

Information, Education, Discussion Bulletin

# In Defense of Marxism

Number 104

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## Working Women in the U.S. Today Race, Class, and Gender Atrocities Against Women in Bosnia

*Also:*  
The Struggle for Abortion Rights  
Notes on the African American Struggle  
Intervention in Somalia



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# Who We Are

*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is published by an independent collective of U.S. socialists who are in fraternal solidarity with the Fourth International, a worldwide organization of revolutionary socialists.

Supporters of this magazine may be involved in different socialist groups and/or in a broad range of working class struggles and protest movements in the U.S. These include unions and other labor organizations, women's rights groups, antiracist organizations, coalitions opposed to U.S. military intervention, gay and lesbian rights campaigns, civil liberties and human rights efforts. We support similar activities in all countries and participate in the global struggle of working people and their allies. Many of our activities are advanced through collaboration with other supporters of the Fourth International in countries around the world.

What we have in common is our commitment to the Fourth International's critical-minded and revolutionary Marxism, which in the twentieth century is represented by such figures as V.I. Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leon Trotsky. We also identify with the tradition of American Trotskyism represented by James P. Cannon and others. We favor the creation of a revolutionary working-class party, which can only emerge through the conscious efforts of many who are involved in the struggles of working people and the oppressed and who are dedicated to revolutionary socialist perspectives.

Through this magazine we seek to clarify the history, theory and program of the Fourth International and the American Trotskyist tradition, discussing their application to the class struggle internationally and here in the United States. This vital task must be undertaken if we want to forge a political party in this country capable of bringing an end to the domination of the U.S. imperialist ruling class, establishing a working people's democracy and socialist society based on human need instead of private greed, in which the free development of each person becomes possible.

*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* is independent of any political organization. Not all U.S. revolutionaries who identify with the Fourth International are in a common organization. Not all of them participate in the publication of this journal. Supporters of this magazine are committed to comradely discussion and debate as well as practical political cooperation which can facilitate eventual organizational unity of all Fourth Internationalists in the United States. At the same time, we want to help promote a broad recomposition of a class-conscious working class movement and, within this, a revolutionary socialist regroupment, in which perspectives of revolutionary Marxism, the Fourth International, and American Trotskyism will play a vital role.

*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* will publish materials generally consistent with these perspectives, although it will seek to offer *discussion articles* providing different points of view within the revolutionary socialist spectrum. Signed articles do not necessarily express the views of anyone other than the author.

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Paul Le Blanc, *Managing Editor*

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# How Free Are We?

by Lisa Landphair

Is there freedom without real choice? As children we are taught in our schools and families, and thereafter reminded until death by the media, that as citizens of the United States we are privileged to be living in a free, democratic society. Prevailing work ethic ideology proclaims that each of us has access to the privileges and wealth of the upper strata and equal opportunity to become, to achieve our wildest dreams. That is the promise of the American Dream, Horatio Alger, Ross Perot, and all that.

Millions of people have migrated to this country in pursuit of this promise of self-advancement. And depending on your socio-economic position, such grand aspirations may or may not be realizable. Unfortunately, for most of the population, and especially for women and people of color, this commonly espoused "fact" remains an elusive dream. This insidious mythology is consciously perpetuated by capitalist ideology and is rooted in the institutionalized structures of the capitalist economy, upon which we are dependent and which consequently oppress us.

Equally misleading is the assertion that women in the "post-industrial" world have attained socio-economic parity with men. A quick reality check shows that at best women earn no more than 70 cents for every dollar

received by men. Clearly we have not achieved total social and economic equity. Moreover, the advancement of women in capitalist society has not come freely or easily. On the contrary, every gain has been fought for, heavily and persistently over decades by multiple generations of women. And these gains are not experienced universally or evenly. For women of color or of noncitizen status, and for those who are young or old, disabled, lesbian, or poor, these gains vary as compared to white, educated, middle income sisters of "the right age."

Additionally these gains, which in a true democracy would be guaranteed fundamental rights, waver unnervingly under the weight of not being inalienable rights. Here in the U.S. we've experienced firsthand the seriousness of this reality. Many of our social and economic gains have come dangerously close to elimination. The gains of decades of struggle can be undone in just a few years, as the Reagan and Bush administrations have shown. *Roe v. Wade*, which made abortion legal, was no longer secure by the time Bush was voted out of office. Major offensives have been launched, with some success, in several state legislatures and have been played out on the streets of U.S. cities by the right-wing, fundamentalist thugs of the "right to life" crusade.

On the other hand, in just a matter of days, seemingly the reverse can occur. Within days of his inauguration as president, Bill Clinton made newspaper headlines by appearing to challenge specific abortion legislation enacted during the Reagan/Bush regime that restricted women's reproductive rights. After more than a decade of frontal assaults on *Roe v. Wade* this "flurry of edicts," as it was described by the *New York Times*, appeared promising for women. Upon closer inspection cause for excitement faded. In what amounts to a good-faith gesture toward women, not accidentally occurring on the 20th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, President Clinton signed five memorandums on abortion-related issues. However, these executive orders do not redress the corrosive anti-abortion legislation and court rulings of the last few years.

Reforms of this kind are very limited and are mainly intended to pacify one side in a protracted conflict. As women's rights activists we need to recognize the placating nature of these reforms and seize the opportunity to demand more substantial measures that will immediately improve the lives of women and the working class as a whole.

Moreover, whether Clinton is a friend to

women is beside the point. Neither he, nor his wife, nor his administration is our ally. What is worth noting, however, is that the power to alter the legal parameters that affect our lives does not now rest in our hands, but rather in the hands of those politicians who work for the owners of major corporations whose interests are not ours. And even if Clinton was inclined to and was able to effect deeper reversals of recent antichoice legislation, how secure would these recovered rights be, given the rise and fall of these four-year reigns?

The *New York Times* referred to Clinton's actions as "a sea change in domestic policy." To suggest that five peripheral memos constitute a fundamental transformation is hyperbole. This is one of the dangers of living in a society where our rights are not guaranteed and are subject to attack. And not having a political party that represents our interests and which is accountable to us increases our vulnerability as women and workers.

As feminists and socialists in the United States, we understand that not only are we far from being fully free as women, but that the oppression of women extends as far as capitalism and its impact does; that is to say, globally. In the former Soviet Union, where contraception is virtually nonexistent but abortion is legal, abortion is essentially the substitute for contraception. How can women fully experience sexual pleasure if they risk pregnancy for lack of contraceptives? Whose freedom, whose fulfillment is curtailed? In the ex-USSR it is not uncommon for women to have had six or seven abortions by middle age. Moreover, while abortion is available, the procedure is performed without anesthesia. What does this reveal about the prioritization of women's needs in that society? Obviously painkillers are administered for surgeries deemed more significant.

In Poland the annual number of abortions almost equals the number of live births because, as in the former Soviet Union, abortion remains the main means of birth control. However, abortion — which has been legal virtually without restriction since 1956 under "Communism" and was state-financed until the late 1980s — is now perilously close to being banned. The Roman Catholic Church, in collusion with state officials, is leading the drive to abolish legal abortion in nearly all cases, as well as to incarcerate physicians who perform the procedure. In addition to the onslaught by church and state, abortion has become a virtual economic impossibility for most Polish women. The procedure typically costs a month's wages or more, forcing many women to travel to neighboring Czechoslovakia or Ukraine for help!

Elsewhere the issue of abortion takes a different turn. In India, where overpopulation is seen as a cause of poverty and males are considered to have greater social value than females, medical technology is being used in what amounts to gender genocide. In partic-

*Continued on page 30*

## Editor's Note

This issue focuses on the women's liberation struggle, highlighting the interrelationship between feminism and socialism (the article by Mary White Ovington and the review of Inessa Armand's biography), and between gender, class, and race (touched on in the articles by Evelyn Sell, Carol McAllister, and Claire Cohen). Claudette Bégin and Lisa Landphair give special attention to the abortion rights struggle, and Elaine Bernard makes an eloquent case for the need to build a working-class party to struggle for the liberation of all.

Claire Cohen's article deals with much more than the intersection of race and gender, discussing the Black liberation struggle as such — which is a continuing focus of this publication — and also critically responding to a previous article by Peter Johnson which argued for "revolutionary integrationism." Further discussion of that article will appear in our April issue.

Also scheduled for April and future issues are: a report on Mexico (including information on the Fourth Internationalist PRT); an analysis of the situation in El Salvador; an eyewitness report on Cuba; discussion of the gay and lesbian rights struggle; a survey of Chicano struggles in the U.S.; an analysis by Dhoruba bin Wahad of government repression against the African American struggle; a survey by Frank Lovell of the U.S. Left; and much more material.



# Mass Rape in Bosnia: Barbarous Product of Serbo-Stalinism

by Marilyn Vogt-Downey

The first reports of the systematic rapes of Bosnian women began to appear in the fall of 1992.

"At least 150 Muslim women and teenage girls who have crossed into Government-held areas of Sarajevo in recent weeks are said to be in advanced stages of pregnancy and have asserted that they became pregnant after being raped by Serbian nationalist fighters. They also said they had been imprisoned for months afterward in an attempt to keep them from having abortions."

This information in the October 3 *New York Times* was based on a report issued by the Bosnian state commission for the investigation of war crimes. The commission was documenting a range of atrocities committed by the Serbian forces that had for six months been carrying out a war of aggression against the mostly civilian population of Bosnia. The rapes were part of the Serbian campaign of "ethnic cleansing," which meant ridding the invaded territories of Muslim inhabitants, but also of Croats and even of Serbs opposed to the Serbian aggression.

By early October, the Bosnian commission indicated that as many as 12,000 women and girls, mostly Muslims, had been raped since the Serbian attacks began in full force in Bosnia in April 1992 just as the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was about to receive some international recognition. In conditions of war, when populations are forced into the uncertain fate of refugees, it is difficult, if not impossible, to receive a timely abortion. The trauma and shame of the rape alone and the experience of carrying to term a pregnancy that resulted from such a horror — which was usually accompanied by other atrocities — will scar many of the women and girls for years to come, if not for life.

Since October 1992, the rapes and sexual abuse have continued and been documented by numerous international reporters and investigators. Under conditions prevailing in Bosnia and Herzegovina — where Bosnian officials say some 100,000 may have been killed and the UN says some 2.3 million people have been made refugees, most of them Muslim women and children — it is very difficult to judge the scope of this atrocity. However, reliable evidence indicates that by early January 1993, the number of known victims had grown to more than 20,000; some sources say it is as high as 50,000 (*Newsweek*, January 4, 1993).

Although the crime of rape is widespread in peacetime and common in war, the rapes

committed by Serb forces appear to be a deliberate tactic. By January 1993, human rights and women's rights organizations internationally began to publicize and protest what Amnesty International termed rapes that were "systematic...with the deliberate detention of women for the purpose of rape and sexual abuse."

The AI report stated that "forces from all sides in the conflict have been rapists, and women from all backgrounds have been victims, although Muslim women have been chief victims, at the hands of Serbian armed forces." The European Community's investigators' five-page report issued in January drew similar conclusions.

*Ms.* magazine, in its report based on accounts of teen-age women who had been victims of multiple rapes by Serbian fascist paramilitary Chetnik and "White Eagle" forces, stated that "most reports coming out of Bosnia contend that Serbian soldiers are under orders to use women's bodies as a primary battleground." The report goes on: "In Zagreb [capital of Croatia], the Croatian women's group Tresnjevka is working to open a support center for wartime rape victims. Many are pregnant and are unable to obtain abortions in war-ravaged Bosnia or in Catholic Croatia." To make matters worse (as the *NOW Times* reported in January), a Catholic right-wing lobby in Croatia is working hard to have abortions outlawed.

The *NOW Times* stated that Nina Kadic, president of Tresnjevka, who collected the material used in the *Ms.* magazine article, documented 16 sex campaign operations by Serbian forces involving at least 35,000 women victims.

The report by the team of European Community investigators in January stated that "many women, and more particularly children, may have died during or after rape." Indeed, a captured Serbian militiaman named Borislav Herak, a Chetnik commander who was indicted for 29 murders in Bosnia and Herzegovina between June and October, recounted that "he and other Serbian fighters were encouraged [by their commander Miro Vukovic] to rape women and then take them away to kill them on hilltops." He admitted to raping and killing in this way six Muslim women who had been detained particularly for this purpose in a motel by Serbian forces (*New York Times*, November 27, 1992).

The rapes have been termed "crimes against humanity" by the European Community, as well as by women's groups like the

U.S.-based Ad Hoc Women's Coalition Against War Crimes in Former Yugoslavia which have joined in the organized protest campaigns. The Serbian atrocities have been so blatant and widely publicized internationally that even the U.S. government—whose hands most recently bear the blood of some 250,000 Iraqis, most of them civilians and 47,000 of them children under the age of five, from the 1991 war against Iraq — wants to see the Serbian leaders stand before some sort of war crimes tribunal "some day."

(U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger made the announcement on December 16. This former U.S. ambassador, who was "once known for his close ties with Serbian leaders," according to the *New York Times* of December 17, 1992, has now apparently turned against them. According to the November 28 *New York Times*, the war and the UN blockade have forced the large Yugo car plant near Belgrade to virtually cease operations and convert what remains of production to AK-47 rifles. This has forced Yugo America, the U.S. distributor of the Yugo, whose sales peaked at 49,000 in 1988, to file for bankruptcy. Eagleburger was one of the founders of Yugo America. The war has hit him in the pocketbook.)

But just because U.S. government officials accuse the Serbian forces of war crimes does not mean it is a lie.

In fact, it is primarily the Stalinist regime in Serbia that bears responsibility for the monstrous and bloody conflicts that have engulfed Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina since mid-1991.

The conflict has taken the form of Serbian forces against Croatian and Muslim forces and has been blamed on "nationalism." Certainly it has become a war between national groupings. However, the roots of the war and the motives for it lie elsewhere.

To find the causes, one must examine the economic and political crises that confronted all the ruling Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the 1980s and the particular solutions the ruling Stalinist castes in the republics in Yugoslavia, particularly Serbia, chose in the hope of finding a way out.

As *International Viewpoint* correspondent Michele Lee wrote in December 1987:

The year 1987 will be remembered in Yugoslavia as the year in which the systematic character of the crisis was made so evident that any hope of a partial solution to the country's troubles has been buried for good (*IV*, #131, December 7, 1987). (Readers interested in studying the history should consult Lee's articles, which appeared over the years in *IV* and will soon be in book form: *The Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Verso books, 1993.)

Yugoslavia, occupying an area roughly the size of Colorado, with a population of some 23 million, was composed of six republics — Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina,



To learn more about and participate in ongoing protests contact:

- Amnesty International — Women's Day Action, 304 Pennsylvania, Washington, D.C. 20003. AI has begun circulating a petition to the U.S. ambassador to the UN asking the UN to provide immediate relief, including medical care, to the rape victims, to investigate and see to the prosecution of the perpetrators of the rapes, and to monitor areas where rapes may be occurring.
- Tresnjevka Women's Group, Mlinarska 71, Zagreb, Croatia, Attn: Nina Kadic. Tresnjevka needs contributions to help set up medical and counseling centers for the rape victims.
- National Organization for Women, 1000 16th St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. NOW is involved in planning various types of publicity and protest campaigns.

vina, Macedonia, and Montenegro — and two provinces inside Serbia — Kosovo and Vojvodina. The Serbs made up about 43%, Croats about 23%, and Muslims about 10% of the population. The product of a genuine revolution after World War II, the Yugoslav “socialist” federation was dominated by a Stalinist bureaucracy headed by Josip Broz (Tito) until his death in 1980, with Serbs playing a dominant role. After Tito's death, the executive has been a presidency rotated annually among representatives of the six republics.

Despite the much-vaunted system of worker “self-management” that had been instituted in Yugoslavia under Tito, the workers had not really managed much at all. The self-management measures, accompanied by increasing reliance on-market forces to determine a wide range of economic decisions, had led to rising prices with a severe decline in real wages, rising inflation, widespread impoverishment of workers, and the growth of deep inequalities in the distribution of wealth.

By 1987, with the inflation rate reaching 120%, there was a rise in worker militancy. Strikes erupted among miners in Croatia, Slovenia, and in the Kosovo province in Serbia, all these involving Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, and Albanian workers together demanding wage increases and better living and working conditions. In fact, 1987 saw the most extensive wave of strikes in Yugoslavia since the federation was established.

It was precisely in 1987, however, that the post-Tito regime, in order to get the International Monetary Fund to reschedule the payments the Yugoslav government owed on its nearly \$21 billion foreign debt, was forced to implement austerity measures. In mid-November, with an inflation rate already at 150%, the government imposed a series of measures that cut deeply into workers' living standards. One measure was a wage freeze that also called for a 10% cut in wages in “unprofitable” industries, many of which

were situated in the less-developed, already depressed regions. Some “unprofitable” industries were closed outright and others were scheduled to be closed down. Price increases of 30-70% were implemented for basic food commodities, and the national currency was devalued. As in the former Soviet Union, the economic crisis was worsened by the widespread system of bureaucratic corruption which had previously managed to plod along relatively unnoticed.

For example, in November 1987, the government allowed a large food company in Bosnia-Herzegovina to go bankrupt. A major employer in a region populated by 60,000 with a work force of some 13,000, Agrokomerc was forced to close after issuing some \$1 billion in uncovered promissory notes. Its closure left tens of thousands of workers unpaid for months. The region's economy, dependent on the company, ground to a halt. Millions of turkeys and chickens died of starvation. The army was called in “to plough up a square mile of land” to bury the dead birds (IV, #131).

The results of these crises were more strikes and mass demonstrations against the price increases and against the local and national governments responsible for the bad living conditions.

The strikes showed many workers that the “self-management” system as it existed was far from expressing any “socialist essence” of the Yugoslav state, as the rulers had proclaimed. On the contrary, it was no more than “an instrument for exploiting the workers.”

Throughout 1988, under the impact of the IMF-imposed reforms, the economic conditions continued to deteriorate and popular protests grew more pervasive. In October, when tens of thousands of Montenegrins demonstrated, calling for the resignation of their republic's leaders, police used truncheons and cattle prods to disperse the crowds. However, although the inflation had reached 217% by then and there were at least one million unemployed, the party leaders who assembled for a Central Committee meeting in mid-October seemed unconcerned. Summarizing the proceedings, the *New York Times* reported “few of the country's problems were discussed in detail and no new solutions were offered.” The clique in power was conducting business as usual. “Not one occasional joke, burst of applause, or show of disapproval enlivened the proceedings” nor did any attempts to address the issues (October 18, 1988).

However, by that time, the results of the political infighting within the Serbian party had already indicated the direction the ruling apparatus was taking to head off popular opposition to their continued domination and divert attention away from their political and economic bankruptcy.

The ruling apparatus and the privileged institutions it had fostered clearly made a cold and calculated decision that it was in

their own best interests to promote Serbian chauvinism. The apparatchik who rallied the forces to do this was a retrograde former bank president, then head of the Serbian Communist party, Slobodan Milosevic, who is now president of the remnants of Yugoslavia — Serbia and Montenegro. He is justly charged with responsibility for war crimes in Bosnia.

The chauvinism used by the Serbian regime and its propaganda machine to justify the atrocities being committed by Serbs in Bosnia described above was first developed for use against Albanians in Kosovo province in Serbia; and Milosevic was the chief figure in the filthy process.

Since the early 1970s, the Albanians of Kosovo province — who constitute nearly 90% of the population, as opposed to some 10% Serbs — had been demanding more recognition of their national rights and more control over their region. It was as a result of their mobilizations that the Tito government in the early 1970s recognized Kosovo as an autonomous region, along with Vojvodina, which has a large Hungarian minority. It was also then that the Tito government declared the Muslims of Bosnia a separate ethnic group.

In an effort to quell continuing protests by both Serbians and Albanians in Kosovo over depressed living conditions and economic inequalities, the government imposed martial law in Kosovo in 1981, and the repression in the region against intellectuals and trade unionists mounted. Yet, despite the repression, it was in Kosovo in the late 1980s that a new wave of strikes broke out, involving both Serb and Albanian coal miners and other workers, students, and intellectuals in a common struggle for economic and political improvements and against the government.

In an effort to deflect support away from the workers' demands, keep the mass struggle from spreading, and drive a wedge between Serb and Albanian workers, the official press and media began to run stories about alleged threats to Kosovo Serbs from Albanian nationalists in Kosovo. Random or fabricated incidents of violence involving Albanians were blown out of proportion and distorted into sensational stories of alleged Albanian premeditated violence against Serbs. (The sources of the stories often turned out to be former police agents.) Next, the press and the apparatchiks began to call for tougher police measures against Albanians to “protect” the supposedly vulnerable Serbs from alleged Albanian extremist nationalist fervor. These scare tactics, by late 1987, were accompanied by actual and, it appeared, coordinated violence against Albanians and their property throughout Serbia and in Macedonia and Montenegro and more intensive police measures.

In 1989, Milosevic — who had emerged as the chief spokesman for this Serbian chauvinist campaign — made a trip to Kosovo,



where he called upon Serbs to organize to defend themselves against Albanian “extremists.” Offering no solutions to either the national problem in Kosovo or the growing economic disasters afflicting all of Serbia — in fact to protect himself from being a victim of a working class solution that might have emerged if the mass mobilizations had been continued — Milosevic advanced the idea of Serbian unity behind a strong leader (himself) as the solution to all problems. In the throes of its own crisis, the Serbian party apparatus, with no other viable alternative, threw its weight behind Milosevic.

He is a noteworthy example of the neo-Stalinist chauvinist type that has also emerged in the ex-USSR, for example, in the Georgian republic against the Ossetians and Abkhazians, in Azerbaijan against the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabagh, and in the Central Asian republics.

By mid-1990, after Kosovo declared itself independent, the Serbian neo-Stalinist, proto-fascist solution was applied in Kosovo. During the summer, Serbian police and government forces took over the province. Albanians were fired from all responsible positions in the province and replaced by Serbs. Albanian workers, who had not been paid since April, were dismissed and some were replaced by Serbs. Hospitals and clinics were closed to Albanians. Albanian teachers were fired and Albanian schools closed. Despite these vicious policies, the workers continued to struggle. For example, workers who had been on strike against the government's repression in the spring, continued into the fall to protest the dismissal of 50% of the work force. Trade union leaders were arrested, and Albanian deputies to the federal government were locked out of their meeting place. A state of terror was instituted and Albanians became pariahs in their own land, much the way Palestinians have been treated by the state of Israel.

By that time, the Serbian regime had thousands of armed “volunteers” at its disposal and the support of the army hierarchy, the Serbian Orthodox church, the main journal *Politika*, and a large section of the intellectual establishment, including the academy of arts and sciences — all of which held privileged positions under the existing order and did not want to see it overturned.

It is important to view the rise of nationalist movements in the other republics in the light of these events in Serbia. It is not surprising that, in the face of this right-wing resurgent Serbian chauvinism, used to justify suppression of the democratic rights of non-Serbs in Kosovo, the nationalist movements grew strong among the non-Serbs. Slovenians, Croats, Bosnians, and Macedonians, for example, could understandably see their own independence as a possible means to defend themselves from falling victim to this same Serbian chauvinism in the future.

It is also important to bear in mind that

although the workers movements had been steadily mobilizing, they had not managed to develop into coherent political movements that could articulate and advance solutions to the economic and political problems that would improve living conditions and challenge the continued rule of the privileged castes and their institutions. That the right-wing nationalists were able to dominate is a reflection of the weakness of the workers' political movements. In fact, it was the near-complete absence of parties representing the working class that made the rise of the right-wing chauvinists possible.

After the collapse of the League of Communists in 1990, elections were held that in all cases — except in Bosnia-Herzegovina — allowed ex-CPers to win. Only in Bosnia did non-CP nationalists win outright.

It must also be noted that the ruling apparatuses in the non-Serb republics accepted the suppression of Kosovo, which went so far that the Serbian parliament reduced Kosovo to a status even lower than a municipality.

Under the weight of the economic and political crises, the Yugoslav federation was falling apart. After the Serbian government adopted a new constitution (which made registration of opposition political parties and their activities extremely difficult) and began calling for creation of a Greater Serbia that would involve annexing parts of Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia, the process of disintegration escalated. It was the refusal of Serbia in May 1991 to allow the Croatian representative to take his turn as federal president that struck the mortal blow to Yugoslavia. Voting with Serbia were the puppet representatives from Vojvodina and Montenegro — where Belgrade-inspired Serb chauvinist movements had brought down local governments and imposed governments loyal to Belgrade — and Kosovo — whose autonomy had been abolished by Belgrade.

Michele Lee has characterized this as the “Kosovo boomerang.” After all, the heads of the other five republics had until then tolerated the repression by Serbia of democracy in Kosovo (*IV*, #209, June 24, 1992).

It was the refusal of the Milosevic regime in May to give up the presidency and then its failure in June 1991 to negotiate the establishment of an inter-Yugoslav agreement that would have allowed some sort of continued union of the former republics that precipitated the decisions of the Slovenian, Croatian, Macedonian, and Bosnia-Herzegovina governments to declare independence. By then it was already clear that the Serbian regime had in mind a military solution to establish a Greater Serbia that could guarantee it an expanded material basis upon which the state and military apparatus could continue to feed. The Belgrade regime responded to the Croatian declaration of independence with a military invasion of Croatia.

