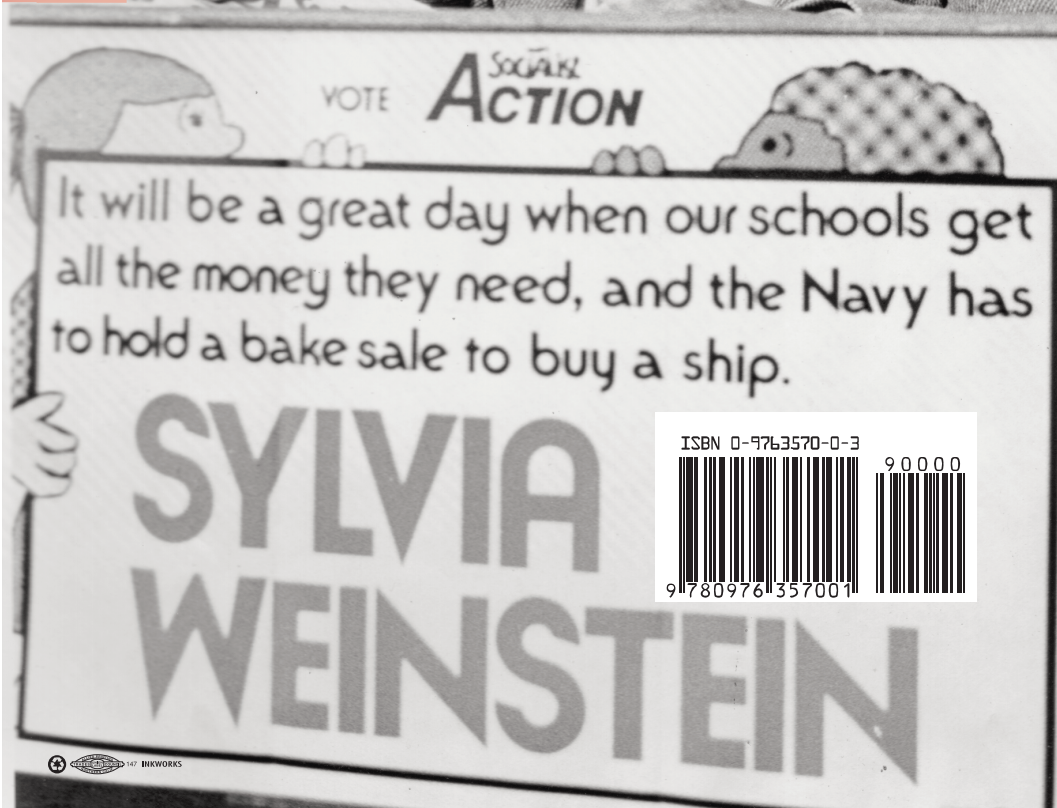
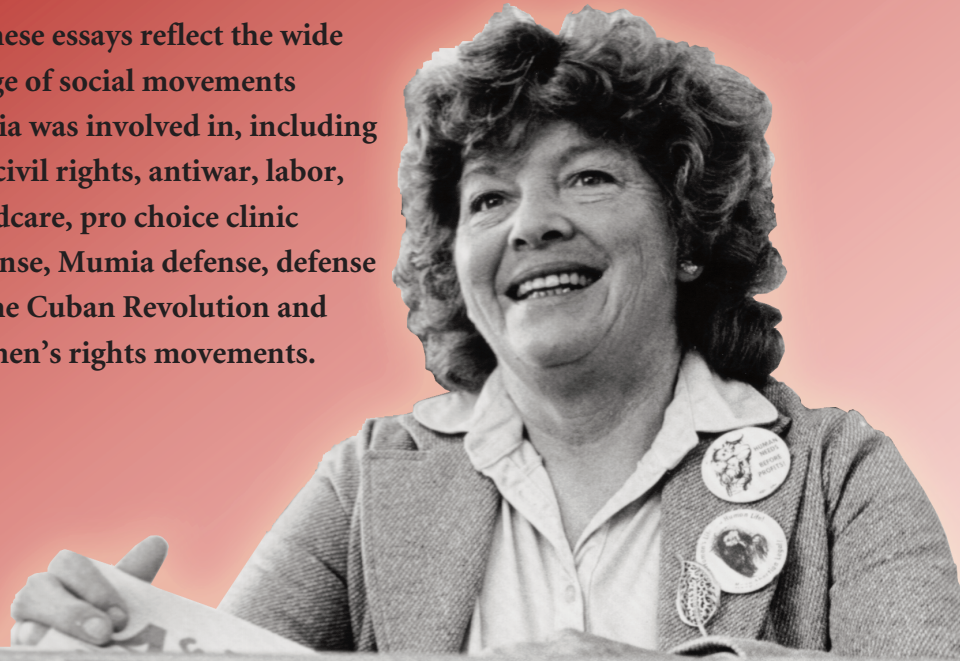


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These essays reflect the wide range of social movements Sylvia was involved in, including the civil rights, antiwar, labor, childcare, pro choice clinic defense, Mumia defense, defense of the Cuban Revolution and women's rights movements.



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**FIGHTBACK!**

**A Collection of Socialist Essays  
by Sylvia Weinstein**

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Viewpoint  
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**FIGHTBACK!**



**A Collection of Socialist Essays  
by Sylvia Weinstein**

1st edition

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SOCIALIST ESSAYS

By Sylvia Weinstein

FIRST EDITION


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“It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the Navy has to hold a bake-sale to buy a ship!”

Sylvia Weinstein  
*circa 1970s*

“I’m an optimist. I have witnessed the magnificent power of workers in struggle for their unions; women who have defended our clinics against the ‘Pro-life’ fanatics; Blacks who have fought and won against the most racist system of Jim Crow; and oppressed people who have the power to fight and the will to win. If we are united and know who the real enemy is, we cannot loose!”

Sylvia Weinstein (1926-2001)  
*From a speech given at the  
University of Maryland, Baltimore, 1993*



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## Introduction

You have in your hands a wonderful book. It is a complete collection of the monthly columns written by Sylvia Weinstein for *Socialist Action* newspaper from 1984 through February of 2001, and for the first four issues of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine, May through September, 2001. She engaged in revolutionary socialist journalism until she died at age 75 on August 14, 2001. This collection also includes the transcript of a presentation Sylvia gave to a university women's rights celebration in Baltimore, Maryland in 1993, in which she reviewed her personal history as a fighter for women's rights.

She was born Sylvia Mae Proffitt in 1926, on the outskirts of Lexington, Kentucky. Fifty-six of those years, her entire adult life since she was 19 years old, was spent as an active participant in the revolutionary workers movement: 38 years in the Socialist Workers Party, and 18 years in Socialist Action, of which she was a founding member and full-time worker. During the last few months of her life, she was a founder and leader of Socialist Workers Organization and Business Manager of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine.

During her 38 years in the Socialist Workers Party, she took assignments as secretary of the New York City branch of the party, as an activist in the Civil Rights Movement in the Brooklyn branch of the NAACP, and as a full time worker in *The Militant* newspaper office, among many others.

She was arrested for sitting in at Coney Island Hospital at an NAACP action there to force the hiring of Black workers in the construction of more hospital buildings. She picketed at



Woolworths in solidarity with the southern sit-ins. Like many socialists during the McCarthy era witch-hunt she was visited at home and harassed many times by the FBI. Of course that never stopped her. She not only increased her activism, she even ran in socialist election campaigns for public office in New York City and later in San Francisco.

Sylvia was a staunch defender of the Cuban Revolution and an activist in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. When Fidel Castro came to New York City to address the United Nations after the victory of the Cuban revolution, Sylvia was a key organizer in the committee that arranged a big reception for Fidel and the Cuban delegation to meet with their U.S. supporters and Black community leaders at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem. Sylvia remained very proud of that experience.

But it was the feminist movement of the 1970s that inspired Sylvia to take a leadership role, especially in the struggles for abortion rights and childcare. These issues had a deep personal meaning for Sylvia. In those struggles, Sylvia was an organizer and activist. She did countless mailings and handed out hundreds of thousands of flyers. But the feminist movement also brought out Sylvia's tremendous leadership talents.

Sylvia made her own experiences as a young mother who was forced to obtain illegal, terrifying, and unsafe abortions the property of the movement as a whole. She testified at speak-outs to legalize abortion, and later, when it was legal, she organized to defend the clinics from the attacks of the rightwing anti-abortion terrorists. She became a spokeswoman and teacher. In the 1970s she was the main leader of the movement for childcare in San Francisco. She became known throughout San Francisco as the "childcare lady," and as an advocate for all human rights.

She set an example of unalterable opposition to the capitalist government which stood in the path of women's liberation. Her campaign for Board of Education in San Francisco was run on a financial shoe string, but Sylvia got about 10,000 votes. She came up against powerful politicians—representatives of the rich—in the course of her work for women's rights. S.F. Mayor Willie Brown, who was then speaker of the California State Assembly, tried to elbow her off the stage in the middle of her speech at a Day in the Park for Women's Rights. That was an annual demonstration that Sylvia had helped initiate during the struggle for childcare in San Francisco. Sylvia also found herself face to face in opposition to Senator Dianne Feinstein, who was then president of the Board of Supervisors of the City of San Francisco. Feinstein tried to use the childcare issue to gain political power for herself but not to expand childcare services for families. Sylvia fought her on this, and fought successfully against the S.F. chapter of the National Organization for Women endorsing Feinstein for mayor.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, Sylvia was both the main spokeswoman for the militant wing of the feminist movement and also the most respected feminist speaker among the masses of working women who demonstrated for women's



rights. Behind the scenes, powerful politicians moved in to try to isolate Weinstein and her collaborators from the NOW members by initiating a public red-baiting campaign in the San Francisco media. To Sylvia, this campaign only showed how effective militant independence in the feminist movement was.

Her last important political work was in founding the Socialist Workers Organization after the demise of democracy within Socialist Action. She continued the regular monthly column, "Fightback!" that she had written for Socialist Action newspaper for the first three issues of Socialist Viewpoint magazine.

Sylvia Weinstein had the unique ability to make masses of people feel justified in their anger at their oppression and in the justness of their cause. She also imparted a strong sense that masses of oppressed, working together, could exert their power and change things for the better. She believed that the working class was fully capable of taking control over society and ruling in the interests of themselves and all humankind. She was sure that eventually masses of people would join with her to change things, to make a socialist revolution. Perhaps it was because she exuded a deep belief in the goodness of her fellow workers, that people gravitated to her and were so affected by her.

In the women's movement, during its ascendancy, Sylvia was able to impart that attitude of class consciousness to thousands of women. In the socialist movement she was able to impart that confidence to her comrades. Her legacy is as a partisan fighter for human rights and advocate of a socialist future for humanity.

Sylvia's columns are infused with revolutionary spirit, optimism, respect for the potential of the working class, love for the working people of the world, and hatred for the oppressor class. The columns exhibit the very essence of Marxist political analysis—a deep understanding that society is divided into social classes with diametrically opposed social, political, and economic interests. But they are in no sense dry or academic. Sylvia spoke and wrote with a colorful style full of invective for the brutality and arrogance of the capitalist class and the stupidity of its stooges in government.

Many of the columns also reveal the strong personal motivation for Sylvia's tireless revolutionary work—her personal background of extreme rural poverty, her childhood experience in labor organizing, her two dangerous illegal abortions, her active participation in the working class, Civil Rights, antiwar, and especially the women's liberation movements. Because Sylvia played a leadership role in the campaigns for child care, the Equal Rights Amendment, and abortion rights, her columns on those topics are especially fierce.

This book will be useful for all who oppose the horrors the capitalist system is perpetrating upon the peoples of the world today. It provides a revolutionary socialist perspective on the last two decades of the 20th century U.S. empire. It contains useful history on some of the most important developments of those two decades, such as the several wars waged by the U.S. on developing countries, on the status of women—particularly with respect to women's reproductive rights—

on the growth of the prison-industrial complex and America's political prisoners, on the first Palestinian intifada, and the major events of the end of the 20th century.

Sylvia had the gift of finding and re-telling the stories of ordinary people that reveal great truths about our society. She found stories in the daily newspapers, such as the story of the Russian mother who went to Chechnya to bring her soldier son home, and let the readers see how this strong act of love and personal sacrifice applied to all mothers and all working people. Through this story she showed how reactionary wars against national liberation were not only against the interests of workers and soldiers of the oppressed nation, but against those of the oppressor nation as well.

The book does much more than provide a useful history of this period. The basic politics of these columns is very relevant today. These writings advocate policies of complete working class independence from ruling class politics. They advocate working class methods, strategies, and tactics, such as mass street demonstrations to oppose war or to support important reforms such as reproductive rights for women and the Equal Rights Amendment. The columns are particularly useful in understanding capitalist electoral politics. Many are scathing attacks on the reformist policy of supporting so-called lesser-evil, pro-capitalist candidates in elections, and the de-railing of important social justice movements in the process. These columns are particularly useful in understanding the present predicament of the antiwar movement in the aftermath of U.S. wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, current continuing occupations of both of these countries, and a presidential election with no genuine working class political party in place to contest capitalist political power. In this context, Sylvia Weinstein's writings are not only interesting but prophetic.

The series of articles in this book are indicative of her compassion for the oppressed and her unswerving confidence in the power of the working class to construct a socialist world humanitarian society in harmony with nature. Sylvia was a rebel woman who knew how to fightback. "Fightback!" was the name of her monthly column, and therefore, it is the title of this book.

—Carole Seligman and Roland Sheppard





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## Preface

All of the columns and two of the speeches in this collection are reprinted from *Socialist Action* newspaper from 1984 to 2001, except for the last four essays. These are reprinted from the magazine, *Socialist Viewpoint*. Also, the speech that begins this collection, entitled, “If We Are United, We Cannot Lose!” appeared in print, after Sylvia’s death, in *Socialist Viewpoint*, in October, 2001, though Sylvia made the speech in 1993.

# THE REBEL GIRL

*Lyrics by Joe Hill*

*There are women of many descriptions  
In this queer world, as everyone knows.  
Some are living in beautiful mansions,  
And are wearing the finest of clothes.  
There are blue blooded queens and princesses,  
Who have charms made of diamonds and pearl;  
But the only and thoroughbred lady  
Is the Rebel Girl.*

*That's the Rebel Girl, that's the Rebel Girl!  
To the working class she's a precious pearl.  
She brings courage, pride and joy  
To the fighting Rebel Boy.  
We've had girls before, but we need some more  
In the Industrial Workers of the World.  
For it's great to fight for freedom  
With a Rebel Girl.*

*Yes, her hands may be hardened from labor,  
And her dress may not be very fine;  
But a heart in her bosom is beating  
That is true to her class and her kind.  
And the grafters in terror are trembling  
When her spite and defiance she'll hurl;  
For the only and thoroughbred lady  
Is the Rebel Girl.*



*This a speech Sylvia gave in 1993 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, during Women's History Month. This speech combines Sylvia's personal background with the convictions expressed throughout this book. Readers can trace the evolution of the ideas that informed Sylvia's commitment and activism. This speech was reprinted in the October 2001 Socialist Viewpoint.*



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## **'If We Are United, We Cannot Lose!'**

I want to thank all of you for being here tonight, and thank the students at the University of Baltimore for inviting me.

I want to start by telling you about how I became a socialist. Actually, I became a socialist long before it was popular to be known as a feminist. My being a socialist came from my upbringing. I was born in 1926, just in time for the stock market to prove that capitalism was an unstable system. However, my family was poor not due to the stock market, but because we were a working class family.

### **Family history**

I was born in the outskirts of Lexington, Kentucky, and my parents constantly fought over religion. My father was a Presbyterian, and my mother's family were hard-shell Baptists who spoke in tongues and had complete faith that every single word in the Bible was the gospel.

My father worked on the Calumet Race Horse Farms training five-gaited saddle horses for the landed gentry. That ended soon after the stock market went under, and then he became a cab-driver and whatever else he could find. Like most men and women who lose their jobs or can't find work, he blamed himself. They feel that they just don't have what it takes to keep a job; not like others in the neighborhood who were still working. It was a while before people began to look around and find that they weren't the only losers. Long lines of the unemployed began to show up wherever there was the slightest chance for work, regardless of the paycheck.

My parents separated when I was around six years old and went their different ways to find work. My father had begun drinking and couldn't give it up, although he did later. My mother went to Brooklyn to her sister's and found work as a waitress; my father went to Middletown, Ohio to work at paper mills, and finally, the Armco Steel Mill. We five children were left to be raised by my grandmother, who already had eighteen children of her own—she didn't need another five little ones.

Christmas time seemed to be the worst. I would ask my grandmother why we were so poor, and she would answer that it was the Lord's way. I asked her why wasn't the Lord fair? Why not give something to us at Christmas time, and not the children up the block? She answered that I was not to question the Lord's way. However, I did. But not out loud; my grandmother was a firm believer in the "spare the rod, spoil the child" theory. When I was six years old and in the first grade our teacher showed us a globe—the whole world that we could spin around. I was thunderstruck. I told my grandmother that my teacher had showed us the whole world and that it was round like a ball. My grandmother slapped my mouth and said, "Don't you ever blaspheme the Lord again." I asked her what was wrong, and she told me that the Bible says that at the end of time Gabriel will blow his horn from the four corners of the world, and therefore the earth cannot be round. Secretly, I believed my teacher, but I was very careful what I told my grandmother.

When I was ten years old my father remarried, and my sister Beatrice, my older brother Glen, and myself went to live in Middletown, Ohio. My younger sister Delina, and brother Jimmy, stayed with my grandmother in Kentucky.

### **My first strike**

The first strike I was involved in was organized by my step-grandmother in 1936 when I was ten years old. She worked for the P. Lorillard Tobacco Company. They made chewing tobacco called "Old Plug." My step-grandmother and several other workers wanted to get a union at their workplace. Working people all over the country were organizing themselves and fighting for unionization. Her boss knew about the secret union and called my grandmother into his office and said how he thought unions were a good idea, and he would like to talk to her and the other organizers. My grandmother, very naively, told the other organizers, and they went into the boss's office, all four of them. As soon as she got into the office, the boss, after making sure that these were all the organizers, ordered them all off the property and said if he ever caught them near the factory, he would have them arrested. My grandmother went out onto the factory floor, stood on a tobacco basket, and told the other workers what had happened. Every single one of them left the plant.

They set up a full field kitchen that served breakfast, lunch, and dinner to all the strikers, their families, and anyone else who was hungry. Shop keepers would donate canned food, and farmers from around the area delivered meat, vegetables, eggs and milk to the strike kitchen. Then came the showdown. I was ordered by my step-grandmother to serve in the kitchen washing dishes and serving food. So I got a first hand look at just how strong women could be when they got angry.

The Governor sent in the National Guard to stop the strikers. At the crack of dawn workers began to arrive at the factory to wait for the Guard. My step-grandmother was in the front line, and she made me stand with her. As the day

wore on, more and more workers arrived. They filled about three blocks, standing shoulder to shoulder and building to building. It was a very hot day. There we stood, and soon we heard the sound of trucks. Up they came, dressed for battle. The trucks came right up to the strikers who were blocking the street. One of the soldiers yelled at my grandmother to move out of the way, or he would roll over her. My grandmother, with great dignity, looked at him and said, "Young man, I've put diapers on boys your age, so if you want to roll over us, then come on—we ain't moving." We stood eye to eye with the truck fender for what seemed like hours. Finally, we heard workers down the line starting to applaud and yell—the trucks began to back out. We had won!

All over the country workers were organizing themselves into the new CIO. Men and women were beginning to look at one another as union sisters and brothers, instead of as people who wanted to take their jobs. A couple of years later, the war was coming and women began to be in big demand. My stepmother became a welder for an aircraft factory, my aunt operated a crane at Armco Steel. Women became teamsters, bus drivers, trolley drivers, shipyard workers—all of those jobs that had been the purview of men, became women's work.

### War time work for women

In the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, California there was twenty-four hour childcare—women were working all shifts. You could bring in your dirty laundry, and it would be done for you. If your children needed new shoes, someone would take them to the shoe store for a proper fit. Of course, you paid for these services, but they were necessary if women were to keep working.

Finally, the war ended and women were expected to go back to their old ways. Actually, for the whole history of this country, women have worked, but in the worst, hardest, and lowest paying jobs. They filled the garment factories, cotton mills, department stores, restaurants, office buildings, etc. Black women have always worked—as slaves in the fields, and as housekeepers, and child raisers for their white masters. Poor women, black and white, have always had to work to feed their families. But the war changed a lot of things.

GI's came home, and they had great expectations. After all, they had fought the war for the "four freedoms"—freedom of speech, and worship, and freedom from fear and want. They came back to what looked like a depression—factories were shutting down war production, but peacetime production couldn't get going. Housing was in short supply, and getting a job at a living wage was difficult. Many soldiers had married and were now expecting families.



My husband was in the Merchant Marine. We got married when he was 20 and I was 18. In Elkton, Maryland, in 1944, in fact. We had to live with my mother, because we could not afford our own apartment. Like millions of other working class young people, we always leaped before we looked. Of course, I immediately got pregnant. But both me and my husband thought this was really great. My husband had become a socialist while sailing on a ship to Venezuela. It was a three month trip, and he was a captive audience to a Trotskyist shipmate. I still have the letters he wrote me—three v-mail letters which started off with, “At last I have found the truth.” I thought he had become a Jehovah Witness.

### **The economic system of capitalism is not good for your health**

But I became convinced when one of his socialist friends explained why there were poor people and rich people. He explained that rich people owned the means of production—the banks, factories, and everything else and working people had to work for them at wages which never caught up with their needs. It was like a bolt of lightning! It wasn’t, as my grandmother told me, God’s will, but because a small group of wealthy people owned everything of worth, and working people owned nothing. Even their homes were owned by the banks. I have been a socialist for fifty years, and every year I am more convinced than ever that the economic system of capitalism is not good for your health or for the health of any other living thing.

The GIs wanted a better life. They began to organize and to march for jobs and housing. That’s when the government agreed to the GI Bill of Rights. Massive housing projects were started. Whole townships were created. In Levittown, New York, you could, if you were a GI, purchase a house for \$5,000 dollars with \$500 dollars down and \$50 dollars per month payment. Ex-GIs began to go to college on the GI bill. In former times, only the upper class and middle class sent their children to college. Working class young men and women usually never even graduated high school and went to work in blue collar industries as soon as they found a job. Now, for the first time, millions of returning GIs were going to college. In fact, this was the beginning of the two-year junior college. They were formed so that those returning GIs could acquire the languages, math, and science, which would enable them to get into four-year colleges.

It was these same GIs who were determined to give their own children a college education. And that’s why you’re here.

### **My first activity in the women’s movement**

My first activity that concerned women was an action that came out of Boston. This was in 1958 or 1959. At that time women could not buy a diaphragm, a birth control device, in the state of Massachusetts. That was a state that was heavily dominated by the Catholic Church. Some of the women wanted to protest. They had been driving to Connecticut, where you could walk into a drug store and purchase a diaphragm without even showing your marriage license. So they



were going to car caravan from Boston to Connecticut, and we from New York (I lived in Brooklyn), were going to meet them at the border of Connecticut to show solidarity. The Boston police were outraged. They were going to call upon the state police to stop the women, arrest them on the way back, and confiscate their ill gotten gains, their diaphragms. But the women stopped them cold by saying that they would be wearing their diaphragms, and how were the state police going to confiscate them? There was silence on the part of the state, and shortly after, the State of Massachusetts was forced to allow the sale of diaphragms.



I was especially interested in birth control, because of two illegal abortions I had. When my first daughter was four months old, I discovered, to my surprise, that I was pregnant again. After a lot of hard work, we finally made contact with an abortionist. The charge was \$300 dollars, which was like a million dollars to my husband and me. By the time we got the money together, I was three or four months pregnant. I had the abortion in an empty apartment in Staten Island with this man who I did not know—he could have been the Midas Muffler Man, for all I knew—and a woman who stayed with us. It was done on a cold kitchen table. What he did was split the placenta and it took hours before the abortion was over. I spent that time in a movie theater with a woman and man who were waiting for the abortion to take effect. The woman would insist that I go to the bathroom every ten minutes. Actually, they finally drove me home, and it was there that the abortion took effect. Fortunately, my mother packed me in ice when I began to bleed all over the place. I lived through it.

My second illegal abortion happened when my second daughter was five years old. This time, in a doctors office, a doctor that I knew. I went in on a Saturday when his office was usually closed. He warned me before we began that if anyone came to his office door, I must be prepared to get up and walk out, no matter what stage the abortion was in. He did a D&C. Naturally, he did not use anesthesia. That did not turn out so well. I kept hemorrhaging, and after a week of hemorrhaging, even the doctor told me to go to the hospital emergency. But I was afraid they would find out I had an abortion and that the doctor would be arrested. But finally, when my feet were beginning to go to sleep, I went to the emergency room. I required two transfusions, and for some reason, the doctors said they believed me about the miscarriage.



I woke up to a full ward of women, and about three beds away was a woman screaming in pain and three policemen were around her bed. They told her they would not let anyone help until she gave the name of the abortionist. She was a woman in her forties with a grown son in the army, and she was unmarried. She was ashamed to have him know that she was pregnant, so she had an abortion. The person who gave her the abortion had stuck a copper tube into her uterus and left it there. He said not to remove it until the pain became unbearable. It became so unbearable that she was taken to the emergency room. It was there that the cops grabbed her. It was the law that the hospital had to report any abortions.

### **What women need most of all**

If I were given a choice of what women need the most, it would be control of their reproductive lives. My experience has been that there can be no equality if women are forced to bear child after child and can't get out the door to even look for a job, not to speak of an education. And when I say choice, I mean choice. I feel that any woman who is pregnant and doesn't want to be, should have access to a safe, legal, and, if necessary, free abortion. However, any woman who is pregnant and who wants the child, should have every support—medical, economic and emotional—so that she has a good environment to raise a healthy child in a secure home. This is a rich country. Just by taxing the rich instead of working

people, we could afford this necessity.

In the 1960s, colleges were being flooded with young, working class women. They were following in their GI fathers' footsteps. But many things were happening in the 60s. The civil rights struggle against Jim Crow. This started in the late 50s, and many of those struggles were led by Black former GIs who thought that they had fought for freedom in the Korean War, not just for whites, but for themselves, also. Many white students became "freedom riders" and went into the dangerous South to change history. I had to get into it and was busted by the police in Brooklyn for sitting in at Coney Island Hospital, trying to force them to hire black workers for building more hospitals. It was the usual lay-down protest, and over 800 people were arrested in two weeks. We also put picket lines around Woolworth's in solidarity with the Southern Woolworth's sit-ins.

It was the Vietnam anti-war movement which gave women the opportunity to begin the Second Wave of feminism. The anti-war movement included millions of students, male and female. Women were learning how to make leaflets, how to stand up before thousands and make speeches, and how to appeal to the vast numbers of parents who wanted that war to end. The major slogan was "Bring Our Boys Home Now." It did not fall on deaf ears.

After the war, young women began to look at their own situation. We organized a march for choice in New York in 1969 of 500 women. We held teach-ins where women gave their experience with illegal abortions openly. And it was, for many women, the first time they had ever told anyone about their abortion; not



Antiwar demonstrators against the Vietnam War



even their own husbands had known.

There had already been some changes in some states on this issue of abortion. In New York the laws were liberalized to include mental hardship or emotional endangerment, if one was forced to carry the fetus to full term. A board panel of three psychologists would hear the testimony of women who said that they would go crazy if forced to have this child. Later some men, using that testimony, would get custody of the children by claiming that the woman was mentally unstable.

We, mostly socialists, formed a national organization called WONAAC (Women's National Abortion Action

Coalition). In California we were working on a class action lawsuit for choice, because none of us really paid much attention to the *Roe v. Wade* case making its way through the courts.

In the WONAAC office we had the names and case histories of three thousand women who wanted to be in the class action suit. They were women who had to go to Mexico for an abortion, women who had been forced to bear six or seven children, women who had to give their children up for adoption because they were single parents, and it was a disgrace to the family. You name it and those women had been through it. Just as we got the suit all ready, along came the *Roe v. Wade* verdict and it was a major victory for all women. But that victory was only the beginning for women. The victory for abortion was hardly won before the anti-choice movement began.

I was one of the founding members of the Coalition of Labor Union Women in San Francisco. CLUW was organized to bring some measure of equality within the trade union movement. There were unions such as the telephone workers, the garment workers, which had mostly women in the workplace, but the union officers were in the large majority male. Women workers got caught up in the struggle for equality that was sparked by college and university women. The 1960s saw a large growth of trade unions in what were formerly considered to be "professional or white collar" jobs. Nurses, hospital personnel, office employees, and teachers were just a few who became unionized. They wanted job protection, as well as better salaries. Some union contracts called for on-job childcare centers.

### **Campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment**

In the late 1970s and 1980s I joined in the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). It is shocking to know that this country has not passed the ERA. It was the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment that actually turned the National Organization for Women (NOW) into a truly nationwide organization. It unified all of the chapters around a central fight. In San Francisco, our chapter had approximately 200 members, although most of them did not attend meetings. By the end of the struggle for the ERA, we had 1500 members, and hundreds attended meetings and we were united and energized. Unfortunately, the NOW national leaders, in the middle of the fight, decided to rely on electing Democrats to pass the ERA, instead of mounting massive actions in the streets to force the politicians to pass the Amendment.

The NOW leaders decided to put their efforts into electing pro-ERA state legislators in the hopes of winning the two-thirds of the states necessary to make the ERA the law. Just a look at our experience in Nevada is enough to make you sick. In that state NOW wanted to campaign for eleven legislators who had said that, if elected, they would get the ERA passed in Nevada. The California State NOW sent hundreds of members into Nevada to hold wine and cheese parties, and go door-to-door for those so-called pro-ERA candidates. Some of us in the San Francisco Chapter wanted to hold a sit-in at the gambling casinos and fill the streets in Las Vegas until Nevada voted our way. Some of the leaders were horrified at our simple suggestion. So, of course, the minute those pro-ERA legislators got the chance, they all voted against the ERA. And this happened in state after







state. In Illinois one legislator, who had formerly voted for the ERA, actually refused to vote for it in the Illinois legislature, saying he was tired of the whole issue, and women lost that state by one vote.

What has happened is that the leaders of the movements that in the 1960s and 1970s were in the streets and making gains, are now supporting lesser-evil politicians, mainly Democrats, and all of our victories are going down the drain.

Reproductive rights is in total jeopardy. But it was President Carter who made the first cut in choice by not allowing poor women to receive abortions under Medicare.

Nothing was ever won in the electoral arena. Everything that workers, Blacks, and women have won has been through massive struggles in the mills and factories, and in the streets. Politicians did not give women the vote. They won it by strikes, picket lines, marches, hunger strikes, and by generally making the ruling class know that they had better give in, or life would get even rougher for them.

In the thirties it was actually illegal for workers to get together and discuss organizing a union. They could be arrested for sedition, and there were law books full of laws which could jail workers for trying to organize. Finally, the workers said, "Just take your laws and stick them." Owners of the steel and auto plants hired their own deputized guards, armed with guns to keep the workers under control. The workers went into the factories, sat-down, and took over. Plus they had massive picket lines that not only shut down production, but kept any scabs from entering the plants. Solidarity groups were formed to keep them fed and warm during the sit-downs. This is how we won the right to form unions. Don't believe the lie that it was given to us by friendly capitalist politicians. It was won by millions marching in the streets, and around factory gates, and sit-down strikes.

The Civil Rights movement in the South, organized by the millions in state after Jim Crow state, held marches, sit-ins and demonstrations until the capitalist class saw the movement going from the South to the North and decided it would be better to concede on Jim Crow laws than to really have to give equality and economic justice to millions of Black workers. Malcolm X was beginning to organize the North, and he was the most dangerous to the owners of American wealth.

Stonewall, in Greenwich Village in New York City, declared for all that the gay and lesbian movement was out of the closet and into the streets. Unfortunately,

just as the women's, Black, and labor movements are supporting Democrats and putting their lives into the hands of people who can't be trusted as far as I can spit, so have the gay and lesbian movements turned to electing the lesser evil.

Where has that gotten us? Just read *The New York Times* for the economic conditions of the vast majority of working people in this country. There are more homeless now than in the great depression. There is more poverty, with women and children making up the majority of people living in squalor and starvation. Young people who are in college today cannot ever hope to live as their families have, with their own home and a well paying job with security. Millions are without basic health care. HIV has killed thousands of people and actually the government does nothing. Some of the medicine which will allow HIV infected people to live longer lives costs \$7,000 a year.

### **Socialism v. barbarism**

We live in an economic system which relies on making a profit. If it can't make a profit, it shuts down production. Enough food can be produced in this country to feed the entire world. But if it cannot be sold for a profit, the capitalist destroys it or stores it in mountains, or pays farmers not to grow it. Our environment is being destroyed, polluted, and laid to waste in the interest of mega-profits.

We socialists have a saying which is a warning first issued by Karl Marx—either socialism or barbarism. It will be your generation that will have to destroy the profit system of capitalism and build a democratic socialist society, or we will descend into barbarism. With male against female, white against Black, ethnic group against ethnic group, and all against each other. We will either unite in solidarity with each other, and take control of this anarchic profit system, or we will fall into fascism or degenerate into disasters like Bosnia, Chechnya, and Somalia.

I'm an optimist. I have witnessed the magnificent power of workers in struggle for their unions, women who have defended our clinics against the pro-life fanatics, Blacks who have fought and won against the most racist system of Jim Crow, and oppressed people who have the power to fight and the will





# 1984

## The ‘Disappeared’—Here and There

SAN FRANCISCO — A face is haunting San Franciscans. It’s the face of Kevin Collins, a 10-year-old boy who disappeared Feb. 10 while waiting for a bus at the corner of Oak and Masonic streets. He was returning from a basketball game at St. Agnes School where he is in the fourth grade. His face haunts us wherever we go. Posters are on every store window and every lightpole. A reward of \$110,000 is being offered for his safe return. Kevin is one of the disappeared.

We know that the kidnapers of Kevin Collins, if caught, will be punished. But we live in a country where *official* criminal acts go unpunished every day. The government in El Salvador is snatching children from their homes and using torture, rape, and murder to repress its own people. The United States government is supporting the dictatorship in El Salvador as it creates thousands and thousands of “Kevin Collins.”

In Congress, right now, the government is requesting \$93 million in emergency aid that will keep the death squads going. That does not include over \$1 million per day which is being pumped into the hands of the dictatorship. Now Reagan is requesting \$1.2 billion for economic and military aid; that request comes from the recommendation of a bipartisan presidential commission led by Henry Kissinger.

What if the U.S. government was appropriating that amount of money to kidnap children like Kevin Collins from their families in this country? Would such a policy have the slightest support from the American people? But that’s exactly what the U.S. government is doing in El Salvador.

The conditions in El Salvador have forced thou-





sands of terrorized Salvadorans to flee their homes. The refugees are children of all ages, men and women, people from all walks of life, teachers, students, workers, housewives, and farmworkers. They are victims of repression so pervasive that the majority of Salvadoran families have had at least one member either tortured, raped, or murdered by government-supported death squads.

The United States is the only government which openly deports Salvadorans back to their war-torn country, despite a specific offer from Canada to accept any Salvadoran the United States wishes to deport. Now the government has adopted a new policy that all Salvadorans and Guatemalans without proper visas who are detained in Northern California will be immediately shipped to Florence, Arizona for deportation proceedings. The facility at Florence is a former concentration camp used for the detention of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

Here's one example of what happens to deported refugees. In 1981, 24-year-old Santana Chirino Amaya was deported to El Salvador. Two months later his decapitated body was found at a site often used by the Salvadoran military as a dumping ground for their victims. The government of the United States shares guilt for this murder with the military dictatorship of El Salvador.

The United States is shipping thousands of Salvadoran "Kevin Collins" back to their sure deaths. Any of us, if we saw Kevin, would grab him up and return him safely to his family. We must do as much for our Salvadoran brothers and sisters. We must protest this outrage. We must view them as we do Kevin. They are all our brothers, sisters and children. —April 1984

## **Mondale/Ferraro: 'More of the same'**

*The following are excerpts from a speech to a July 28 rally launching Sylvia Weinstein's campaign for board of supervisors in San Francisco.*

We in this city have recently been witness to a circus far bigger than Barnum and Bailey. I'm talking about the Democratic Party National Convention, which cost the city's taxpayers over \$10 million.

Mayor Feinstein spent \$100,000 on a party for the big-shots at the convention, while poverty-stricken people line up for a free meal at St. Anthony's shelter. Willie Brown, Democratic speaker of the California State Assembly, spent \$400,000 for a gala convention ball, while working mothers, who cannot afford childcare, have to hang door keys around the necks of their little children.

There are parts of this city, such as the Western Addition and Hunters Point, that look like a disaster area. Why? Because the real estate interests and the banks are playing God with our communities. "Mondo Condo" is sweeping the city as apartment dwellers are thrown out of their residences to make room for condominium conversions.

Forget about the dream of owning a home. A lot of young people would be satisfied just to have their own apartments and not have to share with others. And thousands of people in this city cannot even find a bed to sleep in. They roam the streets with bedrolls on their backs looking for a doorway to huddle in. That is the background in which the Democrats held their convention in our city.

### **Democrats love corporations**

The Democratic convention nominated Walter Mondale for president and Geraldine Ferraro for vice president. Mondale would like us to forget that he was Carter's right-hand man for four years, as they did all they could to attack the rights of working people, Blacks, women, and others.

Carter and Mondale promised during their 1976 campaign to cut the war budget \$5-\$7 billion. But after taking office, Carter and Mondale asked for a \$10 billion increase in the war budget. Carter and Mondale increased funds for the dictators of Central America, while crying crocodile tears about "human rights."

Their secretary of agriculture, however, saved \$25 million a year by cutting down on the school milk program for 1.4 million needy schoolchildren.

Carter promised to support the Equal Rights Amendment during his campaign, but he gave women a glimpse of his real feeling toward their struggle for equality when he cut funds for abortions for poor women. You would have to be a little naive to think that Mondale was just an innocent bystander during the Carter years.

Geraldine Ferraro, for her part, says that she supports a woman's right to choose but that she would never have an abortion herself. But to give credence to the Moral Majority's claim that abortion is somehow immoral and unChristian only adds fuel to the right-wing fire. Abortion clinics are under attack. They have been fire-bombed and prayer-bombed. We've seen preachers actually walking into the middle of an abortion operation to say a prayer for the "unborn."

The anti-abortionists actually call up the parents of young women who have had abortions to tell them what their daughters have done.

What Ferraro should have said is that she will join the escort groups to help women go to a clinic without being harassed by right-to-life fanatics. She should have said that she will prosecute the "raving-right" who harass clinics. She should have said that she will restore the funds for abortion that were wiped out by the Carter and Reagan administrations. But she didn't and she won't.

Ferraro also supports prayer in public schools. She supports the school voucher initiative that would take funds away from public schools and put them in the hands of private and religious schools.

Ferraro voted against the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill because it would give "amnesty" to some "illegal aliens."

She said that this would be an insult to people like her parents who came to this country legally.

Betty Freidan said that every woman should feel a little taller because of Ferraro's nomination as the first woman vice-presidential candidate of either major party. But let me remind you of the British miners who today are being beaten and jailed by another woman. Her name is Margaret Thatcher. The fact is that a woman candidate is only as good as her program.

Take my word for it. You are asking for more of the same if you elect Mondale and Ferraro. Their job is and will be to increase the profits of big capital at the expense of the workers. That's what we can expect.

Despite all the fighting over the platform at the Democratic convention, there was just one little thing left out—the truth. Actually there has never been a Democratic platform that really told the truth. How could it? The Democrats wouldn't get many votes if they said, "We're sorry, but we must protect the corporate wealth of the ruling class. We are even willing, if necessary, to have a nuclear war to protect private profit."

Instead, they stage a little drama to fool the audience into believing that the platform is a bible, promising all things to all people, that cannot be violated. Meanwhile, in the back room the big boys are calling the shots.

Now most of you know all this. But there are some who will say I am just a cynic. After all, there has to be a difference between Mondale and Reagan. There has to be a "lesser evil" in this election.

There has to be an election. Well, I am not a cynic. I have enormous faith in the ability of the working class and their allies to change this society and end all the misery I've been talking about.

### **On the picket line**

Every day during the Democratic convention we have seen real-life heroes and heroines on the streets of San Francisco. I'm talking about the picket lines of the retail clerks of Local 1100 at Macy's and Emporium department stores.

These men and women are caught in the vise of big-business and their bootlicking judges and politicians. The mayor, the courts, and the cops have all sprung into action to carry out the employers' demand that the mass picket lines be broken up. They have imposed on the union a highly-restrictive injunction against picketing.

What these strikers need is solidarity from the entire labor movement of this city. Instead of throwing their money away on back-stabbing politicians, the unions ought to use all their Political Action Committee money to help workers on strike defend themselves. They ought to use their resources to build their own party, a labor party, instead of the Democratic Party.

I became a socialist almost 40 years ago. Far from having changed my mind, I am more convinced than ever of the rightness of socialism. I believe this economic system is bankrupt. I also believe that working people who make this country run have the potential to build a new society that is in the interests of all



the exploited and oppressed.

As I run for the Board of Supervisors, I intend to speak the truth about this system. And I expect by the end of this campaign to have more socialists, more activists, more thinking members of the working class with us in our struggle. So join Socialist Action and work to build a better world. —September 1984

## 1985

### White House Grinch Steals Christmas

Children sent hundreds of letters to Santa Claus at Christmas that revealed desperate loneliness and poverty. “We are still getting the perennial toy request lists, but so many of the letters this season show need — real hardship,” said Millie Lee, a spokeswoman for New York’s General Post Office.

One child, Angel in Manhattan, wrote, “I got nothing last Christmas. I asked my grandmother, the only person who worried about me, what happened. Why didn’t Santa come? She said, ‘Santa is with Reaganomics!’”

President Reagan’s budget plan came just in time for Christmas. In keeping with his kindly Christian nature, nearly one-fifth of his proposed \$34 billion cut in next year’s domestic budget was to be taken from the dinner table of the poor.

Studies from the December 1984 *Scientific American* report that children make up the largest portion of the poor in this country. In 1970, 16 percent of those under 14 lived in poverty. By 1982, 23 percent of our children were living below the poverty line.

Well, the Grinch in the White House brought a special surprise for children! Child nutrition programs,



Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, aid for handicapped and disadvantaged education, parts of the school lunch program, funds to elementary and secondary schools and libraries—and much, much more will be taken away from them.

We all laughed when we heard Reagan urge a 10 percent cut in the high salaries of congressmen and cabinet members. He even hinted that he himself might take a cut—to show how democratic he is about the budget. But 10 percent from a millionaire still leaves a few dollars to play with. Nancy could still afford Gucci bags.

Ten percent, or 5 percent, or 3 percent from a single parent who receives perhaps \$450 per month for herself and her children cuts very close to the bone. It means less food, clothing, and necessities. Imposing “workfare” rules on a mother living on welfare will leave her children unattended at home. But those are the plans for the future of the poor that the real-life Grinch is hatching up.

Parents will go deep into debt at Christmastime to provide the toys, trees, and presents that mean so much to their children. And these things mean even more to parents who want to give their children a better life than they had. The dream of all parents is that their children will grow up in a happier, safer world. There’s no better reason to fight for a socialist future for our children. —January 1985

## Women’s Movement at Crossroads

An important debate is taking place in the National Organization for Women (NOW). The upcoming national convention, to take place this month in New Orleans, will see Eleanor Smeal challenge Judy Goldsmith for president.

The differences between the two candidates are expressed most sharply around how to carry on the fight for the Equal Rights Amendment. Smeal favors a national program for direct action now. “This can’t wait for another 10 years,” she says. “We can’t decide that we want it and then do nothing.”

Smeal is also calling for NOW to get involved in direct action on issues such as reproductive rights, discrimination against females in education, and fighting the Vatican’s policies on reproductive rights and women’s role in the church.

Goldsmith disagrees. “It (the ERA) is on our agenda, but it is not the most propitious time to bring it up. We are not interested in exercises in futility. We must change the political landscape and get more women elected before we try again.”

She goes on to say, “Loud may be good, but it is not only the level of decibels that is heard.”

Goldsmith gives her idea of a great victory: “Without NOW,” she crows triumphantly, “I don’t think there would have been a woman vice-presidential candidate.”

### Shift away from mass action

Although the debate reflects the discontent in the women’s movement at the

setbacks it has been experiencing, it would be wise to take this dispute with a grain of salt. The defeat of the ERA occurred during Smeal's presidency of NOW. When the ERA was within a whisker of winning the required number of states for passage of the constitutional amendment, Smeal led NOW in a shift away from a strategy of mass action. Under the slogan, "Out of the streets and into the mainstream," all of NOW's energy turned toward electing "good guys" male and female, who promised to vote for the ERA in state legislatures.

Nevada was an example of the results of this real "exercise in futility."

Ten Nevada legislators who vowed to vote for ERA ratification were elected with the backing of NOW. In the first test, all 10 voted against the ERA! Nevada NOW women came to the following national convention wearing buttons that said "Remember the Nevada Ten!"

But the national NOW leadership learned nothing. This debacle continued in state after state. NOW pushed its chapters into wine-and-cheese fundraisers and precinct-walking for Democratic Party candidates. The "out of the streets, into the mainstream" strategy had the devastating effect of demoralizing NOW activists.

### **NOW leaders purge activists**

San Francisco NOW was an example of the effect of this disastrous policy. S.F. NOW had been known nationally as one of the most militant, active chapters in the country. In order to turn S.F. NOW from an activists' chapter into an arm of the Democratic Party, it was necessary to red-bait and purge the chapter of its most devoted members.

Leaders of the chapter who had headed up the reproductive rights committee, the equal rights committee, the "Day In The Park" committee and the newsletter, and who had built the chapter, were driven out on trumped-up charges of "organizing a reproductive rights march."

Jeannie Foat, acting California state coordinator, swooped into San Francisco and brought members from other Northern California chapters to vote against the S.F. NOW activists. Over 75 of S.F. NOW's most active members left in disgust.

The trial was effective in its divide-and-conquer effect. The conquest was very short lived. The S.F. NOW chapter, which stood out for its visible, militant actions in defense of women's rights, was reduced to an ineffectual shadow of its former self. And it has yet to recover.

### **Symbol of hope**

The National Organization For Women, before its transformation into a vote-getting vehicle for the Democratic Party, was a symbol of hope for millions of women stifled by a sexist economic system which thrives on the misery of women, children, and oppressed minorities.

But NOW remains an organization of 250,000 members, with 800 chapters and an annual budget of \$6.5 million. Just imagine how much it could do for women's rights with that force if it were not in bed with the same politicians who

represent the oppression and exploitation of women.

If NOW is to survive, it must turn from the electoral arena and go back into the streets. It must once again mobilize women for action. It can begin by reducing its membership fee to \$1 per person.

It should go onto the street corners, into the office buildings, union halls, and factories, wherever women work, and recruit those millions of women who are willing to fight for their rights. —July 1985

## Defend Abortion Rights

The Reagan administration, in its continuing terrorist war against women, is asking the Supreme Court to do away with the constitutional right to abortion.

Last month, Attorney General Edwin Meese requested the Supreme Court to reverse its 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. The court ruling had stated that the decision to end pregnancy was a “fundamental right of privacy” and therefore protected by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution.

At the time of the 1973 decision, in most states, women who obtained abortions and doctors who performed the operations faced criminal penalties. Now, using the legal gimmick of “states’ rights,” Meese has asked the Supreme Court to “return the law to the condition in which it was before that case [*Roe v. Wade*] was decided.”

By “states rights” the attorney general means laws such as those passed in Pennsylvania and Illinois that restricted access to abortion. Federal courts have declared these laws to be unconstitutional and in violation of the *Roe v. Wade* decision.

After repeated attempts by rightwing “pro-lifers” to negate and repeal the right of women to choose, the Reagan administration has now decided to ask for the whole hog, to simply remove this right from the law books. Reagan and his marauding “pro-lifers” do not let a little thing like the Constitution of the United States stand in the way of their narrow view of what is right and wrong.

### Love the fetus, hate children

One would think that given their zeal for saving the fetus, the “pro-lifers” would also be tireless in their efforts to aid children who are out of the womb and living in the world of poverty. On the contrary, anti-abortion legislators are notorious for voting against every bill designed to increase social aid to low-income women and children such as childcare, medical aid, nutrition, and school lunch programs.

It is obvious by their actions that while the “pro-lifers” believe that life begins at conception, they also believe that it ends at birth.

I suspect that their hatred stems from the fact they have discovered that children are not delivered by the stork, but are actually the result of SEX! And you know what SEX is: It is something to be punished and so the result of SEX is also

to be punished.

The “pro-lifers” know that if they get their way, women would be back to the bloodbath of illegal abortions. They know that only safe abortions would end.

The economic facts of life require women to make their own decision about having children and when they can afford to have them.

### **Black robes**

Women of this nation are now glued to the news media to see if nine old men in black robes (I include Sandra O’Connor among them) will continue to allow women their constitutional rights.

Reagan, another rich and evil old man, lay in his hospital bed, enjoying the best medical care money can buy. His right to live is well protected, yet he demands that the Supreme Court take away a woman’s right to choose and live!

For the first time in the history of this country a president is trying to take away a constitutional right because he doesn’t like it. This is a serious test by the right-wing rulers of this country to get away with whittling away our *rights*. If he is successful, what will be next? Our right to vote?

The only way to protect our right “to choose” and all of the other rights we have gained, is by going out into the streets of this country by the thousands and millions and expressing our outrage at being abused by a sexist government. Women’s organizations must answer this threat with a call to action. We will not be driven back into the hands of the back-alley abortion butchers of this country.

—August 1985

## **California NOW Conference Defends Abortion Rights**

Abortion rights was the major concern of the 345 women meeting at a state convention of the National Organization for Women held August 16-18 in Long Beach, California. The theme of this convention was “Continuing to Make the Difference.”

Two important resolutions were passed on the issue of abortion rights: The first on clinic harassment, and the other on two anti-choice initiatives sponsored by right-wing, pro-life forces slated for the 1986 California ballot.

The resolution on clinic harassment included a proposal to launch a petition drive to State Attorney General John Van de Kamp to take immediate action to prevent clinic bombings, arson, and harassment, something he has ignored until now.

The resolution in opposition to the anti-choice ballot initiatives declared California is in a state of emergency concerning all aspects of women’s reproductive freedom. It mandated California NOW chapters to make women’s repro-



ductive rights a high visibility and priority issue through education, demonstrations, advertisement, and local media.

This resolution comes in the context of the national NOW call for simultaneous reproductive rights marches on the West Coast and in Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1986. It has not yet been decided whether the West Coast march will be in San Francisco or Los Angeles.

At NOW conventions it is the workshops which set action proposals for the coming period. At this conference only two resolutions were allowed from each workshop. All of the resolutions, though, were important and reflected the needs and interests of women.

The resolutions included a broad spectrum of issues: No U.S. intervention in Central America; a call to support anti-apartheid actions planned for Oct. 11 and 12; pay-equity; accessibility for disabled women at NOW meetings; AIDS and its relationship to women; an end to coerced workfare for AFDC recipients; organizing peace committees within local NOW chapters; and discrimination against gay and lesbian families.



Sylvia and Joni Jacobs doing clinic defense at Planned Parenthood in Oakland.

Only four of the resolutions came up at the Sunday plenary session, due to the time limit of one hour for discussion. The call to support the anti-apartheid actions in October, for instance, was passed at the plenary session. All the other resolutions were referred to the new incoming state NOW board for consideration at its next two-day board meeting.

What came across most at this convention was that women are ready for action on all of the issues they are faced with every day. The resolutions coming from the workshops have set an excellent path for the new state officers to follow. If acted upon, they could lead women to a higher stage in their quest for full equality.

—September 1985

## ‘New Right’ Does More Than Pray Over Abortion

*“To no form of religion is woman indebted for one impulse of freedom, as all alike have taught her inferiority and subjection.”* —Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902

Once again women’s rights are being used as a scapegoat by the government and the church to organize a right-wing movement in this country. The campaign against abortion rights has become a tool for the right wing in the United States. Capitalism needs a submissive working class, and where better to start than by bringing women under the thumb of the government and the church?

The “New Right” is a coalition of political, religious, and big business organizations who agree on cutbacks of domestic spending for health and human services, increased military expenditures, and elimination of anti-discrimination protection such as affirmative action for women and minorities. They oppose labor unions, workers’ rights, and comparable worth.

The “New Right” is also for the preservation of the family—as they define it. Of course, abortion and contraception do not fit into their picture of “the family.”

First on the legal front came the Hyde Amendment, which cut funds for abortion for poor women. But when the “New Right” couldn’t get enough out of the courts or Congress they resorted to acts of terrorism. Ever onward do these Christian soldiers march!

Since 1982, more than 33 abortion and health clinics have been bombed. Anti-abortion forces have recently called for a “Year of Fear and Pain” for women who seek abortions and for health care workers who provide them.

This will mean increased harassment and violence.

On Nov. 6, two major abortion cases came before the U.S Supreme Court. Lawyers asked that the Court uphold laws in both Pennsylvania and Illinois that had been

thrown out by lower federal courts. Both laws required physicians performing late-term abortions to use procedures designed to promote the survival of fetuses that have developed enough to live outside the womb.

Opponents of the law argue that they were designed to discourage abortions and that they would endanger the health of women undergoing late-term abortions. The Illinois law, say opponents, required doctors to endorse the state government's theory of life.

The Illinois law also required physicians, who prescribe contraceptives that prevent the fertilization of eggs, to tell their patients that these are "abortifacients" that "cause fetal death." The law did not specify what contraceptive methods it had in mind, but the most common is the intrauterine device (IUD).

The Pennsylvania law required physicians to keep certain records for the state and to give women seeking abortion specific information concerning risks and alternatives. Kathryn Kolbert, of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, told the Court that the information is medically irrelevant and "designed not to inform the woman but to persuade her" not to have an abortion.

The Reagan administration submitted a "friend of the court" brief last July asking that the Supreme Court throw out its Roe v. Wade ruling of 1973, which made abortion legal. The brief called the 1973 decision "unworkable and in violation of 'states rights.'"

### **Anti-abortion measures**

Two anti-abortion initiatives are slated for the 1986 election ballot in California. The first, scheduled for the June election, would amend the state constitution to prohibit the use of taxpayers' dollars, "to compensate...any person, agency or facility for the performance of any medically induced abortion."

Abortions when necessary to prevent the pregnant woman's imminent death from physical injury, etc., are permitted *if the legislature so authorizes*.

The second major provision of this proposal provides for the "funding for physical care and medical treatment for unborn and prematurely born children and for care and developmental resources for disabled and handicapped children." This funding, how-



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ever, will only last for three years. After that the children and parents are on their own.

The second ballot initiative, scheduled for November 1986, is much simpler. It says, “No public money shall be spent directly or indirectly for the killing of innocent human individuals from fertilization until natural death.”

This initiative does not include abortion in case of the imminent death of the mother. I suppose the “pro-lifers” feel that any woman who may die in childbirth does not deserve to live anyway.

Across the nation those who believe in the “right to choose” are stepping up their activity. The National Organization for Women has called for massive demonstrations on March 9 in Washington, D.C., and on March 16 in Los Angeles.

Women must begin to organize; no more silence. “Organize, don’t agonize!” must be our slogan. —December 1985

## 1986

### Abortion Issue Hits Close to Home

It was the year 1945—28 years before the historic U.S. Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized abortion—that I knew I would need an abortion. My daughter was eight months old. My husband and I lived with my mother because we could not afford an apartment of our own, and I was three months pregnant.

Through word of mouth, checking with family and friends, we finally located an abortionist. He worked in a pharmacy. I was four months pregnant before we could scrape up the \$300 for the abortion.

The abortionist arranged to pick me up in his car and drive me to Staten Island, N.Y., for the operation. Fearing a possible mishap that could lead to criminal prosecution, he refused to allow my husband to go with me. It was winter, but I was more cold from fear than from the miserable weather.

We went to an apartment that was empty—except for a kitchen table—where

the abortion was performed. I was sworn to silence throughout the operation. I was told not to scream or even moan. When it was finally over, he drove me to a movie theater, where I met my husband who then took me home.

Hours later I hemorrhaged and was taken to Coney Island Hospital, where the job was finished. At the hospital the doctors accepted my unlikely story of a miscarriage. Had they not done so, they would have had to call the police and refuse treatment until I revealed the name of the abortionist.

My second illegal abortion took place when my second child was five years old. This time it was performed in a doctor's office. I was told to be ready to get up off the table at any time if there was knock on the door. Once again after I got home, I began to hemorrhage. Again I was taken to the emergency ward of Coney Island Hospital, where I was given two transfusions.

My first abortion came about because I knew nothing about birth control. The second, because my birth control failed. With both abortions I was in mortal fear for my life. I did not want to leave my little babies to be raised by someone else. But the fear of having another child with an income already barely sufficient for our small family drove me to risk death.

Millions of women have made that bitter choice, and many have died from botched illegal abortions. In 1968 the President Crime Commission reported that "one million illegal abortions were performed annually." The Crime Commission further stated that "350,000 women per year suffer complications and 5000 die. Illegal abortion is the leading cause of maternal deaths in the United States."

The incidence of abortion deaths was actually higher. Many of the deaths from abortion were hidden by misleading death certificates—to prevent embarrassment for the grieving families.

Is all that misery over? No! Despite the Jan. 22, 1973, *Roe v. Wade* decision that made abortion legal, right-wing forces are trying to bring back the back-alley death traps.

We have an opportunity in 1986 to reassert our right to control our own destiny. The National Organization for Women has called for "Marches For Women's Lives" in Washington, D.C., on March 9 and in Los Angeles on March 16. These actions can contribute to saving the lives of millions of women who will be maimed or killed if we allow the right-wing big mouths to take away our right to legal abortions.



Get in touch with your local chapter of NOW and join the effort to build these marches. If you don't have a chapter near you, then start one. Mobilize as if your life depended on it...because it does! —January 1986

## Put Childcare Where It Belongs— In the Schools!

Everybody talks but nobody does anything! This is especially true about child-care needs. Despite the crisis facing families, there has been nothing but talk from both major political parties. Children are still the most neglected sector of our society; they continue to represent the largest section living in poverty.

I am a strong advocate that childcare be placed under the control of the public school system. Those public schools that already have childcare services are far superior to the babysitting-type private setups.

Public school childcare is *education-oriented*. Like kindergarten, which in its time was an extension of the public education system to your children, public school childcare would work to prepare children for their whole learning experience.

The following paragraphs are taken from an excellent position paper published by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) executive council on Dec. 17, 1974. The need for childcare is even more urgent today:

Synthesis of important research shows us that the individual develops as much as 50 percent of his or her maturity from conception to age four. Another 30 percent develops between ages four and eight. Children whose intellectual growth is neglected—either at home by parents who may be hard-pressed, or ill-equipped to provide them with the necessary stimulation, or in institutions which are understaffed and under supplied—suffer immeasurable damage to their learning ability.

When these facts are combined with the real need of working parents for adequate childcare (in 1972, 5.5 million children under six years old had mothers who were working or looking for work; nearly 26 million children under 18 were in the same position), quality early childhood education and day care for children of all ages become even stronger public-school imperatives.

The authors of the paper stress that the public schools are able to offer essential childcare services since “the country is filled with underutilized school buildings and qualified teachers without jobs.”

They also point out that schools are subject to public planning and policy-making by elected bodies, unlike private agencies in the day-care business.

