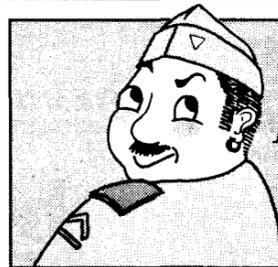




**Culture police vs. avant-garde art, rap, Hollywood: Who's next?**  
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**Gays say enough: Don't ask for patience, don't tell us to wait**  
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The **Freedom Socialist**  
*Voice of Revolutionary Feminism*

July-September 1995

Volume 16, Number 2

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# Anti-labor steamroller threatens affirmative action

BY LINDA AVERILL

**E**ncouraged by the victory of anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California, politicians and bigots nationwide are now leveling their guns at affirmative action.

They are squawking that affirmative action, the latest scapegoat for the lifeless economy and entrenched unemployment, is unnecessary and unfair. Equality has arrived, they say, and "incompetent" women and people of color are beating out qualified white men.

In reality, the bosses rely on discrimination more than ever to keep workers divided and wages and conditions down. As long as the bottom line rules, affirmative action can't eliminate disparity. But it provides a measure of real help to society's most beleaguered members, and its repeal would take us one more step backward toward the days of Jim Crow and the Feminine Mystique.

**Mission incomplete.** Backers are working to place a deceitfully named "Civil Rights Initiative" on the ballot in California, where Gov. Pete Wilson has already banned affirmative action ev-

erywhere he has the power to. The initiative would bar the state from considering race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in jobs, school admissions, and contracts. Similar laws are being proposed in other states and Congress.

President Clinton is waffling, as usual, squeezed between his desire to look good to female and minority voters and his fundamental allegiance to business.

But affirmative action's real failing is in how much discrimination it has left untouched. For example, thirty percent of the military's *ranks* — those who fight and die — are of color. But of its top *officers*, ninety percent are white.

Statistics like these from every arena show how little ground has really been lost by the actual, historic beneficiaries of "preferential treatment."

**What's in it for white guys?** Nevertheless, affirmative action has accomplished a lot, and not just for the disadvantaged workers and students who use it to push open closed doors.

Affirmative action has brought diversity — i.e., the real world — to campus and worksite. It has weakened the chauvinisms that can make the working

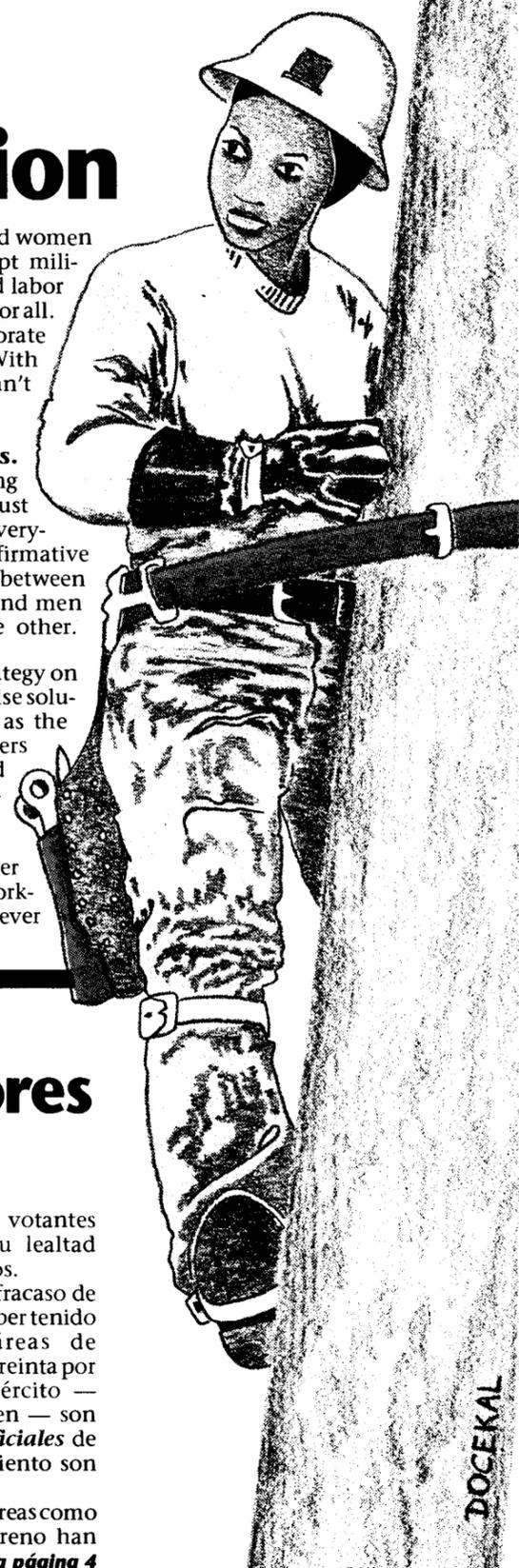
class its own worst enemy. And women and people of color have kept militancy alive in the schools and labor movement, winning benefits for all.

These gains are what Corporate America wants to reverse. With the economy a basket case, it can't afford them.

**Divide and conquer vs. unite and win.**

The right wing is trying to drive a wedge not just between white males and everybody else, but, by painting affirmative action only as a race issue, between white women on one hand and men and women of color on the other. Don't take the bait!

We can turn the bosses' strategy on its head by countering their false solutions with real ones — such as the creation of jobs for all. Workers and students of all colors and both sexes could then be attracted to a united front capable of saving affirmative action *and* of bringing together the fractured and frustrated working class more powerfully than ever before. □



# La campaña en contra de los trabajadores amenaza a la acción afirmativa

POR LINDA AVERILL

**A**nimados por la victoria de la Proposición 187 de California en contra de los inmigrantes, los políticos y la gente prejuiciosa de todo el país ahora están apuntando sus pistolas hacia la acción afirmativa.

Se quejan de que la acción afirmativa, el más reciente chivo expiatorio de una economía sin vitalidad y de un desempleo persistente, es innecesaria e injusta.

La igualdad ha llegado, dicen, y las mujeres y la gente de color "incompetentes" están desplazando a los hombres blancos aptos.

En realidad, los jefes recurren a la discriminación más que nunca para mantener a los trabajadores divididos y los salarios y condiciones al mínimo. Siempre y cuando el lucro sea el interés principal, la acción afirmativa no podrá

eliminar la desigualdad, pero proporciona una medida de ayuda real a los miembros de la sociedad más marginados, y su rechazo nos haría retroceder un paso más hacia la época de Jim Crow y la Mística Femenina.

**Misión incompleta.** Quienes apoyan esta iniciativa están trabajando para

incluir una "Iniciativa de Derechos Humanos" llamada así engañosamente, en la boleta de votación de California, donde el Gobernador Pete Wilson ya ha prohibido la acción afirmativa dondequiera que ha podido.

La iniciativa prohibiría al estado la consideración de raza, sexo, color, etnicidad u origen nacional en los empleos, admisión a las escuelas y contratos.

Leyes similares se están proponiendo en otros estados y en el Congreso.

El Presidente Clinton está titubeando como siempre, atrapado entre su

deseo de quedar bien con las votantes mujeres y minoritarios y su lealtad fundamental a los empresarios.

Sin embargo, el verdadero fracaso de la acción afirmativa es el no haber tenido influencia en muchas áreas de discriminación. Por ejemplo, treinta por ciento de las *tropas* del ejército — aquellos que luchan y mueren — son gente de color, pero de los *oficiales* de alta jerarquía, noventa por ciento son blancos.

Las estadísticas de diversas áreas como éstas muestran qué poco terreno han *sigue en la página 4*

*Los políticos y la gente prejuiciosa dicen que la igualdad ha llegado.*

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Diane Fujino, a Japanese American fighting Proposition 187, draws parallels to the WWII internment of her family — but says that this time, the racist scapegoating can be stopped.

## Top this, Oliver Stone! 5

The plot thickens in Sandy Nelson's case. The *News Tribune*, which transferred her because of her political activities, tried to use the legislature to squelch her lawsuit — and was shut down.



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**Global privatization and free trade:** As the economic going gets rough, the capitalist toughs are roughing up each other — and us. An in-depth look.

## Freedom Socialist Credo

The Freedom Socialist boldly confronts and makes sense of the dizzying events shaping today's revolutionary world.