To undermine the ability of the non-Serbian republics to resist the Serbian military

onslaught that was to follow, the Belgrade regime issued a steady stream of sensationalist propaganda aimed at inspiring fear among Serbs in non-Serb regions that they would be disenfranchised and or driven out of non-Serbian republics were these republics to become independent. Equally retrograde elements among the non-Serb movements played into this propaganda by proclaiming, as did the Croatian president, Tudjman, that an independent Croatia intended to create a Greater Croatia by annexing parts of Bosnia where Croats lived. The Belgrade regime also orchestrated armed rebellions by Serb chauvinists in Croatia and Bosnia, where self-proclaimed “Serb republics” were announced.

Who were the “vanguard leaders” of this Serbian aggression and who has really benefited from it?

Certainly not the Serbian workers. As a result of the Serbian aggression against Croatia and Bosnia, some 150,000 Bosnian Muslims and Croats as well as Serbs, have been killed by Serbian forces in the invaded regions, as have untold thousands of Serbian soldiers. Some two million refugees have been created. One million Albanians in Kosovo are living in unspeakable conditions of poverty and deprivation under the boot of the Serbian military and paramilitary groups.

This has not helped improve for Serbian workers. It has made things much worse. The imposition of the UN economic sanctions have only deepened the economic crisis in Serbia. Some 60% of the workforce is idle. Inflation is now running at a rate of 10,000% per year! The average wage is \$60 per month, far below the minimum cost of living for a family with two children. Some try to get by on a pension of \$12 per month (*New York Times*, December 6, 1992). Milosevic's response to the crisis has been the same as the response of the Stalinist rulers in Moscow: to print more money.

Milosevic won the presidential election in Serbia in December 1992. However, the voters had little to choose from. He ran against a (recently returned) Serbian-American millionaire, whose economic program consisted of the same IMF-backed austerity measures that had led to the marked decline in living standards since 1987, hardly an inspiring figure.

Milosevic's electoral victory notwithstanding, he is not popular. He appears in public only at election time.

It is profiteers and mercenary gangster elements who are benefitting from the continuation of this bloody conflict.

One example is Jezdimir Vasiljevic, “the mystery man pushing the pawns” who sponsored the notorious chess match enticing Bobby Fischer out of seclusion to violate the UN embargo in September 1992. Vasiljevic, whose “group's” sales amount to \$3 billion annually, is officially the owner of a bank and trading house in Belgrade called Jugoskan-



dic, with interests in horse racing. The September 1, 1992, *New York Times* called him "a businessman thriving in the chaos of the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe."

"On the sun-drenched borders of the war in Bosnia," where systematic rape, "ethnic cleansing," and the bombardment of Sarajevo were in full swing, Vasiljevic offered the prize money of \$5 million for this chess match. Vasiljevic is thriving in the present collapsing Serbian economy, which "operates largely on a mixture of smuggling and black-market operations." Dollars purchased on the black market, where the rate was then 400 dinars to the dollar (not the official 200 dinars), "are all making their way to Mr. Vasiljevic and his Jugoskandic bank."

Vasiljevic apparently made his money as a broker in unspecified precious stones and metals abroad, including at the South African-controlled diamond exchanges in Belgium. He returned to Yugoslavia just as the crisis was hitting, in 1987. He is widely considered to be playing a major role in furthering the "chaos," including hiring mercenaries for the Serbian forces and arming them through arms purchases in Israel. He is widely believed to be a frontman for Milosevic; he surely is that and probably more.

The Serbian mercenary and paramilitary forces that he finances have carried out the worst atrocities, including the systematic rapes, although the Serbianized Yugoslav Army has participated on every level.

One of the most notorious Serbian paramilitary leaders is Zeljko Raznatovic. Often referred to as "Arkan," Raznatovic, the son of a Yugoslav army colonel, fled the country as a youth after committing a robbery and lived in Europe, where several countries now have outstanding warrants for his arrest on charges of bank robbery, attempted murder, and other crimes going back to the 1970s. His father got him back in the "good graces" of the Yugoslav authorities by offering Raznatovic's services as an assassin abroad for the Yugoslav Interior Ministry — an offer that was accepted. Returning to Belgrade, Raznatovic formed his own militia in September 1991 after being "unexpectedly released" by Croatian officials (!) for weapons possession and conspiracy to commit terrorism. His history calls to mind the similar one of Sangok Safarov, the mercenary fighter who has led the forces wreaking havoc in southern Tajikistan on behalf of the survival of the old Stalinist Nabyev regime (See *BIDOM* No. 102, January 1993).

Raznatovic led his paramilitary force, called "the Tigers" in the assault on Croatia in July 1991 and then into Bosnia in April 1992. His forces took Bjelina, a Muslim town where some of the first systematic rapes and murders in the process of "ethnic cleansing" occurred. (He is also responsible for the deaths of some 3,000 civilians near the north-eastern Bosnian town of Brcko.)

During the December 1992 parliamentary elections, Raznatovic ran for deputy to represent — of all places — the suppressed province of Kosovo! Although the vast majority of voters there are ethnic Albanians, they were boycotting the elections. This assured the electoral victory of Raznatovic.

Another prominent Serbian paramilitary leader is Vojislav Seselj, the leader of the Chetniks. Milosevic legalized Seselj's Serbian Radical Party in 1991. The Chetniks were originally royalist, anti-Communist Serb guerrillas who collaborated with the fascists during World War II. Today's revived Chetniks have been heavily involved in numerous atrocities against Bosnians, including systematic rape, according to testimony by many rape victims. Seselj is also a deputy in the Serbian parliament, where he is quoted to have said that the only good thing one can do with a Croats is "slit his throat."

Radovan Karadzic, another paramilitary Serb leader, was a psychiatrist, some claim, before resuming his avocation of mass murderer upon in 1991. (He had participated in the activities of the Chetniks during World War II.) Karadzic was one of the founders of the self-proclaimed "Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina," which has served as the military base for the Serbian aggression against Bosnians. He has been personally in charge of the ten-month bombardment of Sarajevo, with all the human destruction and suffering it has caused. In their relentless attacks on Sarajevo, snipers under Karadzic's command have killed at least 588 children and left 7,109 wounded, amputated, or severely disfigured, according to the January *NOW Times* report. His Serbian Democratic Party, even before the beginning of the war, had drawn up a list of Muslims to be hunted down and killed, which his forces have proceeded to implement.

These low-life scum and hired assassins, funded by others like Vasiljevic — who plans to form his own state on land he has purchased on favorable terms from Montenegro — are a major force behind this savage war.

Despite the popular propaganda that blames this war on age-old "nationalist" or ethnic hostilities, an examination of the circumstances surrounding the events in the former Yugoslavia shows that Michele Lee was right to conclude as she did in September 1991 following the Serbian invasion of Croatia: "It is now clear beyond any doubt that the war taking place in Yugoslavia is not an ethnic war, but a war of territorial conquest" (*IV*, #212, September 16, 1991).

The bourgeois press has given prominent coverage to the war, widely publicizing the atrocities committed by the Serbian forces. The United Nations, the European Community, and the United States have imposed economic sanctions on Serbia. They have imposed a ban on military sales to any of the warring parties. However, imperialism has

no interest in defending the victims of Serbian aggression. Imperialism is interested only in stability for securing profits from investments and guarantees of repayment of imperialist and IMF loans. In fact, although the UN has sent humanitarian aid to Bosnia, the arms ban works in favor of the Serbian forces, who far outgun the Bosnian and Muslim militias. The Serbs are supplied by the Yugoslav army and its blackmarket network. Sarajevo, like many other Bosnian towns, is virtually defenseless against the Serb bombardments and assaults. This only emboldens the Serb forces. Furthermore, the "peace plans" offered by the UN have all sanctioned Serbian land grabs and expulsions and thus rewarded Serbian atrocities.

In the face of these conditions, appeals to pacifism and demilitarization are futile and sterile. Democratic and revolutionary forces in the workers movement cannot stop the Serb aggression except by resisting it. Effective resistance will not come through imperialist military intervention. Nor will it come from foreign and domestic fascist mercenaries of the type that have apparently joined Tudjman's Croatian forces. Nor can the ex-Stalinist regimes, such as that headed by Tudjman in Croatia, organize effective resistance while suppressing democratic opposition in Croatia itself, which it is doing.

The only force that can stop the aggression and the suicidal wars is a militant resistance organized by working class parties, which can not only stop the slaughter by turning the guns against the Milosevices, Karadices, Raznatovices, and Vasiljevices, and all the ignorant lumpen mercenaries and henchmen they have been able to recruit — with promises of money and lies about an imminent takeover by "Islamic fundamentalists" — as well against the Tudjmans. Such working-class parties and movements also need to plan to take over the political and economic structures and run them in their own interests.

As the economic situation in Serbia and throughout the former Yugoslavia continues to collapse, social struggles by the workers, especially in Serbia, are bound to play a more prominent role, as they began to in the late 1980s. A strike call by Belgrade transport workers in early February 1993 may be the beginning of a new stage of the struggle.

A Serbian army spokesman articulated the question of the day: "How far will the regime go in subordinating the political system to its own narrow caste interests and how would the army react if there were social explosions [in Serbia]?" (*IV*, #239, November 23, 1992).

It is only such social explosions, which can bring forth a layer of working-class leadership, that offer hope for the future to save the populations of former Yugoslavia from this headlong descent into barbarism. □

February 5, 1993



## The Somalia Operation

# How "Humanitarian" Is It?

by George Saunders

In the months since George Bush sent in the Marines for an alleged "humanitarian mission" in Somalia, events and new information have shown how little of real concern for the Somali people was involved in Washington's decision to go in.

Perhaps most convincing were the arguments made at the very time of the intervention by a Somali human rights leader, Rakiya Omaar, who was fired from her job for opposing the U.S. move. A text of what she said

at that time has now become available to us and we are reprinting it for the information of our readers (see box). Some of Omaar's more revealing points should be stressed: for example, that food relief was getting through to most who needed it and that looting was not nearly as extensive as reported in the media. She also disputed the widely reported figures that half a million had already died from famine and another 1.5 million were threatened by death from starvation.

Another crucial point Omaar made was that *only* the relief operations of the UN and its subcontractor Care were being heavily looted, which was because, unlike the other relief agencies, *they refused to consult and work with Somalis*. Other sources, such as the *New York Times*, have also reported on the oddly ineffective UN relief efforts. Could they have deliberately bungled the work in order to help justify intervention? Why would anyone do such a thing? Why also was a successful UN negotiator fired by his superiors not long before the invasion when he criticized their "dismal" efforts?

There was one rather crass and not at all "humanitarian" motivation for such prointervention maneuvering at the upper echelons of the UN, which everyone knows is dominated by the U.S. government (hence by corporate America). This aspect of things was revealed by a *Los Angeles Times* report, reprinted in this issue. (See "Oil Interests in Somalia" on the next page.)

*Rakiya Omaar, a Somali attorney who helped found the human rights group Africa Watch, was dismissed as director of that organization on December 2, 1992, after she strongly and publicly opposed the U.S. military intervention in her country. An associate of hers, Alex de Waal, resigned after Human Rights Watch, the parent body of Africa Watch, gave its support to the U.S. troop deployment. In a joint statement the two human rights activists detailed their reasons for opposing the U.S. military moves. Their statement was reprinted in the January 1993 issue of The Metro World, Toronto's Black culture magazine. It first appeared in The Guardian (London) on December 4, 1992. For the information of our readers we are reproducing the text from The Metro World, sent to us kindly by supporters in Toronto.*

United States military intervention in Somalia has followed from a gross misrepresentation of the situation in the country, and is a complete failure to pay the most elementary respect to Somalis. There are four major errors.

The first is that Somalia has descended into complete anarchy and chaos. This is false. About three-quarters of the country is relatively peaceful, with civil structures in place to a greater or lesser extent.

The famine and war are limited to the southwest region. Clan elders play a critical role in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance and in negotiating peace agreements throughout much of the country. They could continue to do so.

The second falsehood is that two million people are at risk of death by starvation. The famine is waning. Markets in all the main towns are awash with cheap food because of the looting. Acute malnutrition exists in scattered rural pockets.

All the estimates of deaths are undoubtedly exaggerated. Probably a maximum of 150,000 people have died and a further 100,000 at maximum are at risk, mostly from disease rather than starvation. The real need is to regenerate the economy by revitalizing markets and agriculture.

Where there is a major problem with starvation is Bardera, which the forces of General Morgan [son-in-law of former dictator Siad Barre] have invaded. Morgan is armed and trained by Kenya. Intervention with President Daniel arap Moi is what is needed.

Third, most of the food is not looted. Save the Children Fund have distributed 4,000 tons in Mogadishu without losing a single bag. Other agencies that work closely with Somalis suffer rates of 2-10 percent, because they consult closely with Somali elder and humanitarian workers; working with Somalis is the key to success.

High losses have been suffered by the UN agencies and their subcontractor, Care, which have failed to follow this path.

Finally, diplomatic options have not been exhausted. There has been almost nothing in the way of attempts to negotiate settlements

in comparison with, say, Yugoslavia. The one serious attempt — by the former UN special envoy Mohamed Sahnoun — was meeting with remarkable success. Sahnoun was forced to resign in October because of his outspoken criticism of the UN's dismal failure in Somalia.

He had made a number of important breakthroughs in resolving conflicts and obtaining agreements for the supply of relief. Why not reinstate one diplomat rather than imposing 30,000 US soldiers?

Despite the existence of many Somalis with expertise, humanitarian commitment, and accountability to ordinary people, there was not even a pretense at consulting a single one. Now that foreign forces are arriving, all the warlords and clan elders are expressing agreement — but that is because they want to see how the *fait accompli* can be manipulated to their advantage.

There is a greater danger that US forces will create a larger problem than they can solve. Contrary to the reports from tourists who flit in and out of the country, Somalia is not a nation of warlords, looters, and starving people. It is also a nation with civic leaders — elders, professionals, entrepreneurs, experienced relief workers and volunteers who take daily risks to end the bloodshed and the suffering.

Intervention without consultation will crush many of the vital initiatives that are springing from Somali society itself. One important low-key effort at political reconciliation encouraged by the European Community has already been called off in the last week. American soldiers are not diplomats, and [U.S.] diplomats appear remarkably uninformed about the reality on the ground.

It is likely that they will negotiate with the warlords, thereby legitimizing the very men whose policies have prompted the intervention by US soldiers. When US forces withdraw, there will be a vacuum similar to that when Siad Barre was driven out in 1991. It will be worse than square one.



The central point in the *LA Times* report was that pro-U.S. dictator Siad Barre sold oil and gas exploration and exploitation rights covering two-thirds of Somalia's territory to four major U.S. oil companies before he was overthrown in January 1991; that one of those companies, Conoco, stood the most to gain, since its explorations in north-central Somalia had yielded promising results just before Siad Barre's overthrow. The report further reveals that despite the last two years' chaos Conoco maintained an office in Mogadishu, signed an interim agreement with one of the Somali military leaders, and played a key role as a "facilitator" in the maneuvering preceding U.S. intervention.

Another important fact that the *LA Times* brings out is that Texas oilman George Bush had direct personal familiarity with the large oil and gas reserves extending from Yemen under the Gulf of Aden into Somalia: as vice president in April 1986 Bush dedicated the Hunt Oil Co.'s new refinery in Yemen, an installation which produces 200,000 barrels a day. In his dedication speech Bush stressed the importance of "supporting U.S. corporate efforts to develop and safeguard potential oil reserves in the region."

So when the Marines carry out sweeps through the Somali countryside or use their overwhelming firepower to destroy a building in Mogadishu containing the arms stores and guards of one of the Somali military leaders, you can be sure that behind the orders are not "humanitarian" concerns. The message is: We are here; we will run the show; no one better dare to challenge us. Washington is now talking about leaving a Rapid Deployment Force of at least 2,000 in Somalia indefinitely, plus 1,000 Marines on aircraft carriers offshore. (The U.S. naval base in northern Somalia, near that precious "oil window," is rarely mentioned in the "humanitarian" media.)

Why the heavy military presence? "To safeguard oil reserves in the region," of course. Oil reserves — and any other potential source of profit for the "humanitarian" multinational corporations. □



## Oil Interests in Somalia

*For the information of our readers, we reprint this article (which first appeared in the Los Angeles Times) following the version in the Minneapolis Star-Tribune of January 19, 1993.*

**F**ar beneath the surface of the drama of Somalia, four major U.S. oil companies are sitting on a prospective fortune in exclusive concessions to explore and exploit tens of millions of acres of the countryside.

That land, in the opinion of geologists and industry sources, could yield significant amounts of oil and natural gas if the U.S.-led military mission can restore peace to the nation.

According to documents obtained by the *Los Angeles Times*, nearly two-thirds of Somalia was allocated to the American oil giants Conoco, Amoco, Chevron and Phillips in the final years before Somalia's pro-U.S. President Muhammad Siad Barre was overthrown and the nation plunged into chaos in January 1991. Industry sources said the companies holding the rights to the most promising concessions are hoping that the Bush administration's decision to send U.S. troops to safeguard aid shipments in Somalia will also help protect their multimillion-dollar investments.

Officially, the administration and the State Department insist that the U.S. military mission in Somalia is strictly humanitarian. [Of course!] Oil industry spokesmen dismissed as "absurd" and "nonsense" allegations by aid experts, veteran East Africa analysts and several prominent Somalis that President Bush, a former Texas oilman, was moved to act in Somalia at least in part by the U.S. corporate oil stake.

But corporate and scientific documents disclose that the U.S. companies are well-positioned to pursue Somalia's most promising potential reserves the moment the nation is pacified. And the State Department and U.S. military officials acknowledge that one of those oil companies has done more than simply sit back and hope for peace.

Conoco Inc., the only major multinational corporation to maintain a functioning office in Mogadishu throughout the past two years of nationwide anarchy, has been directly involved in the U.S. government's role in the U.N.-sponsored humanitarian military effort.

Conoco, whose exploration efforts in north-central Somalia reportedly had yielded the most encouraging prospects just before Siad Barre's fall, permitted its Mogadishu corporate compound to be transformed into a de facto U.S. embassy a few days before the U.S. Marines landed in the capital, with Bush's special envoy using it as his temporary headquarters. In addition, the president of the company's subsidiary in Somalia won high official praise for serving as the [U.S.] government's "facilitator" during the months before and during the U.S. intervention.

Describing the arrangement as a "business relationship," John Geybauer, spokesman for Conoco Oil in Houston, said the company was acting as "a good corporate citizen and neighbor" in granting the U.S. government's request to be allowed to rent the compound.

But the close relationship between Conoco and the U.S. intervention force has left many Somalis and foreign development experts deeply troubled by the blurred line between the U.S. government and the large oil company, leading many to liken the Somalia operation to a miniature version of Operation Desert Storm, the U.S.-led military effort in January 1991 to drive Iraq from Kuwait and, more broadly, safeguard the world's largest [known] oil reserves.

Although most oil experts outside Somalia laugh at the suggestion that nation ever could rank among the world's major oil producers — and most maintain that the international aid mission is intended simply to feed Somalia's starving masses — no one doubts that there is oil in Somalia. The only question: How much?

"It's there. There's no doubt there's oil there," said Thomas ["There"] O'Connor, the principal petroleum engineer for the World Bank, who headed an in-depth, three-year study of oil prospects in the Gulf of Aden off Somalia's northern coast.

O'Connor, a geologist, based his conclusion on the findings of some of the world's top petroleum geologists. In a 1991 World Bank-coordinated study, intended to encourage private investment in the petroleum potential of eight African nations, the geologists put Somalia and Sudan at the top of the list of prospective commercial oil producers.

Presenting their results during a three-day conference in London in September 1991, two of these geologists, an American and an Egyptian [perhaps that's why Boutros Boutros Ghali, representative of the Egyptian bourgeoisie, has taken such a special interest in Somalia], reported that an analysis of nine exploratory wells drilled in Somalia indicated that the region [and the countries it comprises are] "situated within the oil window, and thus are highly prospective for gas and oil." A report by a third geologist, Z.R. Beydoun, said offshore sites possess "the geological parameters conducive to the generation, expulsion and trapping of significant amounts of oil and gas."

Beginning in 1986, Conoco, along with Amoco, Chevron, Phillips and, briefly, Shell, all sought and obtained exploration licenses for northern Somalia from Siad Barre's government. Somalia was soon carved up into concessional blocs, with Conoco, Amoco and

*Continued on page 31*



# The U.S. and Turkish Governments Unite to Crush the Kurds

by June Martin

In the aftermath of the war by the U.S. and its allies against Iraq two years ago, U.S. TV viewers for days witnessed the tragic sight of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees fleeing out of Iraq toward Turkey and Iran to escape the vengeance of the Saddam Hussein government after the Kurds' CIA-inspired rebellion failed. Living without shelter on muddy mountainsides, in the rain and the cold, without supplies or drinking water for days, thousands perished.

However, neither the Turkish nor Iranian government, both intent on suppressing the Kurdish people in their own countries, wanted these refugees. So the U.S., with the backing of its allies, set up a "security zone" in Iraq north of the 36th parallel and encouraged Iraq's one million Kurdish refugees and three million other Kurds to seek safe homes within that area. Many Iraqi Kurds did return and the foreign TV cameras went elsewhere.

Meanwhile, however, the Kurds in the "security zone" are not doing so well. For most of the two years since it was established, the Iraqi government has imposed a blockade on the region nearly as tight as the economic blockade imposed on Iraq by the U.S. and its allies. The Kurds in the "security zone" are without fuel, food, and other vital supplies. Since its population has been left to the tender mercies of the capitalist market, what goods are available are being sold at prices few can afford. As the *New York Times* reported on November 27, 1992, "At least 8,000 families live in tents; tens of thousands huddle in gutted buildings with only thin plastic sheeting covering the empty window frames.

The Kurds have chopped down most trees around the urban centers, with many families even digging out the roots, to stockpile fuel for the winter.

Families that have subsisted on vegetables for months now watch in horror as prices spiral upward and the volume in the markets declines....

"As we get closer to winter, we are beginning to see increasing numbers of children who have some degree of malnutrition," according to a local health director.

The Iraqi Kurds depend desperately for supplies on some \$200 million in relief assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development and other international imperialist donors that was to begin arriving overland by truck from Turkey in late 1992.

Meanwhile, the Turkish government had mobilized more than 130,000 soldiers and police by November 1992 as part of its cam-

paign to suppress the Kurdish people in its own territory. There are some ten million Kurds living in Turkey in a territory that makes up about one-third of the country in the southeast bordering on Iraq. This region is part of what the Kurds call historic Kurdistan, which includes territory now part of Syria, Iraq, and Iran.

In fact, the Turkish government has been involved in an ongoing war for decades against the Kurds in Turkey that has claimed thousands of lives — a war that has been no less brutal than the war by the Iraqi government against the Kurds in Iraq. Many Turkish Kurdish fighters in the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) had fled into Iraq seeking refuge from the Turkish assault. In fact, the Turkish government is so anti-Kurdish that the Kurdish language and culture as well as any independent Kurdish organizations are banned in Turkey.

The 130,000 troops that were mobilized in November 1992 were to augment contingents of Turkish government troops who had actually invaded Iraq in pursuit of Turkish rebels a month earlier. In October 1992, according to the *Financial Times* (October 29, 1992), the Turkish government sent at least 20,000 troops, backed by tanks and armored personnel carriers, into northern Iraq, where, supported by aircraft and helicopters, they intended to destroy the PKK resistance.

Not only has the brutality of the Turkish government against its own Kurds raised no international outcry, the Turkish government's invasion of Iraq and its bombing missions there were barely reported in the U.S. press. That is because, as the *Financial Times* reported, "the US State Department this week reiterated its backing for Ankara's fight against the PKK."

Of course, the Turkish government is a junior partner of U.S. imperialism and helps guarantee an environment safe for U.S. corporate investments and is a major recipient of U.S. military aid. Undoubtedly, U.S. military advisers had a hand in planning the operation. Therefore, atrocities committed by the Turkish government are acceptable to the U.S. government. Therefore, the U.S. did not call for the creation of a "no fly" zone over the Kurdish "security zone" in Iraq, as it has done over the Shiite zones further south. Nor did the U.S. retaliate with massive air strikes against Turkish "military targets," as it has done against Iraq.

The conspicuous measures against Iraq by the U.S. government and its allies — dividing

the country into thirds, with the northern zone to "protect" the Kurds and the southern "no fly" zone to allegedly protect the Shiites — have been justified by the Iraqi government's past brutality against these peoples. The *New York Times Sunday Magazine* on January 3, 1993, in fact, revealed new documentary evidence of the Iraqi government's decade-long genocidal war against Iraq's four million Kurds, which reached its peak March-August 1988 with the "Anfal" campaign when as many as 180,000 Kurds disappeared.

This war was unleashed against the Kurds by the Iraqi government not only — as in Turkey — to crush the Kurdish popular movements seeking self-determination and democratic rights but also as a reprisal against the Kurds for the unfortunate decision of their leaders to side with the Iranian government during the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war that ended August 1988. Although the Iranian government used the Kurds to good advantage for its own purposes during the Iran-Iraq war, once the war was over, that government abandoned the Kurds to their fate, i.e., whatever police and military reprisals the Iraqi government saw fit to use. It offered the Kurds no defense against the Iraqi government's savage retaliation.