“It is our belief,” the AFT paper states, “that high quality early childhood education and day care can help us begin to solve a number of our pressing social

problems. It can help us reduce underachievement, it can provide health and institutional care for those who might not get it otherwise, it can bring parents closer to the schools, it can stimulate school integration by providing quality programs at earlier ages.”

“Such a program,” the AFT executive council concludes, “can help us begin to provide universal education with all its benefits for all our citizens of every age.”

Amen! —April 1986

## Reagan Stacks Court with Abortion Foes

On June 11, the U.S. Supreme Court, in a narrow five-to-four vote, threw out a Pennsylvania law limiting abortion. The ruling upheld the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling that established a woman’s legal right to abortion.

Although anti-choice right-wingers were defeated, many of them are crowing over the fact that this was the closest vote yet on the issue of abortion. Not too long ago, the Moral Majority held an open meeting where they prayed for the death of some member of the Supreme Court—so that future voting would be tipped in their favor.

God may not have exactly answered their prayers, but on June 18, Justice Warren E. Burger announced his retirement. Reagan swiftly nominated Justice Rehnquist as chief justice of the Supreme Court. Rehnquist has the court’s most conservative record in cases of civil liberties, affirmative action, school prayer, busing, presidential powers, the death penalty, obscenity, and abortion.

Reagan announced he will nominate another ultra-conservative, Judge Anthony Scalia, to fill the Supreme Court vacancy. One of Scalia’s colleagues describes him by saying, “This kid was a conservative when he was 17 years old. An arch-conservative Catholic. He could have been a member of the Pope’s Curia.”

What rights will the Supreme Court of the capitalist class uphold? None if they can get away with it. But if abortion is again made illegal, it will trigger mass outrage and precipitate massive protest action.

In the meantime, Reagan has given encouragement to the use of terrorism to close abortion and health clinics for women. Joe Scheidler, director of the Pro-life Action League in Chicago, recently went to the White House at Reagan’s invitation to ask for pardon for abortion clinic bombers.

In a recent survey of abortion clinics and physicians belonging to the National Abortion Federation, it was found that 26 percent of the respondents have been “visited” [threatened] by Scheidler and 30 percent had experienced serious violence, including total destruction of facilities—sometimes more than once.

In the early 1930s, the working class was restricted in its right to organize unions in this country. All laws were made to be used against them. They changed those laws by thumbing their nose at them. They organized the most powerful waves of strikes and demonstrations ever seen anywhere.

That's what we have to do today. Women, together with the labor movement and other natural allies, must get back into the streets—independent, strong, and militant.  
—July 1986

## **Bosses Push Diehard ‘Bible-thumpers’**

“With The Bible on The Table and The Flag Upon The Wall” was a popular country-western song played day after day on the radio when I was a young girl in the 1930s. It was a reflection, especially in the Bible-belt South, of despair over the Depression and its terrible effects on the working class.

Good Christians could only understand this massive economic crisis as the curse of God upon an ungrateful population who defied God's will by sinning.

Once again, the capitalist economic system of the United States, the strongest imperialist country in the world, is entering a grave crisis. Unemployment, hunger, inflation, and poverty stalk this nation. The living standard is falling for the working class while the wealthy live the lives of feudal lords and ladies.

The capitalist class has no ideology to explain this crisis to the vast majority of working and poor people. Once again, its politically bankrupt leaders must wrap themselves in the flag and with Bible in hand, raise abstract, moral questions to conceal their social and economic impotency.

Moral questions place the responsibility for society's ills on the individual rather than on the capitalist system and government—where it belongs. That's why the capitalists encourage right wing Bible-thumpers such as Jerry Falwell to provide a morality crusade as a diversion from the real problems of society.

In the last few months we have witnessed the issues of drug testing, the AIDS hysteria, abortion, sodomy, and pornography turned into handles for a Salem witch hunt by the hypocritical moral moss-backs of the church, the courts, and the government.

### **Forced drug testing**

Fifty percent of America's largest corporations listed in Fortune magazine are now testing their workers for drug use.

One man who had worked as a machinist for 11 years, with only three days absence in that whole time, was recalled to his job after a layoff. But first he was tested for drugs. He tested positive and was immediately fired. He had smoked a marijuana cigarette one month before in his own house.

He is blackballed from the industry and also denied unemployment compensation. Drug testing allows employers to hire and fire at will. They can use the test to get rid of militant unionists and anyone who stands up for their rights.

One head of a large corporation stated that “employers have the right to insist



on a healthy workforce.” As if they would begin testing for dental plaque, firing workers who don’t floss regularly!

Of course, we can’t test the boss after a three-martini lunch. Yet these are the bums who cause pollution of our atmosphere. Their factories spew forth poisonous chemicals—remember Bhopal—which they refuse to filter out in their lust for profits.

The Supreme Court recently gave law enforcers the right to break into any person’s bedroom to check on obedience to sodomy laws. And the Justice Department gave every boss the right to fire any worker who has AIDS or AIDS-related anti-bodies. In California, the “La Roach” initiative compels testing for AIDS and penalizing its victims with firing and incarceration in concentration camps.

These methods of allegedly controlling the deadly AIDS epidemic are counter-productive. It will result in potential AIDS victims hiding from medical workers instead of seeking help and advice from them to limit the spread of the infection.

### **Meese’s anti-porn crusade**

For over one year, Attorney General Meese, in another front of the “moral” crusade, has had his Commission on Pornography searching every nook and cranny for “dirt.”

Journalist Robert Scheer followed the pornography commissioners around for six months. In a report in the August issue of *Playboy* magazine he reveals the true character of these “good people.”

Scheer reports: “On one occasion a woman commissioner was talking with one of the men [commissioners], who had loudly declared his belief that masturbation could lead to sexual disorders. He remarked offhandedly: ‘Of course, none of this would happen if women learned how to give a really good blow job.’ When the woman objected, he said, ‘That’s a lot of feminist crap.’”

Why is the government giving these right-wing sewer-astronauts the right to push us around? Because they are preparing to mobilize the righteous hypocrites and other scum to defend the system against mounting popular discontent.

In the ’30s it took an uprising of the working class to set the capitalists straight. The working class answer to the false morality of the capitalist class was a mass fightback. Solidarity of the poor and oppressed became the “flag” of a rising, angry working class.

This generation of American working people will answer as our predecessors did in the 1930s, when millions sang:

*Long haired preachers come out every night,  
Try to tell us what’s wrong and what’s right,  
When you ask them for something to eat,  
They will tell you in voices, so sweet:  
You will eat by and by, In that wonderful world in the sky,*

*Work and pray, live on hay,  
You'll eat pie in the sky when you die.*

We don't need their "pie in the sky." We can build a better world right here, right now. —September 1986

## Reading, Writing, and Finking

The school curriculum has now been expanded by California State Superintendent of Public Education William Honig to include "finking." It will not be long before "spelling-bees" will be replaced by "finking-bees" in our public schools.

Instead of competing on the spelling of a word, children will be urged to vie with each other over who can reveal the most about the personal habits of their parents. What do their parents drink? How much? What do they smoke? How often? What pills do they take? And most important, can they sneak a sample to their teacher?

Honig and Attorney General John Van de Kamp recently spoke at a San Francisco high school, where they approved of the recent incidents of youngsters turning in their parents to the police for alleged drug abuse. "I think it's a sign of success," Honig said. "That means they've found something wrong."

Van de Kamp declared with oily hypocrisy, "The thrust of this program is not to raise a generation of snitches, it is to get kids to deal with their own problems and when they see danger at home—danger to them—to be able to take the necessary steps."

This snitch program was highly successful in Germany from 1933 until 1945. Hitler's youth became experts at turning in their parents to the police. This played hell with the "sanctity of the family," but it sure curbed criticism of the Nazi regime.

### Reagan's phony 'war'

California politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, are rushing to enlist in Reagan's phony "war on drugs." Throwing caution to the winds, both parties are passing congressional anti-drug bills that would trash the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. The Democratic Party-controlled House of Representatives just voted to impose the federal death penalty on people selling illegal drugs who cause someone's death. They also voted to require the president to send military forces to U.S. borders to stop drug smuggling. The troops would be given power to make arrests.

Most ominous, it would permit the use of improperly obtained evidence seized in warrantless searches.

One would hope that the Pentagon or the CIA would immediately disarm the contras in Nicaragua since even Reagan has admitted that they were caught smuggling and selling drugs. But I am willing to bet my life that that won't happen.

The real meat and potatoes of this phony “war” is aimed at the working class—the real victims of drugs. Widespread testing of workers will mean wholesale firings of workers in violation of their civil rights. All experts agree that the “drug tests” are extremely unreliable.

Drug testing has become big business, and if drug testing was expanded to include the annual testing of the 100 million Americans in the work force, experts calculate that the costs would reach several billion dollars.

“In the climate where there’s money to be made, inevitably there will be incompetent and inadequately staffed laboratories,” said Dr. Bryan S. Finkle, a leading toxicologist at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Workers who are forced to undergo drug tests will have their lives in the hands of “incompetent and inadequately” staffed laboratories who are in it for the big bucks.

Socialists are well acquainted with capitalist “justice.” The FBI, CIA, and Red Squads selectively enforce anti-drug laws against organizations that advocate radical social change. Members of these groups are rigorously prosecuted.

And you can bet your life that the government will selectively enforce its anti-drug policy against militant trade unionists.

Huge corporations such as rail, airlines, trucking and nuclear energy are cutting the workforce in utter disregard of safety in their greedy grasp for higher profits. There will be more Three Mile Islands and more airline and rail disasters that the corporate empires will blame on drugs to avoid their responsibility to pay death and injury claims.

Widespread drug use is a result of an economic system which puts profits before the needs of people. Drugs should be decriminalized to remove the current incentive for drug pushers to get people, particularly kids, hooked.

When there is no super profit to be made from drugs, then the drug pushers and dealers will wither away. Instead of making criminals out of drug victims, we should change this economic system so that every individual is treated with decency and justice—only a socialist society can accomplish that.—October 1986

## Duarte Cries Crocodile Tears

The vicious nature of capitalism in El Salvador was revealed most openly during the recent earthquake.

Over 200,000 were left homeless as their houses collapsed around them. Nine working-class neighborhoods in the capital city of San Salvador were over half destroyed.

The Salvadoran rulers and their U.S. backers cried crocodile tears about the desperate need of the people. But the truth is that most aid was given to the upper-class neighborhoods—which have suffered the least damage.

Water, electricity, and telephone service were restored to the wealthier districts

within two days. Weeks later, on the other hand, thousands of poor people continued to sleep in the streets. Medical teams encountered long delays in trying to obtain necessary supplies from government bureaucrats.

"It's bad, it's very bad," Claude Malalloudeau, an official of the French relief organization Doctors Without Borders, said on Oct. 12. "There is no coordination and no government help in the poor areas."

When some government aid did arrive, a week or so later, much of it was disbursed by the infamous Treasury Police, widely known for its corruption and its ties to right-wing death squads.

The Salvadoran daily *El Diario de Hoy* commented on Oct. 19 that despite the rising numbers of sick and hungry, "tons of plastic tenting and all kinds of provisions are piling up in [municipal] warehouses."

The Archbishop of San Salvador, Arturo Rivera y Damas, harshly criticized the failure to provide greater relief services to the poor: "What is most apparent, without offering lectures on social class, is that the poor neighborhoods of the marginal zones are those that suffer most and are those that show the precarious conditions, often inhuman, in which our people live."

### **Mud shacks**

A stark picture of those inhuman conditions was given by James Lemoyne in the Oct. 13 *New York Times*. His article from the Comunidad Modelo neighborhood starts off:

"The people of this miserable warren of mud shacks have been promised by the government that it will help them rebuild from the earthquake that swept away their homes and buried their loved ones on Friday morning. But tonight, as the rains of a violent thunderstorm added to their misery, they found it hard to believe that the promise would be kept any time soon."

"Comunidad modelo," Lemoyne pointed out, "is one of the dozens of poor neighborhoods that circle the capital city of San Salvador, housing thousands of refugees from the war and the urban unemployed—people who provide the most recruits to the guerrillas."

These working-class ghettos have suffered the most from the earthquake largely because of the appalling condition of their ramshackle housing—often slapped together from pieces of tin. The impoverished residents are often compelled to construct their shacks on mountainsides. When the earthquake hit, the shacks slid down and were buried in a mountain of mud and debris.

Typically, these communities have no running water, no health care, and least of all, any influence that could bring government aid in this emergency.

Lemoyne stressed that El Salvador "is a highly stratified society, in which the richest live in walled homes in beautiful neighborhoods and the poorest in squalid canyons such as this one. Thus, the lack of help from the more affluent appears as notable as the absence of help from the American-trained and

American-financed army.”

“There are no volunteer soup kitchens or clothes distribution centers in Comunidad Modelo,” LeMoyné continued. “The only apparent service was a crude clinic on the back of a flatbed truck, manned by teenagers from the local Boy and Girl Scouts.”

### **Stepped-up bombing**

Immediately following the earthquake, left-wing guerrilla groups declared a unilateral cease fire in order to aid rescue operations. But their offer was rejected by President Jose Napoleon Duarte. The government responded instead by stepping up aerial bombing raids on areas of the country deemed sympathetic to the rebels.

For over a week after the quake, Salvadoran military forces kept a notable distance from rescue sites. “In a daylong tour of disaster areas,” *The New York Times* reported on Oct. 13, “not one soldier was seen helping people dig out their homes and relatives. Two officers said the army was busy providing security.”

Clearly, the 50,000-man Salvadoran army is not there to protect and help the victims of the earthquake, but to guard the wealthy from the poor.

The military of El Salvador, like the contras of Nicaragua, are financed by the United States to protect the investments of U.S. capitalists—as well as their local capitalist junior partners. Their job is to jail, torture, and murder the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua who are determined to fight for their independence and for a better life.

These events following the earthquake shed more light on the lies of the U.S. government, which claims that it supports “freedom fighters” in these countries. They are butchers bought and paid for with our taxes and sent to murder the real freedom fighters. —November 1986

## **Fund Childcare, Not Bombs!**

Rashaad, my youngest grandchild, will be three this month. His imagination runs wild. He can change from a little boy to a fierce Karate Kid with just a ribbon around his forehead.

Tape a paper towel onto his back, and he becomes Superman flying through the air. With a kitchen chair turned upside down and a tablecloth, he is transformed into a space warrior—all of this in just a few hours.

Rashaad has learned to play with other children. He waits patiently until it's his turn to play on the slide or tricycle. He no longer clings to our hand when other children are around or insists on sitting in our lap when strange grownups come to visit.

Rashaad is, in fact, becoming a joyful, teasing, wonderful little boy. Of course he's my grandson, and for that he is special. But a lot of the credit belongs to his childcare center. It is there that he has learned to relate to grownups and other children.

He attends an excellent center with caring teachers and parents. He qualified for this public childcare center because his mother is a low-income, single parent and



because she is a student at City College.

Other single parents are waiting to place their children in that center. They want to go to college to learn a skill in order to support themselves and their children. Many of them are “reentry” older women who have sole responsibility their children.

But they are in for bad news. The center has announced that there have been serious cutbacks in funding. They may have to fire personnel. They have had to cut back on the mid-morning juice snack for the children and they will not be able to take in any more children.

Rashaad’s childcare center must now hold “bake sales” to afford field trips or play materials for the children.

Meanwhile, this country is supplying millions of dollars worth of war materiel to Iran and the contras. These weapons will be used to bring destruction and death to the children of the Middle East and Central America.

It’s the American capitalist way of life. The capitalist class of the world’s richest country can only afford bombs—not adequate childcare.

Socialists want to change that “way of life.” We want every child to be joyful and happy. We will help build a world where all children can develop their imagination and creativity. —December 1986

# 1987

## Happy Birthday Martin Luther King!

On Jan. 15, 1929, Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia. He was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee, after having led a march of 6000 protesters in support of striking sanitation workers of that city.

As the Rev. King himself said. “A man who won’t die for something is not fit to live.” After long years of struggle, his birthday has been declared a national holiday.

Listening to Stevie Wonder’s tribute to King (his beautiful Happy Birthday song) brings back memories from 23 years ago when I joined 250,000 other peo-

ple marching in Washington, D.C., for civil rights. On that date, Aug. 28, 1963, I heard King deliver his now-famous “I Had A Dream” speech from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

The idea of a mass march in the nation’s capital caught the imagination of millions of people in this country and helped to impel the Black struggle forward. In fact, the 1963 march was a precursor of the huge mobilizations against the Vietnam War that took place several years later.

At the time, I was active in the Brooklyn Bedford-Stuyvesant chapter of the NAACP. Ours was a militant chapter which organized the country’s first boycott against school segregation in Brooklyn in 1957.

Previous to this, we had jumped into the Montgomery, Alabama bus-boycott support campaign by raising funds for the Montgomery Improvement Association, the organization leading the struggle. We raised funds to send station wagons there to provide Black bus boycotters with alternate means of transportation.

When the national call came for a march on Washington, our NAACP chapter began organizing for it. We were told to bring a lunch and supper and to wear good marching shoes.

At 5 a.m. on the morning of August 28, we began boarding small yellow school buses to make the 300-mile trip to Washington. No one complained of the early hour or of the heat and humidity, which could already be felt. We were involved in that greatest of all human movements—changing the course of history.

It wasn’t until we hit the highway and could look behind us that we could see bus after bus after bus. We could not count them, as they disappeared around the curves of the highway. But as far as we could see, there was just “us.” We felt the power of our numbers.

It was at our rest stop in Maryland that we set policy—to remove a symbol of deep discrimination. We removed all “colored” and “whites only” signs from the restrooms. For that day, those expressions of racism were destroyed.

Nowadays, if you are riding through Maryland, you will not find any “whites only” restrooms. The civil rights movement of the 1960s which involved millions of Americans put an end to Jim Crow discrimination.

Of course, oppressed people in this country still have a very long way to go to win full freedom. But the historic movement that Rev. King helped build and lead forward is a shining example of what’s possible. We can make it all the way.

Martin Luther King Jr.: Happy birthday to you! —January 1987

## Fundamentalists Blast Cinderella

On Oct. 23, 1986, U.S. District Judge Thomas G. Hull ruled that the Greeneville, Tennessee school board must pay damages to parents whose rights

have been violated. He also ruled that the school board must allow parents to teach reading to their children at home.

The case began in June 1983 when fundamentalist Christian parents challenged the reading series of books selected by the school board. These books, published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, are used by schools throughout the country.

The fundamentalist parents complained that if their children read the entire Holt series they “might adopt the views of a feminist, a humanist, a pacifist, an anti-Christian, a vegetarian, or an advocate of one-world government.” Judge Hull agreed.

What were these books and why did parents object to them?

- “Cinderella”: “Because it mentions magic.”
- Shakespeare’s “MacBeth”: “Because it mentions witchcraft and magic.”
- “The Wizard of Oz:” “Because it portrayed a witch as good and because it depicted traits such as courage, intelligence, and compassion as personally developed—rather than God given.”
- “The Diary of Anne Frank:” “Because it suggested that all religions are equal in a passage by Anne,” (“Oh, I don’t mean you have to be orthodox... I just mean some religion.... It doesn’t matter what, just to believe in something.”)
- “The Revolt of Mother,” a short story about a woman challenging her husband’s authority: “Because it attacks the Biblical family.”
- A story that depicted a child’s imagination as a “third eye:” “Because such representations were considered occult and put too much emphasis on imagination.”
- Stories about dinosaurs: “Because the creatures were said to be older than the Biblical account of the beginning of the world.”
- Stories about religion (other than Christianity), including the beliefs of American Indians and followers of Islam.

### **Child abuse**

In December, the court granted these fundamentalist parents \$50,000 for the alleged violation of their rights. What it should have done is fine the parents for violating the civil rights of their children.

Children should have the right to exercise their minds and develop their imagination. What these parents are doing, with the court’s help, constitutes a form of child abuse.

The fundamentalist parents sound like descendants of the Salem witch hunters. They are followers of modern-day hypocrites such as Ronald Reagan, Gerry Falwell, the Rev. Pat Robertson, and other “moral” upholders of U.S. imperialism—both Democrats and Republicans.

Educators recognize that for children “play” is their “work.” They know that for children to develop their creativity and their intellect, they must be able to use their minds unhindered and unchained.



### Make-believe

All children engage in a common conspiracy of “make-believe.” They can be either male or female, grown-up or children, pirate or princess, Batman or Robin, movie star or rock star, good guy or bad guy all in the space of a few minutes.

When my three-year-old grandson and I are in the park, he allows me to be Luke Skywalker and he becomes Princess Lea. We make swords out of sticks, and our space ship can be a tree stump or a park bench. But he must give the count for blast-off. He expects me to honor this make-believe world—or else he would not let me play.

How sad that those fundamentalist parents locked into their own malignant “moral” world have locked themselves outside of their children’s playful make-believe world.

But the people who really live in the world of make-believe are the fundamentalist parents who have faith in the likes of Reagan and Falwell—whose morality comes from the sewer they have been sloshing in.

Their morality boils down to justifying their economic system, which is one of exploitation and oppression. And their morality is supported by any lie they can make up.

Our morals are based on the needs of the oppressed and the exploited. And only the truth will help make us free.

—February 1987

## ‘Grandmaw’ and the Middletown Strike

In the February issue of *Socialist Action* there was a story on Middletown, Ohio, and the workers there at Armco Steel who are fighting for decent working conditions. Middletown was my hometown, and the story brought back many memories from my youth.

I moved to Middletown in 1935, when I was nine years old. It was a real working-class town, quite different from Lexington, Kentucky, where I was born and lived until we moved “north.” In Kentucky, there was no work except in tobacco warehouses or around race horses.

My father’s first job in Middletown was at the Sorg Pulp and Paper Mill. Today’s envi-



ronmentalists would have declared the Sorg Paper Mill a disaster area. You could smell the chlorine a mile away.

After two years at Sorg's, my father landed one of the most coveted jobs in Middletown at Armco Steel Mill. Armco had the reputation of being the best employer in town. My father believed every word of Armco's benevolent reputation. Dad would work any amount of time that was demanded of him. The company did pay better wages than other jobs in Middletown and also had classes for its workers so they could upgrade their skills.

My father started in the furnace, worked up to the roller mill, and finally landed a position as a metallurgist after taking classes at Armco. He loved his work and brought it home with him, always telling about the day's events on the job and especially his new skills.

Armco owned the local ballpark and sponsored its own team. The company gave a yearly Easter egg hunt in Variety Park for the children of the town. It was said that Armco owned the cops, too. And, the story went, if a "good" Armco man got in trouble, the company could get him off.

My father was very impressed by all this. But his romance with Armco and capitalism did not extend to the rest of family. Quite the opposite.

### **My 'Grandmaw'**

My step-grandmother worked for the P. Lorillard Tobacco Company in Middletown. One of their products was Old Plug Chewing Tobacco (which Grandmaw used). She thought smoking was undignified, but she kept a wad of Old Plug in her cheek all the time.

Mine and my step-mother's families came from the hills of Kentucky: Lee County, Wolf County, and "Bloody" Brethet County. (It was called bloody because of what the mine owners did to the miners to try to stop the union.)

Many of my family were miners. Some worked in the lumber mills and when times really got tough some of them took to bootlegging. They were also believers in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). As far as they were concerned, the only person (besides Jesus) who could walk on water was John L. Lewis, who was heading up the CIO at that time.

### **They walked**

Grandmaw helped organize the tobacco workers into the CIO in Middletown. Her boss at P. Lorillard got wind that some secret union organizing was going on. He came up to "Grandmaw" and told her he wanted to talk this over with her and the other union organizers.

The boss said it in a friendly voice, so Grandmaw and four other union militants went to his office to discuss the union. Then he had the "ringleaders" right where he wanted them. He told her and the others to get their belongings, get out of the plant, and never come back.

As Grandmaw was walking out, she jumped upon a big tobacco basket and told

the other workers that she and the four militants had been fired for organizing a union. She explained that everyone else had a choice of staying or walking out, too. The workers walked. There was a long and bitter strike.

The strikers organized a kitchen near the factory, where all workers and their families could get breakfast, lunch, and dinner. She put me to work washing dishes, cleaning tables, and doing whatever else was needed. They collected food from churches, grocery stores, and from farmers in the surrounding area. No one went hungry during that strike.

After a long hot summer, the strike ended in complete victory for the union. I remember the ending. The governor had called in the National Guard against the strikers. It was a hot, humid day when they came. The street in front of the tobacco plant was lined with workers and their families. They had the street blocked from wall to wall.

I was standing in the front line with Grandmaw and the other leaders of the strike. They were facing open panel trucks loaded with armed National Guardsmen. One of the guardsmen looked down on her and said: "You better move these people out, old lady, or we're going to run right over you."

Grandmaw looked him in the eye and said: "Young man, I've put diapers on people your age. So you just come right on, we're not moving." After about a hour of this standoff, we heard a big cheer from the back of the trucks—the guard was moving out. Grandmaw and her co-workers had won.

### **The next lesson**

That was my first lesson about which side I was on. The next lesson came shortly thereafter. I came home from school to find my step-mother and my father in an argument. He was in the bedroom packing a bag of clothes. There was a rumor that Armco was going to be organized and that a "big strike was coming."

The boss had demanded that any worker who wanted to keep his or her job move into the plant and keep it running, strike or no strike. My father was planning to move into Armco. He had his bag packed and was walking down the stairs when my step-mother yelled to him: "If you walk out that door with that suitcase, don't plan on coming back. I will never sleep with a scab."

It has been many years since I've been in Middletown, but I have never forgotten the fighting spirit of the workers in that town. From reading last month's *Socialist Action*, I learned that Armco workers have transformed a company union into a real union. It looks like this new generation of workers will carry on that fighting spirit. —March 1987

## **The Case of Baby M**

**(Wanted: White baby, male or female, good genes, excellent pay!)**

The exploitation of the working class by capitalism has reached a new extreme

with the case of Baby M. Mary Beth Whitehead, mother of two children—Ryan, 12 years old, and Tuesday, 11 years old—agreed to serve as a surrogate mother for the sum of \$10,000. Ms. Whitehead agreed to undergo artificial insemination by William Stern, an upper-class professional man.

Mr. Stern's wife, Dr. Elizabeth Stern, is not infertile but has an illness that could possibly worsen if she became pregnant. Less than a week after giving birth to the baby, Ms. Whitehead changed her mind, refused the \$10,000, and ran away with her new baby and two children to Florida.

The Sterns reacted with rage. They used their wealth and position to hire lawyers by the yard, private detectives, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and "experts." All came into the courtroom to back up the claim of the Sterns against Ms. Whitehead, who had to make do with a court-appointed lawyer.

Meanwhile, the baby was snatched from Whitehead and turned over to the Sterns.

In the hearing last month in New Jersey Superior Court, witness after witness revealed every facet of Whitehead's life. "Experts" testified what wonderful parents the Sterns would make given their income and upper-middle-class life-style, and contrasted that with the income and lifestyle of the Whitehead family.

Despite the power of the Sterns' legal team, they were unable to prove that Whitehead was anything but a very good parent to her two older children and that they were a credit to her parenting.

### **Return the child!**

In any sane society, Whitehead would have had her baby returned to her. She carried that child for nine months and refused the \$10,000 immediately after the birth of her baby.

The only thing contributed by Mr. Stern was his sperm. Evidently, that particular sperm was the only sperm he has cared about for many years, and I assume there is more where that came from.

After reading about this case in the newspapers, it is obvious to me that the child must be returned to its real mother, if justice is to be served. Just by their conduct in this case, the Sterns are unfit parents. They have displayed the most inhuman attitude toward the child and Whitehead.

If Mr. Stern truly loved this child he would offer to pay child support to Ms. Whitehead so the baby could be given the advantages he claims only he can afford.

Actually, the only thing claimed in Sterns' favor is that they could give the child a wealthier life. There was no proof offered that they would love, nurture, or care for Baby M any more than Ms. Whitehead.

### **Children for sale**

More and more poor women I are renting out their wombs in exchange for money. Wealth can buy anything and it can even purchase children. Unfortunately, many women are emotionally destroyed by this experience.

Even women who have adopted out their children often carry a psychological burden with them forever. Abortion is always a difficult decision for any woman to make, but to carry a child for nine months and then be forced to give it up is a brutal sacrifice.

Women must be given a choice. If they want an abortion for any reason, it should be made available to them. Also, if a woman decides to keep and raise her child, she must be given all that is necessary so that her and her child's needs—housing, food, and other services—are met.

Real choice means that a woman can either choose to carry her child or can choose to abort. This would eliminate the “rental” of woman's wombs for wealthy people. By the way, you would never see a rich woman renting her womb to a poor woman. In the meantime, in the United States, the richest country in the world, there is a real crisis in the foster-care system. A report in the March 15 *New York Times* gives this picture:

### **Foster-care crisis**

“The [foster] children are now buffeted by countless rejections and severe stress. They often become angry, depressed, and violent. Few of them understand that they are the littlest victims of a system that, by all accounts, has been overwhelmed... It's gotten to the point where we're sending kids home to bad circumstances because foster care is such a terrible alternative.”

We would look with horror upon animals that deliberately destroy their offspring. But we live in a destructive economic system. Capitalism is barbaric to its children. If we judge a society by the treatment of its young, then it is self-evident that this system must be changed. —April 1987

## **The Case of the Sinister Minister**

For about 40 or so years, I've been a convinced atheist. But once in a while something happens that almost makes you believe that there might be a God. How else can we explain the “revelations” that have rained down upon us in the last few months?

First came “Contragate,” which revealed President Reagan's contempt for the Constitution and all its laws. Shortly after, came Wall Street's “Insidergate,” showing one way the rich get richer and the working class gets poorer.

Now comes “Pearly Gate,” which gives us the inside dope on the modern-day Elmer Gantry of TV.

Of all the “Gates,” my favorite is “Pearly Gate.” Having been raised in a southern Hardshell Baptist family, it brings back memories of all the fire-and-brimstone preachers I had to listen to in my girlhood, and there were quite a few.

My grandmother used to take all us kids to every tent meeting that came our

way. It was cheaper than the circus and almost as entertaining.

### **The ‘Coming’**

The tents were set up in an empty lot and filled with wooden folding chairs. The preacher was always from out-of-town and would advertise his “coming” with throw-away circulars. The advertisements praised the preacher as nothing less than the second coming of Christ.

The opening act of singers or musicians of spiritual music was designed to open up the soul and the pocketbook. We kids had to sit near Grandmaw and behave—or else!

The preacher would give an emotional opening sermon, and believe me, he was talented. Then the good part came. He would begin to urge the faithful to open up their souls to the Lord and tell “Him” what was troubling them.

At first, hesitantly, people would rise from their chairs to reveal their troubles and ask the congregation to pray for their loved ones. Soon, wives would tell about husbands who drank or womanized or both, and husbands would stand up and ask the faithful to pray for wives who had run off with a good friend.

If the testimony got too revealing, my grandmother would send us kids out of the tent to play, which meant that we missed the best parts.

### **‘Better to give...’**

Then the preacher would get serious! He would ask the faithful to come to the pulpit and be forgiven for their sins. One by one they went to the altar and were “saved and sanctified” by the preacher’s prayers.

Some would begin to “talk in tongues” and begin dancing in the aisles or fall down on the floor in a trance. If one of us kids laughed, we would get Grandmaw’s “back of the hand.”

When you got up to the preacher you could usually smell the liquor on his breath. Most of the time, the preacher would pick out the prettiest young woman in the congregation and ask her to stay after so they could pray together over her sins.

As things began to wind down, the preacher would start his main speech of the night about money and how it was better to give than to receive. Despite the Depression, folks would dig down as deep as they could. They would put something in the plate even if it meant going without.

Those preachers lived off the misery and trouble of innocent people. But that was during the Depression and they probably couldn’t make an honest living. In some degree, then, they also were victims.

### **Dinosaurs**

But Tammy and Jimmie Baker, the Rev. Jerry Foulmouth, and all the rest of that crew of right-wing, Bible-thumping, TV preachers are something else. They have been stalking this country like a bunch of fascist dinosaurs.

They've been banning books from our libraries and schools, inciting the bombing of abortion clinics (while closing their eyes to the poverty and hunger of living children), sympathizing with racists in South Africa, and condemning Blacks, women, and anyone else fighting for human rights—all in the name of God.

When people are bruised and battered from joblessness, hunger, and conditions beyond their control, they often turn to the only help they know: the Bible.

But they believe in a loving and forgiving God. They have faith that the poor, not the rich, are the children of God. They view Jesus as having taken from the rich to give to the poor, chasing the money lenders from the temple, and feeding the multitude with loaves of bread and fishes.

After I became a socialist, I would try to explain it to my mother. She would say it sounded just like what Jesus said about the rich man and the eye of the needle. Her religion was one of compassion, not hate and greed.

But these TV evangelists, rolling in wealth, are in the front line of defense of all the evils of capitalist society. They are highly respected, protected, and carefully nurtured by capitalist politicians, from Reagan on down.

They couldn't get away with their swindles otherwise. —May 1987

## What a Way to Make a Living!

On May 14, Wanda Feathers, a 28-year-old package sorter with a three-year-old daughter, wore a black arm-band to work. She was protesting what she called "part time poverty." She is employed at United Parcel Service in Oakland, California, and can get only 15 hours work per week. She cannot support her family on her take-home pay.

"I've been here seven years and all I get is 15 hours a week," she said. Management cut her and other employees back from 20 hours weekly two months ago and shifted work to other terminals.

Wanda Feathers is just like most workers in this country. She wants to earn a decent, honest living. But when you read the newspapers these days you can see that honesty and hard work is not where it's at. If this young woman would only become a gun-runner for President Reagan she could clean up.

The televised investigation of the Iran contragate scandal reveals the real nature of the so-called "high morality" of those associated with contragate and the government. Sometimes the hearings sound like a scenario written for a Marx Brothers movie.

The scene where the wrong Swiss bank account number was given and some lucky businessman wound up with an extra \$8 million in his account could have been written for "Duck Soup." And the "patriotic" gun-running ex-general who sought to make a fortune from U.S. taxpayers by buying "our" military weapons



cheap and selling them dear to Iran could have been written for Groucho himself.

A person has to have a strong stomach to sit through the contragate hearings. Most sickening is the gentle, almost humble way the investigators question the murderous thugs sitting before them. The questioners almost break into tears when they ask the witnesses to report their war records—especially their bombing of Vietnam during that criminal imperialist invasion.

What the viewer is witnessing is a love affair between those doing the questioning and those who carried out the criminal activities being investigated. The “defendants” had in reality done exactly what this country has done secretly for many years.

### **Capitalism in action**

There is hardly an oppressed underdeveloped country that has not felt the whip of U.S imperialism across its back. Openly or in secret, the United States has intervened in these countries to protect the interests of yankee capitalists. So it’s no wonder that the “investigators” are being gentle.

Watergate investigators were harder on Nixon because here were two bunches of bums, the Democrats and Republicans, and one crew was pulling dirty tricks on the other. That was a no-no. But contragate is capitalism in action. That’s the real way the system works.

Both parties are determined to crush the Nicaraguan revolution, if at all possible. They would like to use hired thugs instead of United States troops because they know that the people of this country would not allow another Vietnam to develop without a fight. So it must be kept secret.

Millions of dollars have gone into this example of “Texas chain-saw imperialism” in Nicaragua. And when Congress temporarily stopped aid to the contras, money was raised from every tin-horn dictator in the world to finance the killers in the interim.

I started out with the story of Wanda Feathers, who was fighting part-time poverty in order to raise her daughter. Her child, like all our children, should have a nutritious diet, free, quality childcare centers, good schools, decent housing, and good health care. Her parents should be able to make a living wage. That’s what should be happening in our country.

Instead, what we are watching is the immense waste of our tax monies on a crew of murderous thugs who are out to destroy the Nicaraguan revolution—all in the name of “freedom” and “democracy.” — June 1987

## **Why Not Quarantine the Politicians?**

The biggest danger facing the American people is not from AIDS but from the

big-mouthed politicians. The right-wing Democrats and Republicans yell for testing and quarantine of AIDS victims, and the gutless liberal politicians stand silently by.

The Elmer Gantrys and bigots in the White House and Congress are yelling “FIRE” in a crowded room, and there is nobody there with the courage to shut them up.

Both of my children were born before the invention of the polio vaccine by Dr. Salk. Every summer when they were small there was one panic after another.

We would take them to the beach or a children’s wading pool only to find a sign of warning that it was closed due to an outbreak of polio. This would be followed by a warning to observe your children for a least 10 days to see whether they had a fever or headache (symptoms of polio).

For 10 days, both my husband and I would check their temperatures several times a day. If they came down with a cold, we would rush off to the doctor.

The threat of polio was frightful. There was no cure or vaccine, and the only hope was that if they did contact polio, it would be a mild case. The dread disease left thousands of children handicapped for life or dead.

We would keep our children home, call the doctor, and also tell the parents of our children’s friends if either of them had a temperature, just in case. And they warned us when the situation was reversed. We had no fear of warning our neighbors.

### **What would you do?**

But what if things were different? What if Congress and the president of the United States called for all children with symptoms of polio to be removed from their homes and indefinitely locked away in some quarantine camp?

What if they demanded testing for all children who had been to a beach or wading pool? If the test showed polio anti-bodies, what if they ordered the children permanently removed to quarantine camps? What would you do?

I know that I would keep my children from taking such tests. I would lie to neighbors, friends, and medical personnel in order to protect my children from quarantine. There is no way that they would take possession of my kids without a fight. I’m sure that every parent would feel the same way.

Of course, that would have meant that the number of kids getting polio each summer would have shot up. The government wasn’t that stupid then. But some in government want to do it now with the AIDS epidemic.

### **Education is needed**

AIDS is certainly not as contagious as polio. Polio could be caught as easily as a cold. AIDS is transmitted only through blood or certain bodily fluids. We need more public education on this issue. We need testing of drugs, not people.

There is not one reputable medical expert who advocates forced testing and quarantine in order to halt the spread of AIDS. Yet the highest elected politicians

from both parties are advocating forced (i.e., “routine”) testing and even quarantine of those discovered to have the virus in their bodies.

This rhetoric is for the purpose of spreading gasoline on a fire. It is designed to appeal to the fundamentalist yahoos who claim Biblical grounds for their prejudice against gay people and who do not want to be confused by the facts.

We cannot depend on the politicians in the two capitalist parties to protect our (and it is all of our) human rights. They don’t want to limit or cure AIDS, they want to make political gains from it.

We must depend on the massive action of millions of people who want to cure AIDS and end that disease once and for all. Mass united action in defense of the rights of those carrying the AIDS virus—and everyone else, for that matter—is our only hope of stopping the political tweedledums and tweedledees before they get us. —July 1987

## Sacramento Gang Preys on Children

On July 17, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that California’s state legislators have finally agreed on something. They have agreed to raise their salaries 10 percent.

This act was carried out in concert by the two big-time gangs, the Democrats and Republicans, who run this state. The Democratic mob is headed up by Democratic Assemblyman Willie Brown (Speaker of the House) and Republican Governor “Duke” Deukmejian. Is the following story what really happened?

My youngest grandson, three years old, was robbed at his childcare center this spring. He is a hefty-looking little kid and loves to eat.

While all the kiddies were waiting for their morning snack, their school was surrounded by big limousines and the mob from Sacramento came in and lifted their mid-morning snack. The mob, led by Willie “the Speaker” Brown and the Duke said they needed our money for other interests.

The kids were upset, but they don’t have much pull with the Big Guys. Most of the children come from poor families whose parents are single women, and you know how much weight they have on the mob. None!

### Teacher nabbed

Then, if that wasn’t bad enough, my older grandson’s teacher was snatched from his classroom. She was just in the middle of the math lesson when the Sacramento mob came and hauled her right out of the class, saying that the kids had too many teachers anyway.

Of course, the kids doubled up for the next math class, which, I’m sure, is driving that lucky teacher nuts.

I’ve heard that other teachers are disappearing right and left and that most of them are working as sales clerks in Macy’s or The Emporium or some other store.

Johnny sure misses his teacher. All the other children are complaining, too. But you know how much pull they have with the Sacramento Gang. None!

And talk about crime on the street! My friend, who is on welfare, has a 15-year-old daughter. Unfortunately, her daughter got pregnant and was on her way to get an abortion when she was mugged by the Sacramento mob, who robbed her of her Medi-Cal funds. She will just have to be an unwed mother.

People on the street tried to appeal to the better nature of the Sacramento mob, but they stopped when they found out that Willie “the Speaker” and the Duke had no better nature. Duke and Willie said they had more important things to do with our money.

### **Million-dollar heist**

This mob’s grip extends into every city, village, and county of California. They do help some of their friends. Take millionaire clothier Wilkes Bashford, for instance. He is good friend of Willie “the Speaker” Brown. Now, he’s got connections!

Bashford heisted \$1,719,798 from the people of San Francisco in unpaid rents for his hotel district showrooms. Guess what the judge gave him? He was sentenced to do a fashion show for charity!

When I heard that, I went to the judge and asked if instead of paying my three alternate-side-of-the-street parking tickets, perhaps I could hold a fashion show in my neighborhood to pay my fine. Well, you know how much pull I have with the judge and Willie. None! .

You may wonder how the mob gets away with this high crime? I’ll tell you. When you complain to Willie, he just lays it all on the Duke. And if you complain to the Duke, he just lays it all on Willie.

I mean, you can’t win. It looks like they are the worst of enemies, but I’ve got a feeling that this well-oiled machine really works together.

### **Just rewards**

So, they are stalking the streets. They are preying on the poor, the elderly, and our children. And then they make a get-away to their Sacramento hide-out. What did they do with our money, you may ask? Well, they just voted to give themselves a raise.

Even the Godfather couldn’t have done it better!

Anyway, that’s my story. I hope someday that Willie “the Speaker” Brown and the Duke have to pay for snatching my grandson’s teacher out of the classroom, for confiscating their mid-morning snacks, and for forcing my friend’s daughter to have a child when she is just a child herself.

I have a feeling they will get their just rewards. It’s coming to them!

—August 1987

## Fresh From the Factory—Into Your Arms!

I'm sure most of you view President Reagan as a complete fake, i.e. a phony and a top-notch liar. You may well ask how this man who finances the murder of women and children in Nicaragua could possibly care about abortion.

Now the truth is out. The president's biggest concern is that there are "thousands of childless families still waiting for children to adopt." (It is probably true that they want only white, Christian children—but that is another problem.) So now we know why Reagan is opposed to abortion!

In a speech from Santa Barbara on August 24, Reagan announced a federal task force to encourage adoption as an "alternative for pregnant women."

"We must expand and broaden our efforts to make sure that familyless children are adopted," Reagan said. "We must do all we can to remove obstacles that prevent qualified adoptive parents from accepting these children into their homes."

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater acknowledged that the pro-adoption initiative is also part of Reagan's anti-abortion campaign.

### Time to deliver!

All women with working ovaries and wombs had better get those factories in working order. Mr. Reagan expects you to deliver. You know how he always urges his business friends to make the American worker increase production. And if you don't produce more babies, just remember what Reagan did to PATCO. He shut the air-controllers' union down—just as he is attempting to shut down all family-planning clinics that mention the word abortion.

Reagan is not alone in his mania for women to give birth. Besides having roving fundamentalist Christians bombing abortion clinics while carrying "old ragged crosses," he has the support of the Democratic and Republican politicians who are working overtime to ensure that the female stays in her proper position—barefoot in the winter and big in the summer.

### California's Consent Bill

In California, Democrats and Republicans are working to force minors to go to court in order to obtain an abortion if they cannot get the consent of their parents or guardian.

Phil Isenberg, a "liberal" Democratic state legislator from Sacramento, introduced a bill which would allow welfare workers instead of parents to give their consent. But his bill also included a provision that parents would be financially responsible for the support of their children's babies.

The "pro-life" forces opposed this part of the bill because it would encourage parents to allow their daughters to get an abortion. However, the "parental-consent" bill which passed the California Assembly in June with a 46-28 vote is now headed toward the state senate, where both political parties are expected to adopt it.

If the bill is passed, it will mean that a minor who gets an illegal abortion could go to jail, that a doctor who performs an abortion on a minor could be jailed, or if papers are not filled out properly, parents, guardians, doctors, and pregnant children could all be jailed.

The young mother could be declared unfit and forced to give her child up for adoption. Reagan's hopes for a child for every "qualified" childless family would thereby be fulfilled. It all works so well together!

### **'Plenty' for whom?**

California, land of plenty, is also trying to cut out Medical funding for abortions for poor women. The state budget has a surplus of \$1.1 billion. All the politicians were recently given a 10 percent raise. But we don't, according to the politicians, have enough money for poor women to have "legal" abortions.

Medical funding for abortion should reach the California Supreme Court in January.

The attitude of our elected representatives was put so well by Rep. Beau Boulter, speaking to a group in Wichita Falls, Texas. "The least among us is not entitled to the same medical treatment as the richest person in America," he said. "I do not want to get socialized medicine because then nobody will get excellent medical treatment."

All of Rep. Boulter's medical expenses are free at taxpayers expense. If he needs a hair transplant, we have to pay for it. He has socialized medicine. It's poor women and working people—who don't have it—who need socialized medicine.

—September 1987

## **Once Again—For the Right to Choose!**

A "parental-consent" bill has passed through the Assembly and Senate of the California legislature. After Governor Deukmejian signs it, it will become state law. There is no doubt that the governor will sign it, he has supported this bill from the beginning.

What is "parental consent" and how will it affect teenagers and their families?

The bill says that no teenager under the age of 18 can get an abortion without the consent of at least one of her parents or guardian. If they do not sign consent, then the teenager must go to Juvenile Court and get a judge to grant her the right to an abortion.

This has nothing to do with being able to afford the cost of an abortion, because whether the young woman can pay or not, she must still get the consent of one of her parents or go through the court system.

### **Minnesota ruling overturned**

On Aug. 27, the U.S. Court of Appeals struck down a Minnesota ruling that required young women to notify both parents before getting an abortion. (The

lower court had specified that it didn't make any difference whether the girl had a father at home or not, she was required to get his consent also.)

It was therefore a shock to see that despite the Minnesota Appeals Court having thrown out the law as unconstitutional, the California Senate went ahead and passed its own version of this unjust restriction upon human rights.

It was both the "liberal" and "conservative" capitalist politicians in the California legislature who voted for this criminal law. When the capitalists do not see a fightback, they demand that their hired guns in the legislature do their dirty work for them. And they do it. "He who pays the piper, calls the tune."

But a fightback movement which threatens to upset the political stability of the country—like the one that was developing in 1973 which led to the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion—can force the institutions of capitalist rule to bend to this mass pressure.

### **High rate of suffering**

Teen pregnancies are at an epidemic level in this country. More than one half of U.S. teenagers are sexually active. Over 1 million teen women become pregnant each year (34,000 of them are under the age of 15). Forty percent of those teens have abortions to terminate their pregnancies, but half-a-million teenagers do not have abortions and choose to keep their children.

Teen mothers' babies have double the risk of dying in their first year because of poor prenatal care and low birth weight. Teen mothers have a high rate of suicide—in fact it is seven times higher than others their own age.

The children of teenagers suffer more from learning disabilities and are more likely to be abused than other children. Three-quarters of teen mothers never complete their education because they do not have access to quality childcare services. This assures these teen mothers and their children a lifetime of poverty and ill-health.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, a non-profit research center in New York City, did a study of teen pregnancy in 37 countries. According to their findings, the teen pregnancy rate in the United States is the highest in the developed world.

The teen pregnancy rate is twice as great as Canada's rate and seven times as great as the Netherland's rate even though American teenagers are no more sexually active than teens in other countries. And while whites have nearly double the rate of British and French teens, Black teens in the United States have a higher rate of pregnancy than whites.

### **Teens denied information**

Why do teenagers get pregnant? It's because they are denied access to birth-control information and services. That is the finding of a recent study by Planned Parenthood. Despite the fact that over 60 percent of parents want sex education in our public schools, only 10 percent of the schools have such education.

Large numbers of teenagers think they cannot get pregnant the first time they



have sex, or that they cannot get pregnant if they “do it” standing up, or that “it just can’t happen to me.”

Many teens do not know about the diaphragm or the IUD. In fact, only one in three teenagers uses any contraceptives at all. Teenagers probably know more about the rings of Saturn than they do about birth control and their own bodies.

Would they use birth control if it was available? Yes! At Chicago’s Du Sable High School, where nearly one-third of all the female students have become pregnant in recent years, a medical clinic was set up that dispenses free birth-control devices to students. This has been very effective. In St. Paul, Minnesota, where the first clinical program was set up in 1973, the number of births to teens fell nearly 50 percent between 1977 and 1984.

### **The cost in lives**

The cost of teen pregnancies is enormous; in Illinois it was approximately \$813 million in 1986. But the real cost is to the teenagers themselves.

If the “parental-consent” legislation is allowed to stand, it will mean the destruction of the lives of thousands of teenagers. Not only will they be unable to finish their schooling, but very likely they will resort once again to the back-alley abortionist.

In fact, one teenager I talked to recently told me that her girl friend’s boy friend gave her an abortion by sticking a long wire into her uterus. This was just a casual conversation, and the young woman, who was just 15 years old, clearly didn’t appreciate the deadly risk this entails.

Many more young women will die if this law is allowed to deny them access to a safe, legal abortion. Moreover, medical personnel who give teenagers abortions according to this law, can end up in jail along with the teenage mother who attempts to get an abortion by lying about her age.

### **We must answer back!**

The rich in this country have built their wealth off the backs of the poor. They have never needed legalized abortion because they can bribe doctors or fly to other countries and get safe abortions for themselves and their daughters.

The rich have the finest education and the best of medical care. It is the poor, the working-class women, who will be dragged deeper into poverty by being forced to bear and support unwanted children—and their children’s children.

Women must answer back. We must join together and fight the insane system that is ready to unleash a blood bath against women. We must once again get into the streets in the tens of thousands to defend our hard-won gains.

Like our foremothers who won the vote, or the right to organize unions in the sweat-shops, or public education for our children, we must rally again for ourselves and our children. Remember, the lives we save may be our own.

—October 1987

## We Need a National Health Plan

Newspapers around the country had front-page stories on Nancy Reagan's breast cancer in their Oct. 17, 1987, issues. Breast cancer is a tragic affliction regardless of whom it strikes. But Nancy Reagan, unlike the poor of this nation, received the very best of care. She had a small army of doctors and surgeons looking after her.

For both Mr. and Mrs. Reagan, medical care does not cost one red cent. Along with all elected and appointed government officials, they have "socialized medicine."

If a congressman gets wrinkles or a balding head, he can be renovated at the wink of an eye, all at taxpayers' expense. "Spare no expense" is the slogan of our glorious leaders when it comes to their own health or beauty.

But the working class is left at the mercy of millionaire hospital executives who run our country's health system like any other profit-making business.

For the rest of us, healthcare costs have jumped over 600 percent since 1966. This year alone, the government wants an increase of 38.5 percent for Medicare. This increase will be taken from the pockets of the elderly and disabled.

### Declining access to care

Dr. Victor Sidel, president of Physicians for Social Responsibility and past president of the American Public Health Association, describes the appalling state of healthcare in the Sept. 16 *San Francisco Chronicle*:

"In 1977, 25 million people in the United States lacked medical insurance. Today, more than 35 million people lack such coverage, and millions more have grossly inadequate plans."

"In some states, fewer than 20 percent of those living in extreme poverty are eligible for Medicaid," Dr. Sidel states. "Declining access to care is also related to an increase in the number of people living in poverty."

"Today in the United States," he continues, "one in every four children below the age of six lives in poverty, with one of every two Black children in that age-span in that plight. The bottom 40 percent of our population receives 15.7 percent of the national income—the smallest percentage since the statistic was first collected in 1947. The U.S. infant mortality rate has stopped decreasing significantly, and in many areas the gap between rich and poor appears to be growing—even where infant mortality has declined."

Dr. Sidel goes on to urge a strong national health plan. "Such a program," he says, "would ensure that the poor have full access to health services."

### AIDS epidemic

The government has denied proper funding to research to meet the grave threat that AIDS poses to everyone. Both Congress and the administration have

turned a deaf ear to the needs of hundreds of thousands who have already been stricken. Our pious politicians prefer to blame the victims rather than promote practical education and serious research.

These hypocrites certainly don't "just say no" to the \$30 million an hour they spend on the military budget for death and destruction, or the hundreds of millions they give to the murderous contras.

When this country needed to invent the atomic bomb so that American imperialism could rule the world, they spared no expense. They spent billions on the Manhattan Project, which gathered together the cream of America's and the world's scientists and gave them all the material resources necessary to achieve this goal.

The challenge of AIDS demands an effort on the same scale. Instead of 50 scientists working 100 years to find a cure, scientists could do it in closer to a year.

But the capitalist class, driven as it is toward maximizing profits by any means necessary, can be expected to resist such a life-loving course to the bitter end. Only the working class is capable of putting human needs before profits.

### **Piecemeal insurance**

Unlike its European counterparts, the American labor bureaucracy gave up the fight for socialized medicine or even the pretension of fighting for an independent workers' goal consistent with the needs of all humanity.

Instead they accepted medical insurance plans on a piecemeal basis, each union adopting and paying for its own plan, exclusively for its own members. This left unorganized workers, for the most part, without any medical protection whatsoever.

Now, even workers with once-adequate medical plans are being forced to pay higher premiums for less coverage. Only a major political fight by the entire working class for full government-funded healthcare coverage can bring about the kind of healthcare service needed by everyone.

But to do this, labor needs to break with the Democratic Party and form its own political movement. Only a labor party based on the unions and independent of all capitalist politicians can lead the fight for working class needs like socialized medicine.

And only a resurgent rank and file determined to make their labor organizations serve their class interests can carry out such a successful struggle.

—November 1987

## **I've Never Been a 'Card-Carrying Democrat'**

Most people complain about receiving junk mail, especially at Christmas time. Not me. I love it. I read everything that comes along, all the catalogs, enticements to buy things I never wanted or needed, magazine subscriptions, cook books, and

seed catalogs.

I even read letters from *Reader's Digest* that start off with, "You may already have won \$200,000 dollars." It's probably because I've done so many mailings for socialist causes that I read anything that has a stamp and comes in an envelope.

Last week, however, I received a letter that made me really angry. It was from the Democratic National Committee, asking that I contribute money to elect a Democratic president in 1988.

That, of course, is not unusual. All manner of useless organizations are always crying for contributions for worthless causes. But this time, there was a plastic card enclosed from the Democratic National Committee with my name on it as a "1988 Contributing Member" and a number—009231133—if I made a contribution.

You can imagine my disgust. I am not now, nor have I ever been, nor will I ever be a card-carrying member of the Democratic Party. On the contrary, I have been a hard-nosed opponent of capitalist politicians, a revolutionary socialist in good standing for the last 43 years, and am currently a paid-up member of Socialist Action.

### **Human needs, not war**

Besides, the letter was an insult to the intelligence of a baby kangaroo. It pleaded the necessity of placing a Democrat in the White House in 1988, explaining:

"It will mean a president who understands that quality classroom education is more important to our national security than a \$700 billion Star Wars weapons system."



Oh really! Actually, the Democrats have increased the defense budget at the expense of human needs under every Democratic presidency. Franklin D. Roosevelt started increasing the defense budget in 1935, and it hasn't stopped yet.

Harry S. Truman increased it for the Korean War and the Cold War. John F. Kennedy raised it for the Vietnam War and for covert actions like the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

Johnson paid out more billions for the U.S. murder machine during the Vietnam-Cambodian wars. Carter upped the war-spending ante even more while carrying out covert actions in the Middle East against the Palestinian and Iranian peoples and against innocent people in Central America.

### **And the witchhunt?**

The letter also had the gall to claim that a Democratic president "will mean judges who will defend civil liberties at home and diplomats who will stand up for changes and human rights abroad."

Well, move over Alice in Wonderland. Remember Dirty Harry Truman's Cold War against "commies"? Remember the murder of the Rosenbergs, a direct result of the witchhunt initiated by this great Democrat? Remember the thousands of workers who were accused of being "commies" and lost their jobs?

Remember Kennedy's attempts to murder Fidel Castro? Remember the infiltration of labor, peace, student, civil-rights and women's groups by the FBI under all Presidencies—Republican and Democratic alike?

I remember. And I could go on. But we will soon be inundated with Democratic Party hypocrisy when the 1988 election really gets going, and I need to let my stomach settle down.

The Democratic Party needn't look for a contribution from me. I became a "card-carrying" socialist many years ago because I want real changes in the way this government is run. And those changes are coming.

If you want to be a part of building a better world, then join Socialist Action and get a membership card in an organization that intends to make those changes.

—December 1987

# 1988

## ‘Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem...’

The words go something like this: “Oh, little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie.” But Bethlehem, like the rest of old Palestine, is anything but peaceful right now. It is more like the Old Testament story of David and Goliath.

You remember how a Hebrew boy, David, slew the giant Goliath with his sling shot. This time, it is the Palestinians and other Arabs who are the Davids, and the Zionist government which is acting out the role of the hated giant. Crimes of monumental proportions are being committed by the Zionist state of Israel against the Arab people. In the two weeks before Christmas alone, 346 Arabs were wounded by gunfire from Israeli troops and 473 were injured in beatings.

Over 1,000 have been detained by the Israeli state without a semblance of a trial. Most of those who have been wounded are children and teenagers.

### General strike

Outrage is so great that all Arabs have united behind the Palestinians being brutalized in the Gaza Strip. A one-day strike against the Zionist state was extremely effective. Stores, businesses, and schools were closed in the Arab communities, and Arab workers refused to go to their jobs. The strength of the strike surprised even the Israeli parliament.

Within Israel’s Jewish population, many students have protested the violence of the Israeli soldiers. Demonstrations of up to 3,000 students have taken place at major universities.

The Zionist state has tried to crush the spirit of the Arab people ever since it robbed them of their land. Every dirty trick ever known to come out of inhuman minds has been used against the Palestinians and other Arabs: Their homes have been bulldozed, their families imprisoned and tortured without trial, and their land taken away and given over to “settlers.”

They are faced by guns and tanks virtually everywhere they go—including in their places of worship. They are forced to work at the lowest wages under sweatshop conditions. Their children are in constant danger, and many are forced to flee their land of birth to escape the Zionist wrath.

We are looking at a people who fight as do all those who have nothing to lose but their chains. Because everything good has been snatched from them, we see youngsters fighting tanks and guns with stones and sticks. What rage they must feel to face down a machine gun with a stone in their hands!

What we are witnessing in Israel is occurring throughout the world. And wherever racist, capitalist oppression prevails, the hand of U.S. imperialism can be seen.

### Arms from the USA

In South Africa, school-age African children are also being brutalized by the racist army of that country. Thousands of African children have been imprisoned and tortured with the material aid and silent approval of American imperialism.

In Nicaragua, young children are also being murdered by contras armed with guns and bullets paid for and delivered right to their viper's nests by the government of the United States.

And in Israel, U.S. military and economic aid in 1988 will amount to over \$3 billion.

When I see television news pictures of Palestinian children facing the armed might of Israeli capitalism, I can't help but be reminded of the pictures I saw 30 years ago of little Black children in Selma, Alabama, also marching for freedom.

The courage of those children opened the eyes of the American people. The courage of the Palestinian children will open the world's eyes to the terrible crimes of the Zionists and their masters in the U.S. government.

It is the duty of all working people to support the struggle of the Palestinian people. Theirs is a just cause. Their fight is in the interest of all workers everywhere—including the real interests of the Israeli working class. —January 1988

## Our 'Jenny Higgins' Showed the Way Forward!

Alice Snipper, a member of Socialist Action, died on New Year's Eve, 1987. She joined the revolutionary socialist movement in 1939 and dedicated her life to working-class internationalism and humankind. She never looked back but was part of that rock-solid foundation that will carry socialism and its ideas forward.

