

Ethiopia  
Coalminer Strike

# the freedom socialist

25¢

Vol. 4 No. 1 Spring 1978

C82



# AMERICAN GHETTO 1978

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## the freedom socialist

Volume 4, Number 1 Spring 1978

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**ON THE COVER: A Black working mother and her children, symbols of the daily struggle for survival intrinsic to America's Black communities.**

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## letters letters letters letters letters letters letters

### Hands Across the Border

We run a bookstore in Toronto in conjunction with the Revolutionary Workers League. We would like to receive a bundle of your newspapers. Please detail information on discounts, other publications, etc. Love and Leninism, P. for Louis Riel Bookstore Toronto, Ontario

I saw a copy of your press the other day. Am interested in a subscription and back issues. Please send info; I look forward to hearing from you. N.L. Islington, Ontario

Put this donation toward your excellent newspaper. If not enough, write and tell me. W.D. Winnipeg, Manitoba

(We wholeheartedly welcome readers who put their money where their principles are. Don't miss our Fund Drive information in this issue!)

### Chartist Friends

Recently you sent me the Fall '77 issue of your paper. I found it quite interesting and am sending a check for a subscription . . .

I have some friends in England in the Chartist tendency who are interested in your publication, and if you do not already have an exchange with them, I'd like to send them a gift subscription.

I understand you are planning to put out a theoretical journal. Please send me a copy and I will subscribe. Fraternally, D.C. Berkeley, Calif.

(We are collaborating with the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP) on a public theoretical bulletin that can be ordered now. See page 15.)

### We Love You Too

Hooray for the Carter issue! What a terrific job! It's got everything: good analysis, and interesting articles and editorials. We are bowled over by it and feel like genuine fans. Wonderful job. Myra Tanner Weiss New York City

### Freeway Hall Has Everything

I enjoyed reading about Freeway Hall in the *Freedom Socialist*. I noted specifically that Freeway Hall contains "an extensive library of the radical press comprising almost every tendency on the American left." Does that include the *Weekly People*, published by the Socialist Labor Party? . . . I am very enthusiastic about the recent contact between SLP and the FSP . . .

Keep up the good work. Sincerely yours, J.F.B. New York City

(We certainly do stock the *Weekly People*.)

### Tack!

I enclose money for a subscription to the *Freedom Socialist*. Comradely, F.A.B. Umeå, Sweden

### You're Welcome

I liked the Fall issue and would like to subscribe. Enclosed are funds for this and for FSP publications #3 and #4. I'm also very much interested in the CRSP—if there are special CRSP publications, I'd appreciate hearing about them, and if there are any CRSP conventions or conferences in the offing I would appreciate advance notice. Thanks! Solidarity, D.S. Madison, Wisc.

### Hello Columbus

I have just finished reading Vol. 3, No. 4 of the *FS* and was particularly interested in . . . "Revolutionary Integration." Please send me Part I. Very truly yours, J.D.M. Columbus, Ohio

### Make Us an Offer

. . . Got the latest paper and thought the subject matter terrific. I do have a number of reservations about the writing, though, finding it much too intellectually presented . . . I'm going to see whether I can offer any improvements to satisfy my criticism. The most presentable article from the point of view of any intelligent though uninitiated reader is Clara's . . . I see nothing wrong and everything right in a little personality showing in *any* article . . . Also would like more articles on American working women and their problems. C. New York City

### Combatting Racism

We read with interest the special supplement on *Revolutionary Integration* in the Winter issue of your newspaper. It underscores some of the important problems faced by the left with respect to black nationalism and revolutionary socialism in the U.S. Our Party [the Socialist Party] itself has only come to grips with certain aspects of the question, but is far from putting forward an effective program on combatting racism in America and within the left. This is why we are interested in seeing the first part of the document presented in the *FS*. For Socialist Democracy, Tom Spiro National Secretary and staff member, *The Socialist Tribune* Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The *Freedom Socialist* welcomes letters and urges readers to air their views and responses to the paper.

## Carter's Labor Pains

# Miners Stand Firm in Marathon Coal Strike

The longest coal strike in history, fueled by the grim determination of the miners to win their demands, created a decided crunch for mine owners and a crisis for President Carter, who invoked Taft-Hartley and ordered the miners back to work.

But the move boomeranged, and the heroic defiance of the miners, backed by a groundswell of labor and public support, elevated worker militancy to a new high.

Members of the United Mine Workers, America's oldest industrial union, walked off the job last December 6 in protest against severe cutbacks in health and retirement benefits, and raised the further demand for the right to strike over grievances.

Coal stockpiles were quickly depleted, and the bosses demanded federal intervention. Carter, Labor Secretary Marshall, and a battery of key aides and officials leaped in to help exert heavy pressure on union negotiators.

UMW President Arnold Miller has done little since his reelection to better the conditions of miners. It was under his misleadership that health benefits

were crippled. And as negotiations proceeded around-the-clock, both the corporations and the union rank-and-file exhibited angry impatience with Miller's compromises.

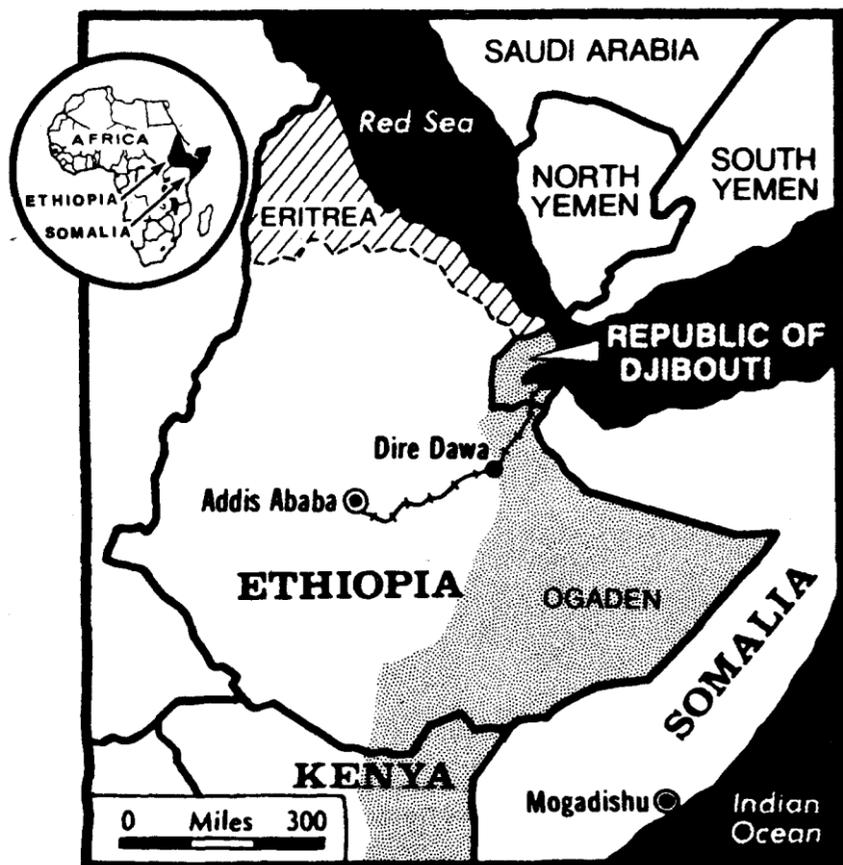
The owners are annoyed because he is unable to deliver labor stability and an end to "wildcat" strikes; the union deeply resents his slow responses to worsening conditions, his hiring of a young and inexperienced negotiating staff, and his endorsement of a no-strike contract that authorizes penalties against militants.

Sellout contract proposals pushed by Miller have twice been rejected as the miners maintain intransigence. As we go to press, the historic audacity of the miners is being put to the highest test. In the offing is a new compromise contract that lowers the health care deductible (previously free) and removes penalties for strikes but includes a speedup, incentive pay clause.

Intense and bitter miners—the traditional shock troops of U.S. labor—have waged a virtual rebellion against the bosses, the government, and their union's bureaucracy. A glowing example of courage to all the exploited, they may well sustain their insurgency until they win a contract they can live—and die—with. ■

# ETHIOPIA

**Eritreans want independence,  
Somalis want unification,  
the Ethiopian masses want socialism,  
and the military regime  
won't have any of it**



Nearly one thousand miles south of Suez lies Ethiopia, a tormented country on the east coast of Africa, close to the Red Sea.

Two other areas actually flank the crucial Red Sea: Somalia, which curls around Ethiopia's southern and eastern boundaries, and Eritrea, the northern section of Ethiopia.

But Eritrea is waging a highly successful battle for independence from Ethiopia. And the Somalis who live in the Ogaden desert of Ethiopia are desperate to reunify with their own nation of Somalia.

The railway through the disputed Ogaden region provides Ethiopia's sole access to the sea—the port of Djibouti.

Ethiopia's military regime refuses to grant self-determination to the Eritreans and the Ogaden Somalis, both of whom are oppressed nationalities—victims of forced assimilation. The Ogaden Somalis were conquered by Ethiopia, with British and Italian help, between 1880 and 1900, and Eritrea became an Ethiopian colony in 1950.

The regime—the Dergue—not only wants to maintain control of the railway to Djibouti, it also wants to defuse the revolutionaries in Ethiopia proper by diverting their energy into a phony war against “aggression” and for “socialism.”

Disguising its capitalist nature with rhetoric that sounds Marxist but isn't, the Dergue has used Soviet and, regrettably, Cuban aid to smash the revolt in Ogaden.

The four-year-old Ethiopian revolu-

tion is at stake.

The workers and peasants who overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 spurred the Eritreans into a new offensive, which in turn impelled the Somalis into a new uprising. Such is the contagion of permanent revolution: workers in Addis Ababa, peasants in the countryside, and nationalists in Eritrea, Ogaden, and Somalia all support each other and seriously threaten both imperialism and world Stalinism, which jointly crave the status quo.

It is only a matter of time before the Dergue tyrants are defeated by a consolidated revolutionary army in what is called the Horn of Africa. ■



# CHILE

**Strongman Pinochet celebrates his  
phony referendum victory  
by canceling elections  
for the next decade**

“There will be no more elections in ten years!” thundered a jubilant Augusto Pinochet, president of Chile, after a reported 75% of Chile's electorate voted “support” to his military dictatorship in a contrived referendum.

Since the outset of his regime, Pinochet has operated hand-in-glove with the CIA to arrest, torture, and murder thousands of Chilean radicals and labor activists. When the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution last December denouncing his regime for “torture, disappearance of persons for political reasons, arbitrary arrest and detention,” he denounced the resolution and called for the referendum, claiming that Chile was a “victim of a base alliance of the great powers.”

## A Rubber-Stamp Plebiscite

Far from being an actual opportunity to express a political opinion on the regime, the plebiscite was engineered to rubber-stamp the government.

A massive propaganda campaign for a “yes” vote was launched through the government-controlled media.

The ballot wording deliberately con-

fused patriotism with support for the regime:

**In the face of the international aggression unleashed against the government of the homeland, I support President Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile, and reaffirm the legitimacy of the government of the Republic to conduct, in a sovereign way, the process of institutionalization of the country.**

The “yes” space on the ballot was graced by a Chilean flag while the black flag of anarchism adorned the “no” area. Poll officials were appointed by the government, and the Ministry of Interior controlled all information concerning the election and its results.

## A Groundswell of Opposition

Widespread opposition to the referendum erupted. Describing a “wave of protest,” the *Washington Post* reported: “By the end of the week, shoppers and passersby began to join the youths in chanting ‘freedom’ and ‘vote no.’”

Four hundred people demonstrated in Santiago on December 31 and January 3, and members of the leading bourgeois opposition party, the Christian Democrats, were arrested for handing out leaflets urging a “no” vote. CBS-TV reported that Santiago demonstrations continued even after the plebiscite was completed.

Pinochet clearly intends to exploit his “victory” to improve his faltering international prestige—but behind the scenes he will intensify repression against the working class. His rigged victory fuels the flame of reaction in Chile and serves to strengthen the hand of U.S. imperialism throughout Latin America.

U.S. workers must come to the aid of their persecuted brothers and sisters in Chile.

**Free all Chilean political prisoners!  
For political freedom and human rights  
in Chile! Legalize all Chilean opposition  
parties! Down with Pinochet's military  
dictatorship! ■**

## CRSP Mailbox

**The Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party is a national Trotskyist tendency formed in July 1977 to begin the work of revolutionary regroupment necessary for the construction of a genuine Leninist-Trotskyist party in the U.S. Information about CRSP discussions and activities is available from sources listed below.**

### ALASKA

Juneau: 125 Troy Avenue, Juneau, AK 99801. (907) 586-1617.

### CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles: P.O. Box 27783, Los Angeles, CA 90027. (213) 463-3706.  
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### NEW YORK

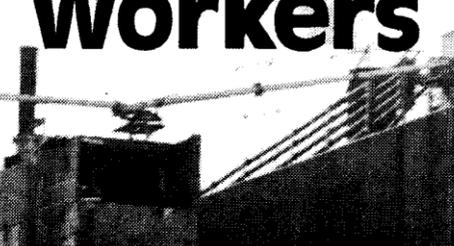
New York City: c/o Murry Weiss, 115 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011. (212) 242-1717.

### WASHINGTON

Seattle: 5137 South Holly, Seattle, WA 98118. (206) 725-2609.  
Olympia: 3813 Biscay N.W., #7, Olympia, WA 98502.

**Jobs Are Dangerous  
to Your Health**

**Chemical  
Arsenal  
Lethal to  
Workers**



by Sandy Nelson

**T**om Burkholder, international representative of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union, has strongly denounced the failure of bosses to provide on-the-job protection for workers.

Burkholder is collaborating with local chapters of his union to halt the use of workers as guinea pigs, and to insure that union contracts include safety measures.

His investigations have revealed that the dangers of commonly used chemicals are deliberately underplayed by management as workers continue to be the victims of unnecessary "accidents" or the debilitating effects of protracted exposure.

Only the threat of being fired forces workers to report to unsafe jobs day after day.

**Cancer and Sterility**

The Shell Chemical Company undertook just enough laboratory work in 1952 to become fully aware of the hazardous effect of the pesticide called dibromochloropropane (DPCP).

Yet Shell employees are still required to work with the chemical, and 14 of 27 male employees at the Lathrop, California factory have become sterile or are suffering from abnormally low sperm counts.

Employees who contracted a type of cancer peculiar to asbestos workers are suing Johns-Manville Corporation for deliberate falsification of information about the risk of asbestos exposure.

**Criminal Negligence**

Burkholder recently investigated a Seattle company whose negligent handling of a solvent caused emission of dangerous fumes. The company stalled an official investigation until all the fumes disappeared, thereby avoiding possible government prosecution.

Bosses not only refuse to halt the use of known dangerous chemicals, they also fail to submit new chemicals to time—and profit—consuming laboratory tests. And occupational medicine is one of the least developed areas of medical science.

**Government Complicity**

Government doctors hired to study industrial chemicals and establish minimum standards frequently ignore or cover up the dangers.

"Government employees write safety standards that benefit employers," says Burkholder.

And the federal circuit court in New Orleans recently refused to uphold a key clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act that guarantees the right to refuse an unsafe job without penalty.

"Free enterprise is free as long as it's the employer who has the freedom to enterprise," stated Burkholder.

Burkholder spoke at the Seattle Labor Temple in December at a meeting sponsored by the Coalition for Protective Legislation. The ongoing battle for protective work laws waged by organizations such as the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union and the Coalition is decisive for reversing the deadly contempt of Big Business for the lives of working people. ■

Doug Barnes/Freedom Socialist

**The PRT**

Mexican Trotskyism has experienced phenomenal growth in the past five years

**M**arked by stunning numerical growth and ideological aggressiveness, the Mexican section of the Fourth International—Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT)—has become a highly visible force in Mexican politics and a focus of the country's left wing.

Composed of a small cadre of Fourth Internationalists in 1973, the PRT today numbers 1500 members and is supported by an equal number of sympathizers. When PRT leader Alfonso Peralta was murdered on May 12, 1977, ten thousand people massed in Mexico City in protest.

Alfonso Rios describes the party's energetic publishing program in the June 9, 1977 issue of *Inprecor*, official Fourth International journal:

...because of the mass communications media, the country knows of the existence of a party which openly declares itself the Mexican section of the Fourth International and raises the banner of the socialist revolution of workers and peasants councils as a credible project in this historic period. . .Trotskyist literature is circulating on a vastly greater scale. In 1977 a revolutionary Marxist weekly appeared for the first time in Mexico, *Bandera Socialista*, whose average distribution is 8,000. The magazine *La Internacional* has a circulation of 2,000. . .*Inprecor* is reprinted in Mexico in order to respond to the high demand. Pamphlets are published every week on special themes with press runs of 1,000-2,000.

The swift growth of the PRT demonstrates the power of Trotskyist ideas to attract mass support in a period of grave economic crisis marked by phenomenal unemployment and inflation. From 1968 to the present, broad sections of Mexican students, workers, and peasants have been radicalized and significant sectors are gravitating toward Trotskyism.

According to Rios,

First it was the student movement which extended its field of action throughout the country; then. . .workers mobilizations, in-

volving only minorities, but with national impact (the electricians, railway construction workers, some factories in the industrial belt of Mexico City); then. . .the movement of university employees, the telephone workers, and the professors; finally, 1976 saw the beginning of peasant mobilizations. . .

This seething climate of social upsurge tested the radical parties. The Communist Party (PCM) lost much influence because its eclectic and reformist policies were so similar to the course of the Mexican government's attempts to quell the mass movements.

As a consequence, since 1975 the PCM has been forced to maintain a fraternal relationship with the PRT. In 1976 the PCM entered into an electoral accord with Liga Socialista (Socialist League), a forerunner of the PRT, and the candidate of the bloc, Valentín Campa, drew two million votes in the subsequent elections.

The PRT is the product of the 1976 fusion between the two largest Trotskyist organizations—the International Communist League and the Liga Socialista—together with smaller Trotskyist factions. This regroupment created a party rich in internal ideological life and in member activism.

Rios concludes:

The. . .PRT is. . .the first organization of the Fourth International in Latin America that has assimilated the International's conception of internal democracy; various international tendencies exist within it which in other countries are still maintaining separate organizations. . .