Nor did the U.S. government do anything to stop the Iraqi government's brutality against the Kurds. In fact, the U.S. government was one of the major military suppliers of the Iraqi government — a U.S. ally during that period. As documents now uncovered reveal, the U.S. government was well aware of the ferocity of what the Iraqi government was doing against the Kurds although at the time — and even now — it tries to deny this.

Throughout the postwar period, Turkey has been a major U.S. ally and military junior partner in the Mediterranean region. As a result, the U.S. has, as it did in the case of Iraq, turned a blind eye to the genocidal military campaign of the Turkish government against the Kurds in its own territory.

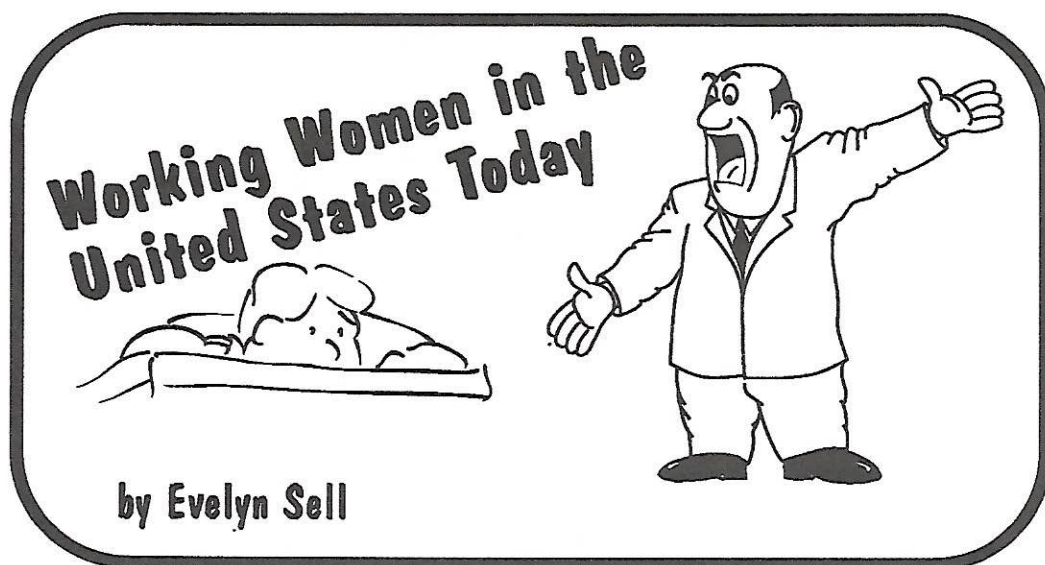
Meanwhile, the Kurds in the northern Iraq "security zone" held elections in May 1992. Although the two leading parties — the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdish Democratic Party — disagreed on whether or not to proclaim independence or to declare their region autonomous within Iraq, they agreed in July to unite to form a coalition government.

According to the *New York Times* November 24, this move "was received with alarm,"  
*Continued on page 27*



The emancipation of the working class and the liberation of women are inseparable goals. Neither can be achieved without the other, and both struggles are necessary in order to transform capitalist society and create the conditions for the construction of a socialist world democratically controlled by the vast majority. These concepts are fundamental to revolutionary Marxism — but socialist activists cannot be satisfied with sweeping generalizations. Working-class activists, feminists, and socialists need to be informed about current developments and changing conditions in order to participate most effectively in existing struggles.

Although this article does not fully cover all aspects of working women's situations, it will help us understand conditions shaping women's lives and affecting the working class as a whole: shifts in the economy and the growing proportion of women in the labor force, the impact of race and ethnicity on wages and job opportunities, the influence of longstanding attitudes, inequalities between female and male workers, the reorganization of the workforce, special problems involving job hazards and sexual harassment, and the role of the labor movement.



**K**ey realities involving working women were demonstrated in an event which took place on November 9, 1992, in the Los Angeles area. A lottery was held in a crowded union hall to fill 228 part-time dockworker jobs reserved for women. Affirmative action was mandated by a landmark 1982 court settlement between a group of women, the association representing West Coast shippers, and the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. The terms of the settlement included the requirement that women hold 35 percent of part-time dockworker jobs. A recruitment drive two years ago led to the hiring of 350 women dockworkers (jobs involving unloading containers, moving equipment, and other unskilled labor). Although there is no guarantee of steady work for part-time dockworkers, the wage of \$14–\$16 per hour attracted 8,000 applicants for the 1992 job openings. One of the lottery winners was an unemployed 30-year-old single mother with three young children. A 34-year-old woman who had been out of work almost ten months and said bitterly, "I have four children and no job." Among those waiting to hear the results of the lottery was a 29-year-old woman, her husband, and their two young children; the woman explained, "We're just making it with me not working, but it sure would be nice to have one or two days' work."

According to U.S. Labor Department figures, women make up almost half of the total civilian labor force (a little over 58 million out of a total 127,087,000 as of November, 1992). Women workers accounted for over three-fifths of the increases in the work force between 1979 and 1990. The constantly increasing proportion of female workers is shown by the official figures: 38 percent in 1970, 42 percent in 1980, 45 percent in 1990, and 46 percent by

the end of 1992. Of all U.S. women aged sixteen and over, 57.7 were workers as of November 1992. This figure shows that a majority of U.S. women are currently involved in the labor market — and this is a steadily rising trend.

The growing numbers of female workers include: single women, wives with employed husbands, mothers with children under 18 years of age, and all races and ethnic groups. During the 1970s and early 1980s, labor force participation of Black, Hispanic, and white women was about equal. In 1989, the rates were: 58.7 percent of Black women (6.8 million), 57.2 percent of white

women (47.4 million), and 53.5 percent of Hispanic origin women (3.7 million). There is very limited information about Asian women, but figures show a relatively enormous rise in the numbers becoming paid workers (from 712,000 in 1975 to 1,890,000 in 1990), and their projected rate of labor force participation is 58.9 percent by 2005.

Women workers continue to be segregated in female-dominated occupations, to receive less earnings for the same kind of work done by men, to be denied equal opportunities for advancement, and to suffer the effects of a multitude of discriminatory policies and practices.

Facts about many sexist job conditions are made public through newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television broadcasts, reports of lawsuits and court rulings, union activities, and the demonstrations and activities of feminists and their supporters. At the same time, little attention is paid to significant trends such as the leap in moonlighting by working women, who accounted for almost two-thirds of the increase in multiple job-holding between 1985 and 1990. New record levels were reached in 1989, when the number of women with two or more jobs grew to 3.1 million and the rate climbed to 5.9 percent. This was an increase of almost 500 percent since 1970. The highest rate of female multiple job-holding was for widowed, divorced, or separated women. These women said they needed extra jobs in order to meet regular expenses or to pay off debts. Single women and men, on the other hand, cited savings for the future as the reason for working more than one job.



## The Impact of Race, Ethnic Group

Studies show that race and ethnicity affect women's job situations and compound the discriminatory treatment of female workers. Most reports present facts about African American and white women but provide almost no material about Asian women and very little about Latinas (U.S.-born, Mexicanas, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans).

A milestone was reached in 1986 when, for the first time, 50 percent of Latinas were part of the workforce. By 1988, this had risen to 53.2 percent — compared to 56.6 percent for non-Hispanic women. Employment of Latinas grew from 1.7 million in 1978 to 3.3 million in 1988, and then rose to over 3.8 million in 1990. The largest proportion were working in technical, sales, and administrative support occupations (41.1 percent); many were employed as bookkeepers, cashiers, computer operators, receptionists, sales workers, secretaries, typists, or teacher aides. Compared with all other racial and ethnic groups, Latinas are overrepresented in operator, fabricator, and laborer occupations, where they are almost exclusively textile sewing machine operators, assemblers, and miscellaneous machine operators. They are also overrepresented in the service field, where they are most frequently employed as private household servants and cleaners, childcare workers, cooks, and waitresses. Hispanic-origin women, more than other racial or ethnic groups of females, tend to be employed more frequently as electronic equipment assemblers, dressmakers, and food batchmakers.

Although their median income for year-round full-time work increased 52 percent near the end of the 1980s, their earnings remained 15 percent below the median income for all women workers, and 17 percent below that of Hispanic males. Contributing an average of 32 percent to total family income in 1987, Hispanic wives accounted for a substantial and necessary portion of the family's standard of living. The number of families maintained solely by Latinas is growing. In 1989, the proportion of such families was 22.8 percent. About 48 percent of poor female-supported Hispanic families were living below the official poverty level in 1988.

Black women maintained 45 percent of African American families in 1989. Over three-quarters (76 percent) of female-supported Black households lived in poverty during 1988. The percentage of Black women workers has been higher than that of other racial groups, but their average earnings remain lower — even when their educational levels are higher. For example, the gap between Black and white women workers' wages increased between 1979 and 1985 — even when factors such as education, work experience, and similarity of jobs remained the same. Structural changes in the labor market during the 1980s tended to widen the gap between African American and white female employees; for example, white women increased their percentage in professional and managerial jobs more than Black women. In addition, the proportion of Black women getting jobs in Southern states increased more rapidly than employment for white women in the South; because of the lower wage rates in the region, this resulted in lower earnings for Black women as a group than for white females.

## Facts Clash with Fantasy

Simple one-dimensional comparisons do not give an adequate picture of the situation of women workers. A serious analysis needs to be made in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and age. Each dimension interrelates with others and has an impact on both individuals and groupings within the female work force. In addition to harsh economic facts, many myths about the role of women in society — as well as about racial and ethnic groups — continue to maintain barriers to equal employment opportunities and earnings.

**Fantasy:** Women are first-and-foremost wives and mothers, and the norm is that husbands/fathers support families. **Fact:** Over one-third of most women's lives will be spent in the paid labor force. "The average woman worker 16 years of age between 1970–80 could expect to spend 29.3 years of her life in the labor force, compared with 39.1 years for a 16-year-old man. White and black women could expect to spend 29.6 and 27.8 years, respectively, of their lives in the labor force."<sup>1</sup>

**Fantasy:** Women choose to work in order to buy luxury items, or to pay for special treats, or to escape the boredom of being housewives. **Fact:** "Most women work because of economic need. The majority of women in the labor force (58.5 percent) in March 1988 were either single (25 percent), divorced (12 percent), widowed (4 percent), or had husbands whose annual 1987 earnings were less than \$15,000 (13.5 percent)."<sup>2</sup>

**Fantasy:** Women's job opportunities and earnings will improve as a result of higher educational levels. **Fact:** "The median income of female high school graduates (with no college) working year-round full-time in 1988 was somewhat lower than that of fully employed men who had completed less than eight years of elementary school — \$16,810 and \$17,190, respectively. In 1988 women with four years of college education had a median income slightly below that of men who had only a high school diploma — \$25,187 and \$26,045, respectively."<sup>3</sup>

**Fantasy:** The wage gap between the sexes will disappear if women hold the same jobs as men and if the "pink collar ghetto" ceases to exist. **Fact:** "...individual occupations which seem to fare well when women's earnings are compared with men's are not located in only 'women's' work (those occupations which have high proportions of women's employment to total employment) or 'men's' jobs (those with high proportions of employed men)."<sup>4</sup>

## Wage Gap Persists

In 1977, women received 59 cents for every dollar received by men; in 1978, this advanced to 61¢; by 1990 women workers were earning 72¢ for every dollar received by men, and this climbed to 74¢ in 1991. Among African American workers, Black women in full-time jobs during 1978 earned 72 percent as much as Black men; by 1990 this rose to 86 percent. Between 1970 and 1981, African American females began to close the wage gap between themselves and white women — from 85 percent in 1970 to a peak of 95 percent in 1978, and then started to fall back so that Black women were earning 93 percent compared to white females in 1981 and dropped further to 87 percent in 1990.

1. *20 Facts on Women Workers*, U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau; September 1990

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Earnings Differences Between Women and Men*, U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau; October 1990



The figures appear to show significant paycheck gains for women workers over the past twenty years. But it is misleading to simply state figures and make superficial comparisons. Women's earnings were not, in fact, truly narrowing the wage gap but reflected the *downward* movement of male income. The loss of better-paying and union-protected jobs in industry, which hit more male workers than female, drove down the general level of men's wages. A 1992 report from the staff of the Congressional Joint Economic Committee explained: men currently see their incomes rising much more slowly than males did during the 1950s and '60s; men entering the labor market are receiving lower wages than were paid twenty years ago, and males can expect to receive smaller pay increases over the coming years. The Economic Policy Institute released a study in late 1992 stating that 75 percent of blue collar workers (mostly male) experienced an inflation-adjusted ten percent fall in income from 1979 to 1987. Between 1979 and 1991, earnings by males dropped 12.9 percent but female wage earners gained 2.4 percent (after adjusting for inflation).

The feminist demand for pay equity was not designed to bring down the level of male earnings but to raise the standard of living for *all* workers, regardless of gender and sex-segregated occupations.

### Changes in Economy

A brief look at developments affecting African American workers demonstrates how little relative earnings have changed between women and men. The severe repression of the early 1980s hit Black male workers particularly hard. The proportion of unemployed African American males aged 25–55 years rose from 17 to 27 percent. A short upturn in the economy brought their unemployment percentage down to 19, but this was still higher than the 17 percent jobless rate in the first part of the 1980s. The losses were primarily in industrial and unionized situations. While Black men were experiencing disastrous cutbacks, African American women continued to work. The numbers of Black men employed in manufacturing, construction, and public administration dropped; during the same period, more Black women moved from service jobs into white collar occupations, especially clerical work, as well as into trade, utilities, and public administration positions. The convergence in union membership for Black women and men also helps explain the appearance of a smaller wage gap. African American males were more likely to be union members because of their employment in industries with long-established collective bargaining relations. Union membership also dropped for Black women during the same period — but not as much as for African American males.

For all U.S. workers, shifts in occupation and in unionization tended toward a convergence between female and male employment situations. Men lost blue collar jobs and entered white collar and service fields; during the same period, women began to move from service and less-skilled pink collar jobs into better-paying service positions as well as professional and managerial occupations. Interrelated developments involving unions also tended toward a convergence between women and men workers. For example, male union membership was cut by 500,000 between 1985 and 1990; in 1989, the loss was 200,000 for males — while female unionists increased by 160,000 (largely in the service sector).

The occupational shifts affecting male workers resulted in decreased earnings, benefits, and job security. Most trends involving female employees, on the other hand, were helping to improve

their job situations relative to men: increased years of work experiences, some successes in fighting sex discrimination in employment (for example, affirmative action provisions and comparable worth gains), and unionization. At the same time, sexist employment practices continue to oppress women workers. Their years of work experience and job training continue to be less valued than those of their male counterparts. Indeed, the more education a woman has, the less pay she receives in relation to men with the same experience, educational level, and age. The Institute for Women's Policy Research found that males earn about 24¢ an hour for each additional year of job experience, but women get only 7¢ an hour per year of work experience. Studies conducted for the federal government demonstrate that men with four years of college earn an average of \$50,000 a year — while a woman with a college degree averages only \$30,000.

A December 29, 1992, article in the *Los Angeles Times* gave a vivid picture of the gender wage gap in California, where women make up 45 percent of the workforce. Analyzing newly released U.S. Census Bureau figures, the *Times* reported that 1989 statistics show that women working full-time in the state earned 69¢ for every dollar paid to their male counterparts. The income comparisons were particularly damaging for those who claim that wage gap problems will be solved when more women enter traditional male-dominated fields and professions. In medicine and dentistry, for example, women earned a little more than half the earnings of their male peers; female dentists averaged 55¢ for every dollar earned by their male colleagues. Even in female-dominated fields, such as public school teaching, men received considerably higher paychecks. Female elementary school teachers — who have greatly outnumbered men for many generations — were paid \$29,299 in 1989 compared to \$35,273 earned by their male counterparts. Out of 481 occupations, women earned more than men in only four: typists, food preparers, assistants to waiters, and repairers of communications and industrial electronic equipment. Among household domestics (cooks, babysitters, housekeepers, cleaning people, etc.) male workers earned a measly \$411 a year more than women. A look at the predominantly female part-time workforce shows an even larger gap between the sexes: California women receive 62¢ for every dollar earned by men in the state.

### Different Explanations

Why does such a disparity exist? Why do female physicians in California receive an average of 57 percent of male doctors'

#### Yearly Pay: California, 1989

	Men	Women
Athletes	\$39,942	\$19,416
Authors	\$59,537	\$33,899
Insurance salespersons	\$56,495	\$30,027
Managers/administrators	\$60,096	\$33,653
Securities/financial sales	\$73,403	\$38,114

#### Female-Dominated Occupations % of Workforce in California

	Men	Women
Child care/ personal services	\$22,413 28.3%	\$17,428 71.7%
Domestics	\$19,015 6.7%	\$10,287 93.3%
Health/lab technicians	\$31,682 30.7%	\$25,783 69.3%
Nurses/other health care	\$42,878 17.9%	\$35,580 82.1%



earnings? A traditionalist view was presented by Dr. Carey Strom, who pointed out that earnings are based on factors such as length of years in practice, number of hours worked, and specializations. He explained that women choose to be involved in medical positions with shorter hours, less money, and more career setbacks because of childrearing responsibilities. When female librarians working for the city of Los Angeles complained about their earning less than male colleagues, city officials explained: "He supports the family," and "She has her husband's income."

Helen Bernstein, president of United Teachers—Los Angeles, explained that "there are differentials that the administration hands out like little cookies, little plums. If you are a coach or a department chair or an in-house dean, you can make more money, and administrators and principals, who tend to be males, also tend to give these appointments to male teachers." She described one school administrator who "sat there and told us that he gave all the extra appointments to men because they had families to support. Meanwhile, half the women sitting there were divorced, and were the sole support for their kids."

Tammy Bruce, president of the Los Angeles chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW), said, "We're making less money because of a social conscience that says women are worth less, and it's an attitude that has an effect on every working woman, from waitresses to the [U.S.] secretary of transportation." Many economists, however, continue to insist that most of the wage gap results from the voluntary decisions made by women who choose jobs with lower pay scales and flexible schedules so that they can care for their families. This kind of fantasy is shattered by the facts about wives and mothers in the labor force.

## Working Wives, Working Mothers

As recently as 1975, labor force participation by married women and by mothers of young children was relatively small. One item noted by a 1990 fact sheet published by the Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, was: "Wives in the labor force contribute substantially to family income. In March 1988, 56 percent of married couples had wives in the paid labor force as compared with 40 percent in March 1972. In 1988 the median income of married couple families with the wife in the paid labor force was \$42,709, compared with \$27,220 for those without the wife in the paid labor force."

By 1990 two-thirds of U.S. mothers were in the labor force (22 million) and, as a group, accounted for the largest growth in the labor force between 1970 and 1990. During this same period, female parents were increasingly likely to be the sole family breadwinner because of the high level of divorces and separations and the fact that almost all women have children (both within and outside legal marriages). Both the number and proportion of children living in one-parent families doubled over the past twenty years, and ninety percent of female-maintained households included dependent children. Even in two-parent families, mothers are increasingly the main wage earners or provide an indispensable second income in order to preserve the standard of living.

It is increasingly obvious that working mothers' earnings are necessary for the economic health of U.S. family units, but a sexist bias continues to regard working mothers as a supplement to the core labor force. The view commonly held by researchers and "experts" is that mothers *choose* jobs that are compatible with child-rearing responsibilities, that is, jobs that are easily entered and exited. Such work situations are low-paid, result in less job experience, and provide little opportunity for advancement to

better-paying levels. Using a gender-based role model, the high job turnover rate for working mothers is explained by women's desire to fulfill traditional family responsibilities. The high turnover rate for male workers, on the other hand, is explained by men's dissatisfaction with low wages or poor advancement possibilities. In addition, the poverty level for male workers is explained by general economic conditions, while the poverty rate for women workers and female-maintained households is explained by women's willingness to accept lower-paid jobs in order to pursue their primary role in life: to be wives and mothers.

Gender-based assumptions distort most studies about working mothers. In a study funded by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, Roberta Spalter-Roth and Heidi Hartmann viewed working mothers as primary or co-equal earners whose wages were necessary to support their families. The two researchers demonstrated that complex socio-economic trends have had more of an impact on working mothers' earnings than family-related characteristics (such as marital status, number and ages of children, presence of a spouse). The findings, published in a November 1991 report, showed that the hourly wage rate of women, in general, depended on their own abilities, skills, experience, and other job-related characteristics — not on family considerations or responsibilities.

In addition to general labor market conditions, a working mother's ability to earn a higher wage is directly dependent upon race and ethnicity. Compared to white Anglo working mothers, African American mothers lose 42¢ per hour and Latinas lose 27¢ per hour due to discriminatory practices (when all other factors are held constant). Income is significantly decreased for working mothers in the low-wage Southern states and the deindustrialized Midwestern areas; this is especially true for African American mothers.

## Improving Working Mothers' Earnings

The research by Spalter-Roth and Hartmann helps to counteract the sexist views held about working mothers and helps to show that the same factors account for raising wages regardless of gender (for example, education, full-time year-round jobs, years of work experience, union membership, employment in high-tech industries). The two researchers propose five strategies for improving the earnings of working mothers:

Comparable worth remedies that revalue women's jobs based on their measurable worth to firms rather than on stereotyped notions of the value of women's work will likely have the impact of decreasing the race and gender gap in returns [for] years of work experience. Comparable wage adjustments are most likely to be achieved through collective bargaining agreements. Hence, labor law reforms that would have the effect of increasing workers' ability to unionize and to bargain collectively would likely result in closing the gap between male and female returns to experience. Both collective bargaining and pay equity, as well as other initiatives, can lead to improved step increases or longevity pay in women's jobs, a convention in men's jobs that is sorely lacking in women's jobs. Other strategies, such as programs designed to enhance job mobility and glass ceiling initiatives designed to increase women's job mobility to higher-echelon, higher-paying jobs and more general efforts to develop and extend job ladders in typical women's occupations (such as clerical work) would likely increase the returns to experience that women workers receive. And finally, increased monitoring and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws and regulations would likely decrease the gap in returns to experience because Black and Hispanic working mothers currently receive the lowest returns to experience.



Increasing working mothers' human capital through education is the second most effective strategy for increasing their earnings. ... Strategies that overcome cultural stereotypes of working mothers as tangential, secondary workers by increasing their ability to stay in the workforce while meeting their family responsibilities, thus increasing their years of work experience, have the third greatest effect on working mothers' wages. Federal, state, and corporate policies — such as family and medical leave, child care, and temporary disability insurance — that meet the needs of workers with family responsibilities will likely have the effect of increasing the earnings of working mothers.... Likewise, strategies that encourage firms to generate full-time rather than part-time jobs, and to hire more women in these jobs, will also have a positive effect on working mothers' earnings.... Decreasing regional wage disparities by increasing wages to the level of the Northeast region of the country is the fifth most effective strategy....

Although these strategies would, indeed, enlarge working mothers' paychecks, they are resisted by the employers and their political servants in government. The need to maximize their profits drives employers to treat women, racial minorities, and ethnic groups as superexploitable workers. Changes are taking place — but they are not designed to help working mothers or any other wage earners.

### The Contingent Labor Force

In their efforts to cut labor costs, employers are reducing their fixed work force by expanding the use of contingent employees (a category which includes temporary, part-time, home-based, leased, subcontracted, and independently-contracted employees). This practice is not new in capitalist societies and, in fact, contingent workers have been a regular part of the U.S. labor market. The garment industry is notorious for the exploitation of home-based workers and sweatshops operated by subcontractors. Migrant and seasonal agricultural workers are another standard feature of the U.S. economy. But the most recent developments show an increase in both the numbers of industries utilizing contingent workers and the occupational categories involved.

As part of the restructuring of the U.S. economy, employment reorganization has changed the character of the primary or core labor market so that jobs which previously provided relatively privileged conditions are now being transformed into contingent employment. This reorganization of the work force is not simply a cyclical fluctuation but a long-term trend. According to one estimate, half of all new jobs created in the 1980s were contingent. The Bureau of National Affairs reported in 1986 that 28 million workers — one-fourth of all U.S. employees — held contingent jobs. This spectacular rise in the contingent work force is particularly important for women workers since the majority of temporary employees are female.

The advantages to employers are many: contingent workers can be brought into and taken out of job situations as profitability dictates; these workers are not unionized and, therefore, not protected by seniority clauses, benefit provisions, grievance procedures, and other collective bargaining provisions; and the service company providing contingent workers acts as a buffer between the employee and the on-the-job boss. Temporary workers, the fastest-growing category of the contingent labor force, are hired as casual workers, limited duration employees, and independent

contractors. A large number are not actually hired directly but are secured through contract labor services and temporary help companies. By the end of the 1980s, the growing temporary help industry accounted for 20 percent of jobs in the business sector and 7 percent of all clerical jobs. The range of jobs held by "temps" include: industrial, medical, technical, and professional — but clerical positions clearly dominate, accounting for 45 to 63 percent of temporary jobs during 1985–90. About two-thirds of all "temps" and 90 percent of all temporary clerical workers are women.

