revolutionaries who think it is chic to smoke. I am appalled that your column masthead insists on being the typical reporter with a cig in hand. Geez, didn't no one tell you that Bogart died of lung cancer. If you have to smoke (some people drink) you should have the consciousness to be ashamed of it. Save our lungs!

Yours,  
E. Bokhara

P.S. The column itself was damn good.

P.P.S. Lung cancer among women is quickly rising to par with men. This is one aspect of equality we don't need.

Clara Fraser Replies:

I don't think it's 'chic' to smoke, and I don't insist on being shown smoking—it's just that every photo of me in existence has me either talking or smoking or drinking (yes, I do that, too). But you're right! I surrender! Don't shoot! Since you liked my column, I'll be delighted to change the photo. But I am puzzled at the reference to Bogart—what's the connection? If you consider me a tough guy, O.K. But I sure hope I don't look like him.

Editor,

I went to the Washington State Women's Conference at Ellensburg in July expecting a prolonged debate with other feminists who want a nice clean ERA effort unbesmirched by any openly stated connection with the struggles of minority women, lesbians, and working women for the civil rights and economic

changes that would make equal rights a reality.

I thought a little verbal pushing and shoving at the conference might produce more militant resolutions on such issues as affirmative action, child care, and protective legislation.

I had little interest in the ultimate transmittal of these resolutions to Houston and then to Congress. I would have had more faith in their ultimately promoting legislative reform had they simply been intended for placement in a time capsule to be opened after the revolution. But I thought the dialogue might help thinking feminists see that only radical changes in our society will end the penny scramble between white males and all the rest of us for the few decent jobs available.

I wanted to see women troubled by the recent Supreme Court decision on abortion connect that ruling with the capitalist need for a large, cheap labor force and a conscriptable army.

What I did not expect was to have to fight to even raise these issues! As a member of the multi-issues caucus organized by Radical Women, I saw first-hand their commendable efforts to get issues onto the floor. I objected to the pleas of liberal feminists to stall and counter the rightwing by non-debate. Like all forms of repression, their tactics didn't work.

Ellensburg was an illustration of the unresolved differences in the feminist movement, and the enormity of the forces opposing change in our society. The well-organized reactionaries speedily summoned an unthinking and fascistic horde of true Mormon believers who turned all attempts at dialogue into an absurdity of false logic and prejudice.

I wonder how many people who saw this challenge to reason in all its raw tenacity are as inwardly preoccupied as I have become, trying to make sense of it and looking for solutions.

Janet Sutherland  
Kirkland, WA

Editor's Note: Readers will find our account of the Ellensburg conference on page 10.

Dear Comrades:

I am starting a sort of "do-it-yourself literature table" project, e.g., putting catalogs & brochures from left publishing houses out at movement events here (which, praise Marx, are beginning to happen again). If you could send me about 100 of any lit list, etc., you have in time for an Aug. 14 distribution, I'd be happy.

Tom Condit  
Berkeley, CA

Dear Comrades,

I talked to a couple of FSP members at the July 4th gay march.

You're the only left group I've heard of that has a revolutionary line on gay liberation and carries it out IN PRACTICE.

The I.S., which I was a member of in 1975, passed a revolutionary line in 1972, but their leadership has tried to play it down in the last several years because "it isn't a priority" and "we don't want to offend the workers" (typical of patronizing, petty-bourgeois "workerism").

The few recent articles on our movement I've seen in *Workers Power* (I.S. paper) had little political content or analysis. Involvement in trade union work is a poor excuse for this—from what I've heard, an extremely high percentage of your organization is active in unions.

The FSP seems to be close to the 4th International Majority on a lot of questions. I've always wondered why that tendency isn't organized in the U.S. to counteract all these berserk groups like the Spartacists and the Worker's League.

Socialists in Gay Action have been talking about starting a Gay Liberation/Revolutionary Socialist paper. It's time us Trotskyists and revolutionaries with clear working class politics got together and put forward a full ideological alternative to the Maoists, who now dominate the gay left here.

In solidarity,  
John Burnett  
San Francisco, CA

## South Africans Blast Apartheid at Canadian Conference

by Madlyne Scott

Apartheid, the nakedly inhuman, hellish system of institutionalized white supremacy in every social sphere, is crumbling under a wave of militant protest and virtual war waged by the ruthlessly exploited and disinherited Black Africans.

The mass struggle against apartheid and the necessity for international support were the subjects of a recent Canadian conference, "Southern Africa: A Time of Change," the first conference on the Pacific Coast where Black Africans were present to describe their struggle. They were eloquent and determined as they demanded more than moral outrage from the 200 participants. Black Africans, they said, need committed political support and international economic boycotts against the racist regimes of southern Africa.

Conference participants responded with commitments to develop public educationals to provide support for the independence struggles, particularly for political prisoners and their dependents and students who face a brutal reaction to their protests. In a move beyond previously empty gestures of sympathy, public campaigns and lobbying to promote economic boycotts of companies which do business with the southern African regimes were promised as a form of direct action against the southern African racists.

The conference, held in Vancouver, B.C. on May 14-15, 1977, was sponsored by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, a coalition of labor, church,

and Africa support groups. The event was beautifully and carefully organized and the speakers, scrupulous in sticking to their issues and time limits, provided a thorough briefing on the fast-moving course of recent events in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia and South Africa.

Unfortunately, the spirit of solidarity was not followed to its logical political conclusion. While conference organizers were supportive of armed struggle by Black Africans against their oppressors, they steered clear of indicting the real culprits—U.S. and Canadian capitalism, without whose economic backing apartheid could not survive.

George Johnston, president of the Vancouver Federation of Labor and conference chairperson, read a telegram from Joe Morris, president of the Canadian Labor Congress, which affirmed support for the struggle of the oppressed people of southern Africa. Johnston announced the formation of a fund to support the work of African freedom fighters.

### Exciting Workshops

Educational workshops played a key role in heightening the impact of the conference. Calistus Ndlovu and Edison Zvobgo, from Zimbabwe, led an illuminating session on their country. Their biting and realistic account of the ruthless colonial exploitation suffered by Zimbabweans reminded conference participants of the takeover of North America from the Native Americans.

Calistus Ndlovu, a representative of the Patriotic Front which is waging war in Zimbabwe, said that the Front re-

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# Women Workers Share Skills, Plan Strategy at A Practical Conference for Union and Working Women



Keynote speaker **ELKE BOETTCHER**, president of Seattle Librarians Local 2083 AFSCME.



**BETTY BOWIE** (right), leader in the 1976 nurses strike. Co-panelists **YOLANDA ALANIZ** (left), president of United Workers Union-Independent, and **MAXINE REIGEL** (center), Boilermakers Union delegate to the King County Labor Council.



**CLARA FRASER**, labor negotiator, delivers keynote speech on "Women's Place in the House of Labor."

by Laura Teague and Henry Noble

**W**orking women, members of 25 Washington and Oregon unions, emerged from a unique weekend conference in Seattle on June 18 and 19 brimming with invaluable information, skills, contacts and ideas for strengthening the role of women in the labor movement.

The spirit and purpose of the 150 participants in the "Practical Conference for Union and Working Women" was captured perfectly in a resolution adopted unanimously in the closing session:

**Be it resolved that we union and working women and men at this conference take strong political action through our unions and workplaces in support of the rights of all workers everywhere, and that we pressure the leaders of organized labor to take up their responsibilities to organize and actively represent women, minorities and all low-paid workers.**

The conference, expressly organized to provide women unionists an opportunity to learn how to advance their rights, articulate their needs, and expand their effectiveness in the unions, was sponsored by the Feminist Coordinating Council; Staff Association Union of Pierce County Library; and Public Library Employees Locals 2083, 2083N, 1581W and 114L, all affiliates of AFSCME, AFL-CIO.

## stick to your feminist and labor principles

Librarians, nurses, bus drivers, bank clerks, welders, painters, shipyard workers, electricians, carpenters, office workers, service and phone workers, teamsters, teachers, postal workers and many others eagerly shared experiences, and the conference was rich in content with the teaching of how-to's, the facilitating of many new working alliances, and strong encouragement to women and minority unionists.

Library workers in particular played a key role in the conference, working out strategies for themselves and conveying their experience to all the participants.

### Hearing It From Women Labor Leaders

Conference keynoters were Elke Boettcher, a Seattle librarian and president of AFSCME Local 2083, who dealt with "A Strategy for Public Employees," and labor negotiator Clara Fraser, speaking on "Women's Place in the House of Labor." Boettcher and Fraser set the tone and outlined the themes which were to characterize the entire event.

"Change for workers comes about within government institutions as well as private industry," Boettcher said, "and public employees are an arm of the citizenry inside those institutions. As such, they have a responsibility to watchdog and to speak out."

She called for solidarity among the workforce and with the public, and lashed out at the taboo against public employees who are "political." "Can we afford *not* to be political?!" she demanded.

Fraser promised that women who are dedicated to unionism will strengthen not only feminism but the entire labor movement. She reviewed women's long history of work and unionism, attributing much of their typically submerged status in the labor movement to the debilitating influence of the "I can't do it" syndrome of the feminine mystique.

"When women discover the depth of our anger and

resentment at the arrogant and insulting treatment by the bosses, and when we discover our innate capacity as women to make demands—then we'll shake the labor movement and change the world. Feminism and unionism are a powerful combination!"

A panel discussion on "The Female Trade Unionist: Special Problems and Solutions" was presented by three labor activists.

## nurses finally got it together ... a beautiful awakening

Yolanda Alaniz, Chicana president of United Workers Union-Independent and a member of the City of Seattle Women's Commission, spoke of the special concerns and emerging leadership of women, minorities and low-paid workers.

"Unions today must seek to meet the needs of women, ethnic and sexual minorities, and low-paid workers because our struggle as workers is not separate from our struggle against discrimination," she said.

Alaniz also addressed the question of independent unions, weighing their advantages and disadvantages for minority and female workers traditionally ignored by the labor bureaucracy.

Maxine Reigel, a welder and delegate to the King County Labor Council from Boilermakers Local 104, stressed the importance of union involvement by women breaking into nontraditional trades.

"By our demonstrated commitment as unionists," she said, "we can win support from our union brothers for our concerns as minority and women workers."

Reigel assured the conference that she would continue as a Labor Council delegate only so long as she was free to speak her mind and oppose capitalist party politicking by labor.

"Stick to the labor and feminist principles you took with you into the unions," she urged. "Otherwise, you can be co-opted into holding an office that silences you."

The success of the precedent-setting nurses strike in 1976 was described and evaluated by panelist Betty Bowie, a registered nurse and strike leader.

"The nurses finally got it together! It was a beautiful awakening," she said, urging the conference to make use of the tremendous power for change they have as women, as unionists, and as an automatic "51% lobbying force!"

### Solidarity as a Two-Way Street

The contributions of speakers and participants tendered a vivid picture of both positive and negative conditions in the labor movement and attested to the potential of women to build a unified movement which

would address the wide range of issues facing all workers. Discussions centered on ways and means of achieving a solidarity which recognizes the needs of all.

"The union's interests should be as broad as its members' interests," Boettcher declared, and her statement was supported by Monica Hill, leader of the workshop on "Political Action Through the Unions," who offered examples of United Workers Union-Independent's engagement in community coalitions on childcare, abortion and police brutality.

"It is impossible to separate union issues from the social and political issues that affect us as total people," Hill explained.

In the workshop on "Winning Support for Sex and Race Discrimination Cases," Rosa Morales, Chicana activist and unionist, reviewed the impressive campus and community struggle mounted against her suspension from her secretarial job because of political differences with her boss, the Director of Chicano Studies at the U.W.

Megan Cornish, an apprentice electrician at Seattle City Light and IBEW Local 77 member, described how the women electricians who are active in the union pressure the union to back them as workers and as women.

The conference adopted a resolution from the workshop on part-time workers which promoted a novel kind of solidarity by recognizing the value of part-time work and protesting the attitude that part-time, temporary and intermittent employees are a threat or not worthy of organizing.

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Top: A television newsman interviews FCC member **JOANNE WARD**, a conference organizer, during the newsworthy event.

Left: Men attending the conference supported the conference program and resolutions.

Bottom: Role playing. Members of the "union" team enjoy sunshine as they plot their strategy against the "management" team during the tense and dramatic "Negotiations" workshop.



photo: Carol Riddell

# Native American Forum Draws 350



by Mary Morrison

*If you have money, you have it made, but if you're a Peltier, you're going to be in two sets of handcuffs. What has happened to Leonard Peltier is like what is happening to minorities and people everywhere. We must let the U.S. government know that this brother is not alone.*

This strong indictment of the capitalist "justice" meted out to AIM leader Peltier capped the speech of Ramona Bennett, chairwoman of the Puyallup Tribe, at a June 24 Seattle forum called to "Free the People: Justice for Leonard Peltier!"

More than 20 organizations including radical, feminist, labor and gay groups endorsed the gathering sponsored by the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee and attended by 350 people.

The forum was held at the Daybreak Star Center at Fort Lawton, high on a bluff overlooking Puget Sound. This beautiful new Native American cultural center is built on Indian land wrested from the U.S. Army through a militant occupation by Northwest Indians—with Leonard Peltier in the forefront of the struggle.

Peltier was convicted last April, on circumstantial evidence, of the 1975 killing of two FBI agents at the Pine Ridge, South Dakota reservation—a conviction amply demonstrated to be a political frame-up. The court allowed the government, previously unsuccessful in establishing a case against Peltier's three co-defendants, five weeks to present its case against Peltier, while the defense was allowed only four and one-half days. On June 1, Peltier was sentenced to two life terms.