We're Marxists, Leninists, Trotskyists, feminists, humanists...we believe that all today's gigantic upheavals are links in an enormous global effort to topple the tyranny of imperialism or Stalinist bureaucratism or racist arrogance.

We hail the decisive leadership role played by people of color and by sexual and national minorities in the worldwide class struggle.

We focus on women's non-stop fight for equality which, in the final analysis, challenges every single basis on which capitalism rests.

Our goal is to inject the socialist movement with the revitalizing ideas of Trotskyism and feminism in order to prepare it for victory in this crucial decade.

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Steve Hoffman

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# WORLD BEAT

## TURKEY

### Fascist-leaning government targets Kurds and dissidents

Recent assaults against progressives at home and Kurdish people in both Turkey and northern Iraq show that the Turkish government is anything but the liberal, democratic regime its Western allies claim.

In March, Turkey sent 35,000 troops into Iraq against bases of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which represents Turkish Kurds fighting for an independent state. In its campaign of suppression against the Kurdish national minority, Turkey has banned their language and cultural organizations, outlawed the PKK, jailed thou-

sands, burned 2,000 villages, and killed at least 60,000 people.

Turkey, a new European Customs Union partner, is in the midst of a full-blown economic crisis. This is engendering both strikes and a fascist mobilization, which is more and more taking over the state.

The fascist National Movement Party now has 20 parliament seats, and its members and supporters make up two-thirds of Turkey's enormous police force. The group is believed to be responsible for a

series of physical attacks on leftist students and for the police shootings of at least 30 people demonstrating against those attacks. □



## BRAZIL

### Huge strikes challenge privatization

In May, 300,000 Brazilians went on strike to resist plans to sell off the country's nationalized industries and services.

Employees of Petrobras, the state-owned oil giant, had been promised a 26 percent raise. They stayed out for 31 days, until the government threatened mass firings. New president Fernando Henrique Car-

do had already sent in army units to operate four refineries.

Cardoso must prove to international creditors that he can pay off Brazil's massive debt while avoiding economic collapse. His *Plano Real* aims to generate big bucks through the sale of public assets and fight inflation by tying the value of Brazil's currency to the dollar.



A 1990 protest against privatization push, begun in 1980s.

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Cardoso must prove to international creditors that he can pay off Brazil's massive debt while avoiding economic collapse. His *Plano Real* aims to generate big bucks through the sale of public assets and fight inflation by tying the value of Brazil's currency to the dollar.

But this will depress wages and conditions in a nation

abandon its workingclass program in an effort to win elections, and by 1992 it was endorsing capitalist development. It joined the bourgeois parties in pressuring the oil workers to end their strike in June.

Brazil's workers have demonstrated that they can shut the country down. Now all they need is a political party willing to show that they can also take the country over and run it! □

## BRITAIN

### Rightward shift in Labor Party

In militant strikes and rallies, British nurses, teachers, and other workers have been protesting the Tory agenda of privatization, pay cuts, layoffs, and union-busting. In May, voters protested via local elections.

The ruling Conservative Party lost 54 local governments and almost 1,800 council seats; in Wales and Scotland, all Tory council members were ousted.

The Labor Party gained 1,400 seats and control of 37 city councils. Recently, Labor and union bureaucrats have pushed the party rightward. They have joined the government in condemning strikes and back-pedaled on demands for full employment, a minimum hourly wage of eight dollars, and public education and healthcare.

In April, after a bitter fight, they also amended the party's Clause Four, adopted after the Russian Revolution; it no longer calls for "common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange."

Officials claim the party's success at the ballot box validates their program of capitulation. But by tossing out the Tories, workers did not vote their approval of concessions, but their repudiation of them. Labor will not keep its new seats unless it shows that it can set Britain on a truly new course. □

## Freedom Socialist Party & Radical Women

### CALIFORNIA

**Los Angeles:** Teamsters Building, 1616 W. 9th St. Ste. 7, Los Angeles, CA 90015. Ph. 213-365-1792. FAX 213-365-6088.

**San Francisco:** RW National Office and Bay Area Branch, Valencia Hall, 523-A Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Ph. 415-864-1278. FAX 415-864-0778.

### NEW YORK

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### AUSTRALIA

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### CANADA

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**Dateline Canada**

# New Democratic Party sides with corporations in B.C. clash over Native land rights

BY MARCEL HATCH

**T**his spring, the Upper Nicola Indians blockaded roads leading to British Columbia's largest cattle spread, Douglas Lake Ranch, which encircles traditional Native fishing sites.

By law, ranch owners are supposed to respect the band's right to fish in its accustomed places. But under NAFTA, beef and milk are being imported from the U.S., flooding the market and bringing down prices.

Douglas Lake is therefore moving into tourism with a sports resort on the Upper Nicola's hunting and fishing grounds; it charges customers as much as \$100 a day to fish in Native waters such as Minnie and Salmon lakes.

In 1989, ranch managers ordered gates locked and ditches dug across roads to the lakes, blocking Native access.

The Upper Nicola and ranch owners reached an agreement for joint use, but Douglas Lake failed to live up to it, provoking this year's confrontation.

Other bands and supporters joined the blockade, just one of many such showdowns. Sixty percent of B.C.'s Aboriginal bands are embroiled in negotiations over land claims with the federal and provincial governments.

**NDP hostile to national rights of indigenous peoples.** In British Columbia, most Aboriginal claims to territory have never been legally set aside.

A royal proclamation in 1763 recognized bands as owners of their land. It mandated the Crown governments in North America to sign treaties with individual indigenous nations before ac-

quiring land for colonists.

But the province of B.C. denied the existence of Indian rights, negotiated only a few isolated treaties in the 1850s, and so never officially gained control over Native lands.

Therein lies the problem for business. Corporations want to eradicate claims by First Nations that cloud property titles.

In 1992, the New Democratic Party was elected in B.C. over the anti-Indian, long-entrenched Social Credit Party, partly because the NDP promised to settle such claims. In December 1994, talks opened under the auspices of the B.C. Treaty Commission.

As a party that bills itself as representing working people, the NDP should support First Nations against big business and take the position that their entire claim to B.C. is valid.

Instead, it refuses to recognize Native justice systems, prohibits gambling on indigenous land, and seeks to tax Indian individuals and enterprises.

The party expects the bands to accept title to only five percent of the province and to allow non-Native corporations full access to even this paltry area.

The NDP is showing that it is hostile to the bands' fundamental right to self-determination — their sovereignty as nations.

**Beware the plunderers.** The Indian movement is split on the Treaty Commission's right to settle claims.

Sovereignty advocates who question the commission's legitimacy are being excluded from the talks. These traditionalists believe

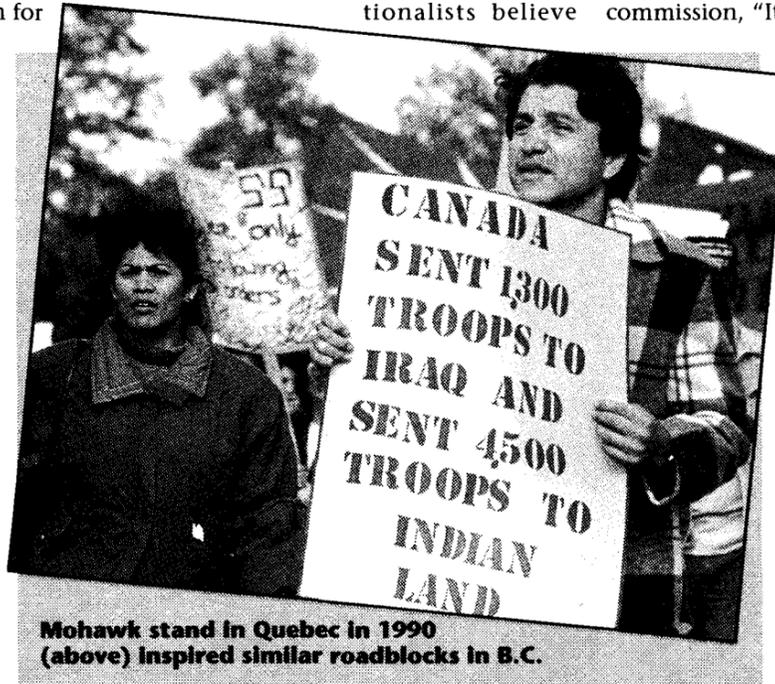
real estate deals renouncing sovereignty, which is exactly what the corporations are after.