### Who Makes the Choice?

Some economic analysts assert that the growth of the contingent work force is the result of women's desires; for example, Wayne J. Howe cited the higher proportion of female temporary workers as proof that women choose such jobs because of certain advantages: "...particularly the combination of flexible work schedules and the opportunities to acquire needed experience and job market exposure.... women with family responsibilities are particularly attracted to temporary employment because it provides flexible work schedules that allow them to reconcile work outside the home with family commitments."<sup>5</sup> This traditional view, based on sex-segregated role models, ignores the long-term trends in U.S. society which have resulted in women becoming a permanent and major feature of the core labor market, the economic realities of the past twenty to thirty years (both for employers and women), the reasons given by women for accepting temporary employment, and the distinct *disadvantages* characterizing temporary employment: low pay, job insecurity, few or no benefits, little possibility for advancement, and generally inferior work conditions.

June A. Lapidus, analyzing the same data as Wayne Howe, reached very different conclusions about women's job preferences. She showed that women with family responsibilities are *not* more likely than other working women to choose temporary jobs. In fact, the availability of temporary work does not attract women into job situations, and women holding temporary jobs are not distinguishable from other females in the labor force in terms of marital status, age of youngest child, or other family characteristics.<sup>6</sup> Her findings were upheld by other researchers (such as Lonnie Golden and Eileen Appelbaum in a report to the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau) who explain the growth of female "temps" as a result of employers' desires to match their labor forces with cyclical changes in output, fixed labor costs, and intensified foreign competition.

Far from exercising choice, most female workers accept temporary situations because they are unemployed and not able to secure full-time year-round jobs. Temporary work does not afford special advantages to working mothers who need job security, health benefits, better wages, family leave, and a host of features which are definitely *not* provided by temporary employment. Being part of the contingent work force is especially difficult for women who are their families' sole earners. The majority of "temps" are young women and African American women — groupings with the highest unemployment rates and the least amount of work experience credentials. Only a small portion of

5. *Monthly Labor Review*, November 1986

6. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; 1990



“temps” are women returning to the labor market after raising children. Students who seek jobs during college breaks and older married women seeking flexibility represent a small portion of the contingent work force. Temporary women workers, as a group, do not have less job experience or poorer skills than regularly employed full-time female employees. During their work lives, women with children do not engage in temporary work more than childless women.

Although companies claim to offer flexibility, the truth is that job assignments go to women who are available whenever and wherever asked and at the pay rate offered by the service company. In short, “temps” accommodate to the needs of the employers; bosses do not cater to the needs of women workers. Temporary employment is not chosen as a means to fulfill women’s needs but acts, in most cases, as a safety net for women looking for permanent full-time year-round jobs. But this safety net has been torn apart as permanent jobs are cut back and temporary jobs increase. Women are particularly vulnerable in this increasingly reorganized work force situation because gender segregation limits their job opportunities as well as their wage rates. The predominance of women in the contingent work force is due to sexist employment practices and is *not* the result of women’s devotion to traditional roles of wives and mothers.

### Job Hazards

Women workers’ problems are compounded by the medical hazards and sexual harassment they confront on the job. Instead of making the workplace safe for *all* workers regardless of gender, employers penalized women of childbearing age when exposure to lead and other materials was part of the job situation. In the case of the Johnson Controls battery plant in Milwaukee, female employees were transferred from jobs necessitating the inhalation of dangerous levels of oxide from melting lead — and, not surprisingly, the safer jobs were lower paid. In 1982, the company instituted a mandatory protection policy for women of childbearing age, who had to prove they were sterile and, if they could not, were forced to change jobs. This led female employees to undergo sterilization procedures in order to keep better-paying positions. This “fetal protection” policy was challenged by a lawsuit brought by seven women and a man (who asked for a transfer on the basis that his potential fatherhood was threatened by working under hazardous conditions). A U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1991 struck down the company’s policy — a decision which affected other employers such as General Motors, Gulf Oil, Du Pont, and Monsanto.

Researchers at the University of California (Davis) revealed in 1992 that 40 percent of the women who work in fabrication areas of computer chip plants are more likely to have miscarriages than other women employed in the semiconductor industry. The study, which covered 15,000 workers in 14 computer chip companies, found harmful effects from exposure to photographic chemicals and solvents. About 70 percent of chip-production workers in the U.S. are women; many are Latina and Asian immigrants. Although the focus has been on female reproductive problems, the chemicals also affect males’ sterility. So far, most workers have had to depend on company promises to clean up the workplace. In some cases, employers demand that workers sign waivers stating they have been told of hazards and accept them. This practice is encouraged by the U.S. Supreme Court’s reassurance that employers would be protected from lawsuits by mothers of damaged

children if “the employer fully informs the woman of the risk and...has not acted negligently.”

The list of hazardous working conditions is long and includes: chemicals sprayed on farms; carpal tunnel syndrome and other problems resulting from repetitive work with computers and various machines. Even when they know of the risks, women workers have no realistic options but to continue with such jobs in order to receive higher earnings and to protect their job security.

### Sexual Harassment

The lack of alternatives is also a major reason why women workers are reluctant or unable to combat sexual harassment on the job. In addition, there are the social “rules” drummed into women from birth: *you* are at fault if a man acts sexually toward you; boys will be boys and men will be men; you can’t blame a man for trying; if you want to work in a man’s world, you have to accept the problems. For women who attempt to take legal action, there are usually impossible costs for civil cases and inadequate remedies from government agencies.

Some attention was paid to workplace sexual harassment during the late 1970s and in the 1980s. For example, in 1979 the United Auto Workers (UAW) broke new ground when the contract negotiated with Boston University included a provision requiring that institution to adopt policies to help stop sexual harassment. The assistant director of the UAW’s Women’s Department explained in 1991 that such harassment is prevalent in blue collar workplaces where newly hired women are given job training by males; the trainees do not complain because they fear the men will not give them adequate information and, therefore, the women will not be able to meet the requirements to become electricians, pipefitters, etc. The same holds true, the unionist explained, for female graduate students who depend on the recommendations of teachers, mentors, and other men who have the power to make or break budding careers.

Anita Hill’s charges against U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas threw a glaring spotlight on the issue of harassment. News about the Tailhook scandal, involving the sexual abuse of military and civilian women at the 1991 convention of Navy and Marine Corps aviators, kept public attention focused on sexual harassment over the past year. Most recently, women’s complaints against the unwanted sexual advances of Oregon’s Senator Bob Packwood have highlighted widespread harassment carried out by government figures. The revelations are particularly embarrassing for politicians because Congress is the *only* employer exempt from laws against employment discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. In its January 10, 1993, program, “60 Minutes” reported longtime and unchecked sexual harassment in the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Department of the federal government.

Sexual harassment complaints filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission rose from 3,661 in 1981 to 4,380 in 1984, and then to 5,694 in 1990. But in the overwhelming majority of cases, no formal complaint is made. A 1986 survey conducted by the Association of American Colleges showed that 32 percent of tenured female faculty members and 49 percent of untenured women at Harvard University had reported some form of sexual harassment. A 1990 Defense Department study revealed that 64 percent of military women said they endured sexual abuse. The October 21, 1991, issue of *Newsweek* reported: 21 percent of women polled by the magazine said they had been harassed at



work; 42 percent knew someone who had been subject to such treatment.

The September 23, 1992, issue of the *Los Angeles Times* noted that nationwide surveys of women workers showed that 25–30 percent had experienced sexual harassment. The Los Angeles Commission on the Status of Women reported that 37 percent of city government female employees said they were subject to sexual harassment on the job. The percentage of complaints was highest within the police department. The pressures upon women not to file complaints is enormous; many explained that their co-workers or supervisors became “unfriendly” when they complained; others were tagged as “troublemakers” when they spoke up, and some women workers were advised by supervisors to put up with the harasser because “that’s just the way he is.” Almost two months after the survey was publicized, the Los Angeles City Council approved hiring an ombudsman to expedite sexual harassment complaints from city employees.

## Union Organization and Women Workers

“By any means necessary!” is not only an appropriate slogan in battles for job equality but is a phrase summarizing actions taken to challenge sexism in the workplace. Women workers have filed complaints with government agencies, have initiated lawsuits against companies, have brought pressures for affirmative action programs, have fought for pay equity and comparable worth plans, have demonstrated, and have launched the independent 21st Century Party as a means to pursue their demands. Unionization is a crucially important method for improving job conditions, benefits, and earnings.

Union membership in general tends to result in higher wages, more rapid raises, and a narrowing of the wage gap between women and men.

### Full-Time Women Workers 1989

Union women:	\$417	Non-union women:	\$312
Black union women:	\$385	Black non-union women:	\$276
Hispanic union women:	\$369	Hispanic non-union women:	\$255

Median weekly earnings in 1991 for female union members were more than \$100 higher than for non-unionized women employees. But even female unionists earned over \$100 less per week than their union brothers in 1991. This continuing wage gap reflects the kinds of gender-based discrimination already described in this article. In addition, unions are not immune to the sexism prevalent in our society. The organized labor movement continues to be male-dominated in its national and local leadership bodies. Many problems encountered by women workers are ignored, dismissed, or weakly addressed. Efforts to overcome these shortcomings include: the establishment of the Coalition of Labor Union Women in 1974, the creation of women’s rights committees or caucuses in union locals, organizing groups such as the project La Mujer Obrera (The Woman Worker) and Cleveland’s Hard Hatted Women, and holding conferences (for example, the 1991 Labor Notes “Organizing for the 1990s” Conference, where special attention was paid to labor’s need to organize women workers; and the 1990 “Conference on Domestic

Workers: Feminist Perspectives” held at the University of California—Los Angeles).

According to Lenore Miller, the first woman elected to head the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, “We find more and more women are coming into leadership positions in the union because more women are working these days. But just a glance at the numbers will show you that women are underrepresented in leadership roles everywhere. The old view of traditional roles dies slowly.”<sup>7</sup> In 1986, Miller won the top office in her union, which now has 140,000 members in 35 states. Maria Elena Durazo, who heads the 11,000-member Los Angeles Local 11 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, was elected three years ago because she received the support of male unionists, who make up almost two-thirds of the local membership. Durazo is cited as an example of female union leaders who are more aggressive than their male predecessors in fighting for union demands.

The special difficulties encountered by female unionists was described by Linda Porter, part-time president of the 600-member Walnut, California, local of the Communication Workers of America (CWA). “When I go to Labor Council meetings in Orange County,” she explained, “the majority of people who attend are still men. One of the biggest problems for women is, if you have children, how many nights can you spend at meetings. And believe me, a lot of this job involves night meetings.”<sup>8</sup>

## Women in the Labor Movement

In terms of the labor movement as a whole, women workers are playing an increasingly vital role. The growth of female unionists was the major factor in keeping the union movement at a relatively steady numerical level during the 1980s. By the end of 1989, women represented more than one of every three union members (36.2 percent) — a proportion which had been increasing over the previous five years. The growth was greatest among African American women, who represented 44 percent of all organized Black workers. About one-third of Hispanic and white women workers belonged to unions by the end of the 1980s. Along with a drop in total membership during 1990–91, there was a decline in the proportion of female unionists; women made up almost 27 percent of all members in 1991 (6,138,000 out of a total 16,568,000).

Among the most successful union organizing drives in the past ten years are those involving government and university employees, where women constitute the largest portion of the workforce. Several outstanding examples are: the 1987 victory won by the Oregon Public Employees Union, which is affiliated with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU); the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, which won its collective bargaining fight in 1988; and the University of Minnesota workers, who were successful in achieving recognition in 1991 — both university groups are affiliated with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In the past several years, the national Justice for Janitors campaign of SEIU has succeeded in organizing militant chapters in about a dozen cities. In the Los Angeles area, where some of the most significant triumphs were registered, Central American women played a key role in establishing SEIU locals.

*Continued on page 24*

7. *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1992

8. *Los Angeles Times*, August 2, 1992



# Race, Class, and Gender:



## *Some Thoughts on an Important Discussion and Debate*

*by Carol McAllister*

In recent years, "Race, Class, and Gender" has become a phrase that is repeatedly heard in educational programs, political events, and organizational meetings of feminist activists and scholars who are part of the U.S. women's liberation movement.

This growing attention to the combined issues of race, class, and gender is bringing the U.S. feminist movement and other movements for social change to a crucial crossroads. One possibility is that the phrase "race, class, and gender" — repeated at times in almost ritualistic fashion — will simply become a litany of political correctness that plays only a minimal role in raising people's consciousness and facilitating the kinds of political analysis and action it implies. The other possibility is that the combined focus on these three forms of oppression — and the current popularity of such an approach — will open up new and significant opportunities for developing a much stronger analysis of the dynamics of contemporary American society and of the various movements that are challenging its structural arrangements. Such a strengthened analysis could in turn lay the foundation for genuine solidarity among the diverse and separate struggles that are currently organized around issues of race, gender, and class.

The progress of this discussion is of particular importance to socialists whose goal is to develop a revolutionary movement which links such struggles in an effective challenge to the capitalist system and which overturns that system and replaces it with a socialist alternative that addresses the needs of all. The purpose of this essay is, first, to strongly urge that socialist thinkers and activists become more consciously engaged in this debate — both learning from and contributing to it — and then to review some of the important insights emerging from the current discussion and to modestly suggest some directions in which it needs to go.

A thorough analysis would need to take a more internationalist approach, but here we will limit our focus to the United States.

This is more of a thought piece than a finished presentation. It is intended primarily to motivate and facilitate further discussion and debate in the pages of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* and elsewhere.

### **Our Struggles are Different; Our Struggles Must Be Joined**

One of the most important insights that the feminist movement in particular has developed out of this new focus on race, class, and gender is an understanding that women are not all the same. Rather, there is a considerable diversity of experience and perspective among women in our society depending on their race or ethnicity and their class position. There is a growing recognition in the women's liberation movement that while we are all oppressed because of our gender, how we experience even specifically gendered forms of oppression — e.g., sexual assault or lack of control over our reproductive lives — varies considerably depending on whether we are rich or poor, Black or white, Latina, Asian, or Native American.

Added to this increased awareness of diversity among women, is the understanding that many women experience multiple forms of oppression. In fact, the majority of women in the U.S. daily confront not only sexism but also class oppression. For women of color, there is the added burden of racism.

Because of these realities, women — both in the organized women's movement and in society at large — have a diversity of needs and priorities for struggle. Sometimes these priorities come into conflict with each other, leading to misunderstandings and distrust. There has historically been a marginalization of the concerns of working class women and women of color in many feminist organizations in the U.S. This has resulted in a replication of the class and racial inequalities of the larger society within the



organized women's movement as well as separate organizing efforts by African American, Latina, and Asian women and by working class women of different races and ethnic groups.

Because of their multiple forms of oppression, women also find themselves involved in a number of cross-cutting struggles for change — with other women around gender issues, with working class men around labor and class issues, and in the case of women of color, with men of their communities in struggles against racism and for national liberation and self-determination. Although these understandings are far from unanimous among feminist activists, the recent attention to the interrelations of race, class, and gender has helped to raise awareness about the need not only to “include” the perspectives and issues of working class women and women of color in the feminist movement but to bring such perspectives and issues “into the center” of feminist analysis and struggle.

At the same time, there is increased respect for and sometimes even campaigns of solidarity with all the struggles in which women are engaged — whether specifically around gender questions or around other questions that equally affect many women's lives.

While the feminist movement has been giving attention to divisions and forms of inequality among women themselves, there have also been new challenges to the labor movement to recognize the particular experiences and demands of women workers and to deal with both racism and sexism within its ranks and in the wider society.

The work of feminists within the Black, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American communities has likewise significantly heightened an awareness of gender issues in struggles emerging out of those communities, whether these are movements for basic civil rights or for more revolutionary changes. There is growing recognition of an obvious, though often politically hidden fact — that women make up at least half of the U.S. working class.

Women also constitute at least half of all communities of color, which themselves represent a growing and significant proportion of the working class. Thus any struggle for class equality that does not at the same time address questions of gender and racial equality inevitably leaves behind most of the members, and in fact the most oppressed members, of the working class.

This contradiction, as well as the recent focus on “race, class, and gender,” also raises some new theoretical questions concerning the interrelation between class struggle as traditionally defined and the struggles of women and people of color for liberation and basic democratic rights. This then leads to the question of the centrality of any or all of these struggles in the fight against capitalism and the work to create a socialist form of society.

While there is certainly not complete agreement or closure in this debate, most Marxist feminists currently argue that none of these forms of oppression can be reduced to or explained simply by reference to any of the others — that is, each has an independent dynamic and tendency to persist and replicate itself. Thus a socialist movement in the present and a socialist transformation of society in the future must give equal and combined attention to issues of class, race, and gender. Put more bluntly, there can be no socialist revolution that is not feminist at its core and that is not consistently and thoroughly antiracist. In more practical terms, the ending of class oppression and the institution of collective and democratic economic forms will not by themselves end gender or racial oppression. Rather, there will be a need for ongoing and autonomously organized women's movements and movements of people of color to continue the struggle against sexism and racism and to guarantee full human and democratic rights.

One additional fact that is becoming increasingly clear as the discussion around race, class, and gender unfolds is that there is not a simple division of labor in terms of these three axes of oppression and struggles against them.

I think there has been a common, though often hidden, tendency among many activists to engage in a form of pigeonholing. It is thus assumed that women and men of color are primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with issues of race and with fighting racism. White women in turn are allocated the tasks of analyzing and organizing struggles against sexism and gender oppression. This, of course, leaves the arena of class analysis and struggle — an arena that was historically privileged at least in European and Euro-American circles — to white men. This division of labor will, of course, not result in very adequate analyses or struggles and is, in itself, rather sexist and racist. More importantly it does not represent current reality.

Look, for example, at the three current initiatives for independent political action that have been discussed most frequently in the pages of this magazine — the Ron Daniels Campaign for President/Campaign for a New Tomorrow, the 21st Century Party, and Labor Party Advocates. It is interesting to note that it was the Ron Daniels campaign that not only put forth the strongest program in terms of fighting racism and the struggle for Black self-determination but also developed a working class perspective, including calling for democratic ownership of the economy, and a feminist agenda, including a demand for full reproductive rights and freedom for women. In a similar vein, if one gives even a cursory glance at the contemporary American labor movement, it can be seen that women — Black, Latina, and white — are leading the way on several issues of concern to both employed and unemployed workers (see article in current issue by Evelyn Sell).

Finally, we need to note the central role that African-American women, both scholars and activists, have played in formulating and furthering the current debate on the need to look at race, class, and gender in a combined and interactive way. One of these individuals, Patricia Hill Collins, in fact argues that African-American women and other women of color in the U.S. are uniquely positioned to understand and analyze all three of these forms of oppression and their interconnections. Her own work and the work of the other Black feminists she cites are good examples of current efforts to do so. (See, for example: Patricia Hill Collins, “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought,” *Signs*, vol. 14, no.4, 1989, and *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* [New York: Unwin Hyman, 1990]; also Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins, eds., *Race, Class and Gender: An Anthology* [Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992].)

## The Need to Go Further

While the insights emerging from the current debate and discussion about race, class, and gender will considerably strengthen short-term struggles for justice as well as the long-term struggle for a socialist future, the analysis of these three forms of oppression and their interconnections needs to go further. I would like to suggest some directions in which this debate and discussion could be fruitfully expanded while leaving the fuller development of these points for future work that needs to be widely shared among many of us.

One place to begin is with a clearer and more detailed analysis of what it is that separates and divides working class people in our society while at the same time trying to clarify what bases for solidarity remain in spite of these divisions. My focus here is on racial and gender divisions in the working class, although there



are other bases for oppression in working-class communities, such as age and sexual orientation. The recent discussion about class, race, and gender should also lead to increased attention to, and a better understanding of, these additional forms of social division and oppression.

A first step in our analysis is the recognition that while all working people suffer from class oppression and the exploitation of our labor, the specific experiences of this oppression and exploitation may be quite different depending on our gender or race. One obvious example is the issue of housework and childcare and its relationship to paid labor. Women and men of the working class have very different experiences in terms of carrying out housework and childcare as well as the social expectations to do so. In particular it is women who find themselves largely responsible for these unpaid, undervalued forms of labor, whether or not they also work outside the home for wages. The double day has thus been primarily an experience of women, not men, workers, and demands for services such as quality day care (including decent pay for childcare workers, again largely women), family leave policies, and flexible working hours have been raised most by women workers.

Historically, there has been another division between Black women and most other groups of women in the U.S. in that Black women were more likely to be engaged in full-time work outside the home throughout their lifetimes, often in performing housework and childcare in someone else's home. A similar pattern separated poorer working class women of all races from those who, while perhaps still formally part of the working class, could purchase labor-saving devices or the labor of other women to replace their own. This sometimes led to different reactions to the call put forward by feminists for women to "go out to work," especially when this demand was not accompanied by measures that would relieve the long hours of work the majority of women perform at home or end the economic and racial inequalities that force some women into performing household services for others.

The consciousness of women and men, and of different groups of women, around issues of work and around various social demands have been differentially shaped by these experiences. What is shared, however, is the continued existence of an unpaid or underpaid sector of work that reproduces the labor force, allowing employers to cut the wages of both men and women, to doubly exploit the labor of women, and to refuse to provide social services and policies such as childcare and family leave that would benefit the working class as a whole.

## **Race, Class, and the Struggle for Reproductive Rights**

Another example is drawn from the contemporary struggle over reproductive rights and highlights how the failure to acknowledge differences in people's experiences of a common form of oppression undercuts struggles for change. All women in the U.S. experience serious constraints on our ability to control our own reproductive lives and to make our own choices about sexuality, pregnancy, and childbearing. This is one thing we have in common and an important aspect of gender oppression in our society. However, the situation is quite different for women who have enough money to get around legal and other restrictions to abortion and contraceptive use and those who cannot afford to pay for abortions or contraceptives even where they are legal and available. There is a further difference between the experiences of white women, who are primarily affected by efforts to curtail access to abortion and contraception, and the experiences of women of color, who are affected by these same policies and are

differentially subjected to involuntary sterilization, attempts by the courts and welfare agencies to impose new forms of contraception such as Norplant, and measures that criminalize pregnancy leading to women's imprisonment if they are pregnant and use drugs.

Finally, because of the racial and class dynamics of our society, poor white women and women of color find it harder than do white women in economically secure circumstances to make the choice to have and rear a child in a healthy environment. This disadvantage begins with lack of access to adequate and supportive prenatal care and continues with differences in the kinds of housing, healthcare, and schools we can provide for our children.

These different experiences lead to different priorities and demands for change. If not acknowledged and given voice, the experiences and thus the priorities of these various groups of women will continue to produce a very fragmented and fractured movement for reproductive rights. If instead, however, these different perspectives are equally listened to and valued — and especially if the concerns and priorities of poorer women and women of color are brought more centrally into the reproductive rights agenda — a much stronger and more unified movement could be built.

In fact that movement's very program and vision would be significantly transformed and radicalized. The meaning of reproductive freedom would move far beyond a demand for keeping abortion legal to include demands for free abortion, contraception, and sex education and against the coercive use of sterilization and contraceptives and the criminalization of pregnancy. But even this would be seen as only a small part of the overall struggle for reproductive rights, which would soon be linked to struggles for free quality healthcare, for women's full economic as well as social emancipation, and for adequate resources to meet community needs, with such resources being under the control of the community itself.

It is, however, only by further specifying the intersections of race, class, and gender that we can become adequately aware of the differences as well as the common links in our experiences.

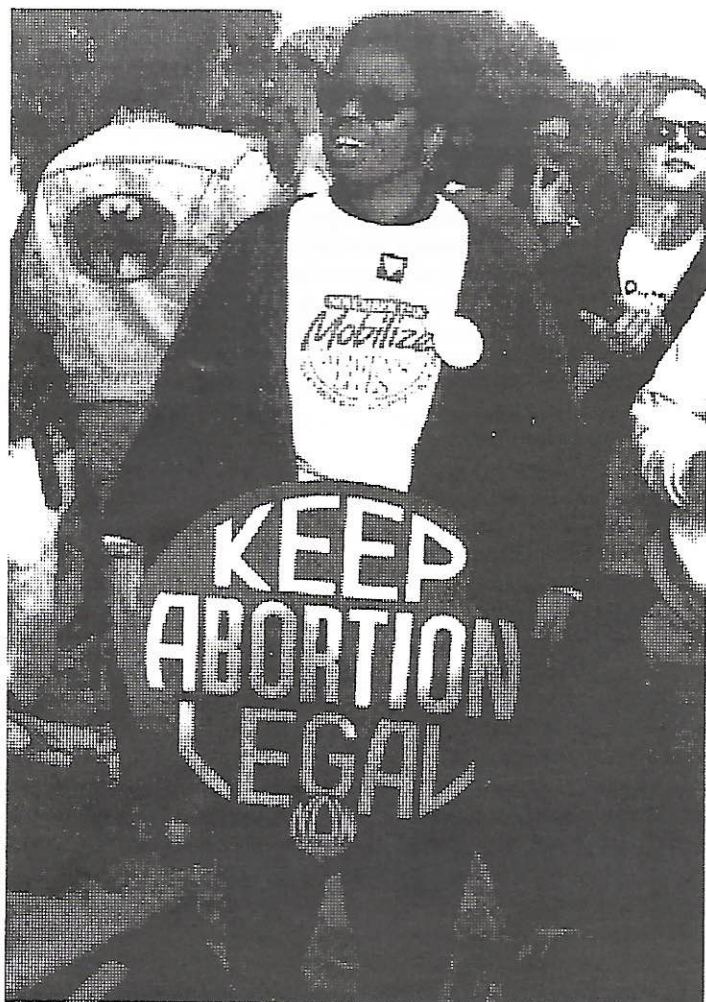
## **Reinforcing Oppressions**

An additional question that arises out of the discussion on race, class, and gender is the way in which each of these forms of oppression not only intersect but actually reinforce and perpetuate each other. For example, not only do women of color experience racial as well as gender oppression — and in most cases class oppression too — but the racial and gender dynamics of our society interact to make the experience of each form of oppression more severe or destructive.