Since September of last year (1976) the Mexican section has been one of the Fourth International's strongest and most dynamic sections anywhere. . .it is through the development of the PRT, along with other parties, that the International's presence and action on the Latin American continent will rise to the level required by the present crisis. . . revolutionaries will be able to play their role of leading the proletariat. ■



# EL PRT

El trotskismo mexicano ha experimentado un crecimiento fenomenal en los últimos cinco años

**M**arcado por un aplastante crecimiento numérico y una agresividad ideológica, la sección mexicana de la Cuarta Internacional—el Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT)—ha llegado a ser una poderosa fuerza visible en la política mexicana y un foco en las facciones izquierdistas del país.

Compuesto por un pequeño núcleo de internacionalistas de la Cuarta en 1973, el PRT hoy día tiene 1500 miembros y es apoyado por un igual número de simpatizantes. Cuando el líder del PRT, Alfonso Peralta fue asesinado el 12 de mayo de 1977, diez mil personas hicieron una protesta masiva en la Ciudad de México.

Alfonso Rios describe el vigoroso programa de publicaciones del partido el 9 de junio de 1977 en una edición del *Inprecor*, periódico oficial de la Cuarta Internacional:

... a través de los medios de comunicación, el país sabe de la existencia de un partido el cual se declara abiertamente la sección mexicana de la Cuarta Internacional y alza la bandera de la revolución socialista de los consejos de trabajadores y campesinos como un proyecto creíble en este período de la historia... La literatura trotskista está circulando en una vasta y gran escala. En 1977 un semanario marxista revolucionario apareció por primera vez en México, *Bandera Socialista*, cuyo porcentaje de distribución es ahora de 8,000 ejemplares. La revista *La Internacional* tiene una circulación de 2,000 ejemplares. *Inprecor* está reimprimiéndose en México para responder a la alta demanda. Los panfletos están publicándose cada semana con temas especiales en tiradas de 1,000 a 2,000 ejemplares.

El rápido crecimiento del PRT demuestra el poder de las ideas trotskistas para atraer la ayuda masiva en un período de grave crisis económica marcado por una cesantía y una inflación fenomenales. Desde 1968 hasta el presente, amplios grupos de estudiantes mexicanos, trabajadores, y campesinos se han radicalizado y significantes sectores están gravitando hacia el trotskismo.

De acuerdo con Rios,

Primero fue el movimiento de estudiantes el que extendió su campo de acción a través

del país; entonces... las movilizaciones de trabajadores, envolviendo sólo minorías, pero con el impacto nacional (los electricistas, los trabajadores del ferrocarril, algunas fábricas en el cordón industrial de la Ciudad de México); entonces... el movimiento de empleados universitarios, los trabajadores del teléfono, y los profesores; finalmente, 1976 vió el comienzo de las movilizaciones campesinas...

Este bulente clima de levantamiento social puso a prueba a los partidos radicales. El Partido Comunista (PCM) perdió mucha influencia a causa de que su política ecléctica y reformista era muy similar al curso del gobierno mexicano que intentaba sofocar los movimientos masivos.

Como consecuencia, el PCM fue forzado desde 1975 a mantener una relación fraternal con el PRT, lo mismo que los partidos comunistas en Europa. En 1976 el PCM entró en un acuerdo electoral con la Liga Socialista, una antecesora del PRT, y el candidato del grupo político, Valentín Campa, obtuvo dos millones de votos.

El PRT es el producto de la fusión de 1976 entre las dos más grandes organizaciones trotskistas—la Liga Comunista Internacional y la Liga Socialista—unidas a pequeñas facciones trotskistas. Este reagrupamiento creó un partido rico en vida ideológica interna y en activismo de sus miembros.

Rios concluye:

El... PRT... es... la primera organización de la Cuarta Internacional en América que ha asimilado las concepciones internacionales de la democracia interna; varias tendencias internacionalistas existen entre las que en otros países están todavía manteniendo organizaciones separadas...

Desde septiembre del último año (1976) la sección mexicana ha sido una de las secciones más fuertes y la más dinámica de la Cuarta Internacional en cualquier parte... lo es a través del desarrollo del PRT junto con otros partidos, que con la presencia y acción de la Internacional en el continente latinoamericano se levantará hasta el nivel requerido por la presente crisis... los revolucionarios podrán desarrollar su papel de conducir el proletariado. ■

by Jamie Bevson

“**A**merica is a Christian nation. So we have to see homosexuality as an attack on the basic premises that our country was built on,” proclaims Curtis McDonald, founder of Citizens United to Protect Our Children (CUPOC), a Portland, Oregon group.

“You shouldn’t present a perversion of sex in the schools,” intones Lynn Greene of Volunteers Organized and Involved in Community Enactments (VOICE), a Eugene, Oregon group. “This is a moral, not a civil rights issue.”

Harassment of gays is mounting as bigoted Oregon conservatives draw national attention to their “Miami-West” antigay campaign.

### God Again

Invoking “dangers to children,” “morality,” “downgraded community standards,” and “God’s law,” VOICE is turning the liberal college town of Eugene, 100 miles south of Portland, into a political battlefield.

Last November, the Eugene City Council passed Oregon’s first ordinance prohibiting discrimination against gays. Within ten days, working through churches and the middle class, VOICE collected 7,000 signatures, sufficient to place a repeal referendum on the May 23 ballot.

### Dade County-West:

## Antigay Hysteria Cultivated in Oregon

Though slow to respond, Eugene’s sexual minority community has now developed a strong defense coalition. Originally the brainchild of a small elite of white, middleclass, conservative gay men, Eugene Citizens for Human Rights (ECHR) has now mushroomed beyond their control into a coalition of fifteen gay, feminist, radical, and liberal groups.

Through mass meetings, ECHR is promoting a strategy of gay visibility, gay leadership, public education, building the gay movement, and connecting with other groups threatened by the backlash.

Eugene activists apparently learned from the Miami defeat last summer, when liberal gay leaders, by *downplaying* the gay issue, opened the way for antigays to capture media attention and build enough support to defeat gay rights.

### Beleaguered Portland Gays Rally

In Portland, sexual minorities are still on edge from the pressures of a fortunately unsuccessful petition drive by CUPOC to recall the mayor for declaring Gay Pride Day in June 1977. But Radical Activists for Sexual Minorities (RASM) and other Portland gay groups have aligned to defend the Eugene ordinance.

### The Battlefield Expands

Ultra-right groups in St. Paul, Wichita and Seattle are also using the referendum tactic to smash gay rights.

The national rightwing drive against gay rights parallels its rampage against unions, women, and minorities. But the conservatives can be defeated by militant coalitions of sexual and racial minorities, labor, radicals, and women bound together by common needs. ■



Lenore Norgard/Free Press Socialist

Jamie Bevson is an experienced gay movement activist in Portland, Ore. He is currently assisting the gay community in Eugene.

## Where to Find the FSP

### ALASKA

Juneau: 125 Troy Ave., Juneau, AK 99801. (907) 586-1617.

### CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles: 637½ N. Windsor Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90004. (213) 463-3706.  
San Francisco/Berkeley: 2326 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94131. (415) 826-2730.

### NEW YORK

New York City: 158 W. 94th St., #B, New York, NY 10025. (212) 850-4867.

### OREGON

Portland: P.O. Box 1643, Portland, OR 97207. (503) 284-9884.

### WASHINGTON

Olympia: 3813 Biscay N.W., #7, Olympia, WA 98502.  
Seattle:  
National Office, Freeway Hall, 3815 5th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. (206) 632-7449. North Branch, 1931 E. Calhoun, Seattle, WA 98112. (206) 325-7305. South Branch, 1136 31st Ave. S., Seattle WA 98144. (206) 725-2609.

## Radical Women Directory

### ALASKA

Juneau: 125 Troy Ave., Juneau, AK 99801. (907) 586-1617.

### CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles: 821 Laveta Terrace, Los Angeles, CA 90026. (213) 625-1141.  
San Francisco/Berkeley: P.O. Box 31634, San Francisco, CA 94131. (415) 826-2730.

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### OREGON

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### WASHINGTON

Olympia: 3813 Biscay N.W., #7, Olympia, WA 98502.  
Seattle: Freeway Hall, 3815 5th Ave. N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. (206) 632-1815.

**Sukey Durham,  
young feminist poet,  
talks with**

# MELBA WINDOFFER

Revolutionary senior citizen



Val Carlson/Freedom Socialist

**Sukey Durham:** Melba, you've been a radical for over 40 years. Why?  
**Melba Windoffer:** I made a mistake in the man I married! Had he been well-to-do, I probably would have been a liberal! We married during the depression; we were young and without marketable skills. I came from a poor, small farm in Washington, and when Weyerhaeuser and other lumber barons started to log the forests, the surplus farm population became industrial wage slaves. IWW members used to talk with my father about this, and I would listen. And my husband was involved in giant demonstrations of the unemployed dur-

ing the depression, and I heard many Communists speak.  
**SD:** What turned you towards Trotskyism?  
**MW:** We worked for the Mooney/Billings defense and for the young Scottsboro boys; I baked for the International Labor Defense. And we supported Upton Sinclair's campaign for governor of California in 1936. After his defeat, a woman from Los Angeles attended a meeting of the campaigners at our house. **I was the only other woman there and had to stay in the bedroom to keep my two babies quiet, but I listened to her describe the struggle between**

**Trotsky and Stalin. She didn't convince the men—but she convinced me. I became a supporter of Trotsky.**

**SD:** Were you always a feminist?

**MW:** Farm women had to milk the cows and do everything a man did so the family could survive. They had more children than they wanted, too close together. Women died terrible deaths because there was no health care for them. They were overworked, isolated, lonely and bitter. My mother and older sister would argue with my father over votes for women, and I became a partisan of women.

**SD:** You joined the Socialist Workers Party just before World War II. What was it like?

**MW:** We were tiny as compared to the Seattle Communist Party at that time. Our comrades were active unionists; I was among the first women to work at Boeing. The Communist Party was huge, controlling the labor movement and the Democratic Party, and it sold out to the Democrats and the bosses because of its super-patriotism about the war. The CP betrayed the principles of Lenin and the Russian Revolution.

The SWP never supported capitalist politicians then and opposed the war as imperialist. Our perspective was socialist and internationalist.

**SD:** You left the SWP in 1966. Why?

**MW:** My strongest motivation was what they were doing to the women. I'd been in New York in 1959 and was appalled by the treatment of Myra Tanner Weiss, a national SWP leader and feminist.

**SD:** You have said that an entire generation of women was destroyed in the SWP. How?

**MW:** Some were driven out of politics completely, as I would have been had it not been for Clara Fraser and our fortunate isolation here on the "east coast of China." Others were suppressed by the sexism, or became conventional, secondary wives. The worst attack came from Joseph Hansen's *Militant* article insulting working women who used cosmetics. That caused an uproar, but our feminist ranks were squelched. **The party wouldn't take feminism seriously.**

**SD:** So you and Clara helped found the Freedom Socialist Party on the basis of feminism?

**MW:** Largely. We were also a minority tendency on the Black struggle, tactics in the antiwar movement, and the terrifying bureaucratism in the party.

Our first major struggle in the FSP was over feminism. It grew out of Clara's attempt to divorce Dick Fraser. Because Dick objected, party men put her down and tried to destroy her as a leading figure. They refused to prevent Dick from red-baiting and slandering Clara in court. He labeled her an unfit mother because she worked and was political.

**SD:** What were the other early FSP struggles?

**MW:** These same sexist men opposed democratic centralism—a disciplined, structured party that should have stopped Dick from contesting Clara's divorce and child custody. They wanted a loose, anarchistic organization, like the Socialist Party or New American Movement. We were a majority of one, however, and we expelled Dick for violating discipline, and his minority walked out.

**SD:** When did Radical Women get started and what is its relationship to the FSP?

**MW:** RW started shortly after we split from the SWP. RW consumed us because it developed so swiftly.

By 1971, RW was firmly established; Clara became FSP organizer, all party women redirected a lot of attention to party work, and the FSP really got off the ground. Later, RW became formally affiliated with the party. Not all Radical Women belong to the party, and RW has autonomy in strategy, tactics, program-planning, and so forth.

**SD:** What are the main problems of older women?

**MW:** People don't see how critical they are. **Poverty: women's lower pay accounts for lower social security. Transportation: few of us have cars. Bad health, loneliness, problem housing. And older lesbians can't get support and help from family or neighbors, and don't know younger lesbians.**

When my husband died, I was fortunate to get his longshoreman's benefits, and I have a car, but most older women are isolated, with no respected role in the world.

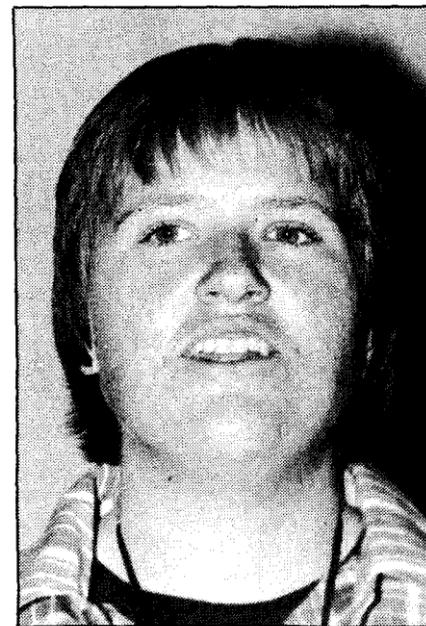
**SD:** How can we combat the growing antifeminist right wing?

**MW:** We have to organize and confront it, or we'll badly compromise ourselves like the SWP. **We should pull together everybody who's going to be affected by the ultra-right and by fascism, because only a total united front will defeat them.**

Our chances are better than in the thirties, because women are organized and conscious now. We are at least half of every oppressed group and we are the sector that can bring it all together. It's going to be a huge fight—like against Joe McCarthy, like the German people against Hitler. Women radicals will have to persuade union leaders, liberals and ex-radicals to take a stand.

**SD:** What is the importance of socialist feminism to you?

**MW:** It gave me a rebirth—in interest, mind, heart, everything. I'd been through so much in the movement, ground down, and socialist feminism gave me a whole new lease on life, new hope and enthusiasm. I really put my heart into Radical Women. I was a reborn socialist. I feel at last that we are going to make a revolution that will help me and people like me. I'm glad I've lived long enough to see it and I hope I live to see a true socialist society where women are really equal. ■



Lenore Norgard/Freedom Socialist

Sukey Durham

# Affirmative Action Benefits All Workers

## The Bakke Case: A Matter of Decision across Race Lines

by Kathy Saadat

**T**he Bakke decision is just as important as the famous Brown vs. Board of Education desegregation decision of 1954. The U.S. Supreme Court verdict will affect two segments of the population that have historically received the dirty end of the stick—minorities and women—and it will also affect the future of white labor.

The Black struggles of the 1960s won affirmative action programs for equal access to education and jobs. Soon after, the women's movement won the same demands.

But the controlling interests in this country would have us believe that if Bakke is upheld, only racial minorities will be injured. Not so! *All* such programs, including those for women, will be threatened.

The Bakke decision is being exploited to pit women and minorities against each other, and white males against everybody.

### Minorities and Women: Unity or Dissension?

Rita Clancy, a white woman following in Bakke's muddy footsteps, was also admitted to the University of California at Davis after charging the minority admissions program with reverse discrimination.

But why didn't she challenge the lack of a program for women? The admissions program lacked slots identified for any women, minority or white. Clancy's attack on minorities echoes the terrible mistake of the single-issue suffragists who turned against the abolitionists instead of the system.

Affirmative action programs should be available for minority men, minority women, and white women! And minorities and women need to fight side by side for all these demands, just as suffragists in the beginning cooperated with abolitionists.

### A Dual Opportunity for Minority Women

What is the role of minority women? I cannot divide myself between Blackness and femaleness. In me, as in all minority women, the two factors blend. Our greatest heroine was Sojourner Truth, who served and led both movements.

Minorities and women are at the bottom of the economic heap, but affirmative action can help some of us move upwards into schools, jobs, and unions. Once there, we may find a base for survival and a rostrum for our ideas. And those of us who will not sell out—who, because of our experience with oppression, are the most militant—sorely need such a base.

Affirmative action further provides us with legal protection for addressing issues crucial to the entire working class.

### Blaming the Victim

Affirmative action is on the hotseat as attacks mount against ERA, gay rights, abortion, undocumented workers, and unions—gruesome but predictable reactions to a flaky economy.

But the last hired, the first fired, the historically

despised are blamed and scapegoated as the *cause* of the economic crisis.

The victim is labeled the oppressor and further victimized! The whole concept of "reverse discrimination" is absurd demagoguery.

### Jobs for All!

Affirmative action is severely limited in a world of insufficient schools and jobs.

Why are there only 100 places at Davis Medical School instead of 1000? Because adequate services, jobs, and schools for everyone would cut the profits of this profit-mad system.

We must organize for the longer struggle ahead—for a system of production and distribution whose own survival doesn't depend on wage exploitation and race and sex oppression. We must work for a society that replaces property rights with human values.

### Affirmative Action Is a Class Question

But we must also unite now to defend our historic gains of the past decade. Equal rights and responsibilities for women and minorities is not just an abstract moral right—it is a crucial factor in the emancipation of the entire working class, which includes women and minorities as well as whites.

Without the solidarity of all segments of the class around the needs of each segment, no one sector can achieve anything.

Affirmative action affects just about everybody. ■

## "Reverse" Discrimination:

## Battle Cry of the Bigots

by Janet Sutherland

**A**llan Bakke cries "reverse discrimination" and a state supreme court upholds his plea. Rosa Morales *defends* affirmative action and is fired by a powerful university.

This pattern clearly illustrates the mounting opposition to creating equality of opportunity.

The chief foes of affirmative action are the eminent and the privileged. Management defiance or manipulation of affirmative action is the basic problem faced by minorities, women, the aged and the handicapped.

An employer increases his minority workforce through the expedient of firing whites. Or he blames affirmative action to conceal the real reason someone is not hired. University administrations, whose function is to preserve the status quo, are experts at this cynical game.

Affirmative action thus abused becomes a quick target for the free-floating discontent prevalent in the country, discontent that is fanned by carefully orchestrated media noise over "backlash."