## Kangaroo Court Exposed

In a moving and drama-filled presentation, Myrtle Poor Bear described the continual harassment and implied threats on her life—and her child—by FBI agents who forced her to sign affidavits saying she saw Peltier shoot the agents. She strongly disavowed the affidavits, which were used as the basis for Peltier's extradition from Canada. "I am risking my life but everything I am saying is true," she said, and the audience, absolutely silent while she spoke, erupted into strong applause.

Stuart Rush, a member of the Canadian defense team which fought unsuccessfully to halt the extradition of Peltier after he sought asylum in Canada, stated that the legal battle was only a portion of the political struggle of oppressed people against their exploitation by this system, and the



LEONARD PELTIER, IMPRISONED AIM LEADER

ongoing war waged by Native Americans for national sovereignty.

Karen Bagn, of the U.S. defense team, said the trial was an example of the government's use of the court system for harassment, humiliation and coercion. She quoted Peltier's statement at his sentencing hearing when he accused the judge of being "blind, stupid or without human feelings, so there is little doubt and little chance that you have the ability to avoid doing today what the FBI wants you to do, which is to sentence me to two life terms consecutively."

Bruce Ellison, one of Peltier's attorneys, also described the incredible mockery of the Fargo, North Dakota trial. The FBI had Judge Benson's full cooperation in its presentation of altered affidavits, and irrelevant hearsay testimony. Yet questions most crucial to the defense were forbidden: Why was the FBI on the Pine Ridge reservation on June 26, 1975? Why were they invading and burning natives' homes? Why did a major government military invasion of Oglala Sioux lands occur on June 26 when these people had committed no crime?

Judge Benson also refused to allow Myrtle Poor Bear to testify.

The panel of speakers exposed the government's plot to seize Pine Ridge land in order to steal valuable uranium and minerals discovered there. The same day Pine Ridge was invaded, Dick Wilson, a puppet on the Tribal Council, signed over one-eighth of the Pine Ridge reservation to the government!

## Enough is Enough!

Madlyne Scott of the Freedom Socialist Party conducted a rousing fundraising effort which resulted in the collection of \$1800.

Steve Robideau, chief organizer of the forum, thanked the audience for its support and asked for everyone's participation in the defense effort. The Defense Committee is currently circulating petitions for the release of Peltier and the investigation of government conduct in the trial. Supporters were asked to write to the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, P. O. Box 522, Suquamish, WA 98392.

The sound of a ceremonial drum and the AIM national anthem rising above a mass of upraised fists provided a stirring conclusion to the highly successful forum.

*"Native people must speak out in unity with our non-native brothers and sisters. We must say, 'Enough is enough!! No longer will we let you push us from our land which is our life.'"*

Leonard Peltier said this. His words must be heeded and his life spared. ■

Mary Morrison, a dedicated civil rights advocate, is the Child Care Coordinator for the University of Washington.



Above: Speakers panel at the Peltier Defense Forum. (From left) STEVE ROBIDEAU, Defense Committee organizer; KAREN BAGN, legal defense team member; JOHN CHIQUITI, Native American activist; RAMONA BENNETT, Chairperson of Puyallup Tribe; MYRTLE POOR BEAR, key figure in the Peltier case; BRUCE ELLISON, attorney for Peltier at Fargo trial; STUART RUSH, Vancouver, B.C. extradition lawyer for Peltier.

Left: DRAMATIC CLIMAX OF THE FORUM: The huge crowd surrounds the pounding ceremonial drum as Native American singers chant a prolonged rendition of the inspiring AIM anthem.

# "Dedicated to the New

by Ed Rader

**A BOLD NEW REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY** committed to the revitalization of U.S. Trotskyism has just emerged on the regroupment front.

A conference of veteran Trotskyist leaders and youthful revolutionary socialists convened in Los Angeles during the weekend of July 22-24 and culminated in the formation of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP), "dedicated to the reconstitution of American Trotskyism."

Drawn together by general agreement with the political program of the Fourth International and a common conviction that the Socialist Workers Party no longer represents authentic Trotskyism, the conference participants included representatives of the L.A.-based Socialist Union, the Progressive Workers Organizing Committee of Denver, the FSP, members of the former Internationalist Tendency of the SWP, and independent radicals from New York, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles. Delegates included such well-known radicals as Myra Tanner Weiss, Murry Weiss, Edith Zaslow, Milt Zaslow and Clara Fraser.

After intense discussion and debate of many key issues facing the radical movement, the general line of a strong



MILTON ZASLOW, driving force behind the Socialist Union and former SWP organizer.

Draft Statement of Purpose was adopted. The Draft declares at the outset:

We adhere to the programmatic foundations of the early Communist International, the struggle of the Left Opposition against the degeneration of the Soviet Union, and the Fourth International which embodies these traditions and is building the world party of the socialist revolution.

Most of us have a common origin in the early SWP. Although we left the SWP at different times and apparently over different issues, we are all convinced that the SWP has degenerated into a monolithic centrist formation.

Together with other comrades who have recently embraced the general program of the Fourth International, we have undertaken the difficult, but unpostponable, task of recreating an organized expression of revolutionary Marxism in the U.S.

## Rejuvenation of Marxism

Myra Tanner Weiss of New York City presented the report on "Regroupment." She vividly summarized the contrast of the rich heritage of Trotskyism and the degeneration into centrism of the SWP.

According to Comrade Myra,

Revolutionary perspectives, especially in this country, have to be based on our capacity to reach out to those who are moving left, to those who are seeking or have already found solutions, even partial ones . . .

Regroupment is first of all a question of

*\*The Draft Statement is currently undergoing minor editorial and stylistic changes. When finalized, the full text will be published in the Freedom Socialist.*

# Reconstitution of American Trotskyism" National Tendency Launched

democracy. Bureaucracy is inherently opposed to revolution; a machine hates free debate! We don't want a monolithic relationship but the expression of many different views. Our discussions will excite and educate larger and larger layers of the radical movement who will be interested and inspired by the free and open manner in which we discuss our differences.

One of the chief differences that emerged during the conference centered around the nature of the current regroupment process.

A minority of four independents questioned or opposed the formation of an avowedly Trotskyist tendency on the grounds that it was "too narrow" and "premature," and would "exclude and alienate a large segment of the radical movement"—former New Left activists who associate Trotskyism with the transparent opportunism of the SWP or the simplistic ultra-leftism of the Spartacist League.

The minority felt that U.S. Marxism was yet to be developed and that regroupment could not be consummated until an extensive literary exchange produced a definitive theory of the U.S. revolution.

The conference overwhelmingly rejected the "closet" Trotskyist concept, insisting on forming a tendency now as the sole means of distinguishing genuine revolutionary internationalism from the SWP and SL.

Myra Weiss summarized the heroic traditions, accomplishments and theoretical contributions of American Trotskyism, promising that "those who adhere to Trotskyism will survive because we *do* have the great answers to the basic questions and together we will elaborate and enrich our theory."

The majority contended that only a cohesive ideological world-view could serve as a pole of attraction



**"THE WOMAN QUESTION WILL NEVER AGAIN BE PUT ON THE BACK BURNER."  
—EDITH ZASLOW, long-time Trotskyist and Socialist Union activist.**

over a key segment of the proletarian vanguard," he said.

Zaslow called for building a Marxist party which would unite the divided proletarian vanguard by wresting the revolutionary-minded workers from the reformist and centrist leaderships through a combination of united front class actions and intensive political debate.\*

Murry Weiss argued that it was necessary to keep open the possibility that the PCP could become transformed into a revolutionary instrument in the course of events. He advocated adherence to Trotsky's general policy of exposing mass reformist parties like the CP by demanding that they lead the masses and take state power. Weiss cited the PCP's breakaway from the Kremlin and European CPs as an example of the power of mass pressure to shatter the Stalinist world monolith. (See Spring 1977 *Freedom Socialist* for a fuller exposition of Weiss' position.)

Both sides agreed that the struggle itself would determine the answer to the question: Can a Stalinist party lead a revolution in an advanced country? And both sides agreed on the tactical steps currently indicated for Portuguese Trotskyists.

## America's Road to Socialism

Clara Fraser reported on the American question: "We take the view of Trotsky," she said,

who maintained that the ultimate fate of the world revolution would be decided in America. Because of its tremendous productive capacity and resources, the U.S.A. constitutes the backbone of imperialism, and no revolution elsewhere can be stable or secure so long as Wall Street rules.

On the other hand, a socialist U.S. would share its great skills and technology with the rest of the world and encourage revolution in all other countries.



**MURRY WEISS**, conference planner and reporter on Portugal, is a veteran Trotskyist thinker and leader.

**MYRA TANNER WEISS**, well-known Marxist educator and orator, told the L.A. Regroupment Conference that "bureaucracy is inherently opposed to revolution! A machine hates free debate, but our discussions will excite and educate larger and larger layers of the radical movement who will be inspired by the free and open manner in which we discuss our differences."

\*The next issue of the *Freedom Socialist* will feature a full-length article by Milton Zaslow elaborating his view of the Portuguese CP.

This is not a matter of great nation chauvinism or a messianic complex. It is the objective, material reality underlying the global relationship of forces.

The American question, Fraser noted, sorely needs theoretical development as a precondition for revolution. The conservatism of organized labor and the general absence of radicals from union leadership are roadblocks whose history, nature and causes must be enumerated if a realistic strategical perspective is to be attained.

She identified the entrenched racism, sexism and homophobia of large sections of the privileged labor aristocracy as the historic basis for the disunity, opportunism and retarded consciousness of organized labor.

She called on the conference to recognize the revolutionary centrality and vanguard status of feminism, minority freedom and the gay struggle. These issues, she said, and the workers who express them, will exert the most radicalizing impact on the rest of the class.

"What used to be irrelevant or 'secondary' issues to Marxists are now key components of the living class struggle. This is the Permanent Revolution at work," Myra Weiss said.

A semantic difference among the participants on the acceptability of the words "socialist feminism" was resolved in favor of the phrase, inasmuch as current usage no longer links "feminism" with an exclusively middle-class program but simply employs the term to describe a vast women's movement composed of many wings and varying class allegiances.

The Draft Statement of Purpose sharply poses the tendency's deep concern with these questions:

1. The struggle of racial/ethnic minorities against racist segregation and oppression is central to the American revolution, requiring constant analysis, unstinting support and a confident anticipation of the coming alliance of the race freedom movements with each other and with a revitalized working class.

2. Revolutionary socialist feminism—the movement for the total emancipation of women in every sphere of life—must be eagerly embraced, promoted and demonstrated in practice by any movement that calls itself Marxist. The double oppression of women, like the double oppression of minorities, creates a special dynamic amongst them that has already begun to transform every other social movement and political process in this country. Women workers constitute an enormous reservoir of energy, consciousness and leadership for the forces of world revolution.

3. The resounding demands of gay people for dignity and civil rights are producing a polarization in the gay movement between right and left wings, and working-class gays, female and male, are increasingly looking toward socialism as the only guarantee of emancipation from bigotry and wage slavery. The intersection of the gay upsurge with the growing militancy of labor is providing yet another great mass movement whose historical drive is destined to link up with the revolutionary forces in this country.

4. Our tendency guarantees the right of any specially oppressed grouping in our midst—racial minorities, women, gays—to organize into caucuses for the purpose of promoting its rights and resisting any manifestation of racism, sexism or homophobia in the organization—should such reactionary outcroppings of prejudice emerge.

## Praxis

In a warm invitation to all Marxists to join the tendency and engage in open, democratic and non-sectarian discussion, the Draft Statement of Purpose outlines the discussion procedure.

1. We will publish and disseminate a *Discussion Bulletin* . . . The proceedings, statements and papers of this conference will be published, and further studies, discussion, debate and proposed revisions on the topics initiated here will be printed . . .

We stand ready to collaborate with any group interested in the regroupment process in the establishment of similar discussion bulletins for the exchange of ideas.

2. We undertake to distribute periodicals and documents from all parts of the world expressing the ideas and considerations of the Fourth International.

3. We will develop communication and an exchange of information and experiences . . .

4. We will engage in joint and coordinated activities . . .

## Backdrop: Zaslows Visit Seattle

The conference was a product of a year-long communication among Myra and Murry Weiss, Edith and Milton Zaslow, the Progressive Workers Organizing Com-

page 4, Special Supplement

# Massive Response to Bigotry

# Gay Pride... Gay Protest... Gay Protest...

by Sam Deaderick

The gay movement has exploded into the consciousness of America.

Never has the world seen such a massive outpouring of gay pride, protest and rage as erupted during June, 1977 when enormous demonstrations hit the streets and furnished the media with a new sensational topic for banner headlines, exciting interviews and cautious editorials. In only a few short years, the gay civil rights movement had catapulted out of the closet onto the front page and prime-time TV news.

## Bryant: Agent of the Counter-Revolution

The credit for this spectacular leap is generally accorded to Florida singer Anita Bryant and her "holy crusade" which succeeded in toppling a Dade County, Florida gay rights ordinance. Bryant and her rightwing backers obviously expected their well-financed campaign of bible-thumping, hate and vilification to drive gays back into the underground. Instead, the whip of reaction stung gays into launching a fierce counter-offensive of historic proportions, and the battle was joined.

**In Dade County, for the first time in history, a popular vote explicitly denied civil rights to a minority which had already won them**

The regressive attack on the Dade County ordinance was a clearcut effort to drive a wedge into all the civil rights movements and the working class as a whole. Bryant and her ilk won the Dade County battle, but gay people sought and won vital allies from labor, minority movements, the feminist ranks, radicals and civil rights advocates, welding a united front against bigotry strong enough to prevent the Bryant forces from winning the war.

## The Sound and The Fury

When the Dade County election results flashed across the country, gays in the major cities of the U.S. immediately hit the streets.