I have thus been told by African American women that young girls in their communities often have a negative self-image, including seeing themselves as ugly, because of the mutual interaction of racist and sexist norms of female beauty. (See the poem by a young African American woman in this issue.) It also seems possible that African American boys and young men feel especially frustrated, angry, and alienated because, given the racial barriers in our society, they can never achieve the models of male behavior demanded by our patriarchal culture.

The historical examination of rape and ideas about rape is one area that has contributed to an understanding of the way sexism has been used to reinforce certain forms of racism and vice versa. Rape in most cases is a form of violence by men against women and thus an extreme form of gender-based oppression. Most instances of rape occur within, not across, racial groups. Yet the racism of our society often excuses the rape of Black women, especially by white men, while fears and false accusations of rape





of white women were often used as excuses to lynch Black men and thus to terrorize the Black community as a whole. At the same time, myths about interracial rape served to reinforce white women's subordination to, and essentially ownership by, white men who saw rape as a violation of their family honor and property.

While the tracing out of these kinds of connections is probably easier with historical materials, it is especially important to understand the ways in which race, class, and gender oppression serve to perpetuate and reinforce each other in the contemporary context. This is a very complex issue that needs a lot more work. Developing a better understanding of these dynamics is crucial, however, in terms of organizing effective struggles on any one of these fronts.

### **Racism and Sexism as Instruments of Capitalist Control**

One dimension of this question concerns the ways in which gender and racial oppression is used to perpetuate and reinforce class divisions in our society and to maintain the dominant control of the capitalist class. In broad strokes this is most obvious in terms of race or gender issues that have an economic dimension or that serve to divide the working class and create lines of competition within it. Thus demands for affirmative action on the basis of both race and gender, or calls for pay equity, are especially resisted by the capitalist class because they undermine the current situation of separate labor markets and a stratified work force. A more fully integrated labor force would also make it more difficult to main-

tain pools of unemployed or underemployed workers who can be alternately pulled into and pushed out of capitalist production as well as used to threaten the jobs and wages of those more comfortably employed.

Various social measures demanded by either women or people of color — for example, for publicly subsidized childcare or a raise in the payments and the level of dignity of the welfare system — are likewise resisted by the capitalist class not only because they would cost money but because they would undercut the existence of these vulnerable and thus very “flexible” pools of labor. In contrast, the fostering of various forms of hostility and suspicion between white workers and workers of color or between women and men serves to forestall the establishment of effective lines of solidarity and thus struggles around any of these measures.

Here we can see how racism and sexism serve to perpetuate class oppression even if they have independent dynamics of their own. What is more difficult to understand is the way in which “less economic” aspects of racial and gender oppression reinforce class inequality or benefit the capitalist class. For example, in what ways do forms of violence against women — e.g., rape and domestic abuse — help maintain the existing class structure? Or what about hate crimes against people of color? Or why are the recent attacks on abortion rights or attempts to coerce women of color into unwanted sterilizations or use of contraceptives such as Norplant supported by at least certain sectors of the capitalist class? Or why are calls for multicultural education in our public schools so vigorously resisted or undermined?

One answer, of course, lies in the tendencies toward misogyny, ethnocide, and genocide that are more violent aspects of the general dynamics of gender and racial oppression in U.S. society. Another answer may be that not all forms of racism and sexism are of direct benefit to the capitalist class but rather represent contradictions and distortions within the working class itself due to the existence of class stratification and years of experience of class exploitation.

In some cases, however, there are links, complex though they may be, between these more social and psychological forms of oppression and capitalist hegemony. The links need to be drawn out so that the relationship between struggles around these issues and struggles against the continued domination of the capitalist class may be made more transparent. In other words, this kind of analysis will help to more clearly reveal the transitional dynamics of struggles against gender and racial oppression, including those that put forward primarily sexual and cultural demands.

### **Gender and Race in Economic Restructuring**

One way in which the capitalist class is particularly exploiting these dynamics in the current period is through their manipulation of race and gender, along with class, in various kinds of restructuring of the international economy. It is interesting that these two discussions — about international capitalist restructuring and about the interrelations of race, class, and gender — have gone on side-by-side with some but not adequate cross-fertilization. The analysis seems must fully developed in terms of the gendered character of economic restructuring in so-called Third World countries — in particular the use of women to create a new low-wage proletariat for assembly line production in export-processing zones. In places as far-flung as the U.S.-Mexico border and the capital cities of Malaysia and the Philippines, U.S., European, and Japanese corporations have used locally existing concepts of “women’s place” and “women’s work,” as well as manipulated and transformed those conceptualizations to their



# Black Woman

Renée Michele Barton

*Renée Michele Barton is an African American high school student in New York City, who has fought to overcome the dislike of self caused by the stereotypes imposed by patriarchal white capitalist society.*

<i>You can jail a revolutionary; But not a revolution. I'm a proud black sister; Searching for a solution. Someone has hurt me; Pushed me to the end. In this harsh world; I'm my own friend. I've won the battle; But I'm losing the war. Respect of mankind; It's well worth fighting for. Don't wash away my tears; Cause you don't understand. I'm an oppressed black woman; Even oppressed by my black man. I fought for respect; To put my pain on the shelf. A little while back; I fought to love myself. I'm stronger now; No thanks to you. And I'll love myself; No matter what you do. You don't have to love me; That I can accept. But one thing you will give me Is the utmost respect. You beat me before; No one would protect. And now when I walk by You genuflect. I make you feverish; I make your heart blister. I leave you to wonder; "Who's That Fine Black Sister?" And for that white guy;</i>	<i>That loves me behind closed doors, You won't have that happiness; Any more. You won't get to touch; This pretty black girl; You know, the one you liked "To rock your world." The one you met; Who entered your life. The one you'd often run to; When unhappy with the wife. You won't do anything; There's only one thing you'll do. Like a black man; You'll respect me too. You don't have it like that; And you're no Casanova. Your days of raping the black woman; Are over. Diluting my skin; My African pride. At one time I was "property"; What you did was genocide. And for the white girl with skin so fair. Your paleness to my color; It doesn't compare. Getting tanned at the beach; Though you may try. You'll never be as black; Nor as beautiful as I. I rose above it all; To the highest I will soar. I am a BLACK WOMAN; Hear me roar.</i>
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own ends, to motivate and justify the use of women for low-paid and hazardous factory work.

In some cases, a similar use and manipulation of local racial or ethnic categories has also facilitated the recomposition of the wage-work force. For example, in Malaysia, it is particularly rural Malay women who are drawn into work in multinational factories, rather than their Chinese or Indian counterparts, who were a little more experienced with wage work and the local capitalist sector before the arrival of the multinationals.

A similar recomposition of the working class is occurring in the U.S. as part of the capitalist strategy of industrial restructuring. The use and manipulation of gender and racial oppression frequently seem to play an important role in furthering the process. An example from the Pittsburgh region illustrates this point. Many of the small towns around Pittsburgh, as well as its urban working

class neighborhoods, have in the past decade experienced the impact of a dramatic process of deindustrialization, centered around the dismantling of the local steel industry. While at first both women and men in these communities protested these developments, I would suggest that the transition to a lower-wage, service-based economy was facilitated by the role women assumed in providing emotional support for unemployed husbands and families experiencing a severe drop in income as well as by women's greater willingness over men to go out and take lower-paid jobs "to see the family through." These low-paying service sector jobs, as well as women's increased responsibilities at home in "making ends meet," have now become the norm in this region.

While heavy industrial areas of the U.S. were being turned into a rustbelt, others parts of the country, often known as the sunbelt, were being transformed into industrial parks reminiscent of those in the free trade zones of the Third World. Here there was a manipulation of both gender and race, as a new workforce in electronics and garment factories was built largely out immigrant women from Asia or Latin America.

The most recent wave of industrial restructuring involves the closing down of many of the larger factories involved in light industrial production. They are being replaced by the revival of wage work being done at home and the "putting out" system (employers moving small-scale production into the homes of the workers) as part of a process of decentralizing production and increasing the "casualization" of the labor force. Some of this is also related to new developments in U.S. foreign policy, especially the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

As one might expect, it is women, and particularly immigrant women or women of color, who serve as the home workers, the last and most vulnerable outpost in this reorganized process of production. At the same time, we might find Asian-American or Latino men serving as the intermediaries in the putting out system, while white men remain firmly in control of the top decisions and profits of the firm.

In each of these steps of industrial reorganization, the working class is partially torn down and recomposed. This process is facilitated by the use and manipulation of existing relations of gender and race. At the end, the particular relations between women and men, and between different racial and ethnic groups, may be somewhat shifted and changed without, however, any apparent lessening of the basic dynamics of gender and racial oppression. It is this process and its outcomes that need to be more carefully studied.

## "Race, Class, and Gender" and the Struggle for Socialism

This then leads to some final questions about the relations of class struggle and struggles around issues of gender and race in terms of the development of a socialist movement in the U.S. What seems clearest is the need for revolutionary socialists to become more fully engaged in the current discussion about race, class, and gender. This discussion is occurring in many contexts but of most importance are those that are connected to actual struggles for social change.

It is among people who are already in motion and fighting for their rights that this discussion has the best potential to lead to significant changes in consciousness and forms of action. This is really a discussion about broadening the conception of one's own rights as well as recognizing the rights of others who are likewise oppressed. And it is only through such changes of consciousness and practice that currently separate movements can come to

*Continued on page 35*



## Interview with Abortion Rights Activist

# “Relentless Terrorist Attacks to Close All Clinics”

*Claudette Bégin is a longtime feminist activist and has been a fighter for women's reproductive rights since the early 1970s. She is currently a leader of the San Francisco Area ProChoice Coalition and cochair of the Task Force on Reproductive Rights of East Bay NOW (National Organization for Women). A socialist for many years, she is currently a leader of Activists for Independent Socialist Politics.*

In a February 1 interview, **Bulletin in Defense of Marxism** asked her to describe the clinic defense action she was involved in most recently.

**Claudette Bégin:** About 100 of us from the Bay Area just returned from a clinic support rally in Redding, a rally the San Francisco Area ProChoice Coalition cosponsored.

We were moved to go to Redding a small city about 200 miles north of San Francisco because it was the site of one of the especially brutal attacks that have been taking place against clinics in Northern California and Oregon.

When the Feminist Women's Health Center in Redding was firebombed for the third time in June 1992, the clinic requested community assistance in rebuilding the facility and showing support for its services. People in the area responded immediately. One of the volunteers was Kim Fortune, a Redding resident who had been previously inactive. She took on a significant leadership role in the Shasta County ProChoice Coalition, raising money for the clinic and mobilizing support to reopen and maintain the clinic.

Last fall, Kim sent out a mailing to initiate a statewide network for the defense of clinics and abortion providers. The meeting launching the network involved representatives of prochoice coalitions from Orange County and San Diego in Southern California, and from the San Francisco, Alameda/Contra Costa, and Shasta County coalitions in Northern California. There were also participants from Planned Parenthood and other organizations. Out of this meeting came the idea for a support rally in Redding.

One of the major purposes of organizing and holding this rally was to reinforce the efforts of the prochoice community in Redding. We wanted to focus statewide and national attention on the Redding situation. City authorities were setting unusual and difficult preconditions for allowing the clinic to rebuild. Operation Rescue (OR) was continuing to harass even while the clinic was rebuilding. It was necessary to develop a strong counterweight to the conservative elements in the community, especially the reactionary churches and the police, as well as the local government officials who were complicit with OR's campaign of harassment.

### January 30 Events

In order to participate in the January 30 action, about 100 prochoice activists drove four

hours from the Bay Area to Redding. When we got there, our 35-car caravan drove at a snail's pace through the entire small city with signs displaying slogans like "ProUnion ProChoice" promoted by the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Other signs on our cars called for lifting restrictions on the RU486 abortion pill and displayed the names of the various groups represented. Our caravan then drove to the indoor rally at Shasta College, where we joined over 100 local residents. We heard personal testimony from women who had been forced to undergo illegal abortions, and there were speakers from various Northern California organizations building the rally. The clinic announced a reopening date of February 19. The Siskiyou ProChoice Coalition reported that they raised \$6,000 from a raffle to pay for the Redding clinic's sprinkler system an expensive installation demanded by the insurance company. After the rally, there was clinic defense training for local residents in anticipation of problems from antiabortion forces.

The event was very inspiring for people from the Bay Area. The opportunity to concretely support another area's pro choice community which was under attack was energizing.

**BIDOM:** What is being planned for the next period?

**Bégin:** Our goal is to organize activities which will lead to a federal investigation and prosecution of all the attacks taking place across the U.S. The San Francisco Area Pro Choice Coalition is currently circulating a petition as part of this campaign. The petition reads:

In 1992, at least seven family planning facilities in Northern California and Oregon were damaged or destroyed. No government agency, federal, state, or local, has conducted a serious investigation into these violent attacks; indeed, they do not consider them to be acts of terrorism! We call upon the proper authorities to recognize these acts as part of a concerted campaign of terrorism, to conduct thorough investigations into these crimes, and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

### Clinic Violence Fact Sheet

- During 1992, there were 1,107 acts of serious violence (bombing, arson, invasion, vandalism, chemical contamination, etc.) committed against community-based clinics which perform abortion procedures.
- 1992 marks a record year for clinic violence. Acts of vandalism alone jumped from 44 in 1991 to 77 in 1992, and the damages are estimated to be close to \$42 million.
- 8 of 12 firebombings committed in the U.S. during 1992 took place in California or Southern Oregon.
- **April 1992** The Catalina Medical Center in Ashland, Oregon, closed after sustaining \$225,000 in damages from arson.
- **June 1992** The Feminist Women's Health Center in Redding, California, was firebombed.
- **July 1992** The Family Planning Association of Newport Beach, California, was the victim of arson.
- **August 1992** Both the Sacramento (California) Feminist Women's Health Center and the Lovejoy Surgicenter in

Portland, Oregon, sustained substantial damage from arson.

- **September 1992** The Eugene (Oregon) Feminist Women's Health Center was the target of arson; the Feminist Women's Health Center in Chico, California, was contaminated with butyric acid.
- **December 1992** The Pregnancy Consultation Center in Sacramento, California, sustained \$75,000 in damages from arson and will not be reopening.
- *To date, no serious investigations have been conducted into these acts of violence, and no perpetrators have been brought to justice.*
- As this systemic pattern of violence against clinics continues, access to all reproductive health services diminishes for thousands of individuals who rely on these community-based clinics for their only form of health care.
- 83% of counties in the United States do not have an abortion provider.
- 15 out of California's 58 counties do not have an abortion provider.



We are asking organizations to endorse and get involved in this project. We are distributing a fact sheet showing that what's happening is all part of relentless terrorist attacks to close all clinics.

**BIDOM:** What do you and other activists feel is the major problem at this time in terms of women's reproductive rights?

**Bégin:** Access! Definitely access. Our fact sheet shows how violence is cutting off access to abortion facilities. But in addition, there are economic restraints on women's reproductive rights due to the lack of available clinics—a situation contributed to by Operation Rescue and other reactionary groups which have forced the closure of clinics and reduced access across the country, the legacy of Supreme Court laws allowing states to cut funds and to mandate waiting periods, parental permission for pregnant teenaged women, and an informed consent process, which is really statemandated antichoice presentations.

We need to fight such restrictions on a state-by-state basis as well as on a national level. We need to mobilize to defend clinics and abortion providers, such as doctors who are being harassed by rightwing groups into stopping their abortion services.

**BIDOM:** Do you have any comments about the increased aggressiveness of antiabortion forces over the last few months?

**Bégin:** They are feeling desperate because they no longer have the visible federal support they had before. But they do have access to tremendous resources and are supported by local and state officials, including the police. They continue to be a force we have to deal

with and fight against. Before the national elections last November, many of us figured that if Bush won, the antiabortion forces would be encouraged to be more aggressive, and if Clinton won, they would be so angry that their actions would become even worse. So, we anticipated problems no matter how the elections turned out, and there are reports from around the country about attacks against clinics, pressures on abortion providers, efforts to get more antiabortion laws passed.

**BIDOM:** How have abortion rights activists been affected by President Clinton's executive orders: lifting the "gag rule" in federally funded clinics, allowing importation of the RU486 pill, ending the ban on fetal tissue research, restoring foreign aid to overseas organizations that provided abortion services, and amending the policy which denied all abortions in overseas military hospitals?

**Bégin:** The feeling of imminent danger to abortion rights, which fueled the tremendous mobilization of the pro choice movement over the past few years, has definitely diminished. It has been replaced by a feeling of relief as a result of the election of prochoice candidates and Clinton's January 22 executive orders. We are faced with having to educate the prochoice majority about how harmful and unacceptable the remaining limitations approved by the Supreme Court are.

The election of a "prochoice administration" has spawned new ambitions within the national leadership of the pro choice movement. NOW is distributing its "100Day Executive Action Agenda." The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) has added an emphasis on birth control access. The National Abortion Federation [an

association of clinics] is launching a campaign to have states rescind the requirement for physician licenses to perform abortions, opening the way for nurse practitioners and physicians' assistants to fill the need for more providers.

**BIDOM:** Do you have any remarks you want to add?

**Bégin:** To move out of the very real crisis of access, the prochoice movement needs to continue to mobilize beyond Clinton's limitations. We can't afford to stop with the Freedom of Choice Act's partial restoration of our rights abrogated by the Supreme Court. Our agenda should be reproductive rights for all women. This means we should be ready to fight battles which will require educating the majority of prochoice Americans about the unacceptable burden caused by the legacy of limitations on our rights. We will need to fight Operation Rescue and defeat them tactic by tactic. We will need to fight state by state against the new laws attempting to curb abortion rights. And lastly, we will need to press at a national level for the return of federal funding and full federal protection for abortion rights, however reluctant the Democrats and Republicans.

In California, we will be fighting Operation Rescue in our local communities but also sharing strategies and efforts within our new statewide network. At least some of the active leaders realize that the movement needs to continue to fight to gain access for all women. That was the theme of most of the speakers at the Redding rally on January 30. We still face a tremendous challenge. □

## Carolyn Curtiss Memorial

*Family members, friends, and fellow activists celebrated the life and achievements of Carolyn Curtiss, who died of cancer January 19, 1993, at age 42, at a February 6 memorial in Los Angeles. The following is from the invitation, which describes Carolyn's lifetime involvement as a socialist.*

Carolyn was born into a family of democratic socialists, and she remained true throughout her life to the radical ideas, expressed in terms of contemporary issues, received from her parents and the socialists who frequented her home. She was a determined upholder of human equality, regardless of race. She fully respected the rights of homosexuals to respect and justice. Demonstrations for abortion rights would find her on the picket line for hours at a time. She was a strong advocate of women's rights. She was a resolute opponent of war.

Without affiliating with any specific socialist organization, she remained a convinced democratic socialist, probably inclined to-

ward the Solidarity group. She was friendly and open to all democratic socialists.

At the same time she developed a strong interest in modern art, in which she immersed herself. She studied modern art in college, in museums, in art shows, and in coffee houses, where little-known artists exhibit their work.

She had the gift of calling forth friendship, because she herself extended friendship and good will generously.

Carolyn told her mother that she, Carolyn, planned to have a child before menopause even out of marriage if need be. Cancer robbed us not only of a good and brave person, but robbed her and us of her child as well.

She fought the cancer that afflicted her determinedly up to the very last breath of her life. She wanted to live, and with that aim, studied the disease and its treatment. But the cancer triumphed...this time.

Yet the incidence of cancer can be reduced by purifying the environment of pollution arising out of capitalist production, in which protection of the environment is subordinate to greed for profits. Much of cancer is caused by pollution of the air, water, soil, and food.

In Carolyn's memory, let us battle the causes of cancer; in her memory, let us fight for an end to racism, for feminism, for a society of equality, health, and friendship. □



# Socialism and the Feminist Movement

by Mary White Ovington

*The following article was originally published in The New Review, March 1914.*

Socialism and Feminism are the two greatest movements of today. The one aims to abolish poverty, the other to destroy servitude among women. Both are world movements. No matter how backward the nation may be that you visit, you will find your revolutionist there preaching that poverty is unnecessary, and that a great organization is working to destroy private capital and to build a cooperative commonwealth. And throughout western civilization, and even in the heart of the Orient, you also find the woman revolutionist telling her enslaved sisters of the effort among women to attain their freedom, to gain their right to live, not according to man's, but according to their own conception of happiness and right. Ideas fly swiftly about the globe, and we are learning to think on the lines not of family or nation or race but of common interests and common suffering.

But while Socialism and Feminism are world movements they present an immense difference in that Socialism has a well-defined policy carried out by a marvelously coherent international organization, while Feminism has an indefinite policy and little organization. The feminist who creeps into the harem and whispers into the ear of the Turkish wife that there are women working to lift the veil from her face cannot at the same time invite her to the feminist local in her nearest precinct. Nor has she any world program by which salvation is to be gained. She is only voicing a discontent with woman's subserviency to men.

Now the relation of Feminism to Socialism is a matter of profound importance to many women Socialists. They read the party platform, demanding that women shall have equal rights with men, they attend the Socialist local and find these rights recognized by their comrades; and this should perhaps assure them that Socialism and Feminism are one. But they are not satisfied. They know that in any big movement certain propaganda is pushed to the foreground, to be striven for without cessation, while certain other is left behind, only to be considered when more important matters are disposed of. When they then ask, does Feminism stand with the Socialist party? Is it forward or is it in a dusky background from which it is rarely brought to light?

In putting this question I realizing my incapacity adequately to answer it. This would require a knowledge of both Socialism and Feminism far beyond anything I possess. I can only give a few suggestions that may provoke interest among others more competent to discuss the matter than I.

The feminist movement as we have noted, is difficult of description because it deals with women under all stages of masculine rule; but, broadly speaking, it is a revolt. As Mary S. Oppenheimer tersely put it in the *New Review*, it is "a reaction from the long rule of man and the consequent repression of womankind." The Socialist party in America as elsewhere always recognizes its political aspect when in its platform it demands a universal franchise for men and women alike, and when in its party organization it gives women an equal vote with men. This is a great deal, but the Progressive party has done as much. Is the Socialist party continually carrying on a woman's suffrage propaganda? Is it showing woman's economic condition, the injustices she suffers not only because she is poor but because she is a woman? That is, is it laying emphasis on the aristocracy of sex, on the fact that men today are still exercising extraordinary power over one-half the population, and are thus making democracy a farce? Is it doing these things?

Individual Socialists are undoubtedly doing them very often, especially women Socialists. But among many men prominent in America as Socialist writers and party leaders there exists a strange apathy on the woman question. Under Socialism, they assure you, women will have everything, but they are not interested in seeing that she secures her modicum now. They subscribe to the party platform, but they do not think the woman's suffrage plank of vital interest. For instance, at an Intercollegiate Socialist dinner I heard Victor Berger tell where he placed the cause of woman suffrage. He said he was ready to push a woman's suffrage position, but he regarded securing the vote for women as much less important than securing the old age pension bill which he had then introduced into the House. That is, the democratizing of half the adult population of the country was insignificant compared to providing pensions for old age, the pensions to be given by a capitalist government that would undoubtedly

ly find a way to get the money chiefly from the working class! This is not what I should call ardent championship of woman's rights.

Again, glance through our Socialist writers, and you will find an astonishing absence of any expression regarding woman and Socialism. I have lately been reading Allan Benson's admirable little pamphlet, "The Truth About Socialism," but there is not a word in it on woman and her disabilities; and Mr. Benson is but one of many writers of whom this is true.

Perhaps the whole matter may be explained by saying that the majority of the men in the Socialist party recognize no division but the division of class, and no struggle but the class struggle; while many, but by no means all, women Socialists recognize also a woman's struggle, the struggle of a sex for the full development of its powers and for the right to the full use of those powers. And while the woman undoubtedly sees that such development is sadly incomplete for the majority in a capitalistic society, she knows, as the man does not seem to know, that men have gone a long way toward freedom, else the political party of Socialism would not have been born. And she knows, too, that the coming of Socialism is not purely material. It does not mean simply a full stomach — that was often attained under chattel slavery — but a full life; and while she looks forward to the Socialist society she desires all the fullness of life that she can get now.