### Backlash Blather

"Backlash" implies that middle-America thinks affirmative action has gone too far, that white males are being victimized by a large-scale takeover of their privileges and jobs by minorities and women.

"Backlash" describes the reflex of frustration, rage, and bitterness acted out by workers whose traditional benefits are threatened and who feel that they alone are suddenly being blamed and penalized for generations of racism and sexism. These white male workers thrust the blame back on the minority worker or the white woman as the cause of their losses.

This displaced and misplaced resentment perpetuates prejudice. Middle Americans allay their own insecurity by lashing out blindly at other groups and behaving as much like the ruling class as possible.

"Backlash" insinuates the inevitability of reaction while mislocating its cause. This wrong thinking is the tried and true mechanism by which the system perpetuates anxieties and pits race against race, sex against sex, and so on.

Yet affirmative action, despite all the uproar it engenders, has not accomplished very much. The *proportion* of minorities and women in schools, on faculties, and in well-paying jobs is unchanged from a few years ago.

### Divide and Conquer

The moneyed class in America is an expert practitioner of the divide and conquer process. Capitalism has always exploited race and sex prejudice to divert attention from class struggle.

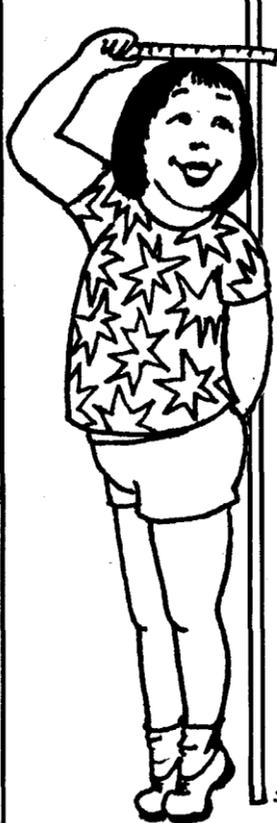
The entire system survives by rewarding selfishness, cutthroat competition, and scapegoating: communists are to blame, or Black militants, or women's libbers. Everybody is to blame for poverty and unemployment and rising competition except the system itself!

But there is a way to combat the backlash and defend affirmative action—and that is through the simple expedient of telling workers the whole truth about the profit system, the economy of scarcity, and the dog-eat-dog culture.

The labor movement should be persuaded to raise the demands appropriate to solving the "reverse" discrimination doubletalk: **Jobs for all! 30 hours work for 40 hours pay! Raise the minimum wage! Equal opportunity for all races and both sexes! ■**

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In Our  
Next Issue

## REPORT FROM CUBA

by Milton and Edith Zaslow

An eyewitness account of Cuba 19 years  
after the revolution, written by two  
keen analysts of international  
developments.

A Decade of

# RADICAL WOMEN

by Sandy Nelson

## 10 years of strife: the politics of principle

By Sarah McCoy

The idyllic, even bourgeois, setting at the Admiralty Resort in Port Ludlow, Washington, belied the intentions of the 125 or so women who went to the annual Radical Women Conference. They were celebrating their tenth anniversary as the nation's oldest socialist-feminist group. They were talking about revolution.

...members and interested non-members listened to presentations of Radical Women's history and ideas and heard speeches from a New York labor organizer and feminist, Myra Tanner Weiss; Janet McCloud, a Tulalip tribe Native American; and various...speakers. Their discussion reviewed a long and surprisingly extensive history of organizing and a dogged determination to continue as a strong voice for socialism and feminism...

The above appraisal was the provocative prelude to a long front-page story in the February 1 issue of *Seattle Sun*, a popular weekly.

Near the close of the article, the reporter wrote, "No one doubts that Radical Women knows what it wants."

Hallelujah, women have arrived! It's been a long time since Freud's cranky remark, "Women! What in the world do they want?!" And if anybody held any lingering doubts, a few hours at RW's

rousing conference would have been enough to dispel them.

### This Is the Revolution

Keynoter Myra Tanner Weiss captured the fervency of the conference:

*"The women's movement is happening all over the world! If Trotsky were alive, he would say, 'This is the world revolution!' Once the base begins to move, how long before the top begins to topple!"*

Weiss, a founder of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP), is a former leader of the Socialist Workers Party, which she left in the early sixties in protest against its cynical bureaucracy and antifeminism.

She traced women's plight in the SWP. This most advanced revolutionary party in the U.S., she said, consigned women's rights to the distant future. "They thought women would be emancipated *after* the revolution, and the revolution would be made by men!"

Weiss illumined the scientific foundations and breathtaking potential of Marxist feminism. Hers was the long, historic view, radiant with revolutionary optimism.

The other side of the question—the grave problems and heartbreak ram-

pan in many movements—was scrutinized by Native American leader and co-keynoter Janet McCloud.

### Friend of the Earth

Striking a sombre note, McCloud scored the rape of the environment by industrialists, and urged RW to address ecological issues.

*"Women must serve the earth,"* she said. *"Instinctively, women feel the threat to life because women are life and the source of life."*

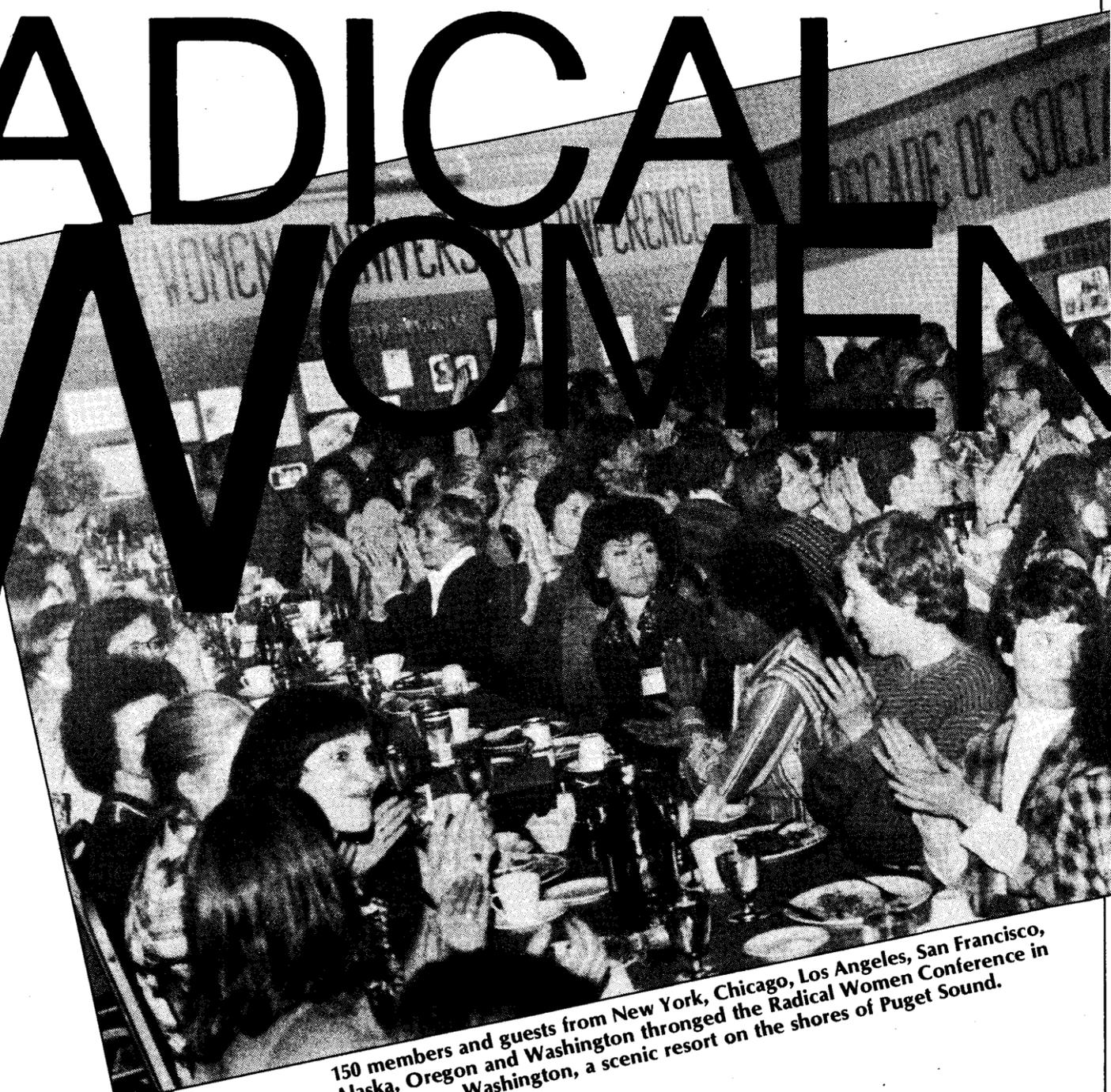
She had kind words for Radical Women. "You will be a major force in the American movement for freedom. I know. I've always had profound respect for you because you live your ideology and have always respected the integrity of our Indian movement."

Then she offered wise advice. "But let's have less back-patting and more ass-kicking—we need to correct our mistakes and never be smug."

McCloud is deeply worried over the decimation and crisis of Indian leadership: "It's only through women that there's any hope for the future."

### In the Beginning

The conference convened Friday night, January 27, with a spirited review



150 members and guests from New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Alaska, Oregon and Washington thronged the Radical Women Conference in Port Ludlow, Washington, a scenic resort on the shores of Puget Sound.



Pioneer feminist Gloria Martin chronicled Radical Women's turbulent early years.

# Socialist Feminism

# 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE



of "1967-69: Shaping the First Socialist Feminist Organization."

Founder Melba Windoffer and Gloria Martin wittily described the original RW, a hybrid of Old Left and New Left women, from which emerged—after stormy debates and splits—a purposeful and tenacious organization of radicals who popularized feminism and achieved leadership in the antiwar struggle, the childcare movement, the antipoverty program, abortion campaigns, divorce reform, affirmative action battles, etc.

In the 70s, members began to enter nontraditional trades, and RW was soon predominantly proletarian.

Assessing RW strength, founder Clara Fraser paid tribute to Windoffer and Martin: "These were women who viewed feminism as they viewed all social philosophy—through the prism of Marxism, of historical materialism. They never forgot the working class! This is the secret of our longevity, the glue that has held us together."

Cindy Gipple continued the historical

evaluation in her report "1970-73: Antiwar and the Days of Rage."

Gipple projected the exuberance of the youth rebellion. "We jarred the country out of the suffocating complacency of the fifties and ushered in an explosive new era of radicalism!"

But New Left sexism and ideological frivolity caused its demise, she said. RW turned toward refinement of theory, reorientation to working women, and minority struggles—and survived.

## Women around the World

A special panel devoted to international feminism and radical politics featured dynamic speakers: Jesús Mena, Los Angeles CRSP organizer, on Mexico; Sandy Nelson, RW's representative at the May 1977 International Women's Conference in Paris; Angelica Merlino, a recent visitor to Italy; and a European cothinker.

The speakers all attested to the rising impact of feminism on workers in other countries, and the difficulties of male radicals with the issue.

## Minority Women: A Strategic Position

Two Blacks and one Chicana explored feminist leadership in minority struggles.

All three are engaged in ethnic and women's rights work, linking these issues within both movements to sensitize minorities to feminism and alert white women to racism.

Yolanda Alaniz, president of United Workers Union-Independent, said, "Chicano unity can only come about if the Chicano movement also addresses our needs as workers, women, gays, and poor people." She hailed emerging Chicana leaders as the force cementing Chicano militancy.

A retrospective account of the Black movement through the heyday of nationalism was rendered by Madlyne Scott, who had few kind words for Blacks who relegated Black women to exclusive function as sex objects and mothers of "revolutionary babies."

"Black women are breaking out of this second-class prison," she declared, crediting feminism as the spur.

Kathy Saadat from the energetic Oregon, Oregon RW branch, said, "RW recognizes the characteristics of minority women which other organizations fail to see—either by design or chronic short-sightedness, both of which express their racism and sexism."

The conference reaffirmed commitment to assisting, recruiting, and learning from minority women, who are decisive to socialism because of the manifold perils they confront.

## Labor, Gays, Expansion

Major reports on RW's impressive work in trade unions and highly significant gains in the beleaguered gay and feminist movements were submitted by Sarah White, Judith Scalise, and Val Carlson respectively.

Exuberant panelists from Oregon, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Alaska, and Olympia, Washington cited broad opportunities for radicals created by the failure of petty-bourgeois feminism, and recounted RW's sectional advances in recruiting workers, gays, and minorities as testimony of its national expansion.

## Perspectives

Constance Scott, outgoing RW Organizer, evaluated 1977 in a commentary on her Organizer's report,

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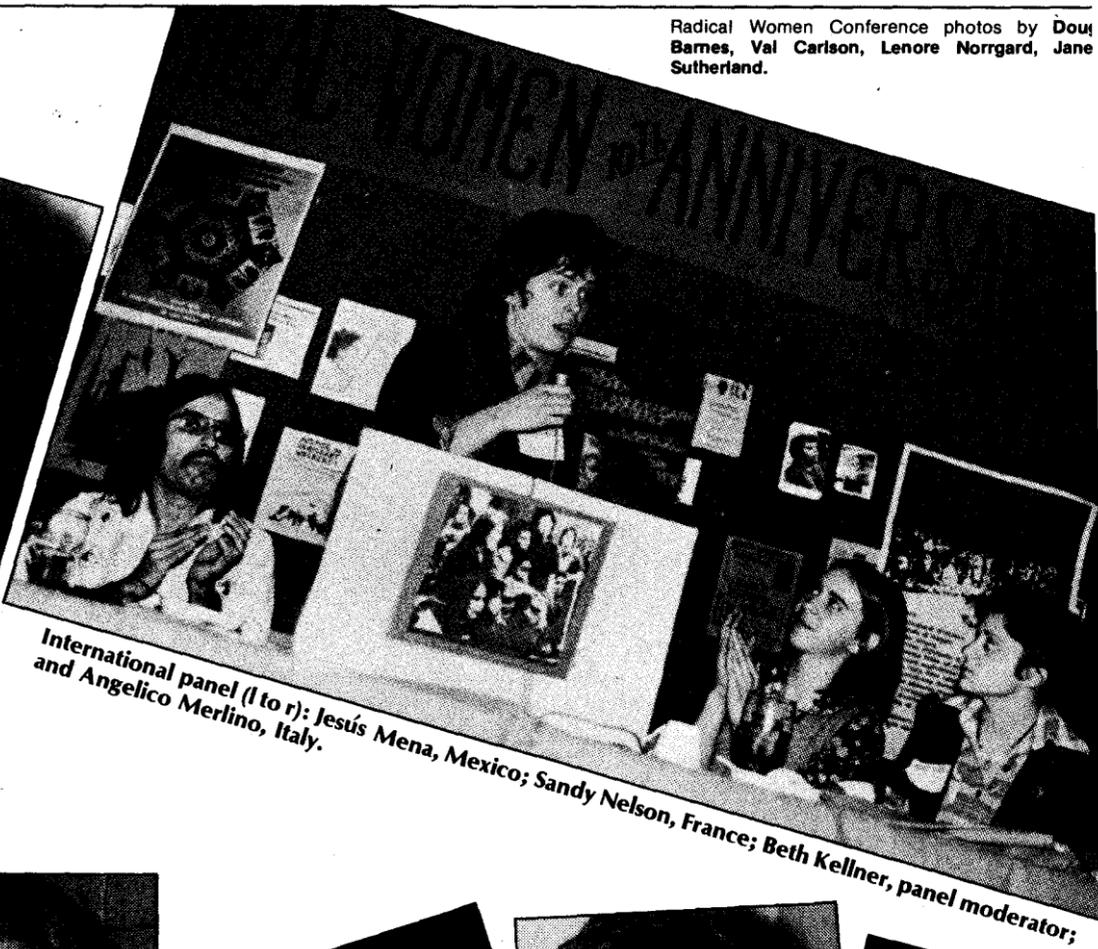


Janet McCloud: "Native women have always asserted a strong influence in their societies . . . it's common knowledge that Indian women were the first to make a stand in the fishing rights struggle."



Myra Tanner Weiss: "We have seen the agony and the misery that delayed world revolution has cost. But only we know the great joy of struggle against all that is rotten—struggle for the freedom and socialist emancipation that will crown our efforts."

Radical Women Conference photos by Doug Barnes, Val Carlson, Lenore Norrgard, Jane Sutherland.



International panel (l to r): Jesús Mena, Mexico; Sandy Nelson, France; Beth Kellner, panel moderator; and Angelico Merlino, Italy.



Yolanda Alaniz, Madlyne Scott, and Kathy Saadat examined the status of minority women.



Mary Reeves, Radical Women Organizer.



Sectional reporters: Sharman Haley, Alaska; Stephen Durham, Los Angeles; Deanna Cecotti, Portland; Meryl Sunshine, San Francisco; Susan Williams, New York.

**Towards Nationwide Socialist Feminism** (the main conference document).

After prolonged, vigorous (and often humorous) debate, the conference voted to delete a phrase in Scott's paper on the "natural superiority" of women, which conveyed to many the connotation of a "master" sex. A public discussion will be launched on the scientific nature and theoretical significance of female physiology.

Mary Reeves, current RW Organizer, reported on goals for 1978. She emphasized the urgency of achieving a united front against the antifeminist right, and called for continued attention to labor and gays, and intensified work with minority women. She also proposed expanding RW's program with a section on the environment. All her proposals were adopted.

**The Pause That Refreshed**

The crowded agenda was relieved by nightly entertainment. Spoofs of past triumphs and disasters were hilariously staged, and the Sunday night banquet was sparked by a scathing "celebrity roast" of RW's founders. The **Bread and Roses Chorus** performed musical comedy routines blending new satirical lyrics with popular scores.

And a group of excellent poets read selections from their works.