- In **San Francisco**, spontaneous demonstrations choked the Castro Street area for several nights, reaching a peak of 5,000 people.
- In **New York**, gays took to the streets the night of the election and demonstrated in Greenwich Village for three consecutive evenings, drawing 3,000 people.
- In **Houston**, riot police were stationed at City Hall while 4,000 protesters rallied after picketing Bryant.
- In **Chicago**, 2,000 picketed a Shriners function where Bryant was performing. Chicago police arrested eight for allegedly engaging in a shoving match with 25 counter-demonstrators.
- In **Norfolk**, 300 protesters stormed out of Scope Arena, shouting down Bryant's assurance that "Christ can cure you." They joined a group of 400 protesters outside while 150 Bryant supporters taunted them from across the street.
- In **Los Angeles**, 9,500 people turned out to march down Hollywood boulevards demanding gay rights.

Massive demonstrations ushered in Gay Pride Week, the eighth anniversary of three nights of antipolice rioting by gay people in Greenwich Village, New York City. Gays, furious over unrelenting police harassment of Stonewall Inn, defiantly resisted and touched off the contemporary gay liberation movement.

- The Gay Pride march in **San Francisco** was the most remarkable, featuring 300,000—over a quarter of a million—demonstrators, the largest number ever assembled for gay rights.
- The crowd in **New York** numbered 100,000, jamming the street for twenty-eight blocks as the throngs chanted "Gay, Straight, Black, White; Workers of the World Unite!" and "Out of the Closets and Into the Streets!"
- In **Los Angeles**, 15,000 turned out for the Gay Pride march, about half in the streets and half watching. Police monitored the sidewalks to keep people from joining the parade and charged those who did with a misdemeanor.

Over 5,000 marched in **Chicago**, and more Gay Pride marches were held in **Atlanta, Miami, Kansas City** and **Providence**, Rhode Island.

## Looney Lloyd Cooney, Seattle's Bryant

Three thousand people marched in **Seattle** where Mormon television mogul Lloyd Cooney echoes Bryant's inflammatory rhetoric. He has broadcast six TV editorials calling for the repeal of a Seattle antidiscrimination ordinance which

**murdered by a gang of hoodlums who shouted "faggot, faggot" and "here's one for Anita" as they stabbed him**

protects gays as well as women, minorities, the aged, the handicapped and political activists. News stories of his attacks were printed in the Miami press.

The Seattle march was endorsed by more than 50 gay, feminist, minority rights, labor, radical and religious groups.

At the rally that followed the Seattle march, Joan Kurtz, representing the Washington Coalition for Sexual Minority Rights which organized the demo, illuminated the real issues:

**"Despite our anger at Cooney and Bryant, we must not be deluded into thinking any single person is responsible for this homophobic hysteria. Neither could survive without the support of a growing antidemocratic movement... We as gay people encompass all racial and ethnic minorities and both sexes. We are the tip of the human rights iceberg, the domino under the most blatant attack."**

Less than a week later, a Seattle gay group, "Concerned Christians Together," organized a rally of 200. The energetic Washington Coalition for Sexual Minority Rights promptly organized a counter-demonstration of 200, gaining wide media attention.

## European Groups Join the Fray

Internationally, gays marched for their own rights and for solidarity with their sisters and brothers in the U.S.

- In **Paris**, 300 lesbians marched against Bryant.
- In **Barcelona**, Spain, 10,000 marched, led by the Front d'Alliberament Gai de Catalunya (Gay Liberation Front of Catalonia). Spanish police attacked the demonstration, shooting rubber

bullets to disperse the marchers. / from the Spanish organization also New York march.

- In **Amsterdam**, 2,000 marchers / Dade County vote. And a demo / **London** attracted 1,000 people.

## A Multi-Issue Movement

The gay movement is rapidly abounding with implications of the Dade County ordinance. A common theme among all demonstrations was the ringing call for aid from other oppressed sectors in self-defense and resistance.

Bryant's Dade County campaign was financed and promoted by the ruling country, demagogically seizing on a issue in their battle against ERA, abortion social services and labor's living standards.

The Ku Klux Klan was a prime ally in Bryant's campaign.

Bryant was an outspoken supporter of **Nam War**, and has denounced the same platform with demagogic antifeminist Schlafly.

Sasha Gregory-Lewis, an editor of gay bi-weekly, the **Advocate**, has leaders of "Save Our Children" to a work of new, rightwing, nationwide committees. One of the central groups network, The Conservative Caucus, with Bryant's "Save Our Children," a coalition of high-powered rightwing who are amply funded and richly staffed.

They aim for conservatives to "advance over the policies of the U.S. Congress 1980, and to mobilize support for the ascendancy. They plan to popularize against gun controls, inflation, forcing unionizing of the military, crime, unemployment, deficit spending, reverse socialized medicine, inadequate defense, abortion, surrender of the Panama Canal talks, the Equal Rights Amendment rights.

## The Fragility of Civil Rights in America

In Dade County, for the first time in U.S. history, a popular vote explicitly denied civil minority rights which had already won them. A top SOC official, Robert Brake, said molestation was the thing that got the We now know how effective it can be.

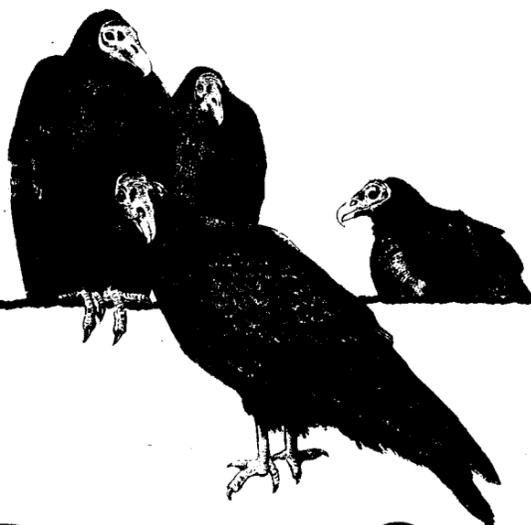
A constellation of slanderous myths prejudices perpetrated by "Save Our Children" was the nucleus around which the regressive campaign swelled, winning them by a margin of two to one.



**ANITA BRYANT** (center) directed the rightwing reaction against the gay movement. On her right is **LLOYD COONEY**, TV executive, Mormon, and bigot from Seattle, who is so known as the "Anita Bryant airwaves." Surrounding them are typical nuts, bolts and Jesus who haunt gay demonstrations.

Cooney photo: Don Wallen

# Page!



## Spartacist Betrayal

# Lavender & Red Union Dumps Gay Liberation

Los Angeles—At precisely the moment of the largest gay upsurge of protest and self-defense in history, the Red Flag Union—formerly Lavender and Red Union—has chosen to announce its cynical abandonment of the gay movement.

Their June 10-12 conference, "Stonewall '77—What is the Importance of Gay Liberation in the Revolutionary Struggle," was completely devoted to a bitter faction fight within the organization. About 85 conference attendees witnessed the pitiful and ironic spectacle of the RFU majority members vilifying their own gayness and past struggles in order to fuse with the notoriously antigay and antifeminist Spartacist League.

Present for the performance were a dozen independents and representatives of Radical Women, the Freedom Socialist Party, the Socialist Union, the Union of Sexual Minorities, the Revolutionary Socialist League, the New American Movement, the Socialist Workers Party and the Spartacist League.

Three major political formations emerged during the course of the conference: the socialist feminists, represented by FSP and Socialist Union; an antifeminist and antigay wing composed of Spartacist League and the RFU majority; and a pro-gay but anti-socialist-feminist combination of the RFU minority and the Revolutionary Socialist League (a splitoff from International Socialists).

### Back to the Closet!

The major topic of conference debate was the impending fusion of the majority faction of the Red Flag Union with Spartacist League, whose arrogant sexism is exceeded only by its holier-than-thou sectarianism.

The RFU majority seems to breathe well in the rarified air of the peculiar "reality" inhabited by the Spartacists. In fact, the harangues against gay liberation and

War II by a disillusioned petty-bourgeois tendency in the Socialist Workers Party, has long served as an excuse to refuse to defend the gains of the Russian Revolution.

The RFU majority holds the traditional Trotskyist view that through the nationalization of industry and land in the USSR and the abolition of the capitalist class, the Soviet Union became a workers state, although terribly degenerated because of the stranglehold of the privileged Stalinist bureaucracy. FSP and SU forces endorsed the RFU majority's stand on this issue.

But both RFU factions agree on the "secondary, or non-strategic importance of gay liberation," despite their heated debates over *practice* within the gay liberation movement. To both sides the question of gay liberation is merely "tactical" having no real social weight. They therefore place gay liberation on the bottom layer of their rigidly structured hierarchy of social issues—such as class, race, sex and sexuality.

### Feminism

During a panel discussion entitled "Separatism, Autonomy and the Party," Los Angeles FSP spokesperson Stephen Durham presented a socialist feminist view of the importance of gay liberation. He explained that gay oppression is necessary to a capitalist society as an integral part of the oppression of women and the maintenance of a sexual division of labor.

"The struggles of women, minorities and gays are objectively revolutionary because they call into question the most basic aspects of American capitalism," Durham stated. "The job of the American party is to bring together the struggles of *all* the oppressed in a program which provides leadership to the class struggle and builds the American revolution."

### Zaslow Pulverizes SL

Milt Zaslow, from the Los Angeles-based Socialist

Tragically, the gay defense effort, dominated by leaders of the Dade County Coalition for Human Rights, discouraged mass action, and spent the bulk of \$350,000 in nationwide contributions to hire Democratic Party organizers and buy media time for cautious refutations of Bryant's charges.

A conventional and super-respectable image of gays was projected, relying on a restrained attempt to prove that gays were **not** child molesters and moral degenerates. What was needed was militant action and a furious exposure of the liars and bigots who were smashing the legal rights of a sorely harassed minority. No serious efforts were made to organize support from labor unions, minority rights organizations, feminists or radicals. No mass rallies were held, nor was recruitment of grass roots forces undertaken.

### Murders and Suicides

The shock of the Miami defeat has sparked recognition of the extreme seriousness of the situation.

## the whip of reaction stung gays into launching a fierce counter-offensive of historic proportions

Solidarity in the face of the rightwing offensive is vital, and gays must gather strength for a long-range struggle. Robert Hillsborough, a San Francisco gay man, was sadistically murdered by a gang of hoodlums who shouted "faggot, faggot" and "Here's one for Anita" while stabbing him to death. His 73-year-old mother is bringing a \$5,000,000 suit against Anita Bryant for inciting violence against her son and other gays.

Two Miami gays committed suicide in the wake of the campaign. One gay man's car and home were firebombed. Jack Ward, a gay Miami bartender, was shot in the chest as he was leaving a Gay Pride Week event. And in Seattle, Joel Melville, a gay man, was brutally stabbed to death in his apartment during Bryant's campaign.

How many other unpublicized assaults and murders were prompted by Bryant's medieval crusade is anybody's guess.

### The Choice: Reform or Revolution

The stakes are high. Gays are being denied their survival rights. There can be no going back, only forward.

The offensive against women, minorities and gays will continue because they represent the most vulnerable layers of the working class, and the ruling class refuses to reduce its profits to meet their needs and demands.

The last 25 years have proved the impossibility of gay victory through rational requests. Liberal appeals are ignored and reformist victories are overturned. The Dade County experience provides alarming punctuation to this page of gay history and points the way to the only solution—militant struggle waged by gays, women and minorities in concert with advanced workers. Political and economic power must be ripped from the clutches of the profiteers who perpetrate gay oppression.

Then, and only then, can a socialist economic and social system be constructed, based on true equality and human rights.

Gays can afford nothing less. The closet door was ripped from its hinges as the hundreds of thousands marched, sang and rallied in the largest demonstrations since the antiwar movement. One chant soared aloft from coast to coast and on two continents: "What do we want? GAY RIGHTS! When do we want 'em? NOW!" But capitalism wasn't listening—and won't listen until the gay movement becomes openly revolutionary and thoroughly socialist. ■

## Line-up of Antifeminist, Antigay "Communists"



"When you say communist, that's not feminist! Affirmative Action is bullshit! It's just a ploy of the government!"

"We do not believe communists should build the autonomous movement! What communists must do is to lead it; we do not need to build it!"

"Gay identity is not a good thing. Sissies will not make the revolution!"

"Yes, we have a closet rule in the Spartacist League, for everybody! There are certain things you are willing to give up!"

"The gay struggle is purely peripheral to the class struggle, a secondary issue!"

feminism from the former gay liberationists of the RFU were even more vicious and bitter than those from the Spartacists themselves.

One RFU majority leader, trying on his Spartacist credentials, expressed this weird revolutionary sentiment: "I say to hell with my oppressed sector as a gay person. If you become a communist you are not a gay liberationist. If you become a communist you are not a feminist—you are a communist and that is a very different thing."

Gay SL members are forbidden to come out on the job under any circumstances because of the dangerous threat of a "secondary" issue intruding upon their "serious" political work, which doesn't include defense of gay rights—except on paper.

The minority faction within the RFU furiously condemned the swiftly approaching fusion and leveled its guns at the SL's "closet rule." The socialist feminists together with virtually all the independents joined the RFU minority in a strong denunciation of SL's treachery.

### The Russian Question

The original cause of the RFU split was differences over the Russian question. The minority sees the Soviet Union as state capitalist, in essence no different from the U.S. This view, first put forth on the eve of World

Union, supported Durham and other FSPers. "Gay liberation is a principle," he said, "and principled revolutionists defend gay rights everywhere."

Zaslow was also an eloquent spokesperson for the defense of a strong, independent women's movement. Quoting Lenin's support of such a movement, Zaslow refuted the ridiculous SL charge that the Russian Bolsheviks were antifeminist.