Alice was educated in the tradition of "Jimmy Higgins," that rank-and-file hero in Upton Sinclair's novel of the same name, written in 1919. Higgins gave his all to the cause of working people's dignity and worked without any other payment than the respect he earned from his comrades.

Jimmy Higgins became a model for all young people who joined the movement for a socialist society. Alice, herself, is another model for younger comrades to follow.

### Hanging in there

Usually, when we read the history of revolutionary and working-class struggles, we are reading about the most exciting times—the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and the upheavals that freed China, Cuba, and other countries from the iron fist of imperialism.

Most often, we see these historic events through the eyes of dynamic leaders such as Leon Trotsky, Vladimir Lenin, or Rosa Luxemburg. But what about those who work day after day, not as great leaders of a revolution, but as part of a socialist movement that must hang on in those difficult periods when the working class is not in motion?

It is that hanging in there, despite all adversity, making small advances one step at a time, that makes the big revolutionary events possible. It is the gaining and



the keeping of the socialist foot soldiers that makes it possible to make the great leap forward when the historic opportunities arise.

What makes the Alices of this world become the material that will change the world? One advantage she had was to come into the movement when the American-working class was winning their fight for labor unionization. She watched as the oppressed and hungry of this country got up off the ground, stood up on their two feet, and took on the giants of capitalism and beat them down.

Millions of workers in this country had just gone through a depression that could have melted anyone's will. But the working class, with a lot of help from rank-and-file socialist militants like Alice, learned the secret of success—in unity there is strength.

### **Another heroine**

Along with that working-class hero, Jimmy Higgins, there should have been created another heroine, a Jennie Higgins—of whom there were many. My experience in the socialist movement since 1944 has been working along with the Jennie and Jimmy Higginses. I will miss Alice at every mailing of the paper, or when we must gather signatures to get our socialist candidates on the ballot or when we must organize a social or a garage sale to raise funds to print leaflets and pamphlets or buy office supplies.

I will miss Alice when we go on marches against American intervention in someone else's country, when we have to set a book table at an antiwar event, when we march for women's reproductive rights, when we join workers on their picket lines to help them fight for the unions, when we go to a campus or a rally to sell our newspaper.

I will miss Alice Snipper—my model Jennie Higgins—because she was always there when she was needed.

Alice was a few years older than me. But in the socialist movement there is no generational difference. I'll tell you why. All of us are fighting for the future, for the next generation, to end racism, hunger, sexism, to bring about a real international fraternity of working people that will end, once and for all, the terrible threat of nuclear destruction.

This next generation owes a debt to Alice Snipper, who held tight to her revolutionary principles and worked actively for her beliefs.

I am thankful that Alice Snipper threw herself into the socialist movement. And I know that there are many more Alices out there. Alice would be the first to say: "It's your turn now, join the socialist future, you have nothing to lose but your chains—and a world to gain." —February 1988

## **Footing the Bill for Mass Murder**

Last month, a Democratic Party task force in the House of Representatives proposed a \$25 million aid package for the Nicaraguan rebels. This was to be an alterna-

tive to the \$6.3 million package that the Reagan administration proposed in January.

The Democrats made loud noises about how they supported the “peace effort” in Nicaragua and did not want to supply the contras with “military” aid. But all that was a bunch of hog-wash. The Democrats, like the Republicans, knew that there was already enough military supplies in “the contra pipeline” to last a year.

The contras have enough missiles, fire bombs, machine guns, rocket launchers, land mines, and other instruments of death—already paid for with our money—to continue blowing up children, mothers, farms, schools, and hospitals in Nicaragua for a long time to come.

The least the Democrats could have done is call their proposed \$25 million giveaway what it is—not humanitarian aid, but anti-humanitarian aid

### **Full steam ahead!**

In the meantime, the private “Friends of the Contra” are going full steam ahead to set up their tax-free foundations to collect funds for more military supplies for the contras.

Those Ollie North buddies made out like bandits on the Iran-Contragate gig, so they immediately set out to swell their private Swiss bank accounts with more of the same. Perhaps their bank accounts have suffered due to the economic “earthquake” which hit the stockmarket last October.

It is very expensive to hire and supply a bunch of die-hard mercenaries such as the contras. This is true even when the U.S. government tries to keep costs down by supplying a “McDrug Franchise” to its hired hoods, so that they can sell cocaine and heroin to Americans, among others.

I have come up with a solution. Why not offer “humanitarian” aid to former Nazi S.S. butchers?

### **The final solution?.**

Even though the U.S. government protected many of Hitler’s best S.S. men and concealed their records from the world in order to give them another start in life, some of the former stormtroopers still did not do so well. They were forced to flee to Brazil, Australia, Colombia—and even Detroit, Michigan (and you know what the winters in Michigan are like!).

Among the retired Nazi elite, you will find people with even more experience than the contras in the art of repression, bone-crushing, and mass murder. They would fit right in with the international death squads systematically trained in Florida by the U.S. imperialist leader of



the “free world.”

Meanwhile, the Zionists who set up the the state of Israel following the holocaust in Europe, have adopted the methods of the German fascists to subjugate the people of Palestine. Since the U.S. government provides the major source of support for the Israeli government, perhaps it can send along some former S.S. guards to help “solve the Palestinian question.”

Does anyone have a contribution for humanitarian aid for elderly S.S. troops? If not, then perhaps the Democratic Party congressional task force will help out.

—March 1988

## Let's Care for *All* Our Children!

There is a major crisis in this country. A crisis borne by the children of this country every day of their young lives. It is the crisis of childcare.

There are now 10.5 million children under the age of six who are cared for by people other than their parents. By 1996, two-thirds of all pre-school children and four out of five school children will have both parents in the work force.

The vast majority of these children are cared for by underpaid, overworked, ill-prepared caretakers in private homes—which often are fearfully inadequate and unsafe facilities. There are not enough investigators to cover even the licensed daycare homes let alone the unlicensed ones. What care there is is expensive and takes a large chunk out of the parent's income.

We have been assaulted with assorted “childcare plans.” Corporate childcare, family-day private homecare, group co-op childcare, and so on. All of these forms of childcare will not provide quality childcare. In fact, there are numerous studies which have shown that these are usually cheap, “Kentucky-fried children” childcare.

At the present time, there is a childcare measure being nursed through Congress which would provide \$2.5 billion toward programs that already exist. This miserly, stingy bill is called the Act for Better Child Care (ABC).

This bill would start up a national infrastructure for daycare based on what the states are already doing. Of the money, 75 percent would be targeted to help moderate and low-income families pay for childcare. Another 15 percent would go to training providers, setting up standards, and trying to keep people in the profession. The final 10 percent would go to administrative costs.

### Star Wars' cost

Although I support the ABC bill, I'd like to point out that \$2.5 billion dollars is just a spit in the ocean as far as the needs of parents and children are concerned. Let's just look and see what the government is willing to waste on its “Star Wars Program.”

In a letter to the syndicated columnist Ann Landers, a reader wrote in to explain what a billion dollars really represents. He says: "If you were to to count a billion \$1 bills, one per sec, 24 hours a day, it would take 32 years."

And he goes on: "Or to put it differently, it has been figured that with \$1 billion you could buy a \$100,000 house for every family in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Iowa. Then you could put a \$10,000 car in each one of those houses.

"There would be enough left to build 10 million-dollar libraries and 10 million-dollar hospitals for 250 cities in those states. There would be enough left over to build 10 million-dollar schools for 500 communities."

But there is more. "And there would still be enough left to put in the bank and from the interest alone pay 10,000 nurses and teachers, plus give a \$5,000 bonus for every family in those states."

He concludes; "Worth noting: President Reagan's fanciful Strategic Defense Initiative, the Star Wars anti-missile scheme, carries a price tag of \$3 trillion."

### **Public schools**

Now you know why \$2.5 billion for childcare is a spit in the ocean. We know what is really needed. Childcare should meet the needs of each child.

We should simply lower the school age of all children, regardless of their parents income, to two years of age.

We already have the public school system upon which to build an excellent program for first-class educational childcare to meet the needs of all parents and all of our children. And a childcare program was developed by the American Federation of Teachers back in 1974.

We have the teachers, many of them unable to work at their profession and forced to become clerks and office workers because this government (which includes both political parties) refuses to spend the money for adequately educating our children.

What we need to do—parents, teachers, labor, and students—is to demand that the government scrap the "Star Wars" plan, along with the entire military budget, and use that money for human needs.

This will take a massive movement. But we have the numbers and the ability to do just this. In the past, we were able to fight and win public schools, unemployment insurance, social security, trade-union rights, and women's suffrage. We were able to end child labor in the mines, mills, and sweat shops of this land; end Southern Jim Crow Laws; and were even able to stop the Vietnam War.

So it can be done. If the human race is to endure, we must fight for all our children and all children's children. —April 1988

## Hunger Strike Against Iran-Iraq War

Ardalan is a 25-year-old Iranian who has helped organize and participate in a hunger strike against the war between the Iran and Iraq governments. For nine days and nights they have camped out at San Francisco City Hall and denied themselves food to protest the murder of over 4000 men, women, and children in Halabja, a Kurdish city in the Iranian-occupied region of Iraq.

The Iraqi military dropped both chemical bombs and massive doses of cyanide gas on Halabja, which instantly snuffed out the lives of Kurdish civilians where they stood.

Newsweek magazine (April 4) printed this report by Theodore Stanger, one of the few reporters allowed in to view the horror:

“At ground zero in this once-teeming market city, death struck in seconds. Bodies of Halabja’s Kurdish residents lay scattered in the dirt streets, in back yards, in living rooms. Like the dead of Pompeii, some were frozen in escape attempts, at the wheel of a car, in doorways. One woman was huddled protectively over her baby, also dead. Nearby, a lifeless father vainly shielded his son. A family sheltered in its cellar was killed by the heavier-than-air fumes that seeped down. Everywhere, the stench of rotting corpses was overpowering.”

The young Iranians who organized the fast in San Francisco were not only protesting this mass slaughter but also the eight-year war between the countries of Iran and Iraq. They are far away from their families, mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters who are suffering bombing and destruction in their homeland every day.

They organized this fast to educate the people of the United States on conditions in the Middle East. They also oppose Khomeini, who they say is opposed to ending the war with Iraq.

Their demands are simple. They say, “We seek an immediate ceasing of bombing of civilian targets. We denounce any use of chemical weapons or other bacteriological methods. We denounce pursuance of political objectives through military invasions. And we support an honorable peace that can be accomplished through the Algerian Pact of 1975.”

I asked Ardalan how their vigil had been received by the people of San Francisco. He said he was very pleased, because most had been sympathetic to their cause and had taken their educational leaflets. Some had even tried to donate money, and one woman had brought them fruit and juice.

He felt that one of the reasons for the good response was the changed American attitude toward Palestinians. The fact that millions of Americans have been viewing the terrorist methods of the Zionist government against the Palestinian people on television every day has had the effect of creating more sympathy toward people of the Middle East.

Of course, another reason is that the Iran/contra expose revealed the fact that

for years all of the imperialist nations, especially the United States, have used all the people of the Middle East as a football to obtain control of the wealth of those countries.

The capitalist powers have used the tried-and-true method of divide and conquer to place their puppets in power and to block working-class movements in these countries. They have imposed upon the people of the Middle East the most ruthless governments and have installed the Zionist government in Israel as their own private watchdog.

The U.S. government has now thrown off its mask of “neutrality” in the war between Iran and Iraq. In recent days, over 40 U.S. warships have been moved into the Persian Gulf in order to “lay down the law” to the Iranians.

Almost any Iranian naval activity is now subject to U.S. armed intervention.

Ardalan’s last words to me were that they would be marching in the demonstration for Peace, Jobs, and Justice in San Francisco on April 30. He has every hope of getting the truth to the people of this country.

Just as the vast majority of people in this country oppose intervention in Central America, so will they come to oppose imperialist intervention in the Middle East. —May 1988

## Ron and Nancy Thank Their Lucky Stars

Donald Regan, former cabinet member and President Reagan’s chief of staff and close friend, shocked the world when he revealed in his book, “For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington,” that President and Nancy Reagan ran the government by astrology.

According to Regan, “Virtually every major move or decision the Reagans made during my time as White House chief of staff was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes to make certain that the planets were in favorable alignment for the enterprise.”

We were to learn later—after the news media tracked her down—that the White House astrologist is really a wealthy San Francisco socialite, Joan Quigley, who claims that she uses “science” and computers to prepare the star charts for Ronald and Nancy.

### Is it a ‘science’?

Scientists and scholars are outraged by this information. They are particularly angry that the news media lets Joan Quigley get away with her “scientific” pretensions without rebuttal.

They fear, and rightly so, that this reflects a dangerous drift into supernatural and other absurdly illogical thinking. A 1986 study by the National Science Foundation found that two-thirds of Americans read astrology reports periodi-

cally, and nearly 40 percent think horoscopes have some scientific credibility.

Andrew Franknoi, instructor in astronomy at San Francisco State, compares astrology to “jetology.” Jetology is a word he made up for a belief that one’s fate is influenced by the positions of jumbo jets flying over the United States at the moment of birth.

Franknoi says that “jetology” is just as logical as belief that the positions of the stars, planets, sun, and moon at birth create direct influences over our lives.

Another scientist points out in *The Washington Post* that the astrologer’s “science”—based on ambiguous references to gravitational forces exerted by the planets on people at their time of birth—defies even “common sense analysis.” He explains that the gravitational pull exerted by the obstetrician standing by the delivery table is six times greater than that of all of the planets combined.

### **Rasputin and the Tsarina**

Actually, the most apt commentary on this affair comes from David Kaiser, associate professor of history at Carnegie Mellon University. He compares the Reagans and their astrologer, Joan Quigley, to Nicholas and Alexandra (the Russian Tsar and Tsarina) and their spiritual adviser, the mad monk Rasputin.

In *The New York Times* of Friday, May 13, Kaiser says, “This analogy does not suggest that the United States is on the verge of revolution, or that astrologers seriously menace the Republic. Instead, it simply suggests that we, like the citizenry of imperial Russia, should look closely at the imperfections of our political system, the kinds of people it occasionally allows to rise to the top, and the precautions that might help us avoid further episodes that can only erode our confidence in our leaders and institutions.”

David Kaiser goes on to urge that we be more careful about who we choose to be our elected head of government. What Kaiser doesn’t seem to understand is that “we” do not pick the Reagans, the Fords, the Carters, the Nixons—or the Dukakis. These “leaders” are chosen by the capitalist class to do their dirty work.

Both political parties, owned and controlled by the corporate giants of this country, choose the least offensive of the smiling dummies—the ones who are reliable and electable—and then tell them what to do and to whom they are to do it.

I am not surprised at Nancy Reagan’s astrology or anything else she and Ronald might come up with. Like the Tsar and the Tsarina, they are rich, spoiled, and arrogant people. And like the last Russian monarch and his wife, millionaires Ronald and Nancy have used their office for personal gain—as well as contributing to increasing the misery of the working people of this country for the benefit of their class. —June 1988



## Are They Really ‘Concerned’ About Drugs?

Drug addiction is no laughing matter in the United States. Thousands of lives have been destroyed and families ruined because of their use. Drugs are not new. Poor and minority communities have been plagued for years by drug users and drug dealers.

For the most part, drugs have been foisted on the Black community by white drug cartels raking in massive profits with the aid and protection of the police department of every large city.

The joke in Harlem is that any child could point out the corner pusher—but policemen could never find them. Usually just before election time there would be a major “drug” and “bookie” bust. Incumbent politicians, up for reelection, would “suddenly discover” that New York City was awash with bookies taking bets and drug pushers pushing drugs.

For weeks before voting time, headlines would scream about the latest arrest of the local bookie or drug pusher. As soon as the election was over, that was the last you heard about pushers or bookies until the next election campaign was upon us.

### A guy named Jack

My experience was a personal one. I worked as a waitress in a luncheonette on 86th Street in Brooklyn for a number of years. The local “bookie” was a nice old guy, probably in his 70s, named Jack. He hung around the restaurant most of the day, occupying a corner counter seat, waiting for bettors to come in. He didn’t have long to wait.

On one side of the restaurant was a police station and on the other was a fire house. The perfect place for a bookie to hang his hat! Jack had plenty of customers, from the fire chief to the police chief and all their underlings, plus the local merchants. I worked there for a few months before I learned that Jack was a bookie. I found out when he would sometimes borrow my order book, write in it, and then go to the phone. My boss said that he was writing down bets in my book. That didn’t bother me as long as a horse wasn’t named BLT with Mayo. But Jack didn’t complain when I told him to get his own book from the boss. I was afraid the cops would come in and take a look at my order book. They never did, of course.

Every election time, Jack would disappear for a few weeks. Then he would reappear after the election, saying that he had gone to the country for a vacation. When Jack died, he had one of the biggest funerals in Brooklyn. The chief of police was the major speaker at his funeral. But the rest of us missed him too. He was not only a nice guy, he was also a good tipper.

### A sinister new ‘war’

This so-called “war on drugs” engineered by Reagan and his “war dogs” is far more serious than the oldtime wars against bookies. This war is sinister and

fraught with danger to the people of this country.

Although Reagan is given credit for this war, the Democrats have jumped in with both feet. In fact the two crooked parties of capitalism are vying with each other to see which of them has the toughest drug policy. All of the legal policies are aimed not at the big drug pushers and dealers, but at the helpless victims of drugs—the users.

California Lt. Governor, Leo McCarthy (R-California), who is running for the U.S. Senate against Senator Pete Wilson (R-California), has just come up with his own plan to fight drugs. He proposes diverting \$1 billion from Star Wars to the “war on drugs” and cutting off foreign aid to governments found by the CIA to be involved in drug trafficking.

That’s like telling the foxes to check the chicken house for chicken killers.

McCarthy also calls for “transferring” assets seized in drug arrests to so-called rehabilitation programs and mandatory drug education in the schools. He also calls for the death penalty for drug-related murders, increased wire-tapping, and random testing of people in transportation jobs—such as pilots, railroad workers, and truck drivers.

### **Are they ‘concerned?’**

All of this would sound sincere if anyone in the government, either Democrat or Republican, had shown even the slightest interest in our health or welfare. The record of both parties gives the lie to their alleged concern for the “people.”

For instance, Fortney H. Stark revealed that in the last 15 months, the Air Force has spent \$3.3 billion patrolling for drug smugglers and has come up with a grand total of eight drug dealers! How much housing and healthcare could have been provided with \$3.3 billion?

Stark also reported that 90 percent of the people who come forward voluntarily for drug treatment are turned away because of lack of space, resources, and lack of personnel.

“Concern” for our health is contradicted by the politicians’ outrageous refusal to stop or even slow down pollution of our environment with chemical and nuclear wastes. According to the Radioactive Waste Campaign, a public interest group in New York City, radioactive pollution is of crisis proportions at all 16 of the Energy Department’s weapons laboratories.

Plutonium, one of the most carcinogenic materials known, has been dispersed into the air or water at weapons stations near Dayton, Ohio; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and Denver, Colorado.

A two-year study by mine researchers concluded that there is “a pattern of gross mismanagement by the department, which is allowing radioactivity to leak out of the sites through soil, water, and air—in many cases intentionally.”

Besides runaway pollution, the nation’s healthcare is a disaster for the majori-

ty of our people and even worse for the poor. The AIDS epidemic remains unchecked and continues to spread because the federal government has failed to provide the funds for a massive research effort to find an effective treatment, means of prevention, or cure.

Meanwhile, infant mortality among Black children is rising. The gap between white infant mortality and Black infant mortality has widened from 64 percent to 98 percent since 1950. Infant mortality for all races in the United States is one of the highest in the major industrial countries.

The truth is that the so-called “drug war” will become, under this economic system, a “war against the poor” and a “war against the user.” It will leave the contras and other “lovers of democracy” free to purchase and distribute their poison to the poor around the world. —July 1988

## **‘Rocket’s Red Glare, The Bombs Bursting in Air’**

On July 3, 1988, as the United States was getting ready to celebrate our Declaration of Independence from the colonial rule of Great Britain, the U.S. cruiser Vincennes shot down an Iranian civilian airplane.

Two hundred-ninety men, women, and children were killed.

The vast majority of people throughout the world were horrified by this senseless slaughter of innocent people thousands of miles from the shores of the United States.

Ever since the overthrow of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlevi (the hand-picked puppet of the United States) in 1979, the United States has been on a rampage against that country and its people.

For 40 years, the United States and its giant oil cartels have fought for the right to control the oil of the Middle East. It now has 29 naval vessels with 10,000 to 15,000 naval personnel in the Persian Gulf.

Persian Gulf nations—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates—possess nearly two-thirds of the known oil resources in the non-communist world. Over 70 percent of the oil used in the United States is imported from the Gulf area. Japan imports 50 percent of its oil from the Arab countries, while Western Europe imports 30 percent of its oil from the Gulf.

The U.S. oil companies want to extort higher profits from this “liquid gold.” James H. Webb Jr., Secretary of the Navy from April 1987 to February 1988, (who supervised the deployment of ships in the Gulf) has expressed some concern about where this action will lead. “The operational environment takes on a momentum of its own,” he said.

“In the space of a year,” he continued, “our mission has changed from defense of sea lanes to a rather aggressive neutrality, to the protection of allied ships to, apparently, the protection of all neutral shipping.”

And even though Webb didn’t say it in so many words, the United States is prepared to blow up commercial airplanes in order to control all traffic in the Gulf area.

### **An accident?**

“It was an accident,” the headlines screamed. For a whole week, officials tried to blame this “accident” on the Iranians.

The capitalist media lied when it “reported” that the plane was outside of the commercial flight path. It lied when the commercial plane was accused of concealing an Iranian F-14 fighter. It lied when it said that the commercial plane was sending out “military” radio signals.

What became very clear, however, was that the Aegis air defense system—installed in U.S. naval ships at the cost of \$9 billion dollars—is not worth diddley-squat.

I don’t call the shooting down of the Iranian aircraft an accident. If a mounted policeman rode his horse through my living room, and his horse dropped a load of manure on my rug, I would not call that an accident. I would want to know why this cop was riding his horse through my living room.

And that’s the question we need to ask. What is the United States doing in the Persian Gulf? What right does this government have to be killing men, women, and children thousands of miles from the United States? Why must it murder innocent people in the interest of profits for the gigantic oil cartels? Who gave it that right?

In the meantime, in this country, 6 million people are sleeping in the streets because they cannot afford a home, 45 percent of adults in the U.S. are illiterate or semi-literate, millions of children are living in increased poverty, and health-care is non-existent for millions of people. Our roads, bridges, and mass transportation are crumbling. Pollution is killing our rivers, streams, and forests.

It is criminally insane to spend trillions for imperialist wars, but crumbs for human needs.

We demand that U. S. imperialism get out of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Central America, and everywhere else it doesn’t belong! No more “accidents!”

—August 1988

## **We Don’t Need Studies. We Need Action!**

All clever politicians know that when a problem exists and they don’t want to do anything about it, the best thing to do is order a “study” to be done.

This is supposed to keep everyone happy. The politicians “hands are tied” until

the study is done, the people who are hired to do the study are getting paid, and the people who have the problem must wait until it's all over—and then, as a rule, wind up empty handed

Recently, I read an article in *The New York Times* about a study done in Boston that made me want to run out into the streets screaming, “The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” It concerned food and poor children. After months of “study,” this report concluded that poor children did much better academically when they had a good breakfast.

It was not reported how long this study took—just that it was done among low-income children in Boston. Nor did the report indicate whether some children were denied food in order to measure the differences between the fed and the underfed children of Boston in academic achievement. (The report indicated that while many children got a free lunch, the group selected to compare academically with the others also received a free breakfast.)

The people making this study concluded that many children who received free lunches could do better if they also had a free breakfast, since many poor children were not receiving a breakfast at home.

### **Picking their teeth**

Now don't get the idea that this government will rush out and begin providing good breakfasts to all children who need them. That would be too simple. Very likely they will want to repeat this “study” on poor children in Philadelphia, San Francisco, New York City, and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, as the study goes on and on, the politicians in our city, state, and national governments can sit by and pick their teeth while waiting for the results (before doing something about it—if ever).

I was mentioning this study to a teacher friend of mine, and she reported that she had just read a study that proved that children from middle-class schools received a better education than children from low-income schools. Of course, this news really startled me!

I asked her if the study showed that children from middle-income schools wore better clothing than children from low-income schools? She said this was not included in the study she had read, but she was sure that this would be taken up in the next “study.”

### **More action!**

If all the “studies” on education were laid end to end, they would circle the globe many times over. The reason for the studies is to avoid taking the steps necessary to provide adequate, nourishment and a decent education to all of our children.

Certainly, we know that children who do not get enough to eat are malnourished and do not do well at home or school. We also know that children who are packed like sardines into classrooms will not get the education they need. We know, too, that “latchkey” children need after-school, education-oriented child-

care while their parents are working.

What this country needs very badly is fewer “studies” and more action. We know what must be done to help our children now! Let’s stop fooling around and get on with the job. In order to do that, we as parents, teachers, and workers must organize and kick out the political scoundrels—Democrat and Republican alike—who “study” at the expense of our children. —September 1988

## **Your Money...Or Your Life!**

The U.S. government has spent over \$2.6 trillion on the military in the last seven years. Yet the amount spent on health and medical needs is a national disgrace.

The United States is the only industrialized country without a national health plan. Britain, France, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and all of the countries in the “Soviet bloc” have nationalized health plans.

This country ranks 17th in the world in its infant mortality rate. The cost of private healthcare insurance continues to climb for all users—including senior citizens as well as members of union health plans. Most private health plans are increasing their deductibles, taking rising costs out of the pockets of our elderly and working people.

### **Catastrophe for elderly**

In July of this year, Congress passed a “Catastrophic Health Act,” which was supposed to be a boon for the elderly. It has actually turned into a catastrophe for the elderly. The Medicare coverage for senior citizens will cost \$4 more per month.

The new health coverage also imposes a 15 percent tax surcharge on social security income. By the year 1993, the income tax surcharge increases to 28 percent.

However, in its continuing efforts to be “fair” to both the rich and poor alike, the government has capped taxation of salaries at \$45,000. This means that if you earn \$200,000, you will still be taxed for healthcare at the \$45,000 rate. All of the elderly with an income of \$25,000 or more will pay an income tax on one-half of their Social Security as well as on their regular income.

Even worse, many operations and medical needs have been cut out because of costs. So if you are elderly, do not expect hospitals to give you necessary life-saving operations if they are too “costly.”

### **Cutbacks in AIDS care**

The title of this article, “Your money or your life,” takes on even more important meaning for people who have AIDS. One of the few drugs that has proven to help in prolonging the lives of AIDS patients is AZT. This medicine costs from \$8000 to \$10,000 per year per patient. But federal assistance to help cover the cost

of AZT is supposed to run out on Sept. 30 of this year.

The federal program covers this cost for those who do not qualify for Medicare and whose yearly gross family income is \$40,000 or less. Ten thousand dollars out of wages of \$40,000 or less is a big bite.

In California, the state has decided to continue funding for AZT treatments until at least December. However, the State Office of AIDS has said that no new AIDS patients may join the program after Sept. 30.

The associate director of the San Francisco Department of Public Health says there are about 30 new people a month who would qualify for AZT treatments from San Francisco alone. They will be turned down because of lack of funds.

To be turned away from one of the few treatments that could prolong life is nothing more than pronouncing a death sentence on AIDS victims. We need to prolong life as long as possible until a cure or vaccine is found—despite the fact that scientists say that development of such drugs is some time off.

### **A National Health Plan**

The death rate of AIDS victims is horrendous. To date in the United States there have been 70,208 cases of AIDS reported, including 19,773 this year. There have been 39,620 deaths, or 56 percent.

The victims were waiters, truck drivers, fathers, mothers, gays, straights, artists, teachers, infants, teenagers, young men and women, and senior citizens. In other words, they were humans who come from all walks of life.

They were taxpayers, just as are all working people. They, like all of us, wish the government would have spent \$2.6 trillion to save lives rather than spend \$2.6 trillion on death and destruction.

What we need is a national health plan which would cover every individual in this country and provide the health services necessary for everyone.

—October 1988

## **‘You Work an Honest Day...’**

A few weeks ago, I ran into my friend Kathy, who works for Safeway as a checker. She looked so down that I invited her over for a visit, and this is her story. Her name is changed because she wants to quit her job instead of getting fired.

“God, how I hate this job,” Kathy said. “I am going to quit because I really can’t stand it anymore. We checkers are treated like serfs instead of workers. I’ve been working at Safeway as a checker for nine-and-a-half years. It will be 10 years in July, and it’s never been so bad.

“When I first started working there, I liked it. The pay was good and so were the health benefits. When you worked in the same store, you got to know all your fellow workers and we used to stick together.

“It has changed just since our last contract, three years ago, when we got the two-

tier wage system. (Checkers have the most seniority and make the highest wage.) Everyone I talked to said they were going to vote against the two-tier contract.

### **Mail-in ballot**

“We went to the union hall and voted. But the counters said, it was too close to call.” We had to vote again, this time, with a mail-in ballot. That vote was overwhelming for the contract.

“Now, really, I have not talked to one Safeway worker who said they voted for that contract. But here we are with the two-tier.

“Safeway is expanding all its non-groceries sections—flowers, bakery, drugs, and deli. All of those new general-merchandise clerks earn less than we checkers. In fact, the most they can make is \$9.50 per hour, no matter how many years they work.

“There were hard feelings between the new-hires and us. Management told the general-merchandise clerks not to talk to us, that we would make things hard for them.

“It was a while before we could become friends with the baggers. They resented us because they were working for the minimum wage, about \$5.35 an hour, and we were making over \$13.

“Safeway began to yank the checkers around. They began to move us all over the city. No matter how long we had worked at a store, they can transfer us without notice. You are working with workers you don’t know, and that leads toward distrust instead of unity.

“They can change our hours. I’m forced to work from 12 midnight till 8 a.m. with no increase in pay. You are always on call, even on your day off. When Safeway calls, you go in.

### **Increased surveillance**

“Management has increased its surveillance of the checkers. If they catch you talking to a fellow checker, they will call on the service phone and demand that you quit talking or they will write you up.

“In fact, we are watched so closely that the only time we can talk is when we’re in the bathroom. Even then, we check all the toilets before we speak. When it comes to its workers, Safeway doesn’t believe in its slogan, ‘Since we’re neighbors, let’s be friends.’

“Checkers are complaining of more injuries. The people who design the stores never were checkers. In fact, I don’t think they’ve ever shopped in a store. We’re getting wrist injuries (carpal-tunnel syndrome) because of the constant moving of groceries over the price scanner.

“We’re supposed to spend a maximum of two hours behind the checkstand but are never relieved when we’re supposed to be because of the shortage of checkers. So we’re stuck until management finds a replacement for relief time. It’s painful on your legs and back when you forced to stand in a two-foot hole for two hours and longer.

“I have a lot of complaints about the union. It is not democratic. But I would



not be without it. Without the union I would be helpless. At least I have the union to protect against some of the worst faults of management. I just wish the union would act stronger and faster.”

Well, that, my friends, is Kathy’s story. If there are any workers reading this who are thinking of signing a two-tier contract—think again. Organize don’t agonize.

—November 1988

## What Makes the TV Preachers Run?

The other night I saw the Rev. Jerry Foulmouth (Falwell) on TV urging his listeners to join “Operation Rescue.” That’s the bunch of fundamentalist potential fascists who are trying to shut down abortion clinics all over the country by terrorist means.

They come to the clinics in droves, violating the civil rights of women who need to use the clinic. They close the doors to the clinics with their bodies. The police take their sweet time (several hours) before removing these leeches from blocking the clinic doors.

Several weeks ago, I joined hundreds of other women and men who support women’s rights by defending the clinics. I went over to a clinic in Oakland and was greeted by others who had also traveled before sunrise to defend women’s rights.

By 9:30 in the morning, over 65 women had their unwanted pregnancies ended and were able to return to their families, jobs, or schools. They did not have to go to a back-alley butcher or fly to another country to have an abortion. They will not be charged with a crime or jailed for having had an abortion, as is done in many countries where abortion is illegal.

### First-class scrooges

What is this anti-choice movement all about? It’s not a moral movement. The leaders of this movement, the TV evangelists and other such creatures, are as moral as rattlesnakes.

Virtually every one of the anti-choice advocates supports the death penalty, supports whichever war the capitalist class is engaged in at the moment, and is for increasing the war budget at the expense of schools, food programs, and social services for the needy.

They are first-class Scrooges when it comes to the children and families of the poor, and they are the first to fight increases in welfare that would reduce the high infant-mortality rate in this wealthy country.

### What is their real motive?

The Rev. Jimmy Swaggart, the crying TV evangelist, was paid \$85,000 in 1986,



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and \$86,000 in 1987. On top of that, he got a house worth \$1.5 million and one worth half that much for his son. He also received a Palm Springs condo, a private jet, and an air-conditioned tree house for his grandson.

They have a class morality. They are for the rich and against the poor. Their aim is to mobilize discontented workers and middle-class people to defend the status quo which serves them and their capitalist friends so well. They can't do this openly. They need to use phony moral issues to corral discontented and confused people in defense of the ruling rich.

In this country today, the top 10 percent of income earners control 56 percent of the wealth. The wealthiest 2 percent hold more than two-thirds of all corporate stock. In 1910 the top fifth of the population received about 46 percent of the nation's income, while the bottom fifth received 8 percent. In 1986 the bottom fifth received only 5 percent.

The total estimated wealth of the Forbes 400 richest Americans is \$156 billion—equal to the entire Gross National Product of Mexico. The total U.S. budget for welfare, food stamps, unemployment benefits, and housing is likewise \$151 billion.

### **Slim pickins**

The haves are getting theirs and the have-nots are getting slim pickins.

T. Marshal Hahn Jr., chairman of Georgia-Pacific in Atlanta, Georgia, earned \$900,000 in 1987—and his company made \$8.6 billion. Mary Jenkins, who cleans Hahn's office after he's gone home, makes \$3.50 an hour, which comes to about \$3,640 a year. Jenkins, who is the sole support of her grandson, is not covered by a health or pension plan.

Mary Jenkins is not alone. More than 2 million women are working fulltime in jobs that pay wages below the poverty line. (In 1987 for a family of three, the poverty line was about \$9,100.)

In 1985 two-thirds of all women were either the sole support of their families or had husbands earning \$15,000 or less per year.

Get the drift? The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. And

things are about to get much worse. The capitalists of the world are in deep doo-doo. The world capitalist economy is about to go down the tubes. Discontent will grow. Working-class consciousness will radicalize. Mass strikes and demonstrations will break out. That's what the Foulmouths and Swaggarts are preparing for. They need to set up false devils so that these poor fools, mobilized around phony moral issues such as abortion, will do their dirty work for them.

[My thanks to Ann Hornaday of Ms. magazine for the statistics quoted above.]

—December 1988

## 1989

### Who Says Dishonesty Doesn't Pay?

A White House commission is recommending pay increases of up to 50 percent for congressmen/women, federal judges, and top-level government officials. Congressional salaries would jump from \$89,500 to \$135,000. U.S. District judges would get the same.

The payoff for cabinet members would jump from \$99,500 to \$155,000, the vice president and the chief justice would come in for a boost from \$115,000 to \$175,000—and finally, the president's annual salary would leap from \$200,000 to \$350,000.

Unless Congress takes action against the White House commission's recommendations, the pay raises will go into effect in 1993.

Don't bet on a congressional protest against these increases in wasted taxes. But there is a catch they won't like. The pay-raise recommendation includes a total ban on "honoraria" (payments by special-interest groups to lawmakers for speeches or writings). These payments are more often than not a disguised form of bribery and a reward for services rendered.

Take a look at the extra loot the looters have been raking in for "lecturing." Such "luminaries" as ex-Attorney General Edwin Meese, ex-Education Secretary William Bennett, ex-White House Chief of Staff Howard Baker, and ex-Director of Office and Management James Miller are receiving \$15,000 to \$25,000 a shot flying around the country speaking to corporate groups and trade associations.

Donald T. Regan, former White House chief of staff, was paid \$100,000 for a week of lectures in Japan shortly after leaving his White House job.

These are the type of people you should pay to not move into your neighborhood—if you had enough money. If they did move in, you should increase your home security. Yet here they are, making fortunes in pay-offs by opening their big mouths to bankers and corporate owners.

Of course, in a way, it is owed to them. They enthusiastically played the role of

Robin Hoods-in-reverse for their class—they really put their hearts into taking from the poor and giving it to the rich.

### **Money to thieves**

So, for some, the belief is that if you just throw more money at the crooks it will make them less crooked (they call it “ethics violations”). At least, that’s what the White House commission tells us. We know better. Throwing money to thieves is like throwing meat to a shark—it just whets their appetite.

Instead of letting them pass legislation siphoning public funds to giant corporations and giving them a bigger cut through raising their salaries, why not use that money to give jobs to the jobless, homes to the homeless, and food to the hungry?

All of those former big-business toadies who are flying all over the world speaking as experts are experts, first and foremost, in the robbery of the world’s working class. They have nothing to say as experts in what’s good for the people.

Do the lectures of former Secretary of Education William Bennett speak of the fact that 69 percent of the teachers nationwide said poor health of students was a problem in their schools? Or that 68 percent reported problems with undernourished children in their classrooms? Or that 89 percent of the teachers reported neglected or abused children in their schools?

### **Freezing to death**

Neither do these people lecture on how to stop and reverse the problem of accelerating homelessness—and a doubling of people freezing to death in the streets in the last 10 years. Nor are they getting out the word on the tragedy of whole families, especially those of single mothers, becoming an increasing proportion of the homeless, and how it must be stopped.

They have nothing to say about the fact that while over 20 percent of the homeless hold full-time jobs, they cannot afford living space. According to these experts, it’s a mystery why people “choose” to live in cars and cardboard boxes when there are such wonderful public “shelters” available.

It doesn’t occur to these gentlemen to call attention to the skyrocketing costs of housing that is in large part due to their systematic “urban renewal” programs, which mean leveling existing housing for the poor and subsidizing new housing for the affluent.

It’s as if they didn’t understand the elementary capitalist law of supply and demand: decreasing housing for the poor is driving prices beyond the means of ever more working people.

Paying off those bums in Washington is not the way to go. What the working class has to do is kick the bums out—not pay them off. —January 1989

## ‘Rich Get Richer, Poor Get Children’

Nothing sets off legal mania as much as women’s internal plumbing. Judges, presidents, preachers, popes, kings, and dictators have passed laws concerning the uterus, fertility, and sexual enjoyment (or lack thereof).

The need to control what women do with their bodies has been an all-consuming passion of dominant males since the advent of private property. After all, you wouldn’t allow your horses, cows, and sheep any freedom. Why allow your main domestic chattel, your wife, any choices?

The first law controlling women’s bodies was passed in 150 A.D. Clement of Alexandria ruled that procreation is not merely good but sacred and that, therefore, procreation is the sole “lawful reason for conjugal intercourse.”

The first law controlling women’s bodies was passed in 150 A.D. Clement of Alexandria ruled that procreation is not merely good but sacred and that, therefore, procreation is the sole “lawful reason for conjugal intercourse.”

In the 4th century A.D., St. Augustine maintained that the male embryo becomes a human being 40 days after conception and a female 80 days after conception. Although abortion is a sin, St. Augustine ruled, it is not murder.

From the 4th century until 1591, the Catholic Church seesawed back and forth on whether abortion was a sin or murder, or both. In 1803, Great Britain outlawed abortion after quickening but allowed abortion in the early stages.

In 1821, Connecticut passed the first law against abortion after quickening but allowed abortion in early stages. In the 1860s, many states passed comprehensive, restrictive, criminal abortion laws—many which remained in effect until 1973. In fact, abortion was outlawed in every state until 1973; only the penalties differed.

On Jan. 22, 1973, criminal laws against abortion across the nation were declared unconstitutional; the court held that abortion during the first two trimesters of pregnancy is a matter between a woman and her doctor. That was the famous *Roe v. Wade* ruling, which made abortion legal in this country.

### ‘The President hears you’

Once again, the legislators, judges, evangelists, presidents, cabinet ministers, and the ruling rich are organizing foaming-at-the-mouth right-wingers in the streets to abolish a woman’s right to control her own body. Thousands of “know nothings” have been using totally illegal methods to shut the abortion clinics down.

Our president, “gentle and kindly” George Bush, greeted these political Neanderthals on Jan. 22 and assured them he was behind their illegal actions 100 percent.

Bush addressed the outlaws over a loudspeaker: “This is what I think.... The Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade* was wrong and should be overturned.



I think America needs a human-life amendment.” He went on, “I promise you that the president hears you now and stands with you in a cause that must be won.”

Then President Bush sent “prettyboy” Quayle in person to bless the gang of 15 who lead the anti-abortion movement—just in case there was any doubt where the new head of the capitalist government stood.

But “Operation Rescue,” which is spearheading a wide-ranging ruling-class assault on democratic rights, is triggering a defensive movement by tens of thousands of women and their supporters. Women are outraged by the fascist-like attacks on clinic after clinic, in city after city.

If these people are permitted to get away with their gangster tactics today, tomorrow they may start sitting down in front of synagogues and mosques, shutting them down because they worship a false god, or shutting down hospitals because blood transfusions violate their beliefs, or shutting down libraries because they disapprove of their books, eventually shutting down union halls and political parties which they decide are “immoral.”

The ruling class is financing and encouraging these experiments in extra-legal activity. While they permit the Bible-thumpers to break the law with nothing more than a slap on the wrist, they regularly throw the book at unions who dare to put more than a few pickets at struck factory gates.

But just as workers in the 1930s told the ruling class to take their anti-labor laws and shove them, so will women do the same when denied their democratic and human right to control their bodies.

### **The Missouri law**

Now the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear a 1986 Missouri law that “protects the fetus from the moment of conception and bars the use of public funds to counsel or encourage abortion” as well as barring “the use of public facilities for the procedure.”

By not limiting its review to the law’s restrictions on abortion, the Supreme Court left the door open to possible reversal of the *Roe v. Wade* decision itself. A decision by the court in favor of any portion of the Missouri law would seriously undermine the right of women to plan their families.

The first wave of feminism from the 1840s until the 1920s won women the right to vote; the second wave of feminism from the 1960s through the 1970s won reproductive rights for women. The third wave of feminism to defend these gains will make the first and second waves seem like little splashes.

The enemies of human rights will not be allowed to again condemn our sisters and daughters to the horrors of back-alley abortions. All out on April 9! Demonstrate for women’s rights! —February 1989

## Sex and Sin Are His Business

I wonder how many of you have been invited to a “condom roast?” Probably not many who read this paper. But last week in Waterbury, Connecticut, there was a “condom roast” staged by Monsignor Joseph Looney (I’m not kidding, that’s his name) of the Sacred Heart Church.

Monsignor Looney, the pastor of the church and a Catholic priest, knows quite a lot about sin, sex, and condoms. Sex and sin are the business of priests and TV evangelists. What would they do without sin and sex, how would they earn their living, who would support these full-grown men for the whole of their lives unless they were experts on these two world-shaking issues?

Monsignor Looney held a “condom roast” in the parking lot of the Sacred Heart Church. The parishioners gathered there to hear his wise, Christian words. (It was not reported how many of the parishioners surrendered their condoms to the monsignor at the “burning.”)

“We are criticizing the condom-nation of America,” Monsignor Looney told the crowd. And he hoped that “condom roasts” would spread to other churches. “Condoms mean cheap sex, yuppie love, calculated noninvolvement—they are a symbol, an instrument of denial, insulation from God and from one another.”

### ‘Sin taxes’

Fortunately, the burning of condoms did not actually take place; it was a symbolic burning which only involved the lighting of incense. Burning condoms probably smell like burning tires.

Father Looney said he decided against burning actual condoms because “we didn’t want to pollute the air,” and because “Catholics are allergic to condoms.” He said, “I wouldn’t come near one with a 10-foot pole.”

The holy Father is calling upon Governor O’Neil of Connecticut to support extension of the state’s existing “sin taxes” (on cigarettes and alcohol) to include condoms. “The fornicators should take responsibility as well as the smokers and drinkers,” said Father Looney, adding that there was a “denial aspect” in the use of condoms.

“There’s one thing that’s worse than sin and that is the denial of sin. Condoms make denial easier. They are a tax-funded cover-up when given out free in the hope of helping the poor.” The good Father didn’t say anything about the enormous tax breaks given the Catholic and other churches in the name of helping the poor.

### AIDS prevention

The “denial aspect” of condoms spoken of by Father Looney is that “sinners” may not be “caught in the act” if they use condoms.

He could also point out that using condoms might prevent pregnancy of unmarried teenagers and prevent infants from being born with AIDS. East Coast hospitals are filling up with children born of mothers afflicted with AIDS. The majority of those little infants will never leave the hospital.

Also, Father Looney might add, using condoms might prevent the spread of other sexual diseases such as syphilis. By using condoms, adult people could engage in sexual activities without the fear of having an unwanted pregnancy too.

Father Looney deeply believes that people who “sin” must suffer—whether it is teenagers, infants, or just ordinary human beings. Father Looney’s God demands full punishment.

Father Looney belongs in the you-know-what bin. He should be put away where he cannot inflict himself on other people.

On the other hand, maybe he should have the company of Louis Sullivan, the newly appointed Secretary of Health and Human Services, who says he will protect the health of women by demanding the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* (the 1973 Supreme Court decision which legalized abortion). These two beauties belong together—in the same padded cell. —March 1989

## ‘Oh Death, Won’t You Carry Me Over’

*“Mother, oh Mother, come to my bed—Place a cold towel upon my head—My head is hot and my feet are cold—Ole devil’s gonna get my soul—Oh death, Oh death, won’t you carry me over till another day.”*

That’s a song my grandmother and mother used to sing to us children when we were small. We lived in Lexington, Kentucky, and my family came from the Kentucky mountains. There were at least nine or 10 verses, and “Grandmaw” would sing every one of them. The song got grimmer as it went along, but we kids loved it.

I used to always ask why this young woman was dying, and I would get a different answer every time. If it was raining outside, my grandmother would say it was because the young woman went out in the rain and got all wet. If it was snowing, she would say it was because she went out into the snow, got too cold, and caught consumption.

It was years before I got what seems like the real reason for her dying so young. My mother told me, right after I had the first of two illegal abortions, that the young woman in the “Oh Death” song died from an abortion. She wasn’t trying to scare me, because I had already returned from the hospital for emergency treatment for my illegal abortion. She was just remarking on why she thought the young woman had died so young.

### **Many women die**

The Center for Disease Control estimates that 150,000 women die each year from illegal abortions. That does not count other disabling effects because of anti-abortion laws in many countries. Women who live through illegal abortions are often sent to jail if they get caught. Many of them are apprehended when they



apply for emergency treatment at a local clinic or hospital.

Before the *Roe v. Wade* ruling by the Supreme Court in 1973, millions of American women desperately went to illegal abortionists, placing their lives into the hands of incompetent amateurs. And if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned, millions more will do so again.

Even if the Supreme Court *only* rules that states have the right to limit abortions by requiring teenagers, for example, to get parental consent, or women to get their husband's or lover's consent, many women will again be driven to illegal abortionists. Many will die.

It is an outrage that Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, who has been appointed by President Bush to head up the Department of Health and Human Services, has stated that he supports the overthrow of *Roe v. Wade*.

This creature Sullivan was approved by the Senate with only one vote against. And that single vote was by Senator Jesse Helms, who thought that Sullivan was "too liberal" on abortion. (Sullivan had said that he supports abortion in case of incest, rape, or the likely death of the mother.)

Not one Democrat or Republican voted against him. Not one of them had the decency to even mention the danger to the lives of thousands of women if abortion is made illegal, not to mention the added expense—no small matter to millions of women.

(Ironically, Congress, which confirmed Sullivan almost unanimously, is completely covered by health care, including hair transplants, face lifts, fat removal, anything they want, legally and safely, and free of any charge whatsoever.)

### **Pro-choice mobilizations**

Worst of all, the near-unanimous approval of pro-Death Dr. Sullivan will give a powerful impetus to the misnamed "Right to Life" and "Operation Rescue" gangs, which are mobilizing around the country to block women from exercising their Constitutional and human right to choose.

On April 2 in San Francisco and April 9 in Washington, D.C., hundreds of thousands of pro-choice supporters will demonstrate to those politicians that the vast majority of people in this country support legal abortion. Every poll has shown this to be the case.

Moreover, pro-choice activists will be using those marches to recruit reinforcements necessary to defend abortion clinics from the "Operation Rescue" goon squads. Every mobilization by these gangs against women's right to choose needs to be met with counter-mobilizations. By out mobilizing them, we will discourage gangster tactics which violate our rights.

On April 2 and April 9, thousands of young women coming into action for the first time should join the National Organization for Women and other organizations dedicated to the preservation of *Roe v. Wade*. April 2 and April 9 will be the first big counter-mobilization, but it will be only the beginning.—April 1989

## We Will Not Be Moved from Our Goal!

Recently I saw the documentary “How We Got The Vote.” I had seen it many times, but this time was a little different. It was shown after the march of 30,000 abortion rights supporters on April 2 in San Francisco and after the massive march of 600,000 in Washington, D.C., on April 9.

The documentary includes news film from the early fight of pioneers for women’s suffrage. It reveals the absolutely indomitable spirit of those women. They picketed, marched, petitioned, lobbied by the hundreds, participated in nationwide elections to defeat politicians who did not support suffrage, were jailed, went on hunger strikes, were brutalized in the jails, and were force-fed.

When they were finally released from their prisons, the women organized a “jail bird” train which traversed the nation. They told their story wearing their prison garb.

In the midst of the First World War, they carried out a fight against President Wilson by burning his speeches in front of the White House. Every time Wilson made a speech about “bringing democracy to Europe,” they demanded that he “bring democracy home to the United States” for women. They refused to abide by unjust laws.

What is important is the lesson: Massive actions in the streets and in the factories serve to educate and place into motion those layers of the population who are waiting for leadership. From a small band of rebels, ridiculed and scorned, those women were able to reach the vast majority of people in this country, both men and women.

### **Giving them a bone**

We are faced with a major problem today. The right of women to control their reproductive organs and to choose when to have children is being challenged.

The politicians, both Republican and Democrat as well as the real rulers in the boardrooms of corporate America, have decided to throw the radical, fanatical right wing a bone. That bone is to begin to take away the right of women to get an abortion. The ruling class needs to encourage these right-wing fanatics because they could serve as their future “storm troopers.”

On April 26, the Supreme Court began its review of *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal in this country. This review is far more than an attack by the conservative judges appointed to the Court by ex-President Reagan. Such a risky project would not even be considered without the support of decisive sections of the ruling class.

The Court has started something which will be hard for them to stop; if they whittle down the right to abortion even a little, they know from the massive marches and the repeated declarations and chants of “Never Again!” that millions will come into the streets and will threaten to further radicalize the entire population.

On the other hand, if they completely back off and entirely reject the states

rights challenge to *Roe v. Wade*, this will inspire women and others to demand all the human and democratic rights still being denied them.

### **Keep the clinics open!**

Even a small victory in the Supreme Court for the right-wing anti-abortion forces will give them a shot in the arm. Although they will scream that “it is not enough,” they will not be happy until they force women to go to Mexico for condoms, let alone abortions.

They will increase their forces and if given “states rights” by the Supreme Court will then proceed to aim at those states that still allow abortion. Our clinics, where they remain legal, will be under siege by these potential shock-troops of reaction.

In the 1930s, there was another movement in opposition to right-wing mobs. It was the labor movement. Workers wanted to organize themselves into unions so they could face their exploiters in a united way. All of the laws in this country said that workers had no right to organize. The laws gave bosses the right to arm and deputize thugs to intimidate and even murder striking workers.

So the workers, being of sound mind and body, said to the bosses, the courts, and the politicians, “Take your laws and shove them—we are not going to obey unjust laws. We will force you to change the law to suit the needs of the vast majority, not to suit the needs of a small minority.” And they did.

They sat in, sat down, and shut down the works until the Congress changed its laws. Workers were doing just what the suffragists did. They defied in massive numbers the unjust and anti-democratic laws.

Now that’s our job. We must mobilize masses of supporters at the clinics to keep them open. We have to take on the “Operation Rescue” mobs in force. We have to let the Supreme Court know that whatever it does will not force us into illegal, botched abortions.

Mass action at the clinics will let the politicians, the judges, the ruling class know that there will be defensive street actions until our right to choose legally and safely is carved in stone. We will not be moved from that goal. “Never Again!”

—May 1989

## **Playing the Game of ‘Stop Thief!’**

Everyone knows this old comedy routine: A thief has just robbed a bank. The cops chase him down the block, yelling “Stop thief!” Suddenly, the thief stops on his heels, points his finger, and also yells, “Stop thief!” The cops run right past the thief in the direction he is pointing. The thief then makes his escape.

The American capitalist class has developed this trick to an art. Not only have they stolen from us the product of our labor, but they have dumped industrial wastes in our air, water, and land, in their greed for ever larger profits.

But who gets the blame? The capitalists use their control over the media to place the blame on the ordinary people of this planet for ecological destruction. They say we use too much of the earth's resources in our "foolish" consumerist drive.

The destruction of the world's natural resources in the course of normal capitalist profiteering is threatening the very existence of humankind. The ozone layer which protects the earth's climate is being eroded, contributing to the "Greenhouse" warming.

The world's oceans have become garbage dumps in the service of the oil corporations and other giant business conglomerates. Our forests, which supply the earth with oxygen, are being depleted in order to keep the corporate boardrooms happy.

And to top it off, the energy corporations continue to dump nuclear wastes into the oceans, rivers, and the atmosphere itself in their blind quest to reduce costs and maximize profits.

The thieves are yelling, "Stop thief," by pointing the finger at individuals instead of at those who are really responsible for poisoning our planet and its entire population.

### **War on drug victims**

The "big war on drugs" is one of the finest examples of the "stop thief" trick. Every newspaper controlled by the ruling class carries screaming headlines on the "drug crisis." The government's so called "war on drugs" is proving to be a war on the victims hooked by the big time international network of drug importers.

Meanwhile, the Contragate scandal showed that the U.S. government itself secretly played footsie with drug dealers, which include Latin American and other "freeworld" military dictatorships in their ranks.

Military boot camps are being proposed to incarcerate drug users, not dealers. Parents, whose teen-age children have been found using drugs, are arrested and charged with being accessories.

Workers in all occupations are being tested for drug use. The fact is that rail owners have insistently pressured railworkers to violate safety regulations and are steadily reducing crew sizes in their unholy drive for bigger profits. But whenever a rail accident happens, the company blames the railworkers, usually by charging them with safety violations. And even if there isn't a shred of evidence, they are almost invariably charged with drug abuse as well.

At the same time that the bosses and their government holler their heads off about the threat to society of drug addiction, victims who are hooked on drugs are denied help because the few drug treatment programs that do exist are overcrowded (in San Francisco alone, there are over 4000 people who are waiting for an opening in a treatment center.)

### **Raising our taxes**

"Sin taxes" have become the rallying cry of the politicians. Instead of forcing the tobacco companies to pay for the costs to society of the poison they push,

they keep raising taxes on the hooked victims.

Gasoline, alcohol, and cigarette taxes are increased to punish the consumer for pollution. Clean, efficient, mass transit which could qualitatively cut pollution is ruled out so as not to cut into the profits of oil, gas, and automobile companies.

Multimillion dollar tax-deductible advertising campaigns push the sales of autos, tobacco, wine, liquor, and beer. But their taxes are cut and ours are raised to pay for advertising campaigns primarily designed to hook people into smoking more, drinking more, and driving more.

Unfortunately, the government campaign has paid off. A large layer of workers and the middle class has fallen for the “blame-the-victim” message of the mass media and the capitalist class.

### **Human needs, not profits!**

Karl Marx warned over a hundred years ago that humanity is faced with a choice between socialism or barbarism. The threat of capitalist barbarism has been underscored by the increasingly scary threat to the ecology of our planet, as well as by the unresolved danger of nuclear annihilation—despite the Soviet Union’s demonstrated willingness to defuse this calamitous threat.

Workers and their allies must turn their fear and anger on the capitalist class—which puts profits above human needs. We really do live on the edge of “socialism or barbarism.” We must take the profit motive out of the system and save our planet from destruction. —June 1989

## **‘From Sea to Shining Sea’**

In the last few weeks, we’ve witnessed an extreme reaffirmation of the fact that “capitalism fouls things up” and that the capitalist system places profits before human needs.

From the Pacific to the Atlantic, our oceans are being turned into oil dumps. The huge oil conglomerates are not only gobbling up massive profits, but they are doing so at the expense of the world’s oceans, lakes, rivers, and streams—risking the destruction of life itself.

On March 24, the tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground and spilled 10.2 million gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound off Alaska. Only about 10 percent of the oil has been recovered. And last month, on June 23 and June 24, there were three more giant spills within hours of each other. Close to 3 million gallons were lost.

But the current rash of tanker spills is part of a pattern. The Coast Guard recently reported that from 1980 through 1986, 91 million gallons of oil and 36 million gallons of other toxic substances have been dumped into U.S. waters. Of the oil, two thirds came from tankers and barges (often from “routine” dis-

charges) and the rest was runoff from land-based sources such as refineries.

Last year alone, there were 5,000 to 6,000 spills of oil and other toxic substances along the U.S. coast. It's no wonder that the supermarkets report that people are eating less seafood.

### **Shifting the blame**

Of course, the oil companies deny any wrongdoing on their part. They immediately try to place the blame on the ships' crews or on the plant managers.

In every case, the oil giants have been incapable of doing the clean-up. Ironically, only three days before the June 23 disasters, the oil companies called a news conference in which they finally admitted that they had "neither the equipment nor the response personnel in place and ready to deal with catastrophic tanker spills."

The oil companies swore on a stack of Bibles that in five years they would have an emergency program in place. In the meantime, they left it up to the Coast Guard or local environmentalists to organize clean-ups. Teams of workers were forced to use pitchforks—the most primitive tools imaginable—to remove globs of oil from the banks of the Delaware River. The damage will be impossible to erase completely.

Why these continuous disasters? The oil companies, in order to increase their profits, have built enormous tankers with single hulls (the cheapest ships possible) and have continued to decrease the personnel on these unsafe tankers. The government—from congress to the president (a former oil man himself)—has been in the pocket of the oil oligarchies since they were formed.

As long as corporations are allowed to place profits above all human needs and as long as the politicians continue to act as the guard dogs of the profit system, they place our planet's existence in jeopardy. This cannot continue.

The oil companies must not be permitted to plead "poverty" as they foul our soil, water, and food. Open the companies' account books! Their profits and assets should be taxed up to 100 percent in order to clean up the environment and prevent further disasters.

If the bosses are unable to take the necessary steps, then the oil corporations should be nationalized. Let the workers take control. —July 1989

## **Land of the Brave—Home of the Free**

I read in the papers that our beloved president, "Free Enterprise George," spent a few days in Eastern Europe last week hustling for those countries to try American-style "democracy." His impassioned speeches on the blessings of democracy—and capitalism—were featured throughout the American "free press."

However, in describing the copious life-style of the free citizens of the U.S. of A., he left a few details out. So as not to mislead our brothers and sisters of Eastern Europe, perhaps I should just clarify a few things for them about the blessings of our free enterprise system.

First of all, we do have democracy. For instance, a rich man or woman has as much right to sleep in doorways as do the homeless. And in reverse, a poor man or woman has as much right to hire a maid, butler, rent the best suite at the Fairmont, or purchase a Porsche (or even a congressman) as the rich person does.