Howard Adams, a prominent author, educator and activist who is Métis (Native and French-Canadian), says of the commission, "It's not the way to gain sovereignty or self-determination — this can only be realized by a mass political movement which includes labour and other natural allies of First Nations."

**Land claims unquenched.** Trade-offs of national rights are especially shortsighted because, in many ways, the bands have the upper hand — by virtue of their militancy, growing support from allies, and recent court victories recognizing indigenous communities. And their land claims, unextinguished after more than 200 years, remain a huge source of strength.

As Chub Pascal, a Lillooet band member and participant in the Douglas Lake blockade, told the *FS*, "As far as we're concerned, we have yet to give up any of our rights, sovereignty, or land by any measure of international law."

The NDP needs to wake up, get out of bed with Douglas Lake Ranch, and start defending Native claims. □



Mohawk stand in Quebec in 1990 (above) inspired similar roadblocks in B.C.

strongly in preserving the political, cultural and economic institutions of their pre-colonization societies — and that means preserving the rights to the land on which these structures are based.

On the commission, the unequal relationship between capital-starved bands and the government is leading some Native negotiators to settle for quick-fix

## ...Unions in Australia

from page 8

workers to only a minuscule wage increase. In just a week, union membership amongst the mostly female workforce jumped from 65 percent to 97 percent.

In my workplace, Northern Metropolitan College, more than 100 teachers joined the union ranks when we mobilized, with women in the lead, to beat back an assault on our leave entitlements. Solidarity, democracy, and militancy were key to our success. The needs of both tenured and untenured teachers were addressed. All meetings, including executive meetings, were open to all members, and mass meetings were the heart of the campaign, providing a vital

antidote to the bosses' divisive tactics. Solid support for strike action and bans on anything helpful to management, like overtime, showed that teachers are serious about defending entitlements.

**A workingclass program.** The planet urgently requires a social system geared to human needs and protection of the environment, with an economy that is communally owned and planned. But what is the ACTU hawking? A lemon called capitalism.

Workers don't buy their sales pitch. Here's what we're in the market for:

- **Full employment!** Create jobs by reducing work hours with no loss of pay. Establish free, quality, voluntary

job retraining programs for those who are retrenched (laid off). Pay the unemployed a living wage.

- **No privatisation!** Open the books on government industries. Turn mismanaged services over to unions to run. Form union-community coalitions, funded by the unions, to fight privatisation. Organise for bans, strikes, and worksite occupations to retain nationalised industries. Develop union-led mass mobilisations to force both Labor and Liberal governments to reverse course and renounce privatisation.

- **Tax the rich and nationalise the banks to fund public services!** Stop corporate handouts and subsidies. Create and preserve free, quality healthcare, childcare, education, transportation, and community services.

- **For legislation protecting workers and their unions.** Save the Occupational Health and Safety and Workers Com-

pensation laws. Jail negligent employers who flout safety standards. Require the bosses to massively compensate injured workers and to stop the harassment against them. Repeal laws that make solidarity strikes illegal.

- **End the employer-instigated racism, sexism, and homophobia that divide and weaken workers.** Defend and extend Equal Opportunity laws and affirmative action. Educate inside the unions, with official sponsorship, about the harmful effects of discrimination.

- **For the union democracy needed to implement this program.** Hold regular, democratic union meetings. Keep officials accountable through regular elections, with mechanism for recall in order to guarantee that the platform is upheld. Peg officers' wages to the wages of the members they represent.

Our demands are just, reasonable, and necessary. Let's go get 'em! □

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## Voices of Color

# California Prop. 187 rings with echoes of Japanese American concentration camps

BY DIANE FUJINO

As I joined in organizing against California's Proposition 187 last year, I flashed back to what happened to my parents and grandparents during World War II. Along with 120,000 other Japanese Americans, mostly U.S. citizens, my family was imprisoned in a concentration camp. The groundwork for this outright violation of their constitutional rights had been laid by a long string of discriminatory statutes.

The government used "national security" as an excuse. Yet, it knew from its own investigations that U.S. Japanese were not a security threat.

How do contemporary assaults on immigrants remind me of this earlier racist treatment of Japanese? Let me count the ways.

**Same old scapegoating.** Then and now, immigrants are convenient targets to blame for economic problems.

The revolving door of immigration operates according to fluctuating business needs. When the economy is strong, the door cycles in vast numbers of desperate immigrants. But when the economy turns down or the new arrivals resist their super-exploitation, the door expels them.

But never completely, because the profit system is addicted to low-paid immigrant labor. The purpose of periodic immigrant-bashing is not to deport every undocumented worker, but to terrorize newcomers into paralysis and seduce other workers into believing that wage cuts, joblessness, and slashed social services are the fault of dark-skinned "foreigners."

Racism, embedded in this country's origins, will be an integral component of scapegoating as long as capitalism stands.

**Popular seal of approval.** The bosses' abuse of vulnerable groups succeeds best when legitimized and institutionalized by other workers. The ballot box is a handy tool.

The very first initiative in California, Proposition 1, closed loopholes in an earlier law designed to prevent Japanese from buying or leasing agricultural land. Also called the Alien Land Law of 1920, the measure was ratified by voters three

to one.

Japanese were recruited to the state as seasonal laborers by agribusiness. They entered an already strongly racist climate; white workers saw immigrants as competition and blamed them for depressing wages and conditions.

Racism was encouraged not only by openly white-supremacist politicians and media, but by the reactionary leadership of the American Federation of Labor as well. And the AFL had a strangle-

hold on the state union movement, due to the government and vigilante terrorism that crushed more enlightened labor tendencies as they developed.

But the passage of laws against Japanese farmers only began when they started to make headway as small owners, often by skillfully reclaiming wasteland. Agribusiness saw this as a threat, and so did other family farmers. The new factory farm system spelled the end for small farmers, but they, like white workers, blamed immigrants.

Seventy-five years and 186 propositions later, the ballot box is once again the vehicle for misdirected fury against immigrants.

**Twin-party partners in crime.** Senator James Phelan, a Democrat struggling for reelection against a projected Republican landslide, sparked Proposition 1. After the Pearl Harbor bombing two decades later, Republican Earl War-

ren, then the California Attorney General, was a ferocious proponent of Japanese incarceration. In February 1942, Democrat President Franklin D. Roosevelt endorsed Warren's bigotry by signing the order under which Japanese were imprisoned.

Today, only the names have changed. Republican California Governor Pete Wilson tries to revive his career by blaming undocumented workers for the state's financial crisis and championing

government that imprisoned them, and planned demonstrations and organized strikes inside the camps.

But Japanese then did not have the support that immigrants do currently. In 1942, the only organized groups to oppose the wholesale uprooting of Japanese were the Socialist Workers Party, Socialist Party, and Quakers. Today, students, leftists, unionists, feminists, gay activists, and people of all colors are battling Proposition 187. The Black, Chicano/a, and other liberation movements of the 1960s era dramatically changed our consciousness, so that we now recognize our collective strength.

Nowhere is the potential for collective strength greater than in the labor movement, and organized labor is learning from its racist past. In the early 1900s, the AFL was the leading advocate for Japanese exclusion. But in the 1990s, labor is an entirely different entity, due to the influx of women and people of color into the workplace, the internationalization of the workforce, and persistent struggles by workers of color to force unions to open their ranks.

As a result, unions are now helping to spearhead the defense of immigrants. Rank-and-file members are cooperating on labor issues back and forth across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Proposition 187. Democrat President Bill Clinton wants to increase border-patrol spending by \$173 million, tighten the asylum process, and introduce an identification card for all workers.

So much for the "lesser of two evils" in politics.