### They'll None of Them Be Missed

Despite their frenzy, the empty slogans and contemptuous insults of the SL phrasemongers fooled no one at the conference except the RFU group already aligned with them. Several independents present, along with representatives of the FSP and the SU, have since consolidated in the formation of a new gay organization in Los Angeles based on multi-issue solidarity.

This promising development, and the immovable integrity of the socialist feminists and gay liberationists at the conference, amply demonstrate that it will take more than SL's amateurish intimidation tactics to keep gay people from fighting for their freedom. And the few gay Uncle Toms from the RFU majority will never be able to shuffle away the movement's dynamic force, vitality and future. ■

# Viva La Raza!

The Chicano struggle stands boldly in the forefront of today's mass movements.

And well it might. The Chicano people are the victims of a prolonged exploitation from which they have drawn unshakeable conclusions about the necessity for militant action.

Two hundred years of bitter experience with being stripped of land, language, culture and respect, first by Spaniard colonialists and then by U.S. and Mexican capitalists, has been channeled into a sophisticated political assertiveness. Chicanos know that the main enemy is U.S. capitalism and they call it by its right name.

## Grapes of Wrath

The vigor of the movimiento stems from the lessons learned in the bloody ten-year struggle of Chicano farmworkers for a union of their own that would guarantee fair wages, decent housing and desperately needed sanitation and health care.

Time and again they witnessed the forces of agribusiness, company thugs, politicians, Teamster bureaucrats, sanctimonious religious figures and police arrayed against them—and illusions disintegrate when one comes face to face with the business end of a rifle barrel.

Lenin's dictum that the state is essentially a body of armed men is not a theoretical abstraction to Chicanos—but the story of their lives.

## Hands Across the Border

Chicanos were quick to expose the fiction about undocumented Mexican workers causing unemployment in the U.S. Solidarity with their Mexican brothers and sisters imparts to Chicanos a strong sense of internationalism; they have far more in common with impoverished Mexican workers than with their "fellow American" bosses, politicians and labor skates.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guarantees the free movement of Mexicanos and Americans between the two countries, a vital right for families who live in both lands. But state legislatures prohibit Mexicanos from entering the U.S., creating thereby the lucrative new profession of the alien-smuggler.

This monster haunts hungry border towns and extracts high fees to help Mexicanos gain entry into this country. The hapless Mexicanos are then hired by growers, but when the seasons ends, the growers become very law-abiding and the immigrant workers are hunted down, deported, and sometimes slaughtered.

Effective Chicano agitation on these questions has already forced President Carter and Congress to advocate some reforms in the brutal U.S. immigration policy.

## Las Chicanas

Chicano power is exemplified and nourished by its strong women. The Chicana is an extremely low-paid worker herded into the least valued, traditionally female jobs.

She fights valiantly to feed and clothe her family and to counteract the racist school system that considers her children retarded because they cannot read English perfectly—in a country where the white majority speaks only one language but her children speak two!

Chicanas have become a leading force in conveying a workingclass—and feminist—consciousness to their movement.

Chicanas were the movers and shakers in a recent mobilization at the University of Washington against the blatantly political suspension of a Chicana secretary. Campus Chicanas forged an alliance between Chicano students, the Chicano community, and university staffworkers who confronted not only the university administration but also its puppets on the Chicano faculty.

We applaud this example of class solidarity triumphing over the division caused by male chauvinism and the paralysis that might have afflicted the movement in the name of "national" unity.

## Venceremos!

Chicanos could well become a firm socialist vanguard. That this proud and embattled contingent will avoid the swamp of Stalinist and Maoist reformism and adopt true revolutionary internationalism is devoutly to be wished.

**¡Basta ya! ¡Viva la raza—y viva la revolucion!**

El movimiento Chicano se presenta valientemente en la vanguardia de los movimientos de las masas de hoy.

Con razón es así. El pueblo Chicano es víctima de una explotación de la cual ha formulado conclusiones inquebrantables sobre la necesidad de acción militante.

Doscientos años de amarga experiencia causados por el robo de la tierra, del idioma, de la cultura y del respeto al pueblo Chicano primero por los españoles y después por capitalistas de EE.UU. y Mexico se han tornado en una conciencia política enérgica y sofisticada. Los Chicanos saben que el enemigo principal es el capitalismo americano y lo identifican por su nombre correcto.

## Vinas de Ira

El vigor del movimiento proviene de la sangrienta lucha de los campesinos Chicanos durante diez años por un sindicato propia que garantice sueldos justos, vivienda decente, sanidad y asistencia médica.

Muchas veces se aliaron fuerzas de negociantes agrícolas, secuaces de las compañías, políticos, la policía, burócratas, figuras beatas de la iglesia en contra del pueblo Chicano. Muchas ilusiones se desvanecen cuando uno se enfrenta con el cañón del rifle del capitalismo.

La declaración de Lenin que el estado es esencialmente un cuerpo de hombres armados no es una abstracción teórica para los Chicanos—sino la historia misma de sus vidas.

## Manos a Traves de la Frontera

El pueblo Chicano conoce que es una ficción que la culpa del desempleo en los EE.UU. son los trabajadores Mexicanos. La solidaridad que les une a sus hermanos y hermanas mexicanos crea un sentido fuerte de internacionalismo. Tienen mucho más en común con los trabajadores mexicanos que con patrones americanos, políticos y burócratas.

El Tratado de Guadalupe Hidalgo garantiza el libre movimiento de americanos y mexicanos entre los dos países. Pero los cuerpos legislativos prohíben la entrada de mexicanos a los EE.UU. creando así la nueva profesión de contrabandistas de extranjeros.

Este monstruo atormenta a pobla-

ciones cercanas a la frontera y extrae altos precios para ayudar a mexicanos a lograr su entrada a este país. Los rancheros se aprovechan de la debilidad de estos trabajadores mexicanos ya que están sin documentos, los emplean en la cosecha, pero tan pronto como termina, se vuelven muy respetuosos de la ley, los reporta a las autoridades, ayuda a que se los aprese, deporte y aniquile.

Una fuerte campaña Chicana sobre estos puntos ya ha forzado al Presidente Carter y al Congreso a abogar por reformas en la política brutal de la inmigración estadounidense.

La fuerza Chicana se ejemplifica en sus valientes mujeres. La mujer Chicana está entre las trabajadoras peor pagadas. Se encuentra empleada en posiciones tradicionalmente de la mas ardua labor y de la peor categoría.

La Chicana trata valientemente de dar de comer y vestir a su familia. Lucha contra el sistema racista educacional que considera a sus hijos retardados sólo por no saber el Inglés. Esto ocurre en un país donde la mayoría de raza blanca habla sólo un idioma mientras sus hijos hablan dos.

Las Chicanas son la fuerza que encabeza el desarrollo de la conciencia obrera y feminista.

Las Chicanas fueron la fuerza motriz y la inspiración de una reciente movilización en la Universidad de Washington contra la suspensión descaradamente política de una secretaria Chicana. Chicanas universitarias forjaron una alianza entre estudiantes, la comunidad Chicana y trabajadores de la Universidad quienes se enfrentaron no sólo contra la administración universitaria sino también contra sus titeres dentro de la facultad de estudios Chicanos.

Aplaudimos este ejemplo de solidaridad de clases que triunfa sobre la división causada por el absurdo sentido de machismo. Este parálisis habría afectado al movimiento en nombre de la "unidad nacional."

Los Chicanos bien podrían llegar a ser una firme vanguardia socialista. Se desea con fervor que este orgulloso contingente luchador evite el del reformismo estalinista y llegue a adoptar un internacionalismo verdaderamente revolucionario.

**El FSP (El Partido de la Libertad Socialista)** es una organización socialista feminista dedicada al reemplazo del mando capitalista por una democracia verdadera de los trabajadores que garantizará la completa igualdad económica, social, y política a las mujeres, a las minorías raciales y étnicas, a los homosexuales, y a todos los explotados y oprimidos por el sistema de ganancias y por el imperialismo.

## El Internacionalismo Revolucionario

Un orden desarrollado de socialismo no puede suceder en un solo país; solamente el socialismo global—el producto de revoluciones en muchos países—puede asegurar la planificación internacional, la coordinación, y un progreso cultural significativo. Apoyamos la revolución en todos sus frentes, tratando de realizar un mundo internacional socialista.

## La Democracia en las Uniones

Los sindicatos, los órganos de la unidad de la clase obrera, han sido reducidos por la política colaboracionista por parte de los burocratas a tal punto que actualmente son vestigios lamentables de su antigua combatividad y progresividad. Un retorno a la democracia interna y a los principios de la lucha de clases es obligatorio si los sindicatos van a deshacerse de su jefatura corrompida y librarse del dominio completo de la política capitalista.

Llamamos a la acción política independiente por parte de los obreros como la única manera de conseguir la solidaridad de la clase en la cabina

electoral. Saludamos la combatividad creciente de los activistas obreros y reclamamos el fin de la discriminación contra las minorías, contra las mujeres, y contra los trabajadores de bajo sueldo por parte de los oficiales y la base atrasada de los sindicatos. Solamente una clase unida alrededor de las necesidades especiales de todos sus componentes diversos puede movilizar su fuerza inmensa y su poder estratégico para efectivamente rechazar el ataque violento capitalista contra los obreros.

## La Emancipación de las Mujeres

Los humanistas socialistas tienen que organizar consecuentemente para la emancipación completa de las mujeres—el sexo oprimido—en todos los niveles de la vida. Las mujeres, el sector más sojuzgado de cada grupo oprimido, están llamadas a ejercer una jefatura decisiva en las luchas revolucionarias, y esto es particularmente la verdad para las mujeres minoritarias. La liberación de las mujeres es una de las primeras cuestiones políticas para los revolucionarios serios.

## La Libertad para las Minorías

Son fundamentales a la economía política capitalista de los EE.UU. el racismo institucionalizado y la segregación racial forzada. Las luchas de las minorías implícitamente ponen en duda todo el sistema y enlazan la cuestión de la libertad racial con la lucha proletaria hacia el socialismo. Abogamos por la igualdad inmediata e incondicional de derechos para los negros, los chicanos, los asiáticos, los indios norteamericanos, y los puertorriqueños y aprobamos la demanda de auto-determinación hecha por las naciones indígenas y por la nación puertorriqueña.

## La Integración Revolucionaria

La colaboración de los negros radicales con el movimiento general hacia el socialismo es la única alternativa realista al separatismo o a la integración reformista al sistema capitalista—dos sin salidas en sí mismas. Al mismo tiempo, pueden servir las organizaciones independientes de las masas negras como mecanismos de transición para la adquisición de reformas y para el desarrollo de jefatura. La rica experiencia política y la pericia de la gente negra son componentes cruciales de la revolución americana.

## La Igualdad para los Homosexuales

La revuelta de los homosexuales es una protesta profunda contra todas las formas de represión sexual y del estereotipado en el desempeño de papeles sexuales. Es un ingrediente clave en la lucha para la igualdad de las mujeres, tal como la liberación de las mujeres es un requisito para la realización de las metas básicas del movimiento homosexual. Los marxistas homosexuales, utilizando la teoría socialista en el desarrollo de un programa dinámico de resistencia para las minorías sexuales, están rápidamente haciéndose un componente básico en la lucha general para la dignidad humana y en el movimiento específico hacia la revolución socialista.

## Hacia un Partido Comprensivo de la Clase Obrera

El FSP es un partido democrático y centralizado de la vanguardia operando en la tradición viva de Marx, Engels, Lenin, y Trotsky, con la aspiración de llegar a ser un partido comprensivo de trabajadores capaz de llevar a cabo la revolución americana.

**¡UNETE A NOSOTROS HOY!**



## New York Hospitals Terminally Ill

# Financiers Axe Hospitals

by Dr. Susan Williams

New York is not only a difficult place to live in, it is a fatal place for the poor and sick.

The city managers have been running the city into bankruptcy for years and now the financiers are making up the deficit by robbing from the poor and giving to the banks. "Budget cuts" mean the unemployment line for thousands of city workers and the end of vital social services, particularly desperately needed public health care.

The city's hospital system has been a major target of the budget-choppers. Municipal hospitals furnish the only available health care for millions of New York's poor and working people, providing 50% of all outpatient services and 90% of emergency room care for city residents. Many people seek medical care only when near death, and even then must spend agonizing hours in crowded waiting rooms. Yet despite the pitifully inadequate level of city health services, the bankers are hacking another \$160 million from the Health and Hospitals Corporation Budget. Several hospitals have been shut down completely and the rest have been ordered to eliminate 12,000 beds this year.

Many special services are being ruthlessly slashed. Chronic care facilities, which provide skilled nursing care for convalescing patients, are being hard hit. Home Health services, which send homemaker aides and visiting nurses and doctors to assist people at home, are also endangered. Many elderly and chronically ill people who have been able to live in their own homes with Home Health assistance will now be forced into New York City's crowded and corrupt nursing homes, or will simply die at home from neglect.

If the city officials have their way, municipal hospitals will be completely phased out within a few years. People will be forced to go, hat in hand, to the private hospitals, where the main determinant of the medical work-up is simply what the insurance companies will pay for.

While whole communities are victimized by the social service cuts, the workers in city hospitals are doubly hit. Thousands have lost their jobs and many more are slated for the axe. The city's murderously understaffed hospitals have been locked into a year-long hiring freeze.

Bitter anger at the layoffs and the deterioration of the hospitals has spread among city workers. But so far, an effective protest by united workers has been prevented by the bosses and their friendly union bureaucrats. Their strategy is to allow only one isolated sector of the workers into battle at a time.