A prime example of how our democracy works was best displayed in a full-page ad in *The New York Times* on July 13. It was an ad aimed at the ultimate wine connoisseur.

For the very humble price of \$550,000 a whole gaggle of wine bargains were offered (including a round-trip plane ride on the Concorde to the Chateau d'Yquem, in France). Featured in the long list of wines were 36 bottles of Lafite Library wines—marked down from \$250,000 to \$125,000.

So for a paltry \$500,000 a body could wind up owning, altogether, about 500 bottles of “quality” wine. And unlike the poor comrades behind the “Iron Curtain,” our poor folks in America have as much right to buy that wine as does Donald Trump or George Bush.

### **They're naive**

One of the problems between the rich and the middle class and working class in this country is that the rich seem to catch on faster than the other two groups. The common people are a bit naive.

In the U.S. of A., we have a HUD department—which stands for Housing and Urban Development. The word was sent out by HUD some time ago that this government department was to provide housing for low-income and middle-income people and that it was all to be financed by tax dollars.

Of course, the low-income and middle-income people just didn't get the concept. They actually believed this government-sponsored myth, and lost a golden opportunity. The real purpose of HUD was to help big developers, insurance conglomerates, and bankers get a little richer by allowing them to tear down the homes of low-income and middle-income people and replace them with up-to-date condos.

This improvement of free-enterprise America's living standards, of course, didn't come cheap, even to the rich. It meant pay-offs of enormous amounts to every “born-again” judge, legislator, and government flunky, not to mention hundreds of the president's pals.

In our free-enterprise system, you don't get nothing for nothing. But if only the poor had jumped first, then they could have bought the politicians and the poor could have been sleeping in homes instead of under the trees and in doorways. After all, that's democracy. The politicians aren't prejudiced, they'll sell out to the highest bidder.

### **It's all evenhanded**

There's one more great attribute we in the U.S. of A. have that our poor broth-

ers and sisters behind the Iron Curtain don't. We have a Supreme Court which is bound to protect our rights under the law (except, of course, when they conflict with the rights of the rich).

Workers, for instance, have the right to organize a union and the right to strike—but not if they intend to win. Then the courts step in to protect the rights of the bosses and the scabs. It's all evenhanded.

And in our country, Blacks have exactly the same rights as the wealthy whites—except when they start demanding equal opportunity and such things as that. That's when El Supremo Court steps in and re-defines the words "civil rights," which turns out to be neither civil nor right.

And what about women's rights? In this country, women have complete and equal rights—except for some little things like reproductive rights, equal pay, and equal opportunity. But our great leaders declare that if they gave us those rights, it might tear apart the "whole fabric of our free-enterprise system." Women have the same right to choose between politicians owned by the rich as anyone else.

So, dear Iron Curtain comrades, eat your heart out because you don't have our freedom. Especially the "greatest" right of all—the right to burn the flag. In fact, any American can now burn a whole barn full of flags, and the only thing that would change is we would have one less barn and a whole lot less flags.

Now, that's the magic of the free enterprise system at its best. —August 1989

## Christian Terrorists Lose in Seattle Court

On Aug. 11, a U.S. District Court in Seattle awarded the Feminist Women's Health Center of Yakima, Wash., \$268,500 plus \$23,000 for lost salaries to three employees.

The Yakima center is the parent to the Feminist Women's Health Center in Everett, Wash. The jury convicted three defendants of conspiring to drive the Everett abortion clinic out of business.

One of the defendants, Curtis Deseda, had previously been sentenced to 20 years in jail in 1984 for firebombing the clinic three times. He has 15 more years to serve. His original defense for having bombed the clinic was that "God wanted him to do it."

The other two convicted Christian terrorists are Republican Party activists Dotti Roberts and Sharon Codispodi of Lake Stevens, Wash. They were convicted of conspiring with Deseda to violate the federal law called RICO (Racketeer-Influenced Corrupt Organizations Act of 1970).

Roberts and Codispodi were not given jail terms but were ordered to pay another \$11,000 in damages to the clinic. They will also have to pay for court costs, which



could amount to \$100,000 in attorney fees, alone, for four years' work.

### **Criminal tactics**

RICO was originally designed to be used to fight "organized" crime. Last year, for the first time, the RICO statute was used against "anti-criminals," the Operation Rescue (OR) bunch. At clinic after clinic across the country, they have defied the laws that allow women access to legal abortions by sitting down at clinic doors, or actually entering the clinics, to harass patients and destroy property.

At the Arcadia Women's Center in Seattle, women have had to climb ladders to a second-story window to get to the clinic when barred by Operation Oppress-you thugs. And when these tactics didn't work, God's little devils firebombed the clinics.

### **Pulling a 'Jimmy Carter'**

Although the courts occasionally crack down on them when they go embarrassingly too far, OR fanatics have continued their illegal attacks because the power structure has blatantly encouraged them. Even the gutless wonders, the politicians who claim to support the legal right to abortion, have been very quiet in the face of these attacks.

In fact, at a recent governors' conference, the abortion issue was declared to be the number one issue. The conference turned into a big "pity party" for the "boys." These weasels did little more than grapple with how to speak out of both sides of their mouth at once. How could they appeal to both the Christian terrorists and the vast majority who support women's right to choose?

Some of them tried to pull the "old Jimmy Carter act" by saying that while on the one hand, they personally abhor abortion—and if they got pregnant they certainly would not get an abortion—on the other hand, they would uphold the laws of the land. Since the majority are men, it is not likely they will ever have to make such a choice.

Other politicians said they weren't opposed to adult women having an abortion but wanted to impose parental consent upon teenagers. They thought this might smooth the feathers of the OR vultures a little.

But the recent Supreme Court decision on the Webster case threw the ball into the governors' laps by making abortion a "states rights" issue. Now, unlike Jimmy Carter, they are forced to make the laws they will uphold.

### **First-rate liars**

Many of these politicians complained that the majority of women didn't listen to their advice or take their statements for good coin. The reason is not hard to explain: Most women know that the political crooks who run the country are first-rate liars and cannot be trusted to carry out any promise they make anyway.

Fortunately, women and men who support choice are not depending on politicians or judges. They are organizing all over the country to stop Operation Rescue at clinics. They are defending choice with their bodies.

And the National Organization for Women has called for another massive march in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 12. On April 9, there were 600,000 pro-choice supporters and this time they expect over 1 million.

Also, California State NOW has called for two Western states marches—on Oct. 15 in San Francisco and Oct. 22 in Los Angeles. Those marches will be used to organize people for the Washington, D.C. march in November.

Call your local NOW office; you are needed to defend your right to choose, now!  
—September 1989

## **The War on Drugs and the War for Drugs**

There are two “wars” concerning drugs going on today in the United States. One is the phony drug war of President Bush and his Democratic and Republican cronies in Congress. This war will prove just about as destructive as the U.S. war against Vietnam and as ineffective as Lyndon Johnson’s “war” on poverty. Both of those wars left millions of innocent victims in their wake.

Johnson’s war on poverty was designed to stop the rebellion of Blacks who were fighting for their civil rights so that U.S. capitalism could be free to carry out its war against the people of Vietnam. U.S. capitalists didn’t think they could win a war some 10,000 miles away and a war in its own cities against Black people at the same time.

Bush’s war on drugs is designed to whack down the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It is not designed to stop the profits from drugs—the only way to stop pushers from hooking the hopelessly impoverished.

In fact, the U.S. government was indicted in public for being part of the international drug-pushing cartel. This was revealed during the Iran-Contra hearings.

Puppet governments throughout Latin America are being supplied with billions of dollars in American armaments in the name of fighting drug war-lords. Most of this military equipment will end up being used against workers and peasants who are fighting for justice and economic freedom from giant agri-businesses. Most of these outfits are owned by U.S. corporations.

### **Aimed against the poor**

In the United States, the Senate has just agreed to a budget of \$9.4 billion dollars to fight the so-called war on drugs. Part of this \$9.4 billion will be gotten by cutting some of the social-service programs needed by the poor. The money will be used to increase the number of prisons, to pay for the use of the National Guard wherever called for, more federal prosecutors, more federal courts, and more U.S. marshals.

Damned little will be given to drug rehabilitation programs for the hundreds of thousands who are unable to get into them because they are too crowded. The

government is also talking about the need to be allowed assassination squads, if called on, to stop drugs. In other words, this anti-drug war is aimed at the poor and the oppressed—just as was the Vietnam War.

Not one expert, even within the government, has even the slightest hope of stopping this scourge by the methods presently adopted by Congress and the president.

However, there is one “drug war” we could win. That is the fight for AZT and other drugs needed to fight the scourge of AIDS. We could take that \$9.4 billion being proposed for more cops and prisons in a losing anti-drug war, put it into the fight against AIDS, and actually win.

“AZT Should Be Free” is the slogan being used to pressure the government to do something about the high cost of AZT, the only drug that has proven effective against this always-fatal disease.

### **Producing AZT for profit**

AZT, or azidothymidine, is manufactured by the Burroughs Wellcome company. The cost per patient for AZT ranges from \$3600 to \$6000 per year. When you consider that other medications and treatments are required along with AZT, the cost becomes an overwhelming burden on those who are infected with ARC or AIDS.

When threatened with a boycott, the Burroughs Wellcome profiteers reduced the cost of its drug by 20 percent—a piddling reduction in the over-priced drug. Burroughs claims that since it was clever enough to develop AZT, it should be allowed to pig-out on profits.

Mr. T.E. Haigler Jr., president of Burroughs Wellcome Co., claimed in a letter to *The New York Times* on Sept. 16 that AZT was essentially discovered and developed at Burroughs without any substantive role being played by the government.

Several doctors answered T.E. Haigler on Sept. 28 in *The New York Times*. They reported: The first synthesis of AZT was done by Dr. Jerome Horowitz at the Michigan Cancer Foundation in 1964—using government grants. The first demonstration of an effect against animal retroviruses was done by Wolfram Ostertag at the Max Planck Institute in 1974—using government funds.

The National Cancer Institute, working with staff at Duke University, developed all of the major tests with AZT on human patients. In fact, Burroughs refused to work with either live AIDS virus or with AIDS patients!

The doctors continued: “We believe that the development of this drug in a record two years, start to finish, would have been impossible without substantive commitment of government scientists and government technology.”

As of March 1989, over 18,152 people in the state of California had ARC or AIDS. In the United States, as of July 31, 1989, over 99,839 people were diagnosed as having ARC or AIDS.

Up until the present time, there have been nearly 1800 cases of children under 12 with AIDS who were reported to the Federal Center for Disease Control.

About 800 of those children have died. The others are waiting for AZT, but Burroughs will not produce it in children's doses even though it has been proven effective for them.

Those who are infected with AIDS or ARC do not have the time or the money to wait until profit-bloated drug company owners transform themselves into human beings. Bush should take those National Guardsmen he is using to fight the drug war and march them to the Burroughs Welcome Company to take the plant over. Then it should be nationalized in the interest of those who need help the most, those who are least able to wait and have the most to lose—their lives.

—October 1989

## Not Quite the Big One?

On Tuesday, Oct. 17, I was sitting at my home in San Francisco's Noe Valley when the 7.1 quake hit. The house I rent was built in 1907, after the Big One of 1906. My older daughter Bonnie was with me. The quake was rugged; it jerked my chair so badly I could hardly get up to run and stand in the doorway. I kept yelling to my daughter to get under my doorway, and she kept telling me she was already under a doorway.

As soon as the house stopped shaking, I rushed over to my next door neighbor. She is even older than me and has been in bad health for some years. I had heard screams coming from her house. The door opened, and she was sitting at her kitchen table crying. Her two grandchildren were with her; it was the young girl who was terrified.

I moved a chair to a doorway and helped the grandmother into it. I did all I could to calm the young girl. The boy seemed to take it pretty well. Actually, I expected more after-shocks, but they didn't come till later that night.

My husband had left shortly before the quake to pick up our two grandsons at school. He had not returned yet, and I was silently sick at heart. Also my youngest daughter had just started a new job that day in downtown San Francisco. The only thing I knew about her job was that it was in a law office on the 23rd floor. Actually, all I could envision was the 23rd floor.

### Felt better together

The neighbors began to walk out to the sidewalk and wave at each other. All of us remarked that it had been a heavy quake, the worst we had ever felt. But we still had no idea how much damage it had caused.

Our phones were down, we couldn't call out. But somehow, my oldest grandson called in to say he was alright and to ask how his mother and the rest of us were. About that time, along came my husband with our two younger grand-

sons—who had not even felt the quake. They had been in the car.

The young man next door had a portable TV; we had the batteries. So we set it up on the steps to listen to the news. Portable radios also began to come out. It was a warm night, and no one wanted to go inside the house. Somehow we all felt better together.

I kept going in to check the beans and rice that had been on the stove when the quake hit. My neighbor kept telling me to turn off the gas, but I figured that's all we had and I wasn't going to give it up.

Then we began to get the news. It was reported that the Bay Bridge had fallen down. I didn't believe it because I could see the bridge from my house. I said the news media simply can't be trusted. But this time they could be.

Finally, hunger began to set in. So I moved a table, wine, soda, and salad outside and we all joined in. Anyone who needed food got it. As usual, I cook for the masses—quake or no quake.

Then my daughter finally got home from downtown. She had had to walk down from the 23rd floor, but she had ridden her bike to work and was able to get home an hour after the quake.

### **Risked their lives**

All over San Francisco, people helped one another with whatever they had. Story after story proved that workers, regardless of their race, risked their lives to save people from the carnage. It proved once again that human nature is not, as the capitalists would have us believe, one of greed and self-interest.

It is the capitalists who are full of greed, who live for profits instead of human need. In fact, most of the suffering from the quake is because of greed—the refusal to spend money to keep our bridges and infrastructure in shape.

We have been taxed beyond reason for Star Wars, stealth bombers, and nuclear madness. Very little of our taxes go for mass transit and other pressing social needs. It is not the working class, but capitalism that fouls things up.

Already, the politicians, business leaders, and rulers are preparing to force working people and the poor to pay for their lawless refusal to prepare for the widely predicted earthquake. We can count on them to let the planet and its inhabitants go to hell—so long as the profits keep rolling in. —November 1989

## **‘Should Women Form a Third Political Party?’**

*This speech was given by Sylvia Weinstein on Oct. 20, 1989, at a San Francisco Socialist Action forum titled, “Should women form a third political party?”*

Since the earthquake of Tuesday, Oct. 17, we have witnessed a side of human nature repressed by the “normal” world created by capitalism. All of a sudden, people all over the San Francisco Bay Area were helping others in need, many times risking their own lives to do so.

It is events such as this earthquake that gives the lie to the myth that people are, by nature, selfish and unfeeling. Selfishness and greed are inherent, not in human nature, but in the system of capitalism. The worst in human nature is created and fostered by a social environment that pits human beings against each other.

But although human beings are conditioned by their environment, they also have the power to shape and change their environment—and thus change human nature.

All of us sitting in this room tonight could probably sit down and work up a pretty good world together. Most of us would agree on the need to clean up our environment, end global pollution, and insure world peace.

We certainly could also agree that we need to provide the basic necessities for all people—food, clothing, clean water, decent shelter, universal healthcare, and quality education from pre-kindergarten to college—as a basic right in a society in which human needs come before profits. Then we could also agree on the need to end national boundaries—that, in fact, we are all one people, regardless of race or national origin.

I know too that we would readily agree to end all manifestations of racism, sexism, and ageism. And we would want a society that is democratic and open—with the full participation of all its citizens. That's not a bad start for a world I believe all of us here would like to see.

I think I can go further yet. I believe that we here would also agree that the majority of the population of the United States know that they are not getting a fair shake. Their standard of living has gone down, they are caught in the killer web of steadily rising prices, while their paychecks are taking a beating. Whereas it used to take one to support a family, it now takes two—and it's increasingly harder to keep up.

I think we can also agree that the majority of people have no faith in the present political process. In fact they are convinced that the politicians are crooks and sell out to the highest bidder.

### **Outrage at NOW Convention**

Most people, however, can see no way out. That's why we're having this discussion. What can we do about the declining quality of life? How can we find our way to build the kind of world I'm talking about—a better world, where people come first?

Those were my thoughts at the National NOW convention in Cincinnati earlier this year. A workshop led by Molly Yard and Eleanor Smeal expressed a sense of outrage—directed against the Democratic Party especially.

That outrage crossed all lines—new and old members, independents, socialists, and even many long-time supporters of the Democratic Party. They had been betrayed on the ERA and they were being betrayed on the issue of abortion. Liberal Democrats, in national and state legislatures, and locally in city after city, have been working hand in hand with the Republicans to destroy women's right

to choose.

It's this sense of outrage that impelled over 600,000 women and supporters of women's rights to march in Washington, D.C. last April 9. Just plain old outrage. They needed to yell it in the streets.

Both Molly Yard and Eleanor Smeal were shocked at the intensity of feeling expressed at the workshop. They ended the conference with a promise to investigate the possibility of the formation of a "third political party."

It was a shot heard around the world. The media immediately came out with quote after quote from so-called friends of women's rights about how impossible this was. They worked overtime to urge NOW that its only hope lay within the Democratic Party.

### **What about a 'Women's Party?'**

Some women at the workshop expressed support for the idea of a "women's party." This idea, which has surfaced whenever the anti-woman bias of both Democrats and Republicans becomes particularly glaring, is a symptom of the growing distrust of these capitalist parties.

But a political party must take positions on all political questions—not just women's issues. A political party must take a stand on all political questions such as unemployment or military spending versus spending for social needs (housing, education, medical care, old age pensions, etc.).

All of these issues can be decided either in favor of the rich or the poor, but not both. Not all women would see the necessity to place human needs before profits. (Would a Mrs. Rockefeller or a Mrs. Donald Trump put human needs ahead of their profits?)

A political party representing the genuine interests of the great majority of women must also be representative of the great majority of the people, all of whom, in one way or another are victims of capitalist society.

Socialists have been urging the formation of a third party in this country for many years. But the only real alternative to the capitalist parties would be one based on working people and their allies—women, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities. A genuine alternative would not be just a feminist party, it would also be a Black party, a labor party.

### **Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow**

A third capitalist party would do none of us any good. It would do no more good than Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Jackson and his Rainbow both base their program on the capitalist status quo. That's why Jackson supported Dukakis for president in 1988.

Capitalists had confidence that Jackson represented no real threat to their system. On the contrary, they saw Jackson's demagoguery as a way to allow the increasing discontent to dissipate harmlessly.

Thus, Jesse Jackson was given broad coverage by the capitalist news media as one of seven major candidates for the Democratic Party presidential nomination. It merely resulted in the dragooning of Blacks, workers, and other oppressed sectors (who would have abstained) into voting for Democrats.

We need a party that is completely independent of the financial and institutional support of the capitalist class. In sharp contrast, it must be dependent for its financing and mass support on the institutions created by working people, feminist organizations, and those of the oppressed nationalities.

A genuine political alternative would be at one and the same time a labor party, a women's party, and a Black party. We need a party that is based on a program developed by workers and that is in the interests of all those who are relegated by capitalism to the bottom of the heap.

### **Workers and capitalists**

When I say the working class, I mean all of those who must work for a living. Whether they work with their hands or their brains makes no difference. And by capitalist class, I mean all those who get the lion's share of this wealth by the right of ownership of the means of production.

Workers are the people who produce all of society's wealth—everything, from food, clothing and shelter to the means of transportation and communication. Just look at who's on top of the I-880 freeway, which collapsed during the earthquake, risking their lives to take it apart! But the ones who wind up with the wealth are those who own the productive forces of our country.

Capitalism is a system that depends on profits. If a product doesn't make a profit, the capitalists won't produce it. Whether it is AZT or some miracle cure for cancer, if they can't make a profit it will not be made. And if the capitalist can earn a bigger profit by paying women, Blacks, and other minorities less in wages—that's even better.

If they can earn bigger profits by risking the destruction of the environment, rather than take measures to safeguard the ecology of the planet, then so be it. Just a look at the disastrous oil spill in Alaska tells the whole story. And don't expect the political parties and the government (which is owned lock, stock, and barrel by these giant corporations) to do anything to prevent a repetition of such disasters—not if it will cut into profits.

### **Why a working-class party?**

Why do socialists say that a political party based on working people and their natural allies—women, Blacks, and other oppressed sectors of the population—would be the right kind of party? It's not some mystical belief.

First of all, the working class in the United States constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population and objectively has material interests that tend to unite workers into a cohesive force. Furthermore, in addition to its numbers, the working class has the power to exert an economic force even more potent than



its great numbers.

Second, the working class is organized into fighting institutions with great potential power—trade unions. We shouldn't underestimate this force. The setbacks that have been dealt working people and their unions over the last 20 years are a result of misleadership.

The labor bureaucracy has followed the fatal policy of relying on their "friends" in the Democratic Party to protect them from the corporate profiteers. This is the same mistake being made by leaders of the women's movement, the Black movement, and the other exploited and oppressed members of society.

Third, the working class does not need to exploit anyone to defend its interests. In fact, workers are the chief victims of the capitalists, who have been increasingly driving down living standards in their unremitting greed for higher profits.

This means that working people are a powerful potential force standing in the way of the attack by the capitalist class on the living standards of the great majority of the American people. More than that, the working class is the only force capable of leading the majority in a fightback to regain lost ground and make new gains.

Fourth, on the economic plane alone, the capitalists are stronger than the workers. The working class is stronger only if it mobilizes all its members and its natural allies for a political struggle in its class interests.

These class interests include abolishing sexism and racism. The reason is simple. Sexism and racism are used to compel women and oppressed nationalities to work cheaply. The lower wages systematically paid these oppressed layers of the population are also used to depress the wages of all other workers as well.

Fifth, the 20-year-long attack on the living standards of American workers is not going to end. It will intensify, as the ruling class seeks to solve its problems by lowering real wages, cutting social services, and increasingly shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor.

And this is only the beginning. All signs are pointing to a major collapse of capitalist equilibrium—and with it, a qualitative worsening of living standards.

The collapse of the savings-and-loan institutions and other manifestations of a developing global economic crisis are like the recent earthquakes in California. They are warnings of the Big One to come—the result of a basic flaw in the earth's crust. In the same way, these economic quakes are a result of a basic flaw in the capitalist system of production.

### **'An injury to all'**

In order to win the coming battles, working people in unions will be forced to fight to defend their living standards. They will quickly learn that they need the help and support of their natural allies—women, Blacks, and other oppressed people. They will again become the champions of the cause of all the victims of capitalism.

In the 1930s, when the American workers were on the move, they became the

social conscience of this nation. The new industrial union movement absorbed the lessons of previous defeats.

Big strikes had been defeated because of the prevailing labor practice of going along with the employers' exclusion of Blacks and women from higher paying jobs. The militant new democratic unions went further than merely opening their doors to those who were previously excluded. Their progressive social policies flowered and sprouted seeds in general social life.

But this progressive trend was not really new. Once taking the road of class struggle, workers have historically embraced the cause of all victims of capitalism. It was the working class which led the fight against child-labor and for the bill of rights, public schools, public health, unemployment insurance, social security pensions, and other public services.

Despite the present domination of the unions by the conservative bureaucracy, the working class has a proud history of honoring its early slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all!"

### **Call a national conference!**

A genuine alternative to the Democrats and Republicans can only come from the working class. Their fighting institutions—the unions—have millions of members in every city of this country. They have vast resources in money and rank-and-file activists as a base to build a powerful political party. And most important, they have enormous economic power to back up electoral victories.

The National Organization for Women could set into motion the process of building a working-class party. NOW could call a national conference of labor, Blacks, women, and all our allies. They could begin a united movement to fight on the issue of the defense of democratic rights for all, for the Equal Rights Amendment, for a massive construction program to combat homelessness.

The conference would be against racism, sexism, unemployment. It would be for affirmative action and against the destruction of our environment. And the right of women to control their own reproductive functions would be high on its agenda.

I am certain that such a national conference would get an immediate hearing. It would put enormous pressure on the labor bureaucracy and make it difficult for them to continue the fatal policy of relying on the so-called friends of labor. It would inspire rank-and-file unionists, Blacks, and other oppressed nationalities to press their organizations to participate in such a national conference.

No matter how far an initiative by NOW could go toward achieving a genuine third-party alternative to the status quo, it would give a realistic perspective to progressive forces for a practical solution down the road. That alone would justify such a conference.

Unfortunately, the NOW national leadership is already pulling back from its call for an investigation into a third party. In any event, we must remain in the

streets, independent and militant. We must do just as we have done this past year with the massive abortion rights marches.

Our independence, our militancy, has accomplished more than was achieved in all those years of sending telegrams, endorsing Democratic Party hacks, and giving wine-and-cheese parties for our enemies in hopes they might throw us a bone. That didn't work, it can't work, it won't work.

### **Defending the clinics**

In the meantime, we must also continue to fight Operation Rescue (OR) to a standstill. We have prevented them from stopping women at the clinic door. Many times, the operators of the clinics have resented our presence. I feel we have given them the message, however, that although they operate the clinics, all women have the right to use them. And it's our right to defend the clinics and women's choice.

We have been able to out-mobilize and outwit OR at every step. This must continue and increase. We cannot depend on the police to protect our clinics. The police generally bend over backwards to protect the OR lawbreakers. No, the only ones we can depend on is ourselves—in the hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands—to keep our clinics open.

It's most important to understand that supporting our hangmen—the Democratic Party hacks—just makes the rope tighter. We have to continue with massive street actions, nationally and locally, and we must step up our defense of the clinics. Only this will work. It's been proven throughout history that mass, independent action is imperative if we want to win.

History teaches us that if we live right, if we continue the struggle, if we continue to reach out to that great majority who are really with us, we will get our chance to make the great changes necessary to preserve human life—all life—on this planet.

One of the most important things you can do is join Socialist Action. We are a small organization, but we have kept alive the best traditions of the workers' movement. And small as we are, we have made an important contribution to the day-to-day struggle for social, economic, and political justice. —November 1989

## **'You Can't Fool All of the People'**

It was quite a surprise to see the former mayor of San Francisco, Dianne Feinstein, on the speakers' platform at the Nov. 12 rally for women's choice in Washington, D.C.

Feinstein is running for governor of California and there she was, big as life, masquerading as a genuine feminist. About the only thing I could agree with her on was when she said we should "outlaw politicians who do not support women's

rights.” So as far as I’m concerned she’s outlawed.

We in San Francisco have had quite a bit of experience with Feinstein as far as women’s needs go. In 1973, a grassroots effort was made to place an initiative on the local ballot calling for an increase in quality childcare for all children who need it, regardless of income. It included infant care, after-school care, and full-day childcare centers.

Our organization, Child and Parent Action, was made up of teachers and working parents, and was indeed a true grassroots organization. Our office was in the attic of a church and we had no salaried people. In fact, we ran bake sales to pay for the election expenses. We also got contributions from the teachers’ unions and others who saw the desperate need for an expansion of childcare facilities.

### **Our initiative won**

Our ballot initiative (Proposition M) won in the election with 97,000 votes, and no one was more happy or surprised than we who had worked so hard on it.

Our organization met and decided to begin the push for implementation of Proposition M. In order to do that, we agreed that we would not become a fake “non-profit” organization of the type that focuses on getting grants for “studies.” Nor would we ask for city funds for our organization.

A few days after the election we received a call from City Hall (Dianne Feinstein was a member of the Board of Supervisors) to come and meet with her and other supervisors on “implementing” Proposition M.

After congratulations were received from the supervisors, they began to tell us how they planned to carry out the wishes of the voters. They suggested that we, (Child and Parent Action) do a “study” on childcare needs. They said that there was about \$86,000 in a special fund and some of it could go towards that study. We answered that we had already done such a study before the election.

We knew at that very moment over 3000 children were without adequate supervision in our city, and those were just the children already on a waiting list. They countered that even if that were true, they still needed a really thorough study, and we could use the funds for a paid staff and an office and even have some left over to pay our election bills.

We replied that we already had an office for free and that none of our volunteers wanted any pay. Also, we had no left-over election bills to pay. We requested that, if they really had \$86,000 in special funds, they use it to hire childcare teachers and to otherwise expand childcare. That was what the voters voted for, not to give money to Child and Parent Action.

Things began to get rather chilly in the room. Smiles froze on the faces of the supervisors, including Dianne Feinstein’s.

### **‘Didn’t lift a hand’**

The Board of Supervisors did not lift a hand to give children the needed childcare; instead they decided to place our initiative back on the ballot and work for a “No” vote. Thanks to a heavy campaign by Dianne Feinstein and several other supervisors, our childcare initiative was rescinded.

Childcare was only the first of many feminist issues that Feinstein would work against. So you can see how surprised I was to see Dianne Feinstein trying to pass herself off as a feminist and urging women to work for her election in 1990.

What politicians hope to do is to sidetrack the growing militancy of the women’s movement by getting them out of the streets and into wine-and-cheese parties for fake feminists—male and female. The Democrats are especially adept at this trick.

As Mark Twain once said, “You can’t fool all of the people all of the time. That’s why we have a two-party system.” —November 1989

## **One for You and Two for Me— Christmas Mathematics**

This is the way my older brother used to divide penny candy between himself, my sister, and me.

Once in a while, we kids would come into a bit of luck. We would each get a nickel from an aunt or uncle. My brother and I would be designated to go to the nearest grocery store and purchase 15 cents worth of penny candy. You could get quite a bit of candy for that much money in the Depression years. Then Glen, my brother, would be the one to divide it up since he was older and could count.

We would all sit on the floor, and Glen would push the candy to us. One for me, one for Bea (my sister), and two for himself. Although Bea and I couldn’t count, we could use the primitive system of watching his mound of candy grow twice as big as ours. We would start to protest, and then he would say, “Okay, okay, I’ll do it better.” Then he would find some other way to increase his share. Sometimes we caught on to that trick too.

I was reminded of my big brother’s accounting system when I read about the recent proceedings in Congress—the capital gains tax cut and that pitiful increase of the minimum wage.

“Capital gains” is the profits made from selling stocks at a higher price than when they were purchased. Lowering the tax on this portion of profits further reduces the effective tax rate paid by the rich, which means that an increasing share of the tax burden will be borne by the poor.

A capital gains tax cut was first passed in 1978, giving large stock holders a massive break in their yearly tax bill. It was eliminated as part of the tax “reform” law

enacted in 1986 (which exchanged the reduced capital gains tax for other, bigger tax reductions for the rich).

Now both capitalist parties, with President Bush leading the way, are maneuvering to reinstate the capital gains tax break. Although a bill to lower the tax failed to pass the Senate this session, most observers predict it will be resurrected early in the next session of Congress.

### **Some crumbs to the poor**

President Bush was all set to veto the minimum wage bill. But he was advised by his Congressional henchmen that when it came time to lower the capital gains tax, it would look better to throw a few crumbs to the poor (the better to shovel more gold into the pockets of the rich).

It is estimated that some 4 million Americans work at the minimum wage. Congressional researchers say two-thirds of them are women and between 25 percent and 33 percent are heads of household.

The minimum-wage package, finally passed in both the House and the Senate, sets a two-tiered floor to wages. For most workers, it raises the minimum wage from \$3.35 to \$4.25 per hour. But workers 19 years old and younger get only \$3.61 per hour for the first six-months "training period" and may be kept at this lower rate for another 90 days if they shift to another employer.

Even supposing you received the generous \$4.25 per hour, you could work 40 hours per week for the princely sum of \$170 per week. Of course, this is before taxes and other deductions. If you stay well, do not get sick, or are not fired, and work for a full 52 weeks a year you will wind up with a whole \$8840.

### **A fall in living standards**

Now let's look at the real situation for both the rich and the poor in this "free" democracy. The facts provided in "The State of Working America," put out by the Economic Policy Institute in 1988, show how much living standards are being pushed down:

"Average hourly wages, adjusted for inflation, dropped by 7 percent between 1979 and 1987... In 1987 more than 5 million workers who wanted full-time jobs were forced to accept part-time work, and among all employees, roughly 17 percent have no health insurance and 40 percent are not covered by a pension plan.

"Between 1979 and 1987," the Institute points out, "all of the progress reducing poverty since the mid-1960s has been reversed. In 1987, the average family headed by someone between the ages of 25 and 34 had an income 9 percent lower than their counterpart in 1973."

The only thing that has kept some families from falling into total poverty is the fact that more wives are working. In 1987, only 35 percent of American families conformed to the Ozzie and Harriet picture of the father bringing in the income and the mother taking care of the home and children.

The figures show that practically all families, including middle-income fami-

lies, suffered a drop in living standards. The only improvement in living standards has been among the rich. In fact, the rich have gotten much richer!



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### **Unequal distribution of wealth**

The distribution of wealth in this country in 1987 is even more unequal than income. A household's level of wealth indicates its economic security—its ability to weather events such as medical emergencies and unemployment.

"Those with family incomes of \$5,000 or less had a median net worth valued at approximately 10 percent of their incomes," the Economic Policy Institute reports. "In 1983, the latest year for which this data is available, 24 percent of families had a median net worth of under \$3,000." (Most of the "wealth" owned by workers is in the form of equity in their homes or automobiles.)

The report continues: "Between 1962 and 1983, the wealthiest Americans increased the value of their share of the nation's wealth by 90 percent, for an average dollar gain of more than \$3.2 million per household. During the same period, the top 0.5 percent increased its share of total wealth by 12 percent while the majority of Americans (the bottom 90 percent) actually lost 11 percent of their share."

"In fact," the Economic Policy Institute points out, "the super-rich 0.5 percent increased their wealth at a pace that was nearly double that of the vast majority of Americans."

The wealthiest 10 percent of Americans own 86 percent of all financial assets (i.e., cash, bonds, stocks, and bank deposits), and 57 percent of the nation's total net worth.

Congress is getting ready to increase the wealth of the super-rich even more by reinstituting the capital gains tax cut.

Since 1981, tax laws have changed twice. Both changes resulted in lower taxes for the rich and higher taxes for working people. The richest one percent of the country's income distribution now pay a federal tax rate six percentage points lower than in 1977. The richest 10 percent pay a 1.7 percent lower tax rate. Meanwhile, the poorest 10 percent pay a 1.6 percent higher rate and taxes for the middle 80 percent have remained the same.



### **Hunger and homelessness**

Despite the “rich and famous” lifestyles thrust upon us on the television tube, there is a specter of hunger and homelessness haunting this nation. More than one in five children under the age of 18 live in poverty. Nearly half of all Black children under the age of six live in poor families. On any given night there are a minimum of 100,000 homeless children—sleeping in doorways, alleys, and parked cars.

In 1987, over one-third of the families headed by women were poor, an increase in poverty by 37.5 percent since 1973. There were 34.8 million Americans without health insurance and who were effectively without access to healthcare services for financial reasons. Nearly one-third (11.1 million) were children.

When I was a young kid, and my brother tried to fool me and my sister with “capitalist mathematics,” she and I would protest until we got an even break.

The working class is going broke hoping for an even break from the ruling rich of this country. They must begin to fight for their interests. —December 1989

**1990**

## **The Ghost of Christmas Present**

One of the things that makes Christmas and New Year’s Day bearable is the chance to see “Scrooge” with Alistair Sims once again. There must be a dozen remakes of Charles Dickens’s “A Christmas Carol.” But none, to my mind, can compare to the 1951 English version with Alistair Sims in the role of Scrooge.

“A Christmas Carol” was written by Dickens in 1843. That was a period when liberals, such as Dickens, thought that capitalism could be reformed just by changing the nature of the individual capitalist. Ebenezer Scrooge goes through his transformation after witnessing the ghosts of Christmas past, present, and future.

What could be more horrible than when the ghost of Christmas Present opens his cloak to reveal two starving children huddled and freezing at his feet. The ghost of Christmas Present points and says: “This child is named hunger,” and then points to the other and says: “This child is named rage.” The ghost pauses for emphasis and balefully intones: “And it is that child (pointing to rage) you should fear.”

In “A Christmas Carol” everything ends well. Scrooge goes through a transformation, becoming the best of bosses and a “father” to Tiny Tim, his employee Bob Cratchit’s crippled son.

### **The world’s Tiny Tims**

The story was written 146 years ago. Unfortunately, the fate of the world’s children has not really improved. Nor has capitalism reformed itself. Instead, the

imperialist powers have amassed the world's wealth at the expense of millions of the world's poor. Panama is just the latest example of how, unlike Scrooge, the capitalists will stop at nothing to protect their monopoly on power.

And for the world's Tiny Tims, it has gotten no better. The child named "rage" can be seen everywhere—from Northern Ireland to Palestine, from Panama to Romania, and right here in the USA.

In Palestine, the Israeli Army said it will begin impounding the property of parents whose children are throwing rocks at the hated Zionist army of occupation. The army is constrained from jailing children under 12 because of "appearances." So they punish their parents by destroying or confiscating their homes.

The army admits that stone-throwing by the thousands of children who wander Palestinian refugee camps and villages is spontaneous and beyond the control of parents. The rock throwers, mostly children under the age of 13, are full of rage because every day they live under the gun of Zionist occupiers who are jailing, beating, and killing their older brothers, sisters, and parents. The United States is the Scrooge who finances Zionist terror.

### **Tiny Tims at home**

And what about the Tiny Tims of our own country, the home-base of world imperialism? For Blacks there has been an increase in infant mortality simply because 31 million Americans have no health insurance. There is no prenatal care for millions of pregnant women. The reason is simple: You got no money? You get no medical care.

In the sunny state of California, the government has cut \$24 million dollars from the family-planning budget—closing nearly 40 health-care clinics which served poor women and their families. Twenty-five million women and children are living in poverty.

Education in this country is another example of the heartlessness of the ruling class. Over 23 million adults are functionally illiterate and will be condemned to join the ranks of the growing population of poverty. Two to seven million of our children are "latch-key" children with no supervision. Their parents are at work and unable to be at home to supervise their kids when they come home from school.

Year after year, plans to improve the educational standards for our children are unveiled. But nothing comes of them. Our schools continue to deteriorate.

Reducing class size to no more than 20 children per class, providing remedial programs for those who are already behind, and expanding quality childcare through our existing school system for all children regardless of income is a basic first step for beginning to improve our educational system. But that costs money, and the U.S. government makes Scrooge look like a bleeding-heart liberal compared to them.

To make bad matters worse, child-labor-law abuses have increased in this country. Violations of those laws have increased by 150 percent since 1983. There were more than 24,000 child-labor violations alone this year. Youngsters, just as in Charles Dickens's time, are still condemned to work in garment sweat-shops and in the fields picking fruit and vegetables.

It reminds me of a poem by Sarah N. Cleghorn. She wrote:

The golf links lie so near the mill,  
That almost every day,  
The laboring children can look out,  
And see the men at play.

That poem was published Jan. 1, 1915, and to the world's shame, has not yet been outlived.

Despite the jubilation by the world's Scrooges over the so-called "failure of communism," it is capitalism which fails our children. It is a failure to most of humanity and most especially to the young people of this world. Happy revolutionary New Year. —January 1990

## The Big Social Security 'Rip-Off'

Senator Moynihan (D-N.Y.) has proposed to cut Social Security taxes by \$55 billion. *The New York Times* editorial of Jan. 24 calls this scheme "Senator Moynihan's hand grenade."

What makes Moynihan's proposal a "hand grenade" is that it has revealed that the government has been ripping off working people for years and using their money to buy Latin American dictators, protect fraudulent bankers, cut taxes for the rich, and purchase billion-dollar Stealth Bombers.

In other words, the Social Security tax is not used for Social Security but to steadily shift the tax burden to working people. To put it simply: the Social Security tax, which taxes workers at an outrageously higher rate than the rich, has nothing whatever to do with Social Security for anyone but the biggest capitalists!

Moynihan, being the good Democrat that he is, blames the theft of Social Security funds on the Republicans. But the truth is that since the first year of Social Security, the government has been using it to rip off working people in order to cut taxes on the rich.

Every worker knows, when they look at their pay check, that they are paying a continual increase in Social Security tax. In fact, nearly three-quarters of all Americans are paying more in Social Security taxes than they do in income taxes.

### **‘Read my lips?’**

The burden of taxation has been shifted from income tax to Social Security tax. This is why Bush can say “Read my lips” as he promises no new income taxes and more cuts in the capital-gains tax and other taxes on the rich. At the same time, Social Security taxes are climbing ever higher!

Surplus revenues from Social Security allows the government to mask the real deficit. For instance, corporate taxes fell by 23 percent since the 1980s, but the share of federal revenue from Social Security taxes rose 23 percent in that same time.

As of Jan. 1, workers and their employers each pay 7.65 percent on payday for Social Security and Medicare. The tax is paid on the first \$51,300 of wages. That means that a big business executive, or any other high-roller on salary, pays no Social Security tax on all income above that amount.

Worse yet, all capitalists pay no Social Security tax whatsoever on dividends, profits, and interest. Of course, they will argue that they match the payments made by workers—but that is a legal fiction. The matching payments are really deferred wages.

### **Crocodile tears**

Most of us remember when those who are already retired were threatened with a cut in their Social Security income. The news media portrayed outraged senior citizens as a “greedy and powerful” political force. They cried crocodile tears, claiming that demands for more by our older folks are driving up the Social Security tax on the rest of us.

The fact is that Social Security taxes amount to \$65 billion more than what is paid out, this year alone. And by the turn of the century, the surplus ripped off to compensate for steady reductions in taxes paid by the rich will amount to \$200 billion.

Most workers believed that Social Security was being saved for them when they retire. Forget that, when it comes time for the rest of us to retire, the mouthpieces of the capitalist class will continue to deceitfully argue that “America can’t afford it.”

Unfortunately, so long as this country remains in the hands of the capitalists, their economic system will continue to force them to drive living standards lower and lower. Already this government is up to its neck in debt because it must subsidize the capitalists and the profit system as a whole. It is a government in crisis.

The increasing rip-off of the poor and elderly reveals just how deep the crisis for capitalism really is. When *The New York Times* editors call Senator Moynihan’s revelations on Social Security a “hand grenade,” they mean that any hint of the truth reaching the ears of the working class will create repercussions for the ruling rich. —February 1990

## Women's Work Is Never Done

Driving your car around the city at six or seven in the morning will open your eyes to women's burdens. Women are standing on the corners, waiting for the bus, with one or more children draped around them. Sometimes they are holding an infant child in their arms while holding the hand of a toddler.

All of them look tired and sleepy. They have probably been up since the crack of dawn to get ready for childcare and work.

Fixing breakfast, getting the clothes ready, waking sleepy children up, and seeing that they get dressed and fed, then trying to keep them awake while getting herself dressed and ready for work is the way a woman's day begins.

Sickness in the family is another burden. The boss doesn't want to know her problems with fevers, colds, and childcare. Baby sitters or childcare centers do not usually have facilities to separate a sick child from the others and will not allow the child with a fever or cold to come into the childcare group.

So the woman has to frantically search for a relative, friend, or acquaintance to drop her child off. Either that, or miss a day's work and a day's pay. Employers don't allow for chicken pox, measles, earaches, or the million other things that demand the mother stay at home to care for her children's health.

Women who make too many phone calls from their place of work to check upon their child's welfare are usually reprimanded and ordered to "place those calls on your lunch hour," not during working hours.

### Who are these women?

Who are these women who shoulder this massive burden? They're usually single women who must work to pay the bills or married women who must work to help pay for the high cost of living, rent, food, etc. They're teachers, waitresses, nurses, pink-collar office workers, saleswomen, and those women who hold those jobs with long hours and very little pay. They are not your bank executives, stock brokers, or rising stars of industry.

A recent *New York Times* article reported that the number of women who hold second jobs (moonlighting) has increased from 2.2 percent of 28.9 million women workers in 1970 to 5.9 percent of 52.8 million who were working in 1989. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found, in a sampling of the workforce last year, that the number of women with two or more jobs had quintupled, from 636,000 in 1970 to 3.1 million in May 1989.

The number of men who were moonlighting rose more slowly in the same 20 years, from 3.4 million out of the 48.7 million men who worked in 1970 to 4.1 million of the 64.3 million working men last year. (The percentage of moonlighting among men declined, from 7 percent in 1970 to 6.4 percent in 1989.)

For both men and women, the survey showed that moonlighting was concentrated among people 25 to 44 years old, the most able-bodied and the most like-

ly to have children to support. The survey also showed that most moonlighting men were married, while most moonlighting women were divorced, separated, widowed, or had never married.

The average woman working full time is paid 70 percent as much as the average man working full time. When increases in the cost of living are taken into account, hourly wages have fallen about 5 percent in 20 years.

### **Shorter workweek**

Eighty-two years ago, on March 8, 1908, socialist women of New York City marched by the thousands for the shorter workweek; for the end of child labor in the factories, mills, and mines; and for safer working conditions in those workplaces.

That march established March 8 as Women's Day on a national scale, and in 1910 the Socialist Congress made March 8 International Women's Day.

When we see the decline of living standards for women and children in this rich capitalist country, then we know that our sisters all over the world are suffering as we are. They too must carry the burden of children and labor on their backs as if they were beasts of burden.

Only a society which puts humankind before profits will ease the burden of all of us, male and female. Happy International Women's Day to all of our sisters, wherever you are! —March 1990

## **Our Children Come First!**

Recently, I spent several days with friends of mine, a young couple who are, like me, ardent supporters of a woman's right to choose. They have two children—a daughter, aged nine, and a son who is five years old.

The husband is unemployed. He is in construction, and it is expected of many construction workers to suffer unemployment during the winter season. The wife is a teacher, who loves her job but works because both she and her husband's income are necessary for family survival.

It was amazing to watch the whole family on a typical weekday morning, getting ready for work and school. Mother has to get to work before the children leave home. Each child leaves at a different time—one to elementary school and the other to childcare.

The nine-year-old daughter needs the help of her mother to dress in just the exact outfit. The son is involved in fixing his lego toys and seems unconcerned about getting dressed or eating. Father is running around the kitchen making lunches and snacks for both children.

Each child sits down at a breakfast of cereal, juice, and toast. Daughter is now ready for school, her books in her backpack.

One out, one more to go: Son is to be picked up for childcare in a few more

hectic minutes by another mother whose child attends the same center. Father gets him dressed, shoes tied, jacket on; hands him his snacks, and he is out the door. All of this whirlwind activity is carried out with love and tenderness by mother and father.

When my children were going to school I used to threaten to throw away all of their clothes if they didn't get dressed immediately. Of course, they didn't believe me because I made this threat too often (and they knew that I couldn't afford to do it, anyway). But in this family, there was no yelling, and every question or statement the children asked or made was treated with interest and answered by the parents.

### **Loving sacrifice**

I thought of the millions of working-class parents, from sea to shining sea, who are involved in this morning ritual. I thought also about the many single mothers who have to do it all by themselves.

If only those parents were raising cotton, peanuts, or tobacco instead of children, they would receive massive subsidies from the federal government to help them out. If the father had headed up a bankrupt savings and loan bank instead of being an unemployed construction worker, the government would pour money on his head.

If both mother and father were in the business of making a useless stealth bomber, they would be wallowing in luxury. The government loves bombs, poison gas, toxic waste, and other profitable military nonsense. But when it comes to children, its wallet is shut tight.

Working-class families are generally held together by love and concern for their children and each other. They cannot hire servants to oversee the care, feeding, and education of their children. Rearing children is a sacrifice—a loving sacrifice to be sure—for a good part of their lives.

### **Accident of birth**

Capitalist society takes almost no responsibility for our children. The perilous fate of each child is left to the accident of birth.

In primitive societies, on the other hand, children were considered the concern of everyone. Each and every adult was responsible for each and every child.

Primitive communism was a social system based on a hunting and gathering economy. The highest degree of cooperation was necessary for the survival of the human species. This resulted in the highest levels of equality and democracy ever achieved on this planet.

In the last 5000 years, class society, based on exploitation by slave-owners, feudal lords, and then capitalists, nevertheless permitted a tremendous expansion of humanity's productive forces. But class society has outlived its progressive function and now blocks further development. It is reversing the film of historical progress, threatening to send the human race back to barbarism and even to

destroy life on earth.

Under a democratic socialist society, organized by working people and based on the highest levels of scientific and technological achievement, human needs, especially the care of our children, would again come first. —April 1990

## Ryan White—One of 78,341

On April 8, Ryan White died from complications of AIDS. He was 18 years old. Ryan, a hemophiliac, had contracted the virus through a blood transfusion in 1984.

Ryan became known to the entire world when the school he was attending in Kokomo, Ind., banned him from the classrooms and forced him to take his classes from his home through a telephone hook-up.

Ryan's family won a court decision, and he was reinstated into the classroom, but the hate became too much. He was taunted at school by the other children, who wrote obscenities on his locker and shouted insults when he walked in the school hallways.

Vandals broke windows at his home and slashed the tires of the family car. Grocery store clerks would fling down change to Ryan's mother to avoid touching her hands when she shopped.

His family was finally forced to move to Cicero, a small farming town about 20 miles from Kokomo, and he began attending Hamilton High School. At Hamilton, he was accepted and treated as just another student. He died before graduating.

Ryan White's family must have been very wonderful parents. They fought for their child the way most parents would have, but their love also gave him his personality. In television interviews, Ryan came across as a gentle, intelligent, mature young person who never expressed anger or hate towards the adult idiots who drove him from his home, school, and classmates.

### AIDS holocaust

Ryan's funeral was attended by the rich and famous, and flags were flown at half mast at the Statehouse. Everyone learned to respect and love Ryan and grieve for his death.

But as of April 22 of this year, 78,341 good people have died from the same disease that took Ryan. And that is just in the United States. Worldwide, it is estimated that there are 600,000 people infected with AIDS and that 300,000 people have died. More Americans have died of AIDS than were killed in the Vietnam War.

It was early in the 1980s when the first gay men began falling ill with a disease that was to become known as AIDS. However, it was not until Rock Hudson died in 1985 that the nature of this real health crisis was admitted. By that time 12,000 Americans were dead and hundreds of thousands infected.

The government of the United States and its economy, the richest in the world,



have been shown to be incapable of doing anything to stop the spread of the disease or to effect a cure. The government's only concern is private profits—not the needs of humans.

During the Second World War, when this government wanted to develop an atomic bomb, they spared no expense. They initiated the Manhattan Project and built Los Alamos, a huge scientific complex. Hundreds of the best minds in the field of nuclear physics were recruited to develop the bomb, all at government expense (or the taxpayers' expense).

That's what should have been done to tackle the complicated problem of the HIV virus. Instead, for nine years AIDS has been a political football for both capitalist political parties. For eight years the president, "Rotten" Reagan, did not let the word AIDS come out of his slimy lips while thousands of men, women, and children fell victim to the disease.

History will record that the United States had its own Holocaust. It will be called the AIDS Holocaust. And the capitalist system let it happen.

A bill scheduled for Congress would provide a meager \$600 million for the years 1991 and 1992 for emergency help to hospitals for AIDS patients in all of the cities in the United States. Very likely that amount will be cut as it goes through the sticky fingers of our Congressmen. Meanwhile, the Pentagon spends more than \$1 billion every working day.

What is desperately needed in this country is a political party of the oppressed, poor, and working class that would go to war against the economic control of our resources and taxes by the wealthy and their hired guns, the politicians, who use them for their own greedy interest.

We need to "ACT-UP" for human needs instead of profits. That's the only way we will ever stop the AIDS Holocaust. —May 1990

## Let's Stand Up and Take a Bow

Randall Terry is feeling sorry for himself. He says that his bullies in Operation Rescue are "tired and battle-weary."

In a *New York Times* article of June 11, it was reported: "On two consecutive Mondays in May, the Supreme Court let stand rulings in New York and Atlanta that forbid demonstrators from Operation Rescue to block access to abortion clinics.

"There are still \$450,000 in unpaid fines growing out of the New York demonstrations and more than a dozen pending lawsuits around the country; not to mention that after federal marshals seized the group's payroll account the staff of Operation Rescue's headquarters shrunk to three people from 23."

The National Organization for Women deserves credit for giving Randall Terry this heartache. It was NOW that organized two massive marches in 1989 which revealed the depth of support for women's right to choose. Politicians who had

been silent about this attack on our fundamental, legal right to abortion found—all of a sudden—that they were really pro-choice.

Democratic Party candidates, such as Dianne Feinstein, had refused to speak at the “Days In The Park For Women’s Rights” (annual demonstrations organized by NOW when Feinstein was mayor of San Francisco). Then she didn’t want to be on the same platform as pro-abortion supporters. Now she has wrapped herself in the flag of “choice” in order to win the California race for governor.

During the Vietnam War, politicians who had stood firm in their support of the war, became “anti-warriors” when the opposition to that war had grown to mammoth proportions. Today, after NOW’s massive marches in favor of choice showed the politicians who the majority really is, the politicians are changing their stripes to pro-choice. That’s their only hope to win an election.

### **The ‘We’ Generation**

There’s been a flood of articles written by all manner of soothsayers, palm-readers, and pseudo-psychoanalysts decrying the fact that “this generation” is unconcerned about others and only concerned with their own selfish interests. It has become known as the “Yuppie” or “Me” Generation.

Well, the major reason that Operation Rescue is crying the blues is because the “Me” Generation became the “We” Generation in just over a year.

Young people from the campuses and workplaces joined with the older generation and poured out to defend their clinics, not only for themselves but for all women. Both women and men gave up their time to turn out for clinic defense at the crack of dawn (most times even before the crack of dawn) in rain, snow, or fog, and fought off the hoodlums of Operation Rescue.

All over this country, at clinic after clinic, from Boston to San Francisco, from Miami Beach to the borders of Canada, we tangled with Operation Rescue and won. This generation has shown that they have the same courage as their foremothers who marched for women’s right to vote, the eight-hour day, ending child labor, and human equality for all.

Thousands of those same young people joined the National Organization for Women because they feel that it is an organization which protects their interests. They are prepared to continue that fight until the right to choose is available to all who need it, regardless of costs.

There are over 250 laws in opposition to safe, legal abortion in the various states. Molly Yard, president of NOW, said that this issue cannot be a states-rights issue. It is a national issue. Just as this country could not exist half-slave and half-free, neither can women exist half-slave to their biological make-up and half-free.

NOW has the opportunity to once again step into the forefront of leading the fight for women’s lives and women’s equality. National NOW must mobilize this powerful new force, by organizing for a massive national march in 1991 to let every-

one know that women will not tolerate a state-by-state encroachment on our rights.

It would be an invitation to disaster to put an ounce of faith in Democrat or Republican politicians. Only massive, visible, militant demonstrations will serve notice to all politicians, judges, and religious fanatics that we will not turn back!

—June 1990

## **‘I Was a Racketeer for Capitalism’**

The homeless in the cities of this, the richest country in the world, are bringing home the message that capitalism cannot solve its most urgent problem.

Their message is that the social system is sick and getting sicker. Many of the homeless do work at fulltime jobs but are still unable to afford the skyrocketing rents.

Hostility toward the homeless is growing among many sectors of the population, including the liberals. City governments have for years destroyed low-cost housing and allowed it to be replaced by high-priced condos.

They have also allowed the banks, real estate brokers, and speculators absolutely free rein in amassing the largest profits possible from housing. However, the homeless, who are the victims, become the target of hostility.

Recently in San Francisco, the police were called in to herd the homeless from the Civic Center park and force them into shelters which by comparison make jails look like high-class hotels.

The homeless have actually broken no laws; it's not illegal to be poor. But City Fathers know how to create laws. Make everything illegal, and it is impossible not to become a law breaker.

Sleeping on public property such as parks and streets and in motor vehicles became outlawed during the Depression, when millions of working people were driven from their homes and apartments because they could not pay rents.

That was at a time when millions of workers were laid off and unable to find work. The United States today is not in an economic depression or even a major recession, yet thousands of homeless men, women, and children are unable to afford a roof over their heads. What will it look like when the economy goes into a real crisis?

Major corporations are announcing cutbacks everyday. McDonnell Douglas says it is to cut back on 17,000 jobs by the end of this year; Boeing, which is reaping massive profits, will lay off 5600 workers this year; and the Grumman Corp. has eliminated 6000 jobs. It is not hard to imagine the anguish of workers who are waiting for the ax to fall on their necks. How many more homeless will be created by those layoffs?

### **Lieutenant Colonel Phelps**

In Santa Cruz, California, on July 4, an anti-homeless rally of 1,500 demon-

strators took place. They wanted to express their anger at the homeless. Not at those who had caused the homelessness, but at the homeless themselves.

One of the leaders was a retired Army lieutenant colonel who lives in the town of Aptos, California. He ranted: "It's time some of these people realized that work of any kind is not demeaning, and they're not above it."

Lieutenant Colonel Phelps places most of the homeless in the "4-D category: people who, by their own choice, are dope pushers, drug addicts, drunkards, and dropouts."

He went on to tell of the hard life he and his family had during the Depression, of backbreaking labor in order to just survive. Anyone who lived through the Depression could recount the same stories.

But let's take a closer look at our retired lieutenant colonel. What has he done to deserve his pension and retirement in the city of Aptos? The last time I looked, it was the working people (not the rich) who were paying the bill for our retired lieutenant colonel.

### **'Racketeer for capitalism'**

Now Phelps may believe that he has somehow contributed to the well-being of the U.S.A. by fighting foreign enemies. But I would remind him of the famous words of U.S. Marine General Smedley Butler when describing his contribution to the U.S.A.

Butler declared: "I spent 33 years [in the Marines] ... most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism."

"I helped purify Nicaragua," Butler said, "for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City [Bank] boys to collect revenue in. I helped in the rape of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street."

"In China in 1927," Butler related, "I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested.... I had a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals, promotions.... I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate a racket in three city districts. The Marines operated on three continents."

These words by General Smedley Butler were written in 1931. Can you imagine him declaring war on the homeless, as has been done by retired Lieut. Col. Phelps? The problem with Phelps is he doesn't know who the real enemy is. That's why he and people like him are the danger—not the homeless. —August 1990

## **Reba Hansen:**

## 'Jenny Higgins' Extraordinaire

Reba Hansen died on July 3, 1990, after spending 56 years in the revolutionary Trotskyist movement. Reba joined the Communist League of America in 1934. The League was to become the Socialist Workers Party.

She joined the revolutionary movement in Salt Lake City, Utah, along with her husband, Joe Hansen. They were part of a group of young radicals who received their education in class consciousness from the depression of 1929. They threw themselves into the struggles of the working class, first by aiding the miners of Utah and, later, the farm workers of California.

Reba and Joe moved to San Francisco in 1935, where Joe helped edit a newspaper in the seamen's union while Reba did secretarial work to help support herself and Joe. She got involved in strike-support activity and worked to distribute our revolutionary socialist press.

In 1938, Reba and Joe went to Mexico to work with Leon Trotsky. Joe was Trotsky's secretary, chauffeur and organizer of household defense. Reba stayed in Mexico for almost one year.

Reba left Mexico and moved to the Bronx, N.Y., where she became involved in building that branch and another in the Yorkville area of Manhattan. She was assigned to participate in party classes and taught some of them, and helped organize the sale of the party press.

Reba also held down a full-time job as a top-notch office worker. Later she proudly wrote of her assignment to work with James P. Cannon in the national office. Cannon had the greatest respect for highly skilled comrades who put themselves at the service of the party.

I worked at the SWP national headquarters at 116 University Place beginning, I think, in 1954. At that time I was working in the city office and came to know Reba. Her job was not only as secretary to Cannon but to run the national office as efficiently as possible. One of her many tasks was to keep track of the party's office supplies. They were kept in the attic of the headquarters building and it was Reba's job to dole them out. We were not a wealthy party—we did not waste paper, pencils, or anything else.