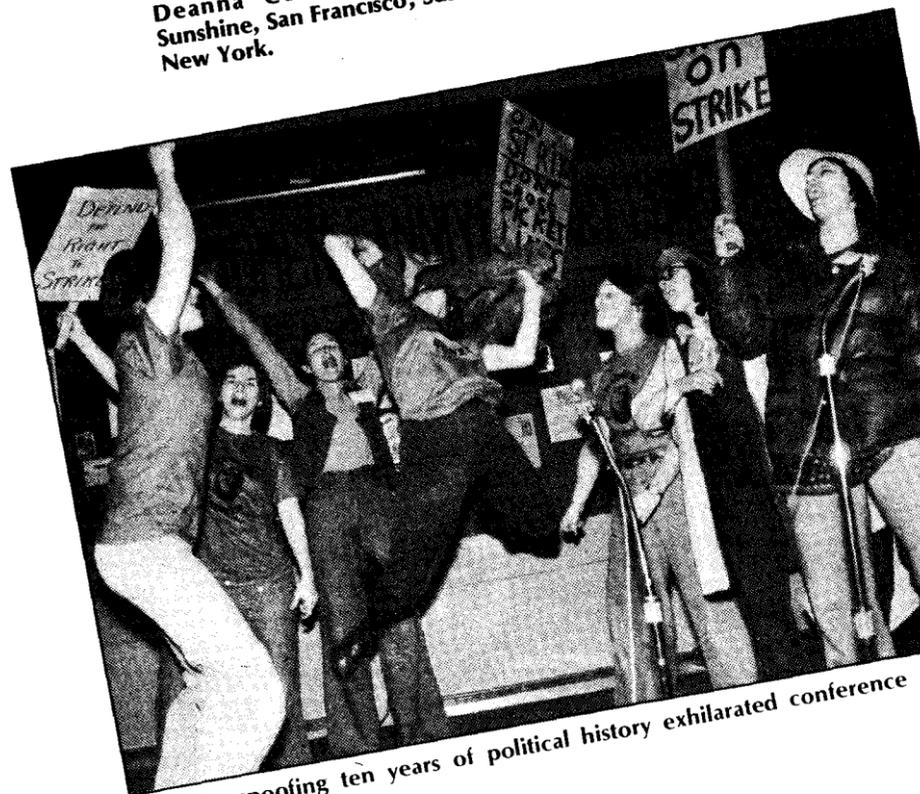
The conference was open, intense, and incredibly exciting. Enough information and inspiration were engendered to sustain the delegates for at least ten more years of assault on the bourgeois colossus—if, indeed, it will take that long, given the contagious drive and maturing revolutionary professionalism of Radical Women. ■



Sarah White, Painter's Union activist: "We have proven in practice that principled, well-organized, outspoken female unionists can make the difference between victory and defeat in the workers' struggle."



Judith Scalise: "Our program has considerable impact on the gay movement, demonstrating that a multi-issue approach is the only way to build militancy against the capitalist system and win freedom."



Skits spoofing ten years of political history exhilarated conference participants.



# AMERICAN GHETTO 1978

by Sam Deaderick

One hundred forty-seven years after the Nat Turner insurrection, one hundred years after Black Reconstruction, thirteen years after the assassination of Malcolm X, and ten years after Martin Luther King had his dream of freedom at last, justice continues to elude the largest ethnic minority in the country—Black Americans.

Institutionalized racism—a total and unyielding system of discrimination on account of skin color—is just as entrenched in the American way of life as in Johannesburg, with one striking difference. South African Blacks are all overtly persecuted, while Blacks in the United States are seriously victimized only if they are poor.

And despite the recent emergence of a broad layer of Black professionals, technocrats, bureaucrats, artists, athletes, businesspeople, and skilled laborers, most Blacks are poor.

Even the “successful,” upwardly mobile Blacks have a tenuous hold on their privileges and cannot totally escape the ravages of prejudice against their entire race. The discrimination they encounter is usually more subtle and genteel than the crass assault on

## ***Dixie is everywhere south of the Canadian border***

their brothers and sisters in poverty, but it always looms beyond the next horizon or around the next corner. It isn't always possible to know on sight which Blacks have money and political influence! And “mistakes” do happen.

### **Racism Guarantees Cheap Labor**

The political economy of racism lies in its *profitability*, in the demand of the capitalist class for vast reservoirs of readily available labor whose depressed status insures low wages. Poverty is the buttress of the capitalist system, and racism is a handy tool for assigning chronic poverty and availability for exploitation

to massive sections of the working class. The ghetto is largely the home of this cheap labor pool.

The war on poverty has long since reverted to war on the poor, and Blacks bear the brunt of it. Nutrition . . . housing . . . childcare . . . education . . . health . . . job opportunities . . . civil rights—all the bottom-line survival needs of human beings—are swiftly deteriorating in the ghetto.

As the economy careens between the scourges of inflation and unemployment, the urban poor are evermore severely victimized. The massive numbers of poor who are Black are forced to pay the penalty for the refusal of business and government to provide jobs and social services.

The government locks the gates of the ghetto when it refuses to fund adequate jobs, minces around with unemployment statistics, and raises the spectre of inflation at any mention of solutions to the Black “dilemma.”

The Black population struggles grimly to surmount a hostile world it never made and a ghetto that remains a battlefield.

### **The Calm before the Storm**

The political temperature of the ghetto is deceptively low today. An occasional flash—like the Harlem and South Bronx looting during the New York blackout—stands out like heat lightning on a summer night.

The air is eerily quiet. Rage and tiredness are masked. The people watch, wait, seethe—and think.

A Black woman reporter in Chicago, interviewed by the *Freedom Socialist*, deplores the current hiatus in the movement:

**We don't have a strong political voice anymore, like with the Panthers and Dr. King. There aren't any leaders among the people, they're all on Capitol Hill. Blacks have gone liberal, concerned with self and individualism, wrapped up in the capitalist system and 'Green Power.' The movement is being re-defined; we're trying to find our direction.**

A Black civil rights veteran and minister in New York expresses his anger to our reporter:

**We are at the same place we were in Reconstruction and in 1929. Then, they came up with the New Deal. They're about out of deals, so they figure we've got to go. That's why they're flooding the Black community with drugs and these bullshit Superfly movies, anything to keep people messed up. This is genocide.**

A century of reform effort has failed. Slavery has been superseded by nonbenign neglect.

### **Black Internationalism**

While the American Black movement is generally quiet, Black Africans are engaged in military combat with the European colonialists who control the Afri-

## ***the ghetto is the home of the cheap labor pool***

can nations. The plight of Blacks in Africa and Latin America is followed closely by Blacks in the U.S.

South Africa and Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) are of particular concern, for life there is closely akin to the rural American South. An inevitable clash between Blacks and the State Department is brewing over U.S. policy in South Africa.

The connections of color, common origins, and oppression are strong. Black struggle anywhere elicits swift solidarity and emulation, conferring on the struggle in the U.S. a decided anti-imperialist and internationalist character that crosses national boundaries and overrides narrow patriotism.

This internationalism fires the resistance of U.S. Blacks to racism. They know that the very same interests responsible for hideous conditions in the American ghetto are the chief props of reactionary white regimes in Africa.

They know, as Malcolm X taught, that “**Dixie is everywhere south of the Canadian border.**”

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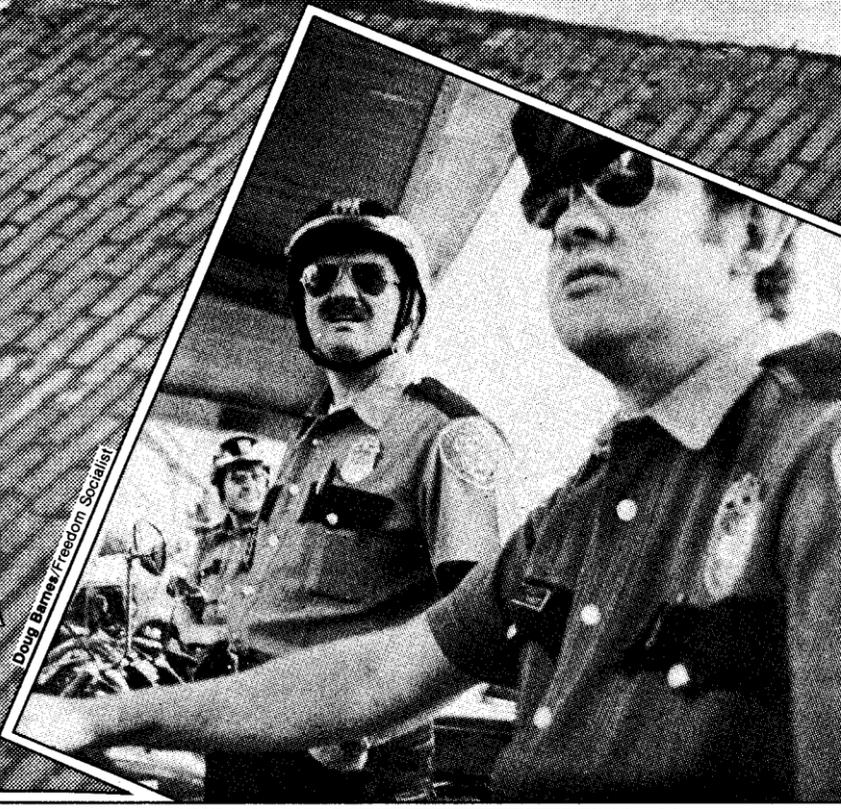
1978/10/1



Billy Medinger



Paul Schuster/1/6



Doug Baines/Freedom Socialist

### Unemployment: A Grim Reaper

Concerned the media last summer when Black unemployment reached 13.9% and Black youth unemployment a startling 40%.

But unemployment trends in the past decade reveal a consistent rise in Black joblessness, and the summer statistics merely reflect the latest leap.

**Black women fare the worst among the unemployed.**

U.S. Department of Labor figures show a 9.1% average unemployment for Black women in 1967, rising steadily to 11.3% in 1972 and 13.6% in 1976. For Black men in 1967, the average unemployment rate was 6.0%, climbing to 9.1% in 1971, to 13.7% in 1975, and dipping slightly to 12.7% in 1976.

Salaries of employed workers display the same sexual disproportion.

The Black woman receives the lowest pay: 53% of a white man's salary in 1974, 73% of a Black man's salary, and 94% of a white woman's salary.\*

The average salary for all minority men and women is consistently lower than the average salary of white men, and the three lower-income groups—minority women, white women, and minority men—rise and fall together relative to white males.

A Black woman writer, interviewed by our reporter in Chicago, succinctly sums up the jobs problem:

**It's deeper than saying there aren't any jobs. We live in a capitalist system; in order for the system to exist, you have to have unemployment. That's the way it is.**

The New York minister advocates Black and white unity in the struggle for jobs:

**There must be group leadership, organized and led by the working class people. The apex or vanguard must be the poorest Black people in this country, carefully organized. But Blacks by themselves can't do it; numerically and strategically, it's impossible. And white workers by themselves can't do it.**

### Affirmative Action: Negative

A Black newspaper vendor in the Pacific Northwest told the *Freedom Socialist* how hard it is to hold a job: "We have to work our way up. We have to be twice as good and almost impossible to beat."

The product of years of battle, affirmative action—the attempt to dispel past patterns of discrimination—does provide a trickle of preferential treatment. But enforcement is criminally lax, and when layoffs occur, the fixed rule of "last hired, first fired" prevails.

A Black male worker in San Francisco told us a familiar story:

**In 1971, my union was sued for discrimination. But the same Black guy who helped bring the suit was bought off and now**

\* These statistics are the most recent available. After a fruitless search, we can only conclude that the government is unwilling to release updates of such damning ratios.

works on the affirmative action board for the union! In my experience, affirmative action just doesn't go far enough.

Another San Francisco Black man is equally dis- "Affirmative action is a token to create a Black class as a buffer against the poor."

Affirmative action is viewed largely as a hoax, Blacks have been galvanized into defending it in the wake of the Bakke case because even this minimal change is under fierce attack.

No doorway to jobs other than affirmative action truly exists.

### The Economics of Hunger

Welfare and food stamp cuts under Carter's proposed welfare reform would slash already bordering conditions in the ghetto.

Minorities currently receive 37% of federal and welfare funds, and 44.3% of the beneficiaries of Aid to Families with Dependent Children program lack.

His speaks volumes about discrimination in the area. Yet federal budget-choppers always cut services first.

Black graduate student and activist in Houston tells us about hunger in the ghetto:

**The American Dream is that all one has to do is pull oneself up by the bootstraps.**

Unfortunately, too many people can't afford to buy the boots to pull up. The rich-

est, most powerful country in the world has one of the highest infant mortality rates due to hunger and exposure. Some of the world's poorest countries don't have the subject poverty that exists here.

For all too many, the American Dream is a vision—or a nightmare.

### The Slumdwellers

Slum housing, infested with rats, roaches, mice, and assorted vermin, is a prime cause of death and disease in the ghetto.

Lead poisoning from chipping paint victimizes countless children. Fire is a constant danger. Millions live without functional indoor plumbing.

When utility payments fall behind, which is frequent, electricity is shut off. The very young, the very old, and the sickly are exposed to the horror of freezing death.

During the severe cold wave last January, over 9,000 calls from people frantically seeking heatless apartments flooded New York's Office of Central Complaints. During the February cold, the office received 600 such calls *per hour*.

According to the *Black Panther*, "Firemen rediscovered the remains of three young children buried under a mattress in a New York City apartment."

The fire was caused by the candles used by a welfare mother and her five children after their electricity had been cut off."

Millions of Blacks begin and end their lives in this environment. And the slums are expanding, attracting.

### The Medical Scandal

Gaping differences prevail in health care for Blacks and whites.

In 1975, the average life expectancy at birth was 72.7 years for a white, and 67 years for a Black.

Five times as many minority as white women die from childbirth complications.

Death from hypertension is three times as common for nonwhites as whites; from diabetes, twice as high; from kidney disease, four times as high; and from tuberculosis, a disease closely associated with poverty, five times as high.



SEATTLE: a newspaper vendor says if you're Black, you have to be "twice as good" to keep a job.

The infant mortality rate for nonwhites is 22.9% per 1,000 live births as compared to 14.4% for whites.

The *Black Panther* reported that in 1968, "Medicare payments per non-white enrollee averaged \$195, while payments per white enrollee averaged \$273."

Racism kills in many ways, from criminal negligence to outright murder, and one of the ugliest is through slow, agonizing years of preventable disease and physical deterioration.

### Blackboard Jungles

Education, the standard lifeline out of the ghetto, is a vain hope when the system erects impregnable obstacles to good schooling for impoverished Blacks.

Most ghetto schools simply track legions of Black youth into street crime and penitentiaries.

Busing programs, more often than not, only shuttle poor Blacks to poor white schools and poor whites to poor Black schools, deepening racial tension and paralyzing education.

Inner-city elementary and high schools are overcrowded, understaffed, dilapidated, and saturated with drugs. Deprivation results in so much theft and

violence that many schools employ armed guards.

Without community control to oversee and insure quality education in Black neighborhoods, high school education is often meaningless. With no incentive to learn, thousands graduate without being able to read and write, awarded diplomas for the sheer feat of being present the required number of days.

In California, financial aid to minority college students totalled 13% of aid to whites in 1970—but the bulk of aid to whites was outright scholarships and fellowships, while aid to nonwhites took the form of repayable grants. Minorities received only 2.7% of their aid through scholarships or fellowships.

"Death at an Early Age," the destruction of the minds and hearts of Black children in racist public schools, has been extensively documented. It is even more extensively ingrained.

### Women's Multiple Hazards

A Seattle Black woman described to the *Freedom Socialist* a typical scenario of a job hunt: "They tell you to go apply for this job, and when you get there they want 99 years of experience. So where do you start? At a \$2.30 per hour job? I don't want that; I can't live on that at all."

In 1974, 53% of Black families "headed" by females lived below the poverty level, as compared to 25% of white families with female "heads."

The federal ban on paid abortion for the poor traps hundreds of thousands of Black women into bearing unwanted children and then struggling to raise a family on welfare. Thousands of Black women suffer mutilation and death at the hands of back-alley abortionists or through self-inflicted abortions.

Other Black women find themselves victims of unwanted and unneeded sterilization.

Education, training, and skilled jobs are completely out of reach for millions of minority women. Facing the double wall of sexism plus racism, many drift into prostitution, drug abuse, and crime, but most end their days weary and spent from a lifetime of hardship, drudgery and maltreatment.

### Black Youth: An American Tragedy

Ghetto hardships strike cruelly at young people as want and privation cripple their childhood and adolescence.

Pompous whites who deplore Black crime can never tell us *how* untrained, disadvantaged, jobless youngsters are supposed to conduct themselves. One of the most heinous chapters in history is the consignment of generations of aspiring Black youth to pauperism, dependency and social alienation.

Black youth delinquency was unheard of before the Mayflower; since the long night of slavery, however, the fate of young Blacks has reached the proportions of a massacre. That so many survive and even flourish is a tribute to their families and the heroic

to next page



SEATTLE: a grandmother talks to reporter Sam Deaderick and says that the right wing must be "wiped clear out."



**From top to bottom:**  
**CHICAGO:** a reporter sees her community as more concerned with individualism and "green power" than with social change.  
**HOUSTON:** a graduate student tells the Freedom Socialist the American Dream is a nightmare.  
**SAN FRANCISCO:** a workingman describes the dual justice system; one kind for whites and another for Blacks.

tradition of Black striving for dignity and freedom in the promised land.

**Cops: Armies of Occupation**

Property rights are maintained in the ghetto—and resistance is quelled—by an armed occupation force of policemen.

In a recent drug bust in the Fillmore neighborhood of San Francisco, police cordoned off an entire square block and rounded up everyone in it. A Black worker expressed his indignation to us:

**There's two kinds of justice in this country, one for Blacks and one for whites. Only in a ghetto would the cops come in and do that. Two of my friends were picked up just for being on the street that day.**

For decades, Blacks have protested police brutality and police murders in the ghetto, demanding either community control of police or civilian powers of review and discipline of police misconduct. But the police themselves rule on complaints against them, and it is virtually unheard of for one cop to find another one guilty.

The greatest crime within the ghetto is the law-breaking of the police themselves, who violate with impunity every civil right and liberty guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

**Killers of the Dream**

The ghetto is alert to the resurgence of racist extremism.

The new alliance of rightwing groups—John Birchers, KKKers, Jesus-shouting fundamentalists, Catholics, the Mormon Church, and others—is whipping up popular sentiment against Black and feminist gains, and planting the seeds for fascism.