In August, 1976, one group of hospital workers, District Council 37 of AFSCME, went on strike against a new wave of proposed layoffs. For four days, the workers waged a militant battle against the city bosses and gained support from many nurses and doctors. But the union officials perpetrated a sell-out—they gave up the workers' cost-of-living raise in exchange for a six-month reprieve for the workers scheduled to be laid off. The strikers were sent back to work. Within two months the city announced that they "regretfully" would have to proceed with further cutbacks after all.

The creators of the crisis, New York's slick financiers, are of course the last to feel its effects. While they callously accrue millions of dollars on interest payments, their profits spell poverty for thousands of public workers and death certificates for the poor and sick. ■



SUSAN WILLIAMS, M.D., is a resident

physician at Harlem Hospital in New York City where she copes daily with the disastrous effects of the city's health-care cutbacks and financial crisis.

## Spartacist League Crazyes Ride Again



## More Theatre of the Absurd

OK, you lucky readers, are you ready for another Night at the Opera scenario crafted by the Marx-less Brothers of the zany Spartacist League? Hang on tightly to your sanity, 'cause here we go!

ACT I. Radical Women in San Francisco organize a study group for feminists. One of the participants is a low-paid and hard-pressed Chicana feminist forced to labor as a small-plant security guard for want of better employment opportunity.

ACT II. SL supporters invade the study group and are asked to leave on the obvious grounds that they are acknowledged and virulent antifeminists.

ACT III. This is where the comedy starts. Hysterical over its exclusion from the group, SL strikes back blindly in its mis-titled *Women and Revolution* publication.

"Seattle RW Fronts for Cops," shrieks the headline. Whaaat?! Just wait, folks, there's more.

The exploited Chicana security guard, according to SL's pretzel mentality, is no less than "an armed agent of the bourgeoisie." It follows then, ipso facto, that Radical Women has "formed an alliance with female cops against working-class militants."

And if that isn't enough, RW is also "grossly legalistic, sub-reformist, polyvanguardist, bankrupt, impotent, class betrayers, and bureaucratic anticommunists."

Sometimes we think SL doesn't like us. But this patently phony script will never sell. What the SL needs is a new agent who can merchandise their bizarre talents properly—perhaps on the punk rock circuit. ■

## Invaded by 2000 Antifeminists

# Right, Left & Center Collide at State Women's Conference

by Guerry Hoddersen

Two thousand Mormon and other ultra-conservative Christian women unleashed a direct attack on women's rights at the Washington State Women's Conference in Ellensburg on July 8-10, and the only resistance they en-



NINFA TANGUMA (at microphone), Chicana militant from Yakima Valley, addresses the Ellensburg conference on the plight of minority women and the handicapped.

countered came from minority women and radicals.

The conference, mandated by Congress as part of a United Nations observance of International Women's Decade, was attended by more than 4,000 women. Billed as an opportunity for women to meet and "identify barriers to women's equality," two such barriers were starkly revealed: the zealous antifeminists who are fronting for a growing rightwing movement, and the excessively polite middle-class feminists whose lack of fighting spirit is echoed by their allies, the Socialist Workers Party.

The conference planning committee deliberately ignored nationwide reports that other state conferences had been inundated by anti-ERA forces. The committee was heavily weighted with women government officials who wanted simply to reaffirm Washington's support for the ERA and elect respectable figures to the upcoming national conference. They feared association with radicals and refused to organize a united front against the far-right.

In contrast to the caution of the moderate feminists, the ultra-conservatives waged a well-organized, deadly serious battle against childcare, lesbianism, affirmative action, abortion and the ERA. They extolled the virtues of capitalism, glorified the nuclear family and heterosexuality,

and endorsed the big business campaign to destroy the reforms won by feminists, minorities and gays.

Radical Women forces worked closely with the Hispanic caucus and waged a concerted floor fight in defense of the issues under attack. When the Mormons offered to support a resolution from the minority women's caucus if support of ERA and a condemnation of the Ku

Klux Klan were dropped, the minority women refused point-blank.

The minority women demonstrated an unshakeable determination to fight for the rights of all women and to stay united on the issues. They saw no middle ground in the fight against the church forces who are allied with racists, with Anita Bryant's antihomosexual campaign and with the antiunion "right-to-work" conservatives—the potential base for a mass fascist movement.

The liberal feminists and their shadows, the SWP, responded to the polarized situation with panic, no program, and useless tactics. The liberals made nervous jokes about the Mormon women, while the SWP, unable to shift its rusty single-issue gears to cope with a multi-issue opposition, was conspicuous by its silence.

The NOW-types swiftly abandoned minority, gay and working women's issues in a hopeless effort to make their restrained brand of feminism palatable to the enemy. Their strategy was to unfurl their entire bureaucratic repertoire in order to stall the conference and avoid a showdown vote on a pro-ERA resolution, and they followed this inane scenario at the expense of every other burning issue facing women.

By belittling or denying the enormity of the right-wing assault, the liberals and the SWP played directly into the hands of the arch-conservatives. The conference demanded a broad united front of determined feminists, but the conference organizers succeeded only in engineering an historic and demoralizing cop-out.

Such deadly attacks on progressive forces—and such serious mistakes in mobilizing a defense—are hardly unknown to history. Leon Trotsky wrote extensively on the German Communist Party's failure to build a united front against fascism in the 1930s. "The most dangerous policy," he said, "is that of passive adaptation to the enemy by painting oneself to look like him." And, one might add, "or her."

Ellensburg was the moment of truth. Parliamentary maneuvers have never stopped the rightwing and feminists now have to decide unambiguously what side they are on. Abject capitulation or united militant struggle are the sole options available. ■

Guerry Hoddersen is a UPS truckdriver, a rank and file leader of Teamsters Local 174 and an outspoken women's rights proponent.



MORMON PARTICIPANTS AT ELLENSBURG dutifully await their next chance to unleash church-directed attacks against the women's movement.

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jects "Black rule" as Kissinger and Company see it. "We will not accept any constitutional arrangement that seeks to differentiate the representation of Zimbabweans in the government on the basis of race, color or creed. We are looking for a government in which people are represented as people, not as races. We are not racists, so we cannot accept racist measures to solve a racist problem."

The effects of apartheid on workers in South Africa were described by James Stuart and Andrew Kaleimbo in a presentation on the working conditions and unions of that country. Black Africans, representing 70% of the South African population, earn only 20% of the country's wages, condemning them to starvation.

Black workers in South Africa are not recognized as employees and therefore their unions cannot be registered. They are left completely vulnerable, with no organized self-protection as workers.

The South Africans emphasized the vital necessity of international labor support to southern Africans in their liberation struggles.

African Women: A Sharp Debate

The exploitation of Black females as both women and workers was presented by Ms. Lee Tutu, formerly a schoolteacher in Johannesburg and wife of a leading church official. She explained that women are only allowed employment as nurses, teachers, typists or domestics and are forbidden to own land or work in the townships unless they are married or live with their fathers, brothers or older sons.

The workshop began to deteriorate with Ms. Tutu's description of the role of the church in organizing a class for domestics so they would presumably become "better" workers. She sparked lively debate when she launched an attack on the women's movement in North America, saying "They are only asking for decorations." Participants responded by sharply pointing out that women—especially minority women—were fighting for sheer survival and that the women's movement was one means of unifying the battles of all the oppressed through united front action.

Hospitality

Informal socializing was a welcome part of the conference. A delicious dinner was served on Saturday night

and La Tropicale Reggae Band provided excellent music for dancing into the night. Discussions among Canadians, Americans, and Africans led to address exchanges and the beginning of new friendships.

Revolutionary Internationalism—  
The Road to Victory

Friendship and collaboration were the hallmarks of the richly-rewarding weekend. The seeds for a strong African support movement were planted, and their growth could herald a new unity between North American and Black African fighters for freedom.

A viable strategy for ending U.S. involvement in southern Africa is a key ingredient for the success of the liberation fighters. But a single-issue and antipolitical civil rights approach of the kind that stripped the Viet Nam anti-war protest of its revolutionary potential is a mistake for the African support movement. The magnitude of the tasks and the dangers facing African fighters, as revealed at the conference, demand nothing less than full revolutionary internationalist support. Anything less would be a roadblock to Black victory. ■

...MID EAST

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in Israel, primed and reinforced by demonstrations and general strikes of Arab workers in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank.

Anti-Zionism is Not Antisemitism

U.S. Jews who support Zionism hurl charges of antisemitism at socialists who refuse to defend Zionism. These mis-led Jews and their supporters have swallowed the Zionist-engendered myth that "Zionism equals Jewish Freedom." It does not. Zionism equals economic and political oppression of the many by the few and has historically led Jewish people into tragedy and death. It is a handy ideological tool to prevent Jews in Israel and elsewhere from joining the radical forces that have historically fought *against* antisemitism and went to their death in Hitler's concentration camps along with the Jews they defended.

U.S. Jews are right on one point: antisemitism is on the rise in this country. It follows inevitably from the menacing ultra-right reaction. Witness the KKK from Plains, Georgia to Boston, Massachusetts and the Nazi attacks against Blacks and Jews in San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. But the answer is not Zionism. Only revolutionary unification can defeat the menace, which attacks not only Jews, but Blacks, women, gays and working people as well.

Arab Nationalism—  
Transition to Revolution

Jewish nationalism—Zionism—has dragged Jewish people backward, away from the battle against capitalist and imperialist control. Arab nationalism has done just the opposite, for it provides a powerful im-

petus to anti-imperialism and a radical restructuring of class and caste relations in the Arab world.

The Palestinian Arabs are fighting for their homelands, for the fundamental human right to retain their culture and enjoy freedom on their own soil. Zionism, and the combined forces of world imperialism, wage war against these Palestinian aspirations for national liberation. As a result, the Palestinian liberation movement takes on the character of an anti-imperialist movement against the Zionist colonizers and their imperialist allies and places social revolution on the agenda in the Middle East.

A comparatively young movement (it took formal shape just ten years ago), the Palestinian liberation movement has already succeeded in throwing hungry imperialism politically off-balance in the Middle East. The Palestinian resistance has raised the political and class consciousness of masses of Arab peasants, workers, and students whose economic and political development had been stymied for centuries, and spurred them to fight for their own freedom.

Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states are essentially feudalistic in their mode of production and political structure, with monarchical rule and royal ownership of the land. Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt have completed bourgeois democratic revolutions but the elected government is still controlled by a ruling bourgeoisie collaborating with world imperialism.

The majority of peasants and workers in the Middle East are poverty-stricken and powerless. But, inspired by the Palestinian resistance movement, social revolution is brewing.

It is no wonder, then, that these revolutionary

upheavals generate terror and conspiracy among the shahs, sheiks, kings, and presidents of reactionary Arab regimes. In grim partnership with their Western imperialist mentors, they are out to smash the rebels through civil repression, union busting, and outright military invasion.

Socialism and Shalom

The Palestinian liberation movement, and the resistance movements connected with it throughout the Middle East, still appear to be essentially nationalist—but with Marxist underpinnings. The base of support for the resistance movements is poor, oppressed people—workers and peasants and students. This composition, combined with the concrete reality of the resistance's engagement in mortal battle against the ruling classes, whether feudalist, capitalist, or imperialist, portends a speedy leap from national liberationism to socialist revolutionary politics.

Essential to victory is a program that embraces the demands of all oppressed people—workers, peasants, women, refugees, slaves, Jews, Moslems, Christians, and students. When Middle Eastern resistance fighters espouse and practice this kind of program, reject collaboration with reactionary regimes and build alliances with revolutionary movements and governments throughout the world—at that juncture will Middle East radicals build a victorious revolutionary movement.

A titanic social transformation would explode from such a consolidation of revolutionary energies, and no force on earth could reverse the ensuing victory.

A socialist Middle East is synonymous with Salaam! Shalom! Peace! ■

...union women

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In the "Affirmative Action and Seniority" workshop, Barbara Carter, Chief Investigator for the City of Seattle Office of Women's Rights, recommended that unions seek to obtain a separate category for minority women in affirmative action goals.

Minority women are falling through the quota system, Carter said, because white women are being hired for the "women" category and minority men for the "minority" category. Or else a minority woman is hired and the company claims that it has satisfied requirements for both (known as the double-dip).

We Can Do It!

The workshops on "How to Organize a Union," "Effective Strike Action," "Grievances and How to Enforce Your Contract," and "Model Contracts, Including Employee Bills of Rights" were storehouses of information and political expertise. Participants were given carefully

detailed handouts as guides to use in their own work.

The "Negotiation Skills" workshop was a singular model of how to teach social skills through role-playing. It was conducted by Clara Fraser, who divided the 40 participants into a union team and a management team which enacted a typical negotiations scenario. Many of the participants had never been involved in contract negotiations before, which explains why the management team won! Fraser evaluated the performance, offering useful tips to inexperienced labor negotiators.

All the resolutions formulated by workshops were adopted by the conference. Two key resolutions defended the combination of seniority with affirmative action, and promoted the passage of protective legislation.

The tenor of the entire conference was one of vigor, pride and inspiration. Excellent meals were served and a Saturday evening party featured a screening of the popular film "Union Maids" plus a fine performance of labor songs by the Bread and Roses Chorus.

A renewed demonstration of the commitment and vitality of women unionists, the groundbreaking conference was a tribute to the sponsoring organizations and their hardworking planners and organizers.

From the "Union Maid" of IWW days to the new breed of feminist labor activist, the consciousness of women workers has indeed come a long way, and the remarkable blend of feminism and unionism that sparked the conference lends considerable substance to the socialist aspiration for the rekindling of both movements. ■

Henry Noble, FSP trade union coordinator, is a computer programmer and an executive board member of United Workers Union-Independent.

Laura Teague, past president of Radical Women, is a vice president of Firstbank Independent Employees Association, an independent statewide union in Washington.