William English Walling has said that the difference between a conservative and a radical is a difference of time. Both see the wretchedness of conditions and both want a change; but one is willing to wait while the other wants the change *now*. It is this way with woman and Socialism. The Socialist tells her to work for Socialism and she will then receive all she desires; but the woman intends *now* to get legal equality with man, the vote, equal pay for equal work, and all the educational privileges open to men. She has no more idea of waiting for Socialism to give her these things than the man has of waiting for the cooperative commonwealth before he enters upon his trade or casts his vote. This is the meaning of the militant suffrage agitation in England. Undoubtedly suffrage will be given to English women in good time, but the



militants want it now, and they do not brook waiting with placidity.

The mass of men Socialists, as I have said, recognize no struggle but the class struggle, and thus logically they have no interest in enfranchising any women but those of the working class. Theodore Rothstein, writing in the *New Review*, assures us that women are adequately represented by their fathers and brothers and husbands because these represent their economic rights, and that the Social-Democrat of England favors universal woman's suffrage, "not on general grounds of so-called citizenship, justice and the rest, but because it will add to the political power of the proletariat."

That women are represented by their fathers, their brothers, and their husbands is surely gravely open to question. It is only since women have persistently agitated for their rights that the woman of property has been able to control her fortune or the working woman her wage. This, perhaps Comrade Rothstein would say, does not concern the class struggle — the money, whether husband's or wife's, remains in the same class — but it does concern the individual wife. And it is such masculine talk as his that must convince every thoughtful woman of the

need of a movement for her release from masculine domination.

But there is a more serious aspect to Comrade Rothstein's reasoning. If as Socialists we think of democratic movements simply as means of increasing a *class* vote, are we not in danger of thinking of them as increasing a *party* vote, and of refraining from enfranchising those who will not vote with the Socialist party? This is a real question in America where we have the disenfranchised Negro. And while the Socialist party is pledged to woman's suffrage, it is quite conceivable that where it has scored a victory it may be lukewarm, if not indifferent, to giving the vote to women even though by so doing the proletarian vote would be increased. It may inquire regarding the character of the woman proletarian. Is she not more conservative than the man? Is she not likely to be ruled by the priests? Isn't it better, now at least, to postpone universal suffrage until Socialism is more strongly entrenched in the proletarian mind?

Such reasoning as this seems very dangerous to some of us women who believe in democracy. It is a far-away cry, that of the Declaration of Independence, "that governments derive their just powers from the con-

sent of the governed," but it is one that women are obliged to declare daily. And perhaps the reason men take so little interest in the declaration is that they fought this question out a century ago, and are now in "fresh fields and pastures new." The woman who lives in a country where the franchise has not yet become universal may perhaps obtain it with more ease than the one who lives in America where men have forgotten that there was a time when but few males could vote. A belated movement is the most difficult of movements in which to interest mankind.

I find that my feminist argument has centered about the suffrage movement. But I believe that women for a long time to come, whether they have suffrage or not, will need to be banded together against oppression. They have a work to do in backward countries as educators, as physicians, as preachers of the divine right of revolt. Doubtless Socialist women will be in the forefront of the battle, and their Socialism will give them courage for the conflict. But they will also recognize that as women they have their obligation to stand with all other women who are fighting for the destruction of masculine despotism and for the right of womankind. □

## Working Women in the United States Today

*Continued from page 15*

Other efforts to organize women workers and female-dominated workplaces are currently being pursued. Given the upsurge in part-time and temporary employment, some unions are attempting to eliminate contingent work and, when that cannot be achieved, are trying to raise the standard of living for the overwhelmingly female contingent workforce. The strategies employed include fighting for pay equity and prorated benefits, and negotiating with employers to limit the use of temporary, part-time, and other types of contingent workers.

### No Simple Solution

Although joining a union is beneficial for women workers, it is not an automatic solution to the diverse problems plaguing female employees. Much must still be done within the organized labor movement itself to erase sexist attitudes and practices — as well as to democratize unions through such formations as the New Directions Movement in the United Auto Workers, Teamsters for a Democratic Union, Hell on Wheels in the New York transit union, Inter-Craft Association of Minnesota (a coalition of rail workers), and other rank-and-file groupings.

Women workers are compelled — by the current situation in unions and by the general conditions of U.S. society — to conduct bat-

tles outside of the labor movement, such as involving themselves in feminist organizations, participating in mass mobilizations for women's rights, defending women's health clinics, promoting independent political action, and pursuing other forms of struggle. In this respect, women workers are not different from other oppressed and superexploited groupings in society fighting for civil rights and remedies for special needs. When the labor movement takes the lead or joins in such struggles, the combination of forces is tremendously powerful. But, like African Americans or Chicanos or lesbian and gay activists, women workers cannot wait for the labor movement and cannot depend solely upon the unions as they are currently organized and led. Female workers need to get their unions as involved as possible in order to achieve their goals, but experience has proven that independent struggles are also required; for example, the top leadership of the AFL-CIO would not come out in support of abortion rights — although individual union leaders and locals were part of the pro-choice forces mobilized to demand women's reproductive rights.

In fighting both for their own special needs as superexploited wage earners and for women's liberation generally, working women's efforts will benefit the working class as a whole. Workplace victories for women's

equality help raise the standard of living for the entire class and aid in combating the divide-and-rule tactics of the bosses. The kinds of issues women activists have prioritized — like health care, parental leaves, safe environments, child care — are vital needs for all working people. Women are part of all the movements struggling for necessary changes: oppressed racial and ethnic minorities, youth and the elderly, environmental, homosexuals and bisexuals, disabled, anti-war and anti-intervention, and antinuclear. Uniting the strengths of social protest movements and unions provides a potent force which can advance the interests of all working people. □

January 14, 1993

### Bibliography

For other *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* articles related to women workers, see:

"How Will Women Workers Gain Pay Equity?" July/August 1987, Number 43

"What Working People Can Do About the Child Care Crisis," October 1988, Number 56

"The Struggle for Women's Liberation in the United States," September 1989, Number 66

"Fighting Against the Wage Gap Between Women and Men Workers," January 1991, Number 81

"The Independent Character of the Women's Liberation Movement," January 1993, Number 102



# Notes on the African American Struggle

by Claire M. Cohen

This article attempts to address several key elements relevant to the African American struggle. As an African American revolutionary socialist who is also a grassroots community activist in Pittsburgh, I feel that the topics dealt with here present key issues to analyze, debate, and discuss. Some of what I have to say may be controversial. I hope the response will not be one of subjective reaction, but instead will engage us in frank, comradely debate. The issues are too important for us to proceed otherwise.

Here I will address: (1) perspectives raised in Peter Johnson's article, "Revolutionary Integrationism and Black Liberation" (*Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*, February 1993); (2) current efforts for independent political action; (3) the role of African American women in the struggle; (4) the role of African American revolutionary socialists. In a future article, I want to further explore the problem of Black-white relations and also the crisis of gangs, drugs, and violence in the Black community.

## Revolutionary "Vanguards" and the Black Struggle

Peter Johnson's article arguing that Blacks should be urged to fight for "revolutionary integrationism" instead of revolutionary nationalism shows a real lack of connectedness with the African American community and its struggles. Furthermore, it shows what happens when theory is not tested against real conditions. While historical debates (such as those in the 1950s Socialist Workers Party between George Breitman and Richard Fraser) are important, they must be analyzed within the context of today's conditions. Otherwise, one ends up with a sterile, dogmatic discussion that, at best, alienates the broad masses from a revolutionary socialist perspective, and, at worst, leads to incorrect action.

The article starts out with the idealist statement that "if Black and white workers struggle together for socialism and Black liberation — under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party — they both can win." The reality is much more complex than this simple statement. Racism is so pervasive and entrenched in U.S. society that it is extremely naive to think that significant numbers of white workers are going to join in the struggle for Black liberation any time soon. In addition, at this point in history, the masses of workers — Black or white — are not inclined to rally to the cause of socialism. Indeed, most workers still buy much of the capitalist

propaganda about the superiority of capitalism over socialism.

There is also the question of precisely what Peter means by workers coming together "under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party." Depending on what this means, it may be that I disagree. African Americans, or any other group of people, begin to mobilize for struggle when they feel their conditions are such that they must fight for change to survive and have a decent quality of life. If the combination of objective factors is right, such struggles may assume revolutionary proportions. The role of the revolutionary socialist is to be there with the people in their struggles, presenting a particular vision of what a changed society might look like that would be just and fair for everyone, i.e., a communist society. Only the masses can choose what kind of society they want or what kind of leaders they have confidence in. The masses may eventually choose socialism, but not choose a self-proclaimed "Leninist vanguard" to lead them, and yet still win a successful revolution.

Peter strikes an unfortunate note in his article that will be interpreted as being paternalistic when he raises, for example, the question, "What should Trotskyists say to young Blacks who have fought the cops in the streets of Los Angeles?" African Americans are alienated when groups which they perceive as being basically white (including "Trotskyists") presume to tell them what they should fight for, as if African Americans are unable to determine that for themselves. Only African Americans themselves can decide the nature and goals of their struggle. Furthermore, Peter sets up a false dichotomy with his undialectical denigration of what he calls "community control of the impoverished Black ghettos." Why does he assume that African American communities must be permanently impoverished? African Americans want control of the economic and social resources coming into their communities because they realize that only they have the vested interest in using those resources to lift their communities out of impoverishment and provide a better quality of life for the whole community.

A static, historically-bound definition of certain terms, based on the tradition of a particular theoretical perspective (for example, what is the "correct" definition of *self-determination*) is also a problem in Peter's article. Thus he totally misses the point of African Americans' keen desire for self-determination as *they* define it. This culture-specific definition can best be understood if

one reads about the seven principles of Kwanzaa, a holiday that is popular among many Blacks in the United States. African Americans today, across a spectrum of ideologies, believe that the key to their liberation is control over the economic, political, and social policies and resources that originate from, come into, or impact on their communities. Most African Americans feel that if they could achieve this without ever having contact with white people, or white society, that would be just as well. Many are not averse to contact with white people. They just don't view it as a determining factor in their liberation. The few African Americans that believe, at this point in time, that integration is central to their liberation are overwhelmingly members of the Black bourgeoisie.

Peter makes no mention of the Black liberation struggle of the 1960s apart from the integrationist civil rights movement — which means that he ignores the historical realities of Black nationalism. The complexities of the Black nationalist movement could only be superficially dealt with in this article. Suffice it to say that there are both reactionary and progressive varieties of Black nationalism, including self-declared African American socialists who have incorporated varying degrees of the Black nationalist perspective into their thinking. Anyone who wants to have a sophisticated understanding of the African American struggle should study the history of Malcolm X, the Nation of Islam, the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the Black Panther Party, the Congress of African People, the League of Revolutionary Struggle, George Jackson and the Soledad Brothers, the Black Political Assembly, and the other organizations, people, and events that played a major role in the Black struggle during the 1960s and early '70s. Just as important is the need to spend time participating in the grassroots struggles of the African American community today.

## Building the Movement for Independent Politics in the Black Community

The key to revolution is a gathering momentum resulting from the successful building of mass struggles. In the United States a major impediment to sustaining momentum in the struggle has been the strong ties of the traditional nonrevolutionary left to the Democratic Party. A good example is the role of the Democratic Party in coopting some of the leaders of the Black liberation struggles of the 1960s. Of course this was not the only or even the biggest cause of the deterioration of



the struggle, but it has had a significant pacifying impact. Because of this, it is important for revolutionaries to work for building a grassroots, broad-based, independent political movement.

To build such a movement, we need to be flexible in our perspective. Because of the racial dynamics of this country that divide the working class, it is not enough to support just "a labor party." Oppressed peoples, such as African Americans, must play a major leadership role in this effort if it is to succeed. While some African Americans will readily join Labor Party Advocates, there are many at this point who will not. Many of these people would join a Black-led party (although some would only join an all-Black party).

Readers of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism* are aware that a Black-led effort has sprung up, the Campaign for a New Tomorrow. It came out of the Ron Daniels independent presidential campaign, which generated small groups around the country dedicated to building the movement for independent politics in the African American community at the grassroots level. The strongest groups are in Washington, D.C., New York City, and Pittsburgh, but there are fledgling groups in at least half a dozen other cities around the country.

In the November 1992 elections, Daniels was on the ballot in nine states and received write-in votes in another fourteen. I estimate that, including the write-in states, he got between 26,000 and 28,000 votes (including the 25,404 votes received where Daniels was on the ballot). More important than the vote count are the local groups that are enthusiastically committed to building an independent political base.

Since the elections, there has been at least one telephone conference meeting of the Campaign for a New Tomorrow's full 27-member national steering committee and a number of newsletters that have been mailed out to supporters. A national office has been established in Washington, D.C. A charter committee has been set up (of which I am a member). It has met regularly by telephone every three weeks and is in the final stages of drafting a charter to put before the membership of the organization. Plans are being made to have a National Founding Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on August 6 through 8, 1993.

On January 4, 1993, Daniels was interviewed by *New York Newsday*. He explained: "We are part of a flowering. One of the missing stories of 1992 is initiatives for new political parties. There are the Greens, the 21st Century Party, the New Party and talk of a labor party. The 1992 election was not about winning the White House for us, but about gathering up as many of the people who were in the Rainbow Coalition plus others to create a base for a permanent movement."

Asked about the Rainbow Coalition, Daniels replied: "The Rainbow was great strides

and lost opportunities. Jesse put out a vision that inspired many of us. He made a tremendous contribution, too, in bringing people together from diverse backgrounds. But Jesse Jackson actually demobilized the Rainbow into the Democratic Party." Asked about President Bill Clinton's policies, he responded: "The Clinton plan has rhetoric but I call it the 'Brill Cream agenda,' a little dab will do you. It just doesn't have the resources in it.... We have to have something new because the Democratic and Republican parties assume that the system as is, with the dominance of the military-industrial complex and corporations, is all right [and that] all we have to do is soften it a bit, put a kinder face on it."

Asked about the program of Campaign for a New Tomorrow, he stressed the need for a radical economic reconstruction and far-reaching social programs, involving "economic democracy" and "democracy in the marketplace," and adding: "A model may not exist. We may have to create something. I'm not for nationalizing industries. I'd much rather see workers take them over and run them." He elaborated in a manner that indicates his own Black nationalist roots and framework:

I go back to the National Black Independent Political Party Convention in Gary, Indiana, in 1972. The Gary Declaration is my Bible. It said the crisis we face as black people — and today I would add women and working people — is the crisis of the whole society. Today we still live in a society where the top 1 percent controls more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. That has to change. So, there is no honeymoon for the Clinton administration.

I articulate five basic human rights: First, a job with good wages and benefits. Full employment is a national responsibility, and government should be the employer of last resort. Second, quality housing for every human being in a safe and environmentally secure environment. Third, quality health care in a single-payer system. Fourth, education that offers a multicultural curriculum, social workers in schools and well-paid teachers. Fifth, a sustainable environment....

Cut the military budget 50 to 75 percent. Raise money through a genuinely progressive tax system. Then provide a domestic Marshall Plan and rebuild our cities, rural areas and the reservations where Native-American people live. We accomplish economic conversion of the military and economic democracy.

Throughout his campaign Daniels stressed a fundamental commitment to the Black nationalist perspective that African Americans must control their own communities. At the same time, he also argued (and in this interview he also concludes) that the various independent political initiatives must be "working collaboratively" to forge "a coalition of forces" that can dislodge the Democrats and Republicans by the first decade of the 21st century. The program of the Campaign for a New Tomorrow suggests how the issues of race and class realistically can be interlinked

— in a manner far superior to that suggested in Peter Johnson's "Revolutionary Intergrationism." The Campaign for a New Tomorrow program is also important for the way it deals positively with problems of gender oppression. This is a question which must be given attention by all serious activists.

## Black Women and the Black Liberation Struggle

The gender dynamics in the African American community are complex and contradictory.

On the one hand, extending all the way back to Africa, there is a traditional concept of woman as strong and the economic foundation of her family and community. African American women of all classes have been employed and often have pursued careers with the support of their families. They have played a strong, significant role in the struggles of their community — from Sojourner Truth, to Ida B. Wells, to Rosa Parks, to Assata Shakur. They have had a strong presence in many other aspects of African American life — from the arts, to the professions, from to business to community organizations. Some studies (according to Stephanie Coontz) indicate that African American males as a group have been more willing than males of other ethnic and racial groups to play an active role in childrearing and household work. Black men such as Frederick Douglass and Charles Redwood were among the strongest male advocates of women's right to vote.

On the other hand, there has been a lot of misogynist expression in African American literature and music, and this seems to be increasing. There has also been a tendency in the Black community to see a counterposition between the feminist movement and the Black liberation struggle, a strong tendency to suggest that the struggle for Black liberation is synonymous with the struggle for "Black manhood," and a lack of acknowledgment of the very real sexist oppression that African American women experience both within and outside of the African American community. One example of this sexism is the lack of equivalent recognition given to Black women activists, such as those mentioned above, as well as Mary Church Terrell, Ella Baker, Amy Jacques Garvey, Shirley Graham DuBois, and many others.

Another problem is the lack of support that the African American community gives to Black women when they have been victims of sexual harassment or abuse by Black men. Instead of dealing with the complexity of the tragic interplay of sexism and racism in victimizing both the man and the woman, there is a tendency to totally absolve the man of all guilt and lay all blame for the situation squarely on the shoulders of the woman. Examples include the Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas affair and the situation involving Mike Tyson and the Miss Teenage African



America contestant. In the case of the Hill/Thomas affair, the African Americans community's overwhelming response not only further victimized Anita Hill but played right into the hands of the Bush administration, whose aim was to put a traitorous Uncle Tom on the Supreme Court.

This is an issue that only the African American community can solve within itself. And, fortunately, it is starting to be dealt with in a small but significant way by progressive Black male activists, as well as African American women. There was actually a group formed called African American Men in Support of Anita Hill. There are many African American men who have spontaneously spoken up for the rights of African American women (and all women), such as Haki Matabuti, Ron Daniels, Jesse Jackson, and Manning Marable.

The key to resolving the contradictory tensions of gender dynamics in the Black community is for African American activists of both sexes to continue to emphasize that fighting for the liberation of *all* African Americans (women no less than men) will unite and strengthen the Black liberation struggle, while advancing the "liberation" of

one gender at the expense of the other will only divide and alienate much of the Black community. Another point that African American activists can continue to make, which will ring true with many African Americans, is that the current "mainstream" ideals of femininity and masculinity are products of European culture and not universal. There are a diversity of gender role ideals, many of which are African, which we should analyze and use to help us define ideals for ourselves that will work better for our community and possibly even for the whole society of the United States.

### **The Task for African American Revolutionary Socialists**

At this point, what is the task for African American revolutionary socialists? I would suggest that the answer to this question is relevant for *all* revolutionary socialists. We cannot afford to sit by and be armchair socialists. We must become deeply involved in the grassroots struggles of our communities. These struggles are more often than not being led by people who aren't even leftists, but I feel they have genuine revolutionary potential.

We should not attempt to convert these struggles to consciously socialist struggles at this time — neither the grassroots organizers nor the masses are ready for that. However, the people in these struggles are beginning to question some of the basic conventional "truths" of this ruthless capitalist culture. Our role should be to help people develop a damning critique of capitalism while beginning to develop, through their experiences in mass struggle, a vision of society which is in essence a truly democratic socialist society. As people begin to develop such a vision, they will become increasingly receptive to the ideas of socialism and the need for it. This is a long-term, not particularly "dazzling" role for revolutionary socialists to play. But in the long run it is the most important one — with the most potential, I believe, for bearing fruit.

There are many more difficult issues to be dealt with by revolutionary socialists who are serious about putting their ideas into practice. In a future article, as already indicated, I will give attention to the relationship between gangs, drugs, violence and grassroots organizing in the African American community, and also the question of Black/white relationships and revolutionary socialists. □

## **U.S. and Turkish Governments Unite to Crush the Kurds**

*Continued from page 8*

and not only in Baghdad. Turkey, Iran, and Syria feared that the establishment of a Kurdish entity in Iraq would encourage Kurdish rebels within their borders.

"In part to ease the concerns of Turkey, Secretary of State James A. Baker 3rd met with Iraqi Kurdish leaders in Washington, reportedly informing them that if they wanted support, the United States would expect them to maintain a good relationship with Mr. Demirel's Government in Ankara," the capital of Turkey. In other words, Baker issued a threat: "either help the Turkish government crush the Turkish Kurds, or you are on your own."

Caught between imperialist threats to cut off desperately needed supplies, with winter approaching, the two dominant Kurdish parties in the U.S. "security zone" in Iraq caved in. On October 4, "the 105-member Iraqi Kurdish legislature then voted to expel the Kurdish Workers party" from its territory, which meant that its forces joined with those of the Turkish government to suppress their brother and sister Kurdish fighters.

By the end of November, the PKK forces in Iraq had been crushed by the combined force of Iraqi Kurdish detachments and the U.S.-backed powerful Turkish military offensive. At least 500 Turkish Kurds had been killed, 1,500 wounded, and 1,600 captured, according to press reports (*NYT*, November 24, 1992). Both the Iranian and Syrian governments mobilized troops to reinforce their borders to prevent Kurdish rebels fleeing Turkey from entering their territory.

The New World Order, like the old one, will not tolerate any manifestations of self-determination. A new tragic page has been added to the history of the Kurdish liberation struggle, with the fratricidal accord by the Iraqi Kurds to help the Turkish government crush the Kurdish liberation struggle in Turkey.

The *New York Times* reported: "Leaders of the Iraqi Kurds now hope that their military role against the Turkish Kurds will win them favor in Ankara, whose support may prove important in allowing them to maintain their own regional autonomy (Nov. 24, 1992). This is a pipe dream. This reprehensible collabora-

tion of Iraqi Kurdish leaders with Ankara may help keep supplies coming overland from Turkey to the "security zone" for a while; it may mean that a few less Iraqi Kurds will die from hunger and cold this winter. However, it is clear that the Iraqi Kurds should have no illusion that this U.S.-backed "security zone" where they are living will provide them any freedom at all. It is, rather, a large internationally supported concentration camp for them.

In late 1992, the U.S. Congress approved another \$450 million in military aid to Turkey, on top of the some \$5 billion in military aid that the Turkish government has received from the U.S. government over the previous eight years, thus putting its rubber stamp on the Turkish government's policy of repression of the Kurds.

It is obvious that there needs to be a movement here in the U.S. exposing the criminal actions of the U.S. and Turkish governments against the Kurdish people and demanding "Stop the repression of the Kurdish people! Stop all military aid to Turkey!" □



# The Centrality of Labor Political Action

by Elaine Bernard

*Following is the edited text of Elaine Bernard's talk at the Labor Party Advocates educational conference in Detroit, December 5–6, 1992. Former president of the British Columbia New Democratic Party, she is now executive director of the Harvard University Trade Union Program*

**B**y the term labor movement we mean the self-organization of working people for empowerment. However, in the U.S. we use the term labor movement to mean trade unions. In most advanced industrial countries labor has two centers of organizing and activity. One is in the workplace, and it usually leads to the forming of trade unions. The second sphere of activity is in the community, and often this means organizing working people into political parties. When you go to Europe you'll hear people talk about *the labor movement*. People who are not union members will refer to themselves as being part of the labor movement because the labor movement is seen as having two wings, and it is more than the trade union members. In fact, if you go to a Third World country, you'll discover that they might refer to a third wing, which organizes in the countryside around peasants and small farmers. The labor movement internationally has always been larger and greater than just the trade union organizations.

The United States tends to be rather unique in that it doesn't have, and never had, a trade union-based political party like other advanced industrial countries. In Britain, for instance, the trade union movement eventually decided to launch its own political party at the turn of the last century. The trade union movement created a new political party called the Labour Party, and when that party sold out the trade union movement, the trade union movement tried to transform that party so that the trade union movement would utterly dominate the party through something called the bloc vote. Today I would suggest that that party is once again in crisis, and it is the job of the labor movement to again transform that party into a democratic party with real labor participation, rather than a bloc vote, but that's another story.

The German labor movement was originally a party-based movement; the Social Democrats. They didn't have labor unions. They started off as a socialist movement of working people and saw that they needed to construct some organization in the workplace to fight for workers rights. So the party helped to construct the trade unions in Germany. It was a totally different model from what happened in Britain. In Spain and France, the two grow together. Anarchist groups, socialist groups, communist groups, etc., organized in both the workplace and the community and formed many parties that had a majority of working class members and that

represented a variety of pro-working class strategies.

It's important for us to understand the centrality of labor political action in the United States, because we have been pushed out of the political field and hostility to labor political action is now part of the tradition of the American labor movement. We know instinctively that political action is important. That there is nothing you can win in collective bargaining that cannot be taken away by legislation. It just makes common sense that we need to have a political action strategy. We must be organized on both fronts.

## Costs of Success

One of the reasons I believe we haven't been organized on this second front independently, in our own name, in the United States has been because for a number of years the U.S. trade union movement was the most successful trade union movement in the world. It had won for its members a social wage that working people in other countries were only able to win politically. The social wage that I enjoyed in Canada, of health care, paid vacations, pensions, etc., was legislated. It was first won by the trade union movement, but through political action was socialized to all people, whether or not they were members of a union. In the United States, the union movement was able to win these benefits for its members without winning state power. The cost of its success, however, is that it only won these things for its members, it didn't extend these benefits to the *entire class*. The union movement became isolated.