A Black grandmother in Seattle bluntly told the *Freedom Socialist* her opinion of the right wing: "It should be wiped clear out. It's not helping anybody."

A Black woman in Los Angeles was grim. "The right wing is out for our blood. They're scared and getting scarer. If it's them or me, it's not going to be me, and I'll take help anywhere I can get it."

The backlash is feared. But it has stimulated the beginning of a counteroffensive.

**Black Politics**

Virtually all well-known Black spokespersons today are mired in the two indistinguishable parties of big business. But the ghetto crisis has escalated so sharply that Black politicians have been forced to protest Carter's spectacular failure to seek any remedies.

Their criticism, of course, is sheathed. They advise Blacks to pressure Carter but "give him a chance."

A longtime Black activist in New York discussed the relationship between Carter and Black politicians with our interviewer:

**Carter is grooming bourgeoisie leadership, pumping these bourgeoisie negroes into thinking of themselves as the talented tenth. These Tom leaders have actually helped organize a Black depression in this country—they trade fancy jobs for themselves for massive Black misery. They have always played the role of sub-oppressors; they can't play any other role.**

Jesse Jackson, a charismatic leader, informs Blacks it is their own fault if doors are closed to them. "The door of opportunity is open to our people," he announces, "but they are too drunk, too unconscious to walk through the door."

Rev. Jackson's political advice is equally sage. If the Democrats won't produce, he says, Blacks should join the *Republican* party! But Republican racism is hardly superior to the Democrat variety.

According to the Black activist from Houston, **The so-called leaders who do exist were handpicked by the media which somehow seems to be an agent for the elite group that controls this country. Many of the leaders have become prostitutes who pass on erroneous information that things are so much better than they used to be, and Blacks are lulled into complacency.**

**The New Vanguard**

The memory of martyred leaders hangs heavily over the ghetto, for the voices of Malcolm X, Dr. King, George Jackson, and slaughtered Black Panthers have never been stilled.

The conviction runs deep that true leaders are marked for death while sellout compromisers flourish.

The Black Panthers, succumbing to years of FBI infiltration, police persecution, treachery and murder, are almost shattered.

Other former leaders, like Angela Davis who is a Communist Party functionary, are hopelessly mired in reformism.

The great women leaders of the Black upsurge of the sixties were driven out of the movement by confused men anxious to prove their "manhood" to the sexist opinion-makers of white America. More was

heard about "emasculatation" than about discrimination, leaving Black women politically stranded.

Most of the male chauvinist leadership of the sixties, however, is now comfortably ensconced in the bureaucracies of government or social agencies, while the rise of feminism has emboldened many Black women to step forward, pick up the abandoned leadership reins, and press for race progress through the women's movement.

Black poet Beah Richards articulates the new Black feminism:

*I have never been a lady  
 I have always been a woman.  
 And woman, in her harlot's hue,  
 nameless, faceless, but not raceless.  
 . . . I fought for freedom  
 I'm fighting now for our unity.  
 We are women all.*

The defiance of Rosa Parks sparked the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, inaugurating a new chapter of the Black liberation struggle. Two hundred years of torment have conditioned the Black woman worker for such leadership, and today's Black feminist is the wave of the future.

**Let My People Go**

As Wall Street plunders the poor to fatten its coffers, segregation and poverty will worsen or a new political integration will emerge—a Black alliance with women and with all hard-pressed minorities.

Just as the ghetto can be judged by the status of its most depressed segment—Black women—so can freedom for all racial and ethnic minorities be judged by the degree of Black freedom. And freedom for the Black race would spell freedom for all, because the changes needed to win Black emancipation are so basic and total that the social system itself would be overturned, laying the foundations for a new and equalitarian organization of production, distribution, government and human relationships.

**today's Black feminist is the wave of the future**

Freedom demands a new and bold type of political action, a new party that is independent, militant and radical.

The ghetto is seeking allies, and Blacks will find them only *in other ghettos*—in the enclaves of Native Americans, Chicanos, Asians, Puerto Ricans, women and gays, and eventually, in the world of the trade unions. A dynamic, anticapitalist Labor Party based on the unions could turn this country around, especially with Black men and women workers to lead it.

The Black activist from Houston is prepared for a showdown:

**A Black receiving an important job is not synonymous with Black progress, which will occur only when all Blacks can benefit.**

**Hopefully, within the next few years, a great leader will emerge. The movement has a 20-year cycle—Delany and Douglass, Washington and Du Bois, Garvey, Randolph, King and Malcolm.**

**The new leader, hopefully, will permit history to be his or her teacher. I think equality will be accomplished through an evolutionary process that will first involve reform and then possibly revolution.**

The American ghetto is undergoing the pangs of giving birth to a profoundly radical movement, to a new crusade for revolutionary reconstruction. Only social revolution can establish racial equality, and Blacks—an historically humanist and internationalist race—are destined to transform their ghetto, all ghettos, and the country as a whole into communities fit for human habitation.

Ghetto Blacks can seize the future and construct a socialist America and a socialist world. ■

National contributors to this article include Manny Sunshine, San Francisco; Fred Brode, Houston; Mary Ann Curtis, Chicago; and Susan Williams, New York. Gwen Hall, Tom Boot, Madlyne Scott, Malinda (Bird) Wilson, and Kathy Saadat from the Pacific Northwest helped considerably with advice and evaluation. The editors are grateful to all of them for their legwork, interest and critical judgment. Cover photo by Lenore Norrgard and Doug Barnes.

# L.A. Gay Group Challenges Reformists

by Stephen Durham

**D**ominated for years by a reformist leadership cemented to the Democratic party machine, the Los Angeles gay movement was enormously invigorated last summer when gays thronged the streets of Hollywood to protest the nationwide rightwing attack against them.

Out of this revitalization grew a new formation, the Union of Lesbians and Gay Men, armed with a militant, multi-issue, and feminist perspective.

Lesbians had long been antagonized by the sexism displayed by many gay men; the gay movement floundered because it lacked understanding of the connection between feminism and gay liberation. The founders of the new Union were determined to change this situation, and they adopted a program of solidarity with the struggles of women, minorities, poor and working people—all those oppressed by a society which depends upon sex-role stereotyping for its economic survival.

## SWP Blocs with Conservatives

The Union's first arena of action was in the Coalition for Human Rights, where it advocated a multi-issue orientation. The Coalition adopted a broad statement of purpose which provided a firm basis for building a united front of gays, women, and minorities against the right wing. Within weeks, however, a conservative opposition arose, composed of reformists, feminist liberals—and the Socialist Workers Party, suddenly and belatedly intervening into gay politics.

The conservatives all adhered to the common goal of a single-issue, respectable coalition. The militants, feminists, and radicals in the group were slandered as "disrupters," the multi-issue program was overturned, and a reformist leadership was installed.

But the Union, undeterred by this setback, directed its attention into other channels.

## A Bold Approach to Problems

On another front, Union members raised the issue of financial accountability of movement leaders during the L.A. Gay Faire, when the bulk of the gate proceeds went directly into the pocket of one sponsor.

In November, the Union sponsored a lively and well-attended forum on "How to Build the Gay Move-

ment." A predictable harangue by ex-gay liberationists of the Spartacist League against the concept of independent organizing by gays was soundly rebutted.

The Union is presently organizing a demonstration against police harassment, seeking to unify gays, minorities and women against a common threat. The Union is also weighing the possibility of a campaign for a gay rights ordinance.

The Union, through its activism, public education and intensive political discussion, has emerged as a recognized force and has laid the groundwork for a serious challenge to the self-serving, male-dominated, reformist leadership of the movement. The historic work of building a strong and committed gay movement in Los Angeles has begun. ■

**Stephen Durham is a union activist and a spokesman in the building of a militant alternative to the current reformist gay leadership in Los Angeles.**

## ...ISRAEL

from back page

engineered to (1) enhance his lackluster record on foreign policy, and (2) prop up the lagging U.S. export market through arms sales.

And what a prop! Less than two months after the Tel Aviv love-in, Carter unveiled his plan to sell sophisticated jet fighter planes to Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia—a \$4.8 billion transaction!

### Next Year in Jerusalem

The Palestine Liberation Organization, severely shaken by the diplomatic extravaganza, is experiencing severe crisis.

Externally hemmed in by dictatorial Arab regimes, the resistance movement is rent internally by explosive political differences between left and right. And a sharp split may be necessary to halt its chronic wavering between revolution and class-collaboration with royalty and the capitalists.

To win its goals, the PLO must be internationalist. It should demand aid from the workers states—but reject Stalinist-type deals with bourgeois politicians. And it should make an appeal to the world.

The international proletariat is sick and tired of the futile slaughter of Jews and Arabs, and wants to see a just peace concluded. But what is *fairness* in the Mideast?

1. Israel has a right to security, and the Palestinians have a right to their own homeland both outside and within Israel. Begin has to give.

### A contrived arrangement between Cairo and Tel Aviv to forestall revolt at home

2. Nevertheless, there is no peace under capitalism. Peace can only come when socialist-minded workers, peasants and students of the Mideast stop ravaging each other and start collaborating against their own ruling classes and against U.S. imperialism.

A socialist Israel would immediately install a bilateral government of both Arabs and Jews who would cooperate in resettling the millions of starving, displaced refugees.

In contrast, Israel's massive attack on and occupation of southern Lebanon on March 15—a gruesome retaliation for a guerrilla assault that killed 34 Jews—proves once again the futility of Zionism as the answer to the Jewish question. ■

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**New  
Publication!**

# CRSP Discussion Bulletin

**No. 1, March 1978**

**\$1.00**

Sixty-two pages of key material on the debate within the Fourth International over the Portuguese Revolution. Copies available from your closest CRSP chapter (see page

3 for addresses).

ditorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editorial editor

## Forked Tongues and Broken Arrows

In a broadside attack on the Native American nations, a total of *nine* bills were introduced in Congress last session that deny Indian sovereignty and repudiate longstanding treaties.

Said Rep. Lloyd Meeds, D-Wash., a sponsor of two of the bills, "Since it is the United States which reserved the right for the Indian reservation, it is within the authority of Congress to define what is reserved."

But just a minute there, Lloyd! The U.S. never granted privileges to Indian tribes via the treaties. On the contrary, it was the Native American nations which generously granted favors to the white settlers, and all rights not specifically granted to the whites remained with the Indians.

The tribes were always recognized as independent, self-governing nations, with authority over the land and resources of North America. That is why agreements between Indians and whites took the form of *treaties*—contracts between two sovereign nations.

Treaties are binding legal contracts, but reactionary groups are now attempting to abrogate them unilaterally, even though it takes *two* nations to change a treaty.

The outrageous assault on Native rights betrays a naked attempt at a new land grab, to appropriate minerals, timber, fish and game that haven't already been stolen, and to halt the

reclamation of land achieved by some Indian nations.

Congressional pirates aim to gain unchallenged control over a militarily weak group of small nations because the current white backlash is drowning out Indian insistence on sovereign rights. The land-grabbers have a chance for economic genocide now, before Native Americans can mobilize clout.

Happily, a wide variety of Native organizations across the country are rising to the challenge. The Native American Treaty Organization (NATO), and a joint "action committee" of the National Congress of American Indians and the National Tribal Chairmen's Association, are only two of the new mechanisms set up expressly to resist the backlash.

This is everybody's battle. If Congress can simply legislate away Native American land, resources, way of life and cultures, it can legislate away anything from anybody.

Native Americans need to hear the voice of working people around the world in support of these oppressed small nations trying desperately to survive within a dominant nation.

***Uphold the Treaties!  
Defend Native American Sovereignty!***

***Self-Determination for the Indian Nations!***

—Lenore Norrgard

## Lenguas Horcadas y Flechas Rotas

En un ataque arrebatado contra las naciones indígenas americanas, un total de *nueve* proyectos de ley se presentaron al Congreso durante la sesión pasada que niegan la soberanía indígena y repudian tratados de larga duración.

Dijo el Representante Lloyd Meeds, D-Wash., patrocinador de dos de los proyectos: "Ya que fue los Estados Unidos que reservó el derecho de la reservación indígena, queda dentro de la autoridad del Congreso definir lo que está reservado."

Pero, ¡espérate ya, Lloyd! Los E.U. nunca concedió privilegios a los indios por los tratados. Por el contrario, fueron los americanos indígenas que generosamente confirieron favores a los pobladores blancos, y todos los derechos no concedidos a los blancos específicamente, se quedaron con los indios.

Las tribus siempre se reconocían como naciones independientes y autónomas, con autoridad sobre las tierras y los recursos naturales de Norteamérica. Por eso, los pactos entre los indios y los blancos se formalizaron como *tratados*—convenios entre dos naciones soberanas.

Los tratados son convenios legales obligatorios, pero hay grupos reaccionarios que ahora pretenden abrogarlos unilateralmente, aunque es el asunto de *dos* naciones cambiar un tratado.

El asalto desafortunado contra los derechos de los indígenas revela un patente esfuerzo hacia una nueva toma de tierras, para apropiarse minerales, maderas, peces y animales de caza que no han sido robados ya, y para parar la reclamación de tierras realizada por

algunas naciones indígenas.

Los piratas del Congreso intentan ganar control, sin ser desafiados, sobre un grupo militarmente débil de naciones pequeñas porque la actual reacción blanca está sofocando la voz insistente de los indios en defensa de sus derechos de soberanía. Los que se apoderan de las tierras tienen la oportunidad del genocidio económico ahora, antes que los americanos indígenas puedan movilizar el apoyo suficiente a su favor.

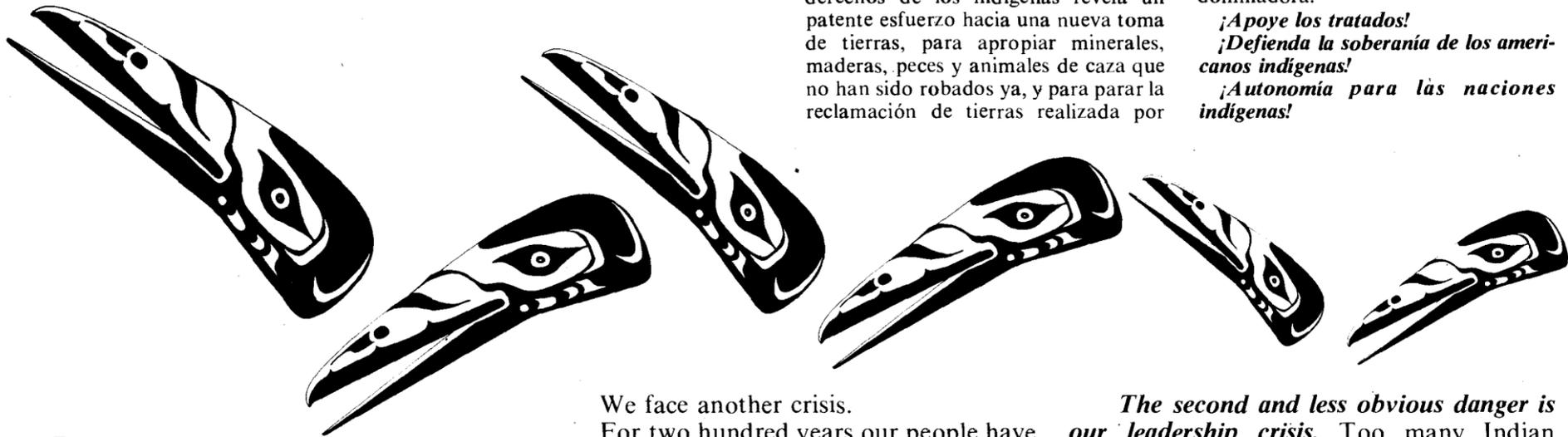
Felizmente, una amplia variedad de organizaciones indígenas a través del país se están lanzando al desafío. La Organización de Tratados de Americanos Indígenas (NATO) y un "comité de acción" colectivo del Congreso Nacional de Americanos Indígenas y de La Asociación Nacional de Presidentes Tribales, son nada más que dos de los nuevos mecanismos establecidos expresamente para resistir la reacción.

Esto es la batalla de todos. Si el Congreso puede abolir a pura fuerza de la legislación las tierras, los recursos, los modos de vivir y las culturas de los americanos indígenas, puede igualmente abolir por la legislación cualquier cosa de cualquier persona.

Los americanos indígenas necesitan oír la voz de la gente labradora del mundo entero en apoyo de estas pequeñas naciones oprimidas que tratan desesperadamente de sobrevivir dentro de las fronteras de una nación dominadora.

***¡Apoye los tratados!  
¡Defienda la soberanía de los americanos indígenas!***

***¡Autonomía para las naciones indígenas!***



**Janet  
McCloud**

### A Warning Message

**Editor's note:** Janet McCloud has just published a profound paper entitled "A Warning Message to All Indian Nations and Our Friends and Supporters," by Yet Si Blue (her Indian name).

In a brave and eloquent call to save threatened Native Americans, McCloud details the history and nature of three crises facing her people and asserts that true resolution can only come about through the return of American natives to their historic culture of a communal society based on sharing and equalitarianism.

McCloud's paper may be obtained for \$.30 per copy through the FSP Bookstore, 3815 Fifth Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98105.

Excerpts from her historic 17-page statement are printed below.

We face another crisis.

For two hundred years our people have struggled against powerful forces to insure a life for ourselves and the coming generations.

Many times we faced defeat, but by unified and determined efforts we rose to the challenge and survived.

And now our people must arise once again to face threats that endanger our liberty and our distinctive way of life . . .

**The first danger** is the **threat to our sovereignty** posed by the treaty termination bills before Congress.

These bills are pushed by a sinister coalition of special interest groups, the predator ruling class, who have become rich and powerful from the exploitation of Indian land and resources.

United Indian resistance to stop the exploitation of our Nations and the raping and pillaging of our land and resources has unleashed the wrath of the super-rich, who are using their vast political power and wealth against us.

**The second and less obvious danger is our leadership crisis.** Too many Indian leaders are overadapting to the ways and the thinking of our exploiters and selling us out!

**The third danger** is acute and potentially destructive—**our cultural crisis** as a whole people.

By adopting the philosophy and behavior of our enemies, we are abandoning our cultural identity . . .

Soon our trails will divide . . . one will be for those who competitively strive to climb the ladder of success to their predator-ruler's castle in the sky! They will fall into the emptiness they have created, to death and destruction.