Women  
of All  
Countries,  
Unite!

Paris—What was originally planned as an "internal" meeting of a handful of delegates from European women's groups mushroomed into a major conference of 6,000 women who descended upon Vincennes University in Paris on May 28-30.

Participants in the "International Meeting of Women" stepped boldly beyond their own national boundaries onto the arena of international class struggle, affirming the pressing need for an internationalist and class-conscious feminism.

The keynote speech, on the recent mass upsurges of women in Italy and Spain, set a militant mood.

The French speaker for the "Women and Unions" workshop hailed the fact that unions and political parties finally have been forced to go beyond mere talk about women's liberation.

A workshop on abortion demanded women's control over their bodies, free and legal abortion, and an end to forced sterilization, rape and violence.

The workshop on "Repression and Rape" called for an international campaign to condemn political and sexist violence against women.

Sandy Nelson, Seattle representative of Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party, was the speaker for the "Lesbianism" workshop. "Lesbians suffer oppression as women," she said, "but we suffer additionally as lesbians. We fight to be free from the domination of capitalism and its bourgeois morality, its church and its psychology." Her demand for the international feminist movement to stop ignoring lesbians and start defending homosexual rights met with strong applause.

The English woman speaker for the "Childcare" workshop said, "We refuse to see childcare as a private responsibility." She exhorted the women's movement to reach out to and assist mothers.

The gulf between the "class-struggle" feminists and the radical feminists was clearly evident. In opposition to the radical feminist view of politics as subordinate to women's issues, the political feminists demanded the adoption of a class perspective for feminists and a feminist outlook for the labor movement.

The explosive growth of European feminism in the last two years primed the move toward class struggle feminism and made the conference a landmark of female class consciousness. A new cornerstone has been laid for socialist feminism. ■

# Middle East



WOMEN GRADUATES OF A FATEH TRAINING CAMP

by Monica Hill

"Peace is Near!" the headlines shout, and the solution posed for the Middle East is Kissinger-style shuttle diplomacy—a delicate treachery, a peace of war. For imperialist peace is class war, and the Middle East is no exception to that law of social reality.

Underlying the shooting war in the Middle East is class war, an inevitable conflict between the Arab and Jewish masses and their own oppressors.

Peace can come to the tortured Middle East, but only if one vital lesson of history is absorbed: *the historic dilemmas of one oppressed people cannot be solved at the expense of another oppressed people.* The bloody, unrelenting combat in the Middle East is graphically and with ever-increasing intensity searing this truth into the consciousness of the twentieth century world.

Palestine belongs—historically, legally, culturally and politically—to both Jew and Arab, and the Jews have no economic or moral right to proclaim the land as their own exclusive territory. This is not just nationalism, but colonialism, and the Israeli warfare state, for all its vaunted technology and culture, is the state of the new robber barons, the homeland of genocide for all.

Only a bi-partisan, bi-lateral, jointly governed Israel can furnish a decent life to the Arabs and Jews who both call it home.

Behind the confusing war, behind the propaganda spewed by Zionist and Arab reactionaries alike, lies their primary common aim—to stem the tide of revolution wherever it raises its threatening fist. Religious and race hatred are officially created and escalated in a deliberate attempt to disorient Moslems, Christians and Jews and block their confrontation with the common enemy—capitalism and imperialism.

## Zionism: Hope or Deadly Deceit?

Zionist nationalism, although understandable as a defensive reflex to centuries of holocausts and pogroms, is nevertheless regressive. Why? Because Zionism works hand-in-glove with world imperialism, echoing and advocating its most malignant features. A besieged and insecure midget among giants, Zionist capitalism is nakedly vicious in its measures of oppression against the working class of Israel, both Jewish and Arab. The ideology of Zionism has been a roadblock to revolution, infecting the progressive movements of the



PALESTINIAN MILITIA: AMMAN, JORDAN

Middle East and sending ripples of confusion throughout the entire world workingclass movement.

In Israel, Zionism has spawned a state boiling with acute internal social antagonism and besieged by external enemies. Zionism, already a bloody instrument of oppression against Palestinian Arabs, ultimately represents a death-trap for Jews.

## Zionism, already a bloody instrument of oppression against Palestinian Arabs, ultimately represents a death trap for Jews

Israeli socialist author Arie Bober succinctly poses the contradictions of Zionism:

Zionism *promised* national awakening and fraternal solidarity; it has produced a society of increasing economic inequality and of racist discrimination and cultural oppression. Zionism *promised* independence; it has produced a society in which the Prime Minister must periodically affirm to the people that the existence of the nation depends on the delivery of fifty Phantom jets from the United States. Zionism *promised* the Jews the dignity of a nation taking its place among the nations of the world; it has not been able to compel formal recognition by even the weakest and most reactionary Arab state, and it has not gained the slightest hint of legitimacy in the eyes of the Arab masses. Zionism *promised* physical security to the Jews; Israel is the most dangerous place on earth today for a Jew, and it will remain so as long as Israeli-Jewish society retains its colonial character and its function as an instrument of imperialism.

## The Imperialist Stake in Israel

From its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, modern Jewish immigration to Palestine took place under capitalist sponsorship whose aim was *not* to protect the Jews but to *use* them, first in a scheme by French banker Baron de Rothschild to expand French colonialism through control of Palestine, and later by Zionists such as Theodore Herzl who wished to found a supposedly superior European colony in this "plague-ridden, blighted corner of the Orient." Herzl, an eminent representative of the British colonialist "white man's burden" mentality, solicited support from whatever empire was in control of Palestine at the time—German, Turkish, or British.

Originally, European Jewish workers were not attracted to Zionism. Not until after the defeat of working class revolutions in Poland and Germany and the rise of fascism were these workers vulnerable to the false hope of an exclusive Jewish state. They were given no other real choice. Fleeing from Nazi extermination and refused U.S. sanctuary, Jewish refugees were cut off from escape routes by western capitalist countries which conspired with the Zionists to make unwitting colonists out of the desperate refugees.

That early pattern of Zionist collaboration with

reactionary governments has continued, culminating in Israel's desperate dependence on the U.S.

Imperialist nations have always needed the Middle East because of its strategic geographic location and its oil. Consequently, they need alliances with the ruling classes of the Middle East and historically have taken sides with any forces ready to protect their economic and political interests there. The Zionist leaders of Israel have proven eager to cooperate, huddling under the military protection of the U.S. war machine at the expense of the very Jews they claim to represent.

Israel's foreign policy confirms this international capitalist collusion. Israel joined Britain and France in a 1956 attack on Egypt; it supported the fascist French Secret Army Organization during the Algerian war; it supported U.S. intervention in Lebanon in 1958 and in Viet Nam in the sixties. Israel was one of the first countries to recognize the CIA-backed military coup that crushed Allende's Chilean government. Israel sells arms to prop up South Africa's apartheid regime and brazenly collaborates with mock enemies in the Saudi Arabia and Jordan regimes.

## No Land of Milk and Honey

Israel's oppressive capitalist economy is creating a brutalized Arab proletariat, facing severe discrimination in education, housing, jobs and basic civil rights, and burgeoning into a highly radicalized threat to Zionist control. These Arab workers are shipped into Israel as cheap labor like Black Africans into Johannesburg, South Africa and undocumented workers in the U.S. They make only half as much in wages as the already poor Israeli workers who do the same unskilled, low-



CARVED FRIEZE IN CAIRO, EGYPT

paid work, but they get none of the job benefits available to Israeli workers.

Significantly, however, the government is beginning to bear down hard on anyone who is anti-Zionist, including Jews. This blatantly exposes the government's real understanding that it is class antagonism, not race or religious relationships, that is at the root of the present conflict. The Zionist state of Israel, which could not exist without imperialist support, must clamp down on anybody who opposes the ruling class.

Class war is raging today among Arabs and Jews alike. Economic and political strikes and protests mount

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# Radical Laborism Versus Bolshevik Leadership: The Organization Problem of the Socialist Workers Party (Part II)

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This analysis was originally published in the *Socialist Workers Party pre-convention Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 25, No. 14 in 1965.

It is a companion work to the Political Resolution submitted by the then Seattle Branch of the SWP to the 21st National Convention in 1965. Most of the Political Resolution has subsequently been published under the title *Crisis and Leadership*.

Crisis and Leadership together with Radical Laborism constitute the ideological basis of the split between the SWP and its Seattle Branch in 1966, a division which culminated in the formation of the Freedom Socialist Party.

Part I of Radical Laborism was printed in Vol. 3, No. 1, the Spring 1977 issue of *The Freedom Socialist*. This current installment is the second and concluding section of the document.

## THE WEISS GROUPING

### WHAT WAS THE SOURCE OF THE ANTAGONISM TO THE WEISS GROUP AND WHY HAVE THE DIFFERENCES BEEN SUPPRESSED SO LONG BY BOTH SIDES?

Not until after the liquidation of the Weiss group were any hints of political differences between the two groupings manifested in major resolutions. At the 1963 Convention, Comrade Myra Tanner Weiss proposed some amendments to the Political Resolution. But long before this, there existed differences and shades of difference which the Weiss group minimized or repressed after the Cochran split in the interests of building a unified collective leadership on fundamental questions.

#### The Differences

The sources of friction were threefold.

The Weiss group held to theory as the fundamental guide of the Party.

Objectively, their interventionist bent and tactics constituted resistance to the Holding Operation.

Finally, they were outspoken proponents of women's emancipation in society and in the Party.

On all three counts, the anti-politicals considered them a menace.

#### 1. Theory

The Weisses were teachers of basic Marxism. They conveyed a deep respect for theory and for the worker-Bolshevik concept of the Party member. They wanted a Party of revolutionary intellectuals, of thinker-doers. This led to a concern with maintaining a constant relation between theory and practice, and between strategy and tactics. This in turn led to a habit of leadership accountability and responsibility, in the sense of Trotsky's constant demand upon leadership to be self-critical.

This tradition has vanished from the National Office. As impressionism and eclecticism replace theory in the SWP, the doctrine of leadership infallibility and immunity from criticism prevails. The need for leadership to regularly present a candid and complete balance-sheet on past policy and perfor-

mance is honored only in the breach. Political errors of the Dobbs-Kerry machine are either ignored or incorporated into Party doctrine as vindicated appraisals and actions.

#### 2. Interventionism

The Weiss group, in contrast to the Dobbs-Kerry Holding Operation, characteristically sought SWP influence within any leftward-moving currents.

This required strategical talent, but such talent was typical of Party leadership in the formative years of our movement. Flexibility, alertness to opportunity and initiative were the political skills bred by early Trotskyism.

The 1956 Regroupment Campaign symbolized this spirit of the old "Cannonism," but the real and lasting gains achieved by that campaign were written off by the present regime precisely because of its hostility to any such turns. It wants no more maneuvers and negotiations with groupings—large or small, centrist or revolutionary. It orients only to untainted individuals without dangerously lurid pasts.

#### 3. Women's Emancipation

The defense of women's rights is a particularly irritating matter to the regime. Their testy reflex to this issue exposes their non-communist character, for they wish to build a Party in which the average backward worker will immediately feel comfortable.

In regard to race prejudice in the Party, Comrade Vernon<sup>21</sup> wrote that white radicals are justified in creating that type of Party climate in which white workers would feel at home, even though Negroes are repelled (*White Radicals and Black Nationalism*, p. 19):

Radicals are fully aware of the politically reactionary aspects of American policies and condemn those aspects of American life which they can pinpoint as direct products of capitalism per se, but are basically in harmony with what passes for American culture, and identify with the American (i.e., white) people. They had better. Their job and goal is to get closer to and fuse with the American workers and people, and this requires being American.

We answered him in 1963 (*Revolutionary Integration*, p. 40) as follows:

Vernon is both stunningly right and fortunately wrong. He is right in his enumeration of the qualities estranging Blacks from us; he is wrong in thinking our bad habits are good socialist tactics.

We are isolated from the white working class. We are isolated because of our revolutionary program and principles. No

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The Weisses were teachers of basic Marxism.  
They conveyed a deep respect for theory and for the worker-Bolshevik concept of the Party member.”

amount of conformity to cultural mores or anything else will prevail until objective conditions force a change in working class opinion. However, our concessions to the general illiberal folkways of white America do estrange us from its key victims—Blacks, women, youth—leaving us very isolated indeed.

Lenin warned that the revolutionary Party must not encompass any of the backward prejudices of the proletariat. He called upon men and women Bolsheviks to heed the plight of oppressed women and aid them in the Party and in society.

Almost alone among SWPers, Comrade Myra Tanner Weiss heard Lenin's call and responded to it, educating and re-educating members of all generations in regard to the vital theoretical, political and organizational significance of the woman question.

Her reward, of course, except for the gratitude of the few, was the hostility of the many, accompanied by demagogic downgrading in typical male chauvinist style. She is subjected to blatant insult and condescension, an approach that is most effectively undertaken by women defenders of the regime—best exemplified in the article *An Answer to M. T. Weiss' "Comments"* by Hedda Garza in the *Internal Bulletin*, No. 29, 1963.

This is how the SWP deals with the comrade who was its foremost female spokesman for twenty years. The SWP does not educate against male chauvinism, it agitates against real women leaders.

#### The "Soft" Split

The gap between Weiss and Dobbs-Kerry grew out of the unspoken question, "What kind of a Party shall we aspire to be?"

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The SWP does not educate against male chauvinism, it agitates against real women leaders.”

The old communists, Lenin and Trotsky, aspired to build parties of people who hate capitalism, want to destroy it and will fight for freedom and fraternity in and out of the Party.