She made sure that whatever we took was strictly accounted for, but always with the greatest courtesy and good humor. We all knew, however, that she could be hard as nails when it came to doing the job she was assigned to do. You didn't mess with Reba.

Reba and Joe were probably the best working team the SWP ever had. They were friends as well as lovers and both were hard working comrades.

Reba was not known by most comrades as a political leader of the party. But while she was highly regarded by all who knew her as a "Jenny Higgins," she was also viewed as one of the most devoted and politically mature members of the SWP.

("Jimmy Higgins" was a highly respectful term applied in the socialist movement to those worker activists who served their party in any way needed, whether

it was teaching a class, or turning the crank on a mimeograph machine, or distributing leaflets, or keeping the headquarters clean.)

During the 1960s, we began to recruit from the student movement. They came from devoted and enthusiastic participation in the civil-rights, free speech and antiwar movements into the revolutionary workers' movement. At first, a few of these new young people brought with them a little of the elitist terminology existing among some of the student activists.

One of these carry-overs was to call what we respectfully thought of as "Jimmy Higgins" work, "shit work." Reba and all the other Jenny and Jimmy Higgenses would cringe every time they heard that snobbish put-down of working people. The newcomers soon got the message.

In 1962, Reba and Joe were sent to Latin America by the party. Their job was to locate supporters of the Fourth International and, if possible, to bring them closer to the SWP and our world movement. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 had shaken up the whole continent, and workers and peasants were in motion. Our organizations in Third World countries were hampered, not only by the repressive governments of their countries, but by simply being poor.

Being the professional revolutionaries that they were, both Joe and Reba began to learn Spanish so they would be better able to do their job while in Latin America. They set about it by literally sealing themselves off from all outside forces for several months for at least two hours a night.

One night I had to deliver a message to Joe and could not reach him by phone. I went over to their apartment, knocked on the door and was met by Reba. She took my message, then excused herself, closed the door and returned to their Spanish lesson. She explained to me the next day that they had only a short time to learn to read, write, and speak Spanish so could not invite me in.

Needless to say, by the time they left on their trip they both were capable in their new language.

### **A frugal diet**

Reba and Joe knew how to enjoy life also. One of their favorite drinks, along with many other comrades (myself included), was a very cold, dry martini. A continuing debate in the party was whether to make them with vodka or gin. Tom and Karolyn Kerry were vodka fans. Reba and Joe preferred gin and I liked them either way. I must say that I never saw Reba ever over-indulge. Hers was strictly a two-martini night.

Joe took up growing bonsai plants with a vengeance. He built an enormous table, equipped it with the first growing light I had ever seen, and began to raise bonsais. Joe went to the library, read every book he could find on that art and talked to every expert at the botanical gardens he could buttonhole. He soon knew as much as anyone. Reba saved some space for her African violets which

brought a touch of natural beauty to that old loft they lived in.

(This was in the days before it became fashionable for rich people to spend a couple of million bucks to remodel a loft into a luxuriously quaint city residence.)

Both of them loved to cook. However, they were the most economical cooks known in the heartland of imperialism. In fact, when they went to Latin America we all felt they were probably the only pair who could live on roots and leaves if necessary.

Joe's frugal habits brought a rebellion at the Trotsky School in Mountain Spring Camp in Washington, New Jersey. Joe and Reba headed up the school at which comrades from around the country would be chosen to go for six months for an intensive study of our Marxist classics.

He and Reba had the cost of the school's diet down to a minimum through their applied science of how to save money at every meal. But we had some city slickers at the school who just couldn't get down that much heart, liver, and lungs along with black eyed peas, barley and greens. The city office in New York began to be besieged with requests to bring food relief or face an uprising by the students.

Joe and Reba finally gave in, even though they were serving probably the healthiest, cheapest meals ever eaten. (They had a record of every meal served along with its calorie, mineral and vitamin content—and exactly how much each meal cost. They were way ahead of their time but were dealing with a lot of salami and hot-dog-eaters who were homesick for their junk-food diets.

It would be impossible to cover all of Reba's contributions to the revolutionary movement even in a book, let alone an article such as this. But comrades should read the book, "James P. Cannon As We Knew Him," published by Pathfinder Press in 1976 after Cannon's death. Reba's article, the last one in the book, gives you some idea of her warmth and dedication.

Of course, we will miss her, but she will remain with us as an inspiring example of dedication to the cause of human freedom. —September 1990

## **And Still the Struggle Goes On**

Antonina (Toni) Porter died Aug. 27 after suffering from cancer for several years. She was 47 years old, the mother of three children, Jeffrey, 25; Benji, 21; and Kate, 18. Toni died in Portland, Ore., where she had been a school teacher.

Toni was the daughter of Larry and Gusti Trainor, revolutionary leaders of the Trotskyist movement in Boston. Toni and my two daughters were just a couple of years apart, and they became friends when both families attended Mountain Spring Camp, a wonderful place for socialists to come with their families and relax.

At the camp, all of the children could avoid the endless political activism of their parents. While the adults enjoyed socialist lectures and discussions, the kids would wander around together, swimming and just plain loafing.

### **In the Trainor home**

It was not easy being the child of well-known socialists during the 1940s and early 50s. The capitalist witch hunt was in full swing, and little children at school, reflecting this hysteria, made it felt on kids like Toni. Meanwhile, Larry was witch-hunted out of his job. Gusti became the support of the family.

And what a family it was! Their house was always open to anyone who wanted to learn the real history of the working class and of workers all over the world—their victories as well as their defeats. Larry was a great teacher.

So in the Trainor home, there was always good conversation, debate—and especially good food. Toni became accustomed to this. She was raised on revolution and excellent Italian food.

### **Civil Rights struggle**

Then thousands of young people were moved into activity by the heroic struggle of African Americans in the South. Toni was no exception. The truth of oppression and exploitation that she had learned from her parents became real on the streets of the towns of the South.

There, young Black children were laying their lives on the line for their human rights and dignity, while students on college campuses across the country were fighting for social justice as well as their own free-speech rights.

Toni and my own daughters also began to march and demonstrate for Black civil rights. They joined the socialist movement and contributed their idealism and dedication.

Today, other young women are beginning to fight against the injustice of this economic system. They are marching for “choice” against another witch hunt by the “moral” anti-choice mobs inspired and encouraged by the U.S. government.

Young people are also getting involved against the imperialist attack on Iraq and the possibility of another Vietnam, which could kill tens of thousands of people, both Iraqi and American, just to keep oil money flowing into the pockets of the rich.

Although Toni left the movement and moved to Oregon, where she lived with two of her children, she had made an indelible contribution to the betterment of human society. She gave a good part of her life to make a better world, for which we are all grateful. She will be missed by all who knew her and by her three children, Jeffrey, Benji and Kate.

### **But the struggle goes on...**

The Canadian government has sent troops to Saudi Arabia to fight for “self-determination” for His Highness, Kuwaiti Emir, Sheik Jaber as-Ahmed al Sabah. At the same moment, Canada has crushed a valiant struggle of its own citizens, the Mohawk Indians, who were trying to defend their own very real right to self-determination.



For 78 days the Mohawks, men, women, and children, were fighting to keep their land from real estate interests who wanted to build an exclusive golf course there.

Canadian troops blockaded Native Americans at home—just as they help their imperialist henchmen to starve innocent Iraqis into submission in the Middle East. And in Canada, as in the Middle East, imperialism is ready to spill the blood of innocents if starvation doesn't bring these oppressed nations to heel.

What hypocrisy! World imperialism fights for "self-determination" for its Sheik and Emir stooges over there, while they crush a fight for genuine self-determination by Native Americans here.

This is a lesson for all to learn. The rich of the world, wherever they are, consider that all the world's resources are theirs, and in their rapacious greed they stop at nothing.

Indeed, the struggle goes on. —October 1990

## **Cuba: Land of the Free, Home of the Brave**

On October 14th, 1990, a thirty year dream came true for me. I arrived in Havana, Cuba, to spend seven wonderful days. Thirty years ago, right after the Cuban revolution, I had been very active in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York and Brooklyn. I had even helped arrange a reception for the Cuban revolutionaries, including Fidel Castro, at the Hotel Theresa in Harlem when they came to appear before the United Nations.

Even though I had worked on various tours to Cuba for hundreds of people I never had the chance to go myself. Either I was too busy or too broke to make the trip. When my husband Nat and I finally could afford the time and the expense, the Government of the United States brought down their "iron curtain" and refused to allow any U.S. citizen to travel to Cuba.

This tour was to participate in a conference of women organized by the Federacion Mujeres Cubana (FMC, or in English, Federation of Cuban Women), a non-governmental organization of over 3 million Cuban women or 81 percent of the entire female population over the age of fourteen years. For seven days women from all over the Caribbean met and for seven days the women from the Federation answered all questions, showered us with information, personal visits to childcare centers, health care facilities, women's prisons and whatever else we expressed interest in seeing. They answered all questions frankly and honestly.

There were nine women from the United States—none of us had ever met before this meeting. Three of us were fluent in Spanish—unfortunately I wasn't. But we had no trouble getting translations wherever we went. And we went everywhere we had the energy to go, including what turned into a seven mile walk to the Malecon (an historic walkway along the oceans edge), up streets, down streets into all manner of neighborhoods, arriving back to our living quarters late

at night. None of us were accosted or hassled by anyone.

This conference was called in memory of the nuns and priests who had been murdered by the military in El Salvador, and that set the serious tone of the conference. It was a busy one. We were meeting with women from Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, as well as from Cuba. All of us were housed in a beautiful home that had been turned over to the Federation. It had obviously been the home of a very wealthy person during the days of the Batista regime. Now it is a dormitory for the use of the Cuban people.

One of the best aspects of being at this conference was living with and getting to know sisters from other countries. They are women who are fighting for justice and democracy in their countries. Every one of them knew that it is the United States government which stands between them and justice.

Cuba is a beautiful country. Houseplants that I have in my house grow into trees in Cuba. Below our dorm were banana trees with huge stalks of bananas on them. Flowering trees and shrubs were everywhere. Small parks are everywhere. The ocean has the deepest blue I have ever seen and the Cuban people of all ages looked healthy and well cared for. They drive fast and they walk fast. The buses are called wawas in Cuba and no one seemed to know why. But what is most beautiful about Cuba is that it is the sanctuary of the oppressed of the world.

I met a young, beautiful 16-year-old Panamanian woman. She had been shot in the back by U.S. troops when they invaded Panama. She will never walk again. She was in Cuba for medical reasons. Cuba also supplied her with her first wheel chair.

Cuba supplies medical care for wounded fighters from Africa and Central and Latin America. In Cuba they receive hospital care, dental care and whatever else necessary and they don't pay one cent. Cuba carries out the policy carved on the Statue of Liberty:

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tossed, to me:  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

Unfortunately, it is our government which is creating the huddled masses yearning to breathe free from its oppression. And it is to Cuba's teeming shore that the homeless, huddled masses escape. And it is Cuba and the Cuban people who dig deeper into their pockets to give refuge to all who need it; despite the cost to this poor country.

We met many young men and women from many countries who were taking refuge in Cuba. Many were young college students who were receiving a totally free education at Havana University.

### **How Cuba takes care of its children**

The children of Cuba are especially lucky. When the Cubans call them

“Cuba’s future,” they mean it and they provide for them the best childcare and education possible.

All children of women who work outside of the home have childcare services. One of our trips was to a childcare center in Havana. It was a center built eleven years ago and was considered a model center even in Cuba.

But just in case anyone tries to say that we were fooled by Cuban authorities, let me say that we actually drove past four centers before we visited the one picked for this tour. At all of the centers the children were well supervised as they played.

Children may enter the childcare centers when they reach the age of 45 days. They can stay until they reach the age of six and then enter the school system. Women who take off that first 45 days after giving birth are guaranteed their jobs back.

There are over 1,000 childcare centers in Cuba and 115 centers were opened in Havana between 1987 and 1989. A total of 110,000 children are cared for from 6 AM until 9 PM. One of the FMC women told me that at first the centers were only open till 6 PM but they soon realized that many women work until 9 PM so it was decided to keep the centers open until 9 PM for the convenience of the mothers. By the way, there is no cost for any childcare center, it is absolutely free.

At this center, the Frank Pais Center, there were 216 children with a total of 49 workers. Forty-seven women and two men. There were eleven teachers and eighteen aides plus support workers such as cooks and cleaners, etc. Head teachers at each center must have five years of university study including one year of child development and psychology.

Thirty-one infants up to the age of two were being cared for in a special area of the center. Women wearing nurses uniforms and caps were taking care of them. The nursery was well scrubbed with play pens and cribs and dressing tables, as well as toys and bright colored paintings on the wall. They had their own kitchen and refrigerator.

The other children are separated according to age and have their own rooms and play groups. Parents and friends had made beautiful papier mache childrens’ chairs and tables. Each school provides clothes, tooth brushes, soap and towels for each child.

Their schedule is like this. At 6 AM the children arrive and change from their home clothing to their school clothing. Each school washes and dries the clothing for the next days use. At 8:30 AM the children have gym where they do exercises and dance, at 8:45 they go to classes, according to their age level, where special effort is given to language development.

At 9:15 they have a snack, 9:45 they listen to music or stories, 10:00 AM is bath time for all children, 11:15 is lunch, 12 to 2:30 is nap—they all have their own cots and bedding. 3 PM is snack time, 3:30 is crafts and or singing or story reading time. From 4 till 7 PM is set aside for independent activities.

All children are toilet trained by the staff at the schools. Each child receives

their own special identification such as a hat, color, flower, etc. This identification is placed on all of their belongings such as tooth brush, drinking glass, clothes, so that children too young to read can identify their things.

Parent meetings are held every two months and parents are filled in on the developmental programs so that the children can learn at home as well as at the center. Children who are ill (with a temperature) are kept at home until they are well enough to return to the center.

There are grandparent clubs all over Cuba! Retired grandparents, and others, can "adopt" a center and help out. Parents come to the center every day to pick up their children and are also encouraged to come into the center any time they have free. A total of 56 percent of the children in Cuba receive free, quality childcare.

### **What about the children of women who choose to stay home?**

At the dorm where we were staying there was a beautiful park just next door. Every morning there were 16 or so young pre-school children who were being supervised by two adults. They were engaged in games and exercise. I was also told that they had crafts and art in community buildings in their neighborhoods. Cubans realize the importance of supervised play in the education of the young, so that even children of women not in the workplace receive daytime play periods.

Cuba has made special efforts for the disabled and the mentally handicapped. They have separate schools for them and make every effort to educate them to take a productive place in society.

Primary schools stay open from 7AM until 7PM. Classes begin at 8 AM until 4 PM. All children receive breakfast, snacks and lunch at school. Cuba has an established schedule for learning. For instance, all six year olds are expected to be doing some reading and writing after four months. I asked a teacher what if they didn't make it. The teacher explained that actually most children do learn in that time and those that didn't receive special help.

There are special summer and vacation camps for all Cuban children as well as children from all over the world. One of the women on the tour who lives in New York sends her two boys to an international summer-school in Cuba for the summer, and her daughter is in a boarding school outside of Havana. All free, including clothing. The mother works at a full time job in New York and doesn't want her children spending their time on the streets alone and unsupervised. Her daughter had been at the boarding school for three years. She is sixteen and will very likely continue on through college in Cuba.

### **Health care**

What about health care? All health care is absolutely free. There is some charge for prescription drugs, but at very low cost. But most medicine is simply free.

They have a very good medical system in Cuba. Doctors must live in the community their patients live in. The doctor will have a house on the top floor and open a clinic on the bottom floor. For the first year after the birth of a baby, the

doctor will make monthly house calls to give immunization shots including polio vaccine. He or she is also expected to make sure that the living conditions of the infants are clean and that the babies are well cared for.

That is why Cuba's infant mortality rate is one of the lowest in the world including even the industrialized countries. It is .07 percent and going down; in the United States the infant mortality rate is .17 percent—two and a half times higher, and going up.

In addition to its extraordinary medical care for its people, Cuba also exports many of its doctors to underdeveloped countries, including Africa and Asia.

Meanwhile, in the richest country in the world: "Every 67 seconds an American teenager has a baby. Every eight seconds of the school day an American child drops out of school. Every 53 minutes an American child dies of poverty."!!! (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/25/90.)

### What about 'choice'?

Abortion has been legal in Cuba since the revolution—over 30 years ago. Immediately after the revolution the Cuban government legalized abortion. However, they became concerned because a large number of their medical operations were abortions.

For a short time Cuba tried to slow down on abortions, claiming that other medical needs outweighed their ability to perform abortions. What happened is that illegal and self-induced abortions created more medical problems than ever. Women were staying hospitalized longer due to botched abortions.

Cuba very soon re-legalized abortions and it has been legal and free ever since. Women over the age of sixteen can get immediate abortion, free and on demand. Women under the age of sixteen must inform their legal guardians or parents. However, neither has the power to prevent abortions.

Abortions must be performed in hospitals rather than clinics and can be done during up to ten weeks of pregnancy. The method of abortion is by vacuum aspirator. I asked what happened to women if they were already over the ten week limit and was told that since there is no stigma attached to abortion that almost no one waited beyond the ten week period.

Sex education begins in the third grade with both male and female students. The IUD and birth control pills are the most commonly used contraceptives. Cuba does not produce either the diaphragm nor the condom; those birth control devices must be imported, and are too expensive. There is no anti-choice movement in Cuba.

Despite the wide-spread sexual education campaign there is still teenage pregnancy. In fact, when talking to some of the FMC women I was reminded of the complaints we hear in the United States about our exorbitant high teenage pregnancy rate. I mentioned a little joke that we tell about teenagers:

They have three beliefs: 1. They will never get old; 2. They will never die; and

3. They cannot get pregnant if they do it standing up! The Cuban women finished it off by adding “or they can’t get pregnant the first time they have sex.” I also mentioned that we even have people in the United States who blame the high teenage pregnancy rate on sexual education itself. She said that she had also heard the same complaint from older Cubans herself. But she said that this is rare.

I had the opportunity to meet a “block” group of the FMC women. This was one of my most treasured meetings. The block committees are volunteer women who provide services within their community. We met on a beautiful night on the front porch with about 20 women of all ages. One was 74 years old and her husband had been hanged in a public square by Batista’s thugs for activity against his dictatorship.

They explained that their job was to help in the community in whatever way needed. For instance, if an older person was sick they took them to the doctor, helped with shopping and medical needs. If there was a family having trouble, personal or financial, they intervened to help them out. They were responsible for any children who needed their help and generally interceded on behalf of their neighbors when dealing with a government agency.

I asked two questions of this group of mixed generation women: How did they take it when the government granted women the right to divorce their husbands, live together without marriage, and legalize abortions? The oldest woman answered:

She said that in the old days before the revolution only the middle class and rich had official weddings—the poor always lived together without the sanction of government or priest. Also, before the revolution women had to stay married to a man no matter how she was treated. Usually she was afraid to leave because she had no one to help support her children or herself. Now women were economically independent and were not forced to live with a man who was cruel to her or her children because women could work and make their own way.

I asked them what they thought of abortion. For years and years, they told me, women died of botched abortions. Or if lucky enough, they lived through them, but had to endure years of degradation by those who knew of the attempted abortion. Now it was open and honest and women had the right to decide how many children they would have.

Then I asked if their community involvement was sometimes looked upon as simply butting into private affairs of their neighbors. I was told that actually people came to the local FMC people with their problems because they knew they would be helped by them. They do so much community service that they are looked upon as the people to go to if you have any kind of trouble.

The answers to all our questions had the ring of truth. I couldn’t help thinking of the times when I personally would have loved to have had a neighbor like them, someone I could call on if I needed real help. Of course, most of us have someone we can rely on, but in Cuba you have a whole organization whose job is to be good friends and neighbors and who enjoy doing it.

Bush talks through twisted lips about “a thousand points of light.” Well those thousand points of light are burning bright in Cuba—on every block and in every neighborhood—they are the women of the FMC.

### **Housing**

What about housing? Walk through any city in the United States and you will come upon people sleeping on door steps, in parks and alleys—wherever they can find the slightest bit of shelter. I didn’t see or hear of one such case in Cuba. I mentioned earlier that I had taken what must have been a seven mile walk thru Havana. I had blisters on the bottoms of my feet the size of half dollars. Not once did I see any sign of a homeless person on the street.

I did not even see anyone who gave the appearance of not having a home. What I did see was massive construction going up in all parts of Havana—most of it housing. And you pass by homes which were obviously once the homes of the wealthy who had left Cuba. These homes have been portioned for use as regular housing. For those who know San Francisco it would be like walking through Pacific Heights and seeing clothes hanging from lines and balconies; evidence that these homes are now being occupied by working class families rather than by the rich and beautiful and their servants.

The FMC woman said that there is, however, still a shortage of housing in Cuba. That this was why families did have to share larger homes. She also said that some of the housing were dorm affairs but she said that no one in Cuba was without shelter. The rent in Cuba, by law, is held to just 10 percent of wages. It can go no higher.

Cuba has also developed “micro-brigades.” These are real self-help housing associations. Workers can take off from work, being replaced by another worker, while they build their own apartments. The government will give the worker all building supplies and give them the help of skilled construction workers to help them build their own home.

The government builds high-rise shells and workers finish them off. In that way thousands of workers in Cuba have not only built their own homes but have also helped their fellow workers build theirs. Unfortunately, with the energy crisis and with the new 1991 Soviet trade agreement, which is a sharp cut-back from the 1990 trade agreement, Cuba will probably have to slow down its housing development.

### **Equal pay for equal work**

The micro-brigades have also had the effect of placing more women into jobs they would not have done a few years ago. Women are working at trades, such as construction, that they had not been in before. Two things that are illegal in Cuba are racism and sexism. Women and minorities receive the same wage as men when doing the same work. It is against the law to pay women and minorities less. While the poison of racism and sexism might still live on in the hearts and minds of a very few Cubans they had better not practice it. It is against the law!

Women of the United States have been waiting and fighting for two hundred years for the Equal Rights Amendment. In Cuba the women have full and equal rights. But it took a revolution to get them, and that's what it will take here.

However, women still have a way to go, not because of the government but because of the history of oppression of women before the revolution. Women are moving into leadership roles; there are more women in the universities than ever before, women are working in increasingly diverse occupations formerly reserved for male workers; they are becoming doctors, plumbers, movie directors—getting into all phases of Cuban life. Today in Cuba, women and Blacks are the majority in the institutions of higher learning. In the United States there are more black males in prison than in college.

Most importantly, my impression is that the Cuban people are dedicated to a society based on the principles of socialism. They are not inclined toward the Soviet bureaucrats' mad dash toward capitalism. They can see what capitalism has done to the people of the undeveloped world and they want no part of it.

Cuba won't be a push over like Grenada. The Cuban people are ready to defend their ideas and homeland with their lives if necessary. As one 74 year old Cuban woman said to me: "I would sink this whole island and me with it before I would let the United States take it."

Listen up, George Bush. Don't mess with that little Caribbean island, home of the free and the brave! —November 1990

## **Eyewitness Report: U.S. Atrocities in Panama**

Here is the story of one Panamanian woman during the U.S. invasion of her country on Dec. 20, 1989.

She is the mother of 16 children and several grandchildren who lived in her home at that time. I met her in Havana, Cuba, during the conference of the Federation of Cuban Women which began on Oct. 16 of this year. For six days, we were roommates in the same dorm.

They had heard rumors for days that the United States would invade their country. But she really didn't believe it. They had been friends with many North Americans and just did not believe that they would make war on the people of Panama.

She was awakened out of a sound sleep on Dec. 20 by the sound of helicopters over her home. Her 10-year-old grandson ran into her room crying. They looked out the window and could see lights and fires all around them. Then bullets began to smash through her windows. She and her grandson and daughter (with her two-week-old baby) dove under the bed to escape being killed.

Soon, loud-speakers began to demand that all people leave the building. She didn't want to, but realized that her house was burning. When she and her fam-



ily went into the street, there were U.S. soldiers and tanks all over the place. They were ordering people out of the burning neighborhood.

Many people had sons, daughters, and other relatives in the neighborhood and wanted to run and help them out of the burning inferno—but the soldiers would not let them. They had to stand by while their meager possessions were burned into the ground. This particular woman lost her home and everything else she owned.

### **The concentration camp**

The troops demanded that all people in that area go to a camp which had been set up by U.S. troops. They told them they could get food, water, and shelter at the camp. Many, however, first wanted to find their families. But brute force was used to move them away from their homes and into the camps.

She moved into the camp with her daughter and two-week-old granddaughter. There was no water, food, or beds—just some tents where they slept on the ground. Meanwhile, the army put up barbed-wire fences all around the camp. About 5000 people were behind barbed wire—men, women, and children.

The “toilets” were out in the open—they had nothing, not even a curtain. She pleaded with the soldiers to at least put curtains around the open areas they called “toilets.” They laughed at her. She was so embarrassed she could not move her bowels for four days. She got a hernia from holding herself in.

The showers where they were supposed to bathe were also wide open. She pleaded, once again, to have some privacy when she took a shower. She explained that strange men and army troops were walking around the showers all of the time and that she had never even let her own husband see her that way. They thought this was very funny.

I should note here that she believed that some of the “American” GIs were Nicaraguan contras. Not only were their accents Nicaraguan, but they “spoke contra language,” that is, they used terminology she and other Panamanians identified as such.

She was given a plastic identification card (she showed it to us) so she could leave and re-enter the encampment. She left to go out and try to locate relatives who were missing and to try to find some food and clothes for her family. The camp still had very little food.

While she was out, she ran into her 10-year-old grandchild, who had been lost during the air raid. He was so happy to see his grandmother that he cried. At 10 at night, she arrived back at the camp with her grandson and was told by the guard that she could come in but not her grandson—he didn’t have a card! Despite her pleas to allow her grandson into the camp the soldier was unmoved.

She pleaded that her grandson had been sleeping on the street and had only her to care for him—the child was hysterical at the thought of being separated from his grandmother again—but the soldier stood firm. She finally went outside the camp and slept on the ground with her grandchild. The next day, he was given a

card and allowed to enter the concentration camp.

### **Missing relatives**

For weeks, people would try to search the ruins to find members of their families—even their bodies. When they went to the American authorities to ask about missing relatives, they were laughed at and told that “they had probably run away.” But the people knew they were more likely killed in the bombings.

Finally huge earthmovers came and bulldozed all of the burnt and destroyed housing without making an attempt to find and remove the dead. They got rid of the rubble, bodies and all. Now, all over Panama, families are still searching for missing children and other loved ones, who they believe were among those killed but unaccounted for in the invasion on Dec. 20, 1989.

When atrocities like this occur, the criminals responsible can sometimes hide it for a while. But history shows that the truth cannot be hidden forever. **U.S. OUT OF PANAMA!** —November 1990

## **And Where Are George Bush's Kids?**

The American parents of some 300,000 women and men know where their children will be this Christmas. They will be 6000 miles away in the desert of the Middle East waiting for George to give the go ahead to murder women, men, and children of Iraq and in the process kill thousands of American troops. No one expects this war to be an easy one.

George tells us that Saddam Hussein must be taught a lesson for the invasion of Kuwait. George says he just doesn't like invasions.

But on Dec. 20, 1989, George invaded Panama killing thousands of innocent civilians in his phony “war on drugs.” Previous to that he and Reagan invaded Grenada to “protect American students.” For years he armed Contra thugs and caused the death and destruction of thousands of Nicaraguan people—mostly unarmed peasants and children. All in the name of “democracy and the American way of life.”

In El Salvador he and his predecessors have armed and supported a military junta which has targeted workers, peasants, and their children, as well as nuns and priests. There is not a country in Latin America which does not bear the imprint of U.S. whips on the backs of the poor and impoverished. All for the “American way of life”—that is, to preserve the “American way of life” for the rich of this country, certainly not the life of American working people.

### **Shifting excuses**

George Bush has come up with a lot of excuses for his actions in the Middle East. After he tried “the American way of life” excuse, he shifted to “stop Hussein the second Hitler.” Then he shifted to the “saving ours jobs” excuse.

I'm sure that this one was designed to arouse the hopes of unemployed "hard hats." The president desperately needs a home team to beat up on the antiwar sentiment that is sweeping this country—like they had at the beginning of the Vietnam war. Not this time, Georgie!

In the Nov. 28 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, it was announced that the National Organization for Women (an organization with 300,000 members) has demanded the "immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Persian Gulf!" They know whose children will be dying if a shooting war breaks out.

Along with NOW a broad coalition of Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic leaders have also opposed the use of military force in the Persian Gulf, citing the fact that if a shooting war should develop, "certainly more civilians would be killed than combatants."

It will not be the children of the rich who will be dying on some hot and sandy desert. Which takes me to what George and Barbara's sons have been doing to defend "our" way of life. Well, they're doing just fine, according to an article in the Nov. 12 issue of *The Nation*.

### **'Silverado Kid'**

You remember Neil Bush, the "Silverado Kid" of the Silverado Savings and Loan scandal? He makes John Dillinger, the notorious bank robber of the '30s, look like a boy scout.

Dillinger pulled a gun to get the loot, Neil uses his dad's pull for the same ends.



Dillinger was gunned down on the streets by the FBI. Neil has yet to get a slap on the wrist! He'll get off scot-free, because that's the way it is in America, rich kids get to play monopoly with real money that belongs to other people. But don't worry, the taxpayers will make things right.

Let's turn to another chip off the old block—Jeb Bush. Jeb, who works for the Republican Party in Miami, went into partnership to purchase a Miami office building using money borrowed from a Florida savings and loan called Boward Federal. When Boward Federal went under, the government bailout took care of more than \$4 million to make good the loan.

Jeb and his partner, Armando Codina, negotiated a settlement with the regulators in which they repaid \$505,000 and retained control of their office building, while passing on to the government a \$4.6 million second mortgage. Now, maybe that's the "jobs" that "big-daddy Bush" is talking about fighting for in Iraq.

### **Texas oil profits**

And George Bush, Jr? He really lucked out. He is the eldest son of the president. He is also the director, a large stockholder, and the \$120,000-a-year consultant to a Texas oil company whose potential lucrative drilling rights in the Persian Gulf are being protected by American troops.

By mere chance, George Jr.'s firm is the Harken Energy Corporation of Dallas, which has been granted the exclusive right to explore, produce, and market almost all of Bahrain's oil and gas owned by Saudi Arabia's royal family. (Bahrain is a small island nation just off the eastern coast of Saudi Arabia.) But I don't think the Bahrain people got to vote on this.

Among the three top stockholders in Harken is a Swiss company controlled by South African businessman, Anton Rupert, and an unnamed Saudi investor who holds 17 percent of the common stock. The first three wells will be drilled by Bass Enterprise Production Company of Ft. Worth, Texas. They recently received \$2 billion in federal money to buy out the American Savings and Loan of California.

### **Mission to Nicaragua**

We should take a look at the exploits of another of Bush's sons, Marvin Bush. (Are George's daughters getting equal opportunity in the rip-off business?) Marvin was sent on a mission last May 15 to Nicaragua. He handed a consignment of medicines to Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, spiritual father of the Contras and later of the Chamorro coalition.

It was reported by Ernesto Salmeron, Chamorro's own Minister of Health, that 1300 children had died in the first eight months of this year from preventable diseases. This delivery of medicine to save lives would seem to be a good thing, no?

But according to Alberto Sequeira, who works for Cofarma, the Chamorro government's pharmaceutical agency, fully 75 percent of the medicines were either out of date or second-hand. Sequeira told of opening containers which contained used urine receptacles. When questioned about this, Marvin Bush refused to discuss the matter and gave an untraceable outfit in Hartford, Conn., as the financier of the trip.

This is the real reason U.S. troops are in the Middle East: to preserve the "American way of life" for the likes of Neil, Jeb, George Jr. and Marvin Bush. THEY ARE NOT WORTH DYING FOR! —December 1990

## **1991**

### **Free the Iraqi Hostages! End the Blockade!**

Four thousand civilians have died in Iraq because of the U.S. embargo. Half of them are children.

Dr. Bernard Lown of the Harvard University School of Public Health and co-president of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, said: "We found that sanctions are working and working brutally, right now." He had just returned to the U.S. from a fact finding mission in Iraq.

Children are the hardest hit by medical shortages. Forty-three percent of Iraq's estimated 18 million people are under age 15. Baghdad hospitals lack insulin, intravenous solution, and injectable forms of antibiotics and anesthetics. In Turkey, there are thousands of pounds of dried milk (desperately needed to save the lives of infants and for which Iraq has already paid) which cannot be delivered because of the imperialist embargo.

Meanwhile, George Bush walks around like a barnyard rooster, crowing that nothing less than all-out war with the people of Iraq will satisfy him—if Iraq fails to surrender unconditionally.

On Dec. 16, David Frost interviewed President Bush, which was shown on tel-

evision on Jan. 2. Listen to what sounds like the ravings of a madman! The president harshly denounced Saddam as “the aggressor, the dictator, the rapist of Kuwait.” Bush argued that the chance for a more peaceful world will be lost “if we give one single inch to placate [Iraq].”

He went on to say: “It is not acceptable to have any conditions for Saddam’s withdrawal, halfway withdrawals or ‘well, I’ll do it tomorrow’ excuses—that is not good enough.” Bush also said that if the United States goes to war on Jan. 15, “it would be over in a few days, but what happens, realistically, is hard to tell.”

### **Nuclear weapons**

From the very beginning of the United Nations-sanctioned blockade of Iraq, the Bush administration has hinted at the use of nuclear weapons, if necessary, in order to have a quick end to the war, and “save American lives.”

Unfortunately, I fear, this is not the raving of a madman, but a coldly calculated decision that appears to have been made by a section of the leaders of world capitalism. The evidence strongly suggests that the Bush administration is prepared to save their system even if it means taking the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation.

This is what’s behind Bush’s “new world order.” He is telling the world that, if it were up to him, the American imperialist colossus would stop at nothing to maintain control over their empire. And when President Bush says that he will not stand for “aggression” he means, in the last analysis, by anyone but American capitalism.

The United States is the only country that has used nuclear bombs to destroy two cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and hundreds of thousands of their inhabitants in August 1945. It was a signal to the people of the world that the ruling Mafia of American capitalism would go to any lengths to protect its profits.

It is clear that the current American ruling-class threats are not just aimed at Iraq. The real purpose is to warn the entire people of the world, East and West, that the American imperialists will stop at nothing in their determination to protect their world system and the uninterrupted flow of profits into their coffers.

### **The war economy**

The following light has been shed on the meaning of the American military adventure in the Gulf and its consequences by Seymour Melman, chairman of the National Commission for Economic Conversion and Disarmament:

“The operation of the U.S. war economy from 1949 through 1989 used up \$8.2 trillion in resources of every kind (measured in 1982 dollars). This exceeds the 1982 value of all of U.S. industry and infrastructure—\$7.3 trillion. This permanent war economy has meant a domestic war on the middle class, minorities, children, the poor, single parents, the homeless, and the elderly. Bush proposes a further escalation in the U.S. military. Direct U.S. costs of war in the Gulf would be \$50 billion, with a cost in lives that could reach 45,000 American dead and wounded. Drawing on the Vietnam war experience, we reckon that the indirect cost to the U.S. economy of a

Gulf war would be a further \$190 billion.”

The majority of humankind want peace and a sane world where workers can develop society's resources in the interest of human needs, not for the profits of a few. We must organize the most massive worldwide response to the threat to kill tens of thousands of Americans and Arabs. ALL OUT—FROM NOW UNTIL JAN. 26! BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

—January 1991

## How Can You Tell When the President Is Lying?

During the Vietnam war, a stand-up comic told this joke about President Lyndon B. Johnson. Question: How do you know when the president is lying? Answer: His lips are moving.

This is no joke when it comes to President Bush, who for many years headed the CIA. After all, you don't give a guy the secret Rolodex files unless you can trust him to keep his mouth shut on every dirty trick ever turned by the U.S. capitalist class and their war machine.

In fact, Bush created the “contras,” the El Salvador death squads, and who knows what else. Let's look at some of the lies he has been spewing forth since he attacked Iraq.

### Who spilled the oil?

The first TV announcement of the disastrous oil spill in the Gulf said that a Kuwaiti oil storage tank had ruptured and spilled thousands of gallons of oil. Bush immediately went on the air and denounced Saddam Hussein as a madman for turning on the oil spigot and trying to destroy the environment.

What is the truth? Hussein has said that he is not responsible for this disaster and that the spill is a result of the massive U.S. bombing raids. Even though I have no reason to take anyone's word in such a situation, the circumstantial evidence tends to support Hussein.

The fact is that the U.S. has been trying to blow Kuwait and Iraq to smithereens. The generals have been on TV announcing the relentless “surgical” air and sea strikes against Iraqi “military targets.” Given the admitted 2000 daily bombing runs, in the first 10 days alone that adds up to 20,000 “surgical” strikes. That's some surgery!

It seems more likely that the oil spill resulted from this unrestrained bombing, which is designed either to demoralize the Iraqis and get them to quit, or to soften up Kuwait in preparation for the ground assault against Iraqi troops dug in there.

Two years ago, the Alaskan oil pipeline ruptured—and it wasn't even bombed. It had been pronounced as the strongest, safest pipeline in the world; nevertheless, it ruptured and spilled oil. Kuwait is surrounded by massive oil storage

tanks; some of the pipes are so large you can drive a car through them.

Isn't it more likely that U.S. bombs, and not "madman" Hussein, caused the damage to the oil storage tank? I believe it is "Madman Bush"—not Saddam Hussein—who is destroying the ecology of the Gulf.

Even the burning oil in Kuwait is, in my opinion, the workings of the U.S. bombing raids. First of all, U.S. generals were complaining about low cloud cover over Kuwait two weeks before the oil storage fire. They were crying that it made "surgical bombing" difficult. The Iraqi troops did not need the huge oil fire to provide cloud cover.

In fact, that massive oil fire is probably doing more damage to Iraqi troops than it is providing cover. Common sense says it is the U.S. bombings, and not the Iraqi troops, that have set-off these fires.

### **Did Iraq gas the Kurds?**

From the very beginning, Bush has portrayed Saddam Hussein as another Hitler in order to justify his cold-blooded "desert storm" on Iraq. In order to do that he has constantly referred to the "fact" that Hussein used chemical and gas warfare against the Iranians and his own people, the Kurds.

In the Jan. 30 *San Francisco Chronicle* "Briefing" section, an article by Knut Royce, a reporter in the Washington bureau of *New York Newsday*, gives a different view of the so-called "poison gas" war of Saddam Hussein. Royce writes: "The evidence that Iraq purposely gassed Kurds is flimsy, according to officials who have reviewed the classified material and a U.S. Army study of the Iran-Iraq war."

Royce continues: "The evidence relates to two episodes, both in 1988. The first was in mid-March when both Iran and Iraq used chemical weapons in attacking the Iraq border city of Halabja, which each side mistakenly believed was being held by enemy troops.

"U.S. analysts later reviewed photographs and accounts from eyewitnesses and determined that the Kurds had died of cyanide gas, which produced telltale blue lips on the corpses. Only the Iranians possessed cyanide gas."

"It seemed likely that it was the Iranian bombardment that had actually killed the Kurds,' concluded an Army War College team that reviewed the intelligence for an analysis completed in February, of the Iraq-Iran war."

Royce says that the second episode of poison gas warfare occurred in late August 1988, shortly after the war with Iran ended. Republican Guards had been sent to northern Iraq to crush an insurrection by the Kurds, who had earlier teamed up with Iran to form a second front against Iraq.

"Kurdish refugees who fled to Turkey," Royce writes, "reported incidents of explosions that 'released either white or yellow gas which quickly dissipated...that smelled of bitter lemon, bitter orange, or apple.'

"However, Turkish doctors told the U.S. officials that they were unable to verify that the Kurds they treated for various ailments had been victims of chemical attacks."



“The Army War College study completed in February concluded, ‘Having looked at all of the evidence that was available to us, we find it impossible to confirm the State Department’s claim that gas was used in this instance (late August 1988).’”

### **Preparing a nuclear war?**

George Bush has announced that the United States armed forces are prepared to use “nonlethal gas” to “save lives” in this war. This violates all UN and even U.S. treaties on conduct during a war. It is really a threat in the hopes that Saddam Hussein will use chemical or gas weapons so the United States can try out its nuclear bombs (1000 of them) stored on U.S. warships in the Gulf.

In order to carry out a nuclear war, the U.S. must again paint Hussein as a “mad Hitler.”

What’s it all about, Alfie? Bush and the imperialists are using the Iraq war to warn all Third World countries that the United States will use any means necessary to stop any movement for freedom or self-determination. They are also warning Gorbachev that he had better continue to play ball, or else.

So the next time you hear of a poll showing how the majority of American people support Bush and his war, just remember his lies. And remember how you can tell when the president is lying—when you see his lips move. —February 1991

## **Yippee! Goliath Whips David!**

We have just been through one of the most bloodthirsty wars in U.S. history. The number of dead is in the hundreds of thousands—almost all Iraqi dead.

The United States dropped the equivalent of one bomb per minute on Iraq civilians and the Iraq army. Even as the Iraq army was retreating and moving out of Kuwait, the U.S. forces continued their blood-letting.

This was neither a war nor a battle. This was what we hillbillies used to call “shooting fish in a barrel.” It was like putting my seven-year-old grandson in the ring with Joe Lewis and cheering Lewis on to victory.

Iraq is a Third World country with a population of less than 19 million. Half of that population is under the age of 15. The United States chose to make an example of Iraq for the whole world, especially the Third World.

### **‘Democratic’ Kuwait?**

Does the United States government care so much for democracy that it would spend \$1 billion per day to save Kuwait? Kuwait is ruled completely by a monarchy, noted for the extreme differences between its poor and its wealthy. In fact, Kuwait hires its workers mainly from the Arab world’s poor because most Kuwait “citizens” don’t work.

The real reason for the enormous destruction unleashed by the United States is to warn all Third World countries and the working class of the Soviet Union, itself, not to make a move for independence or freedom from the world's most powerful imperialist power.

From the beginning of the war against Iraq, Bush promised the people in this country that it would not be another Vietnam. The ruling class knew that the anti-war feeling, which arose immediately after the first air raid on Iraq, was growing into a massive force in this country and around the world. Millions of people marched and demonstrated against the war in every city of the world.

The capitalist class knew that only a swift war would stop such a movement. That is another reason for the massive force used against the people of Iraq. It also allowed the generals to test their deadly weapons, which have cost the working people of the United States untold billions of dollars. The military-industrial complex is rubbing its hands in glee at the thought of billions more for even more deadly weapons.

### **A rotten system**

Since the fall of the Berlin wall, the mouthpieces for the capitalist class have been saying that socialism just doesn't work. What doesn't work is capitalism. Any economic system that depends on a bloody war against the poor and oppressed of the world to keep its system operating is a rotten, fouled-up system. It doesn't work for the millions of homeless and hungry (and the even larger number of working people on the edge of disaster).

Billions of dollars have been used to foul up the environment, destroy our forests, pollute our air and water, and waste the world's resources for the profit of a few. Since World War II ended, millions more people have died in capitalist wars.

The war against Iraq was an imperialist war—a war of the large imperialist countries against the Middle Eastern peoples. Now the imperialists will, once again, fight among themselves to grab up the loot. They will continue to buy off governments such as the debauched monarchies of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, using the wealth they steal from them.

Then the sheiks and princes, the idle rich of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, will go back to the gaming tables of Monaco and the night clubs of Southern France. That's how capitalism works. It works to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

We must demand that the United States stop using our sons and daughters as cannon fodder for the rich. We have a war here at home. A war for full medical treatment for all. A war to end the curse of AIDS once and for all. A war for free, quality childcare centers for all children who need them. A war to lower the class sizes in our schools and provide each and every child a free, quality education from childcare through college.

We have a war to end hunger, to provide decent jobs for all, to provide decent

housing for every person. A war to clean up our rivers, air, and earth. A war to provide safe, unpolluted living conditions for all. That's a war worth winning and one in which we can be proud to serve. —March 1991

## From Sea to Shining Sea

On March 3, the Los Angeles “boys in blue” were trying to beat Rodney G. King, a black motorist, to death. Not only was King handcuffed, but he was attached to an electric stun gun. Twelve Los Angeles cops stood by watching while three police officers hit the victim over 56 times with their clubs.

They hit him so hard that fillings flew out of his teeth, his eye socket bone was fractured, his cheek bone was fractured, his skull was fractured in eleven places, his facial nerves are probably permanently damaged, and he suffered a broken leg. Medical reports say that he will never fully recover and may possibly have brain damage.

While this was just cop business-as-usual, something new was happening. This vicious atrocity was being recorded by a bystander with a video camera. He sent it to a local TV station in Los Angeles, and CNN, the television news network, played it for the whole world to see.

Watching the video was like watching wild dogs tear apart a helpless victim. But the dogs do it for food—the racist cops were doing it for fun. When tapes were released to the public, they revealed that even when the cops radioed for an ambulance, they were laughing and making racist innuendos.

The Black and Latino people of Los Angeles were outraged. They suffer at the hands of the cops all of the time, but more often than not the forces of law and order cover it up, and the victims are lucky if they don't get sent up for “assaulting an officer.” But police brutality is so common, the cops do get caught once in a while.

When people demanded action from L.A. Police Chief Daryl Gates, he excused it as an “aberration.” But the people know better. They are victims of an organized system of racist brutality against the Black and Latino communities.

### New York's ‘finest’

This mad-dog system is not just relegated to the city of Los Angeles—it's par for the course, from West to East, from sea to shining sea.

Across the continent in New York City, the city's “finest” were also having their fun (“partying,” one of them said). On Feb. 5, Federico Pereira, a 21-year-old cook who worked in a fast food restaurant, was murdered by N.Y. cops. There was no video this time, but there were three witnesses to the killing.

One of the witnesses said that Mr. Pereira was lying on the ground. One of his legs, which was bent back at a 90-degree angle, was handcuffed to one of his wrists. He was being hit and kicked by plainclothes officers. At one point, one of the cops stepped to the curb and cleaned blood off of his boots and went back to

beat up his victim.

Another of the cops, Officer Paparella, straddled Pereira, entwined his fingers under the suspects neck, and lifted his head back into what was referred to as a “camel clutch,” while jamming his knee into Pereira’s back. When he dropped him to the ground, Pereira was motionless. He was pronounced dead at the hospital.

One of the witnesses, Ronald Harmon, had his car tires slashed and his dog poisoned. Harmon was punched in the head by a cop who took him to the station house and “questioned” him for seven hours. Thomas A. Stickel, Harmon’s lawyer, said that his client had been coerced into saying that he had seen the victim “swing” at the cops—which he now repudiates. Other cops are accused of terrorizing and otherwise harassing the other witnesses, too.

The cops’ version of the killing is that their victim was “thrashing about in a cocaine-induced mania, banging his head against the sidewalk as officers tried to subdue him.”

Cops are noted not only for their brutality toward the Black and Latino communities. They have a long record of brutality towards workers who are on strike. The history of the labor movement is covered with the blood of workers.

It is the job of the cops to protect the wealthy from their victims when they fight back. The cops often just want to let the workers know who’s boss and what they can expect if they get uppity.

The “new world order” is not only for foreign countries but for the Black, Latino, and working-class communities of the U.S.A. The capitalist class wants everyone to know that they are prepared to use whatever methods of violence and terror are necessary to stamp out resistance to their exploitation. The government views the working class of this country as it does the people of a colonial country.

—April 1991

## **Thou Shall Not Break The ‘Eleventh Commandment’**

Thou Shalt Not Tax The Rich! That’s the only commandment the legislators and the president obey. The other 10 were made to be broken by them and their buddies, the ruling rich. In fact, the 11th commandment should read: Thou shall not tax the rich—only tax those who work for a living.

In state after state, regressive taxes (such as sales taxes) are growing like toxic waste. City, county, state, and federal politicians are working overtime to pick the pockets of the poor, so as to save the rich from paying even a modest share of the cost for schools, health care, and social welfare.

President Bush is busy cutting the public school budget while getting ready to hand over the money saved to private schools. Bush deserves the title of “educa-

tion president” as much as Adolph Hitler deserved the Nobel Prize for Peace and Humanitarianism.

The federal government is cutting its contribution to state and local governments, forcing them to get the money any way they can. Of course, all of the state and local politicians are going to get it out of the hides of those who are already bearing the lion’s share of the tax burden.

The real blows will be felt mostly by our children. In the United States one out of 10 people is illiterate. Fewer than one-half of this country’s students finish high school. In California alone, one in five children live in poverty, one in three do not graduate from high school, and more than half of all two-year-olds are not immunized against fatal diseases.

In fact, across the country there is a resurgence of measles—which is easily preventable. But children are dying because they have not been inoculated. Community health centers are being closed down all over the country, and most parents have no health coverage for themselves or their children.

In this country (the richest in the world), every 67 seconds a teenager has a baby, every eight seconds of the school day a child drops out of school, and every 53 minutes a child dies of poverty.

### **Bankrupt schools**

In Richmond, California, the schools will have to close at the end of April because they are bankrupt. Although the federal government didn’t hesitate a moment before bailing out the savings and loan institutions at the rate of \$7,420,000 per hour last year, now neither the state nor the federal government will bail out the Richmond schools. (Richmond will only need another \$20 million to continue through the rest of the school year.)

One of the reasons the governor is so merciless is because the Richmond Board of Education had the nerve to grant their teachers a nine percent raise two years ago (after a long period without a salary increase).

Now the governor is demanding that California teachers suspend collective bargaining and accept a wage freeze for three more years—a total of five years without an increase. The governor, of course, is getting a 40 percent salary increase this year. Surely, he will refuse to take it?

### **Soak the workers**

Why can’t we have quality public schools and quality public childcare centers for every child? Why can’t every person have good health care, free of charge? Why can’t all universities and colleges provide a free education to all students who want it? Why can’t every person have decent housing?

Because for the last 40 years, 50 percent of every federal tax dollar has been going to the war budget, while only 3 percent has been going into education and the rich have been dumping the tax burden on the workers and the middle class.

Four-member families whose incomes put them in the lowest one-fifth, aver-

aging \$12,700 a year on a national basis, pay 13.8 percent of their earnings in state and local taxes. The richest one percent, with incomes averaging \$875,200 a year, pay 7.6 percent of their earnings to state and local governments. These figures come from a report by Citizens for Tax Justice.

And now we learn that the Pentagon's share of next year's budget will rise by 14 percent. We also learn that the new estimate for the Gulf War is \$100 billion and the United States will have to cover most of it. To top that off, we read that Lockheed will get \$95 billion to develop the F-22 fighter plane to replace the F-15.

In fact, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney judges that defense spending will exceed \$2 trillion through 1997. And the poor Richmond School District only needs a measly \$20 million.

Several school districts across the nation are on strike for better conditions for teachers and students. What is needed is a national movement by teachers, students, and parents—and all of their unions—who are sick of being crapped on by our “education president” and the rest of the political servants of the rich in both parties. And then, we need a political party obedient to working people—not to the capitalist class. —May 1991

## Supreme Court Outlaws Hippocratic Oath

The U.S. Supreme Court's May 24 decision has made medical ethics illegal. El Supremo Court has ruled that any family-planning clinic that accepts federal funds cannot reveal that abortion does exist, even though it is vitally necessary to save the life of the pregnant woman.

Even if a woman is 12 years old, diabetic, AIDs positive, with serious heart disease, or a hard drug user, and even if the fetus is so deformed it is unlikely to survive outside the womb, she cannot be told about the option of abortion. Clinics that receive any federal funds have had their lips sealed when it applies to poor women.

This decision makes an executive ruling by President Reagan in 1988 the law of the land. This is not something that was passed by Congress, although those gutless wonders in Congress could have gotten rid of this neanderthal ruling when it was first initiated by Ronnie Reagan.

Now the Democrats on Capital Hill are strutting around saying that they are going to pass a bill to abolish the regulations which were first adopted in 1988 by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Actually, federal funds have not been used for abortion since 1970. What makes the Supreme Court ruling even more evil is that it says that any clinic which receives any federal funding cannot even mention the word abortion.

For 20 years, the Democrats in Washington have had the opportunity to pass a bill which would have restored federal funds for abortions for poor women.

They have not done this, even though the Democrats have been the majority in Congress for all of those years. This proves the futility of trying to rely on so-called friends of a woman's right to choose.

Why is it in the interests of the capitalist rulers to make forced pregnancy the law—as it was in Rumania under Ceaucescu, or as the Pope is trying to impose on Poland? Could it be that Bush is really pro-life and wants to save little children? It is estimated that 400,000 children in Iraq will die this year if that country does not receive aid to save them. Has Bush made even the slightest effort to save these children?

Most important to the capitalist class is to continue receiving massive tax-breaks at the expense of the poor and working class. That means cutting health-care for all workers and poor people, cutting social services down to the bone, making cuts threatening the very existence of public education, making cuts in the pitiful allotments for nutrition provided children in the poorest families, and so on. Why?

All of these anti-human measures are designed to decrease taxes for the wealthy rulers of this country. At the same time, taxes are raised on the middle class and working class to pay for more savings-and-loan, bank, and airline bailouts.

It is necessary to provide phony “moral issues” like the “right to life” and “freedom of speech” for racist and sexist assaults on Blacks, women, gays and others branded by capitalist society.

It is all designed to provide a “moral” cover for the fascist defenders of capitalism who will be set loose by panicked capitalists when the working people and their allies inevitably begin to fight back. That's what the anti-choice zealots are—the social breeding ground for incipient fascism.

Our class must organize, massively, independently, and in the streets to regain our rights—if we are not to be pushed down even further. We have to mobilize as we have before, independently of the two political parties in power, to fight for our human rights. —June 1991

## **How Will We Win the War Against Anti-Choice Bigots?**

On Saturday, June 15 (the day before Fathers Day), I was at Planned Parenthood at 6:30 a.m., along with 85 others to defend the clinic from a threatened attack of Operation Rescue (OR). That's the anti-choice, neo-fascist band of hoodlums that tries to stop women from exercising their legal right to choose. Fathers Day, we figured, would be the perfect day for them to attack women and try to deny us our rights.

We stood around drinking coffee and eating a variety of baked goods donated to clinic defenders by local bakeries. Then the day went like this:

Ellen, the representative of Planned Parenthood, thanks everyone for showing up and gives us the latest information on OR and general information about the latest attack on abortion rights. She asks how many were new to clinic defense, and almost 25 young women and men raise their hands.

Lisa from the National Organization for Women's Reproductive Rights Committee speaks. She explains S.F. NOW's leading role in clinic defense.

Because there are so many new people, we go through actual defense training and, as usual, Joni Jacobs does this part. (Joni is also the Socialist Action candidate for mayor of San Francisco. She is the only candidate that has personally defended our clinics almost from the beginning of the attacks by OR.)

Everyone then settles down to await the arrival of the social neanderthals. But on this day, they do not show.

Clinic defenders in the Bay Area have beaten the socks off of OR no matter where they struck and have out-mobilized them in almost every encounter.

Now, however, the Supreme Court along with politicians from both capitalist parties are working overtime to accomplish what OR was unable to do; this time to destroy abortion rights through the courts and state and national legislatures.

Everyone on the clinic defense line is mad as hell at the recent Supreme Court decision to place a gag on doctors at federally funded clinics, and the Louisiana legislature's outlawing of the right to choose.

At every level, it seems, there are evil, narrow minded, arrogant bigots who are trying to rob women of their natural right to determine their reproductive lives. And when we read recent Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action, illegal search and seizure, and workers' health rights, we know that it is not just women's rights that are at stake but the rights of all victims of capitalist injustice.

### **Lessons from history**

It is good to take some lessons from our history. How did women win the right to vote and workers win the right to organize into unions?

They fought back the only way a majority can—in massive demonstrations and strikes that forced the monsters of that day to change the laws in favor of the majority. In the 1900s, women marched, demonstrated, went on hunger strikes, and in general told the courts and judges that their laws were unjust and would not be tolerated. This is how women won the right to vote; it was not granted out of the goodness of the rulers' hearts.

And in the 1930s, it was illegal to organize a union or go on strike. Workers were jailed, fired, blackballed, and murdered because they wanted better wages, hours, and working conditions. But they won these basic democratic and human rights by organizing massive demonstrations, strikes, and sit-ins.

Before the 1950s, the Supreme Court and legislatures in many states said that segregation was legal. There were "white-only" water fountains, toilets, schools, bus and train waiting rooms. In many states, Blacks had to stand in the back of



buses and even—in this “land of the free”—were denied the right to vote!

So Black men, women and children organized massive marches. They boycotted, struck, and refused to obey unjust laws by the millions. This is the way they got rid of the “lily-white” Jim Crow laws and scared the hell out of racists everywhere.

All of our rights, all of our human needs, have been won through struggle. And that’s why we must organize as women, organize our allies in communities, counties, and states and get back to the streets.

We have to tell the black-robed, hand-picked judges that we will not abide by unjust laws. Our bodies belong to us. Not the church, not the state, women will decide their fate!

—July 1991

## Living in Poverty Is a Very Personal Thing

We keep getting statistics on children in this wealthy country. One out of five children live in poverty in the United States; 40,000 infants die in their first year; 2000 minors were murdered in the U. S. in 1988; and 78 percent of child deaths in the U.S. are caused by accidents, suicide, homicides or other violence. Medicaid, the so-called government healthcare program for the poor, covers barely 40 percent of those living below the poverty line.

Living in poverty is a very personal thing. I was born in 1926—just in time for capitalism, barely three years later, to prove it doesn’t work.

One of the most embarrassing events of my life occurred when I was seven years old. I didn’t have shoes for school. When our shoes got holes in the soles my grandmother stuffed them with cardboard. When they were hand-downs and too large, she stuffed paper in the toes. If they were a little too tight she poured boiling hot water into them and when the water cooled down we put our feet into the shoes—water and all—and walked around until they stretched. So when I say I had no shoes, I really had no shoes.

I did have a pair of red rubber boots given to me by a neighbor whose child had outgrown them. I really loved those red boots; they were shiny and bright. One day I had to wear the boots—without shoes—to school.

At school that morning, the teacher demanded that I remove my boots and put them in the cloak room. They were rain boots and not to be worn in class. I had no shoes on so I just refused to take off the boots. I was sent to the principal’s office for being stubborn and sassy. The principal wormed the truth out of me and forced me to walk back to the class in my stocking feet. She had me stand up in front of the class and made me request that children bring shoes to school the next day. For two weeks my class was covered by old worn out children’s shoes. I took them home and all of my sisters and brothers wore them.

Other memorable occasions were the dresses from the Ladies Aid Society.

These were church ladies who sewed up dresses and brought them to our school for the “poor children.” Of course I was eligible. However, the dresses were sewn from the same bolt of ugly cloth and all the same size pattern. The “Ladies” would come into class and we girls would have to go into the cloakroom, put them on and give a fashion show for the class and the “Ladies.” Since I was short, the dresses always just topped my ankle and the sleeves fell off my shoulder. None of this mattered—the teacher would praise the “Ladies” for their generous spirit and make us children thank each “Lady” profusely. My grandmother would not alter the clothes to fit because she thought this would make the “Ladies” angry and they would stop giving me dresses.

But I was a dreamer. After listening to Little Orphan Annie on the radio and seeing some Shirley Temple movies, I used to dream that some day some rich person would come along and demand to adopt me because I was so charming. After all, it always happened to Shirley who suffered no end until some wealthy person took over and she lived happily ever after.

I even considered that perhaps I had been given to this poor family by mistake and someday my real rich mother and father would drive up in a big car and rescue me from poverty.

I had no idea that it was the rich of this country who were the cause of the problem. That came later. I remind the reader this all took place in the 1930s, during the Depression.