The other path . . . is for those who have struggled to remain free and sovereign Nations and human beings, the caretakers and guardians of life who are equalitarian, democratic, communal, and nonexploitative. That trail will spiral upwards on the natural evolutionary path of life, into a higher level of existence!



**Murry Weiss**

## Spartacist League:



## The Juvenile Fringe

The Spartacist League is a wildly contradictory phenomenon.

It is disfigured by fatal flaws—male chauvinism, ultra-leftism, Stalinophobia and homophobia. All these features were flaunted in its November 4, 1977 *Workers Vanguard* report on the formation of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP) last July.

Yet SL claims adherence to many good things. It promotes the Trotskyist analysis of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state and defends it unconditionally against capitalism. It supports revolutions around the world and condemns Socialist Workers Party third-campism in Angola and its support to Soares' Portuguese Socialist Party (the chief agency of counterrevolution). SL condemns Stalinism and social democracy, and wants a Leninist party.

**But with utter disrespect for its alleged program, SL's report studiously avoids dealing with the fundamental program of CRSP.**

Instead, *Workers Vanguard* frivolously dismisses CRSP as the product of "a few small clumps of Pabloist undergrowth" where "each tends to have its own hobbyhorse; in the attempt to arrive at a lowest-common-denominator 'program,' CRSP has simply aggregated the various components' eccentricities."

In contrast to this fanciful invention, the CRSP **Statement of Purpose** is a full and advanced program which painstakingly spells out a host of principles to serve as a basis for reconstituting American Trotskyism.

### Our Method and Theirs

The **Statement** explains that "the SWP has degenerated into a bureaucratic, monolithic, and centrist formation moving in the direction of the Social Democracy. . . . The opportunistic and Stalinophobic degeneration of the SWP was clearly revealed in its reaction to. . . Portugal. The SWP veered sharply to the right. . . ."

Does SL agree? Or disagree?

The **Statement** calls for the regroupment of radical forces in this country because:

In collaboration with the social-democratic labor bureaucracy, the old New Left has perpetuated a wholesale abandonment of independence from the twin parties of capitalism. . . .

Does SL agree? Or disagree?

The **Statement** treated so lightly by SL advocates "the construction of a revolutionary socialist party based on proletarian internationalism, a rich internal democracy, and firm roots in the working class," and it delineates the classic Trotskyist traditions and foundations upon which CRSP proudly rests—the principles of the early Communist International and the Left Opposition's struggle against Stalinism.

Does SL agree? Or disagree?

CRSP considers itself a supporting part of "the movement to build a world party of the socialist revolution—a part of the Fourth International which is dedicated to the

application of Marxist principles to contemporary social reality."

Does SL agree? Or disagree?

If the Spartacists want to be taken seriously, they must drop their literary fun and games and directly state their views on the propositions set forth by CRSP.

### The Snicker School of Falsification

The reflex of SL to CRSP views on "Race, Sex and Sexuality" was the adolescent sound of snickers, sneers and giggles meant to convey total disrespect for seasoned revolutionists and their thinking.

The CRSP plank on socialist feminism elicits from SL the jaunty assertion that it was "intended to placate the kooky Freedom Socialist Party. . . . Clara Fraser is to our knowledge the only ostensible Trotskyist who considered the disputed questions of her divorce to be political. . . ."

**This polemic by insult instead of argument is all the more reprehensible because of the ignorance displayed. Engels and Trotsky publicly declared that Karl Kautsky's divorce struggle with Louise Kautsky was a political matter—and that Kautsky's conduct constituted a break from elementary rules of conduct for revolutionaries. They strongly supported Louise Kautsky.**

But the sexist SL doesn't anymore know or care about Clara Fraser's struggle than about socialist history and tradition. Nor does it mention the red-baiting and male chauvinism of Dick Fraser in the divorce courts, even though a published analysis of this issue is readily available (**A Victory for Socialist Feminism: The 1969 FSP Organizer's Report**).

SL prefers to smear socialist feminism as a personality cult—and, ipso facto, pass the whole matter off as a self-evident argument against the woman question.

And the Sparts are horrified, of course, that CRSP elevates feminism "to 'equal and interlocking' status with the class question," conveniently forgetting that women are almost 50% of the class and that life, not just CRSP, interlocks the two questions!

CRSP's description of gay liberation—"a great mass movement whose historical destiny is to link up with the revolutionary forces in this country"—is duly slandered as "the FSP's more recent infatuation with the gay movement."

At this point, leers have replaced sneers.

### May the Force be With Them

The sensationalized *Workers Vanguard* treatment of CRSP was hardly the paper's first indulgence in infantile name-calling. Their chronic overkill of the opposition through arrogance and ridicule has long since brought their own politics to a screeching halt.

SL sorely needs to grow up and learn to distinguish the verbiage commonly employed at a men's smoker from the language and tone appropriate to the radical marketplace of ideas.



**Clara Fraser**

## The Two "Julias"

The nationally syndicated gossip columns gleefully report that writer Lillian Hellman, the indomitable one, feuded with the director of *Julia* and refused to attend the premiere of this film based on her memoir, *Pentimento*. Good for you, Lillian. It's bad enough that the rest of us had to see it.

There's a screwy scene in the picture where Jane Fonda, miscast as Hellman, throws her typewriter through the window in a fit of rage. Had Hellman viewed the film, she might have thrown a typewriter at the screen. Her profound and lovely tribute to her communist friend Julia has been trivialized by Hollywood's assembly lines.



Hellman is a radical of sorts who promoted Communist Party causes for decades. Her lifelong companion was writer Dashiell Hammett, a devoted CPer who elevated detective yarns to the level of literature. He was railroaded to prison during the McCarthy era for refusing to inform on his comrades. *Scoundrel Time* is her account of their experiences with the witchhunters.

Jane Fonda was the superstar of the antiwar movement, the quintessential New Leftist—privileged, articulate and defiant. She now plays Democratic Party politics.

Vanessa Redgrave portrays Julia, the wealthy and brilliant humanitarian who is murdered by the Nazis. Redgrave, the most highly political of this female triumvirate, is a revolutionary, an active British Trotskyist.

So one would expect the film to make an authentic statement about fascism and feminism, right?



Wrong. The screenplay and direction are simply askew. The view of women is archaically romantic and patronizing, and the political insight is nowhere.

The movie is a glamorized, confusing, and ultimately sappy account of two female eccentrics.

Fonda strives mightily, via posturings, tears, chain-smoking, whisky-guzzling, and pacings on a lonely (but scenic) beach, to convey a sense of character. She fails.

In her climactic scene, where she—a Jew—must smuggle \$50,000 past fascist police to the underground in Nazi Germany, she behaves like a perplexed, naive imbecile, and Hellman's real-life courage is belittled.

Redgrave's Julia is more clearly defined, because Julia is a heroine of Wagnerian proportions. But Redgrave, aiming at radiance, looks glazed and transfixed instead. The problem is that Julia's motivation, her *communism*, is never specified.



Neither the Nazis nor anti-Nazis make political sense.

The fascists raid Freud's psychoanalytic institute where Julia is a student—at least I think they do—and they beat and kill people with impunity until a group of students or faculty or something, headed by Julia, advances on them. This "advance" is unbelievable: Julia and her colleagues WALK, do not RUN, to the bloody fray! Scenes like this impart a dreamlike, unreal, and puzzling quality to the entire picture.

The screenwriter and director are so edgy about the subject matter, and so ignorant about the normal behavior of strong women, that they dump the central political theme of *Julia* with irritating frequency, "relieving" the heavy stuff with misty flashbacks into the girls' adolescence.



The one bright note in the debacle is Jason Robards' playing of Hammett with just the right note of bemused detachment and long-suffering that the film warrants. Who Hammett is, of course, we never discover.

But you can read the book. There really *was* a Julia.

book review book review book review book review book review book review book

# Feminist Poet on the Job

**WORKWEEK** by Karen Brodine. Berkeley, California: Kelsey St. Press, 1977. Paperback, \$2.50

Neither the male literary establishment nor most women writers regard the workplace as a particularly compelling subject for poetry.

To the artist insulated by academia, the experience of a boring, oppressive job is foreign, and the vast majority of writers who work for wages to support themselves and their art regard a job as a numbing routine, dismissed from mind as soon as their "real" work begins.

In **Workweek**, Karen Brodine illuminates her life as a wage earner with a grasp of struggle and resistance that is as refreshing as it is inspiring.

These poems, made from her own life as a typesetter, union organizer, and lesbian, are neither abstract nor romantic, unlike the works of some proletarian writers who praise the masses without the slightest idea of what workers think or feel.

Brodine's poems are real and true, speaking for working men and women who have never had the chance to write about themselves.

In "The Receptionist Is By Definition," Brodine writes:

*remember the receptionist with the lovely smile, with the green eyes, the cropped hair, big feet, small knees, with the wrinkled hands, the large breasts, with the husky voice, the strong chin?*

The receptionist is no longer "just a secretary" or a typing pool drone. She has become a person, an individual—we can identify with her and take the first steps toward solidarity with her.

"Quota" is a stinging indictment of the deadly

regimentation of office work. Again, the sense of identification with other workers lends the poem its cutting edge.

*they accuse you of talking or eating or thinking onthejob you are allowed one spit per hour if you spit less than eight times per day you receive an Evaluation. at lunch you read in the paper about the women's prisons where a memo says: do not snap your fingers do not sing along with the radio do not dance.*

This is good poetry. It is also fine agitation. The psychology of **Workweek** is collective, nurturant. In "Please Sketch The Woman Holding A Power Drill, Her Head In The Shape Of A Bell," the poet dreams:

*the telephones have blank ears. we're on the top floor, locked in. The boss will starve us, a man tries to jump to the next building, blurs downward. I go to find help, leading a young girl with me. we pass the man's crumpled body... I go back and climb to a rooftop near the office, yelling to my friends, 'here, here are bundles of food, catch these bundles of food!'*

This theme of survival through solidarity is repeated in the allegorical "The Wolves Were Silver."

*...some people had frozen and we took these dead ones in our arms and tossed them up into the air they landed under the bare trees and the wolves minnowed toward them, belly-flat*

*to the snow we drew into a close safe pack we had to keep touching.*

Male critics traditionally regard women's poetry as inward and confessional because they cannot understand the female experience or are threatened by the resistance expressed. Brodine's poetry reflects a new confidence among women writers who have found their voices in the feminist movement and consider their lives as women to be a source of strength and revolt. Brodine contradicts both the male-imposed definition of women poets and the alienated-artist pose popular among white males who have the option of simply avoiding whatever they find oppressive.

In "More," Brodine rejects art-for-art's-sake:

*more than pocket myself in some enclosure and paint pictures of the walls... now we will open the world with our hands, no handful, we will open the body of the world and see it, imagine it, for what it is.*

The many themes in **Workweek** cross over and intersect: "Gardening At Night" is a fierce and tender four-part love poem; "I Had A Screaming Kicking Fight" is the defiant shout of the lesbian poet to her mother:

*'it is the most natural, the most natural the most natural act there is!'*

**Workweek** is beautifully designed; the back cover features a photograph of the time card the poet fills out at work each day. Brodine herself did the typesetting, design and layout for the entire book. ■

— Sukey Durham

boycott boycott boycott boycott boycott boy



## Liberals Dilute J.P. Stevens Boycott

The maimed hands and grim faces of J.P. Stevens workers depicted on hundreds of thousands of leaflets proclaim the heartlessness of industrial aristocracy at its worst as the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union papers the U.S. with news of their boycott of Stevens products.

But the militancy of the boycott is in danger of being sacrificed to the conservatism of boycott organizers who want to keep radical supporters busy but quiet—and who select union bureaucrats and treacherous southern preachers as their spokespersons.

The Stevens story should impel attention and noise, not restraint.

Thirty years ago, J.P. Stevens cold-bloodedly closed its northern textile plants, leaving thousands jobless. Stevens went South, where labor was abundant, desperately poor, and largely Black and female. The company's medieval operations proliferated, unchecked by unionism or protective labor laws.

Any laws that exist, Stevens breaks. Any challengers of their criminal practices drop away as litigation costs mount.

Brown lung disease caused by cotton dust has long been choking Stevens employees to death, and the victims languish and die with no compensation from the firm. Union-busting tactics are chronic, replete with reprisals against employees who speak out, and company racism and sexism are flagrant.

Boycott organizers correctly emphasize Stevens' attacks on women and minority workers, and make a strong plea for mass support. But leaflets and their film *Testimony* reveal a dangerously flawed strategy for achieving that support.

Marred by the fatal urge of liberals toward respectability, boycott leaders play up double-talking southern parsons who purport to be on the workers' side but actually straddle the fence and call for "understanding on both sides." The dedicated efforts of volunteer activists around the country to mobilize support for the boycott are undermined by the timidity of the official policymakers.

The only road to defeating J.P. Stevens is to tell the ugly truth about capitalism and the southern system which spawn and protect J.P. Stevens. The truth will liberate the militancy necessary to stop J.P. Stevens from consuming workers' lives, dulling their minds, mutilating their bodies, and violating their human rights. ■

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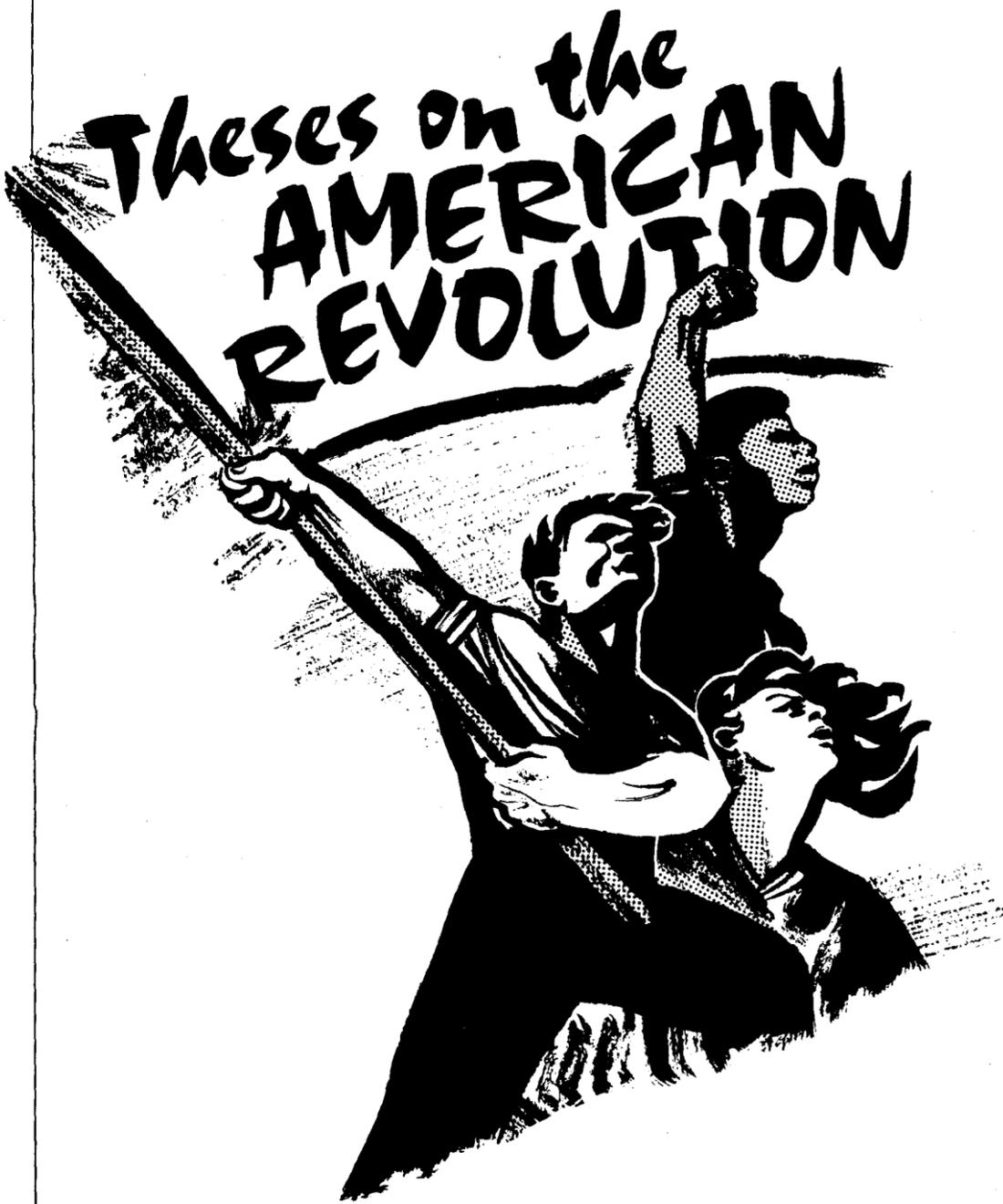
Written in 1946, and adopted as a political resolution at the Twelfth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party in that year, the *American Theses* has come to be recognized as a cornerstone of American Trotskyism. We are proud to publish it as a *Freedom Socialist* supplement, as we consider the FSP's general program to be a continuation of the basic approach to the "American Question" expressed in the *Theses*. We are equally pleased to publish Murry Weiss' introduction to the document.

Weiss, a veteran revolutionary, has been a radical since his teens. Starting as a member of the Young Communist League, he turned to Trotskyism and became a founder of the Socialist Workers Party. A leading member of that party's Political Committee when the *Theses* was written, he participated in the collective process of writing the document and staunchly defended its perspectives during frequent factional attacks on it.

Since leaving the SWP in the early sixties, Weiss has been a movement activist, teacher and theoretician, and works as a psychotherapist in private practice in New York City.

Weiss recently helped initiate the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP).

**special  
supplement**



## Introduction by Murry Weiss

**T**he *Theses on the American Revolution*, later published under the title *The Coming American Revolution*, was adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at its Twelfth Convention, November 1946, in Chicago.