Bolshevik circles were always marked by a distinct atmosphere of equality. Workers, intellectuals, men, women, different nationalities, the aged, the youth, and adherents of many diversified viewpoints on many issues all lived together in mutual respect and collaboration. The leadership was clearly multi-tendency and operated collectively. Democratic centralism was the glue that held them together, and democracy was never sacrificed to centralism until the necessities of War Communism clearly demanded it. Indeed, the argumentativeness of the Bolsheviks was an international joke, but these disputatious Russians were the people who led the first successful proletarian revolution in history.

The atmosphere of equality repelled those who could not or would not accept this criterion for Party membership. In the SWP, however, Bolshevik practice is reversed and everything is stood on its head. A clearly revolutionary aggregate of leaders, the Weiss group, was driven from the SWP precisely because the Dobbs-Kerry faction would not tolerate even vague tendencies within the leadership.

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The Weiss group was demoralized by discriminatory treatment and unabashed vindictiveness. It was possible for them to virtually fall apart under the lash of persecution because of two factors:

1. They never published an analysis of the political character and social background of the very leadership that was factionally organized against them. They thereby helped prepare their own victimization.

2. For all their devotion to theory, they could never bring themselves to look critically upon Party doctrine, which included Negro Nationalism and the label of "secondary" applied to both the Black and Woman questions as a matter of principle.

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*The lid will blow as  
yesterday's disputed or  
suppressed "secondary  
questions" become the  
burning issues of the day.*

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About a year after the Cochranites left the Party in 1953, the Branches suddenly received a National Office communication signed by Murry Weiss, then functioning in the central New York leadership. He was calling upon his supporters, who "perhaps" constituted a clique, to disband. He "repudiated" any past unconscious leadership of a clique.

What specific pressures and rationalizations evoked this **Darkness At Noon\*** "confession" and self-slander can only be surmised. In general, however, this capitulation was predicated on the conviction that unity on the Political Committee must be maintained at all costs, and that to raise any issue other than the most obvious and elementary which-side-are-you-on question was diversionary and disruptive. At bottom, he had no confidence in the necessity and ability of the National Committee or the Party ranks to call the regime to order.

Comrade Weiss' reluctance to speak out until it was too late stemmed from his lack of a clear-cut programmatic differentiation, his commitment not to rock the boat, and an attitude of futility about the possibility of change within the Party. Certainly, the methods and programs of the regime are supported by the majority of the Party, due to the fact that (1) the clique politics of the regime are obscured by the peculiarity that the clique is the regime, and (2) the erratic conjunctural and episodic reflexes of the leadership appear to have the blessings of the founders of the Party.

But the discussion of controversial ideas within the Party cannot be repressed forever, and open discussion cannot always await the pleasure of the leadership. **The lid will blow as yesterday's disputed or suppressed "secondary questions" become the burning issues of the day (as they usually do).** When the obsession over preserving the unity of the leadership congeals into the paramount organizational concern of all the various tendencies within that leadership, Leninism is no longer a living reality in the movement and internal education comes to a dead halt. It is not open controversy that breeds divisive centrifugal tendencies, but precisely the repression of political controversy for **organizational reasons.**

The SWP is paying the price today for the myopia of that sector of the leadership which recognized the incipient dangers to the Party but instead of giving serious analytical thought to them, willingly created window-dressing for the suspect regime.

When Dobbs-Kerry saw the opportunity to establish a machine that would insure them total control of the Party, the Weiss group became superfluous and had to go.

The "soft" split—the secret, puzzling, non-event split—will haunt and taunt this Party indefinitely until it is understood.

#### ***The Concealed Years: Transitional Stage to the New Course***

The issue of the "soft" split has been easily and readily relegated by many people to past history, as if Party history played no conditioning role in the character of the organism today. Newer and younger comrades are taught to view SWP history as interesting but irrelevant, and comrades with more seniority have long allowed the masquerade of a consensus to play on and on, even when they recognized stunning

departures from principled traditions and practices.

The analysis of the real differences between Comrades Weiss and Dobbs-Kerry serves to inform and remind us that the past epoch has indeed been relevant. It was one phase in the process of the SWP, an interim marked by growing counter-currents to the predominant trends of the pre-Cochran epoch. These counter-currents have now crystallized.

The nature of the Weiss group was a negative indication of the nature of the Dobbs-Kerry group. The latter inoculates the membership against those very traditions of American Trotskyism which demonstrated in life how a small, but correct, Bolshevik party could grow and prosper. Devotion to theory, programmatic clarity, scientific conjunctural politics, interventions, fusions, splits, principled analyses and organizational flexibility—all are consigned these days to the realm of old junk, necessary in the dim past when all we supposedly did was sit in cellars, read the books, and clarify theory, but outmoded today when what is needed is "Action!"

Action? Even words have been changed to connote their polar opposite meanings.

Of what bold thrusts does this new "Action" consist? Let us see. Literature promotion, fund drives, and a tightened organizational structure devised to isolate and confine those who oppose the new course. Evidently nothing more is needed because our future leadership of the American proletariat is ordained.

But this leadership, alas, is not ordained. It depends precisely upon what we do. And what the SWP is doing, apart from basic tasks of drives, elections and education, is wrong—wrong in strategy, tactics and evaluation of life both within and beyond 116 University Place (the National Office).

The regime may keep its eyes glued to the AFL-CIO ball, but radical life moves outside and around the unions, bypassing and outstripping them for the present as viable organs of mass action. New areas of vital action emerge in the country and new serious contenders for radical leadership appear. The Party is faced with new problems and new opportunities, but these are largely ignored. The Party is likewise faced with the need to confront and settle long unresolved and even unnamed disputes.

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*One can only admire a  
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”

But when the living history of the Party becomes substance not for illumination and education, but for awkward silence and crass distortion, it grows increasingly apparent that the concealed years and the unreported struggles contain the clue to the real political nature of the regime, the barrenness of its program and the blatant deviationism of its organizational policies.

#### **THE ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTION**

The Political Committee's **Organizational Resolution**, the subject and product of a special Plenum of the National Committee, provides the legal cover for administrative practices already in effect. The document is a mopping-up operation, formalizing the high-handed methods typical of the regime.

One of the myths promulgated by the leadership is that it is "unprincipled" to criticize them on organizational procedures (1) so long as political differences do not exist, and (2) so long as political differences do exist!

There is no precedent for this fantastic formula anywhere in the revolutionary movement. The tested law of principled politics that organizational grievances not be raised ahead of and in place of extant political differences has become thoroughly distorted.

#### ***The Relationship of Programmatic and Organizational Issues***

In the fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1940, Trotsky and Cannon promised to deal minutely with the organizational question AFTER the political issues were resolved, and this they proceeded to do. Still, an aura of suspiciousness surrounds organizational proposals and objections that arise from outside the central leadership itself. Members of the Party objecting to violations of past practices

are told, in effect, to develop a faction on the question of Outer Mongolia or keep quiet, because organizational criticisms are **always** supposed to represent deeper or unconscious political differences.

So the ranks are prevented from criticism so long as they do not have political differences, and conversely, if an avowed political faction or minority raises organizational questions or protests organizational practices which they believe are in violation of their rights, they are promptly damned for "obscuring" the political questions and "introducing" trivia.

It is time to take issue with the falsity, hypocrisy and downright unfairness of this nonsense. Insistence on programmatic issues taking precedence over administrative issues arose from pre-factional situations where anti-Party tendencies refused to reveal their full program and had to be smoked out. **No such minority has congealed in the SWP since 1953.** Every faction in the past decade has explicitly and directly announced its points of ideological difference.

“  
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”

Existing factions have every right to voice their opinions about the regime, complain, or criticize administrative conduct without being demagogically condemned for doing so. And comrades who believe themselves to be in political agreement with the majority or who do not know what, if any, programmatic differences they may have, possess not only the right but the responsibility to express themselves critically on organization matters at any time.

Some minority factions, like the Marcyites and Johnsonites,<sup>22</sup> further away from the majority than any of the contemporary minorities, never voiced objections to the methods and practices of the regime. Indeed, **they had no cause to.** The leadership always bent over backwards to accommodate them, integrate them into the Party and the leadership, and extend to them every democratic avenue of expression.

These fortunate minorities did not abuse their privileges, either, and generally behaved with restraint and respect for the rules.

Similarly, many comrades in the past decade have seriously questioned one or a number of practices of the regime and have never developed political differences.

The Organization Question is not just and not **always** a reflection of and a link to programmatic questions. It also has an identity and a character of its own. The Party has a right to judge the leadership **on this question alone.** It is neither honest nor principled for any leadership, whether on a national or Branch level, to demand of a critic that he anchor his objections in **Capital** before he can be heard.

If his objections are indeed anchored there, the regime has no right to denounce him as unwarranted, petty or extraneous if he raises any protest over administrative issues affecting him.

In the final analysis, the Organization Question, in addition to having an identity of its own, is itself a **political question**, and politicalized comrades should stop denigrating it. They tend to consider organizational matters as unworthy of their attention and intervention because of the second-class status of the issue. Exclusively concerned with wondering if their organizational objections have deeper political roots, they completely forget that **the organizational practices of the leadership may have deeper political causes than the leadership cares to reveal.**

It may well be that the new pogrom of expulsions, suspensions, censures, threats, etc., are powered by a **different concept of the Party and SWP program** on the part of the leadership, a concept that the regime obscures by its Convention resolutions which, in most cases, appear to reiterate traditional positions of the Party.

Surely, a regime that openly threatens to get rid of certain Branches and individuals—even "active" ones!—and warns that it will "clean up" certain areas and "eliminate factionalism" for all time, is a regime to whom the following question may validly be addressed:

"Comrades, just what is your **political** program and strategy for the SWP? And how can Party

\*A novel about the Moscow Trials by Arthur Koestler, written in 1941.

organizational practices change so radically unless they are actually rooted in your undivulged new politics and perspectives?!"

#### Leadership Accountability

The spectacle of a regime that brands as "disruptive" an organizational protest by a political minority that has a real or suspected grievance is a sorry spectacle, rife with hypocrisy. The regime has the responsibility of answering criticism by admitting or denying it and has no right to "reject" it. It may postpone discussion of the issue, but to turn majority-minority relations into bourgeois diplomacy-style gamesmanship is to reduce leadership responsibility for its organizational practices into nothingness.

Most Branch organizers know this, and know as well that they are capable of plenty of mistakes, excesses, myopias, and general underachievement! Still, they are accountable for their stewardship. That the central regime should somehow stand exempt from the necessary criteria and norms of judging leadership and assume the mantle of absolute organizational and procedural inviolability from criticism—taking exception to the form rather than the content of criticism—is a mockery of the very democratic centralism they claim as their guide.

#### Factional Showdown in the Party Corral

It is apparent from the new **Organizational Resolution** that the regime isn't quite sure how far to go in proscribing factions. Nor is it at all sure what kind of an organization it presides over.

The **Political Resolution** tells us that the SWP isn't even a Party but is still a **propaganda group**—but the **Organization Resolution** promptly transforms us into a **combat Party** mobilized to seize state power!

The **Political Resolution** tells us that our tasks are **propagandistic**—but the **Organization Resolution** decrees more centralism so that we can more effectively **penetrate** the mass movement!

It is difficult to know whether absent-mindedness, inefficiency, cynicism or schizophrenia is at work here. One can only admire a leadership which not only defends its position but defends two mutually exclusive positions with equal zeal.

In regard to factions, page 15 of the **Organization Resolution** assures us that "The right to organize tendencies and factions is safeguarded." Very nice, exemplary, properly traditional. But hold on—pages 16 and 17 describe in Grand Guignol terms exactly what you can expect after you exercise this dubious "right." A faction cannot be politically justified we are told, **unless** it conducts a power fight! Furthermore, if differences are so fundamental as to justify the organization of a faction, then the faction "must" conduct a "showdown fight for control of the Party."

Fantastic. Not only does the regime now have the right to commandeer private factional correspondence, it has the audacity to order factions to conduct "war against the Party" on the pain of being labelled "politically unjustifiable" if the factions do not declare war!

“  
*While anyone may certainly express critical views, hardly anyone can get them discussed objectively and on their own merits. Distortion and insult have displaced political debate in the SWP.*  
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This is to serve notice on the Party majority that the Seattle Branch of the SWP refuses to foment a power fight, and if this be disloyalty to the new "Organizational Character of the SWP" as well as proof of our "disruptive" and "degenerate" nature, let the Political Committee act forthwith.

So factions are evidently still legal but politically immoral, unwise, unnecessary and provocative by their very nature. Faction members are not necessarily criminals (unless they refuse to incite splits) but they are definitely irresponsible fools and knaves, ordained to become anti-Party cliques.

#### Dissidence Outlawed

The Progressive Labor Party (PL) convention, scorned by *The Militant*, was much more consistent. **Because** factions are evil, they said, they are prohibited; in their place, "criticism and self-criticism" shall prevail. *The Militant* dismissed this as "Stalinist garbage." But what alternative avenue of criticism does the P.C. propose for PL or for itself? If factions are anti-Party and if individual criticism is garbage, what are the approved outlets for dissent?

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*The "ample room" for critical expression is equivalent to the choice of the last meal by the condemned man.*  
”

We are repeatedly told in the **Organization Resolution** that "ample room is provided for the expression of dissident views." Where? When? How?

Every two years, the Convention decides policy for all questions that will arise during the next two years, even surprise events that haven't happened yet, like the Kennedy assassination, Cuban missile crisis, etc. Since criticism can only be advanced and (supposedly) discussed during one 3-month pre-Convention discussion period every two years, then anyone planning ahead as to how best to intervene in this discussion with a minority viewpoint is vilified as a factionalist because he is organized and/or hasn't changed his mind since the last convention when he was only a tendency.

Furthermore, while anyone may certainly express critical views at the Convention, hardly anyone can get them **discussed** objectively and on their merits. Distortion and insult have displaced political debate in the SWP.