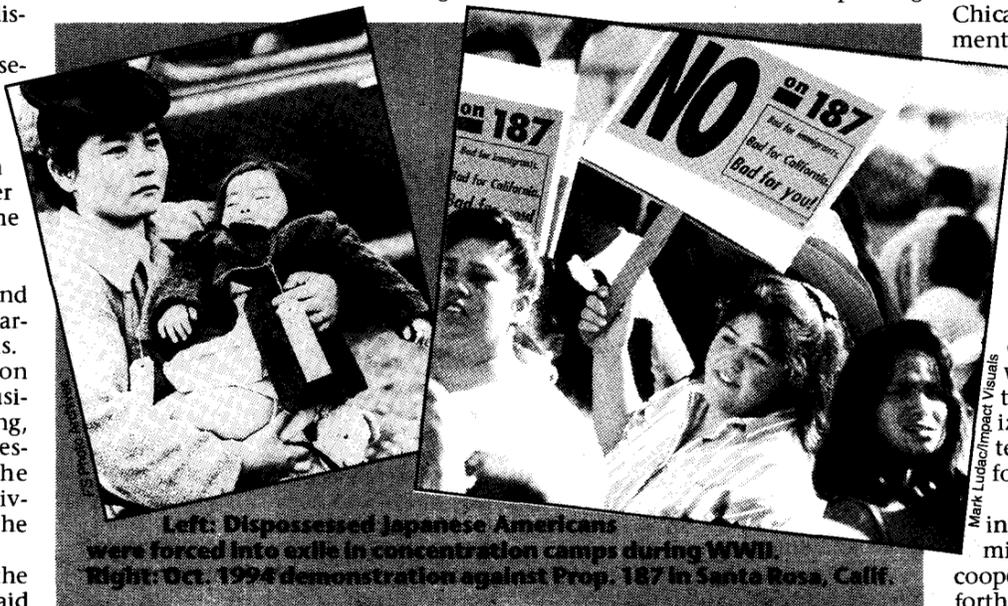
**Power to the people!** However, the past and present are not identical. For Japanese early in the century, life was one repressive statute after another, culminating in internment. But now, even though Proposition 187 passed by a large margin, activists have won court injunctions that, so far, prevent its implementation. Why the difference?

It certainly is not that earlier generations of Japanese didn't fight back. They did, although the information is hidden. They got arrested to challenge the constitutionality of evacuation orders, formed the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee to resist going to war for the

Despite all the effort that has gone into keeping people of diverse colors and national backgrounds divided, an uncensored look at all the movements shows that multiracial solidarity crops up again and again, because it succeeds. For example, in 1903 Japanese and Mexican migrant laborers joined forces against the mighty sugar-beet industry in Oxnard, California — and won.

I've learned important lessons from drawing parallels between the attacks on my family fifty years ago and on immigrants today. We must always fight back for liberation and justice everywhere. And by recovering our history and unifying, we have the power to conquer our common enemies. □

**Radical Women member Diane Fujino works with Asian Sisters for Ideas in Action Now! in Santa Barbara to save and strengthen affirmative action.**



Left: Dispossessed Japanese Americans were forced into exile in concentration camps during WWII. Right: Oct. 1994 demonstration against Prop. 187 in Santa Rosa, Calif.

## Gay Resistance

the hidden history

BY SAM DEADERICK

by Sam Deaderick and Tamara Turner

**Chronicles the vibrant struggle for gay liberation, from antiquity through the explosive 1969 Stonewall Rebellion.**

DOB had five basic goals: education of the "variant," education of the public that lesbians are women and that this twentieth century...

the strongest leadership, their contributions proved more enduring and advanced than those of the men. But the character of the movement as a whole was one of a single-issue quest for integration. Social activism flourished; the gay scene of bars, cafes and popular gathering places was rich and diverse. But few angry public demands were heard, nor any calls for deep-going change. And there was no clear and conscious linkage with other civil rights movements, other than the ideological connection with feminism. There wasn't even agreement that homosexual love was legitimate. In the mid-60s, Frank Kameny, leader of the Washington, D.C. Mattachine, started the movement with the assertion that homosexuality was not a sickness—and many gay spokespersons disputed him. The early homophile leaders were courageous pioneers, the first to organize publicly as lesbians and gay men, and to argue for their civil rights. But it would be the next generation of gay activists, inspired by the Black in-

in 1952, while the respectable were succumbing to McCarthyism and ousting the radical founders from Mattachine, a new gay organization was formed in Los Angeles—ONE, Inc. ONE's self-described four fields of activity were education, publishing, research, and social services, but publishing a magazine largely by and about gay men was its major work. ONE Magazine doubtlessly reached a large number of readers and performed a valuable function as a voice insisting on social legitimacy. But it was far more a literary and pseudoscientific forum than a political one. The magazine promoted an image of the gay male as a respectable, light moral, urbane and successful man-of-the-world. It ignored lesbians. Women were welcomed into ONE—at least officially. But lesbian concerns were rarely addressed, treated as a footnote to the more important men's issues. A few women joined, some of the women from the Vice Versa circle...

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## ...La acción afirmativa

viene de la primera página

perdido los beneficiarios históricos reales del "tratamiento preferencial."

situación con la economía hecha un desastre.

**¿Qué hay para los hombres blancos?** Sin embargo, la acción afirmativa ha logrado mucho y no sólo para los trabajadores y estudiantes en desventaja que la usan para abrir puertas cerradas.

La acción afirmativa ha traído diversidad — o sea, el mundo real — a los campos universitarios y lugares de trabajo.

Ha debilitado al chovinismo que puede hacer de la clase trabajadora su propio enemigo.

Las mujeres y la gente de color han mantenido viva la militancia en las escuelas y en el movimiento obrero, obteniendo así, beneficios para todos.

Estos logros son lo que el mundo corporativo de los EEUU quiere revertir, porque no pueden solventar este

**Divide y vencerás vs. únete y ganarás.** El ala derechista está tratando de poner barreras no sólo entre los hombres blancos y los demás, sino, catalogando a la acción afirmativa como una cuestión puramente racial, entre las mujeres blancas, por una parte, y los hombres y mujeres de color, por otra. ¡No muerdan el anzuelo!

Nosotros podemos hacer girar la estrategia de los poderosos contraponiendo a sus soluciones falsas, soluciones reales — tal como la creación de empleos para todos.

Los trabajadores y estudiantes de todos colores y de ambos sexos podrían entonces ser atraídos a un frente unido capaz de salvar la acción afirmativa y de unificar más fuertemente que nunca a una clase trabajadora dividida y frustrada. □

# "Don't ask, don't tell" fiasco triggers gay leadership shakeup

BY SU DOCEKAL

Just two short years ago, one million exuberant lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgenders and their supporters marched on Washington D.C., confident they were ushering in a new era. The ban on gays in the military would be lifted, a national healthcare plan passed, and AIDS education and caregiving finally taken seriously by the federal government.

Two years later, Bill Clinton and his merry band have broken every campaign promise that gay votes and money could buy. Angry with the administration, queer activists also feel betrayed by their own leaders, who were seduced by yet another smooth-talking Democrat.

**Some people never learn.** The Human Rights Campaign Fund is a national gay lobby that backed Clinton vigorously and invested hugely in the campaign to lift the ban. In 1994, they threw good money after bad, contributing \$750,000 to Democratic candidates. Meanwhile, they provided no coordination and little aid to struggling local organizations hunkered down in the ground war against the right wing.

In response to this sort of dereliction of duty, grassroots organizers have

handed cautious bureaucrats ("we just want a place at the table") a resounding vote of no confidence.

Lidell Jackson, of New York's Lesbian/Gay People of Color Steering Committee, told the *Freedom Socialist*: "The military ban sealed the coffin on national gay organizing." Jackson's recent essay in *Colorlife* magazine warns that the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, which under former director Urvashi Vaid won wide respect for its outspoken multi-issue approach, is now moving right as well. Taming its message to suit well-heeled contributors, the Task Force risks becoming just as irrelevant as the HRCF. "But I remain optimistic," says Jackson. "Gay organizing didn't cease — it simply changed direction."

Rank-and-file activists have rolled up their sleeves to concentrate where they felt they could make an impact: fighting bigotry on the ballot, educating door-to-door, and forging alliances with labor and civil liberties organizations, people of color, and feminists.

Out of these regional battles is emerging a new leadership whose heroic efforts last year won the defeat of anti-gay ballot initiatives in a dozen states.

**The face of gay liberation has changed.** Gone are the days of insular-

ity and invisibility; fresh gay voices are lifted everywhere. A National Gay Labor Alliance formed in 1993; sexual minorities in the Japanese American Citizens League are demanding recognition; and Queergo for Cuba are penetrating the U.S. Embassy with condoms. Even country music stars are coming out of the closet!