A few weeks ago all of these memories came back to me when I read an article in the June 20 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It concerned the Gordon Gettys and their new home. Gordon comes from the billionaire family of oil-rich Gettys. He got his money the “old fashion way.” He inherited it from his father who inherited it from his father, etc., etc.

Gordon and his wife Ann, are buying a \$4.25 million home next door to their \$3.75 million mansion. They want to convert this new home into a concert hall with a swimming pool. It will be connected to their original home with passageways and will cost \$500,000 to remodel to their satisfaction. The city planning commission granted them permission. Hey, let them eat cake!

In California, those in the top one percent income bracket, (those who make \$550,000 a year or more) paid \$84.4 billion dollars less in state and federal taxes in 1990 than they did in 1977. It is the working class and poor families who are paying the taxes for the rich.

When I was a child I was embarrassed at being poor. I thought it was my fault. Becoming a socialist taught me different. Now I wouldn't be embarrassed. I am just mad as hell at the outrageous conduct of the rich in the face of all of this poverty.

—August 1991

## Pity the Poor Bureaucrats

The entire world has been glued to their television screens watching the events in the Soviet Union. Two sets of bureaucrats were vying for power.

Gorbachev was out for a few days, and a new bunch took his place. Each set of “bosses” was trying to prove to the capitalist world that they were the most able to turn the people of the Soviet Union into a passive labor force for capitalist exploitation.

However, the best laid plans of the Stalinist bureaucrats are going astray. Neither wing of the bureaucrats has so far been able to convince the imperialist vultures that the Russian workers will lay down and play dead while the world’s capitalists and bureaucrats gobble up and divide the wealth produced by working people.

The stock market was the real indicator of the nail-biting going on among the piggies of the capitalist world. The Soviet bureaucrats have been doing their best to lay the entire country on a banquet table for world imperialism to feast on. The capitalist class has no illusions. They have complete faith that the whole Stalinist bureaucracy—and that’s what they all are—would like nothing better than to become capitalist junior partners of the big imperialist countries like our own.

They have no fear that any of the bureaucrats are socialists. They know they have been busily ripping off the Soviet economy so that they will be well-fixed when and if they are able to bring capitalism back to the Soviet Union.

What the world’s capitalists do fear, however, is that no faction of Stalinist bureaucrats can deliver the goods. Even worse, they fear that while the wolves and foxes are bickering among themselves, the chickens will begin to organize and take over the whole hen house. That’s what worries the capitalists. They are all deadly afraid that the working class of the Soviet Union will tell both the bureaucrats and the capitalists to get lost.

The working class does that every once in a while. They just take matters into their own hands and do it themselves. That’s what the Russian workers did in 1917, and that’s what the American working class did in the 1930s. They told all of their bosses and all of their labor bureaucrats to get back and out of their way. They took them all on and came out on top.

Never forget that. The American workers showed that they can defeat the whole kit and kaboodle of bosses and bureaucrats.

### **Bosses demand more**

And let’s not kid ourselves. American workers know what the Soviet worker is faced with. Fat-cat bureaucrats are not much different no matter which country they live in. They all live off of the labor of the workers and they all want the workers to stand back and keep quiet and let them do their talking for them.

The well-dressed and well-fed bureaucrats, whether in the Soviet Union or in the AFL-CIO, want to dicker with the bosses over how much workers should give back to these greedy pigs. They are willing to give up jobs, health, working con-

ditions, wages, and anything else the boss demands—rather than organize the membership to fight. Their primary concern is that union dues keep coming in to pay their fat salaries. But sometimes they run into problems.

This is because the capitalist class is never satisfied. They always want more. They are especially eager to destroy unions whenever the opportunity presents itself. The union “leaders” are so used to doing all the talking and keeping workers in the dark, that if workers don’t push them into action they wake up one morning and find that the goose that lays the golden egg—the unions—has been killed by the bosses.

### **Workers and democracy**

The rank and file of the unions must have democracy in order to defend their interests—not only from the bosses, but from their own bureaucrats who are always ready to play “lets make a deal.” The workers need to discuss among themselves the best way to defend their interests. It’s the working people who are really for solidarity. And it is the workers who have the power to organize in the millions in the streets and at the factory gates to defend their living standards.

Only a democratic movement can guarantee that the real interests of the mass of people are protected. This is true of all movements for justice. The women’s movement as well as the labor movement.

During the civil rights movement it would have been impossible for Martin Luther King to tell the millions of Black people to go home—that he would handle the whole thing. First of all it would never work. Jim Crow would still be festering like a cancer in the Black communities of the southern states.

Secondly, without those millions of Black men, women and children, Martin Luther King would have been just another voice crying in the wilderness. And that was his strength, he knew it and did everything he could to inspire them to get into the streets and fight for their human rights.

That’s what workers everywhere need; a new fighting leadership that dares to mobilize the many millions of us—everywhere in the world—so that we can defend and advance our class interests. —September 1991

## **‘Support Our Unborn Troops?’**

“Support Our Unborn Troops!” This slogan was prominent at an Operation Rescue rally on Aug. 25 featuring the Rev. Pat Robertson. The rally was held in Wichita, Kan., where Operation Rescue thugs had tried to stop women from exercising their lawful right to have an abortion.

No, I didn’t make this up. One of Operation Rescue’s deep thinkers must have thought that since the slogan “Support Our Troops!” seemed to work so well for the American assault in the Middle East, it would also lead to victory for them.

But the slogan might have been more appropriate if it read, “Support Our Unborn Storm Troopers!” That, in any case, is closer to what they really mean.

The Right Rev. Pat Robertson exhorted his thugs with statements such as, “We will not rest until every baby in the United States is safe in its mother’s womb,” and “We will not rest until this land we love so much is once again truly one nation under God.” These ravings brought the crowd to its feet.

What is this movement all about? It certainly is not about saving children in or outside of women’s wombs. We know that young children and their mothers are the number-one victims of poverty.

Last year, in this country that Pat Robertson “loves so much,” 3.4 million preschoolers could not be immunized against measles because they were too poor. This year, it is expected that 10,000 children will die because this rich country cannot afford to pay \$15.33 per child for their immunization. And every night in this country 100,000 children will sleep in the streets because they and their parents are homeless.

Of course, these are “born” children, which the fascist-like leaders of Operation Rescue couldn’t care less about.

### **Future storm troopers**

The rantings and thuggery of Operation Rescue serve a larger purpose than what appears on the surface. Besides serving as a battering ram in the combined attack by the courts and state and federal governments to knock down the hard-won right of women to choose, they are experimenting with tactics that future storm troopers will seek to use against the coming rise in working-class militancy.

The American ruling class knows that the economic crisis building up will soon break out of control. Increased unemployment and inflation will force working people to fight to defend their living standards. When workers in this country take the road of class struggle, the forces of “law and order” will not be enough to beat us down.

That’s why the ruling classes of Italy, Germany and Spain financed fascism in these countries during the crises which erupted after World War I. They were not able to put down workers’ uprisings without the help of extra-legal shock troops.

The fascists in Europe also hid behind so-called “moral” issues to whip-up their followers against the victims of capitalism. The German fascists did not start out by saying they were going to murder six million Jews, uncounted numbers of gypsies and other “inferior races,” trade unionists, gays, communists, and socialists. No, they claimed to have “noble” aims: To bring class peace and a New Order to Germany and the world.

Today the American ruling class needs the option of turning the “Right to Life” gangs into “Right to Work” goons. In coming days, I can see the same types breaking through union picket lines saying the strikers are denying God-fearing citizens their right to work. That’s why the wealthy of this country are financing the Pat Robertsons and other demagogues, whose real program is the right to luxury for the rich and the right to starve for the poor and oppressed.

### **‘Civil Rights’ tactics?**

The so-called “Right to Lifers” claim they are using the tactics of the civil rights movement, which resorted to civil disobedience to defeat inequality and racial injustice. But the Operation Rescue bums are using civil disobedience to deny liberty and equality to millions of women.

I watched the hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court. Thomas is the hope of the “Right to Lifers.” But what will really happen in this country if *Roe v. Wade* is overthrown is that millions of women and men who support liberty, equality, and justice will take to the streets.

I do not care who is on the Supreme Court. The courts, in the last analysis, do what’s best for capitalism. Whether it is to extend or to take away rights depends on how well organized are those fighting for the rights of the real majority, the exploited and oppressed.

Women will defend their rights against church and state and maintain their right to choose if they organize together with their natural allies. —October 1991

## **Challenge to *Roe v. Wade***

In 1989, the Pennsylvania legislature passed one of the nation’s most restrictive anti-abortion laws. It was called the Abortion Control Act of 1989. The most restrictive parts of the act required parental consent for women under the age of 18, pre-notification of the husband, pre-abortion counseling, and a 24-hour wait after counseling before having the abortion.

On Oct. 21, 1991, the U.S. Court of Appeals threw out the provision requiring women to notify their husbands, but upheld the other restrictions.

On Oct. 22, State Attorney General Ernest Preate Jr. said he will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to return to the law the section requiring notification of husband. According to informed sources, this appeal will put *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark case that legalized abortion, on the fast-track toward review by the Supreme Court.

Louisiana, Utah and Guam have passed anti-choice laws even more restrictive than Pennsylvania’s, but the Pennsylvania law has gone further in the appeals process.

Kathryn Kolbert, the lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union’s Reproductive Freedom Project, who argued for the plaintiff, Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania, said, “For the first time since 1973, a federal court of appeals has directly said that *Roe v. Wade* is no longer the law of the land.”

On Oct. 5 in San Francisco, the Pro-Choice Coalition held a march and rally. Estimates were that over 7,000 people marched. The march was organized in two months. It was an unusual march in that a large percentage of marchers were born after Jan 22, 1973, when *Roe v. Wade* became law.

Many of these young women not only marched, but they took over organiza-

tional tasks such as out-reach, campus organizing, phone-banking, media activity and all of the other tasks that are required to build a march and rally.

Their energy and optimism added color and numbers to the march. And their anger kept them going. They were especially angry at the parental consent laws which have been passed in 26 states, including California. The California law is presently being heard in San Francisco Superior Court.

In the United States, seven out of 10 females and eight out of 10 males are sexually active in their teens. Only one in 50 teenage mothers finishes college, as compared with one in five women who delay child-bearing until their mid-20s. Only 4 percent of unmarried teen mothers give up their babies for adoption. About 43 percent of teen pregnancies end in abortion.

The myth that abortions take place late in pregnancy is a falsehood spread by the anti-choice minority. Ninety-one percent of all abortions take place in the first trimester. Fifty percent occur in the first eight weeks. Only 8 percent of all abortions are performed in the second trimester (6.1 percent before the 16th week). A tiny fraction, 1/100th of 1 percent, are performed during the third trimester, and then only for serious medical reasons.

Two young women have already died because of the parental consent restriction. Becky Bell, a 17-year-old high school student, could not bear to disappoint her parents by telling them she was pregnant. She died from an illegal abortion. Spring Adams, a 13-year-old victim of sexual abuse by her father (she was raped and impregnated by him), was shot and killed by that same father when he found out about her pregnancy. Spring's father shot her to death while she was sleeping.

The National Organization for Women (NOW) is asking that one million pro-choice supporters come to demonstrate in Washington, D.C., on April 5, 1992. In light of the recent Pennsylvania ruling—and the direct threat to *Roe v. Wade*—this march has become even more crucial in defending our abortion rights.

I hope that one million women who know what it was like before *Roe v. Wade* and one million who were born after *Roe v. Wade* all plan to go to Washington, D.C., for NOW's march. GET READY BUSH, WE'RE COMING!

—November 1991

## Memories of Racism in the 1930s

Watching David Duke brought back some of the earliest memories of my



childhood in Lexington, Kentucky. These were marked, indelibly, by racism and the Great Depression. It was not a pleasant memory.

What jogged my mind was the pictures of David Duke's blue-collar followers, both men and women, carrying his campaign placards—laying bare their hatred of Blacks. What was revealed was that just below the surface lay all of the rotten racist crap, and all that was needed was the likes of David Duke to bring out the worst in them and make them feel it's okay.

But David Duke is just a symptom of the decay of an economic system that is founded on racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism. Capitalism couldn't exist if it did not divide white against Black, Christian against Jew, male against female, etc.

What always amazes me is how often it works. Some big mouth KKKer will run for office on the issue of white against Black and there are all of those poor-white suckers, being pounded into the ground by their bosses and the capitalist class, carrying around David Duke signs. What's the secret? How does it work? It's not such a mystery.

It was 1936 in Lexington, Ky. There were no jobs or money. My father had read in the paper that the tobacco warehouses were hiring tobacco strippers. The tobacco had been hanging up in the warehouses and was now dry and ready for stripping. My mother was working, and so my father took me and my older brother, Glen, to the job-site. Glen stayed in the car, but I insisted on going to the line-up with my father.

It was a hot morning and when we got to the loading dock of the warehouse, there were already two lines of men. One line for Black men and one for whites. The men stuck to their line and talked in low tones to each other. There were no exchanges of either words or glances between the two lines.

Finally, after what seemed hours, a white man wearing a large straw hat came out onto the loading dock. "All right," he said, "this is how it is. We're willing to pay 37 cents an hour to you white men. And if you don't want to work for that, we have plenty colored boys here that will work for 27 cents an hour." And with that the lines begin to shuffle forward and hopeful workers gave their names.



My father didn't get the job. He was too far back in the line. As my father walked back to the car, he said that the problem with "niggers" is that they would take the bread out of his children's mouth for 10 cents an hour.

His anger was not directed toward the boss who was offering 10 cents an hour difference. After all, in his mind, that's what bosses were supposed to do, pay the lowest possible wage. He was just doing a boss's "job." No, my father blamed the Black men who had to accept 27 cents an hour to get the job.

Actually, stripping tobacco was usually a job done by Blacks. It was low-paying, back-breaking work. But this was a depression, and whites had showed up for these lousy jobs. In fact, it would be closer to the truth to say that it was the white men who were taking the bread out of Black children's mouths. This thought never occurred to my father.

After I grew up and became a socialist, I rearranged that scene in my head a dozen times. First, I pictured the white men yelling back to the boss that all of them, Black and white, would get equal wages or no one would work. Then I pictured the Blacks walking off and saying to the white workers that if you want to work for a dog's wages go ahead—but we won't.

And then I pictured the white men joining the Black men and both groups laughing and shaking hands. And, of course, I pictured the boss caving in and saying he was only kidding—everyone would really get 47 cents an hour.

During the organizing drive of the CIO in the 1930s, Black and white workers did join together to create industrial unions—but mostly in the North. It was self-interest that spurred white workers to hold out their hands to Blacks.

Divide and conquer, the tactic bosses used to keep wages down in the South, was smashed up North by an industrial union movement based on real solidarity.

Those unionized workers refused to be suckers for the capitalist class. They kept their eyes on the real enemy and organized united struggles by all workers to raise their living standards—Black and white, women and men—irrespective of creed. That's the only answer to all forms of bigotry. —December 1991

1992

## A.F.D.C. = Aid for Dependent Capitalists

A "depression" has hit the U.S. economy. Although the major economists don't like the "d" word, whatever it may be called, it's bad. And in state after state, the capitalist politicians are playing Robin Hood in reverse—taking from the poor and giving to the corporate rich.

Governor Wilson of California just announced his plan to place more of the tax burden on the poorest in his state to ease the pain of the pampered rich. Wilson is planning to cut AFDC funds (Aid for Families with Dependent Children).

At the present time in California, a single mother with two children receives \$663 a month plus food stamps and Medi-Cal. Wilson fears that this magnificent stipend will act as a magnet for welfare recipients from other states and motivate them to move to California.

Actually, the welfare rolls have expanded because California has a 7.4 percent unemployment rate, which is 10 percent higher than the national rate of 6.8 percent. When unemployment insurance runs out, workers have no choice but to apply for welfare. (And when their checks run out, the government claims that they're "discouraged" workers who no longer seek jobs—and they're no longer counted as unemployed.)

Welfare case loads in California increased 20 percent between 1988 and 1991. Across the nation there has been a 15 percent increase. Between 1980 and 1988, births to unwed mothers nearly doubled, from 83,000 to 152,000, or nearly 30 percent of all births in California. This, too, has added to the welfare case loads.

But Wilson is determined to make the children pay for the recession, and it is the poor who are going to be forced to carry the burden of the chronic capitalist disease of mass unemployment. In the days of Charles Dickens little children were allowed to beg on the streets. When Wilson cuts AFDC he should, at least, supply each child with an official begging license.

Day after day we are bombarded with news stories about how lazy welfare recipients just refuse to work. How women will have baby after baby just to get welfare and not have to work. It makes as much sense as President Bush telling us to end the recession by running out and buying a car and a house—and maybe a pair of socks.

But, I have living proof that people want to work and will do anything for a job.

Our new headquarters, at 3425 Army Street, is just across the street from a parking lot where day-laborers gather. At dawn, every day, men begin to line up for work. In the rain, fog, and wind, they wait for any truck that might come by. Then they break and run for the truck, surrounding it, asking to be hired.

They are willing to take the most gut-busting, back-breaking work for the lowest salary possible. They stand in the parking lot until the sun goes down, and then return the next day for a new try.

If I had the power I would force every loudmouth who talks about lazy welfare people to stand outside that store and beg for work.

The real truth is that many people who are on welfare do work. But their wages are so low they need welfare in order to survive.

From 1977 to 1989, the poorest fifth of American families saw their incomes drop by more than 10 percent, to \$8391 annually, while the incomes of the rich-

est fifth grew by more than 25 percent to \$109,424 annually. In the 1980s, 80 percent of all jobs created paid less than \$8,000 per year.

Taxes on the poor and working class have skyrocketed while taxes on the rich have dropped steadily for the past 20 years. Now the politicians and the capitalist class are demanding even more tax cuts for the corporations, saying this is the way to end the recession.

In a way, they're right. Capitalists are not investing because profits are too low. To raise profits, among other things, it's necessary to mercilessly tax the working-class poor and cut social services such as education, health, and welfare.

And then, the Democratic and Republican Party state and federal governments simply hand over billions of our taxes to bail out bankrupt banks and corporations.

That's the new AFDC swindle (Aid For Dependent Capitalists) that California's Governor Wilson and all the other political puppets of the ruling class are pulling off.

I want to wish all of our readers a great, militant, fighting new year!

—January 1992

## The United States v. Cuba

"Remember that here you stand in line for bread, but there you stand in line for work. Sooner or later here you get the bread, and jobs are guaranteed. But there?"

The "there" is the United States. That is a quote from an article by Mary Jo McConahay called "Sugar Cane Communism," which was printed in the Jan. 12 *Image* magazine section of the *San Francisco Examiner*.

While the writer describes the hardships being faced by the Cuban people, she also is even-handed in showing the support of the Cubans for their country and its leader, Fidel Castro, and their willingness to sacrifice for their homeland.

A comparison between the Cuban people and their hardships and the working people of the United States would quickly reveal why the majority of Cubans are willing to sacrifice, while the working class and the poor of this country are angry and resentful.

Listen to a Cuban woman, Rosamaria, talk of her country. "I don't know if I could survive capitalism.... I am afraid I will be marginalized in a non-socialist system," she says. She deeply fears a world where competition is important, where there is a vast gap in the standard of living between rich and poor. She has never known such a gap.

Can you imagine any poor person in the United States who has never felt the gap between the rich and the poor? Even capitalist economists are "worried" about the growing number of "have-nots" on one side and the super-rich on the other.

McConahay continues in her article, "After 30 years of social revolution, there are no bums, no more gaps between the glittery rich and the miserable poor, no

more desperate prostitution.”

She goes on to report on Cuba’s controversial AIDS policy. “Cuba’s AIDS policy is draconian and effective. Those infected with the virus live in one of the 11 sanitariums that are scattered across the island. From 200 cases in 1986, the number has risen to only 676, of which 54 have died.

“Despite cutbacks almost everywhere else, the state is maintaining its expenditure of \$15,000 a year per patient—about five times the average yearly wage—at this sanitarium. It is a sprawling country estate that feels at first like a rural resort. Overhead are tropical fruit trees—orange, mango, avocado. Patients live individually or as couples in their own houses with televisions, kitchen appliances, and the tools of their trade.

“Patients at the sanitarium continue to receive the salary they earned on the outside. They can choose the kind of treatment they want or no treatment at all. Cuba produces its own Interferon. AZT is expensive because the U.S. embargo means the drug must be purchased from third countries at inflated prices, but it too is free to those who want it.”

Dr. Jorge Perez, the director of the sanitarium, allows three-day passes on weekends and sometimes leave during the week for those they deem “responsible.” Among the staff are medical personnel who are also residents because they are HIV-positive: five doctors, eight nurses, and four medical students. “This makes the level of trust very deep with other patients,” Perez says.

At the sanitarium patients get married, have relatives who are not HIV-positive visit, and work alongside other workers who are not HIV-positive.

Odaline Reyes is a 22-year-old nursery school teacher who lives at the sanitarium with her 2-year-old daughter, who is not HIV-positive. She divorced her husband from whom she contracted the disease. There is no division between heterosexual and homosexual patients at the sanitarium.

McConahay tells of meeting a 60-year-old cigar maker. When he found out she was from San Francisco, he took her into his house and showed her a picture of his nephew. The picture lay flat on a table under glass and sprinkled round with fresh yellow flowers like an icon. The young man died of AIDS in San Francisco in January.

“I know it’s a mortal sickness wherever it strikes,” the cigar-maker mused. “But we have these sanitariums here now, you know. I keep thinking if he were home he might have lived longer.”

Personally, I am opposed to a quarantine of HIV-positive or AIDS-infected patients. Even in Cuba, it is probably not necessary. But Cuba is a poor country which does not even produce condoms and must sacrifice to import them.

In the United States—the so-called “land of the free”—there has been a cut in funds for HIV-positive or AIDS patients. President Bush very seldom allows the “A” word to slip through his slimy lips. While the U.S. is cutting its health budget, it is planning to purchase 6724 new military tanks at a price of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million each.

How many AIDS patients could that money save? While children are dying from measles and whooping cough, and while an epidemic of tuberculosis infections is killing off AIDS victims, Bush and the other politicians are spending billions on weapons.

Two hundred thousand of our youngest people have already died from this vicious disease. How can we stop it?

This country needs to develop another program like the “Manhattan Project.” At the beginning of the Second World War, this government started to develop the atomic bomb. Money was no object. They secured from around the world the best scientists and technicians. They provided them with homes, salaries, and the best scientific equipment and laboratories available.

They did not leave it up to private enterprise. The effort was a completely social effort organized and financed by the government. Of course, the bomb was developed and used to murder hundreds of thousands of Japanese people.

If we want to cure AIDS, we need an AIDS research-and-development campaign on the order of the Manhattan Project. Secure the brightest and most capable minds in the scientific and medical world. Build them the best laboratories possible. Spare no expense. Give them full salary so they can devote 100 percent of their time to finding a cure. Do not allow one private enterprise corporation to stick their fingers in the pie. Only the broadest exchange of information and experiments will allow for speeding the way toward a cure.

The United States is the wealthiest country in the world. But this government puts profits before human needs. That is why the military budget continues to go up and our human needs budget continues to go down. Only a massive, unified fightback against this rotten capitalist economic system that takes from the poor and gives to the rich can change it.

That’s what the Cuban people did in 1959. They took their country out of the hands of the rich and built a society which put human needs of the great majority before profits for the tiny minority of millionaires and billionaires.

And that’s why both political parties want to crush Cuba—because it remains a shining example for the poor, oppressed, and exploited of the world.

—February 1992

## ‘Democracy’ v. Human Rights

In a 1983 referendum in Ireland, voters narrowly approved a constitutional amendment that made all terminations of pregnancy illegal, even those resulting from rape. Because of this so-called “exercise in democracy,” a 14-year-old rape victim has been denied her human right to end a pregnancy imposed on her by force and violence. By law, she must give birth to a child after having been raped by her best friend’s father. Ireland’s second-highest court issued a permanent injunction preventing the 14-year-old girl from traveling to Britain where she

could have a legal abortion.

In his ruling, Judge Declan Costello of the High Court of Ireland said that the girl had repeatedly threatened to commit suicide if she could not have the abortion, and he acknowledged that the case was a “tragedy which involves a great measure of human suffering.” But the judge ruled that under the Irish constitution’s ban on abortion he had no choice but to issue the court order barring the operation.

Between 4000 to 7000 women cross the Irish Sea every year to seek abortions in England and Wales, where they are legal. The judge’s ruling would make criminals of them all, as well as anyone who assists them. Therefore it is important to know how this teenager’s intentions came to the attention of Irish authorities.

It all started when her parents asked police whether they should retain tissue samples from the fetus—after the abortion—for use in criminal proceedings over the rape charge. The Irish forces of law and order said absolutely not! Thus the rape victim was put in a classic “Catch 22” trap: The court prevented her from having an abortion. Thus, a crucial element of proof for convicting the man who raped her was blocked by the same court’s action. And if she carries the pregnancy to term, the crime against this 14-year-old girl is immeasurably worsened.

Apologists for such social injustice will argue: “But, the people of Ireland approved this law in a democratic referendum.” Leaving aside, for now, how “democratic” the electoral procedure in capitalist “democracies” like Ireland really is, putting basic human rights up for a vote is an outrageous social injustice.

We have such a case in South Africa today. There the white minority has been asked by the head of that government to vote on whether or not apartheid—the juridical denial of human rights to the Black majority—shall remain the law of the land. Any bets on the outcome of that election?

We also had such an infamous instance of “democracy” when slavery was instituted in this country and “democratically” upheld for over 80 years after the Declaration of Independence. That historic document declared that “all men are created equal.” It failed to mention either Black people or women as having been created equal. We’re still paying for that one.

And after slavery was abolished, “Jim Crow” law—the American version of apartheid—was “democratically” upheld for nearly 100 years by the United States Supreme Court and both houses of Congress. And to this day, despite the Black movement’s successful overthrow of “Jim Crow,” de facto second class citizenship for Blacks still prevails.

But these instances of legal hypocrisy are only a drop in the bucket. American democracy is spotted by many other atrocities such as the branding of all American citizens of Japanese descent as dangerous to this country and then locking them up in concentration camps to be kept prisoner without trial during most of World War II.

And in another sphere of human rights, just last year the “democratically elect-

ed” House of Representatives and President of the United States forced striking railroad workers back to work under a contract imposed on them—in flagrant violation of the Constitution which proscribes involuntary servitude.

Voting on human rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and the simple pursuit of happiness is a ruling class trick.

No one has a right to vote on my right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness—no matter how unhappy it makes them. And as long as the system of capitalist “democracy” compels me to yield my rights to someone else, my human rights are violated.

What is happening to that 14-year-old young woman in Ireland is now a threat to young women everywhere and to all who love and care for them.

Whether it is “democratically elected” politicians who make the laws, or whether it is “impartial” judges who will “interpret” them, we don’t have to accept their assault on our rights. We still have the right, and the duty, to get out there into the streets, in great numbers, and just say, “NO! We will not tolerate your assault on our basic rights—not without a fight!”

All supporters of the right to choose must come out to march and protest in San Francisco on Sunday, March 29, and again in Washington D. C. on April 5, against the mounting attack on women’s rights.

**LET’S MARCH IN SOLIDARITY WITH OUR YOUNG SISTER IN IRELAND!**

—March 1992

## Stick ’em Up, Kid: Hand Over Your School!

The voucher fraud is back again, this time under the title, “Parental Choice Scholarships” initiative. Hustlers are out on the streets collecting petitions to place this disgrace on the November 1992 ballot in California.

It would be a constitutional amendment because it would require using public school funds for private and religious schools. The initiative transfers funds directly out of the public schools and offers a “scholarship” voucher that can be claimed by any student attending a private school, with no accountability placed on the school.

If a “Tammy Faye Bakker’s Christian Elementary School for Cosmetics and Music” had pupils, they could get their share of public school funds. Or a “David Duke Elementary School of Hype and Hyperbole” could also stick their slimy hands into children’s pockets and pull out \$2500 for their “white students only” school.

It’s a sure bet that if this bunco initiative is passed, “fast buck” artists like Bakker and Duke would open their private school doors the very next week.

Parents of public school children are critical of the education their children are receiving, and every school district across the country is papering the country

with this year's latest improvement plan, which usually includes adjusting to school fund cutbacks by laying off more teachers, office personnel, librarians, school nurses, social workers, etc.

In other words, as far as educating our children, they are fighting off a tidal wave of funding cuts with a sieve. So every year educational standards go down and the right-wing religious sharks await the final sinking of the public educational system with "voucher initiatives."

What would it take to save our schools and educate our children? First, put teachers in the classrooms. That helps! Lower the class size to no more than 20. With 20, rather than 40 children per class, the teacher would actually get to know each of her or his pupils and their needs. Every school should have after-school recreation and remedial classes with qualified, credentialed teachers.

Every elementary school should have attached to it an early childhood development center. These centers should be open to all children, regardless of family income, from the age of two. These centers should have qualified, early childhood development-credentialed teachers.

All schools should have free meals, free medical care, free transportation, and parent education classes. Schools should stay open until six o'clock for the convenience of working parents.

They should be bi-lingual and include all of the arts, music, dance, and sports, such as gymnastics, etc., free! This would give our children a very early knowledge of the workings of their wonderful young bodies and minds. It would encourage them to keep themselves healthy forever.

The majority of children in public schools are being raised by one or two working parents. These parents need an expanded support system to help them raise healthy, well-educated children. Only the public schools can provide it.

Unlike the 1930s and '40s, when most jobs required fewer skills in math, language and science, today's job market requires far higher knowledge and skills. Most youngsters did not graduate from high school in the '30s and '40s, but managed to make a living and support a family as blue collar workers. Not today. It almost takes a college degree to get through the door to apply for any job.

What's wrong with the system? The ruling class of this country wants to take back the social gains won by working people in great class battles.

Workers fought for federally-funded social support systems, like compulsory education through public schools, old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, and medical care.

These reforms were originally designed to make the capitalists pay for programs intended to guarantee that every child, every sick person, every senior citizen, every worker thrown on the scrap heap of the unemployed, had a fighting chance to survive in this dog-eat-dog capitalist world.

Now, the ruling class is trying to cut back on all of these gains, especially public education for our children. They want to place the burden of education direct-



ly on the family. They want to take public school tax monies and give them to the rich in the form of even more tax breaks.

That's why we now have the "voucher" initiative. They are trying to get thousands of signatures to put what is really a child-abuse initiative on the ballot. It will amount to a mass escalation of child-victimization to allow only those who can afford it to get a decent education.

If approved, the rest of our children—working class children—will have to scramble for class seats in even more overcrowded, unhealthy, dangerous schools. JUST SAY NO! to the voucher initiative. —April 1992

## **The Link Between Buffalo and Peoria**

In the last few weeks, we have witnessed two historically important struggles for workers' constitutional rights. In Peoria, Ill., the workers of Caterpillar were fighting for their constitutional right to freedom of assembly, the right to free speech, and the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

And even more important, they were fighting for the right to earn a decent living. All of these rights have been denied to them by the laws, the court system, the police, and the Caterpillar bosses.

In Buffalo, N.Y., we are watching another massive struggle for women's reproductive rights. Once again, the capitalists and all their agencies are scheming to deny women their fundamental right to freedom of assembly, free speech, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—and most of all, their right to control their very own bodies.

### **Need for solidarity**

Both of these battles are working-class battles. The outcome of the Caterpillar strike is of immediate importance to those heroic pro-choice fighters in Buffalo. And the Buffalo fight is of immediate importance to those Caterpillar workers who fought hard against their bosses but lost because of a "leadership" that refused to lead an effective fightback.

In Buffalo, however, the pro-choice forces are taking command of their own defense lines and are not allowing the Operation Rescue scabs to cross. They have massed by the hundreds to defend their clinics and have set an example to all workers: Don't let the scabs through, hold the fort!

In Peoria, the scabs were allowed through picket lines by official union policy. The pickets were warned by their union officials against blocking the plant gates.

One of the slogans in Buffalo used against the fetus-fetishists is, "Pray, you'll need it, your cause has been defeated!" The same "right-to-lifers" who are attempting to take reproductive rights away from women today, will be among the "right-to-work" scabs tomorrow.

Solidarity is a life or death necessity. The fight of women to control their own

bodies is a working-class issue. Every worker, male or female, is forced to support their families by selling their labor power. If they cannot control the size of their families, they are at the greater mercy of greedy employers, like Caterpillar. The more children you have, the more you need to “dance with the devil” every month to stretch your paycheck. Every victory by the workers for higher wages is a victory for working men and all women.

### **A fighting fist**

There was a time when every worker knew this in their bones. In the 1930s, the organizing drive of the CIO played a role in molding every worker—male, female, old, young, Black and white—into a united, fighting fist.

In Detroit, the UAW marched 5000-strong to defend a Black community when sheriffs were trying to evict them. Such picket lines and social battles were the force behind employer concessions such as unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, and other social-welfare programs grudgingly granted to all workers—organized and unorganized.

But it has been many years since the labor movement earned the reputation of being the defender and champion of all of capitalism’s victims. To defend workers’ interests in the big struggles ahead, the labor movement must once again reestablish itself as the champion of the working class and all its historic allies—especially those in the women’s and Black and Latino movements for social, economic and political justice.

Can you visualize the impact that would be made if great numbers of trade-union members, with their union banners flying, were standing beside their sisters and brothers in Buffalo, defending the clinics in a united fight for the right of women to control their own bodies?

Such an action would send a signal to all capitalists and their agents that an injury to women, to Blacks, to labor, is an injury to all!

It’s important to learn from history. To know that women by the tens of thousands marched and fought for the eight-hour day along with their union sisters and brothers. That mass women’s organizations fought against slavery, against child labor, and for public education, as well as for women’s rights. Women joined the fight for the right to organize into a union in little towns and big cities all across this country in the 1930s.

I know this for a fact. My grandmother was one of those low-paid, unskilled working women who helped organize the CIO in Middletown, Ohio, in those hard times. She fought with a passion, knowing it was for all women like her and for all working people.

Only this kind of unity can stop the Caterpillar example from spreading. United we stand, divided we fall. Sound familiar? That’s what it’s all about.

—May 1992

## Is It Justice or ‘Just Us?’

“In America justice means ‘just us’ white folk.” That’s a quote from H. Rap Brown, one of the leaders of the Black movement for justice in the 1960s and 70s in the United States. After the Rodney King verdict it seems more apt than ever. All over the world there are Rodney Kings being ground down into the dirt, beaten, kicked and brutalized by “official” law and order thugs. In Israel, justice for Palestinians means “just us” Zionists. In South Africa, justice, again, means “just us” white folk. In Northern Ireland, justice means “just us” pro-English Protestants.

The police represent an occupying army in the Black communities of the United States. They are there not to protect African American citizens from crime, but to repress any attempt by them to resist criminal capitalist persecution, exploitation, and oppression. At the same time that the mouthpieces of the oppressive system cry crocodile tears over the poverty and the racial injustice in America’s central cities, they seek to drown out the cries of pain with the loudest denunciations against “violence as a means of righting wrongs.”

Israeli “just us” is another example of oppression of a people by a racist oppressor. The Zionists are trying to solve the “Palestinian problem” just as Hitler tried to solve the “Jewish problem.” There is a difference in scale. But that’s only because Palestinians are the great majority and a final solution is not within the capability of Zionism.

Just a look at the May 1992 murders of Palestinians by the Zionist settler-state will reveal Israel’s hidden agenda against a whole people. Since the beginning of the Intifada over 1,064 Palestinians have been killed.

MAY 2: Antone Louis Shoumali, 22, from Beit Shour was shot and killed by Israeli border guards in the Bethlehem area. Shoumali was a business administration student at Bethlehem University. He died from three bullet wounds to his chest.

MAY 3: Majed Muhammad Nahhal, 14, from Jabalya refugee camp in Gaza, died of gunshot wounds in the head from Israeli soldiers who were in the camp.

MAY 4: Basem Abdel Hafez Awwad, 17, in Deir al-balah, Gaza Strip was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers. Awwad was killed by two bullets and his body was taken from the hospital and buried at a mass funeral.

MAY 5: Zakaria Mahmoud Mushtahi, 44, a resident of Shajaiyeh quarter of Gaza City, died in Barzali Hospital from gunshot wounds sustained after being shot by Israeli soldiers. Ahmad Muhammad Barakat, 25 from Ein Beit Elma refugee camp was shot and killed by an Israeli prison guard.

MAY 7: Israeli soldiers shot and critically wounded two Palestinians in Sa’ir, Hebron area. The two injured Palestinians will be arrested after they leave the Ramallah Hospital.

MAY 8: Mahmoud Issa al-Shalalkeh, 23, from Sa’ir, died in Ramallah Hospital from wounds sustained the day before when Israeli soldiers shot him. Sadeq

Ramadan Da'na, 16, was shot and killed in Hebron by Israeli soldiers.

These are Palestinian people who were murdered by Israeli soldiers from May 2 through May 8. But this only scratches the surface of the Israeli version of “just us.”

There is first and foremost the economic crimes against the Palestinian people, the unemployment imposed on this people, the second-tier wage status imposed on them, the curfews, the homes destroyed and the unrecorded number of Palestinians killed and wounded during the same period. And just as in the case of Rodney King, each brutal murder is blamed upon the victim.

Whenever an oppressed people fight their oppressors this kind of “justice” will prevail. But there will come a time when the oppressed will turn the tables. It will be our turn, no matter whether it will be begun by Palestinians in Israel; Blacks in South Africa; Blacks, Latinos and women in this country; or whether it will begin by a generalized rebellion of the working class somewhere in the world.

Don't give up. Do not despair. We will prevail. We will win because there are more of us than them. That's why their guiding strategy is “Divide and Rule! and ours is “An injury to one is an injury to all!” —June 1992

## Supreme Court Guts Right to Choose

**(Independent mass actions needed: no confidence in Democrats or Republicans!)**

A devastating blow has been struck against a woman's right to choose. On June 29, the U.S. Supreme Court announced its long-awaited decision on a Pennsylvania law that makes it more difficult for women to obtain abortions.

In a five-to-four majority opinion, the court upheld almost every restriction in the case known as *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 91-744, thereby giving states the power to erect legal roadblocks to obtaining an abortion.

Although the majority opinion claimed to reaffirm *Roe*, in reality the Court's decision has eviscerated *Roe*'s true meaning—that a state has no right to interfere with a woman's private choice in the first trimester of pregnancy.

The June 29 decision is boldly political. All of the major presidential candidates—Clinton, Bush, and Perot—support restrictions on a women's right to an abortion. A White House advisor told the press that President Bush was pleased by the decision.

The ruling is also in complete accord with the strategy of national anti-choice groups, which have announced their intention to avoid campaigning for a direct and unambiguous overturning of *Roe*. Instead, these anti-choice fanatics seek to eliminate—through abortion clinic blockades and harassment campaigns—the fundamental democratic right to make personal decisions regarding abortion, contraception, childbirth, and the family.

The ruling will certainly encourage the right-wing religious mobs who gather at health clinics to deny women their right to choose.

While using the language of “reaffirmation,” the Court upheld Pennsylvania’s mandatory delay; biased counseling provision; “informed” parental consent; and the statute’s dangerously narrow emergency exception.

The restrictions that were upheld require:

- 1) Women to wait 24 hours after they decide they want an abortion;
- 2) Doctors to advise women of the potential dangers of abortion, all alternatives to abortion, and to show photos of fetal development;
- 3) Doctors to keep detailed records, subject to public disclosure, on each abortion performed;
- 4) Minors seeking an abortion must obtain permission in writing from a parent or a judge.

The only provision struck down by the Court was the spousal notification requirement, which the Court found to be an “undue burden” on a married women’s right to obtain an abortion.

By upholding virtually all of the Pennsylvania statute while still claiming to reaffirm Roe, the Court is attempting to deceive the American public about the true nature of this decision. In this regard, the capitalist media are being very cooperative, if the San Francisco newspapers give any indication.

In the June 29 *San Francisco Examiner*, the headline screamed, “Abortion Restrictions Upheld.” In the *San Francisco Chronicle* on the following day, the press gave the decision a different spin with the headline, “Court Upholds Right to Abortion.”

But it was Chief Justice Rehnquist—who along with Justices White, Scalia, and Thomas wrote a minority opinion in favor of overturning Roe—who really understood the ramifications of the Court’s decision. “Roe continues to exist,” he said, “but only in the way a storefront on a Western movie set exists: A mere facade to give the illusion of reality.”

### **Court eroded a constitutional right**

The Court, in effect, has qualitatively eroded Roe by ceasing to treat the right to choose as a fundamental constitutional right deserving the highest level of protection against government interference.

According to the Court’s majority decision, “a finding of an undue burden is a shorthand for the conclusion that a state regulation has the purpose or effect of placing a substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking an abortion of a non-viable fetus.” It states that a statute imposing such a burden is invalid.

However, under the Pennsylvania test, only the husband notification provision was found to be an “undue burden,” although all of the other challenged provisions of the Pennsylvania law also impose “substantial obstacles” on women seeking abortion.

The new criterion of “undue burden” replaces the previous standard where states had to show a “compelling interest” for restricting a women’s right to choose. The Court’s decision indicates it feels that states now have a “compelling

interest” to restrict women’s rights if those restrictions don’t create an “undue burden.”

Legal experts feel that although this ruling leaves no clear standard by which lower courts can judge abortion restrictions in the future, the vast majority of restrictions found unconstitutional since 1973 would now be permissible. Indeed, the very restrictions that the Court upheld this term were struck down as “unconstitutional” in 1986.

### **What will the impact be?**

The most immediate impact of this reactionary decision will be felt by the women of Pennsylvania. The lower courts of that state will begin to implement the decision within 30 days. There will be an additional undetermined period of time during which the district court will rule on whether Pennsylvania’s husband notice provision is severable from the rest of the statute, or whether the entire statute must fail because spousal notification is unconstitutional.

Even if the district court holds that the remainder of the statute can go into effect, there will be a further period of time in which it must decide whether the state is adequately prepared to administer the provisions that were upheld.

The immediate long-term effect of the decision means that almost insurmountable obstacles have been placed to access to abortion for working-class women, poor women, and women from oppressed minorities.

Already, over 20 percent of American women who want abortions can’t get them, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In terms of facilities available for performing abortions, one quarter of them are performed in five metropolitan areas where only 14 percent of women of reproductive age live: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. In some states, like North Dakota, there are no abortion services available at all.

Nine states are already waiting in the wings to establish restrictions. Louisiana, Utah, and the territory of Guam have already enacted draconian laws that make abortion illegal except in life-threatening situations.

Other states with restrictive abortion rulings were waiting for this decision to see if they could enforce their own anti-choice laws. The Court’s decision has opened wide the floodgates.

The immediate response of women’s groups will be to mobilize the anger against this decision into campaigning for “pro-choice” candidates—mostly Democrats—in the November elections and electing a “veto-proof” Congress for a Freedom of Choice Act, which would codify Roe.

Unfortunately, this strategy will suffer the same fate as the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), when Democratic Party “friends of women” changed their votes and scuttled the ERA.

Every attack against Roe since its enactment in 1973 has had a consciously anti-working class bias—from the Hyde Amendment in 1976, which prohibited

public funds being used for abortions for poor women; the Webster decision in 1989, which upheld the state of Missouri's right to ban abortions in public hospitals; to President Bush's "gag order" in 1990, preventing federally-funded clinics from even talking about the option of abortion. The cutting edge of the Supreme Court's decision is to further make life miserable for working people in this country—especially women.

The American people support the unrestricted right to abortion by 58 percent to 20 percent. In the past few years, pro-choice clinic defenders have out-mobilized the anti-choice zealots by more than two to one. That's what we must continue to do.

We must mobilize massive demonstrations in the streets, independent of the two political parties—the Democrats and Republicans—who have shown that they are absolutely gutless when it comes to our constitutional rights.

They have proven that they are the problem—not the solution. —July 1992

## Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Mumia Abu-Jamal is sitting on death row, accused of killing a policeman, because of his involvement with the Philadelphia MOVE organization.

I know you will remember the horror of the police bombing of the MOVE headquarters in 1985. The helicopter bombing left 11 members of MOVE dead, including five young children. They also destroyed several blocks of homes in a mainly Black community.

Blacks were outraged by this wanton slaughter and destruction within their community by the Philadelphia cops. They knew that the cops would never have wreaked such destruction to exterminate a handful of people attempting to show their hatred of racist oppression if the targeted victims lived in the midst of a white community.

The police attack against MOVE began many years earlier. In 1978 over 600 heavily armed police laid siege to the MOVE home in Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood. (Jamal had first come to the defense of the MOVE organization at this time.)

MOVE was an organization within the Black community which was fighting against police harassment.

In fact, Mayor Wilson Goode, was elected in opposition to the former mayor, Frank Rizzo—an open racist. Mayor Goode was the first Black to be elected as mayor of Philadelphia. It was this Black Democrat who gave the order to use aerial bombing against the MOVE organization. He wanted to prove his loyalty to the white ruling class of Philadelphia and his willingness to sacrifice the Black community in order to advance his own career.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's history is that of many young Black men. At the age of 13, Jamal came to the attention of the Philadelphia cops and was beaten and arrest-

ed for protesting against a rally for the racist governor of Alabama, George Wallace. The rally was held in Philadelphia and was supported by Mayor Rizzo.

In 1968, at the age of 14, Jamal was co-founder and Minister of Information of the Philadelphia Black Panther Party. Jamal wrote for the Black Panther newspaper.

In 1980, at age 26, Jamal was elected president of the Association of Black Journalists. He was named by Philadelphia Magazine as one of its 81 “people to watch” in 1981. The cops felt the same way. He became one of their “people to watch.”

On Dec. 9, 1981, the Philadelphia cops tried to kill Jamal in the streets. He was hospitalized with a bleeding stomach wound and was arrested for killing a policeman.

At his trial, with only one Black person on the jury, the prosecutor secured the death sentence. One of the prosecution’s central arguments was that Jamal should be condemned to death because his political history and beliefs warranted a presumption of guilt.

A petition for review of his case has been filed in the U. S. Supreme Court. Over 20,000 people and organizations around the world have signed statements demanding Jamal not be executed. Among those organizations are the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Conference of Black Lawyers, who have filed an *amicus curiae* brief in his behalf. **YOU CAN HELP!**

Tax-deductible contributions for his defense should be sent to the Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked “Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense,” c/o Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky, and Lieberman, 740 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. **STOP THIS LEGAL LYNCHING!** —July 1992

## **What Socialist Action Is All About**

Socialist Action came toward the end of its ninth year with a national convention that lasted from July 29 until August 2. Our members are revolutionaries, many of whom have been engaged in all of the struggles of the American working people from the 1930s through today.

Socialist Action members were part of the struggles against racism and sexism, for the right to organize unions and to strike, and in opposition to imperialist wars.

At the present time, we are engaged in defending our health clinics against Operation Rescue. Some of the same people who beat the scabs down on the picket lines of the 1930s, are today up at dawn to defend our abortion clinics from the big-mouth minority who want women, especially teenagers, to return to “coathanger” and back-alley abortions.

Along with our home-grown fighters, we had guests at the convention from Black South Africa, Europe, and Latin America. All of us have the same enemy—the capitalist class.

As revolutionary working-class socialists, we are enthusiastic about the future.



We know that there are really two worlds, the world of the exploiters and the world of the exploited. As in our own land, every country has two traditions—that of the oppressor and of the oppressed.

Our America was born from the Revolution of 1776. Workers, farmers, and enslaved people, Black and white, took on the King of England and all his horses and men, and kicked their butts all the way back across the Atlantic Ocean.

Again, in 1861-65, our America fought and died to rid this country of the scourge of slavery. It was the poor, the oppressed and the exploited—along with the slaves themselves—who did the fighting and dying. (The rich could literally buy exemption from the draft.)

Since that time, however, our world has witnessed one horrible war after another. Each time, the sons of working people are sent to kill the sons of workers of other lands. All the killing is done only to line the pockets of capitalists. And the technology of killing is made ever more efficient and extended to include women and children and other non-combatants.

Every day, moreover, tens of thousands of men, women, and children starve to death. Every day, increasing poverty means that millions are condemned by capitalism to malnutrition, outright starvation, and disease.

Despite fantastic advancements in science and technology, misery grows every day. It has reached the point where millions of people wonder whether the human race, and life itself, will survive on this planet.

Imperialism, with American capitalism at its head, is in each country based on a small minority of capitalists, landlords, and militarists who, thinking they own the Earth and everything on it, will stop at nothing—including nuclear annihilation, if necessary—to keep it for themselves.

But Socialist Action is confident that our world, the world of the exploited and oppressed masses, will ultimately prevail over the world of the capitalists. Our world includes everyone struggling for freedom; from Black Africa to Black America, from neo-colonialized Asia to Latin America.

Our world includes women everywhere who struggle for social and economic justice. It includes all who must battle for their daily bread. It includes everyone who marches against imperialist war; everyone who fights against the destruction of the balance of life on Earth.

Our world includes all true artists (i.e., artists who tell the truth). It includes the rap singers, the poets and painters. Those whose words and images give hope and enlightenment to the poor, and nightmares to the rich.

Our world does not include those who advocate political support for the enemy class. It does not include those who say, "Vote for the lesser evil even if it means holding your nose." It doesn't include those who preach that "workers and bosses are partners." It doesn't include those who preach servility and capitulation to the social vampires and parasites of the world of capitalism.

Our world will come to understand that when the exploited and oppressed

unite in a common struggle, we can change everything. And in the words of one of my favorite pioneer revolutionary socialists\*, we must:

“Throw out the profit and rent hogs, and increase the living standard of the people who do useful work.

“Assure freedom and democratic rights to all, not forgetting those who are denied any semblance of them now.

“Call back the truculent admirals from the seven seas—and ground the airplanes with their dangling bombs.

“Hold out the hand of friendship and comradely help to the oppressed and hungry people in the world.”

But to accomplish this goal requires building a party that has absorbed the lessons of history. It is indispensable for bringing capitalist insanity to an end once and for all. That’s what Socialist Action is all about.

\*James P. Cannon, 1890-1974, was a founder and leader of the Communist Party up until his expulsion for opposition to Stalinism in 1928. He went on to be a central leader of the American and world Trotskyist (i.e., revolutionary Marxist) movement and its organizational expression, the Fourth International. —August 1992

## You’ve got to be Taught to Hate

The Rev. Pat Robertson is doing his best to live up to the song from South Pacific that explains how it is necessary to begin teaching hate at an early age.

Robertson wrote a letter to Iowa voters in opposition to a state Equal Rights Amendment, which will be voted on Nov 3. In it, he stated that the proposal is not about equal rights for women but part of a “feminist agenda.”

He raved on, “It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians.” Believe it or not, this is what he wrote!

In his letter, which was mailed to thousands of voters, the old Bible-thumper did not mention in which order these activities were to be carried out. Should women kill their children before leaving their husbands, or should these socialist feminists simply destroy capitalism first and then carry on with this very demanding agenda? Should all of this be done on their lunch break or after the women come home from work and have prepared supper? Or should they just send out for pizza and then commence these mammoth chores?

Rev. Pat simply doesn’t supply enough details. But he is certainly willing to peddle this garbage to thousands of voters in Iowa.

Three hundred years ago, in Salem, Mass., little children would fall down and writhe in pain at the sight of a woman who was thought to be a witch. Can you visualize what the children of Iowa will do when they are told that not only does

their mommy want to kill daddy but them also? How many will fight going to sleep at night fearing at what moment mother will strike?

What is amazing is that some mental health workers haven't yet strapped a straight-jacket around the Rev. Robertson and put him away. But remember, he is a major spokesman for the Bush election campaign. He also gets heavy support from the capitalist class. Why? Because he and the rest of his sewer-mouthed evangelist ilk are needed by the ruling class to protect their right to exploit and oppress the overwhelming majority of the people.

The ruling-rich are a small minority in this country. They are, of course, protected by the two political parties—Democrats and Republicans—by the armed forces, the police, and all other institutions of state power. But they are still a tiny minority compared to the millions of working people. So capitalism needs this incipient-fascist bunch to help divide the majority. That is the only way they can maintain their power.

Women want equal pay for work of comparable value. They want affirmative action to guarantee them equal access to better paying jobs and they want child-care for their children when they are forced to work to support their families. Women support an Equal Rights Amendment because they have never had equal rights and do not have them now. Do these demands threaten America? No, sir! Do they threaten capitalist profits? Yes indeed!

The labor power of women has been used as a great resource for superprofits. Women and Blacks in this country have always been put back, condemned to be part of the "reserve army of unemployed" that is used to keep wages down as low as possible for all workers—male, female, Black, and white.

Women's labor has historically been undervalued and underpaid. For poor working-class women working conditions and wage differences are even worse today. Two out of three poor adults are women and one out of five children is poor. Women head half of all poor families, and over half the children in female-headed families are poor—as are 50 percent of white children and 68 percent of Black and Latino children.

A woman over 60 years of age is almost twice as likely as her male counterpart to be impoverished. One-fifth of all elderly women are poor. Among Black women over 65 and living alone, the poverty rate was 82 percent in 1982. Fifty percent of women with children over age six are working outside of their homes. Most must work to help feed, cloth and house their families.

More women are working outside their homes because working-class families have taken a beating economically. In 1991, the number of jobless persons in the United States was 16 million—a jobless rate of 13 percent. The government's "official" unemployment rate (which is a joke) is 6.7 percent.

Even more important, by the beginning of 1992, average weekly wages for production workers in U.S. industry, adjusted for inflation, had fallen to 79.7 percent of their level in 1973. At the same time, there was a sharp increase in inequal-

ity of income distribution in the United States. The position of the bottom 20 percent was worse than it was in 1947.

By far the greatest loss of jobs, 2.2 million from 1979 to 1991, has occurred in the highest paying manufacturing jobs. By contrast, the service producing sector of the economy has generated 21.8 million jobs during the same years. However, 73.5 percent of these jobs are in the two lowest paying categories of the service sector, namely, retail trade and health and business service. The majority of workers in this sector are women.

These are the reasons that more women are demanding not only control over their own reproductive lives but full equality on the job and equal access to better paying jobs. This is bad news for capitalists, and is the reason the most holy Rev. Pat Robertson is working so hard to teach people to hate. And especially to hate women. —September 1992

## **This Columbus Day Is for ‘Pink Mary’**

I am going to tell you about my grandmother, “Pink Mary,” who was a Cherokee Indian from Kentucky. Her father, my great grandfather, was Chief Blue Moon Mann.

When I was young and being raised by my grandmother, I was never told she was an Indian. She had married my grandfather, James Ellsworth Wright, who was English, Scots, and Irish. And that’s what my family wanted the world to believe.

I was 12 years old before I knew for a fact that my grandmother was an Indian. In fact, the first inkling I got about her Indian heritage was when my uncles or my aunts would call her an “old squaw” in anger. She had long black hair; so long she could sit on it. And she wore it around her head in braids.

I remember my aunts pleading with her to bob her hair because she looked like an “old squaw.” They wanted her to wear make-up—but she wouldn’t. They wanted her to shorten her dresses—she wouldn’t. She was that way as long as I can remember her. Something in her wouldn’t let her change to keep up with the changing world.

Now, I respect that feeling. Then, I just thought she was old-fashioned and ignorant.

She gave birth to 18 children. She had professional help, a midwife, only with the first. All the others were delivered with the help of my grandfather. She had three sets of twins, and my mother, Alice, and her brother, were one of those sets of twins.

My uncle Crit, my mother’s twin, was also called “the Indian.” His hair was black and his eyes were even blacker. My mother had blue eyes and brown hair. They called my uncle “the Indian” because he lived off the land in Kentucky.

When uncle Crit was 12 years old, he went into the coal mines and worked until he was 40. By that time, he got black lung disease and could not mine coal

any more. But all his life he spent as much time as possible living and hunting in the deep forest of the Kentucky mountains.

He hunted and trapped squirrels, foxes, possums, and rabbits. He sent my grandmother packages of herbs, roots, and a variety of leaves to make medicine. He also sent her wild honey from a bee hive deep in the heart of the forest. Crit hated the city, unlike his brothers and sisters, who had moved to Lexington with my grandmother. His ability to live all alone (except for a hunting dog) in the great woods of Kentucky was not only not appreciated but scorned.

My mother and father had divorced and my brothers and sisters and I were left with my grandmother. My father had gone to live in Ohio and my mother had joined her two sisters in New York City. My brother, sister, and I went to New York for one summer when I was 12.

We stayed in a furnished apartment in Bensonhurst, in Brooklyn. We southern children became the talk of the neighborhood kids, who were all Jewish. They kept asking if we were "Polacks."

(I was to learn later that this was a derogatory name some called people of Polish ancestry. But I think many kids who used the term didn't know it was derogatory. I didn't until I was told this much later.)

The neighborhood kids asked our nationality. (I couldn't understand why.) I told them American. This didn't seem to satisfy them, so they would ask what country was I born in. I told them Kentucky. They asked if I wasn't really a Polack? I told them I would check it out with my mother, because I was never told I was any other thing but an American.

When I asked my mother what our nationality was, she told me I was Irish, "Scotch," and English. Then my aunt Kitty said that, actually, I was mostly Indian. I went back and informed my new friends about this, and they said I was lying, that I was ashamed of being a "Polack." I finally gave up trying to understand them or trying to explain. I was just as happy that they considered me a Polack from Pennsylvania as an Indian from Kentucky.

Nowadays, there is no shame in being part Indian. In fact, my relatives now brag about it. I wish my grandmother, "the old squaw," had lived to see the day. Perhaps that's why she would never bob her hair, wear make-up or change her way of life. She knew where she came from and was proud of it.

That was my grandmother, "Pink Mary." She was named after a wild flower in Kentucky. This "Columbus Day" is for her. —October 1992

## Apocalypse by Choice

In this country, over 150,000 people have already died of AIDS-related diseases. Federal health officials estimate that at least one million Americans are HIV-infected. The number of AIDS cases will almost double in this country alone by 1993.

And now, due to the criminal neglect of the U.S. government, we are in a

tuberculosis epidemic with strains so virulent they threaten to return pockets of American society to a time when antibiotics were unknown; to a period more reminiscent of the Black Death of the Middle Ages.

HIV-positive people are most threatened by the resurgence of tuberculosis, which has been swift and calamitous in many of our largest cities.

The new TB epidemic comes after two decades of searing budget cuts in public health programs. Without these cuts, experts say, the disease could have been all but eradicated, and new, deadly strains would never have been allowed to evolve and flourish.

New York City has 4000 cases of tuberculosis. The last time it had that many cases was in 1967. At that time, the city had more than 1000 beds assigned to TB patients. Today, there are fewer than 75 beds available.

In 1968, there were 22 full-time chest clinics in New York. Today there are only nine.

And those clinics are so over-crowded and dilapidated that scores of patients must huddle each day in the drab, dimly-lighted corridors as they await treatment.

The TB epidemic has been kindled by AIDS, homelessness, drug abuse, and the rapid disappearance of preventive-medicine health clinics in cities all across the country.

"I'm scared," said Dr. Lee B. Reichman, who has just become president of the American Lung Association, and who for 30 years has been one of the nation's leading tuberculosis experts.

"Here we are in 1992," Reichman says, "with cure rates lower than countries like Malawi and Nicaragua. We can't keep track of our patients, and all evidence suggests more and more of them have TB that is resistant to our best drugs. We have turned a disease that was completely preventable and curable into one that is neither. We should be ashamed."

Dr. Reichman blames pure and simple "neglect" for this dangerous development. Most Americans put TB out of their minds. It wasn't a problem for them. However, it was never completely eliminated in the poorest parts of cities like Miami, Atlanta, Houston, and New York. In the poorest areas, TB persisted through the 1960s, '70s, and '80s.