We say that we have got the most antiunion employers in the United States. It is because there are more rewards to smashing unions in the United States than in any other country. You can smash a union in Canada, but you can't get rid of workers' health care. Why? Because it's socialized and is a right of all residents, not just "unionists." In the United States, if you smash a union, you can destroy all sorts of working people's benefits because so many of our benefits are employer dependent. In the United States there's a real benefit to smashing a union because the wage and condition differences between working people in unions and working people not in unions is so extreme. By not socializing the gains of our movement, by not extending them to all workers, we've in a sense, made ourselves a target.

There are of course lots of reasons why we didn't socialize the benefits first won by unions. It wasn't just that we were mean or that we chose not to; there's all sorts of reasons. Good reasons and bad reasons. Bad reasons like racism and good reasons like it was very difficult, and all the resistance we met in the workplace didn't make it that easy to extend. But we ended up being isolated from the rest of the working class, and we constructed a trade union movement that lost any sense of being a movement and any sense of class.

Class is about knowing who's on the same side as you, and realizing that we are our brother's and sister's keeper, and that what we wish for ourselves we want for all. Instead, we constructed a movement that would help us look out for number one. I call it McDonald's socialism: we do it all *for you*. You pay into it and we do it all *for you*, as opposed to the self-actualization of working people — doing it for ourselves. Our movement should be about helping us organize to win things for ourselves. You can see that the ideological battle that we've always had in this country, of individual versus collective or group rights, fits in and pushes our trade union movement toward business unionism, where it makes sense to join a union because we'll get something out of it individually. It's an investment, you put in a little money, you tolerate a little shit, but no problem, you get a better social wage for doing it. It's not seen as being part of society, and a means of transforming not just ourselves, but our kids, our friends, our neighbors, etc. We live in a world where people don't exist only as individuals, as important as individuals are, but also as collections of people.

## Politics Is About Ideas

We depoliticized the working class. Politics is in fact about ideas. Politics defines what can be done, and what problems can be dealt with in the social realm rather than the individual realm. This has historically changed over time. We need to ask ourselves, "What is my responsibility as an individual, what can I do and what can I expect from us collectively as a society?" There was a time when we thought that we couldn't expect anything from us as a society; that we were each on our own to fend for ourselves and our families. However, building a social wage starts to say, as we have in Canada, that we collectively, as a society need to provide



quality health care for all of our residents. Even right-wing Canadians talk about health care as a right. We have constructed a sense of *entitlement of a social right*. You do that through *politics*, by making it a political issue. By arguing and discussing and thinking, you empower a whole group of people through your actions. It's very important to understand how politics helps us to see what problems we can solve collectively as a society, and that we've got to work collectively as a society if we're ever going to change things. We have, of course, a "collective" identity in the U.S., and it is the amorphous classless notion of "America." This form of collective identity works against separate labor and working class political action. On questions where there are clearly different interests between working people and rich people, we see the interests of workers disappear in a "bipartisan" solution. What's good for GM is what's good for America. And to criticize what's good for "America" is to place yourself not just outside of the realm of the working class or the community, it's to place yourself outside of the entire country.

You can see how that then leads to no politics in the union. There are no separate working class politics, no separate interests of working people as opposed to the interests of bosses. There's just one big America, and anything that's really important affects America, and there's only one America, so of course we'll need a bipartisan solution. The minute we do that we have done something that's very dangerous: we've lost *our* voice. We have entered a realm of mass conformism. We have broken the ability of people to think and work collectively in their own interests. What we end up doing is destroying politics in the labor movement. There's all sorts of reasons historically as to what caused this, but the key thing to remember is that people change through their own actions, and what *is* can change.

What we need to do now is think about how we can change labor politically, how we can repoliticize the labor movement. How we can construct a labor movement beyond a trade union movement. I think that a labor party in the United States is vital to such a task. It helps to construct a working class consciousness and an awareness of the importance of politics. We in the trade union movement are now a minority of the working people in America. We might consider, that by always talking about the "trade union movement," whether we mean to or not, we are setting ourselves against other workers who have not yet had the ability or the privilege that we have had to be able to organize into unions. A labor movement is different because you don't necessarily have to be in a union to be part of a labor movement, which you can be through a political party.

I want to talk just briefly now about some of my experiences in Canada. I think that

there's some things we can draw from through my experience as somebody who has been in the labor movement there. By that I mean both as a trade union activist and as someone who was in a labor-based political party. The first thing that we learned from the Canadian experience is that a North American-type model of a labor movement is quite possible. The game we play in America is to say that nobody understands us, this country is unique, everybody else in the world is a foreigner, etc. But Canada is very like the U.S. The tricky thing about Canada is that it's really difficult to red-bait seriously. You can't say that the socialist hordes from Canada are coming down to invade our society. Canadian workers look and sound like us and have the same "frontier," non-"feudal" tradition. There are so many traditions similar to America, except that we know there's that little gene called collectivism that kicks in and forces them to do socialized things. That's nonsense. It's not like Sweden, it's not like Germany, it's not like Britain. In many ways our traditions are so similar.

### NDP Transformed Politics

The second thing that the Canadian labor experience shows is that you don't need to win power to win reforms. At a national level, the New Democratic Party has never garnered more than 20 percent of the vote, but I would argue that they have transformed Canadian politics. They've done it by having clear, articulate people with their own voices. There's no nonsense about bipartisanship, except recently around the constitutional debate, and they're paying the price for that.

Thirdly, there's the concept of a "loyal opposition," that opposition is an appropriate and responsible stance. Opposition to policies you disagree with is not "un-American" — silence is. That's an important part of what we need to do. We need to liberate people in politics and in action. There's a lot of people here who are part of dissident caucuses in trade unions. The concept of a loyal opposition could transform our union movement. It legitimizes political discussions inside the labor movement. There can be none of this "We can't talk politics in this union." That's bullshit. We need to be able to say, "I'm affiliated to this political party and I want to discuss some of its platform issues and whether they are appropriate and adequate." That's why today, for instance, the Canadian Labor Congress is pro-choice on abortion, because being linked to a political party means that it got to discuss some of these issues.

And workers should be discussing these issues in the workplaces as well as in political parties. It brings labor into coalition with other groups, and in a democratic sense it creates a second channel for influence within the trade union movement for building a working class political base.

One of the things you notice in the Canadian labor movement is that you can build a base of support not just through your own work site which, in a sense, your union isolates you in, but with workers in other unions. Even if your union happens to be one of those snooty unions that doesn't like to get involved with other unions because they think they know everything, you can hang out with other trade union activists, legitimately, through a labor party, where you share knowledge and ideas and political solidarity that you can then bring back to the floor of your own trade union. You can then start to transform it in a way that you can't in the United States.

In the United States, it's very difficult for rank and file trade unionists to think and talk about ideas, unless they belong to some little clique or small left grouping or something like that. There is no legitimate vehicle for discussing political ideas within the union. But a labor party brings trade unionists into solidarity with other groups of the working class movement: gays and lesbians, people of color, environmentalists, all sorts of people. You can't work together in a party without developing some sense of solidarity, without learning from each other.

Some in the U.S. might argue that involvement in these other issues, social issues and work in coalitions, might take energy away from our union goals. But the experience in Canada with, for example, the Action Canada Network shows that it hasn't stopped the Canadian trade union movement from building extraparliamentary forms of action. The Canadian labor movement understands that it must work inside its own political party, but it also needs to build a wider social movement beyond electoral politics, and the two complement each other. It's not like the reductionist way that we always look at things in the United States, saying that it has to be one or the other. It's a dynamic process — it's growing through working together.

Finally, it transforms the other social movements. I was involved in the women's movement in Canada. The women's movement in Canada tries to get women trade unionists to speak on issues and tries to make sure there's a union label on their leaflets. Things that the women's movement in the United States doesn't think about because it has very little experience working with trade unions. Working people also get a real experience with power, with leadership and with accountability, and of course it broadens the whole political spectrum.

I'd like to end with one comment. We spend a lot of time, particularly those of us on the left, conceiving how the future's going to be; what the future will bring, and how are the forces lining up? I used to work in the area of computing, and one of the things they say in that business is that the best way to *predict* the future is to actually *create* it. □



# Cooperation or Cooptation?

by Melanie Benson

*Melanie Benson is a member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 in Minneapolis/St. Paul.*

"In our diversity, we have the same struggle. We may work different jobs, but the way management treats us is always the same." The woman who spoke these words was Lola Reed, president of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, and she spoke near the end of the highly successful "Meeting the Challenge" conference, held January 30 in St. Paul.

Cosponsored by several labor organizations, including the Assembly, the conference focused on the growing threat to unions posed by management-designed and management-controlled programs variously called "team concept," "employee involvement," "quality of work life (QWL) circles," and so on.

Of the almost 400 unionists and other workers in attendance from several states and thirty-nine unions, only a handful worked for employers who did *not* have such programs in place. Nods of recognition and agreement from conference participants were commonplace as several speakers outlined increasingly familiar management tactics.

Speakers on the morning panel presented a national perspective. Bill Urman, international vice-president of the Teamsters Union, described such programs as double pronged: first, a threat to the collective bargaining process and, second, a struggle for "the hearts and minds" of workers. Greg Pofert, national business agent for the American Postal Workers Union, explained the APWU's longstanding opposition to these programs, which are often used to whipsaw and divide unions and "to pit worker against worker." His message was strong: "It's not the relationship with the bosses, but our relationship with each other

that's important." Bruce Glover, chairman of the Brotherhood of Maintenance and Way Employees on the Burlington Northern Railroad, noted that management expects unions to sit at one table in "jointness" while trying to "slaughter us at another table" in contract negotiations. Similar experiences in the United Paperworkers International Union were related by Dick Blin, IPIU publications director.

Since many companies cite the supposedly successful model of Japanese labor-management relations to justify their programs, a particularly valuable contribution to the discussion was made by Ben Watanabe, former president of the South Tokyo Local of the National General Workers Union of Japan. According to Watanabe, the Japanese management style is based on a multi-tiered discriminating structure that benefits only a relatively few, more privileged Japanese male workers for large corporations at the expense of women and immigrants working for small and medium-size firms — and at the expense of the community as a whole. "Karo-shi," sudden death due to overwork, is a growing problem in Japan.

Labor-management cooperation schemes have proliferated three times in U.S. history, explained labor history professor Peter Rachleff, in periods coinciding with a decline in the strength and power of unions. The phenomenon is nothing new. From "Taylorism," or scientific management, in the early 1900s to "vocational psychology" in the 1920s, to the multitude of programs today, companies have tried to use the collective skills and intelligence of the workers to maintain management control. Jane Slaughter, writer for

the newsletter *Labor Notes* and author of books and pamphlets on Employee Involvement Programs, gave several examples of the use of the "Cooperation Apparatus" of QWL circles leading to "Management by Stress," where increased worker productivity is the ultimate goal — usually at the expense of workers' health and resulting in a loss of jobs. The bulk of her presentation dealt with how unions can fight such programs by educating union members and organizing union caucuses.

Tom Lacey (UAW Local 879, Ford), Mike Tittle (Mailhandlers Local 3230), Gladys McKenzie (AFSCME, University of Minnesota), and Rick Sather (Teamsters Local 638, Minneapolis Star-Tribune) described case studies of how unions have dealt with some of these programs. Several unionists attending the conference from the Midwest and from as far away as California and Idaho contributed to the serious and inspiring discussion, making it clear that this subject is of vital and compelling interest to many. The biggest chuckle of the day followed a remark by Bruce Glover that working in joint programs necessitates "trust in management." The theme of labor solidarity was reinforced by a member of the Rubberworkers Union from Iowa, "'The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.' No one trusts management, but we should all trust each other." Those attending unanimously passed a resolution to continue and expand the educational work on this issue and encouraged people to attend the April Labor Notes Conference in Detroit, where the issue will also be discussed.

An evening program at the UAW hall following the conference featured Larry Solomon, president of UAW Local 751 (Caterpillar) in Decatur, Illinois, who noted that before the recent strike, 70 QWL groups were up and running at Caterpillar: "The more we cooperated, the more they took it as a sign of weakness." Both Jane Slaughter of *Labor Notes* and Jerry Tucker of the New Directions caucus in the UAW echoed the need for eternal vigilance as they cautioned unionists against the policies favoring labor-management cooperation being promoted by the new Clinton administration. Tucker emphasized the need for new ways of organizing unions to meet the new realities of the multinational corporate challenge. □

## How Free Are We?

*Continued from page 1*

ular, the sonogram, an advanced method of safely and accurately determining the status and gender of a pregnancy via the use of sound waves, is being used to control the number of female births.

It is obvious that the fight for control over our own lives, for reproductive choice, for a living wage, for education, health care and housing, for political representation, in addition to other issues affecting women, must take place both here *and* internationally. We

must not erase from our collective memory the lessons of the last twelve years. We cannot entrust our hard-won rights to either establishment party. Whether Clinton's policies prove to be a "sea change" or not, one thing is certain, that even superficial attempts to address gaping social inequities of long standing will incite antichoice forces and intensify our struggle to insure individual choice and self-determination for *everyone, everywhere.* □



# Former P-9 Strikers Sweep Union Elections

by David Riehle

The Hormel workers in Austin, Minnesota, added another chapter to their rich history when a group of former P-9 strikers swept the local union elections in December, taking every major position.

The new officers are not part of the leadership that headed the P-9 strike in 1985-86. Those leaders, including local president Jim Guyette and the other members of the executive board, were fired at the conclusion of the strike, with the connivance of the company, the federal courts, and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW).

The new leaders come from a group of former strikers who were allowed recall rights under the sweetheart contract signed at the end of the strike by company and international union officers, including Packinghouse Division head Lewie Anderson. These former strikers began to re-enter the plant about 1989, as recalls began. They found that part of the sweetheart deal was that the scabs had been granted seniority rights over them. The Hormel Company had also set up a fake subsidiary called Quality Pork Producers (QPP) by building a wall through the plant and declaring the cut-and-kill department a new corporation. The UFCW signed an even sweeter sweetheart agreement covering the QPP workers with rock bottom wage rates.

Back in 1987, after federal court orders had allowed the UFCW to evict the P-9ers from their Austin union hall, seize their assets, and declare the strike ended, the UFCW sandblasted the labor solidarity mural from the wall of the union hall and rechartered Local

P-9 as "Local 9," as if they could erase the memory of the struggle as easily as a mural. The UFCW also set up as the heads of the new local discredited former local leaders who had been ousted when the Guyette leadership came into office in 1984. These were the people who were voted out in December 1992. Especially strong support came from the QPP section of the plant, where the new leaders won by a five-to-one margin.

As the Barbara Koppell documentary on the P-9 strike "American Dream" vividly illustrates, even while the strike was still officially sanctioned by the UFCW, the international was meeting secretly with the people who had led the scab movement across the picket lines in February 1986 to plan how to defeat the strike.

[Koppell's Academy Award winning film, which depicts the Guyette leadership as hapless incompetents, makes out Lewie Anderson, the former protege of longtime Stalinist packinghouse union leader Jesse Prosten, to be the real hero of the situation. A new book on the strike written by historian and labor activist Peter Rachleff presents a stinging assessment of Koppell's film:

"American Dream" actually implies that the UFCW had the "right" position — not to take on Hormel at all, or to return to work on the company's terms when they began to hire "permanent replacements" — at the same time that it whitewashes the union's role in destroying a strike it publicly claimed to support. (*Hard-Pressed in the Heartland*, South End Press, 1993, p. 5.)]

Elected to the key posts of president and secretary treasurer of Local 9 in December

were former rank and file striker Dick Koski and Dale Chidester, a former Hormel worker from the Ottumwa, Iowa, plant, where 500 workers were fired in February 1985 when they walked out in support of the Austin strikers. When the Ottumwa plant was closed and sold to another meatpacking company some Ottumwa workers also were granted rights to transfer to Austin. In a front-page article on the P-9 elections, headlined "Persevering P-9ers Return to Power," *Minneapolis Star Tribune* writer Doug Grow said: "Chidester, who was narrowly elected as secretary treasurer, has the fire to be a labor leader to watch in the future" (*Star-Tribune*, January 31, 1993).

One of the first acts of the new leaders was to attend a conference of some 300 unionists in St. Paul on January 30, called to discuss ways to oppose so-called "quality circle" cooperation schemes, where they were greeted with an emotional ovation when they were introduced.

Six years after the strike was brutally crushed the indomitable Hormel workers have once again renewed their struggle for justice. It is a struggle that goes back as far as November 1933, when they first struck and took control of the Austin plant. At that time U.S. packinghouse workers were largely unorganized, low paid, and suffering under terrible conditions, much like today. Like then, the Hormel workers have their work cut out for them. For those who know them and their struggle, there is no doubt about whether they will meet the challenge. □

## Oil Interests in Somalia

*Continued from page 7*

Chevron winning the right to explore and exploit the most promising ones.

The companies' interest in Somalia clearly predated the World Bank study. It was grounded in the findings of another, highly successful exploration effort by the Texas-based Hunt Oil Corp. across the Gulf of Aden [from northern Somalia] in the Arabian peninsular nation of Yemen, where geologists disclosed in the mid-1980s that the estimated 1 billion barrels of Yemeni oil reserves were part of a great underground rift, or valley, that arced into and across northern Somalia.

Hunt's Yemeni operation, which is yielding nearly 200,000 barrels of oil a day, and its implications for the entire region were not lost on then-Vice President Bush. In fact, Bush witnessed it first-hand. In April 1986, when he officially dedicated Hunt's new \$18 million refinery near the ancient Yemeni town of Marib. In remarks during the event, Bush emphasized the critical value of supporting U.S. corporate efforts to develop and safeguard potential oil reserves in the region.

Of the four U.S. companies holding the Siad Barre-era concessions, Conoco is believed to be the only one that negotiated what spokesman Geybauer called "a standstill

agreement" with an interim government set up by one of Mogadishu's two principal warlords, Ali Mahdi Muhammad. Industry sources said the other U.S. companies with contracts to Somalia cited *force majeure* (superior power), a legal term asserting that they were forced by the war to abandon their exploration efforts and would return as soon as peace is restored.

"Whatever Siad did, all those records and contracts all disappeared after he fled," Juhammad Jirdeh, a Somali businessman familiar with the oil-concession agreements. He said he was uncertain that the agreements still are good. □



# Revolutionary Feminist

*Inessa Armand, Revolutionary and Feminist*, by R.C. Elwood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 304 pages, \$49.95.

Reviewed by Paul Le Blanc

**M**y own real introduction to Inessa Armand came from reading the memoirs of Lenin's companion, a revolutionary organizer in her own right, Nadezhda Krupskaya. These are some of the many passages from *Reminiscences of Lenin* that give a sense of a truly impressive person:

Inessa Armand arrived in Paris from Brussels in 1910 and immediately became an active member in our Paris group.... She had a family of two little girls and a boy. She was a hot Bolshevik, and before long our whole Paris crowd had gathered round her....

My mother was greatly attached to her. Inessa often came to have a chat with her, or sit and smoke. Things seemed cosier and more cheerful when Inessa was there. We were completely absorbed by Party cares and affairs.... and we were very glad to have Inessa.... There was a delightful warmth about her stories. Ilyich and I went for long walks with Inessa. Kamenev and Zinoviev called us the "gadding party."... She loved music, and persuaded us all to attend the Beethoven concerts. She was a good musician herself and played many Beethoven pieces very well....

[Lenin decided that she should attend the 1914 Unity Conference in Brussels.] She... was able to keep a cool head and had plenty of character. She could be depended on not to surrender positions....

At the end of 1919 a frequent visitor was Inessa Armand, with whom Lenin liked to discuss prospects of the movement....

Ralph Carter Elwood has written innumerable scholarly articles, a major book, and a small monograph on various aspects of the Russian revolutionary movement in the years leading up to 1917. Neither a Leninist nor a Marxist, and quite capable of advancing unfair characterizations of Lenin, he has nonetheless demonstrated a capacity for writing about the Bolsheviks objectively and somewhat sympathetically. His studies offer invaluable and detailed information about their activities in the antisarist underground and in Western European exile. His new biography of Inessa Armand is worth the attention of revolutionary Marxists and feminists.

## Birth of a Revolutionary

Inessa Armand (1874–1920) was born in Paris, under the name Elizabeth-Ines Stephane. Her parents were employed in what would today be called "the entertainment industry" (her father a moderately successful opera singer, mother a minor actress). Both parents died when she was young. One of her aunts, a governess (that is, a live-in teacher and child-care worker), took her to Russia upon securing employment with the Armand fami-

ly, whose head was a wealthy textile manufacturer. Inessa grew up as part of this family. Like a number of bourgeois families in tsarist Russia, the Armands were immersed in a "progressive" cultural world touched by the Enlightenment, Romanticism, the great Russian writers (especially Tolstoy and Chernyshevsky), and political ideas having a liberal-to-radical orientation. All of the children eventually became involved, to one extent or another, in the revolutionary movement.

Inessa married one of the sons, Alexander Armand, and had four children with him. But she was determined not to be a home-bound wife and mother, wanting instead to understand, be involved in, and contribute to the improvement of the larger society. Beginning from Christian-Tolstoyan and moderately feminist convictions, she became involved in reform activities having to do with education, prostitution, and the plight of women workers. Through such activity, she became aware of related and immense social problems, including the oppressiveness of Russia's semi-capitalist, quasi-feudal social and economic structure, not to mention the repressiveness of the autocratic regime which consistently thwarted even modest reform efforts.

Alexander Armand did not follow his wife's path from bourgeois reformer to revolutionary militant. By the age of 30, Inessa had become a Marxist and was active in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), to which she was introduced by her slightly younger brother-in-law. She fell in love with this man and separated from her husband through a mutually agreed-on and relatively amicable arrangement. In fact, throughout his life Alexander remained a supportive friend of Inessa, as well as a financial supporter of the revolutionary movement. He also shared fully in the care of their children.

## A Revolutionary Marxist

Within a few years Inessa was arrested and exiled to an isolated Russian village in the far north. Her lover followed her, but contracted tuberculosis which would eventually result in his death. Like many revolutionaries, Inessa finally escaped abroad, where she immersed herself in studies (earning a doctorate in political economy at the New University of Brussels) and revolutionary work. Fluent in French, German, and English as well as Russian, well read and studious, critical-minded and a competent organizer, she had much to contribute. Drawn to the Bolshevik faction of the RSDLP by 1909, she quickly became a central figure. A capable public speaker and translator, with a keen interest in theory, she was especially interested in problems and questions relating to women, but her talents

and energies were initially devoted to larger party-building efforts. As the organizer of the Bolshevik cadre school at Longjumeau (where she also lectured) and the chairperson of the Bolsheviks' Committee of Foreign Organizations maintaining contact with revolutionary emigre groups in Western Europe, Inessa played a key role in transforming the Bolsheviks from an embattled faction within the RSDLP into an independent revolutionary party in 1912.

As we have noted, Armand became personally close to Lenin and Krupskaya. Krupskaya especially remained one of her closest friends and comrades, also maintaining warm ties with her children long after Inessa's death. In various conferences and meetings of the world socialist movement (the Second International), some of them involving extremely complex factional situations, she functioned as Lenin's "right-hand person." And yet she was quite capable of strongly disagreeing with this prominent comrade over major questions. These are recorded by Elwood in a manner that is typical, essentially an occupational hazard, among Western biographers of Lenin's comrades: for daring to express any strong disagreement with the subject of one's biography, Lenin is seen as "unreasonable" and "arrogant" and "intolerant" and "inconsiderate" and automatically wrong.

It is hardly the case that Lenin is above reproach. At points a condescending tone (which could be directed toward men as well as women who disagreed with him) made her furious. In their correspondence on women and sexual relations, her ideas seem interesting and his a bit dated and prudish. In a fierce dispute in the early days of World War I around calling for "the United States of Europe" as an immediate slogan, Armand's position seems more reasonable to me, and Lenin himself finally agreed that the slogan be dropped. On the other hand, Lenin strikes me as profoundly realistic on the national question: supporting the right of self-determination for oppressed nations. In contrast, Armand's thinking seems similar to the oversimplified antinationalist "internationalism" of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek, and Nikolai Bukharin. Similarly, after the Bolshevik revolution, Inessa joined with the Left Communists in 1918 in order to oppose Russian withdrawal from World War I because German peace terms were too harsh; Lenin was again the realist in insisting that the revolutionary regime had no choice but to accept the German peace terms.

The point is that revolutionary comrades can and do, and sometimes must, engage in sharp debate with each other in order to be true to themselves, in order to clearly and firmly put forward their own honest and independently developed views. In this way complex realities are illuminated, different approaches are tested, and it is possible for a revolutionary organization to develop a more



adequate approach. Both Lenin and Armand were serious revolutionaries. Sharply expressed disagreements between them can be best understood as an illustration of that fact.

### The End of an Affair

This brings us to an interesting feature of this study. As Elwood notes, "Inessa Armand, if she is mentioned at all in Western textbooks of Russian history or in popular biographies of Lenin, is usually portrayed as a beautiful woman with a talent for playing the piano and for speaking four languages. She is rarely seen as a person of revolutionary significance other than allegedly being Lenin's mistress for most of the decade before he came to power." The story of an affair between Lenin and Armand, popularized by the late anti-Communist historian Bertram D. Wolfe, has been widely accepted by serious scholars. Elwood, an extremely careful researcher, has combed through all of the available evidence and concluded that there was a close personal bond but no love affair.