**Voting with their feet.** Despite explosive growth and success at countering homophobia at the polls, the gay movement is on the defensive. The ranks, tired of sell-outs and re-waging the same fights year after year, are increasingly fed up with leaders who lack vision and a longterm strategy for *winning*.

In substance, the debate is the same one that split the movement in the early 1970s: Is our goal equality within the status quo, or an all-encompassing liberation that requires a restructuring of society? It's a class question. And to the HIV-positive gay man with no health insurance, to the lesbian of color with no job prospects, and to the queer youth with no home, the answer is obvious.

But the heated political arguments of the '60s are out of vogue: when groups don't meet their needs, activists of the '90s just up and leave.

Moisés Montoya, a former member of San Francisco ACT UP, cautions: "Failure

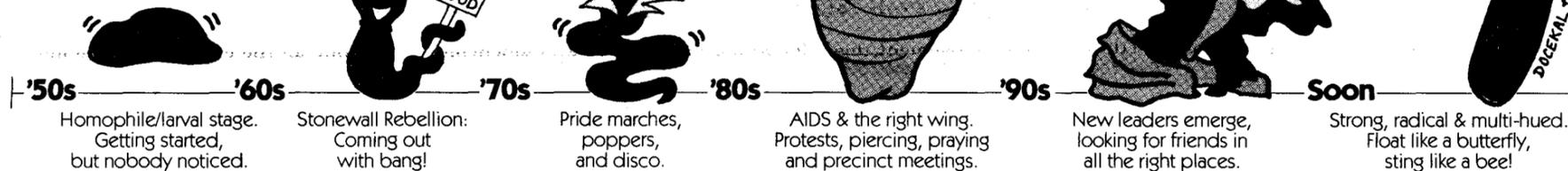
to discuss and analyze led to mistakes. Militants in ACT UP and Queer Nation adopted increasingly radical *tactics*, but exhausted their fire on short-term reforms, leaving the system itself unscathed."

These days it seems that only artists, whose free speech the gay community zealously protects, are willing to engage in no-holds-barred polemic. Even many queer *leftists* gingerly avoid discussing capitalism, much less naming it as the problem. Playwrights and poets like Tony Kushner, Merle Woo, and the late Audre Lorde are now the ones popularizing socialist ideas.

Artists are ahead of their times, but the times catch up. Unending economic doldrums and the relentless right wing will continue to push youthful queers to follow where the culturati are leading — to burst the bubble of silence, call timid gay leaders to task, and hammer out a bold new program for *human* liberation. □



## Queer metamorphosis...



# Reporter fighting for free expression bests publisher lobby in legislature

BY LINDA AVERILL

Sandy Nelson, a journalist, lesbian and radical who is suing her employer, *The News Tribune*, turned adversity into victory when she stopped TNT from suing out a Washington state law that protects the political rights of employees.

And in saving a key clause of the Campaign Finance Reform Act, she widely publicized the law's safeguards.

Passed by popular vote in 1992, the law bars discrimination against workers who take political stands. It and the state constitution are the bases for Nelson's suit.

In 1990, TNT, Tacoma's one daily paper, yanked Nelson from reporting and made her a copy editor because she was part of a gay-rights campaign. TNT told this socialist feminist sparkplug that she could get back her beat only if she dropped *all* her activism. Instead, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Nelson sued. She has built widespread support by explaining that for workers today, the right to organize on their own behalf is a survival issue.



Pierce County Superior Court Judge Vicki Hogan.

**Lobbying to gut worker rights.** TNT offered a real-life illustration of the truth of her position in April, before a hearing scheduled for May. At that hearing, ACLU lawyer Paul Chuey planned to use the campaign reform law to argue for Nelson's reinstatement without going to trial.

Meanwhile, however, *Tribune* lobbyists were at the state Capitol, quietly and successfully persuading legislators to delete the relevant section of the law by adding an amendment called Section 21 to another bill.

When Nelson's defense committee discovered these shenanigans, they mobilized. Letters and calls from the ACLU, labor councils, unions, and lesbian/gay and other groups deluged Governor Mike Lowry, urging him to veto the amendment.

Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild Local 82 warned that if Section 21 took effect, "All Washington workers — not just journalists — will lose the only protection they have from job discrimination based on political activities. That would create two classes of citizens — employers, free to lobby for

and against legislation that furthers their interests and to donate to political candidates, committees and initiative efforts; and workers, who risk discipline or termination for exercising the same rights."

### Hogan sides with bosses.

In May, with the amended law sitting on Lowry's desk, lawyers for both sides argued in front of Judge Vicki Hogan in Pierce County Superior Court.

Hogan found for TNT, citing both technical and constitutional reasons.

She ruled that the campaign-reform law, passed after Nelson was transferred, could not be applied "retroactively," even though TNT's refusal to reinstate her is ongoing. Hogan also endorsed TNT's contention that requiring new workers to be politically neutral is a First Amendment right needed to protect the "appearance of objectivity" — a patently hypocritical claim given the high-profile stands taken by publishers.

**Guv does the right thing.** Just days later, Nelson scored her victory: Governor Lowry vetoed Section 21, preserving safeguards for workers and an important foundation for her suit.

Even Hogan's adverse ruling had one important beneficial effect. Earlier, she had rejected Nelson's constitutional arguments, saying they didn't apply to private-sector workers. Now, since she used

First Amendment grounds to reject Nelson's application of the campaign-reform law, the case can be one unit again. Nelson's lawyers plan to appeal Hogan's rulings regarding both the constitution and the campaign reform law, together, to the state Supreme Court.

Nelson's case will be the law's first test; her defense committee is gearing up to win a strong precedent. To endorse, donate, or offer other help, please write the Sandy Nelson Defense Committee, P.O. Box 5847, Tacoma, WA 98415, or call (206)756-9971. □



Sandy Nelson and ACLU lawyer Paul Chuey at May 2 hearing.

## Editorials

### Without a labor party, U.S. workers all revved up with no place to go

IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, every week seems to bring a new announcement about cutbacks at Boeing. Most recently, the company said it plans to eliminate another 184 jobs by mothballing a plant that makes airplane blankets. Boeing will likely take advantage of NAFTA and ship the work south where wages are low. This set of layoffs is far less dramatic than the previous one — 10,000 jobs to be slashed — but the motive is no different: to boost profits.

This kind of scenario is playing out all across the U.S., and it has catalyzed a resurgence of union militancy.

Ingenuity and guts aren't lacking among the unionists battling the Staleys and Caterpillars and Firestone/Bridgestones and Safeways and USAirs. But these heroes are sparing with an arm strapped behind their backs — and the other one in a sling.

**FIRST OFF, THEY ARE FIGHTING** a class that has not one political party representing its interests, but two. Whenever workers score a gain through strikes and such, the Democrats and Republicans just pass a new law or ratify a new trade agreement to nullify the victory.

The union movement's own leadership is the arm-in-a-sling problem. While the bosses are laying waste to the frontline troops, labor's supposed field generals are back at AFL-CIO headquarters scheduling their next take-a-Democrat-to-lunch day or off at a labor-management cooperation seminar somewhere. No wonder some union leaders are calling for President Lane Kirkland's ouster.

Malcolm X said, "Put the Democrats first and the Democrats will put you last." He knew whereof he spoke.

Organized labor has got to take a cue from organized capital and marshal its own party — not a mushy, adjective-free "third party," but a class-conscious, boss-busting party with no divided allegiances. On the next page, an FS reader offers the name "80 Percent Party" for such a phenomenon.

Whatever you want to call it, a labor party is way overdue. □

### The U.N. in Bosnia: a sham and a shame

**AROUND THE WORLD**, the United Nations has been bestowing upon itself more and more police powers. In its eyes, it has the right to override the sovereignty of "rogue" states that need to be curbed or "failed" states that need to be saved.

But in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the U.N. seems unable to decide what it wants to do with its self-conferred authority.

In the U.S. media, the troops are being portrayed as helpless victims and the mission as a selfless attempt to bring peace to an area gripped by ancient, irrational strife.

Don't you believe it. Bosnia would not be in this state of misery and crisis if not for the divisive and exploitative role that European lenders and investors like West Germany played in Yugoslavia in the years before its breakup.