The ideas were not new. Its author, James P. Cannon, a founder of the early Communist Party and later of the Socialist Workers Party, said, "The *Theses* in their theoretical part are strictly Trotskyist. There isn't any innovation there." He meant that the *Theses* derived essentially from Leon Trotsky, who had observed in a 1926 speech:

...in this power of the United States is its Achilles' heel; in this power lies its growing dependence upon countries and continents economically and politically unstable. The United States is compelled to base its power on an unstable Europe, that is, on tomorrow's revolutions of Europe and in the national

revolutionary movement of Asia and Africa... Under these conditions a victorious revolution in Europe and in Asia would inevitably inaugurate a revolutionary epoch in the United States. And we need not doubt that once the revolution in the United States has begun, it will develop with truly American speed.

Trotsky's theoretical views of the American dynamic were never challenged. But when Cannon elaborated them and presented them as theses before a party convention for a vote and action, an outburst of sharp criticism, ridicule and even outrage ensued.

Why? Because in 1946, after six years of war prosperity, U.S. imperialism was at its peak and capitalism, on the surface, looked invincible.

A faction led by Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow opposed the *Theses*, split from the party and joined Max Shachtman's group, which had broken

with Trotskyism on the eve of the Second World War.

Seven years later, in 1953, the cold war, prosperity, and McCarthyism were in full swing, and a conservatized labor bureaucracy was waging a full-fledged red-baiting campaign within the trade unions. The pressure of these conditions provoked the emergence of a new faction in the SWP, led by Bert Cochran. After a fierce struggle, this faction split from the SWP, and quickly proceeded to erase all traces of its Trotskyist past. It soon dissolved as a political tendency. Predictably, the *American Theses* had been a chief target of the Cochranites.

Today, 25 years later, the *Theses* is still with us—just as imperialism is. But much has since happened: great revolutionary victories over imperialism in Asia and Africa, revolutionary ferment in Europe, the radicalization of the '60s and '70s in the U.S., and the birth of a new generation with a vast reservoir of revolutionary energy for ending capitalism.

And new critics of the *American Theses* have also emerged. The main objections of these petty bourgeois radicals are as follows:

1. It is visionary to speak of revolution in the United States. Capitalism has paid off and cowed the industrial proletariat. Why try the impossible? Just quit.

2. Revolution in the U.S. would only result in tyranny, just as the Russian Revolution ended in Stalinism. And just because the bourgeoisie also warns about this doesn't mean it isn't so.

3. Their paramount and underlying objection: it is all right to speak about, study, and worry about revolution in general—or even U.S. revolution—but to take action is another story. To commit oneself to the task of organizing a combat party, to devote one's whole being to the overthrow of capitalism, to build a professional party staff, to mean business—that is not only presumptuous, it's preposterous!

Cynics and scoffers view the power of the labor bureaucracy with respect and awe, likewise the power and glory of academe with its military and secret police establishment. But to summon up the nerve to build a Leninist party and take serious steps toward making a revolution, to appreciate the historically explosive potential of the working class—that is futile, absurd, and romantic.

The inauguration last year of the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP) had the same effect as the original presentation of the *Theses*. In New York City, the mere announcement of the formation of CRSP split the Marxist Education Collective right down the middle between Trotskyists and anti-Trotskyists. It was one thing to talk—and even teach—about Trotskyism, as M.E.C. leader Felberbaum was fond of doing. But to take action? Make a decision? Actually organize? That is scary. And all hell broke loose as the cynics tried to stop us from *our* course!

Their terrified response vividly points out the power and essence of the *American Theses*, which tell that theory and practice are inseparable, and that the revolution in the most powerful capitalist nation in the world will be led by theoretician/activists who believe "in the unlimited power and resources of the American workers" as Cannon said in his commentary on the *American Theses*, and who believe no less in their own "capacity to organize and lead them to storm and victory."

The sideline doubting Thomases are invited to retreat to academe and stay there. ■

## I

The United States, the most powerful capitalist country in history, is a component part of the world capitalist system and is subject to the same general laws. It suffers from the same incurable diseases and is destined to share the same fate. The overwhelming preponderance of American imperialism<sup>2</sup> does not exempt it from the decay of world capitalism, but on the contrary acts to involve it ever more deeply, inextricably, and hopelessly. U. S. capitalism can no more escape from the revolutionary consequences of world capitalist decay than the older European capitalist powers. The blind alley in which world capitalism has arrived, and the U. S. with it, excludes a new organic era of capitalist stabilization. The dominant world position of American imperialism now accentuates and aggravates the death agony of capitalism as a whole.

## II

American imperialism emerged victorious from the Second World War,<sup>3</sup> not merely over its German and Japanese rivals, but also over its "democratic" Allies, especially Great Britain. Today Wall Street unquestionably is the dominant world imperialist center. Precisely because it has issued from the war vastly strengthened in relation to all its capitalist rivals, U. S. imperialism seems indomitable. So overpowering in all fields—diplomatic, military, commercial, financial, and industrial—is Wall Street's preponderance that consolidation of its world hegemony seems to be within easy reach. Wall Street hopes to inaugurate the so-called "American Century."

In reality, the American ruling class faces more insurmountable obstacles in "organizing the world" than confronted the German bourgeoisie in its repeated and abortive attempts to attain a much more modest goal, namely: "organizing Europe."

The meteoric rise of U. S. imperialism to world supremacy comes too late. Moreover, American imperialism rests increasingly on the foundations of world economy, in sharp contrast to the situation prevailing before the First World War, when it rested primarily on the internal market—the source of its previous successes and equilibrium. But the world foundation is today shot through with insoluble contradictions; it suffers from chronic dislocations and is mined with revolutionary powder kegs.

American capitalism, hitherto only partially involved in the death agony of capitalism as a world system, is henceforth subject to the full and direct impact of all the forces and contradictions that have debilitated the old capitalist countries of Europe.

The economic prerequisites for the socialist revolution are fully matured in the U. S. The political premises are likewise far more advanced than might appear on the surface.

## III

The U. S. emerged from the Second World War, just as it did in 1918,<sup>4</sup> as the strongest part of the capitalist world. But here ends the resemblance in the impact and consequences of the two wars upon the country's economic life. For in other major aspects the situation has in the meantime drastically altered.

In 1914-18 continental Europe was the main theater of war; the rest of the world, especially the colonial countries, was left virtually untouched by the hostilities. Thus, not only sections of continental Europe and England but the main framework of the world market itself remained intact. With all its European competitors embroiled in the war, the way was left clear for American capitalism to capture markets.

More than this, during the First World War capitalist Europe itself became a vast market for American industry and agriculture. The American bourgeoisie drained Europe of her accumulated wealth of centuries and supplanted their Old World rivals in the world market. This enabled the ruling class to convert the U. S. from a debtor into the world's banker and creditor, and simultaneously to expand both the heavy (capital goods) and the light (consumer goods) industries. Subsequently this wartime expansion permitted the fullest possible develop-

ment of this country's domestic market. Finally, not merely did the American bourgeoisie make vast profits from the war but the country as a whole emerged much richer. The relatively cheap price of imperialist participation in World War I (only a few score billion dollars) was covered many times over by the accruing economic gains.

Profoundly different in its effects is the Second World War. This time only the Western Hemisphere has been left untouched militarily. The Far East, the main prize of the war, has been subjected to a devastation second only to that suffered by Germany and Eastern Europe. Continental Europe as well as England have been bankrupted by the war. The world market has been completely disrupted. Thus culminated the process of shrinking, splintering, and undermining that went on in the interval between the two wars (the withdrawal of one-sixth of the world—the USSR—from the capitalist orbit, the debasement of currency systems, the barter methods of Hitlerite Germany, Japan's inroads on Asiatic and Latin American markets, England's Empire Preference System,<sup>5</sup> etc., etc.).

Europe, which defaulted on all its prior war and postwar debts to the U. S., this time served not as an inexhaustible and highly profitable market, but as a gigantic drain upon the wealth and resources of this country in the shape of lend-lease,<sup>6</sup> overall conversion of American economy for wartime production, huge mobilization of manpower, large-scale casualties, and so on.

With regard to the internal market, the latter, instead of expanding organically as in 1914-18, experienced in the course of the Second World War only an artificial revival based on war expenditures.

While the bourgeoisie has been fabulously enriched, the country as a whole has become much poorer; the astronomic costs of the war will never be recouped.

In sum, the major factors that once served to foster and fortify American capitalism either no longer exist or are turning into their opposites.

## IV

The prosperity that followed the First World War, which was hailed as a new capitalist era refuting all Marxist prognostications, ended in an economic catastrophe. But even this short-lived prosperity of the twenties was based on a combination of circumstances which cannot and will not recur again. In addition to the factors already listed, it is necessary to stress: (1) that American capitalism had a virgin continent to exploit; (2) that up to a point it had been able to maintain a certain balance between industry and agriculture; and (3) that the main base of capitalist expansion had been its internal market. So long as these three conditions existed—although they were already being undermined—it was possible for U. S. capitalism to maintain a relative stability.

The boom in the twenties nourished the myth of the permanent stability of American capitalism, giving rise to pompous and hollow theories of a "new capitalism," "American exceptionalism," the "American dream," and so forth and so on. The illusions about the possibilities and future of American capitalism were spread by the reformists and all other apologists for the ruling class not only at home but abroad. "Americanism" was the gospel of all the misleaders of the European and American working class.

What actually happened in the course of the fabulous prosperity of the twenties was that under these most favorable conditions, all the premises for an unparalleled economic catastrophe were prepared. Out of it came a chronic crisis of American agriculture. Out of it came a monstrous concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands. Correspondingly, the rest of the population became relatively poorer. Thus, while in the decade of 1920-30, industrial productivity increased by 50 percent, wages rose only 30 percent. The workers were able to buy—in prosperity—proportionately less than before.

The relative impoverishment of the American people is likewise mirrored in national wealth statistics. By 1928 the workers' share of the national wealth had dropped to 4.7 percent; while the farmers retained only 15.4 percent. At the same time, the bourgeoisie's share of the national wealth had risen to 79.9 percent, with most of it falling into the hands of the Sixty Families and their retainers.<sup>7</sup>

The distribution of national income likewise expressed this

1. Capitalism is the economic system of commodity production based on private ownership of the means of production and distribution and on the laws of profit. Capital is obtained through the extraction of surplus value from the unpaid labor of the working class, and the resulting profits are reinvested in new production. Capitalist production as a whole is unplanned and unstable, and the system fraught with recurring convulsions and zig-zags.

2. Imperialism is the expansionist law of finance capital that drives richer nations to exert economic, political and military control over poorer countries. Imperialism operates through extraction of the raw materials and natural resources of other nations, exploitation of foreign labor, and creation of overseas markets for goods and fields for capital investment. Imperialist countries breed a privileged section of the working class upon which rests a powerful labor bureaucracy.

3. December 1941 through 1945.

4. World War I lasted from 1914 through 1918.

5. England's Empire Preference System was initiated in 1932, when the British government reversed its free trade policy, instituted tariff walls against foreign competitors, and exempted countries of the British Commonwealth from tariff duties.

6. The Congressional Lend-Lease Act of 1941 authorized President Roosevelt to "lease" enormous quantities of materiel to Britain and later Russia for wartime use. Ostensibly, the equipment was to be paid for or returned at the end of the war; fifty billion dollars of this aid was sent overseas.

7. The "Sixty Families" was a term popularized by Ferdinand Lundberg in his book *America's Sixty Families* (1937), an analysis of the holdings of sixty immensely wealthy families (Morgans, Rockefellers, du Ponts, etc.) which dominate the U.S. economy.

monstrous disproportion. In 1929, at the peak of prosperity, 36,000 families had the same income as 11 million "lower-bracket" families.

This concentration of wealth was a cardinal factor in limiting the absorbing capacity of the internal market. Compensating external outlets for agriculture and industry could not be found in a constricting world market.

Moreover, the need to export raw materials and agricultural products tended to further unbalance American foreign trade. This inescapably led to a further dislocation of the world market, whose participants were debtor countries, themselves in need of selling more than they bought in order to cover payments on their debts, largely owed to the U. S.

While appearing and functioning in the role of stabilizers of capitalism, the American imperialists were thus its greatest disrupters both at home and abroad. The U. S. turned out to be the main source of world instability, the prime aggravator of imperialist contradictions.

In the interim between the two wars this manifested itself most graphically in the fact that all economic convulsions began in the Republic of the Dollar, the home of "rugged individualism." This was the case with the first postwar crisis of 1920-21;<sup>8</sup> this was repeated eight years later when the disproportion between agriculture and industry reached the breaking point and when the internal market had become saturated owing to the impoverishment of the people at one pole and the aggrandizement of the monopolists at the other. The Great American Boom exploded in a crisis which shattered the economic foundations of all capitalist countries.

## V

The economic crisis of 1929 was not a cyclical crisis such as periodically accompanied organic capitalist development in the past, leading to new and higher productive levels. It was a major historical crisis of capitalism in decay, which could not be overcome through the "normal" channels; that is to say, through the blind interplay of the laws governing the market.

Production virtually came to a standstill. National income was cut into less than half, plummeting from \$81 billion in 1929 to \$40 billion in 1932. Industry and agriculture sagged. The army of unemployed swelled tenfold "normal," reaching the dizzy figure of 20 million. According to official estimates, based on 1929 averages, the losses in the years 1930-38 amounted to 43 million man years of labor, and \$133 billion of national incomes.

By 1939 the national debt soared to \$40 billion, or \$14 billion more than the highest point at the end of the First World War. The number of unemployed kept hovering at 10 million. Industry and agriculture stagnated. The foreign trade of the U. S. in a reduced world market fell to less than half of its "normal" peacetime share.

What all these figures really express is the fearsome degradation of living standards of the workers and the middle class, and the outright pauperization of the "underprivileged one-third" of the population. The wafer-thin layer of monopolists, naturally, did not suffer at all, but on the contrary utilized the crisis in order to gobble up even a larger share of the country's wealth and resources.

The bourgeoisie saw no way out of the crisis. They had no way out. They and their regime remained the main obstacle in the way not only of domestic but of world recovery. In its downward plunge, the American bourgeoisie dragged the rest of the capitalist world with it, and kept it down.

Decisive is the fact that despite all the "pump-priming," "brain-trusting," and emergency "reforms," American capitalism was incapable of solving the crisis. The partial upswing of 1934-37 proved to be temporary and passing in character. The precipitous drop that occurred in 1937 revealed the abyss facing American capitalism. The threatening new downward plunge was cut off only by the huge expenditures made in preparation

8. The economic crisis of 1920-21 was triggered by a surplus of production combined with a lack of purchasing power.

During World War I, American farm prices rose sharply because of sales to Europe, whose farm production capacity was disrupted. After the war, European farm output increased and U.S. crops were a glut on the market; U.S. farm prices accordingly decreased sharply.

Meanwhile, manufacturing capacity increased. But the farmers, 1/5 of the population, lacked purchasing power, and the demand for tractors, cars, and manufactured goods lessened.

Employment in the cities also declined. Technological change caused an undertow on the economy, and the purchasing power of workers could not keep pace with the expansion of production.

9. Pump-priming is the act of pouring water into a pump in order to create the unbroken column of water necessary to draw water. Economically, the term refers to the act of artificially stimulating an aspect of the market with an infusion of public funds in order to attract private investment.

During the New Deal, the government apologized for recurrent excesses of government expenditures over receipts as "pump priming" — an injection of government fuel aimed at starting up the stalled motor of private expenditures. A few billions of government spending, it was hoped, would set into motion an upward spiral of private spending and job expansion.

for the Second World War.

Only the war temporarily resolved the economic crisis which had lasted in both hemispheres for ten years. The grim reality, however, is that this "solution" has solved exactly nothing. Least of all did it remove or even mitigate a single one of the basic causes for the crisis of 1929.

## VI

The basis of the current American postwar prosperity is the artificial expansion of industry and agriculture through unprecedented government spending which is swelling constantly the enormous national debt. In its fictitious character the war and postwar boom of the early forties far exceeds the orgy engaged in by European capitalism during 1914-18 and the immediate postwar years. The diversion of production into war industry on an unheard of scale resulted in temporary shortages of consumer goods. The home and foreign markets seemed to acquire a new absorbing capacity. Universal scarcities and war havoc are acting as temporary spurs to production, especially in the consumers' goods field.

Overall there is, however, the universal impoverishment, the disrupted economic, fiscal, and government systems — coupled with the chronic diseases and contradictions of capitalism, not softened but aggravated by the war.

If we multiply the condition in which European capitalism, with England at its head, emerged from the First World War by ten times and in some instances a hundred times — because of the vaster scale of the consequences of World War II — then we will arrive at an approximation of the actual state of American capitalism.

Every single factor underlying the current "peacetime" prosperity is ephemeral. This country has emerged not richer from the Second World War as was the case in the twenties, but poorer — in a far more impoverished world. The disproportion between agriculture and industry has likewise increased tremendously, despite the hothouse expansion of agriculture. The concentration of wealth and the polarization of the American population into rich and poor has continued at a forced pace.

The basic conditions that precipitated the 1929 crisis when American capitalism enjoyed its fullest health not only persist but have grown more malignant. Once the internal market is again saturated, no adequate outlet can be hoped for in the unbalanced world market. The enormously augmented productive capacity of the U. S. collides against the limits of the world market and its shrinking capacity. Ruined Europe herself needs to export. So does the ruined Orient, whose equilibrium has been ruptured by the shattering of Japan, its most advanced sector.

Europe is in dire need of billions in loans. In addition to lend-lease, Wall Street has already pumped almost \$5 billion in loans into England; almost \$2 billion into France; and smaller sums into the other satellite countries of Western Europe — without however achieving any semblance of stabilization there. Bankrupt capitalist Europe remains both a competitor on the world market and a bottomless drain. The Orient, too, needs loans, especially China, which, while in the throes of civil war, has already swallowed up as many American dollars as did Germany in the early twenties.<sup>10</sup>

At home, the explosive materials are accumulating at a truly American tempo. Carrying charges on the huge national debt; the astronomic military "peacetime" budget (\$18.5 billion for this year); the inflation,<sup>11</sup> the "overhead expenditures" of Wall Street's program of world domination, etc., etc. — all this can come from one source and one only: national income. In plain words, from the purchasing power of the masses. Degradation of workers' living conditions and the pauperization of the farmers and the urban middle class — that is the meaning of Wall Street's program.

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10. The Versailles Treaty decreed that Germany was to pay its war reparations in gold marks. Germany could not pay. England and the U.S. urged France to reduce Germany's payments, but France refused, since England and the U.S. would not reduce France's war debts to them. Germany was declared in default on payments, and France occupied the Ruhr in January 1923.