Absolutely free from any prudish Stalinist concern for Lenin's "moral cleanliness," Elwood argues that the only evidence for an affair between Lenin and Armand consists of bits of gossip, circulating decades after the two alleged "lovers" had died. His careful analyses of the hard evidence plus serious character analyses of those directly involved (Lenin, Armand, Krupskaya) seem to refute the legend. The author gives the tongue-in-cheek title "The End of an Affair" to the chapter in which the legend is demolished.

Even more important than whether or not there was a love affair, Elwood finds that after a careful examination of Inessa Armand's life, "the impression conveyed was certainly not the conventional one of a loyal, docile and mindless protegee." She was very much her own person, a strong revolutionary and *feminist*.

### Marxism and Feminism

Elwood correctly notes that Armand would not have used the term "feminist" to describe herself. The term is commonly used now to mean favoring full legal and political equality with men, opposing all economic and cultural restrictions on the individual development of women, supporting the right of women to have control over their bodies in regard to sexual and reproductive activity. This certainly describes Inessa Armand's own views. But the term "feminist" had a different connotation among many European Marxists of that time. It was identified as a reform movement that sought to unite all women under the leadership of bourgeois feminists, focusing on "the battle of the sexes" as opposed to the class struggle and compromising the class independence and true interests of working-class women.

Elwood's discussion of this is hampered by his distorted view on the relation between Marxism and feminism. He tells us: "To

Marx, women workers were oppressed in the same fashion as male workers by the capitalistic system and needed therefore to join their class brethren in a common fight against economic oppression. He did not recognize that there are specific women's problems that should be addressed and settled separate from general class and economic problems." This ignores too much evidence (in Marx's writings, in Engels's writings, in certain aspects of Marx's life, in the life and work of his daughter Eleanor Marx, in August Bebel's classic *Woman and Socialism*, and in the work of many later Marxists) to be accepted without serious qualification.

What can be acknowledged is that many in the Marxist and socialist movements *have* seen things in the terms suggested by Elwood — subordinating or subsuming (or obliterating) the struggle for women's rights under the "higher priority" of the struggle of the working class. Often any efforts on behalf of women's rights were seen as diversionary or as undermining working class unity. Generally such attitudes simply have reflected ignorant, backward, sexist prejudices among men who feel threatened when women don't "stay in their place" of inferiority and subordination in regard to men. This commitment to women's subordinate status was strong in bourgeois-patriarchal societies throughout the world (as, to a somewhat lesser extent, it still is), and was powerfully reflected in the ranks of the Russian revolutionaries, including among the Bolsheviks.

In regard to independent women's rights activities, there was a tendency on the part of Russian Marxists to be hostile unless such activities were under the control of the workers' movement. This was one half of a vicious circle that was completed by the reluctance on the part of these same Marxists to organize special or separate activities and groups of working-class women, including a lukewarm attitude toward the "feminist-tainted" International Woman's Day. Lenin was one of the few leaders in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party to favor such efforts. Krupskaya was the author of one of the first pamphlets dealing with women's issues in 1901. Among the Mensheviks, Alexandra Kollontai (who later went over to the Bolsheviks) had to fight her own comrades' prejudices in order to initiate serious efforts around women's rights and drawing working women into the labor and socialist movements.

Yet an essential aspect of Inessa Armand's political development, from reading Chernyshevsky's revolutionary feminist novel *What Is To Be Done?* to attending the 1908 Second Conference on Socialist Women (an international gathering chaired by Clara Zetkin), involved a concern with overcoming the oppression of women. In late 1913, a year after the Bolsheviks organized themselves as a separate party, Armand and Krupskaya (along with other female Bolshevik activists including Ludmila Stahl, Praskoviya Kudel-

li, Elena Rozmirovich, Konkordya Nikolaevna Samoilova, Zinaida Lilina, Anna Elizavrova) pushed forward the Bolsheviks' work for women's liberation through the establishment of a special twice-monthly newspaper, *Rabotnitsa* (Working Woman), embracing a wide range of women's concerns in each issue's sixteen pages. Armand contributed two substantial articles, "Electoral Rights of Women" and "Women Workers and the Eight-hour Working Day." The paper was suppressed by the authorities after seven issues. Elwood notes that it is difficult to know the extent of *Rabotnitsa's* impact on the working women of St. Petersburg, but

it did...make them realize that some people within the Bolshevik Party were interested in their problems and were prepared to offer encouragement and organizational assistance. The loyalties won and contacts made among women factory workers in St. Petersburg in 1914 were to stand the Bolsheviks in good stead in Petrograd in 1917. Perhaps the readers of *Rabotnitsa*, through their correspondence to the paper, also broke down some of the stereotypes concerning the backwardness of Russian factory women and male attitudes toward them. There is evidence that some trade unions lowered their dues in 1914 to get women workers to join rather than trying to remain exclusive male preserves. Inside the party, despite a continued lack of male enthusiasm for *Rabotnitsa*, no longer was a female workers' paper viewed as a feminist or separatist threat. The precedent that women socialists could address women workers on issues of interest to women through an organization run by women had been established and would be recalled when the party returned to organizing women workers in 1917.

In this same period, Armand considered writing a pamphlet on women and the family. One of the issues she hoped to deal with was the question of what she called "freedom of love" for women. Included in this notion were freedom from economic considerations and pressures in love relationships, as well as freedom from religious prejudices, freedom from parental prohibitions, freedom from the narrow circumstances of one's social-class environment, and freedom from restraints of the law, courts, and police. Yet she meant something more. She believed that passion was profoundly important (a "short-lived passion and/or love affair" could be "more poetic and pure" than "love-less kisses...of a married couple") but also that there was a need to combine spiritual and sensual qualities that had been separated from each other in previous levels of civilization. In a letter to her teenage daughter she explained:

As life becomes more complex (like the relationships among people), that which we call culture has grown; not only thought but also feeling has been enriched; that, which earlier among animals and primitive peoples was only instinct (as, for example, with respect to maternity), has turned from instinct into feeling with a thousand tints and nuances; new attitudes and new feelings have



arisen among people, which animals and savages do not know at all or know only in embryonic form. Love is also a product of culture and civilization — animals and savages do not know love, do not know that complex “poeticization”, full of the most complex psychological interaction (and such love does exist).

In present-day society, she felt, “everyone marries or indulges in lust but *very few* love or have loved.” An aspect of socialist revolution was to create the framework within which this would change.

After World War I threw the working classes of Europe into the maelstrom of imperialist slaughter, Armand threw herself into antiwar activity. She expressed the opinion that “during the war the [women’s] movement can play a very important role. When most of the proletariat — the men — are at the front, the other part of the proletariat — the women — should take our socialist cause into their own hands.”

When Lenin insensitively criticized this “into our own hands” formulation (“if this gets into the press, you will be a laughing-stock,” he wrote her), she took offense. She in turn initiated a critique of some of Lenin’s own antiwar formulations, and their correspondence became a polemical wrangle. This was abruptly interrupted with the news that tsarism had been overthrown in Russia — in part through the demonstrations of militant working women in Petrograd on International Woman’s Day.

### 1917 and After

In April 1917 Armand returned to Russia on the same “sealed train” that included Lenin and thirty other revolutionaries. She was one of the few prominent Bolsheviks to defend Lenin’s “April Theses” calling for the working class to overturn the bourgeois government and take power through the new democratic councils (soviets). She took up residence in Moscow, where she defended Lenin’s position at a conference of the Moscow region party organization and was soon elected to the seven-person leadership body of the Moscow party organization. Among other activities, she carried out educational work, giving lectures on such diverse topics as “Women Workers and the Class Struggle” and “History of the Second International.”

Armand became noted as a militant advocate of pushing the revolution forward, of establishing committees for workers’ control in the factories, and of giving special attention to the role of women in the struggle. She helped to produce a newspaper *Zhizn rabotnitsy* (Woman Worker’s Life) for the radicalizing proletarian women of Moscow and also supported the establishment of special women’s commissions to organize more effectively among the working women of Moscow region.

After the Bolshevik-led revolution of October/November placed political power in the hands of the soviets, Armand (like so many

other revolutionary veterans) was pulled in dozens of different directions, assuming many different responsibilities for the new regime. By the spring of 1919, however, she focused her attention on work among Russian women. With Alexandra Kollontai, she helped organize a national congress of women that drew 1147 delegates (only 300 were expected).

In one of her reports at this congress, Armand condemned the double work day, in which working women had to work in the capitalist factory and then assume the burdens of cooking, cleaning, etc., in the home; in addition to ending capitalist economic exploitation, she argued, the new regime should move toward setting up communal kitchens and laundries, as well as child-care centers. Women should be encouraged to participate fully in public activities that would shape the new society. The congress, in conjunction with the leadership of the Bolshevik organization (now renamed the Communist Party), established a Central Commission for Agitation and Propaganda among Working Women, which was soon replaced by an even more powerful Women’s Section of the Central Committee (Zhenotdel) of the Communist Party. Inessa Armand became the director of this body.

Elwood writes that the “Zhenotdel lasted until 1930, covered the entire country and ultimately affected the lives of most women in the Soviet Union,” and he quotes Barbara Clements (the biographer of Alexandra Kollontai), who termed it “one of the most ambitious attempts to emancipate women ever undertaken by a government.” This institution was designed to mobilize women to defend the Soviet Republic (which was being threatened by foreign invasion plus internal counterrevolutionary armies financed by hostile capitalist governments) but also to inform Russian women of the political, civil, and economic rights the revolution had brought to them. There was still considerable resistance on the part of many workers and peasants, as well as the more traditional-minded males in the Communist Party, to what these revolutionary women were attempting to accomplish. On the other hand, there was greater awareness than ever before of the central importance of this work to the success of the socialist revolution.

According to Elwood, “Inessa Armand promoted a sense of female collectivity which is at the heart of her feminism and also is totally alien to the organizational precepts of Bolshevism.” But this last dubious assertion seems belied by the facts that (1) Armand herself was a prominent Bolshevik of long-standing and (2) she had considerable support among leading Bolsheviks (including Lenin) for the work she was doing.

Armand had a full-time staff to help her set up and establish policies for regional and local structures, organize courses for regional and local instructors, and publish women’s

literature (including pamphlets, “women’s pages” in various existing publications, and a theoretically-oriented journal, *Kommunistka*, dealing “with the broader aspects of female emancipation and the need to alter the relationship between the sexes if lasting change was to be effected”). Especially important were delegates’ meetings in various regions, where representatives periodically elected from various workplaces would attend several meetings a month to hear presentations on political issues, on the work of local soviets, and on such practical matters as how to set up child-care centers in factories where women worked.

These women delegates also attended literacy classes and received some training that would assist them in participating effectively in their local soviets, trade unions, and party organizations. “Inevitably, through association with other women and through discussion of issues of interest to women, they became more conscious of their gender and of the woman question in its new Soviet context,” Elwood writes. “This indirect result of delegates’ meetings was probably Armand’s most lasting contribution to Soviet feminism.”

Revolutionary internationalism was crucial, however, for the success of what Armand and her comrades were trying to accomplish and for the very survival of the Soviet Republic. Only to the extent that revolutionary workers’ movements in other countries became stronger and finally victorious would Bolshevik perspectives be triumphant. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Armand involved herself in the work of the Communist International, which existed for that very purpose. In 1920 Armand headed the First Conference of Communist Women organized under the auspices of the Comintern, which established an International Women’s Secretariat to unify the efforts of women Communists in all countries. The tragedy was that working-class revolutions outside of Russia were unsuccessful, leaving the Soviet Republic isolated and encircled by hostile capitalist powers.

The traumas of revolution, civil war, foreign invasion, and capitalist economic blockade took a fearful toll. Millions of workers and peasants, including some of the finest revolutionaries, lost their lives to war, famine, and disease. In the first nine months of 1920, cholera alone killed 12,000 people. Among these was Inessa Armand. By the early 1920s, many of the revolutionaries were gone, and the surviving population was exhausted. A bureaucratized party and state apparatus — largely corrupted through authoritarian “expedients” of the civil war period, as well as by a taste for privileges unavailable to the rest of the population — consolidated itself after Lenin’s death (1924), under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. Those who fought to maintain the original revolutionary perspectives of Bolshevism (re-



flected in the life and work of Inessa Armand no less than of Lenin) were decisively defeated.

The work of Inessa Armand was overturned by the Stalinist bureaucracy. "Many of Inessa's Old Bolshevik friends at Longjumeau, her travelling companions on the 'sealed train,' and her associates among the Left Communists later ended up in the

Gulag," Elwood writes. "By 1930 the party leaders wanted to forget about the communal kitchens, the 'new morality,' affirmative action programs, and special organizations such as Zhenotdel and the International Women's Secretariat. Under Stalin, the paternalism and disinterest in women's issues which characterized the Social Democratic Party before 1914 returned."

What Inessa Armand accomplished, what she tried to accomplish, what she did and said and thought, the person that she was — all of this still has the power to inspire us and to teach us. What she fought against, and what she fought for, still have relevance in her homeland and ours. □

## Race, Class, and Gender

*Continued from page 20*

develop relations of genuine solidarity with each other and thus to effectively join in a broader revolutionary struggle.

How to further the discussion of race, class, and gender within existing social movements is, however, not a simple task. It must be done with full recognition of the complexity of the issues involved as well as the strong emotions that result from repeated experiences of racism, sexism, and class insensitivity even within activist circles. We may be active participants in struggles for women's rights, for Black or Latino liberation, or for union recognition — i.e., struggles explicitly around gender, racial, or class issues. Or our focus of activism may be against U.S.-sponsored wars, for better neighborhoods and schools, for national health care, or against NAFTA. All of these are struggles in which the combined issues of race, class, and gender play a role and thus in which it is important to raise these issues and their interconnections.

Most effective are those situations in which an awareness of race, class, or gender can be raised as part of actual debates or decisions occurring within the struggle itself. Such opportunities need, however, to be looked for and developed more consciously.

Of equal importance for those who are conscious socialists is a serious grappling with the implications of the discussion around race, class, and gender for Marxist theory and our vision of socialism. In this regard, Karen Sacks, an anthropologist and activist, has written a most interesting piece, which not only analyzes the interconnections among race, class, and gender but relates this to the history and theory of Marxism (Karen Sacks, "Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race, and Gender," *American Ethnologist*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1989). Among other things, she suggests that this discussion challenges Marxists to develop a broader definition of the working class and of class struggle. In particular, this involves a fuller recognition of women and people of color as vital mem-

bers of the working class, whether or not they are immediately engaged in wage work or as central participants in class struggle. When looked at in this way, we can see that not only the workplace but also the community may be the locus of class struggle, and that issues other than economic demands between worker and employer may be the central issues in those struggles.

What is especially interesting is the way this conceptualization helps to highlight the importance of certain developments in the contemporary U.S. These include the recent growth of unions that are composed largely of women and people of color and which are putting forward an agenda that includes demands for women's rights, civil rights, and broad changes in social policies as well as more specific workplace issues. There are also new forms of organization in the sunbelt area known as "community-based labor organizations." These represent efforts by immigrant women and local women of color, many of whom are involved in work at home or the "putting out system," to organize around an array of economic and social issues, as well as to give attention to international dimensions of their situation.

What Sacks's perspective and these recent developments in our society suggest is not only the importance of forging links among labor struggles and struggles organized around race or gender issues but also the necessity of recognizing that the latter struggles often have a class dynamic and are thus centrally part of the class struggle itself.

In terms of our vision of socialism and our work toward a future socialist transformation of society, the discussion of race, class, and gender has equally profound implications. I have argued above that there can be no socialist revolution that is not consistently feminist and antiracist. But what does this mean? Many would assert that for most of its history, Marxist socialism has given insufficient attention to issues of gender and race and to the need for both women's liberation and the liberation of oppressed nationalities or racial

groups. In recent years, feminism and liberation struggles waged by peoples of color have become more fully recognized as essential components of the socialist struggle and socialist vision. In the U.S. this was largely the result of militant struggles for Black self-determination and for women's liberation in the 1960s and 1970s. In the Trotskyist tradition this resulted in the development of the idea of combined revolution — i.e., a combining of an anticapitalist struggle with liberation struggles of women and peoples of color, the totality representing the development of the American socialist revolution.

Margaret Randall in her new book, *Gathering Rage: The Failure of 20th Century Revolutions to Develop a Feminist Agenda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1992), argues that it is not enough for feminism to be one component in the struggle for socialism. Rather, she says, it must be an integral part of the socialist vision. I would argue the same in terms of the liberation of oppressed racial/ethnic groups.

In other words, both feminism and other forms of liberation consciousness must be integral parts of our vision and practice of socialism. This means not only embracing a commitment to gender and racial equality as part of the socialist transformation of society but also fundamentally transforming the socialist vision and the socialist struggle themselves so that they reflect many of the insights of feminism and the liberation struggles of oppressed nationalities — about gender and racial equality but also about other matters such as community, culture, dignity, power, sexuality, and self-determination, to name a few. This may prove one of our most difficult, though exciting, tasks in the coming period. It raises a number of questions we need to further explore and compels us to look for additional questions that we need to ask. This is one of the most challenging aspects of the current discussion on race, class, and gender. □



# Marxist Essays on Cultural Commitment

*The Responsibility of Intellectuals: Selected Essays on Marxist Traditions in Cultural Commitment*, by Alan M. Wald. Humanities Press International, Inc., Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716 and 3 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London WC2E 8LU.

Reviewed by Michael Steven Smith

This collection of twenty selected essays on Marxist traditions in cultural commitment is too good and too rich to be truly appreciated in a short review. Alan Wald takes his title — *The Responsibility of Intellectuals* — from Noam Chomsky's essay by the same name that influenced him and many of us sixties radicals when it first appeared in 1967 in *The New York Review of Books*.

Chomsky's anti-Vietnam war polemic pilloried the establishment intellectuals, liberal and otherwise, for their support of the war, their apologetics, obscurantism, and deceit. He cut their heads off clean and held them up so the world could see there was nothing inside. "I am also committed," writes Wald, "to exploding mystifications of the professional ideologists of the ruling elites."

Wald takes his responsibility in a second way as well. He is the foremost cultural historian of the left of our generation. He writes with a sensibility, breadth of knowledge, and facility of expression about figures and issues that creates, at the same time it preserves and carries forward, our common socialist culture. His *The New York Intellectuals*, whose publication five years ago made him a national figure, is a treasure in this regard. So are many of the essays in this book, starting with his political and intellectual autobiographical introduction.

Wald's radicalization began, as it did for many of us, with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. It deepened at Antioch College, where he joined the local chapter of SDS in 1965. The next year he moved to, and worked in, Cleveland with the SDS's Economic Research Project led by SDS leaders Paul Potter and Kathy Boudin.

After studying in England in 1967 he realized he needed "the structure and stability of a socialist organization to develop myself politically," and at the end of 1967 he joined the Antioch Young Socialist Alliance, the youth group of the Socialist Workers Party. Soon after that, he joined the SWP, which in the sixties and early seventies was an extremely attractive organization — unlike

now, when it hangs on in name only as a degenerated and failed Castroist cult.

The SWP emerged from the fifties with an unstained banner, a continuator not only of the great pre-Stalin Russian internationalist revolutionary tradition but also of the left socialist movement in the United States, with its roots in the IWW and the Debsian Socialist Party. This all blossomed in the sixties when the SWP played a leading role in the antiwar movement, popularized the ideas of Malcolm X, identified with the youth rebellion and feminism, and had substantial chapters in major cities and important campuses throughout the country.

Wald writes: "The single most important and treasured fact of my political, intellectual, and personal life to date is that I had the good fortune to be a college student during the 1960s." His scholarship and the political activism that has complemented his writings are "critical extensions of the theory and practice absorbed and lived during that decade."

The book is divided into four categories of writings: (1) Trotskyism and Anti-Stalinism; (2) Communism and Culture; (3) Race and Culture; and (4) Commitment, by which he means the problems of intellectuals "who wish to devote their unique skills to the cause of social emancipation."

His first piece, a long essay on the American sculptor and Trotskyist revolutionary Duncan Ferguson, is a gem. Ferguson was an extraordinary figure, now no longer obscure thanks to Wald. Born in China, the son of an influential American missionary, and educated at Harvard, Ferguson crossed from 1920s bohemia into the Socialist Workers Party in the 1930s.

He was a sculptor of distinction, hailed as a "new genius," with works in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum, as well as in the private Rockefeller collection. Wald's gifts as a biographer and cultural historian bring Ferguson to life as an artist and a party member, two roles the troubled man could never reconcile.

Wald's last piece, also a gem, is a loving remembrance of George Breitman, the self-taught working class intellectual who edited the works of Malcolm X and much of Trotsky's writings before he was thrown out of the Socialist Workers Party for "disloyalty," after some forty years as a leader and founder of the organization.

Breitman's "extreme sobriety," his "critical intelligence," and his passion for accuracy in reconstructing the past are a standard for Wald, who collaborated with Breitman and who refers to him as "in some respects as a father." In one strikingly wise sentence

Wald writes that Breitman's "devotion to socialism was, I believe, an act of will, not faith, a scientifically derived moral response to the otherwise meaningless and ephemeral nature of human existence."

Other biographical essays include articles on Pete Seeger and Howard Fast in the section on American Communist traditions and a fine piece on the great European revolutionary, poet, and novelist Victor Serge in the section on "Trotskyism and Anti-Stalinism." This section includes an article on C.L.R. James. In his section entitled "Commitment" Wald pays tribute to novelist Nadine Gordimer, "whose vision is partly animated by a modern socialist and feminist consciousness" and to her book *Burger's Daughter*, which Wald views as a "stunning artistic achievement."

In one strong polemic "Racism in Academe: Issues in the University of Michigan Struggle," Wald, who was active in Concerned Faculty, exposes the biases and hidden assumptions of the university officials. They "denounce" racist speech on the campus (Wald is a professor there) while making a pitch for yet more rules to govern student's speech. Never do these officials talk about hiring and promoting third world faculty or giving third world students a real say in the running of the school, its admissions policy, its faculty selection, or in the shaping of its curriculum.

Through his writings Alan Wald, as he states, has "sought bridges among various Marxist traditions." He understands socialism "as a system self-managed by democratic control of the economy by the associated producers. While I have never felt comfortable saying that I 'believe' in socialism, I am convinced more than ever that socialism remains the only rational choice for an informed humanity. It is to a socialist future that the cultural interventions included in this volume are dedicated."

What could be more timely now with the consolidation of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency and Solidarity and the appearance of the genuinely open Committees of Correspondence in the wake of the Communist Party's collapse than the appearance of *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*?

"The failure of the sixties," Wald concludes, "was in the failure of its leading participants to construct a serious, internally democratic, coherent socialist organization with a pro-working class perspective that could have embodied the experiences of the past and synthesized those of the present." This is our challenge in the nineties. Nothing more. Nothing less. □

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Michael Steven Smith practices law in New York City and has recently published *Notebook of a Sixties Lawyer: An Unrepentant Memoir and Selected Writings*.



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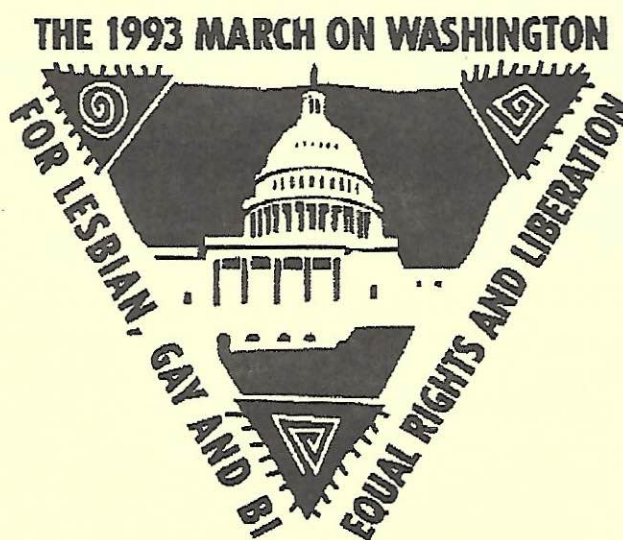
## April 25 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation

Stop discrimination, harassment, and  
violence against lesbians, gay men, and  
bisexuals

**Demands include:**

- ▼ a civil rights bill for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons;
- ▼ repeal of all laws criminalizing sex between consenting adults;
- ▼ massive increases in AIDS funding for education, research, and patient care;
- ▼ the right to reproductive freedom and choice;
- ▼ an end to all racial and sexist discrimination.

For information write: March on Washington, P.O. Box  
34607, Washington, D.C. 20043 or call 202-628-0493.



*1993 Labor Notes Conference*

# "Solidarity and Democracy"

April 23-25, 1993

Hyatt Regency Hotel, Detroit, Michigan

*Focus will be on:*

what is being done to bring workers together  
in unions and communities;  
building solidarity out of diversity;  
charting a new course on the job  
and in the political arena.

**Four main sessions, over 50 workshops,  
banquet with speakers, various meetings.**

For more information or registration, contact Labor Notes, 7435 Michigan  
Ave., Detroit, MI 48210. Phone 313-842-6262; FAX 313-842-0227.