**THE SPLITTING OF BOSNIA** into separate ethnic enclaves has already been accomplished in fact if not in law, and the governments of the U.S. and Europe just stood by and let it happen. They could care less. They will take the risk of provoking antiwar organizing in their own countries only when they can see what they are going to get out of it.

Not that more forceful intervention would be a good thing. The U.N. leaves bloody bootprints wherever it goes. Remember Somalia? That "humanitarian" mission was a military expedition through and through, with all the accompanying horrors.

Every thinking and feeling person aches for a solution to the war in Bosnia. But the U.N., top-heavy with the world's biggest and baddest colonialists and imperialists, isn't it. The difficult road out of the quagmire must be mapped by the Bosnian workers, in conjunction with their Balkan co-inhabitants and former comrades. U.N. out! □

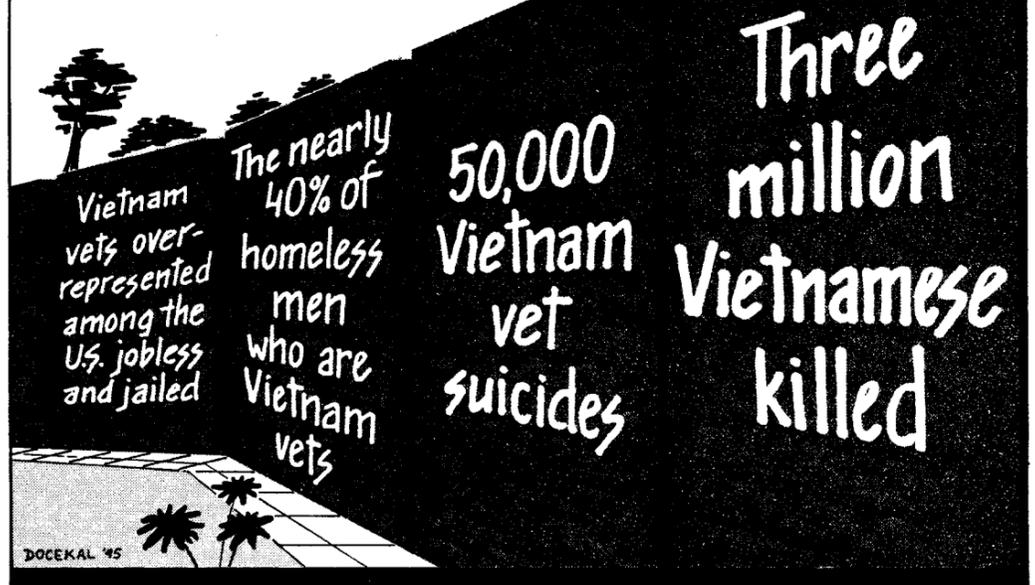
### Sparts vs. feminism

**"FEMINIST SEX COPS FROM HELL."** Does that sound like Rush Limbaugh on one of his Feminazi kicks? Guess again, it's the Spartacist League — the Limbaughs of the Left.

To the Sparts, date rape is a hoax. These guys and gals loved the sexual revolution; feminism, on the other hand, sends them into a frenzy of denunciation and vitriol (not hard to do). Feminism, you see, is inherently bourgeois.

Tired, tired, tired. Our advice to Spartacist women and young people: Get out while there's still time! □

20 years after the Vietnam War,  
many names remain to be added  
to the Memorial wall...



### Bob Dole's "true lies," family values, and the NEA

BY ANDREA BAUER

**I**n the literary treasure **From Shakespeare to Shaw**, Annette Rubinstein writes, "The old miners' song has it, 'They say in Harlan County, there are no neutrals here,' and that is also so in the great world of art."

In the latest partisan face-off in the culture wars, we have Senator Bob "An Assault Weapon in Every Home" Dole so supposedly concerned about violence that he is emboldened to take on a goliath: Time Warner, "the world's largest media and entertainment conglomerate," as its own news-weekly modestly describes it.

Says Dole, "We must hold Hollywood and the entire entertainment industry accountable for putting profit ahead of common decency."

Time Warner chairman Gerald Levin is used to having to scramble for the high ground. In 1992, his company released the song "Cop Killer" by rapper Ice-T. In response to a campaign by the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas threatening a national boycott against Time Warner, Levin mounted a stirring defense in the *Wall Street Journal*.

He wrote: "The test of any democratic society lies not in how well it can control expression but in whether it gives freedom of thought and expression the widest possible latitude."

Self-serving rhetoric aside, corporate America is hardly a knight in shining armor for the arts. It will defend exactly as much controversial culture as is profitable.

**All violence is not created equal.** The family-values crowd act like they're upset about all the naked bodies and dead bodies, but that's not really the big problem, any more than it's true that they oppose abortions because they cherish life.

Dole, for example, called the movie *True Lies* family fare. It's easy to make fun of his hypocrisy, given that the film is a racist, xenophobic, misogynist festival of violence. Commem-

tators ascribe this eccentricity to the fact that star Arnold Schwarzenegger is a Republican booster of, well, Schwarzeneggerian proportions.

This is probably part of the explanation, but there's something more fundamental going on.

Art and popular culture are about ideas. That's why people get so steamed up about them. It doesn't matter that Dole hasn't seen *True Lies*; he approves of it because it matches his world view. The mayhem in it is OK because it's carried out by a duly authorized government official against dark-skinned foreign "terrorists"; the sex is fine because not only is it between husband and wife,

to spend money on things that make them richer — like blood-drenched action movies that can be marketed anywhere in the world, because the plot and dialog don't matter; things blowing up is a universally understood language.

The NEA has \$170 million dollars at its disposal this year — less than .0002 percent of the federal budget.

Most NEA-funded projects are less in the neighborhood of Andres Serrano's "Piss Christ" (a plastic figure of Jesus floating in Serrano's urine), and more in the neighborhood of Mr. Rogers — or Sesame Street. The NEA gives seed money to non-profit community arts centers, brings plays and dance to rural children, and helps to support establishment-type symphonies and ballet, opera, and theater companies.

All the foregoing are worthwhile, but perhaps ultimately it's the small proportion of really out-there stuff that's most important to defend, even if you'll never see it or suspect you might hate it if you did.

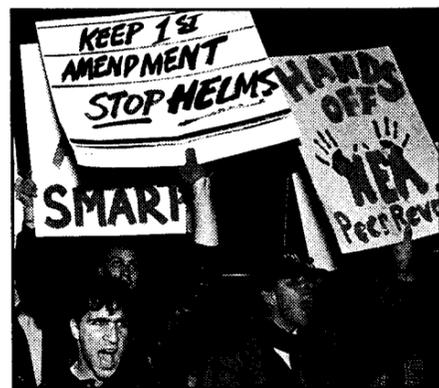
Leon Trotsky described art as "the most sensitive and at the same time the least protected" part of social life. One of the

things he had in mind when he wrote this (in *Leon Trotsky on Literature and Art*) was a Diego Rivera mural commissioned for Rockefeller Center, deemed communist upon completion, and painted over.

How much art is being destroyed right now because it's unsaleable or too radical? How much never comes to fruition?

**Rebellion for art's sake.** Much is being made today about the effect of the arts, both lowbrow and highbrow, on society. And art does affect us. But the truth is, society doesn't need to be saved from artists; artists need to be liberated from a social system that fetters and prostitutes them.

Art will never be able to make a separate peace with capitalism. When we battle to free the working class, win justice for the oppressed, and find harmony for the planet, we battle too for art. □



NEA funding for AIDS exhibition defended in New York City.

but, as a bonus, the woman has been totally humiliated — and really appreciated it!

"Cop Killer," on the other hand, which was written after the cops nearly killed Rodney King, aims its guns in the opposite direction: "Cop killer, it's better you than me/Cop killer, fuck police brutality."

**Your stake in public funding.** Gerald Levin will only stick up for rap, or any controversial art form, as long as it's commercially viable. In the wake of Dole's attack, he's already promising more "social responsibility."

The same goes for the other big players, like the Walt Disney Co., whose subdivision Miramax produced the controversial movie *Priest*.