In life, then, **no real room is provided for objective and serious expression and debate** of dissident views. All critics are promptly slandered, pilloried and obscuritized. For many long years, the SWP had the enviable and unique reputation of being a democratic centralist party that permitted factions and factional life, but today, opposition on any question whatsoever has been rendered so suspect, so disgraceful and so dangerous to its formulator that scenes like the following are commonplace:

A Party leader speaks in diametric opposition to a P.C. Resolution at a national Convention. Then, to the bewilderment of some unsophisticated delegates, he votes FOR the P.C. Resolution—because, he says, you just don't vote against the leadership!

So much for the regime's habit of pointing with pride to the "overwhelming" majority vote and the "minute" votes garnered by minorities. In life, to vote against the regime in order to register your **opinion** is intolerable disloyalty that disqualifies comrades from first-class Party citizenship.

The "ample room" for critical expression is equivalent to the choice of the last meal by the condemned man.

The current regime forces dissenters into becoming tendencies and tendencies into becoming factions. The only alternatives are abject capitulation, despite one's convictions, individual withering away, or, ironically, that very phenomenon about which the regime waxes so righteously indignant—degeneration into cliques. The history of the Communist Party should serve warning on the SWP: where factions and political disputes are overtly or in effect prohibited, cliques will proliferate, serving as private formations for the discussion of burning Party issues.

The absurd contention that factions mean power fights is a political frame-up and the formulation should be summarily removed from the **Resolution**. It is designed to prejudice any discussion of political questions raised by an organized minority. It illustrates one of the fundamental characteristics of the regime: when faced with political opposition, it promptly creates hysteria in the Party over secondary organizational questions. This allows the regime to evade defending its policy in the "objective," "responsible" and "educational" manner piously advocated by the **Resolution**, and still attain its objective—an "overwhelming" majority vote.

Both Lenin and Trotsky bequeathed to us the unchallengeable right to organize factions for the express purpose of trying to influence and persuade the membership and the leadership to alter or adjust Party policy. There is not one word in the doctrine of Bolshevism to the effect that the majority is by

nature correct and the minority automatically wrong. Yet according to the present **Organization Resolution**, "basic differences with the Party line" are caused by "alien class pressures... ideas, moods and motivations at odds with our program and traditions... nervousness translated into exaggerated criticism of the Party... those who develop basic political differences also develop an urge to throw off restrictions imposed upon them by the Party's organizational concepts. They become antagonistic to democratic centralism." (Pages 4 & 5.)

#### The Self-Critical Spirit of Revolutionists

This "analysis" of minorities is not only a shameful generalization but an ignorant political error. It assumes that nobody knows that Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Cannon were frequently in minorities themselves. The regime really believes that Party line is equivalent to absolute truth and minority opinion equal to absolute "capitulation to alien class pressures"—but that the entire Party believes this is unbelievable! Surely, even among those who have not become so "disoriented" as to organize factions, somebody has absorbed the rigorously self-critical spirit of Marxism:

**If Marx and Engels were alive today they would certainly have nothing but biting contempt for the suggestion that the merciless criticism which was their sharpest weapon should never be turned against themselves.**

**Their real greatness does not consist in the fact that they never made a mistake, but in the fact that they never attempted to persist in a mistake for one moment after they had recognized it as such.**

Karl Marx by Franz Mehring

The **Organization Resolution** buries this spirit once and for all, for not only has the Dobbs-Kerry regime never made a mistake, it is self-described as generically incapable of making any. The majority, therefore, by automatically supporting the regime, will always be historically right.

“  
*Both Lenin and Trotsky bequeathed to us the unchallengeable right to organize factions for the express purpose of trying to influence and persuade the membership and the leadership.*  
”

There aren't enough Organizational Resolutions in the world to continually suppress the factions forced into being by such a hallowed leadership. In **The History of American Trotskyism**, Comrade Cannon writes:

**Once a movement has evolved through experience and through struggle and internal conflict to the point where it consolidates a body of leaders who enjoy wide authority, who are capable of working together and who are more or less homogeneous in their political conceptions, then faction struggles tend to diminish. They become rarer and are less destructive. They take different forms, have more clearly evident ideological content and are more instructive to the membership.**

**The consolidation of such a leadership becomes a powerful factor in mitigating and sometimes preventing further faction fights.**

The consolidation of such a leadership is devoutly to be wished. Obviously, it has not yet materialized in the Socialist Workers Party. ■

#### Notes

21. Robert Vernon was the SWP's leading Black exponent of the nationalist ideology, and is still an SWP spokesman.

22. J.R. Johnson was the pseudonym of the famous West Indian author, C.L.R. James (*Black Jacobins, World Revolution*, etc.). He left the SWP in 1940 with the Schactmanites, but returned in 1947 and authored the 1948 Resolution on the Negro struggle. He left the SWP once again in 1951.

# SWP's Tom Kerry Spews Vitriol in Seattle

by Angelica Merlino

The Spring issue of the *Freedom Socialist* proved so threatening to the SWP that they sprung their prime bureaucrat cum laude out of his desert retreat—and Tom Kerry himself descended on Seattle to herd the SWP faithful back to the fold.

Chief weapon of the former SWP bigwig was his sewage-and-spittle brand of polemic, unmodified by advancing years or the soothing breezes of Palm Springs.

Kerry's ostensible subject for a three-part lecture series was "The Emerging Revolt in U.S. Labor," but his main energy was directed to long, sputtering and often incoherent diatribes against the Freedom Socialist Party.

The *Freedom Socialist* was labeled an "outhouse rag" and "cesspool quarterly" for daring to commit political heresy and openly publish its program.

The "political pygmies" of the FSP, thundered Kerry, went so far as to include a blasphemous supplement in their newspaper—a document entitled "Radical Laborism vs. Bolshevik Leadership." (This supplement provides a factual account of the degeneration into bureaucratism of the Farrell Dobbs/Tom Kerry regime of the SWP in the 1960's, which became increasingly conservative and finally purged all dissenting tendencies.)

In typical Stalinist fashion, Kerry raved and ranted about the supplement in a completely apolitical way, concentrating on personal slander and sexist insults.

## long, sputtering and often incoherent diatribes against the Freedom Socialist Party

Kerry was particularly obsessed with Clara Fraser, a 25-year SWP member who became a founder of the FSP. His rampage against her was hysterical; she was a "tyrant," ruthless in "forcing

her ideas down everybody's throats."

"If you dare to disagree with her," he shrieked, "she'll pull your leg out of your ass and beat you with the bloody stump." He, however, was "unafraid to be in Clara Fraser country," even though she would like to "emasculate" the SWP into "impotency."

The fact is that Fraser, against overwhelming odds, tried to promote within the SWP the unheard-of idea that women and minorities have an unmatched capacity for leadership in the American revolution. But the SWP cannot countenance socialists who anticipate rather than tail-end the mass movements.

Two Marxist scholars who were formerly SWP leaders, Myra Tanner Weiss and Murry Weiss, were special targets of Kerry's ire for their temerity in disagreeing with the infamous Dobbs/Kerry machine and leaving the party.

Kerry's venom against the Weisses was provoked by a cover story on them in the *Freedom Socialist*. They were NOT "titans of world revolution," he fumed, but trifling "Rip Van Winkles" who awoke and "slandered their own party" and "backed the CP in Portugal." (The SWP gives aid and comfort to the State Department-backed Portuguese Socialist Party.)

He charged that Murry Weiss had "disappeared on a 15-year leave of absence from the SWP," and that Myra Tanner Weiss had been "dropped because of inactivity," ignoring the Weisses' consistent work as teachers and theoreticians in the New York Marxist Education Collective, and Myra Weiss's involvement in labor, feminist and minority struggles.

He refused to discuss the *issues* that forced so many of the most talented SWP leaders out of the party they had created.

Kerry's bombastic pronouncements on labor history typified the SWP's outmoded views of the contemporary scene. He credited labor's finest moments exclusively to white male trade unionists in the steel and auto industries. The explosive history and current struggles of unskilled, immigrant, women and minority workers were relegated to footnote status—a few token remarks about their auxiliary position. Much more significant to Kerry was the "tremendous" political



**TOM KERRY, retired SWP bureaucrat, brandishes the cause of his tantrum—the FREEDOM SOCIALIST.**

weight of middle-class students whose rise to revolutionary fervor he eagerly awaits.

As for the feminist, civil rights and gay movements, Kerry was glad to see that they were finally "maturing." At one point, he made a disgusting antigay, limp-wristed gesture to satirize how bureaucrats "lash out" at the bosses, a shockingly offensive bit of gay stereotyping worthy of a confirmed bigot.

FSP members were allowed only two responses during the three-part lecture series. SWP's refusal to permit the targets of Kerry's attacks to defend the FSP was an implicit commentary on the SWP's vaunted call for workers democracy, and a verification, if anybody needed one, of their demagoguery and dictatorial methods.

"I hate factions and splinter groups," Kerry snarled at one point, conveniently forgetting the origins of the SWP itself.

Freedom Socialist salespeople did a brisk business with the independents present who were revolted by Kerry. "If he reflects the culture of the working class," said one young woman, "there's no hope for anybody."

But he doesn't—and there is. The lowly workers whom Kerry and the SWP perennially scorn—minorities, women, gays and youth—are not footnotes but the chapter headings of living labor history. They will emerge victorious while Kerry and his fellow hacks descend to merited oblivion. ■

# ...new tendency

from page 5

mittee in Denver, the FSP, and groupings and individuals in other cities.

The Seattle visit of the Zaslows, two long-time Trotskyists, like the previous visit of the Weisses (see Spring 1977 *Freedom Socialist*), helped pave the way for the enthusiastic L.A. conference.

Candid discussions, conducted with comradely respect, produced broad areas of general agreement on fundamental programmatic issues.

Edith Zaslows, a former labor leader and current Socialist Union activist, revealed that "not so long ago, I considered retiring from active politics. I told myself that I was too old, I was tired, I wanted to write a book or something. But then I started getting vibes about this regroupment thing, about Seattle and the FSP and your insistence that the woman question was a first-class political priority. I became very excited by what I heard and, now that I'm here, I am confident that as long as the FSP is involved in regroupment, the woman question will never again be put on the back burner."

Milton Zaslows, formerly an SWP leader who is a driving force in the 9-year-old Socialist Union, praised the "professionalism, effectiveness and high standards" of the FSP. "This has been a profound experience for me," he said. "Before we came here, we had little idea of what you were about, but your party is absolutely staggering to the imagination. You've got to be doing something right, and we strongly recognize that. Our differences are compatible with Trotskyist principle and I feel we could collaborate comfortably in a truly democratic centralist organization."

### Felberbaum Tour

Arthur Felberbaum, a founder of the Young Socialist Alliance (an SWP affiliate), came to Seattle on the first leg of a national tour designed to probe prospects for regroupment.

The FSP's contact with Felberbaum, a member of the Marxist Education Collective in New York City and coordinator of the collective's School for Marxist Education, was welcomed as a potential step in the national regroupment process.

In an FSP-sponsored public lecture to a capacity audience, he discussed "Capital: What It Is and How to Read It." In private meetings, Felberbaum elaborated his views on Portugal, the need for expanding Marxist theory, significant political developments on the east coast, and

regroupment, which he said he was vitally interested in promoting.

Debates on the economics of female labor, the vanguard role of minority women, and the relationship of theory to practice highlighted the ideological exchanges between him and the FSP.

He next travelled to Oregon for a lively meeting organized by the FSP's Portland branch.

In a surprising move for someone who called himself a Trotskyist in Seattle, Felberbaum subsequently sent greetings to the L.A. conference, wishing it success but objecting to what he considered a precipitous tempo for regroupment. At a pre-conference meeting in New York, he claimed that he hadn't discovered any historic continuity to American Trotskyism and urged that regroupment "not take off from within Trotskyism" but from outside "objective circumstances." And he is currently trying to prevent Trotskyists in the MEC from affiliating with the new tendency.

The FSP hopes that Felberbaum, a socialist scholar, reverses his present confusing course in time to avoid becoming one of the skeptics whom Trotsky characterized in the *Transitional Program* as "desirous of reversing the whole course of revolutionary thought" because "instead of learning from the past, they 'reject' it." These skeptics wanted to delay the creation of the new International even though the "degeneration and perfidy of the old leadership" demanded such a course. "The class struggle does not tolerate an interruption," he wrote. "Who does not perceive this today, let him in the meantime stand aside."

And quietly, we would add.

### On to Regroupment!

The Seattle meetings, the growing collaboration among like-minded revolutionists, and the success of the groundbreaking Los Angeles conference have placed regroupment at the head of the agenda for radicals.

As one speaker remarked during the conference, "What we are doing here is beginning a process of building



**Arthur Felberbaum, coordinator of New York's School for Marxist Education, speaks to a Seattle audience.**

a party through ideological struggle, exchange of ideas and the experience of working together. The correct time for initiating regroupment is now. To hold off or stand aside would be a dereliction of our duty and a mockery of our responsibility to bring Marxism to life at every new turn of events. A great opportunity has presented itself, and the question now arises: Are we equal to the challenge?"

The record will show that the L.A. conference rose brilliantly to the occasion. ■

## Brother & Sister—Can You Spare Some Dimes?

Dimes add up to dollars, which we need plenty of to continue spreading the word about revolutionary socialism. Please spare us some dimes (several dollars worth!) and help us beat back the likes of Anita Bryant, Lloyd Cooney, the Mormon antifeminists, Carter and his racist court, and the whole kit and kaboodle of demagogues, liars and capitalist bigots.

Send your contribution now to the **FREEDOM SOCIALIST PARTY, 3815-5th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98105.**

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