In 1970, for example, TB case rates in central Harlem were nearly 20 times the national average and at least five times higher than the average for New York City.

The disparities have grown worse. Last year, reported case rates in central Harlem soared to 220 per 100,000 residents—35 times the figure for wealthy residents of the Upper East Side, just a short bus-ride away. It is a disease of the poor and disfranchised.

Beginning in 1953, when the government began keeping TB statistics, the number of cases declined steadily from a high of 84,000 that year, to a low of

22,000 in 1985. By last year, however, there were nearly 27,000 new cases reported in the United States.

The American Lung Association now estimates that without a major effort, the United States, within a decade, will see at least 50,000 new cases every year and they will cost the country billions of dollars a year to treat. TB, unlike AIDS, is easily spread through casual contact with an infected person.

This is nothing more than cold-blooded murder through neglect. This is not like the Middle Ages when the plague took millions of lives. Neither the medical nor the scientific information was available to stop that pandemic.

But what hasn't fundamentally changed is the attitude of the ruling class, who foster the belief that those who have contracted AIDS are somehow guilty of sin and are being punished by God. In the Middle Ages, the ruling class spread the same hypocrisy about plague victims.

"It is hard not to be bitter about a catastrophe that simply should never have happened," said Dr. Barry R. Bloom, a senior researcher at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and a TB specialist.

"We had everything we needed. All the knowledge, the skills, the medical expertise necessary to eliminate this disease. Instead, this country chose to very nearly eliminate the health care programs people with this disease need most."

This country has the expertise and know-how to find a cure for AIDS and to cure TB. What is necessary is a massive, unrelenting fight against this corrupt ruling class to force them to end their "apocalypse by choice." —November 1992

## **Long Arm of the Catholic Church in Ireland**

On Nov. 25, the voters of Ireland voted on three constitutional amendments concerning abortion. Voters approved, by about three to two, amendments guaranteeing access to information on abortion and birth control and making it legal for women to travel abroad to secure abortions.

The voters rejected by two to one an initiative to permit abortion—but only if the mother's life is in danger. If approved, these words would have been inserted into the Irish Constitution: "It shall be unlawful to terminate the life of the unborn unless such termination is necessary to save life, as distinct from the health, of the mother where there is an illness or disorder giving rise to a real and substantive risk to her life, not being a risk of self destruction."

The Catholic Church, the "moral majority" in Ireland, opposed this third section of the referendum. As it was, the wording of this section was so obtuse, it



could well have been written by the Pope.

But the Church chose—only for tactical reasons—not to oppose the right to information about birth control, nor the right to travel. They needed to appear “reasonable.”

In any case, the Church will try to stop the right to go abroad for an abortion by other means. They sponsor a very active “Right to Life” group that takes every opportunity to seek out women who travel to England for an abortion and splash their pictures, addresses, and names in the Catholic press. This results in women and their families being harassed by phone calls night and day.

In Northern Ireland, the Protestant church takes over from the Catholic one. They too, have their “Right to Lifers” who take it as their God-given right to control the reproductive lives of women. They too, harass women who travel to England for abortions—meeting them at airports and ferries and shoving “fetus” photographs in their faces.

Historically, the Catholic Church has made 180 degree shifts on the issue of abortion. In the year 1140 (before capitalism), Pope Gratian announced, “He is not a murderer who brings about an abortion before the soul is in the body.” In 1234, Pope Gregory IX upheld that ruling.

In 1588, Pope Sixtus V abruptly announced that Church and secular penalties should be the same for abortion and murder. Three years later, however, Pope Gregory XVI reversed that decision and abolished all penalties for abortion except for those after “ensoulment.”

It was not until the 18th century, when capitalism was ascending throughout Western Europe, that the Catholic Church adopted and kept its present stand on abortion.

The Church’s current stand on abortion is based on four principles: (1) God is the author of life. (2) Human life begins at the moment of conception. (3) No one has the right to take an innocent “human life.” (4) Abortion at any stage of fetal development is the taking of innocent human life.



To make sure this is fully understood, Dr. Austin O'Malley, a major Catholic mouthpiece, writes in "The Ethics of Medical Homicide and Mutilation," "An innocent fetus an hour old may not be directly killed to save the lives of all the mothers in the world."

But it's not the medieval minds of Catholic princes who are responsible for the oppression of women. Today, the utterings of the Church hierarchy and other fetus-fetishers on this question reflect the views of the capitalist class.

The denial of abortion rights is part and parcel of a social system in which women are condemned to second-rate status—including wage levels close to half that of men. But it's not men as such who profit from the oppression of women, but the capitalists.

Thus, without encouragement by the captains of industry, finance, and government, the churches wouldn't and couldn't get away with their mischief.

### **When does 'ensoulment' begin?**

Harold J. Morowitz and James S. Trefil, authors of "The Facts of Life; Science and the Abortion Controversy," blasts the Catholic and fundamentalist Christian churches out of the water. On conception, they write:

"There is probably no question more frustrating to a scientist than, 'Does life begin at conception?' It's like asking an engineer if a building begins when the blueprint is made. The only correct answer—yes and no—is profoundly unsatisfying.

"A frequent argument against abortion is that a new DNA 'blueprint' comes into existence at conception creating the possibility of a new life. But this argument, which owes its existence to advances in molecular biology, is threatened by studies of parthenogenesis—birth without conception. There is the possibility that DNA can be manipulated so that females can actually have virgin birth. Can the church be against virgin birth? Even eggs discarded during menstruation have the future possibility of becoming 'potential life.'"

Morowitz and Trefil argue further: "Are we obligated to provide every unfertilized egg with a chance to develop? Do we outlaw menstruation?"

Then they give the ensoulment argument the coup de grace. They write: "It is generally accepted that what distinguishes us from other animals—what makes us human—is the highly developed outer layers of the human brain—the 'gray matter' or cerebral cortex. The cortex is the seat of emotions, sensations and other characteristics we consider human. So it can be argued that when a fetus acquires a functioning cortex, it has acquired humanness.

"[But] just as a pile of microchips isn't a computer, a collection of brain cells isn't a brain. It is only around the 25th week (the start of the third trimester) that the connections start to be made and the cortex starts to function. Before that, the fetus is a human in the strict biological sense, but has not acquired the characteristics that distinguish humans from other animals."

Morowitz and Trefil conclude that *Roe v. Wade* is right to allow abortion

before the onset of the third trimester. —December 1992

# 1993

## Malcolm and Fidel in Harlem

The Dec. 5, 1992, issue of the *People's Weekly World* has a review by Tony Monteiro of the film "Malcolm X." The review is unusual because it actually has some "nice" things to say about Malcolm X. Monteiro dropped the Stalinist newspaper's former nonsense that Malcolm was a "racist-in-reverse."

That's what the Communist Party used to call him. That's what the Stalinists called all Black nationalists, including members of the Nation of Islam.

Malcolm X joined the Nation of Islam because he was opposed to racism and white U.S. imperialism. He left the Nation because he was moving toward socialist ideas and because he wanted to get involved in the massive movements of Blacks who were fighting for their civil rights. Malcolm X wanted to bring that fight to the North.

If anyone wants to know what the world Stalinist movement thought about Malcolm X when he was alive, and even six years after his assassination, all you have to do is read long-time Communist Party leader and prominent historian Herbert Aptheker's book, "Afro-American History—The Modern Era."

It was written in 1971 and covers all of the major modern Black leaders up to Martin Luther King and Huey P. Newton. Out of 324 pages, there is not one word, not one whisper of Malcolm X.

### Fidel's visit to Harlem

The most amazing part of the article is that it gives Malcolm X credit for having gotten a room in Harlem's Hotel Theresa for Fidel Castro in 1961. Although this story is intended to be complimentary to Malcolm, it is not based on fact.

I was there at the time and played an active part in the efforts of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York City to establish deeper links between revolutionary Cuba and American Blacks.

In October 1961, Fidel Castro and the Cuban delegation had come to New York to address the United Nations. They first took up residence at a mid-Manhattan hotel that catered to delegations from poor countries.

But as soon as it became clear to the powers-that-be that the Cubans were not about to cave in to imperialist demands that they change their revolutionary ways, the news media began a campaign to slander the Cubans. The press issued a flood of stories about \$100-dollar call girls visiting the Cuban hotel headquarters. They even featured stories that had the Cubans plucking chickens and cooking them in their hotel rooms.

Finally, Castro called for a halt. He threatened to go to sleep in Central Park

rather than stay in such a hotel. He said that he had had plenty of experience sleeping in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, and sleeping in the park would be more natural. Of course, this also made the headlines.

### **Fair play for Cuba**

We were then members of the Socialist Workers Party who had helped form the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. One of the committee's national leaders was my friend Berta. She proposed to the Cuban delegation to the United Nations that they move from the fancy white hotel they were being abused in to a Black one in the heart of Harlem.

Berta told them that such a gesture of solidarity with African Americans would be greatly appreciated in Black America.

Berta contacted the Hotel Theresa and made arrangements to reserve a whole floor for the Cuban delegation. The Cubans accepted the arrangement immediately. The CIA and State Department went crazy! Suddenly Castro was being flooded with offers from many other hotels. There were even offers of free space—but Fidel said “no thanks.” He and the whole delegation then moved into the Theresa.

The Theresa was an historic hotel in the heart of Harlem. It was the first time that any United Nations delegation had ever stayed in Harlem. Fidel Castro—along with Juan Almeida, the head of the Cuban Armed Forces—would walk along the streets of Harlem, shaking hands, drinking orange juice at a hot-dog chain called “Nedicks,” and talking to the people in the streets of Harlem.

The press was silent about this news event. But they did print a photo of the Soviet Union's limousine, which was about a block long, driving up to the Theresa. It was probably the Soviet delegates' first time on 125th Street!

### **At the reception**

It was the Fair Play for Cuba Committee that gave the reception for the Cubans at the Theresa on Oct. 2, 1961, not Malcolm X. My friend Berta arranged that, too.

That night, thousands of people lined the streets around the Hotel Theresa hoping to get a look at Fidel. We were on the 7th floor, and every time anyone went near the window, thousands of people on the ground would cheer.

We refused to allow any cops or reporters onto the floor. We had guards at every elevator and exit. At about nine o'clock I was told to go wait outside the Hotel for the caterer's delivery truck. They were bringing refreshments and food. I was also told not to speak to any of the press.

As I went outside, the photo bulbs began to flash, and reporters started asking me what was going on upstairs. I just kept saying, “No comprendo.”

The next day, there it was in the headlines: “One hundred-dollar call girl at Castro reception says she ‘no comprende.’” I was astounded to be called a one-hundred-dollar call girl. I did not deserve it.

So the story in the *People's Weekly World* that it was Malcolm X who arranged for the Cubans to go to the Hotel Theresa and who gave a reception for Fidel Castro and Che Guevara was untrue. I have no idea where it came from. In fact, neither Malcolm X nor Che Guevara attended the reception.

However, it was true that Malcolm X took the initiative to return the Cubans' solidarity gesture. It was widely reported in the news media that Malcolm went to the Hotel Theresa and met with Fidel Castro. I do not know what went on, but Malcolm X was then a leader of the Nation of Islam, and it is highly unlikely that he was swayed towards socialism at that time.

However, the fact that Malcolm X did visit Fidel Castro at the Theresa had an enormous effect on the Black community of Harlem.

At any rate, Malcolm X does not need the Communist Party to make up fairy tales about him. They would do well to read Malcolm X speeches, review his real life—and acknowledge where they were wrong about Black nationalism and Malcolm X.

—January 1993

## Iraqi Children Nuked for U.S. Oil

"In the first eight months of 1991 alone, over 5000 children of Iraq have died. They and others continue to die of cancer and mysterious stomach ailments. Because of sanctions and the war, the death rate of children under five has tripled."

This information comes from an article by Eric Hoskins in the Jan. 21, 1993, *New York Times*. "Evidence has come to light," Hoskins states, "that they may be dying because many of the shells used by the U.S. and UN forces to bomb Iraq were made with 'depleted uranium,' which is one of the world's most poisonous substances."

For years, the U.S. and UN forces have been claiming that Iraq may have secret nuclear or chemical weapons. They have kept up the bombing of that country under the guise that Saddam Hussein is a dangerous man who may be planning a war against other countries. The so-called coalition forces there have been combing Iraq looking for "secret" weapons.

But all of this time, it has been the United States, not Iraq, which has been using secret nuclear weapons.

This is known as the "stop thief" diversion. While the United States is bombing Iraq (and plotting to do the same against countries in different parts of the world that won't bow to its will) it points the finger at Saddam Hussein.

Hussein has never used a nuclear weapon against any other country. However, the United States is using radioactive bombs against entirely innocent people—including children—of that small country.

The bombs, known as "depleted uranium penetrators," were, according to Hoskins, "developed by the Pentagon in the late 1970s as anti-tank, armor-pierc-

ing projectiles. Depleted uranium is a radioactive by-product of the enrichment process used to make atomic bombs and nuclear fuel rods. The material is extremely hard and abundant, and provided free to weapons manufacturers by the U.S. government.”

Hoskins continues, “When fired, the core bursts into a searing flame that helps pierce the armor of tanks and other military targets. Diesel vapors inside the tank are ignited, and the crew is burned alive.”

During the land war against Iraq, U.S. and allied coalition forces fired at least 10,000 of the 6-inch, 6 to 8 pound radioactive shells. At least 40 tons of depleted uranium was dispersed in Iraq and Kuwait during the Gulf War.

The Pentagon was forced to concede this information after several allied military vehicles destroyed by “friendly fire” were found to have traces of radioactivity.

“Many health experts,” Hoskins reports, “suspect that the postwar increase in childhood cancer and mysterious swollen abdomens is at least in part due to the radioactive shells.... UN personnel and aid workers have seen children playing with empty shells, abandoned weapons, and destroyed tanks.”

Hoskins points out that most doctors and scientists agree that even mild radiation is dangerous and increases the risk of cancer. He writes, “The health risk becomes even greater once the projectile has been fired. After they have been fired, the broken shells release uranium particles. The airborne particles enter the body easily.

“Children are especially vulnerable because their cells divide rapidly as they grow. In pregnant women, absorbed uranium can cross the placenta into the bloodstream of the infants. In addition to its radioactive dangers, uranium is chemically toxic, like lead, and can damage the kidneys or lungs.”

Hoskins tells us that doctors suspect the fatal epidemic of swollen abdomens among Iraqi children is caused by kidney failure resulting from uranium poisoning. He reports the British as saying that they believe that there is enough uranium in Iraq and Kuwait to “cause tens of thousands more deaths.”

This criminal assault upon the people of Iraq is a signal to all Arab countries of the real intent of American and world imperialism’s New World Order—to grab the natural wealth of the peoples of the world for the benefit of the rich.

Even more horrifying is the fact that most of the news media have kept their mouths shut on this use of poisonous residue of nuclear fuel against the children of Iraq.

Eric Hoskins is a doctor and public health specialist who was medical coordinator of the Harvard Study Team’s surveys of health and welfare in post-war Iraq. We owe him special thanks for getting out this information. And now we must protest:

**STOP THE MURDER OF IRAQ CHILDREN FOR THE BENEFIT OF U.S. OIL BARONS! U.S. OUT NOW! —February 1993**

## Spend the Money—Cure AIDS!

The Feb. 17 *New York Times* carried a story with the headline: “Drug Mixture Curbs HIV in Lab, Doctors Report, but Urge Caution.”

It is difficult to use caution when we know that, before the day is out, hundreds will die from complications of the HIV virus. The disease is so deadly that whenever we hear of even the hope of a cure our hearts beat faster and we search every newspaper for even more information.

The latest medical discovery was found by a medical student at Massachusetts General Hospital, Yung-Kang Chow. Chow combined three drugs that attack a single component of HIV, an enzyme that makes copies of the virus’s genetic material.

In the British scientific journal *Nature*, it was reported that the combination of drugs used by Chow has blocked the virus from growing and from spreading to other cells in test tubes. “The scientists also noted,” stated the journal, “that the test-tube strategy apparently prevented infection of healthy cells and successfully treated HIV in cells that had been infected.”

The National Institute of Health in Bethesda, Md., has given the go-ahead to 10 medical centers throughout the country to start testing the new drugs on 200 people who have advanced HIV infections.

The only information about Mr. Chow was that he left his country, Taiwan, at the age of 14. He is now 31 years old and a student at Harvard Medical School in a federally financed program designed for him to earn Ph.D. and M.D. degrees.

### Applied for a grant

Mr. Chow explained how he came to his conclusion to use three drugs to combat the HIV virus.

“I was reading during dinner, which is a bad thing to do,” he said, “but I had to because I had so much to do that evening. I was thinking of ways to explain the phenomenon, and the idea just came to me in an instant. It was an inspiration, almost like ‘Eureka!’ I was ecstatic, jumping up and down and telling my wife that I think this was the most exciting thing I ever came up with because right away I realized the implications of the work.” He immediately applied for a grant to test his new theory.

I’ve been thinking about this young medical student. Does he need more money for his research? Does he need more help with his work?

How many young researchers have been slowed down by lack of funds?

While it is true that AIDS/HIV received more research funds than heart disease or diabetes, it was still only a spit in the ocean compared to what is needed.

In 1992, AIDS/HIV received less than \$1.3 billion for research. The payments to farmers not to grow crops in 1992 was \$6.9 billion and “Star Wars” research received \$4.2 billion. In fact, federal spending on military research and develop-

ment will exceed \$37 billion this year.

That's \$37 billion to kill and bomb mostly Third World countries and only \$1.3 billion to stop the worst disease since the Bubonic Plague—a disease that is expected to wipe out millions in Africa and other underdeveloped countries.

### **March on Washington**

On April 25, a massive march for gay rights is scheduled. The March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation is expected to draw 1 million people to Washington, D.C. It should be the largest march for human and civil rights ever in that city.

The march has received wide endorsement, and the national NAACP has announced that it will endorse and march. One of the central demands is for “a massive increase in funding for AIDS education, research, and patient care.”

It is not just gay people who have a need for a cure to HIV. There is not a single section of the population who is not at risk. Women, men, and children of every race and nationality are subject to this killer. The slaughter has gone on too long. It is time to switch the \$37 billion from military research and development and turn it over to cure AIDS.

Let us do with the HIV virus what this country did when they wanted to build the first atomic bomb. They got the best minds that existed in the scientific world, gave them all the money and technology available—with unlimited resources—and they did the impossible.

Can you imagine what hundreds of Yung-Kang Chows could do if given the same support instead of scratching around for grant money for every scientific study?

Join the march in Washington, D.C., on April 25. Too many of our young friends have fallen in the battle against this monstrous disease. This war we must win now. This is the war to fight! —March 1993

## **RU-486 – Just the Facts**

A new drug, RU 486, used by tens of thousands of women in Europe with no harmful side effects, is banned in the United States. In a legal test case, a woman who had a prescription for RU 486 from a doctor in this country went to England, picked up the pills, and was arrested upon arriving in the United States. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) ordered customs agents to seize the pills.

What is this new drug that has so aroused the wrath of the U.S. government? Is it some kind of poison or narcotic? Hardly. RU 486 is a pill that has proven useful for women as a morning-after pill to induce abortion.

RU 486 is an antiprogesterin that prevents the fertilized egg from implanting into

the wall of the uterus. Progestin is always present in both the female and male body. Without progestin, the fertilized egg cannot develop. This chemical gets the uterus ready to receive the fertilized egg.

Pregnancy usually takes place about five days after sex. RU 486, when taken early, interrupts the pregnancy and actually prevents the fertilized egg from implanting itself in the uterus wall. It is an abortion pill. Actually, nearly 50 percent of all pregnancies end with spontaneous abortion very early in the pregnancy. Very few of the aborted fetus cells have ever been examined, but those few that have were found to be defective. It is thought by some scientists that this is nature's way of maintaining a healthy gene pool.

RU 486 was developed in the 1970s by the French pharmaceutical company, Russel-Uclaf, but was relatively unknown in this country until the early '80s.

One of the major reasons for this is that the so-called "Pro-Life" forces found out about it early on and threatened the company and the company directors with major harassment and boycotts of their other products. This threat was effective especially when backed up by a government in this country that was encouraging these hoodlums.

RU 486 is taken in three pill doses and it was found to be effective 85 percent of the time with no harmful side-effects. It is now coupled with a prostaglandin and is 99 percent effective. In Scotland, doctors have given it to women who are three months pregnant and it was shown to be equally safe.

This drug was used by over 130,000 women in France and is now used in China. Most French women chose to take RU 486 instead of having an abortion because it worked earlier in the pregnancy.

### **Back in the USA**

In the United States, women must wait until the 8th week, at the least, before the vacuum aspirator abortion can be performed. Abortions with RU 486 can be done during the first two months. Most women who have decided to terminate their pregnancy usually want to have it done as soon as possible.

RU 486 is also a very effective morning-after pill. Today in the United States, birth control pills are generally used as morning-after pills. They are usually given to women who have been raped or who have had sex without using their preferred preventive method.

But the birth control pill causes severe nausea and stomach cramps. This is not the case with RU 486. Most women using RU 486 will get only slight menstrual cramps and have a heavier period.

There is certainly no scientific reason for not using RU 486. Hundreds of thousands of women have used it with no harmful effect.

Why is it that women in this country do not have the right to choose RU 486 as a method for terminating pregnancy? Women who, for whatever reason, do not want to have a child at this time could have an early abortion just by using



these pills. It could be done in their doctor's office.

Even more important, abortion would be made available to many women who now have to travel to other cities to get an abortion and must pay the extra expense of staying overnight in a hotel.

In fact, 83 percent of counties in the United States do not have an abortion provider. In some states, there is only one city providing abortion services.

In a survey of doctors who do not now provide abortion services, over 500 said they would use RU 486. Also, at the present time the "Pro-Life" terrorists are attacking our clinics and have now begun murdering doctors who perform abortions. RU 486 would make it easier for more doctors to help women in counties that do not provide abortion services.

### **'Freedom of Choice Act'**

The U.S. Congress is scheduled to begin debate on the "Freedom of Choice Act," which, it is to be hoped, would be a constitutional guarantee for abortion rights in every state.

However, it is extremely likely that many restrictions would remain, like requiring teenagers to get parental consent. The very women who have the most need of the right to choose are teenagers who would often be intimidated by narrow-minded parents—or, fearing parental reproach, get a life-threatening illegal abortion.

Right now in underdeveloped countries the most used abortion instrument is a sharpened wooden stick. Over 200,000 women die each year from illegal abortions. Denial of access to RU 486, a perfectly safe non-surgical abortion method, is nothing less than a capital crime.

All those who support the fundamental human right of women to choose when to have children must actively resist the ongoing assault on abortion rights by getting out in the streets of America by the hundreds, thousands, and millions.

They must demonstrate and march to drive home the fact that the great majority of American people support this basic human right.

There is an old saying that is absolutely appropriate in the context of gangs of fanatics and capitalist politicians hammering away at the right to choose: "The best defense is a strong offense."

Now is the time for the defenders of women's and human rights to take to the streets once again putting the legalization of RU 486 high on their list of demands.

—April 1993

## **Clinton's Massacre in Waco**

Millions watched as the FBI's actions triggered an inferno in Waco, Texas, that snuffed out the lives of as many as 70 adults and at least 17 children.

The government's spin-masters immediately started to manufacture phony

excuses. The “liberal” Democrats circled their wagons and began pointing their fingers at the victims to cover up their crime. The “liberal-feminist” attorney general, Janet Reno, argued that the murderous assault that killed those children and their parents was justified because David Koresh allegedly abused children.

Of course, they will never be abused again because now they are all dead, burned to death by the actions of the U.S. government. And even more important, all evidence is destroyed. Even the “child abuse” evidence was simply the word of two people who had members of their family in the Davidian compound. Other members who had lived in the compound testified that there was no child abuse and that all of the children were loved and well taken care of.

Congresswoman Pat Schroder, another Democratic Party “liberal feminist,” said the massacre was justified because of the cost to the taxpayers, who were getting impatient with the high cost of the 51-day stand-off.

Virtually the entire capitalist mass media did their best to cover-up for the capitalist political establishment. All howled in unison that David Koresh, the leader of the religious group known as the Branch Davidians, planned or was destined by his religious beliefs to order his followers to “commit mass suicide.”

From Day One, the press and media repeatedly compared Koresh to Jim Jones, who had indeed committed suicide along with his followers at Jonestown over 10 years ago. They hammered away that the Branch Davidians believed in Armageddon, the final battle between the forces of good and evil that, according to the Bible, is to occur at the end of the world.

Without a shred of tangible evidence, despite statements to the contrary by survivors, and despite testimony by Koresh’s lawyer—and even a small but significant number of pro-capitalist critics of the government’s unjustified assaults—Clinton, Reno, the FBI, and the media claim that Koresh commanded his blind followers to commit mass suicide.

### **Let’s go back to see how it all began.**

On Feb. 28, what started out as a peaceful Sunday morning, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms agents entered the housing of the Davidians without warning, wearing black ski-masks, black suits, and bullet-proof flak-jackets. Entering without warning through upstairs windows, like ordinary assassins, they began shooting and throwing grenades at the people inside.

Unfortunately for the government agents, most people in this country believe that they have a right to defend their homes when invaded by strangers with guns. The Davidians began to fire back, killing four federal agents and suffering at least six of their own people killed.

The entire housing complex was surrounded with tanks and other heavily armed vehicles. And as the days wore on, the federal agency used eerily bizarre methods of harassment.

It was described this way in the March 24 *New York Times*: “Throughout the

night, beneath a star-studded sky and across a patch of central Texas prairie, the FBI blasts ear-splitting tape recordings into the Branch Davidian compound: Chanting by Tibetan Monks, Sing-alongs with Mitch Miller, Christmas carols, an entire Andy Williams album, Nancy Sinatra's 'These Boots Are Made For Walking.' At dawn, a trumpet blares Reveille over and over and over again."

The F.B.I. had cut off the water, gas and electricity and refused to allow any food to be brought into the housing complex. Whenever anyone left the compound, they were immediately arrested, charged with murder, and held incommunicado.

Why did the invasion happen in the first place? The Feds and their "spin-masters" have yet to provide any credible answers. They first claimed that they had reason to believe that the Davidians had accumulated an illegal arsenal including 50-caliber machine guns and other heavier weaponry. The Feds later had to admit that all of the firearms the Davidians purchased were legal.

In fact, the Davidians were open traders of firearms and said they had intended to open up a legal store selling guns—which in Texas is entirely legal. Then, the federal agents were forced to drop the stuff about heavy weaponry and shift their ground to another completely unsubstantiated charge. Their new story was that they believed the Davidians had bought and installed kits for converting semi-automatic weapons into automatic ones.

On the issue of suicide: If that were true, why were all of the Davidians wearing gas masks when they were assaulted with tear gas by the FBI?

That assault lasted for six hours. The FBI, using huge tanks, knocked holes in the compound and sprayed dry powdered tear gas. Anyone who has ever seen a silo explode knows what happens when the air is filled with matter and even the smallest spark occurs. Six hours of dry, powdered tear-gas must have filled every corner of the compound.

Survivors have testified, moreover, that since all water, gas, and electricity had been cut off, the Davidians had been using kerosene for lighting and fuel. One of the survivors said that he saw an armored vehicle drive deep into the house and crush a butane tank, which then exploded.

What causes people to join these religious groups? What causes them to place all of their hopes on the Hereafter? Listen to this entirely humane and sympathetic explanation by a famous atheist:

"The deepest root of religion today is the socially oppressed condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon ordinary working people the most horrible suffering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by exceptional events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc.

"Fear of the blind forces of capital—blind because they cannot be anticipated by the masses of the people—forces which at every step in life threaten to inflict and do inflict, on the proletariat and small owner 'sudden,' 'unexpected,' 'acci-

dental,' destruction, ruin, pauperism, prostitution, and death from starvation—such is the root of modern religion.” This was written by Lenin, in “On Socialist Ideology and Culture,” Dec. 3, 1905. No one could have said it better!

But we have no sympathy for the likes of the capitalist rulers who drive the masses toward the religious opiate to deaden the pain inflicted on them by capitalism.

And despite all of the lies that the capitalist media and politicians tell, history will show this to be a crime, not of the Davidians, but of President Clinton and his New World Order.

Clinton and the other Democratic and Republican politicians belong to the Dollar Cult. They worship only the almighty dollar. That is all that matters to them.

—May 1993

## The Attack of the Slime Balls

Quite often, something slimy oozes out from beneath a rock, puts on a shirt, a tie, dresses up in a suit, and gets elected to public office. Hard as this is to believe it happens in every city, county and state in the United States. In fact it happened in Cleveland, too. The latest slime ball to crawl into the limelight is Rep. Robert E. Netzley. And he is mad—fighting mad.

Netzley, a “fighting” conservative Republican, is taking on, not the rich and infamous, but the poor and downtrodden. He is wading into the fight against welfare mothers and “dead-beat” dads. What a hero!

According to Fearless Netzley, fathers of ADC children (Aid for Dependent Children) will be given a four-choice menu: Pay child support, or get a vasectomy, or get two years in jail, or do community service at the rate of 50 hours per month per child.

Welfare mothers are not left out. His program for them is this: Women with children already receiving Aid for Dependent Children (ADC) could keep getting benefits, but Netzley doesn't want any additional children from those mothers added to the rolls. And to “reduce abuse and neglect,” Netzley wants to force ADC mothers, who dare to have additional children, to undergo “childcare training.”

But then—get this—if she skips or fails a mandatory parenting course, an ADC mother would have her newborn child taken away from her!

The child could be placed with a relative able to pass the test, but if the mother didn't pass the test sometime in the new child's first year, the state would put the child up for adoption.

Netzley says: “Farmers in my district treat their livestock better than do some parents of unwanted children.” Of course, considering the government subsidy to big farmers (rarely to working farmers), their livestock and tractors get much more money from the government than do the children of poor people.

Here is some more of Nutzley's—oops, I'm sorry—Netzley's anti-welfare attack.

Currently, an Ohio ADC mother with one child is entitled to a monthly cash benefit of \$279; with two children, \$341; with three, \$421.

Netzley's law would bar benefits for additional children. But he would let the mother boost the family's ADC benefits two ways. First, if the mother agrees to tubal ligation surgery, she would get a one-time bonus of \$1000 and an immediate 50 percent hike in monthly ADC benefits. With such a generous boost an ADC mother with two children would then see her monthly benefit rise from \$341 to \$511.50.

Wow! With this magnificent sum she could try to purchase a bankrupt S&L and really increase her welfare payments.

But back to Netzley: An ADC mother could see a gradual but steady rise in benefits by being injected with Depo-Provera or being implanted with Norplant (both these drugs are contraceptives). Benefits to these women would rise every six months until they reached 150 percent of the basic benefit. However, if ADC mothers who agree to injections or implants fail to have them checked or renewed, they would be kicked off the ADC rolls—along with their children.

Netzley is not alone. Slime-balls all over the country are raising the battle-cry against poor mothers on welfare while gladly giving handouts to the real welfare bums.

Take Millard Drexler, for example. This guy is the president of Gap, a clothing manufacturer and clothing store chain. In one year he raked in \$41,518,881.

Where did that money come from? Off the unpaid labor of garment workers, truck drivers, sales clerks, cotton pickers and every other worker employed by Gap. Drexler did not pick one ball of cotton, weave a single yard of cotton, stitch a single garment, load a single truck with those garments nor fill out a single sales slip at a Gap store. All of that was done for him while he smirked all the way to the bank.

What about the S&L welfare bums? Their big-time welfare ripoff is estimated to eventually cost taxpayers some \$600 billion! In 1989, even President Bush said he was so shocked at the amounts swindled that he promised to "put the S&L crooks in jail."

But almost three years later, just before Election Day, the General Accounting Office reported that two-thirds of the major cases (involving amounts over \$100,000) had been dropped and that, while the courts had ordered nearly \$850 million in fines and restitution, less than 5 percent of that amount had been collected.

Will Netzley demand that they get punishment to fit their crimes equal to what he proposes for our poorest people? Like a vasectomy of their bank accounts maybe?

The sad truth is that the government is really run by the biggest welfare bums the world has ever seen. The politicians yell "stop-thief!" while they systematically pick our pockets. They figure if they yell loud enough we won't notice.

—June 1993

## Defeat the Voucher Initiative!

California voters will be confronted with a special state election this November. It includes, among other threats to public education, a vote on a new “voucher” initiative.

Boiled down to its essential function, this initiative, if passed, will take money from our public schools and give it to “private” schools.

This is the way it would work: Any private entrepreneur with a minimum of 25 pupils enrolled would be eligible to start their own school. This would automatically entitle all private schools to receive \$2500 per pupil—which would be deducted from the funds budgeted for public schools.

If passed, the voucher referendum would cause a 10 percent decline in funding before a single child was taken out of the public school system. That is, \$2500 for every child presently enrolled in private schools would be taken from public school education funds and handed over to parochial and secular private schools.

This would qualitatively worsen the already crippled system of public education, which has been increasingly drained of federal and state funding. Moreover, it would be certain to set off a chain reaction leading to the bankruptcy of the public education system as parents, in desperation, shifted their children from public to private schools.

The actual cost of educating one child in public schools today is \$4500 per year. Thus, once a child leaves the public school system, it would not only lose the \$2500 transferred to private schools but also another \$2000 would be deducted from the funds allotted to public schools.

What’s more, because of a “glitch” in the way the measure was written, for every student who transferred to a private school, the public school district would lose guaranteed funding for two students—or \$9000. Consequently, if 50 percent of children in public schools transferred to private schools the public schools would lose all funding! Public schools would no longer exist.

Most of the private schools have already stated that a considerable additional tuition fee will be charged each student making the switch. That’s what I call kicking a child when he or she is down! Moreover, although the voucher initiative rules out discrimination because of race, private schools will be allowed to exclude students because of language or other learning or physical disabilities.

This means that public schools will be left with the extra costs of educating all “problem” children rejected by private schools. (Of course, private schools will always be open to those with enough money to pay whatever it costs to educate “problem” children.)

These educational cutbacks come at a time when the number of one-parent families is growing rapidly, and two-parent families are also struggling to keep up with the cost of living.

What is to be done?

The largest teachers' union, the National Education Association (NEA), is having its convention in San Francisco at the beginning of this month. Teachers from all over the country will be confronted with this crisis in public education created by both the Republicans and the Democrats in local, state, and national government.

The two major teachers' unions have a membership that surpasses two million. Teachers' natural allies include the public school system's support network of employees who back up classroom teachers. Those whose interests also ally them with teachers are the nation's tens of millions of students of all ages and their parents. Every member of this huge constituency suffers from the assault on public education.

The only thing missing is a leadership that can organize these millions into a united force to defend and advance the system of public education.

The teachers' unions can do this. The National Education Association can start now to mobilize this potentially irresistible force to advance its common interests. The spontaneous protests against tuition hikes on community college campuses in California this past semester is evidence that the massive educational community is fed-up and ready for action.

The NEA could begin to mount a fightback at this convention by rallying millions of people against the voucher initiative. The electoral defeat of this latest assault on public education would only be a beginning.

But it will take a change in strategy to defeat this anti-working class assault on public education. Up to the present time, teachers have succumbed to the divide-and-conquer strategy of the dominant political forces ruling America—who have played school employees and working class taxpayers against each other.

Gutless politicians refuse to tax the rich. After all, that's the hand that feeds them. They opt, instead, for increasing regressive taxes (sales and homeowners' taxes), which places the burden of funding social services, education—and everything else—on working people.

Democrats and Republicans epitomize the "Sophie's choice" foisted on working people. Democrats emphasize increased taxes on working people while Republicans emphasize cuts in social services. So long as working people accept these loaded alternatives, we are lost.

A sound basis for a united struggle against the voucher initiative and for a healthy system of public education would begin with a campaign to reverse the bi-partisan policy that shifted the tax burden from the backs of the rich to the poor and steadily reduced social services.

A victory over the voucher initiative would send a message to all American working people that united around a real choice, around a campaign to advance the class interests of the overwhelming majority, we can win. —July 1993

## Stop U.S. Terrorism Against Arab People

The United States government, under the direction of its new president, Bill Clinton, is carrying out the “Bush” policy of a witch hunt against the Muslim peoples of the Middle East and North Africa.

Last month’s bombing of Iraq is an example of the not so “New” World Order. U.S. cruise missiles smashed into the city of Baghdad, killing a number of innocent civilians—including three children and one elderly man.

The United States is bombing that country under the pretext that Iraq is threatening the peace of the world by developing mass-destruction weapons, including atom bombs. President Clinton, however, claimed that the latest U.S. attack occurred because of an alleged plot to murder former President George Bush—a proven big-time murderer.

The Kuwaiti government cooked up the alleged plot to kill Bush to cover up their own murder and mayhem.

“I feel good about what happened,” Slick Willie Clinton said after the bombing.

But the real goal of the repeated assaults is hardly Iraq or even Saddam Hussein. It’s to intimidate anyone in the Middle East (or anywhere else) who might get it into their heads to challenge the imperialist masters of this planet.

The U.S. government has sponsored and carried out mass terrorism that dwarfs the puny efforts of their victims to retaliate. In 1986, for example, President Reagan ordered the bombing of Libya, allegedly to personally punish Col. Moamar Qaddafi, the head of the Libyan government, for setting off a bomb in a Berlin nightclub.

Recently, the U.S. government admitted that the Libyans were not responsible for the incident in Berlin. But the “apology” came too late. This indisputable act of U.S. terrorism resulted in the death of Qaddafi’s five-year-old daughter. It, too, was less aimed at Qaddafi than it was a warning to all who would challenge the masters of the New World Order.

Now, even though Iraq has complied with all the mandated U.N. guidelines, the U.S. government refuses to call off the economic blockade it has initiated and maintains against Iraq.

### War against Palestinians

This policy against Iraq is part and parcel of American imperialism’s war against the people of Palestine, and their supporters in the Arab world. Just get a load of this:

- In the last five years, more than 1,300 Palestinians have been killed by the U.S.-backed Israeli Zionist government. Over 13,000 Palestinians are now in Zionist prisons, and one of every three adult Palestinians has been imprisoned at least once by the Israeli junior partners of American imperialism



- More than 2000 homes of poor Palestinian have been demolished or sealed as part of Israel's collective punishment program.
- Over 120,000 fruit-bearing trees, by which many Palestinians traditionally made their living, have been uprooted in an effort to drive them off their land.
- More than 60 percent of Israeli-occupied West Bank land and 30 percent of its water resources have been confiscated for exclusive Israeli use.
- Between December 1987 and December 1989, 159 Palestinian children under the age of 16 were killed by Israeli soldiers. (The average age was 10.)
- Between 50,000 and 61,000 children were beaten, gassed, or wounded. More than half of those slain were not even near a demonstration when killed. Even after slaughtering the children, the Zionist ruling class wasn't content. Treating them as "protest demonstrations," they disrupted more than half the funerals for the children that they had killed.
- Four years ago in Gaza, Israeli forces deliberately exploded tear gas canisters, plainly labeled "Made in the USA," inside a maternity hospital full of expectant mothers and infants. Under the new Rabin government, they have been using U.S. anti-tank weapons against houses in Gaza.

The U.S. government is a full partner in these crimes. It hands over our tax money, at the rate of \$1000 every year for each Israeli man, woman, and child. Since 1948, in fact, U.S. taxpayers have given Israel almost \$60 billion. In 1991, alone, Israel received \$4.8 billion—more U.S. foreign aid than Washington gave any other nation.

### **Antiwar sentiment**

The American people, in their majority, are opposed to such genocidal oppression against whole peoples, as was clearly shown when masses of Americans marched against U.S. intervention into the Persian Gulf.

At the war's height, nearly half a million people marched on one day in Washington, D.C., and San Francisco against that lop-sided war. Only the quick crushing of Iraqi resistance prevented the anti-war movement from growing to dimensions rivaling the opposition to the Vietnam War.

It is this general anti-war sentiment among the American people that has fueled the witch hunt against Arab and Muslim people in this country.

The U.S. government is now conducting a new witch hunt in order to justify to the American people—who reject the policy of spilling blood for oil—its outrageous assault against the people of the Middle East.

As I am writing this piece, I am hearing the latest act of terrorism by Zionist military forces against Lebanon. Just like their mentor in Washington, they kill innocent women and children there while claiming to have targeted Arab terrorists.

The Nazis were famous for this when they occupied much of Europe; they called it "collective responsibility" as they destroyed whole villages when one German soldier was killed.

### **World Trade Center**

Now we turn to the terrorist bombing of the World Trade Center. The Clinton administration and the capitalist-controlled media are conducting themselves like a pack of howling mad dogs. In order to justify running roughshod over colonial peoples, the U.S. must demonize all Muslims—Arabs, Iranians, and other Middle Eastern and North African peoples.

What has become clear, however, is that those who plotted the bombing of the World Trade Center included an FBI informer and agent provocateur, one Josie Hadas, who is also reported to be a member of the Mossad, the Israeli secret service.

This suggests that the FBI knew beforehand of the plan to bomb the Trade Center. It also suggests that the raid of the place where the bomb was made could have been done before the fact and thus prevented the bombing!

The U.S. government has managed to destroy many organizations by infiltrating provocateurs—police informers—inside them. It has been shown, more than a few times, that these secret agents are often the indispensable ingredient for transforming empty “revolutionary” rhetoric into an actual terrorist action.

In this way, police agents helped destroy the Black Panthers and other such organizations of oppressed peoples. The method of these cop-infiltrators is to pretend to be the most “revolutionary” by proposing the most extremely unrealistic and, unfortunately, counterproductive courses of action.

The witch hunt against the Arab people is part of American imperialism’s attempt to maintain the old order of super-exploitation and oppression in the service of profits—and profits alone. It’s a “stop-thief” coverup for the real criminals in Washington, USA.

Don’t fall for it. Our interest is not with our exploiters—it’s with the oppressed peoples of the world, including the people of the Middle East. —August 1993

## **Why Liberal Feminists Witch Hunt Immigrants**

Senator Joseph McCarthy was the instigator of a massive witch hunt in the 1940s and ’50s. Thousands of lives of innocent people were destroyed by his anti-communist witch hunt. At its peak, the McCarthyite witch hunt framed-up and executed two innocents, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, whose only “crime” was that they were associated with the Communist Party.

All of those hounded off their jobs, jailed, and killed were victimized with the indispensable help of the hordes of phony liberal politicians in both capitalist parties who jumped aboard the hysterical redbaiting bandwagon.

Now, once again, liberal Democrats are elbowing into the forefront of another witch hunt. This time it’s against so-called illegal immigrants.

“Feminist” Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, two “liberal” Democrats,

are out in front of the pack of mad dogs who are hounding, arresting, and deporting immigrants from south of the border who are in this country “illegally.”

Feinstein and Boxer, along with that other prize “feminist liberal”—U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno—were seen in shameful action by millions on the country’s television sets.

There they were, prancing around at the border, along with legions of media reporters, whipping up an hysterical campaign against “illegal aliens.”

Boxer was shown demanding that the National Guard be called upon to beef-up the border patrol, while Feinstein got into the act by demanding a dollar tax be placed upon all immigrants whether from the North or South.

With millions of people homeless, with abortion clinics being bombed and harassed, doctors being shot and murdered by anti-abortion fanatics, with millions of women working at permanently low-paid or part-time jobs, with millions of children underfed and ill-housed, with hundreds of thousands dead and dying from AIDS—neither Feinstein nor Boxer has done a single thing to ameliorate those conditions.

Instead, Feinstein and Boxer act to incite the backward and blind to a lynch-mob frenzy. And this grotesquery takes place in a nation of immigrants who responded to the welcoming appeal inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

### **A sordid history**

The “liberal” Feinstein is well known in San Francisco for her “good works.” In 1973, when she was on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, she introduced an ordinance that would prevent protesters from picketing in front of foreign consulates. In 1975, she campaigned against the extension of childcare services for the children of this city, claiming that property taxes would be so high it would drive people out of their homes.

In a demonstration of her “feminism,” Feinstein summarily dismissed the head of the S.F. Commission on the Status of Women because the woman had the audacity to organize a meeting in support of “equal pay for work of comparable value.”

Throughout her reign as president of the S.F. Board of Supervisors and later as mayor, Feinstein consistently refused to support “Women’s Day in the Park,” saying that she could not be on the same platform with speakers who supported a women’s right to choose abortion. Her excuse was that her constituents were divided on the issue and she did not want to be identified in any way with this “divisive” issue.

My favorite Feinstein horror story was her treatment of senior citizens who lived in a hotel that she had purchased. Many of the seniors had been living there for years.

However, when Lady Dianne took possession, she wanted it turned into a hotel

for tourists because there were more bucks to be raked in that way. She banned the old residents from sitting in the lobby of her hotel because she claimed that it would drive away tourist business.

When her nastiness hit the fan, she agreed to build them “a lobby of their own” on an upper floor—well out of sight of any wandering tourist.

Feinstein and Boxer, and all of the rest of their “liberal” and “conservative” ilk, are now beginning an attack on the people who are forced to come to this country to make a living.

### **Beneath the hue and cry**

Perhaps you think that these and other capitalists are opposed to illegal immigration? The fact is, they like nothing better than recruiting destitute Mexicans and other desperately poor workers whose language and superficial features make them easy to single out from the dominant ethnic groups in this country.

Despite the hue and cry against “illegal aliens,” they continue to be systematically recruited to come across the border, legally and illegally, to work in the hardest, lowest-paying jobs.

Capitalists especially want the U.S. workforce loaded with “illegals” to be kicked around for two main reasons:

- In the first place, they not only must work for low wages because of their desperation and because they don’t yet know their way around, but their undocumented status keeps them from organizing to fight for better wages and working conditions.

They are under constant threat of deportation by their employers if they dare to complain—even when they get paid with rubber checks. And the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) systematically rounds up those poor souls who dare to get out of line with their bosses.

- Secondly, “illegal aliens” provide the ruling capitalist class with another way to divert attention from the real cause of the growing unemployment plaguing American workers as a whole—it derives from the very nature of the capitalist economic system.

The real reason that the Boxers and Feinsteins have championed immigrant-bashing is to reinforce the basic strategy by which the capitalist exploiting minority can maintain their domination over the great exploited majority—that is, through the age-old game of divide and rule!

Unfortunately, the so-called “leaders” of America’s working people at the head of the AFL-CIO bought into this con-game long ago. Their “Buy America!” rallying cry is intimately connected with “illegal alien”-bashing.

In fact, the Boxers and Feinsteins and their ilk know that their latest dirty trick will win them praise and support from the labor bureaucracy. As far as these fat and stately asses at the head of this country’s unions are concerned, hounding the most exploited and oppressed out of the country is for them an excuse for not demanding a real solution to capitalist unemployment.

And you don't have to be a genius to figure out a real solution. It's a central part of the history of the labor movement, and has been traditionally advanced by unions whenever joblessness rears its ugly head.

A real program for jobs includes a demand for a shorter work week with no reduction in pay, along with a public works program, and extended unemployment insurance for the jobless at union wages for the full period of unemployment.

North American working people have everything to lose, and not a damn thing to gain if they get sucked into this latest witch hunt against our working-class sisters and brothers, the so-called "illegal" immigrants.

Don't fall for it! An injury to one is indeed an injury to all! —September 1993

## The Rich Don't Push Shopping Carts

San Francisco, "the city with a heart," is on a campaign against "street people." In fact, as poverty grows across the nation, all cities are stepping up their campaign against the poverty-stricken. San Francisco isn't alone.

The present mayor of San Francisco, Frank Jordan, was a "liberal" on homelessness in 1988. In December of that year, when testing the waters to see if he could be elected mayor, he said, "Homelessness is not a criminal justice problem." But now that he is mayor of San Francisco—guess what? Being homeless has become a criminal justice problem.

Mayor Jordan has instituted the "Quality of Life Enforcement Program," which is now known as Matrix. This new program can't really outlaw homelessness, but it can make a person illegal if he or she is homeless in San Francisco.

There are now what Jordan calls "quality of life offenses." These are crimes such as lodging or sleeping in public parks, obstructing the sidewalk, and public urination. These public "orders" also include "illegal encampments."

All of these laws are aimed against the homeless. During the first two weeks of the "program," 79 misdemeanor arrests for violations such as sleeping and camping in public parks were made in the Union Square area of San Francisco. And an additional 109 enforcement activities were recorded under a "nuisance abatement" category, which translates into curtailing the presence of homeless people in this downtown location.

In the Civic Center-Polk Street area, the figures for arrests are even more astounding. In two weeks of enforcement, 266 arrests were made; of these arrests only 10 percent were for felonies. Of the 42 arrests that could be documented by the Coalition on Homelessness, 25 were for camping in the park, four for sleeping in the park, 10 for illegal lodging, two for obstructing the sidewalk and one for urinating in public.

The city's shelters admit to turning away 15,000 people each month. Transbay

Terminal, which was used by over 300 people for shelter, has been closed by our mayor, pushing even more people to sleep in the open. Police often tell the homeless they arrest that they are “eyesores” that the mayor can no longer bear to see.

### **Insult added to injury**

These “quality of life offenses” are violations of state and municipal laws that the homeless people cannot help violating. They have no other choice.

Homeless people who are arrested under the new San Francisco law are fined \$76. Some of them are fined several times a month. These are people who if they had \$76 would rent a room to sleep in instead of sleeping in some park or doorway.

But this insult is not enough. Now the city is demanding that the police confiscate the shopping carts of the homeless and supposedly replace them with “colorful” duffel bags. The shopping carts usually contain the total wealth of the homeless. They make it easier to keep their valuables and are less likely to be stolen. Also, if necessary, they can be made into a tent in case of rain.

The “city fathers” are worried about how it might look to the tourists when they are forced to view hundreds of people walking around the “Streets of San Francisco” with their whole life in a shopping cart.

According to the new California state budget, the poor are going to get even less help than ever before. The interests of big business and their ilk will be protected down to the last mortgage they hold on someone’s grandmother’s house. But the poor are getting kicked in the backside—not just in California but nationally.

### **Benefits for children reduced**

Just this spring, the number of families on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) grew nationally by 15,000 to 20,000 a month. The whole country’s AFDC rolls swelled to an all-time high of 5 million families. Some 9.3 million children are part of those families.

In California, the fastest-growing population of AFDC recipients are not single-parent families but two-parent families. AFDC children in California, who live 20 percent below the national poverty level, have already suffered a 15 percent cut in benefits, and this year they will be cut another 2.7 percent.

However, don’t get nervous, 80 percent of the businessman’s lunch is still tax deductible.

How many children will be forced to sleep in our parks because of the 17.7 percent reduction in AFDC benefits? How many children will be forced into foster homes because their parents will not be able to provide them with shelter? How many of their parents will be arrested for violating the “Quality of Life Enforcement Program?”

Capitalists think that if they just remove the poverty-stricken from their view, they will somehow cease to exist.

But there's a big problem brewing. The destitute are increasing in numbers in every city and there are only a limited number of places they can be driven to. Berkeley is already frightened that the San Francisco poor will be forced into their city. Then the Berkeley city fathers will have to drive them back, or at least into Oakland.

What happens when the poor start shoving back? When the unemployed and homeless start driving out the rulers and taking back that which has been taken from them? It happened in France in 1789, in the United States in 1776, and in Russia in October 1917.

In all of those revolutions the homeless, the landless, the poor, and the hopeless became the bravest, the strongest, and the hope of the world. It will happen again.

—October 1993

## The Criminal 'Justice' System

Anyone who watches television knows that the police department never sleeps and always gets its men or women or children.

The criminal (that's what it really is) "justice" system never fails. Take for instance the "Ice Cream Caper" in July of this year. That "grand theft" happened in Thomaston, Georgia.

Three young men, two of whom were 15 years old and one 17, were arrested at the Upson-Lee Middle School and accused of stealing some Snickers ice cream bars from the school cafeteria. No one saw them with the ice cream bars. It was just reported that some ice cream bars were missing from the school freezer. Wow!

The young men said that they were on their way to play basketball and stopped into the open school to use the bathroom. But a box of ice cream pops was missing, so the police were called to make an arrest.

None of the young men were seen with the missing ice cream, but that did not deter the criminal cops (oops, I mean criminal-justice cops) who hauled all three young men to jail. The two younger boys were charged with juvenile offenses.

Dehundra Caldwell, who was 17 years old, was assigned an attorney, a Mr. Bishoff—who was absent when the cops got Caldwell to admit he had entered the school. Nor was this attorney present in the court when Caldwell was sentenced to three years in jail.

Caldwell had already served 10 days of his three-year sentence when the local NAACP came into the case and got him free on \$15,000 bail. The accused "felon" was allowed to go back to school. But he has a felony conviction as part of his permanent record.

After the case became nationally known, Judge Andrew Whalen still refused to

reverse the three-year sentence. But nationwide protests forced the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles to declare its intent to review the sentence.

Of course all of you reading this must have guessed that the three young men were Black.

Another recent example of the capitalist system of justice is that of Byron Stamate. He is a 74-year-old retiree who freely admits that he grew marijuana in his guest house and used it for the relief of his own and his companion's back pains.

Convinced that Stamate's bank account was just too big, the El Dorado County's zealous law enforcement authorities used controversial asset-seizure laws to strip him of his entire life's savings.

They slapped a lien on his house, grabbed his savings account and liquidated \$106,000 in stock securities. They seized a total of \$177,000 in cash and securities. That's not too much after a lifetime of hard work. It certainly doesn't seem like enough for him to be jailed as a major drug pusher.

His woman friend committed suicide a year after his arrest. Stamate blames her suicide on harassment by county authorities. There is absolutely no proof that he ever sold marijuana to anyone. But the authorities are treating this as major drug racketeering.

The problem with both cases, Stamate's and Caldwell's, is that they didn't really do anything wrong. That's why the "criminal" justice system went for their throat. They just didn't know how to steal "big."

For instance, if they had been in the Savings and Loan business, they would have walked away with billions of dollars and they would have had "big government" picking the tax-payers pockets for them.

Or if they had gotten involved in the Iran-Contra affair, all of government would have been at their feet. They could have traded U.S. arms for billions of dollars, pocketed the money, gotten a first-class education on drug dealing and been pardoned by the president.

I can see why they all got off without serving even a day in jail. Every day, we see the photos of senators and congressmen, bankers and businessmen, who have made millions from illegal activity—and you can count on one hand those who have gone to prison. They all want pardons, and they get them.

The "criminal" justice system is designed for the workers and the poor. It is used in the interest of the rich, to make sure that those on top stay there and that those on the bottom remain where they are. That's what capitalism and it's "criminal" justice system is all about. —November 1993

## Putting People in Prison: It's Big Business

President Clinton made a speech in Los Angeles on Nov. 21 to an East Los Angeles community, mostly Latino, urging them to begin the fight against crime





in their own neighborhood.

In his speech, Clinton said: “But we have to make up our minds that we will no longer tolerate children killing children, children having guns and being better armed than police officers, neighborhoods unsafe. We can do better.”

Clinton didn’t mention the crimes of policemen shooting down children—which happens all too often in the African American and Latino communities.

When speaking to the Black community, Clinton deigned to speak in the name of Martin Luther King. In the Latino community, he invoked the image of César Chavez. It was as if both of these opponents of the social injustice suffered by their peoples did not know who the criminal was and who the victim.

In his message against crime, Clinton did not once mention a jobs program, or a housing program, or an increase in funding for education, or even programs to help the addicted get off drugs. Absent, of course, was even a hint that a healthy increase in the minimum wage might have a salutary effect. His only message was to blame the poor—especially their children—for the increase in crime.

What is the Clinton administration offering? Janet Reno, Clinton’s attorney general, is calling for a \$22 billion “anti-crime” bill; that is, for more prisons and cops. She is asking for the use of the National Guard at the border, “to stop illegals.”

### **Lock ’em up!**

The United States is already number one in the number of people who are in prison. The prison population soared between 1980 and 1990. By 1990, 421 Americans out of every 100,000 were behind bars—numbers higher than both South Africa and the former USSR.

By 1992, the U.S. rate of incarceration was 455 for every 100,000. In human terms, the number of people in jails and prisons on any given day tops 1.2 million, up from fewer than 400,000 during the Reagan era.

Strangely enough, the prison population has risen faster than crime rates, reflecting the ruling class’s decision to increase the rate and length of jail sentences. From 1975 to 1985, the serious crime rate actually decreased by 1.42 per-

cent, yet the number of state and federal prisoners nearly doubled.

Politicians have gotten themselves elected by playing on their “tough on crime” record. Almost every state has endorsed the increased use of the death penalty. They have instituted mandatory minimum sentences, restricted parole, and set tougher “good time” regulations on those already in prison.

The “War on Drugs” has focused on sending to jail increasing numbers of addicted victims of drugs while doing little to stop the flow of drugs into this country. On the contrary, federal agencies assigned to stop drug traffic into the country have recently been implicated in large-scale trafficking—and to the profit of the same government agencies!

The last time the United States faced such a sharp rise in the prison population was after the Civil War, when freed Blacks, who were previously punished by slaveowners within the slave system, came under the jurisdiction of civil “justice.”

### **Privatizing the jails**

Now prisons have become a growth industry. They are being “privatized.” In Leavenworth, Kansas, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) runs a short-term detention facility for medium and maximum-security prisoners.

Under contract to the U.S. Marshal’s Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the CCA Leavenworth facility is part of a national trend. In the last decade—from juvenile detention centers to county jails, and from work farms to state prison units to INS holding camps for undocumented workers—increasing amounts of private capital have been invested (in a big way) in the incarceration business.

Wherever people are detained, there are profits to be made. And if detaining people can make profits, it’s no wonder that Clinton’s Attorney General Reno asked for and received \$22 billion for more cops and prisons. Profit is the bottom line of the new “anti-crime” bill passed by the Senate.

Among other anti-social provisions, this bill makes a radical change in immigration law. It would allow the government to deport aliens lawfully resident in this country without providing the accused with an account of the charges against them or who made the charges.

On top of that, the attorney general is given the power to use secret proceedings or secret evidence by simply asserting that the “alien” was a “threat to national security.”

The funds for this criminal “crime” bill would come from so-called discretionary spending. That is, it would divert funds from such things as Head Start, a program for providing special educational assistance to a small portion of this nation’s especially deprived children.

Not a single Democratic or Republican politician raised their voice in protest against this unconstitutional law, aimed at punishing the victims of American

class injustice.

This is a class law. It is a law to be used by the capitalist exploiters against their victims. And unless there is a fightback by the whole working class—the poor and dispossessed (male and female, Black, white, yellow and brown)—the prisons will be filled and overflowing with the homeless, hungry, and jobless.

The real criminals are those at the pinnacle of industrial, banking, and governmental power. One day, not so far down the road, we can be sure there will be a big table-turning celebration whereby the real criminals will be indicted, tried, and meted out justice by the real victims of capitalist injustice. —December 1993

1994

## Mrs. Elders and the ‘War on Drugs’

Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders recently suggested that the government begin to study legalizing drugs to reduce crime. Now she and her family are caught up in a crime wave.

Her son, Kevin Maurice Elders, age 28, was being sought on a warrant for possession of cocaine. In a telephone interview on Dec. 17, Mr. Elders denied the charge and suggested that it was a politically motivated response to his mother’s remarks that the crime rate could be reduced if drugs were legalized.

Kevin Elders turned himself in on Dec. 20 and was released on \$2,500 bail. His crime, according to the Little Rock, Arkansas, police is that he sold 1/16 of a gram of cocaine to an undercover cop on July 19, 1993.