This is why public funding for the arts is important. Rich people own the studios and the record labels and the networks, and they're only going

## Letters to the Editor

### THE U.S. BULLY

#### Yankee hypocrisy

The U.S. now has installed its own Berlin Wall between California and Mexico, although this, I understand, is steel instead of concrete. Similarly, a form of Berlin Wall (put there by the U.S.) exists across the Korean peninsula.

Also, the war against Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait is really the other side of the same coin as that of the U.S. "stealing" large areas of Mexico in the last century. Double standards proliferate and the U.S. should be given a world award for crass hypocrisy.

**Ed Simpson  
Apsley, Ontario**

#### Government keeps its crimes under wraps

I highly recommend the book *The Fire This Time* by former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark. I became so angry when I read it to find out how we treated Saddam Hussein and the people in Iraq. What evil we inflict on defenseless countries. It will probably come out some time in the press, just like Vietnam, but it's amazing how the government can keep everything under wraps.

**Betty Oudal  
Rochester, Minnesota**

### THE WAR AT HOME

#### Locked out of the system

There is a stigma with being Mentally Challenged, and for the African American Woman, it is doubled.

In the summer of 1986, I quit my job on impulse and two weeks later, I was admitted into the Buffalo Psychiatric Center for the criminally insane. I had a lot of anger, but I was far from being criminal.

When I tried to retrieve my old job back, I was told that it was no longer available. I was unable to receive unemployment or disability. This was the beginning of being lost in a shuffle of madness.

Whenever there is a cut in the budget, Mental Health feels the crunch first. We have been abused, misused, misunderstood, stripped of our dignity long enough. We have been denied our *civil rights*.

I have found freedom, because I speak of these painful experiences. This freedom will assist me in obtaining my goal, to start self-help groups for African American Sisters.

**Frances V. Williams  
Buffalo, New York**

### LABOR PARTY - YES OR NO?

#### Socialists and labor party are incompatible

Linda Averill in "Bipartisan Contract" in your April-June '95 *Freedom Socialist* was absolutely *wrong* about supporting an "independent labor party." Socialists don't need to support *any* party that seeks to dicker with capitalist thieves!

I would also like to challenge Moisés Montoya on his statement that Chicanos are not a nation, but Native Americans are. Native Americans are

many different groups of people who stretched from Canada to Mexico (and beyond).

**Charles Bateman  
West Sacramento, Calif.**

*We believe that Native Americans are not one nation, but many nations. —Ed.*

#### Let's form a party to represent the 80 percent

The U.S. has become the most economically stratified of the industrialized nations. The formation of militias and the Oklahoma City bombing show the stratification must be reversed. Obviously, those whose income is dropping will have to make the necessary changes. We need an "80% Party" — the 80% bracket covers those with incomes below \$61,000.

So many things need to be done to make our country cleaner and safer and to save our planet. This means moving from a competitive society to a cooperative one. In doing so we will move ourselves out of the animal kingdom based on survival of the fittest into a

achievements of the USSR in spite of Stalinism, in a manner that I think Trotsky would do today. I think it a very important approach if we are to build a *new mass Comintern*, a genuinely revolutionary one.

Preparing for this requires a new leap forward in Marxist thinking to deal with today's situation. Through open discussion and debate, perhaps a truly revolutionary current can emerge.

I am seeking collaborators in a new project to prepare for a new Comintern — for a Fifth International. Genuine Trotskyist political influence will be essential for this process to work in a genuinely revolutionary manner.

**Steve Masterson  
antek@gn.apc.org**

#### Socialism will never be more than a dream

That was one of the most amazingly full of bologna articles I've read in a long time.

Although the ideal of socialism is nice, the implementers of this idealism are flawed vessels — sometimes

Strike!  
in the spirit of Eugene V. Debs,  
an American Beowulf, who was like both a  
sacred covenant rainbow  
for all the blue proletariat  
and a

bolt of crimson lightning from a  
powerful electromagnetic storm  
and struck fiercely against the  
industrial money monsters who  
were mute, blind, stark and cold  
to all colors of tears and as  
brutal, bloodthirsty and beastly  
as the Anglo-Saxon monster Grendel!

Strike like a prairie grass fire by the light of the Morning Star  
at dawn, or

Strike like a heat wave by the light of the scorching sun  
at noon, or

Strike like a hurricane by the reflective light of the full moon  
at midnight,

But strike, as passionately as you love to make love.

Strike  
Strike  
Strike!

**Tashunka Raven  
Camp Springs, Maryland**



Debs

higher kingdom based on cooperation. There can be no higher calling. I wish I were younger — I am 84 — so I could play a more important role in bringing about this momentous and necessary change.

**Carl Geiser  
Corvallis, Oregon**

### SOCIALISM FOR SKEPTICS

#### Series deserves additional installments

"Socialism for Skeptics" 1 & 2 (Clara Fraser, Vol. 14 No. 4 and Vol. 15 No. 1) are most enjoyable, pugnacious, assertive, confidence-boosting. More please ASAP.

**John Plant, England  
jplant@cix.compulink.co.uk**

### FRASER ON THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

#### Time to build the Fifth International

In "Hail to the once and future Soviet Union," I appreciated your appreciation of the

called humans, though they don't deserve the title.

The same system that made North America the most powerful block of civilization in the entire world isn't going to go away in our lifetimes. Or our children's lifetimes, etc.

Sure, it seems as though a very small elite hold the entire power circles, but with hard work and ingenuity, clever men can make it to the same top as these power elite.

Under socialism, how can you ensure that a man gets out of the system exactly what he puts into it? How is that an incentive for a man to work harder?

Utopia is a dream, and always will remain a dream.

**Marc Tooley  
bj371@kanga.INS.CWRU.Edu**

*Readers are encouraged to submit letters, news stories, commentary, cartoons, graphics, photographs, and pertinent resource information. Letters may be edited for length. Please write to 5018 Rainier Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98118, or e-mail us at hnoble@eskimo.com.*



**Clara  
Fraser**

## Socialism for Skeptics V: The world of tomorrow in sound bites

*A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing.*

—Oscar Wilde

*We're taught at such an early age to be against the communists, yet most of us don't have the faintest idea what communism is. Only a fool lets somebody else tell him who his enemy is.*

—Assata Shakur

**PREXY BILL CLINTON, SPEAKING** at a commemoration for WWII vets, grimly opined that "no generation can ever banish the forces of darkness from the future."

Are prospects really so horrible that we can expect nothing but suffering, war, destitution, and barbarism into eternity?

Thank you, President Liberal, but your bleak existentialism is wrong. Another possibility actually exists. Americans have the capability right this minute to open the door to a brand-new social landscape, to a vastly different way of life devoutly desired by the entire world.

But when it comes to transforming the profit system, the same opinion-molders who laud breakthrough products and talents and techniques as "truly revolutionary" proceed to go wild. At that touchy point, revolution becomes *bad*, its proponents viewed as virtual criminals and treated as clear and present dangers. *That* untouchable door remains locked.

Our major talking heads stigmatize communism as an untried pipe dream, a brutal dictatorship, a failed experiment. Like Hamlet, they would "rather bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of." Stuff and nonsense. The Wright Brothers' first planes didn't fly. Spacecraft still blow up. And computers generate more headaches than solutions (my personal opinion!). All beginnings are rocky.

**SO LET'S SHUT DOWN** the fixed idea that *rightward* change is inevitable but *leftward* change unthinkable. Social revolutionaries are the authentic entrepreneurs.

Socialism (and its final stage of communism) is a wonderful goal, a beautiful and necessary vision to live and die for, a promise of a lifestyle irresistible in its harmony, workability, naturalness, passion and compassion.

It is a panorama not of Jurassic Park but of the Garden of Eden modernized and global. And some great minds have provided us with a wealth of down-to-earth definitions.

**"SOCIALISM IS AN OPINION** as to how the income of the country should be distributed. The only satisfactory plan is to give everybody an equal share no matter what sort of person she is, or how old she is, or what sort of work she does, or who or what her father was." Thus sayeth George Bernard Shaw, playwright and Fabian socialist, in *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism*.

"Communism, far from being an intolerable bureaucratic tyranny and individual regimentation, will be the means of greater individual liberty and shared abundance." Words from *If America Should Go Communist* by Leon Trotsky, co-leader and standard-bearer of the Russian Revolution.