Ruhr workers would not cooperate with the French occupation, and the German government spent 40 million gold marks per day in support of the resistance movement. To meet this enormous expense, the bankrupt German government simply printed more money.

One of the worst inflations in history resulted: in January 1923 the exchange rate for marks was 7500 to the dollar; by November 1923 it was 4.2 billion marks to the dollar.

In 1924, the U.S. intervened through the Dawes Plan, which lowered reparation payments for 4 years. To meet the first payment, Germany would receive a LOAN of 800 million gold marks, financed by selling Dawes Plan notes with German real estate as collateral. Most of the notes were sold to American capitalists, who were encouraged to invest in the German economy and did, extensively.

11. Inflation, typically a war economy phenomenon resulting from debit governmental expenditures, is an increase in money and credit relative to available goods. Inflation has the primary and immediate effect of lowering real wages because of the sharp and continuing rise in prices. The rate of exploitation of labor is thereby increased.

## VII

The following conclusion flows from the objective situation: U. S. imperialism which proved incapable of recovering from its crisis and stabilizing itself in the ten-year period preceding the outbreak of the Second World War is heading for an even more catastrophic explosion in the current postwar era. The cardinal factor which will light the fuse is this: The home market, after an initial and artificial revival, must contract. It cannot expand as it did in the twenties. What is really in store is not unbounded prosperity but a short-lived boom. In the wake of the boom must come another crisis and depression which will make the 1929-32 conditions look prosperous by comparison.

## VIII

The impending economic paroxysms must, under the existing conditions, pass inexorably into the social and political crisis of American capitalism, posing in its course pointblank the question of who shall be the master in the land. In their mad drive to conquer and enslave the entire world, the American monopolists are today preparing war against the Soviet Union. This war program, which may be brought to a head by a crisis or the fear of a crisis at home, will meet with incalculable obstacles and difficulties. A war will not solve the internal difficulties of American imperialism but will rather sharpen and complicate them. Such a war will meet with fierce resistance not only by the peoples of the USSR, but also by the European and colonial masses who do not want to be the slaves of Wall Street. At home the fiercest resistance will be generated. Wall Street's war drive, aggravating the social crisis, may under certain conditions actually precipitate it. In any case, another war will not cancel out the socialist alternative to capitalism but only pose it more sharply.

The workers' struggle for power in the U. S. is not a perspective of a distant and hazy future but the realistic program of our epoch.

## IX

The revolutionary movement of the American workers is an organic part of the world revolutionary process. The revolutionary upheavals of the European proletariat which lie ahead will complement, reinforce, and accelerate the revolutionary developments in the U. S. The liberationist struggles of the colonial peoples against imperialism which are unfolding before our eyes will exert a similar influence. Conversely, each blow dealt by the American proletariat to the imperialists at home will stimulate, supplement, and intensify the revolutionary struggles in Europe and the colonies. Every reversal suffered by imperialism anywhere will in turn produce ever greater repercussions in this country, generating such speed and power as will tend to reduce all time intervals both at home and abroad.

## X

The role of America in the world is decisive. Should the European and colonial revolutions, now on the order of the day, precede in point of time the culmination of the struggle in the U. S., they would immediately be confronted with the necessity of defending their conquests against the economic and military assaults of the American imperialist monster. The ability of the victorious insurgent peoples everywhere to maintain themselves would depend to a high degree on the strength and fighting capacity of the revolutionary labor movement in America. The American workers would then be obliged to come to their aid, just as the Western European working class came to the aid of the Russian Revolution and saved it by blocking full-scale imperialist military assaults upon the young workers' republic.

But even should the revolution in Europe and other parts of the world be once again retarded, it will by no means signify a prolonged stabilization of the world capitalist system. The issue of socialism or capitalism will not be finally decided until it is decided in the U. S. Another retardation of the proletarian revolution in one country or another, or even one continent or another, will not save American imperialism from its proletarian nemesis at home. The decisive battles for the communist future of mankind will be fought in the U. S.

The revolutionary victory of the workers in the U. S. will seal the doom of the senile bourgeois regimes in every part of our planet, and of the Stalinist bureaucracy, if it still exists at the time. The Russian Revolution raised the workers and colonial peoples to their feet. The American revolution with its hundredfold greater power will set in motion revolutionary forces that will change the face of our planet. The whole Western Hemisphere will quickly be consolidated into the Social-

ist United States of North, Central, and South America. This invincible power, merging with the revolutionary movements in all parts of the world, will put an end to the outlived capitalist system as a whole, and begin the grandiose task of world reconstruction under the banner of the Socialist United States of the World.

## XI

Whereas the main problem of the workers in the Russian Revolution was to maintain their power once they had gained it, the problem in the United States is almost exclusively the problem of the conquest of power by the workers. The conquest of power in the United States will be more difficult than it was in backwards Russia, but precisely for that reason it will be much easier to consolidate and secure.

The dangers of internal counterrevolution, foreign intervention, imperialist blockade, and bureaucratic degeneration of a privileged labor caste—in Russia all of these dangers stemmed from the numerical weakness of the proletariat, the age-long poverty and backwardness inherited from czarism, and the isolation of the Russian Revolution. These dangers were in the final analysis unavoidable there.

These dangers scarcely exist in the U. S. Thanks to the overwhelming numerical superiority and social weight of the proletariat, its high cultural level and potential; thanks to the country's vast resources, its productive capacity and preponderant strength on the world arena, the victorious proletarian revolution in the U. S., once it has consolidated its power, will be almost automatically secured against capitalist restoration either by internal counterrevolution or by foreign intervention and imperialist blockade.

As for the danger of bureaucratic degeneration after the revolutionary victory—this can only arise from privileges which are in turn based on backwardness, poverty, and universal scarcities. Such a danger could have no material foundation within the U. S. Here the triumphant workers' and farmers' government would from the very beginning be able to organize socialist production on far higher levels than under capitalism, and virtually overnight assure such a high standard of living for the masses as would strip privileges in the material sense of any serious meaning whatever. Mawkish speculations concerning the danger of bureaucratic degeneration after the victorious revolution serve no purpose except to introduce skepticism and pessimism into the ranks of the workers' vanguard, and paralyze their will to struggle, while providing fainthearts and snivelers with a convenient pretext for running away from the struggle. The problem in the U. S. is almost exclusively the problem of the workers' conquest of political power.

## XII

In the coming struggle for power the main advantages will be on the side of the workers; with adequate mobilization of their forces and proper direction, the workers will win. If one wishes to deal with stern realities and not with superficial appearances, that is the only way to pose the question. The American capitalist class is strong, but the American working class is stronger.

The numerical strength and social weight of the American working class, greatly increased by the war, is overwhelming in the country's life. Nothing can stand up against it. The productivity of American labor, likewise greatly increased in wartime, is the highest in the world. This means skill, and skill means power.

The American workers are accustomed to the highest living and working standards. The widely held view that high wages are a conservatizing factor tending to make workers immune to revolutionary ideas and actions is one-sided and false. This holds true only under conditions of capitalist stability where the relatively high standard of living can be maintained and even improved. This is excluded for the future, as our whole analysis has shown. On the other hand, the workers react most sensitively and violently to any infringement upon their living standards. This has already been demonstrated by the strike waves in which great masses of "conservative" workers have resorted to the most militant and radical course of action. In the given situation, therefore, the relatively high living standard of the American workers is a revolutionary and not, as is commonly believed, a conservatizing factor.

The revolutionary potential of the class is further strengthened by their traditional militancy coupled with the ability to react almost spontaneously in defense of their vital interests, and their singular resourcefulness and ingenuity (the sitdown strikes!).

Another highly important factor in raising the revolutionary potential of the American working class is its greatly increased cohesiveness and homogeneity—a transformation accomplished in the last quarter of a century. Previously, large and decisive

sections of the proletariat in the basic industries were recruited by immigration. These foreign-born workers were handicapped and divided by language barriers, treated as social pariahs, and deprived of citizenship and the most elementary civil rights. All these circumstances appeared to be insuperable barriers in the way of their organization and functioning as a united labor force. In the intervening years, however, these foreign-born workers have been assimilated and "Americanized." They and their sons<sup>12</sup> today constitute a powerful, militant, and articulate detachment of the organized labor movement.

An equally significant and profound development is represented by the transformation that has taken place in the position occupied by the Negroes. Formerly barred and deprived of the rights and benefits of organization by the dominant reactionary craft unions and, on the other hand, regarded and sometimes utilized by the employers as a reserve for strike-breaking purposes, masses of Negroes have since the twenties penetrated into the basic industries and into the unions. Not less than two million Negroes are members of the CIO, AFL, and independent unions. They have demonstrated in the great strike struggles that they stand in the front lines of progressiveness and militancy.

The American workers have the advantage of being comparatively free, especially among the younger and most militant layers, from reformist prejudices. The class as a whole has not been infected with the debilitating poison of reformism, either of the classic "Socialist" variety or the latter-day Stalinist brand. As a consequence, once they proceed to action, they more readily accept the most radical solutions. No important section of the class, let alone the class as a whole, has been demoralized by defeats. Finally, this young and mighty power is being drawn into the decisive phases of the class struggle at a tempo that creates unparalleled premises for mass radicalization.

## XIII

Much has been said about the "backwardness" of the American working class as a justification for a pessimistic outlook, the postponement of the socialist revolution to a remote future, and withdrawal from the struggle. This is a very superficial view of the American workers and their prospects.

It is true that this class, in many respects the most advanced and progressive in the world, has not yet taken the road of independent political action on a mass scale. But this weakness can be swiftly overcome. Under the compulsion of objective necessity not only backward peoples but backward classes in advanced countries find themselves driven to clear great distances in single leaps. As a matter of fact, the American working class has already made one such leap which has advanced it far ahead of its old positions.

The workers entered the 1929 crisis as an unorganized, atomized mass imbued with illusions concerning "rugged individualism," "private initiative," "free enterprise," "the American Way," etc., etc. Less than 10 percent of the class as a whole was organized on the trade union field (fewer than 3 million out of 33 million in 1929). Moreover, this thin layer embraced primarily the highly skilled and privileged workers, organized in antiquated craft unions. The main and most decisive section of the workers knew unionism only as "company unionism," remaining without the benefit, the experience, and even the understanding of the most elementary form of workers' organization—the trade union. They were regarded and treated as mere raw material for capitalist exploitation, without rights or protection or any security of employment.

As a consequence, the 1929 crisis found the working class helpless and impotent. For three years the masses remained stunned and disoriented by the disaster. Their resistance was extremely limited and sporadic. But their anger and resentment accumulated. The next five years (1933-37), coincident with a partial revival of industry, witnessed a series of gigantic clashes, street fights and sit-down strikes—an embryonic civil war—the end result of which was a leap, a giant leap, for millions of workers from nonexistence as an organized force to trade union consciousness and organization. Once fairly started, the movement for unionism snowballed, embracing today almost 15 million in all the basic industries.

In one leap—in a brief decade—the American workers attained trade union consciousness on a higher plane and with mightier organizations than in any other advanced country. In the study and analysis of this great transformation, rather than in vapid ruminations over the "backwardness" of the American workers, one can find the key to prospective future developments. Under the impact of great events and pressing necessities the American workers will advance beyond the limits of trade unionism and acquire political class consciousness and organization in a similar sweeping movement.

12. Today (1978), we would not only add "daughters," but list them first in recognition of the heroic role of women unionists.

## XIV

The decisive instrument of the proletarian revolution is the party of the class conscious vanguard. Failing the leadership of such a party, the most favorable revolutionary situations, which arise from the objective circumstances, cannot be carried through to the final victory of the proletariat and the beginnings of planned reorganization of society on socialist foundations. This was demonstrated most conclusively—and positively—in the 1917 Russian Revolution. This same principled lesson derives no less irrefutably—even though negatively—from the entire world experience of the epoch of wars, revolutions, and colonial uprisings that began with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.

However, this basic conclusion from the vast and tragic experience of the last third of a century can be and has been given a reactionary interpretation by a school of neo-revisionism, represented by the ideologues, philosophers, and preachers of prostration, capitulation, and defeat. They say in effect: "Since the revolutionary party is small and weak it is idle to speak of revolutionary possibilities. The weakness of the party changes everything." The authors of this "theory" reject and repudiate Marxism, embracing in its place the subjective school of sociology. They isolate the factor of the revolutionary party's relative numerical weakness at a particular moment from the totality of objective economic and political developments which creates all the necessary and sufficient conditions for the swift growth of the revolutionary vanguard party.

Given an objectively revolutionary situation, a proletarian party—even a small one—equipped with a precisely worked out Marxist program and firm cadres can expand its forces and come to the head of the revolutionary mass movement in a comparatively brief span of time. This too was proved conclusively—and positively—by the experiences of the Russian Revolution in 1917. There the Bolshevik Party, headed by Lenin and Trotsky, bounded forward from a tiny minority, just emerging from underground and isolation in February to the conquest of power in October—a period of nine months.

Numerical weakness, to be sure, is not a virtue for a revolutionary party but a weakness to be overcome by persistent work and resolute struggle. In the U.S. all the conditions are in the process of unfolding for the rapid transformation of the organized vanguard from a propaganda group to a mass party strong enough to lead the revolutionary struggle for power.

## XV

The hopeless contradictions of American capitalism, inextricably tied up with the death agony of world capitalism, are bound to lead to a social crisis of such catastrophic proportions as will place the proletarian revolution on the order of the day. In this crisis, it is realistic to expect that the American workers, who attained trade union consciousness and organization within a single decade, will pass through another great transformation in their mentality, attaining political consciousness and organization. If in the course of this dynamic development a mass labor party based on the trade unions is formed, it will not represent a detour into reformist stagnation and futility, as happened in England and elsewhere in the period of capitalist ascent. From all indications, it will rather represent a preliminary stage in the political radicalization of the American workers, preparing them for the direct leadership of the revolutionary party.

The revolutionary vanguard party, destined to lead this tumultuous revolutionary movement in the U.S., does not have to be created. It already exists, and its name is the SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY. It is the sole legitimate heir and continuator of pioneer American Communism and the revolutionary movements of the American workers from which it sprang. Its nucleus has already taken shape in three decades of unremitting work and struggle against the stream. Its program has been hammered out in ideological battles and successfully defended against every kind of revisionist assault upon it. The fundamental core of a professional leadership has been assembled and trained in the irreconcilable spirit of the combat party of the revolution.

The task of the SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY consists simply in this: to remain true to its program and banner;<sup>13</sup> to render it more precise with each new development and apply it correctly in the class struggle; and to expand and grow with the growth of the revolutionary mass movement, always aspiring to lead it to victory in the struggle for political power. ■

13. The problem, of course, is that the Socialist Workers Party failed abysmally to "remain true to its program and banner" and is today on the highroad to becoming an organized expression of the American social democracy. Revolutionary principles and proletarian democratic centralism have been abandoned by the SWP, but the banner has been taken up in the United States by the Freedom Socialist Party and the recently-formed Trotskyist tendency, the Committee for a Revolutionary Socialist Party (CRSP).



# THERE IS NO PEACE

by Monica Hill

Anwar Sadat's electrifying peace bid to Israel earned him *Time's* Man of the Year award. But the newsmagazine honored him more for melodrama than for serious peace-waging.

As Sadat and Begin embraced, "the astonishing spectacle was global theatre," said *Time*, neglecting to add that the stage crew behind-the-scenes was provided by courtesy of Jimmy Carter while Palestinians picketed outside the theatre in stormy protest over negotiations on their fate that somehow failed to include them!

The great expectations initially fostered by Sadat's "sacred mission" to Tel Aviv were quickly shattered as the world recognized all the telltale signs of a tired scheme by superstar politicians to prolong the status quo.

The media-special peace offensive was soon exposed as a contrived arrangement between the ruling classes of Egypt and Israel aimed at forestalling revolt and revolution in their own countries. Why else is Sadat so ready to negotiate away the destiny of the Palestinian Arabs?

### Prologue to the Hoax

Overpowering mass pressure forced Sadat and Begin into their diplomatic Waltz of the Flowers. Poverty, inflation, desperation and fear of war plague Jews and Arabs, and the entire Mideast is rife with internal class struggle.

Huge strikes were waged last year by workers in Egypt and Israel beleaguered by wage freezes, soaring prices, antilabor policies, and the general oppressiveness of life in a garrison state.

The peace ploy covers up the intent of the bourgeoisie and oil sheiks to smash this mounting radicalization, with its implicit threat of class solidarity surfacing across nationalistic lines.

### Much Ado About Nothing

Press headlines to the contrary, nothing new has been offered by the regimes in Cairo or Tel Aviv.

- Will Palestinians win an independent state on the West Bank?

No, Begin still rejects compromise on Palestinian independence. And while a Palestinian state is a dubious solution at best to the gigantic refugee problem, any resolution which ignores the wishes of

the Palestinians is a terrible violation of their right to self-determination.

- Will Arabs in Israeli-occupied territory be granted self-determination under Begin's "self-rule" plan?

No, not with Israeli guns pointed at their heads. Civil self-rule under foreign military occupation is a hopeless contradiction.

- Will Israel's territorial aggression stop?

No. Even while talks with Sadat were underway, Begin "legitimized" more Zionist colonies and threatens to install additional Jewish settlements in southern Lebanon and the already-occupied lands.

Sadat, Begin, & Co. can no more work out a lasting peace than two corporation moguls can produce a fair contract for picketing workers being shot at by company goons.

### The Last Hurrah

Popular jubilation erupted at the sudden prospect of peace—a thunderous endorsement of the friendship that could easily flourish between Arabs and Jews who supposedly hate each other.

But a protest reflex was equally swift when the masses discerned the dimensions of the callous peace charade.

### The international proletariat is sick of the slaughter of Jews and Arabs

Tens of thousands of Lebanese workers and supporters executed a general strike. Arabs in occupied territory vociferously expressed outrage. Every anti-Zionist organization in Israel, Arab and Jewish alike, denounced Sadat's demagoguery. And socialists around the world charged sellout.

### Peace Is War

Carter feigned surprise at Sadat's "sudden" peace offensive; he had memorized his lines well, but he was clearly in on the game from the outset.

His paternal Uncle Sam role was clumsily

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