"Anything that has any kind of value is made, mined, grown, produced, and processed by working people. So why shouldn't working people collectively own that wealth?" Former Black Panther and escaped political prisoner Assata Shakur penned these lines in *Assata*.

"We visualize a social order based on the common ownership of the means of production, the elimination of private profit in the means of production, the abolition of the wage system, the abolition of the division of society into classes." Lifelong U.S. Marxist James P. Cannon furnished this capsule during his sedition trial, as recorded in *Socialism on Trial*.

"From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs." So asserted Karl Marx in *Criticism of the Gotha Programme*.

Socialism, simply, is *non-capitalist* living. Wealth is created to satisfy human needs, not inhuman greeds.

The present economic arrangement is insatiable in its avarice, unrelenting in its viciousness, rife with contradictions, and veering crazily out of control. The rule of the almighty dollar or yen or mark must and will be overthrown and supplanted by the rule of reason and justice.

I love these quotes and have only just begun to beguile you with them. Some of the rocky terrain still to be covered: How will the new system be implemented? What about small farms and businesses? What will prevent a bureaucracy from trampling on individual liberties and enforcing conformity? Tune in again to our prime-time infotainment series. □

BY GERRY HOBBS

**T**he April bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building brought to light a shadowy group: the some 15,000 members of U.S. militias.

However, the media is burying much of the real story. To hear them tell it, the militias are bad for two reasons: they hate the federal government, and they're violent.

What they do not say is that this is a fascist-inspired movement, produced by a profound cynicism and despair about capitalism's ability to solve the social crises it creates. The vicious government massacres at Waco, Texas and Ruby Ridge, Idaho gave Nazi organizers, hard-pressed by anti-fascist forces, the martyrs they needed to revitalize their dwindling numbers.

Now the militia idea is spreading, spurred on by calls for gun control and fears about urban crime, immigration and a permanent underclass. And the Nazis are recruiting again.

**The politics of paranoia.** Militias are groups of armed citizens outside the official structure of the army, cops, etc. In the U.S. they have been mostly a rightwing phenomenon. The Ku Klux Klan, for example, originated as a militia during Black Reconstruction after the Civil War.

But there have also been groups who armed themselves for self-defense against racist violence, and strikers who created militias to defend themselves against scabs and private armies funded by bosses.

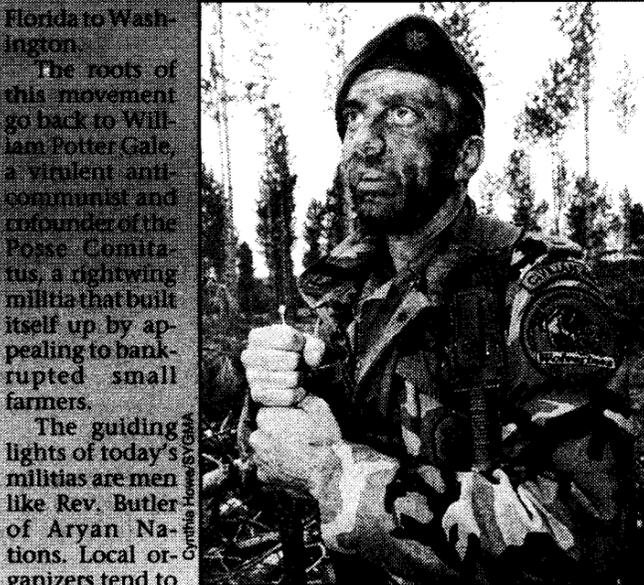
What's new today is the development of a *Nazi militia movement* that spreads out across dozens of states from

Florida to Washington.

The roots of this movement go back to William Potter Gale, a virulent anti-communist and cofounder of the Posse Comitatus, a rightwing militia that built itself up by appealing to bankrupted small farmers.

The guiding lights of today's militias are men like Rev. Butler of Aryan Nations. Local organizers tend to be part of the squeezed middle class: small-businessmen, farmers, contractors, professionals, military retirees.

They peddle a crazy quilt of Christian, conspiratorial, and political ideas whose common thread is that the world is split into producers and parasites. The "parasites" exist on both ends of the economic scale, according to this view, and are ripping off the "producers" with the help of a "Zionist Occupation Government" run by Jews.



Like classic fascists, they offer a mishmash of ideas that appeal to the worst fears of desperate people, and they tailor their pitch to their audience.

**Excuse for clampdown.**

For now, U.S. bankers and bosses frown on the militias as unreliable and disruptive to the status quo. But the ruling class will never entirely destroy

them, because the day might come when they are needed to dismantle workingclass and progressive organizations, as the German industrialists needed Hitler.

That's why the AFL-CIO, immigrants, activists of color, feminists, and the Left all oppose President Clinton's Comprehensive Terrorism Prevention Act, an FBI brainchild put on the congressional fast track after the Oklahoma bombing. They know this kind

of legislation is always used against them, not the right.

In a bipartisan lovefest on June 7, the Senate approved Clinton's measure 91-8 and sent it on to the House.

The bill would eliminate many constitutional protections for people accused of terrorism, especially those not born in the U.S., and would allow both citizens and non-citizens to be jailed or deported for supporting even the legal activities of groups that the president designates as terrorist. In the past, both the African National Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organization have been labeled that way.

The racist fabrication initially circulated by politicians and the press, that one of the Oklahoma bombers was Middle Eastern, served to whip up sympathy for this kind of bill targeting the foreign-born.

**A question of idea-power, not firepower.** Clearly the real fight against Nazi militias will come not from politicians who strip workers of their First Amendment rights, but from a grassroots, workingclass-led movement that offers a *counter-ideology* promoting equality and the sharing of wealth rather than anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and taking by brute force.

Communists have long been caricatured as secret schemers for violent minority overthrow of the state. But this is the ultraright's strategy for Armageddon, not ours. We believe in the right of armed self-defense for labor and oppressed groups, but we know that the fundamental battle is for the hearts and minds of the majority.

In the end, guns don't make revolutions — people make revolutions. □

## Dateline Australia

# Revive the trade union movement — reject the ACTU push for productivity!

BY ALISON THORNE

**I**t isn't hard to pinpoint the problems plaguing Australia's union movement. Once half the workforce was unionised; now it's 35 percent and falling. Working conditions are worsening and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Media commentators gleefully discuss union power in the past tense and predict the demise of the movement by next century.

The solution of the Australian Council of Trade Unions is to annex small unions in order to create twenty monolithic super-unions, who supposedly will be able to recruit new members by providing attractive consumer services.

The ACTU just doesn't get it! Workers join unions to protect themselves from the boss, improve pay and working conditions, and create a better society. Discount airfares, special retail deals,

and insurance schemes will not build unions when the "core product" — workplace organising — has withered through neglect. Provoking widespread outrage, one union went so far as to offer discounts for hiring strippers!

Strategic Unionism à la ACTU is part of the problem, not the solution. Increasingly remote union leaders don't ask what members think, although we are graciously permitted to fund their fat salaries. Instead, they harangue us about the need to work harder and smarter and are at their passionate best arguing that good old-fashioned class struggle is out of the question.

Employers insist that the only way for workers to better their situation is to increase national productivity. The ACTU accepts this proposition. Thus, labour standards won through decades of blood, sweat and tears are now deemed "structural inefficiencies" that must be

eliminated "in the national interest."

Many workers wonder just whose payroll the union bureaucracy is on!

**Global gambling fever.** Australia's problems are not unique. In the 1950s

*Unions who reject gimmicks and rely on grassroots organising are in the best shape.*

and '60s, when jobs were abundant, well-organised unions forced employer concessions. Benefits flowed on to less-organised workers. But now, the world economic system is on the skids and capitalism is more ferociously competitive than ever.

Enormous sums of money are gambled in the hope of making a speculative buck. Public assets are bought at bargain prices, and the worker/consumer is milked by huge hikes in the cost of services. National governments exercise little control over this global casino.

It is up to unionists to call in the chips in this demented game.

**Resistance works.** The unions in the best shape are those who are rejecting gimmicks and relying instead on grassroots organising.

The Transport Workers Union recruited 3,000 members last year when it launched a successful struggle for a 15 percent pay rise. This year, when workers at the Sara Lee cake factory struck and picketed over money and conditions, they refused to cut a deal that would have abandoned the lowest-paid

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