It is interesting that the police did not act on this crime for almost six months and only after his mother spoke out on legalizing drugs in order to cut the growing crime rate. One would suspect that the government likes to have something on their hirelings just in case they get feisty and start telling the truth.

The White House very quickly distanced itself from Mrs. Elder’s remarks, and she tried to make amends by saying that these were personal observations and not the views of the administration.

But it did her no good. Besides going after her son, the police are also digging into a Little Rock rental home owned by her husband, Oliver. They say that they had complaints it was a hangout for gang members selling drugs.

Not a word of any of these witchhunt charges has to be true. Mrs. Elders had dared to question one of the government’s most sacred cows—the phony WAR AGAINST CRIME AND DRUGS.

Imagine if Harry Truman’s health secretary spoke out against the Cold War begun under his stewardship, saying that many lives and a whole lot of money could be saved if the government would just drop the Cold War and tend to its own business. Something like that could disrupt the whole economy and put a lot of well-paid generals and “defense” chief executive officers out to pasture.

Tens of thousands of police officials, undercover cops, CIA drug dealers, jailers, and jail builders are living off this anti-crime, anti-drug war. But worst of all, it provides the incentive for hordes of poor, demoralized and jobless working people to become drug-pushers.

The “war on drugs” was also the pretext for the whole contra anti-Nicaragua, anti-Panama, anti-Colombia, and anti-Cuba conspiracy. It provides this “peace and freedom-loving” government the cover for such dirty tricks.

We’re talking big bucks here. We’re talking of billions of dollars in military hardware to keep the people of Central and South America in the poverty stricken cubby hole the U. S. capitalist class has prepared for them.

### **The British way**

What if drugs were decriminalized? (That’s not the same thing as legalized.) Here is what Sidney Zion, a former U.S. attorney, says in *The New York Times* of Dec. 15:

“Legalization in the form of medicalization—doctors giving drugs to addicts—kept England free of drug-related crime for 50 years. Then in 1971, the British signed on to our [U.S.] prohibition, complete with draconian sentences for pushing and possessing. Result: Drugs have become Britain’s No. 1 crime problem.”

Zion continues: “But Britain’s prohibition still has an important exception; doctors can still set up programs to provide drugs to addicts. Dr. John Marks opened one in Liverpool in 1982, and the results have been extraordinary.

“The crime rate among addicts went down 96 percent,” Dr. Marks told Zion in a telephone interview. “Even more surprising, astonishing really, is the number of new addicts decreased geometrically. We compared our results with a nearby town that has prohibition and their rate of new addicts was 12-fold higher than ours.”

When asked why that was true, Dr. Marks replied, “Under prohibition every addict becomes a salesman. He has to bring in new customers so that he can earn enough money to feed his habit. But those who come to us don’t need to proselytize, they get what they need for pennies.”

Zion continues, “Because the needles are clean, there have been no AIDs cases in Dr. Mark’s clinic and no deaths from overdoses or polluted narcotics.”

How does law enforcement like it? “Last summer,” Zion states, “John Grieve, the chief of the National Criminal Intelligence Service, New Scotland Yard, called for a system of licensed drug centers.”

### **Tougher and meaner**

If we had a Dr. Marks in this country, his whole family would be in danger with the law. Look at what has happened to Dr. Joycelyn Elder’s family because she made a rational suggestion that the powers-that-be don’t like.

In the United States there has been one answer to crime, “Get tougher, meaner, and let the devil take the hindmost!” It has resulted in billions of dollars being wasted on the so-called “War on Drugs” and has condemned untold thousands

of hopelessly poor people to the hellish prison of drug addiction.

Since 1973, as a result of a vast nationwide increase in criminal sentences, imprisonment has risen more than fourfold. We have added a million citizens to the prison and jail population. More than one in 40 males who are 14 to 34 years old are locked up.

Not even South Africa can match this. But despite this get-tough policy, violent crimes are up 24 percent. Seventy percent of prisoners in New York State come from eight neighborhoods in New York City. These neighborhoods suffer from poverty, exclusion, marginalization, and despair.

It costs \$100,000 to build a prison cell, at least \$20,000 a year to staff it, and at least \$60,000 a year to put a police officer on the street.

It would cost much less if the minimum wage were raised, low-cost housing, schools, and hospitals were built, and everyone could get a job. That way parents and their children would be able to build a real future and the "crime" resulting from poverty would begin to disappear. —January 1994

## **‘It’s a Wonderful Life’ for Bill and Hillary**

The increasing revelations that have been coming out about the Whitewater scandal have been dogging President Clinton for over a month now. The poor man couldn’t get away from them even during his so-called groundbreaking trip to Eastern Europe. More than likely, however, the Clintons are hoping that the sheer complexity of the scandal will force people to lose interest.

Alas, keeping abreast of this tangled web is certainly a taxing experience. So try to follow me while we try to get all the characters straight in this Whitewater-gate deal.

Clinton, while governor of Arkansas was a major shareholder in the Whitewater Development Company from 1979 to 1992 (when he became president). James B. McDougal, his close personal and political friend, was owner of two banks: the Madison Bank and Trust and Madison Guaranty of Arkansas. McDougal was removed from control of Madison Guaranty by federal regulators, was indicted for bank fraud in 1989 and was acquitted in 1990. Clinton, then governor of Arkansas, appointed the state regulators who oversaw McDougal’s savings and loan institutions.

McDougal was also the president of the Whitewater Development Company along with his wife, Susan McDougal, who was also an officer in the company.

Now enter David Hale, a former municipal judge and owner of Capital Management Services, Inc., which received federal assistance for lending to “disadvantaged entrepreneurs.” Records show that in 1986, he made several loans to borrowers with ties to the Democratic Party.

Mr. Hale is now under indictment on charges involving transactions that he says grew out of earlier loans. His company lent \$300,000 to Susan McDougal in

1986, obviously a “disadvantaged entrepreneur.” Some of this money was eventually used in a land purchase by Whitewater Development Company. Hale was also on the board of directors of the Whitewater Development Company.

Another actor in this financial drama was Vincent W. Foster Jr., a childhood friend of Clinton’s who was appointed deputy White House counsel when Clinton became president. He was a law partner of Mrs. Clinton at the Rose law firm. He committed suicide in July 1993.

In 1992, Mr. Foster was the Clintons’ lawyer when they sold their share of Whitewater stock back to McDougal. A Whitewater file was taken from his office after his suicide, a fact that was not disclosed until December 1993, when questions about Whitewater began to surface. Before he joined the Clinton administration, Foster represented Madison Bank and Trust. Federal regulators also frequently hired Mr. Foster and the Rose law firm to represent the government in cleaning up failed Arkansas savings and loan associations in the 1980s. Presently, a Justice Department inquiry is reviewing the circumstances surrounding Mr. Foster’s death, including the removal of the Whitewater file.

Another piece in this tale: Hillary Clinton, a partner in the Rose law firm, was also a major shareholder in the Whitewater Development Company from 1979 until 1992.

Webster L. Hubbell was a law partner of Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Foster in the Rose law firm, and their partner in a now-defunct business venture. Mr. Clinton named him associate attorney general of Arkansas. Mr. Hubbell’s father-in-law, Seth Ward, borrowed hundreds of thousands of dollars from Madison Guaranty, and according to court records, failed to repay more than \$500,000.

Beverly Bassett Schaffer, another lawyer, was appointed Arkansas chief savings and loan and securities regulator by Governor Clinton. She briefly represented Madison Guaranty before becoming a state regulator. Although as a lawyer she had written a memorandum saying Madison Guaranty had engaged in “willful” violation of federal laws, she took no action against the savings and loan for 18 months. Sort of like having a fox guard the chicken house.

She concurred when federal regulators removed Mr. McDougal from control of Madison Guaranty in 1986. Ethics experts say state ethics guidelines suggest she should have excused herself from any decisions concerning Madison, but Mrs. Schaffer denies giving the organization any preferential treatment. Several people linked to Whitewater or the McDougals were appointed officials in Arkansas by then-Governor Clinton.

In 1985, Mr. McDougal raised money to help retire a Clinton campaign debt he accrued when he ran for governor. Investigators now suspect that the money was improperly diverted from Madison Guaranty. This institution’s assets rose from \$3 million in 1982, when McDougal bought it, to more than \$120 million in 1985. It invested in real estate developments in Arkansas and Canada that ultimately failed.

But this cast of bankers played the capitalist game for all it’s worth; they court-

ed politicians and held political fundraisers for them. Federal examiners criticized the savings and loan in 1984 for “unsafe and unsound lending practices” and numerous other violations. The next audit in 1986 found so many possible violations that Mr. McDougal was removed.

The Justice Department is still investigating whether Madison Guaranty improperly funneled money into Whitewater or into Mr. Clinton’s 1984 campaign for governor.

The Rose law firm was a prestigious law firm in which Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Foster and Mr. Hubbell were partners. It represented Madison Guaranty. It also represented the federal regulators who were trying to clean up failed savings and loans including Madison Guaranty. Get a load of that little conflict of interest.

The Whitewater Development Company was a real estate development company incorporated by the Clintons and the McDougals in 1979. The four partners borrowed more than \$200,000 to buy 230 acres in the Ozarks, hoping to resell the land for retirement homes, but the venture failed.

This is just another S&L white-collar bank job, which at the present time is placing every man, woman, and child in this country \$5000 in debt. In fact, in ’85 and ’86, the cost of the S&L bailout was growing by \$1 billion a month. For two years the problem was hushed up and is now costing American working people another half trillion dollars.

In his State of the Union address President Clinton made a special point on crime. He promised to put thousands more police in the streets, communities, and schools—wherever people might gather. But will he put a cop in every governor’s office, the Oval Office, the board rooms of corporate industry and banks, in the Congress? Or will they continue to be allowed to take everything this nation has except the nails in the floorboards?

That’s the story so far. It could be called “All in the Family,” “Jessie James Rides Again,” or “It’s A Wonderful Life for Bill and Hillary.” —February 1994

## Uncle Sam—Top Secret Grim Reaper

All during the late 1940s and 50s, the United States government was in action against the evil “Red Menace,” the Soviet Union. And all the while, the biggest danger was right here in the good old U.S.A.—from our own government.

The Energy Department has amassed at least 32 million pages of secrets, a stack that would rise three miles high. Some of those secrets are about experiments on humans—mainly the poor, the sick, the children and, of course, Black people.

In the name of keeping our “democratic way of life,” the CIA released the whooping cough virus in 1955 in Palmetto, Fla., (near Tampa). This was aimed directly at the Black community. Hundreds of children were affected and more than a dozen died.

Over 7000 military volunteers, plus 1074 civilians, were given mind-disabling drugs at Edgewood Arsenal, Md. There was no follow-up study to find out if there was any long-term effect.

African Americans were unknowingly given LSD at the National Institute of Mental Health.

Fort Detrick, Md., was capable of producing 130 million mosquitoes a month in 1960. They were released by the Army Chemical Corps in Savannah, Ga., and Avon Park, Fl. The corps was trying to find out if the mosquitoes could be used as carriers to spread yellow fever.

Carver Village, which was exclusively Black, was the target for these experiments (which were also used against Cuba). Residents at the time reported fevers, bronchitis, typhoid, encephalitis, still-births, and also, mysterious deaths.

According to Alexander Cockburn, who writes for the *Anderson Valley Advertiser*, "The present director of National Institute of Mental Health, Dr. Fred Goodwin, endorses research claiming Blacks are genetically violence prone. He and a colleague praise the eugenicist, Dr. Ernst Rudin, a Nazi doctor who worked for Hitler."

### Experimentation

In 1977, it was revealed that the CIA, in conjunction with the military, had for 25 years carried out mind-control experimentation on unwitting U.S. and Canadian people. Involved were 44 colleges and universities, 15 research foundations, 12 hospitals and clinics, and three penal institutions.

These experiments ranged from chemical and biological warfare to hypnosis, use of strange pathogens, and other toxic agents. During the 1950s and '60s, 8000 U.S. servicemen participated in chemical and biological warfare experimentation; 1000 of these were unwitting recipients of LSD; many others of BZ, a more powerful hallucinogenic drug.

One of the best known cases concerns the Tuskegee experiment of the Public Health Service, where 400 poor Black men were denied treatment for syphilis for 40 years so that the natural course of the disease could be followed by the medical profession.

The government has fought tooth and nail against anyone who has tried to claim compensation for damages done to them by government experimentation.

### Radiation

The real horror is coming out now about radiation experiments used against a defenseless population—including ethnic minorities, the mentally ill, and the critically ill—for three decades following World War II. The experiments took place in government laboratories as well as private medical institutions. They involved injecting patients with the by-products of nuclear weapons manufacturing or subjecting them to powerful radiation beams.

Now the Energy Department has been forced to acknowledge that, for the last



six years at least, it has ignored evidence of abuses as well as a Congressional request to reveal the full extent of the experiments and to compensate the victims.

The nuclear experiments were conducted with the authorization and compliance of government agencies. This was done in large part in order to gauge the probable effect of radiation on soldiers and civilians in a nuclear war. But many of the “patients” were never informed of the full nature of the experiments and possible harmful effects of the radiation.

For example, 131 prisoners in both Oregon and Washington had their testicles exposed to X-rays in order to test the effects of radiation on the production of sperm. They were never informed that radiation could cause cancer.

Researchers at the University of Rochester, the University of Chicago, and the University of California in San Francisco injected patients with high doses of plutonium, without their informed consent. Many patients were chosen because specialists believed they suffered life-threatening illnesses. As it turned out, however, some of the subjects were not seriously ill at the time.

### **Atom bomb victims**

Young men in the armed forces served as guinea pigs when the military forced them to witness its atomic bomb tests during the 1940s and 50s. Years later, many of them paid with their lives as victims of cancer and other diseases caused by radiation. Workers in the nuclear industry were also victims of the atomic bomb tests.

Keith L. Prescott worked as a miner in the 1960s digging radioactive debris out of the deep tunnels beneath the Nevada desert where the government tested atomic bombs. Mr. Prescott has told interviewers that he was ordered to work in underground chambers so contaminated by radiation that he became nauseated and dizzy.

In 1969 he developed multiple myeloma, a bone marrow cancer known to be caused by radiation, and in 1980 he sued the government. The government has fought the suit for 14 years, denying that radiation had anything to do with Mr. Prescott's illness. He is still fighting.

In 1956, when ranchers in Utah asserted in a lawsuit that radioactive fallout killed 4500 sheep, the government steadfastly refused to accept the blame or refused to compensate the ranchers.

Since 1990, thousands of workers and residents have filed eight class-action lawsuits over radiation from nuclear weapons plants in Colorado, New Mexico, Ohio, Tennessee, and Washington State. The suits are aimed at corporations that managed the plants for the government.

Because of its contractual obligations, the Energy Department has spent \$47.1 million since 1991 to reimburse these companies for legal fees connected with the cases.

The general feeling of most people is that you can't trust the government. The

revelations that are coming out now will begin to draw back the curtain of secrecy that the government has been trying to keep hidden for years. They will prove that the real enemy of American working people is right here. —March 1994

## Better Living Through Chemistry

From DDT to rbGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone), the chemical industry insists on giving us better living. I don't have to explain DDT; Rachel Carson did that for us in 1962 in her wonderful book, "Silent Spring." Her book led, eventually, to banning the use of DDT on food crops, and it is no longer on the market in the United States. However, the manufacturers who could no longer sell DDT in this country found other markets in the Third World.

Other chemicals that were formerly in regular use in food products, such as DES in beef, NDGA, diethyl pyrocarbonate, FD & C Violet No. 1, and safrole have all been banned because they have proven to be unhealthy for all living creatures. In fact, the chemicals in our food have forced more consumers to buy in "natural food" markets.

Now the manufacturers who insist on "better living through chemistry" are hitting our most trusted food item—milk.

After all, don't we all watch those little children grow instantly into handsome young men and women because "milk does a body good?" And when you go to the dairy counter at the supermarket, there are probably six to eight kinds of milk on display. Non-fat, low-fat, regular, acidophilus milk, fortified, and probably others I just can't remember right now. But you get the idea. Milk is an absolute necessity. Unless you're allergic.

Now the Monsanto Corporation has found a way to increase milk production by adding another chemical called rbGH. This is a hormone that makes cows produce even more milk. It will also force the government to pay even more federal, state, and local price supports for unsold "surplus" milk—which will cost you and me (the taxpayers) up to \$100 million a year for the next five years. It will probably also increase the cost of milk at the supermarket—which will force parents to cut down the amount of milk they buy for their children.

The only people who will benefit from this new chemical are Monsanto and the large dairy farmers. Certainly, the consumers will not enjoy this new "addition" to our drug overload. This good stuff, the hormone, will be produced in Austria and packaged in the Netherlands. We will only get it when we pour our toddlers their morning glasses of milk.

This government already has warehouses loaded with milk and milk products. It is paid for by the government with our taxes, so that milk, cheese, etc. will maintain high prices. It's all for profit. The corporations don't care if "milk does a body good," they just want it to do their bank accounts good.

The new hormone, rbGH, increases disease rates in cows. Monsanto's own product label states that rbGH-injected cows "are at an increased risk for clinical mastitis," an infection of the udder.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says in public press releases that the drug poses "no health threat" to animals. However, in more technical documents (unread by the general public), the agency states that the risk of clinical mastitis infections in rbGH-treated herds increases by almost 80 percent.

The FDA admitted that what it means by "no health threat" is that it poses a "manageable risk." Farmers "manage" cow mastitis through increased use of antibiotics.

To make matters worse, an independent analysis of Monsanto data found a significant increase in somatic cell counts (the scientific term for pus and bacteria) in rbGH-treated herds, which can give milk an off taste and shorten shelf life.

At the present time, the FDA is saying that dairies do not have to label rbGH-treated milk. Monsanto does not want milk to be labeled as such. "We do not have the right to know."

We should demand that the government force all milk products to be labeled. Let's just find out if the consumer will know enough to avoid antibiotics, pus, and bacteria in milk. If we had known then what we know now about DES and DDT, which was dropped into our foods, we might not have the massive problems we have now. That includes the ever-growing cancer rate. —April 1994

## The Blue Plague

Blue Plague, that's the name given to the New York City police, "the boys in blue," from the 30th Precinct in Central Harlem. That name has been given to them by Jill Nelson, author of "Volunteer Slavery: My Authentic Negro Experience," in a May 30 *New York Times* "Op-Ed" article.

Nelson describes the feeling of people in Harlem when 14 police officers from the 30th Precinct were arrested. The police were accused of stealing from drug dealers or taking money to protect them.

Nelson writes of the outrage of African American families who must live with the "police protected" dope dealers and the effect it will have on their children. She writes:

"As for the citizens these officers were sworn and paid to protect—the citizens they abused and exploited for financial gain—they remain invisible. Honest, hard-working people who want what everyone wants: a decent job, good schools for their children, safety in their community. From what one reads and hears, it would be easy to assume that they were untouched by the actions of corrupt police officers, unaffected by living in a community in which the lawless and the law become one.

"There are a few pictures of a handful of neighborhood people jeering as

cops were led away; as they were portrayed, these people were transformed from victims into victimizers of the boys in blue.... Those of us who live in Harlem or places like it know better.

"We know that women and men forced to weave their early morning way to work through phalanxes of heavily armed drug merchants under the protection of the police do not do so unscathed. That the lives, aspirations, and self respect of boys and girls—who must navigate a sea of cocaine-dealing thugs daily as the police stand idly by—are often irrevocably and negatively changed. That when they are allowed to flourish with the active or tacit approval of the police, the devastation is that much greater.

"Many Black and Latino people neither trust nor respect the police, much as we'd like to. Often, society acts as if this attitude springs from some genetic, parental or cultural deficiency. But why would we respect them when they so often abuse their authority and so often have no respect for the people they are paid to serve and protect?....

"But what about those men, women and children who find themselves seduced by the rampant availability of drugs, by destruction as a way of life, by the rule of lawlessness? Who cares or speaks for a young woman lost to crack, a young man captured by violence, the parents or grandparents who mourn blood relations either dead or consigned to the ranks of the living dead? How many young people are in prison because they foolishly thought they could be lawless just like the police?"

The anger of Jill Nelson is felt in every minority community—from East Los Angeles to Bedford Stuyvesant. That's because the police are repressive in every Black and Latino community. They are there to enforce not to protect. They are the guardians of capitalist property, not people.

The corruption in the New York Police Department and the investigation of this corruption is expected to lead to the arrest of officers in as many as 10 of the city's 75 precincts.

The investigation was begun by the Mollen Commission two years ago after Officer Michael Dowd was arrested for dealing drugs from his patrol car.

The investigation of the 30th precinct in Harlem found that police corruption and brutality occurs at virtually every hour of the day.

Here is what the commission grudgingly revealed: Police force drug dealers to pay them protection money and beat up those who refuse to cooperate. They have stolen hundreds to tens of thousands of dollars worth of drugs and cash from dealers and other residents by illegally breaking into cars and apartments—and then they sell the drugs! The abuses go on and on. And this is only an investigation into one precinct in one city in this country.

Compared to today, Harlem once used to be a tolerable neighborhood for children and adults. But in line with increasing rates of racial and class injustice, capitalism's only solution is to escalate repression and open wider the flow of

drugs into the ghettos and other slums of America.

They know that the desperation of oppressed people will force them to rebel and fight back. That's why you see police-protected drug dealers in Harlem and not on Fifth Avenue. —May 1994

## **Beware! U.S. Threatens to 'Rescue' Haiti!**

Since 1991, the Haitian military has killed at least 4000 people and has forced at least 100,000 people into hiding. This has been done since the Aristide government was overthrown in 1991. Thousands of "boat people" (Haitians fleeing Haitian repression) have been picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard and returned to Haiti or have been imprisoned in detention centers in Guantanamo Bay, a U.S. naval base in Cuba, or held in prisons in the United States.

Meanwhile, President Clinton speaks with a forked tongue about the issue. When asked why the U.S. government returns the refugees, he said, "The whole purpose of the return policy is primarily to deter people from risking their lives." This was said April 22, 1994.

Anyone who is the least bit familiar with the history of the United States and Latin America knows that the last thing the U.S. wants is freedom in those countries.

One American who knew the score was Major Gen. Smedley Darlington Butler. He was a rare man who came to understand the basic truth of the U.S. military machine and its war policies, especially towards Latin America. On August 21, 1931 this highly decorated soldier made this antiwar speech: "I spent 33 years... being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street and the bankers. In short I was a racketeer for capitalism...."

"I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1916. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City (Bank) boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the rape of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street...."

"In China in 1927, I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. I had a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals and promotions... I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to operate a racket in three cities. The Marines operated on three continents...."

The 1930s made Butler strongly antiwar and anti-imperialist.

The United States has invaded Central and South American countries 43 times in the last 100 years. Not once to bring democracy or to aid in getting rid of military dictators. Usually it was when military dictators were threatened by a popular uprising of the people.

The August 9, 1993 issue of *Newsweek* magazine shed a small amount of light on

what the U.S. government really does to prop up military dictators in Latin America. It runs the United States Army's School of the Americas in Fort Benning, Georgia. In November 1989, a Salvadoran Army patrol broke into Central American University and murdered six Jesuit priests, their cook and her daughter. Some of the victims were executed lying face down on the ground. Nineteen of the 27 Salvadoran officers whom a U.N Truth Commission report implicated in the Jesuit murders were graduates of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas in Fort Benning. Almost three quarters of the Salvadoran officers accused in seven massacres during El Salvador's bloody civil war were trained at the Fort Benning school.

It has been called the School of Dictators. Since 1946 the School of the Americas has trained more than 56,000 Latin American soldiers in combat and counterinsurgency skills.

At least six Peruvian officers linked to a military death squad that killed a university professor and nine students at a Lima University last year were graduates of the Fort Benning school.

Four of five senior Honduran officers, who were accused in a 1987 Americas Watch report of organizing a secret death squad called Battalion 316, were trained at Fort Benning.

Last year a coalition of international human-rights groups issued a report charging 246 Colombian officers with human-rights violations; 105 were Fort Benning alumni.

To honor graduates who reached senior ranks in their respective military organizations, the State Department and the Pentagon each year select Latin American generals for a Hall of Fame. But among the two dozen inductees, whose framed pictures hang in the Fort Benning school's main foyer, are men who represent not democracy but the real intent of the State Department and the Pentagon. They include Gen. Hugo Banzer Suarez, who in the 1970s brutally suppressed tin miners and church workers as dictator of Bolivia; Gen. Manuel Antonio Callejas y Callejas, chief of Guatemalan intelligence in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when thousands of political opponents were assassinated; Honduran generals Policarpo Paz Garcia, who presided over a corrupt regime in the early 1980s, and Humberto Regalado Hernandez, who as armed forces chief was suspected of aiding Colombian drug traffickers.

This "School of the Americas" costs the taxpayers of the United States \$42 million a year. With this information does anyone in their right mind think that the United States is really interested in bringing democracy to Haiti? —June 1994

## **You've Still Got A Long Way To Go, Baby!**

August 26th, is officially Women's Suffrage Day. Seventy-four years ago, in

1920, women won the right to vote in the United States. It was another three years before the last state ratified the suffrage amendment to the Constitution.

When I say “won,” I mean that it took almost 30 years of marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and hunger strikes before capitalism finally caved in on voting rights for women. Women were “given” nothing; they had to take it themselves. Thousands of women were arrested and jailed because they wanted to be included as first-class citizens.

While a few women in 1994 complain about the “glass ceiling” (being refused promotions in business because of their gender), most women are worried about whether they will have any ceiling over their heads as more women and children join the growing homeless population. This is especially true for single-parent families where women are the head of the household.

The latest Census Bureau figures are that the median family income in households where two parents were present is \$43,578. In one-parent families where the mother was divorced, the median income is \$17,014, and where she had never married, the median income is \$9,272.

Similarly, 10.6 percent of children living in two-parent families were living below the poverty line. But 38.4 percent of children living with divorced mothers and 66.3 percent of those living with mothers who had never married were living below the poverty line.

The government’s answer to this horrible problem for women is to cut back on welfare programs, such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which will drive more women and their children into ever lower depths of grinding poverty.

### **Worldwide oppression**

Women the world over are suffering from poverty and special oppression. In the August 1994 issue of *Scientific American* magazine, there is an overview of women’s oppression throughout the world. Domestic violence, a major problem in the United States, is also extensive in other parts of the world.

Experts say that “between 20 and more than 50 percent of women throughout the world may be abused.” One survey in Papua New Guinea found that 56 percent of married women in cities reported being battered, and 18 percent of wives had gone to a hospital because they had been beaten. In the countryside, 67 percent of wives had suffered from domestic violence.

In Bombay, India, one of four deaths of women between the ages of 15 and 24 is caused by “accidental” burning (a means of murdering a wife in order to get a higher dowry through another marriage.) In the United States, between 22 and 35 percent of visits to emergency rooms are for injuries caused by domestic violence. Battering may be the leading cause of injury to American women.

Even on the issue of HIV infections, women have been given the shaft. Many of the medicines for the AIDS virus have not been given to women, and in general, women have been excluded from many health programs related to AIDS.

The World Health Organization estimates that by the year 2000 between 30 and 40 million people will have been infected with the HIV virus, half or more of them women. AIDS is already the leading cause of death for African American women between the ages of 20 and 40 in New York State and New Jersey; it is also the principal killer of women in the same age group in sub-Saharan Africa.

Until 1992, despite the magnitude of this part of the epidemic, the list of conditions set by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention used to define AIDS did not include gynecological symptoms.

Family planning, which should include abortions, is still in the Dark Ages as far as women are concerned. As many as 60 million abortions are performed annually, at least 50 percent of them clandestinely in 100 or so countries where the procedure is illegal or severely restricted. Many of them are sought by teenagers and young unmarried women who have little access to contraception because family-planning programs are designed for married women. In many countries, providing contraceptives to teenagers is illegal.

Some of the figures in the *Scientific American* article on women and health are too horrible to think about: About 2 million girls annually, in 26 African countries, must undergo genital mutilation. They are clitoridectomized or infibulated—the process in which the clitoris as well as the labia majora and minora are destroyed—often without anesthesia.

One million U.S. teenagers become pregnant each year. The fastest growing segment of the population carrying the HIV virus are women. Cervical cancer kills 200,000 women yearly. Some 450 million women in developing countries are anemic, which will affect their children. 250 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases occur every year, mostly in people between the ages of 20 and 24.

The facts are clear. Women still face special oppression and super exploitation. They are still paid 69 cents for every dollar paid to a man. But this is not because of male oppression, but capitalist oppression. It is the capitalist class and their politicians in power who benefit from women's second-class status.

Women in the United States might have won the vote 74 years ago, but they have not won their equality. We still have a long way to go before U.S. women—and their sisters the world over—are really free and equal.

But let's wish ourselves a happy Women's Suffrage Day. What the hell—we deserve it!

—July 1994

## Hands Off Cuba!

In my desk drawer I have a paper bag full of buttons that say “HANDS OFF CUBA.” They were made in the early 1960s by the Fair Play For Cuba Com-



mittee, an organization to which I was proud to belong.

This was a committee dedicated to the idea that every country has a right to self-determination. That when a people, such as the people of Cuba, decides to kick out a dictator, as they did to Batista in January 1959, they have a right to organize their freedom anyway they want.

The free-loading capitalist class of the United States didn't see it that way. They thought Cuba was theirs, just as they think that every country in Latin America and everywhere else is theirs to plunder.

Whenever a North American capitalist is in trouble, the United States sends its gunboats and armed soldiers to strong-arm anyone who doesn't like being exploited by some American businessman. That's the American way.

Cuba was used as a sporting house and a playground for North American tourists. Brothels, gambling casinos, big hotels, plantations, and factories were all owned and controlled by American businesses. Cuban men, women, and children were there to be controlled and to labor so that the exploiters could send their profits to banks in the United States.

Batista, the dictator of Cuba at that time, acted like a hired gun of the United States. He made sure that any Cuban worker who even thought of organizing a union disappeared, rapidly. His job was to keep the Cuban people in their place, on their knees, for the North American capitalist class. Then something happened.

Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and other young Cuban rebels decided to try to take back their country. And they did—with the support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people, who wanted to get the foreign capitalists out of their country. On New Year's Day, 1959, the July 26th Movement took Cuba away from the Yankee imperialists.

Then they set about taking back their land and turning it over to the Cuban peasants and workers. They closed the brothels and gambling casinos, took the plantations and factories out of the hands of North American robber barons, and stopped the northward drift of profits.

Then, for all Cubans, they set up free medical care, free public education through college, and free childcare. They began to build housing, roads, and airports and nationalized the banking system. They made Cuba a nation of proud, educated, and militant people.

Imperialism hates that kind of thing. It could catch on in other countries in the Western Hemisphere. If one group of workers threw out the capitalist bums, then every other small country could do likewise. Even workers within the imperialist countries could get wise and start thinking about a real democracy in their own country.

Can you imagine the working class voting on their own hours of work and wages? Can you imagine workers voting to build houses and repair schools instead of bombs and tanks?

And the working class voting against bombing Panama or Iraq, saying they had nothing to gain by murdering men, women, and children in another country?

Instead, the workers of imperialist countries vote for puppets who go to Washington, D.C., and work for their bosses. They have the choice of voting for Candidate #1, who will do what he or she is told to do, or Candidate #2, who will do what he or she is told to do.

Every once in a while there comes Candidate #3, who promises to work for the “people” and then does what he or she is told to do by the ruling class. That’s the kind of “democracy” in practice in the United States.

In Cuba, the workers bypassed that kind of “democracy” and set up their own kind of government. In fact, when the United States invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban people voted with their guns and drove out the invaders. That was democracy, an event very similar to our own “Boston Tea Party” on Dec. 16, 1773, an early event in the struggle that eventually eliminated control by the British monarchy.

Once again, the U.S. imperialists are on a rampage against Cuba. They have tried everything to choke the life out of that country. Now they want to tighten their fingers around the throats of the Cuban people.

We must stand with our Cuban sisters and brothers at this time. We must say to our own capitalist class:

**HANDS OFF CUBA! END THE EMBARGO!  
OPEN THE DOORS TO TRADE WITH CUBA! NO WAR!**

—August 1994

## Defend Immigrant Rights!

Proposition 187 is one of the most evil ballot initiatives ever placed on the California state ballot. It has been a boon to the corrupt, putrid politicians—both Democrats and Republicans—who hope they can ride into government on the backs of immigrant workers.

Proposition 187, if passed, would: 1) Deny an estimated 400,000 children schooling, despite the federal laws protecting their constitutional access to a public school education;

2) Deny social and medical services to thousands, contrary to the U.S. Constitution and federal law;

3) Convert teachers, nurses, doctors, social service workers, etc., into informers for the INS, creating a police state—a McCarthy-era or Nazi Germany atmosphere.

(4) Cause people to be accused of illegal residence solely due to accent, skin color, language, or family name.

This initiative is a con-game by the capitalist politicians trying to cover their failing economy by attacking the very people who suffer the most from unemployment and low wages. Like cats scratching in their litter box, the politicians

are trying to cover-up for capitalism and blame the victims, the immigrants.

The two major candidates who are running for governor are Pete Wilson, presently the governor of California, and Kathleen Brown, the Democratic Party “liberal.” Here are their views on Proposition 187:

Wilson has endorsed Prop. 187. He wants to deny most government-financed health and education benefits to undocumented workers and their children. He wants the federal government to step up border patrols and has sent national guard forces to the border with Mexico.

He favors a constitutional amendment to take away the automatic citizenship given to children born in this country to “illegal” immigrants.

If passed, this could lead to big problems. For example, Christopher Columbus, in 1492, was an “illegal” immigrant, since the only real Americans were the native Indians. And the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock in 1620 were also “illegals.” The majority of the people in this country are the descendants of “illegals.”

Wilson has sued the federal government to reimburse the state for the costs of dealing with undocumented workers. That is Wilson’s position.

Now for Brown’s “liberal” position on Prop. 187. She opposes the measure, citing among other things a legislative analyst’s report that says the proposal would cost California taxpayers billions of dollars in lost federal aid.

But she wants to cut off jobs for undocumented workers. (She favors starvation rather than Prop. 187.) She wants stricter border enforcement, with over 1000 new guards on the Mexican border.

She calls for the creation of tamper-proof Social Security cards—a right-to-work passport for all Californians—and higher fines on employers who hire illegal immigrants.

That’s the “liberal” Democrat’s position on Prop. 187. What’s the real difference? Write this newspaper if you can think of an answer.

While these two worthless candidates battle it out about who will be the meanest governor, they are silent about the class that’s really slurping up the wealth of this country.

The richest one percent of Americans had an average income of \$676,000 in 1992. The richest one percent receive more income in a year than the poorest 40 percent. The richest one percent got 70 percent of all income growth in the economy from 1977 to 1989.

The wealthiest one percent of the people own 37 percent of everything in the United States. The wealthiest one percent own 50 percent of all corporate stocks, 79 percent of all bonds, and 62 percent of all business assets.

You don’t hear one word from the two gubernatorial candidates that some 2.2 million children a day statewide can’t afford a school lunch. Or that San Francisco’s infant mortality rate is nearly double that of Sweden’s, and only 49 percent of the city’s two-year-olds were fully immunized.

You can't blame that on "illegal" immigrants! That can only be blamed on capitalism. That's why the politicians keep their mouths shut on those kinds of issues.

One more fact on immigrants. They contribute \$12 billion more than they receive in the state of California and \$28.7 billion more on a national level.

On Oct. 16, meet at 10 a.m. at Lorena and Cesar Chavez Blvd. in East Los Angeles and march to L.A. City Hall (corner of First and Main). This march against Prop. 187 is in the interest of all workers, regardless of their color or country of origin. This march is for us! —September 1994

## **Terrorists Attack Women's Clinics**

On Sunday, Oct. 9, someone wasn't in church praying. They were out fire-bombing women's clinics in Northern California.

At 3:30 a.m., the Planned Parenthood clinic in Chico, California, was fire-bombed. The Chico police called the Redding, California, police to warn of a possible attack on the Feminist Women's Health Center (FWHC) in that city. The Redding police say, however, that they were overwhelmed with work at 3:30 a.m. and did not bother to get to the health center, which was fire-bombed just 70 minutes later.

The police failed to respond despite the fact that the FWHC had been previously attacked five times. Fires believed to be caused by arsonists were reported in October 1989, July 1990, and June 1992.

At the time of the latest bombing, a businessman, who had gone outside to smoke a cigarette, spotted an individual wearing a ski-mask crouched down near the building and holding a gasoline container. The arsonist fled; the police, of course, did not find him or her.

### **The smoking gun**

In fact, the only time anyone has been caught in an attack upon a women's clinic is when they stood there with a smoking gun in their hand. That happened in Pensacola, Fla., on July 29 when Paul Hill shot and killed two people, Dr. Britton and Mr. Barrett, and wounded June Barrett who was a volunteer escort at the Pensacola Ladies Center.

In March 1993, Dr. David Gunn was murdered by Michael Griffin at Pensacola's Women's Medical Services clinic. In August, Dr. George Tiller was shot in both arms by Rachele Shannon at the Women's Health Care Services clinic in Wichita, Kan. Shannon has recently been indicted for arson attacks in Northern California.

In 1994, the following attacks against clinics have occurred: On Aug. 10, a Planned Parenthood clinic in Brainerd, Minn., was burned to the ground. On July 29, a homemade firebomb was placed outside the back entrance to the

Commonwealth Women's Clinic in Falls Church, Va., causing \$10,000 damage.

On Aug. 9, staff at the Planned Parenthood clinic in St. Albans, Vt., discovered an unexploded firebomb in the driveway. Helen Virginia Ames, an anti-choice activist reportedly from Gulfport, Mississippi, was arrested on Aug. 20 and charged with illegal possession of the destructive device.

Nine abortion providers in states ranging from Arizona to Indiana to Ohio reportedly received letters threatening their lives in the month following the Pensacola shootings. The sender remains unknown.

More than a dozen Ku Klux Klan members and sympathizers demonstrated at the Aware Women Center for Choice in Melbourn, Fla., on Aug. 20. Allegedly protesting the presence of U.S. marshals at clinics nationwide, the new arrivals outnumbered the "regular" anti-choice contingent. The Melbourn clinic and its owner have also received bomb and death threats.

Anti-choice protests were held Aug. 8-10 in Gulfport, Mississippi, targeting Mississippi's sole abortion provider, Dr. Joseph Booker.

The American Coalition of Life Activists, who were "invited to Mississippi" by anti-choice activist Roy McMillan, subsequently moved their "No Place to Hide" campaign to Jackson for two days. The demonstrators followed Dr. Booker to the streets outside his home there and to the city's New Women Medical Center, where pro-choice activists outnumbered anti-choice fanatics by five to one.

The only force that has prevented even more attacks on the clinics is the mobilization of thousands of pro-choice women and men who have stood guard at the clinics as escorts and defenders.

This factor, combined with the pressure exerted by mass marches and demonstrations demanding safe and legal abortions, is what forced the government to take some small steps to defend the clinics.

### **Who are the bombers?**

Who are these mad-clinic bombers? It is too easy to say that they are just crazies. They get encouragement in a thousand different and subtle ways.

The ruling class makes up just a small percentage of the population. They have always supported and financed extra-legal groups who will be prepared to do their bidding when the majority begins to fight for its rights.

In the old South, after the Civil War, it was the Ku Klux Klan that bombed, burned, and lynched the Black population. In Haiti, the "deathsquads" were financed and protected by the ruling class with the support of the U.S. government. In Europe, "skinheads" are fire-bombing buildings of immigrants in the middle of the night.

These same extra-legal forces will be in the forefront of a "right-to-work" movement in this country, which will bomb union headquarters and target militant unionists—just as the SS did in Germany under Hitler's direction.

That's the real motive behind the anti-choice mob. Their targets are women

who know they have a right to control their own bodies. That kind of freedom is dangerous.

But women across this country have shown that they will fight and protect their right to choose. As women (and men) fought against child labor and for public education and the eight-hour day, so they will struggle to stop the anti-choice terrorists. —October 1994

## Capitalists Send Clear Message In Elections:

### Offensive Against Women's Economic and Democratic Rights Will Intensify

Before Nov. 8, Election Day, I was receiving at least one letter a day from women's groups urging me to support Democratic Party candidates—especially U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and California gubernatorial candidate Kathleen Brown. Each letter stated that I must vote for these “feminists” or all of the gains of the women's movement would go down the tubes.

But I didn't vote for either of them. I could not remember one thing they had done to aid our “right to choose,” affirmative action, equal pay for work of equal value, expansion of childcare services for working parents, or anything else that women so desperately need.

I do remember Dianne Feinstein trying to crush childcare services in San Francisco. And I do remember Dianne Feinstein refusing to speak at a women's rights rally in Golden Gate Park, claiming that “the speakers would support abortion rights, and her constituents were divided on the question.”

I do remember Kathleen Brown urging more troops for the border to attack “illegal” workers. And I do remember her endorsement of a special social security card to screen out “illegals.”

Those who voted for Democrats, and lost, are predicting the end of all things good and the coming of all things evil. And I will admit the Republicans are evil, sinister, and just plain nasty.

However, Bill Clinton is going along with a national prayer addition to the Constitution—so this should help. Perhaps the mothers and children who are thrown off Aid to Dependent Children can pray for food, clothing, and housing for their children.

### ‘Contract With America?’

Claiming they have a “Contract With America,” the Republicans are going to



“overhaul” welfare—by removing all single mothers age 17 to 21 from Aid to Dependent Children. They want to build orphanages and group houses, so the single mothers won’t have to watch their children starve when thrown off AFDC.

They also propose to end federal support for food stamps and the nutrition program for women and children. Georgia Rep. Newt Gingrich is also opposed to the Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows women and men to take an unpaid leave of up to 12 weeks to care for a new or sick child, an ill family



member, or a personal illness.

Mr. Gingrich said that workers who didn't like it could "exercise that most basic American freedom"—the right to quit their job.

Let's examine that "Contract with America." In the last election, a total of 38.7 percent of the eligible voters voted. The Republicans received almost 20 percent, and the Democrats received a whopping 18 percent. Now, that does not seem like a very strong "contract" to me.

The vast majority, almost 62 percent, stayed home and voted for "none of the above." In fact, a recent poll of registered voters showed that 53 percent said we needed a third party.

Voters who formerly supported Democrats and Republicans have little or no faith in the election process and feel that there is no difference between either party.

That's why newspapers such as *The New York Times*, a mouthpiece for the capitalist class, are saying that the newly elected Republicans should show some caution when they talk about a cut in the capital gains tax for corporations, an increase in military spending, and cutting social services for the unemployed and poor.

They are afraid that those kind of actions will set off a response from the 62 percent who didn't approve the "Contract With America."

### **Slaves of two capitalist parties**

As for the women's movement, the major organizations, including the National Organization for Women (NOW), have been enslaved to the electoral process since the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) on June 30, 1982, when it fell three states short of the 38 needed for ratification.

For a short period, NOW called for demonstrations and actions to rally women and labor for the ERA. NOW grew by the thousands during that fight. In city after city, new chapters were formed and older chapters grew by the hundreds.

However, during the last two years of the campaign, the organization tried to win the amendment by electing "good [Democratic Party] candidates" who would support the ERA in their unratified states. In each state the so-called pro-



ERA candidates, elected by women to office, betrayed their trust as soon as they were elected.

It was a bitter defeat for those women who had believed the promises of the NOW leaders. The leadership then turned their attention to “electing good women” instead of just electing Democrats. All to no avail.

However, when the right to choose became threatened, the National Organization for Women did organize a march of 600,000 in Washington, DC, on April 5, 1992. In San Francisco, women organized two marches of 50,000 and 80,000.

A national clinic defense was also organized, with coalitions of women’s organizations that included NOW, Planned Parenthood, the Coalition to Defend Reproductive Rights, and hundreds of locally based organizations. It was successful in turning back anti-choice, so-called “right to lifers,” in one city after another.

The pro-choice forces outnumbered the anti-choice reactionaries every time. The anti-choice women-haters have had to resort to murder, firebombings and other terrorist actions in an effort to close women’s health clinics. This Congress will give those terrorists a real boost.

The right to choose is just one of the problems women face. The majority of mothers with children under the age of six are in the workforce. Economic reality has forced them into the job market, but women’s wages are still 69 cents for every dollar of men’s wages.

Women are also the majority working in the minimum wage and part-time jobs. The recession has taken a dreadful toll on working families and especially single working mothers.

### **The poor get poorer**

In the United States, the rich still get richer, and the poor and working class are getting poorer. In 1982, the total holdings and assets of America’s 400 richest individuals was estimated to be \$92 billion. In 1994, a recent issue of *Forbes* magazine reported, the net assets of the 400 richest Americans has grown to \$300 billion.

Meanwhile, according to the Federal Reserve, the bottom 60 percent of the population have assets of zero or less—they owe more than they own. It doesn’t make any difference whether they are Republicans or Democrats, the rich still get richer and the poor still get zapped.

We can be assured that this Congress, like its predecessor, will attack the right to choose as well as all social services needed by poor and working people.

The newly elected big-mouths are already talking about making California’s anti-immigrant Proposition 187 a national law. They hope to make cuts in the food stamp program and nutritional programs for nursing mothers. Clinton has already said that he can work with the Republican majority on such items as cuts

to welfare and other social services.

What is needed is a united effort on the part of women and labor, oppressed minorities, the unemployed, the underemployed, and other allies to start a new battle for both equal rights and economic rights.

Together, we are the vast majority. But the mass of American people cannot be rallied through the ballot box and by depending on some “good” politician to kindly give us our rights, or on the judicial system, who work for the rich against the poor and working people.

It can only be done using the methods of the women who fought for suffrage, the working class who fought and won trade unions in the 1930s, the civil rights struggle in the 1950s and 60s, and the student struggle against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s.

History has shown repeatedly that if we have the will to fight we can win. Women especially have demonstrated their ability to come together and make gains.

The fight for equal rights and the fight for the right to choose proves that this generation of women are equal in courage to those of their sisters who battled and won in the past. What is missing are leaders capable of leading. But the organizations are in place—awaiting a leadership equal to the needs of the millions.

—December 1994

# 1995

## What Jocelyn Elders Doesn't Teach

Dr. Jocelyn Elders was dismissed from her post as Surgeon General of the United States on Dec. 10 by President Clinton. She really had to go because she was the only member of the government who told the truth about health matters.

The truth was what set her free when she said that masturbation should be part of the public schools' sex education classes. This “shocking” statement was made at a United Nations conference on the AIDS virus.

Dr. Elders was asked by Dr. Rob Clark, a psychologist who was attending the conference, for a “more explicit discussion and promotion of masturbation” as a means to limit the spread of the virus. Dr. Elders began by describing herself as “a very strong advocate” of teaching sex education in schools “at a very early age.”

“As per your specific question in regard to masturbation,” Dr. Elders then replied, “I think that is part of human sexuality and it's a part of something that perhaps should be taught. But we've not even taught our children the very basics.”

Notice she was not talking about presenting a “how-to” course but that children should learn that masturbation is part of human sexuality.

The fact is that masturbation does not have to be taught. Surveys have found that about 60 percent of adult males and 40 percent of adult women masturbat-

ed in the past year, and that about 90 percent of teenage boys and 65 to 70 percent of teenage girls masturbated. How did they learn to do that? Not in school, that's for sure.

If Dr. Elders had wanted to reach the hearts and minds of the Christian Right, she might have used the "Onan" method of teaching about masturbation.

Details on this and other early treatises on the subject have been made available for the edification of modern readers thanks to an essay by Gina Kolata that appeared in the Dec. 25, 1994, *New York Times*.

In 1741, Dr. S.A.D. Tissot of Switzerland sounded the first alarm about the dangers of masturbation in his pamphlet, "Onanism, or a Treatise on the Disorders of Masturbation." Dr. Tissot declared that the act drained the body of vital fluids, causing wasting illnesses like tuberculosis. Too much sexual excitement, and masturbation in particular, he said, caused neuroses and could damage the nervous system.

Even one of the most revered figures of U.S. medicine, Philadelphia's Dr. Benjamin Rush, who was known as the "Hippocrates of Pennsylvania," felt the need to turn his attention to the subject of masturbation. Dr. Rush claimed that it caused poor eyesight, epilepsy, memory loss, and tuberculosis.

Physicians argued that masturbators were easy to spot because they looked sickly and repugnant. Sort of reminds me of the TV evangelists I've seen.

Seeking to capitalize on these brave scientific discoveries, 19th-century kings of industry peddled their own cures for masturbation. J.H. Kellogg invented corn flakes, and Sylvester Graham the graham cracker.

In an 1888 book addressed to parents, "Plain facts of the Young and Old Embracing the Natural History and Hygiene of Organic Life," Kellogg outlined 39 signs of masturbation, including acne, bashfulness, boldness, nail biting, use of tobacco and bed wetting.

He suggested bandaging a child's genitals or enclosing them in a cage. He also advised circumcising boys without an anesthetic. For girls, the cure was carbolic acid on the clitoris.

And yes, Kellogg reminded parents, corn flakes eaten daily would prevent masturbation. Of course, I would suggest that masturbating with corn flakes might also be a cure.

Mr. Graham's 1834 book, "A Lecture to a Young Man," warned that a teenage boy who masturbated turned into "a confirmed and degraded idiot, whose deeply sunken and vacant, glossy eyes, and livid shriveled countenance ... denote a premature old age, blighted body—and a ruined soul!"

Some 19th-century inventors patented anti-masturbation devices, including a cage that held a boy's penis and scrotum with springs. An alarm sounded when an erection occurred.

Now that's what Dr. Elders should have answered when asked that simple question at the UN AIDS conference. Had she suggested a "cage" or bondage, she

would still have her job.

I would certainly suggest a law that requires “cages” for every politician.

—January 1995

## Clinton’s Message: Women And Children Last!

I listened—it felt something like getting your gums scraped—to President Clinton’s “State of the Union” address in January. It was an amazing performance, dedicated to the rich and powerful, and spitting in the face of women, children, and the oppressed.

I had hoped (I don’t know why) that he would at least make a passing reference to the clinic violence that has caused the death of five innocent people over the past two years.

The National Abortion Federation lists the violence at women’s reproductive health clinics from 1977 to 1994:

There have been five murders, eight attempted murders, 40 bombings, 92 arson attacks, 68 attempted arson and bombings, 347 clinic invasions, 583 cases of vandalism, 95 assault and batteries, 216 death threats, two kidnappings, 34 burglaries, 204 cases of stalking, 1785 hate mail and phone call threats, 308 bomb threats, 7568 clinic picketings, and 633 clinic blockades.

The violence, as terrible as it is, has only just begun. According to *The New York Times* of Jan. 27, “An organization called the American Coalition of Life Activists issued an invitation to more mayhem. ... the group distributed a flyer, bearing the title, ‘Guilty of Crimes Against Humanity,’ that gave the names and addresses of 12 doctors who perform abortions, describing them as “The Deadly Dozen.”

“This has an uncomfortable resemblance to a hit list,” *The Times* editors point out. “Several of the doctors have already been displayed (as were the two murdered physicians) on ‘wanted’ posters.”

This flyer was distributed in the nation’s capital—almost right on Clinton’s front door! In his one hour and 20 minute “State of the Union” speech, however, Clinton had not one word to say against these terrorist actions.

But he had plenty to say in favor of building more jails, and more concentration camps for “illegal” workers in this country. He also gave enthusiastic support to “welfare reform” (i.e., welfare cuts)—to name only a few of his most outrageous pronouncements.

Clinton’s rabidly reactionary speech received numerous rounds of standing ovations from the assembled government dignitaries.

It looked like a fundamentalist revival meeting. All in the interest of saving unborn fetuses and “ending welfare as we know it” for those born into poverty.

According to a recently published study on children in the 15 industrialized nations, “The United States has by far the highest percentage of children living in

poverty: 20 percent, which represents a 21 percent increase since 1970.”

The study goes on to say: “Never before has one generation of children been less healthy, less cared for, or less prepared for life than their parents were at the same age.”

Over 146 nations have ratified the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child, but the United States, the world’s wealthiest country, has still failed to ratify. Despite all the rhetoric about family values, less than 5 percent of the U.S. federal budget was spent on programs that supported families with children.

The time parents have available for their children has been squeezed by the rapid shift of mothers into the paid labor force. In the United States, the average worker is at work 163 more hours a year than in 1967, which adds up to an extra month of work annually. In 1960, 30 percent of American women worked. By 1988, 66 percent were in the paid labor force.

Americans are working harder than ever. According to a recent survey, the average workweek rose from 41 hours in 1973 to 47 hours in 1989. Clearly, the threat of unemployment and the knowledge that any new job is likely to involve a wage cut, has led many workers to work longer hours.

In contemporary American society, children not only have two parents that work, they also have mothers as well as fathers who routinely work 55 hour weeks; who come home pre-occupied and exhausted, unable to give much of anything to their children.

The complete failure of the United States government to improve the conditions of working parents and their children and to stop the terrorism against women prove beyond a doubt that this government cares nothing for children before or after they are born.

Mobilizations for women’s rights, such as the demonstrations that will take place in San Francisco on April 1 and in Washington, D.C., on April 9, are designed to show that the vast majority of American people want an immediate change in government policy towards women and children. —February 1995

## **‘I Didn’t Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier’**

Russian mothers are giving new meaning to one of my favorite songs, written in 1915 by Alfred Bryan and Al Piantadosi. The words to the chorus go like this:

“I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier, I brought him up to be my pride and joy, who dares to place a musket on his shoulder, to shoot some other mother’s darling boy? Let nations arbitrate their future troubles, it’s time to lay the sword and gun away, there would be no war today if mothers all would say, I didn’t raise my boy to be a soldier.” There are more verses, but you get the meaning.

More than 500 Russian mothers have marched into the army training camps and plucked their sons out of the war in Chechnya. One mother, Valentina, drove

300 miles to her son's army base, made him change into civilian clothes, and took him home to Moscow. And at least 50 of them have gone all the way to Chechnya to remove their sons from the battlefield.

They don't believe for one minute that this war is for the good of their country. It is about oil—just as the war against Iraq was fought for Standard Oil and American business investments in the Middle East.

What made these mothers decide to risk the wrath of the Yeltsin government?

According to an article in the Feb. 11 *New York Times*, the Chechen separatist leader, Dzhokar Dudayev, declared early in the war that he would "release the Russian prisoners of war but only into the custody of their mothers. In January, Chechen fighters in Grozny handed over six Russian prisoners to their mothers. Other mothers have been allowed to visit their captured sons and to bring them clean socks or a sausage from home."

That brought on the flood of women from the Mothers of Soldiers Committee, as they have named their group.

"Of all the incongruities in the bloody conflict in Chechnya," observes *The Times*, "one of the most striking is the sight of soldiers' mothers marching en masse in the war zone to take back their sons. Hundreds of working-class women bundled in drab coats and thick wool scarves have poured into the region to seek the release of their sons from Chechen prisons, or to find out for themselves where their sons are...."

"As the names of captured soldiers began appearing in Russian newspapers after the Russian offensive began on Dec. 11, the mothers formed committees and started coming.

"While some have rescued their sons from Chechen prisons, others traveled by bus and train all the way to the war zone for nothing. A woman from Bashkiria, in the Urals, spent a week hunting for her son in Chechnya, only to learn that he was dead and that his body had already been shipped home. She had to be carried onto a bus to the airport...."

"Nina Vasilievna did not wait for her son to be shipped out to the front. 'I went to his barracks in St. Petersburg, just before he was sent off to fight,' she said. 'I just leaped over the fence into the military compound and grabbed him,' she explained with a shrug, adding that she took her son home...."

"The mothers complain bitterly that the government has done nothing to help them, but in fact their organized anger seems to have yielded results. Deserters have not been prosecuted and senior officers have looked the other way as mothers have retrieved their sons...

"But there is far more anguish than relief among the mothers who have come

to Nazaran to seek sons missing in Chechnya. Nadia Razgulayeva, 44, sat stiffly in the Mothers of Soldiers Committee room waiting for news with a dozen other mothers. She had been there a week, ever since her 19-year-old son, Aleksei, was reported missing in action. Since then, her husband had also disappeared in the war zone. 'He went into Grozny all by himself to look for our son,' she said, her eyes filling with tears, 'And I haven't heard from him since.'"

It is no wonder that the Yeltsin government has, so far, taken no action against the soldiers who have followed their mothers home. The Russian Revolution was started out by a massive march for "Peace, Bread, and Land." Any action against the mothers and their sons could lead to even more trouble for the Russian bureaucrats.

The Russian mothers are sisters in spirit to the American mothers who marched against the Vietnam War. Had that country been as close to the United States as Chechnya is to Russia, you can be sure that many mothers would have snatched their sons out of the jaws of death and defied the U.S. government to stop them.

Just one more verse to "I Didn't Raise My Boy To Be A Soldier":

"Ten million soldiers to the war have gone, who may never return again. Ten million mothers' hearts must break for the ones who died in vain. Head bowed down in sorrow in her lonely years, I heard a mother murmur thro' her tears: I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier."

Mothers of Russia, may your tribe increase! —March 1995

## Women Need Affirmative Action

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employers from discriminating on the basis of an "individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin." It also outlawed discrimination in public accommodations and public education.

That was then—this is now. It's like *Roe v. Wade*. Ever since the Supreme Court made that decision, some creep in Congress or a president has been trying to whittle it away.

In about 1971, a friend of mine, a woman, decided to become a house painter in San Francisco. She was tired of being a waitress, barmaid, or office clerk. Besides, the pay was better and so were the hours.

She managed to get a job with a contractor who did work for the government and needed to show that he did not discriminate. He agreed to take her on as an apprentice. This meant that she was assured three-year's work, the time required to move from apprentice to full-fledged, journeyman painter.

Then she went to the Painters Union in San Francisco and tried to sign up, saying that she was a minority and wanted to join the union. The union "leader" said she could not be a member of "his" union because she, as a woman, was not clas-

sified as a minority since women were 52 percent of the population.

She pointed out to him that if she joined the union she would be .001 percent of women in the union, so this made her a minority. This was, of course, a mystery to the "leader." She was forced to sue and appeal to the National Labor Relations Board, which ruled in her favor.

After the privilege of paying a whopping initiation fee, my friend became a bona fide member of the Painters Union. She wore her button proudly and attended every union meeting. And never scabbed.

Being an apprentice is never easy. Her main job was to carry buckets of paint, ladders, drop cloths, sandpaper, rollers, and whatever else was necessary to get the job done. She developed the strength necessary to not only carry massive amounts of equipment upstairs but to ward off the over-friendly male painters. Many times, these men would send her back downstairs for some little thing they had forgotten. They forgot often.

As they began to work with her and found out that she was serious about becoming a good painter, the men left her alone and many times even invited her out to the bar for a drink with the other painters. They even came to her defense whenever a new painter made ungracious remarks about the way her painter's overalls fit, especially around her bust.

But after a few years of painting, she fell in love with taping dry wall. Don't ask me why. I have never felt the urge to apply mud and tape to a dry wall and then smooth it down with a trowel. Perhaps she was just a pioneer, because, of course, she became the only woman tapper. And a good one, at that.

As hard as it was, she still said her job was better than serving drinks from four in the afternoon until two in the morning at some bar. The language on the job was also much easier to take than that in a bar.

But most important, she was earning a good living. She could afford her own apartment and even go on vacation once a year.

That's why women and minorities need affirmative action. They need a good job and a good paycheck. That's all, that's it!

Now some joker has put affirmative action back on the California ballot in order to dump it. He calls it the "Civil Rights Initiative." He didn't want to name it the "Anti-Civil Rights Initiative" because that would be too truthful.

People are already calling the initiative "Son of Prop. 187," which was aimed at the rights of immigrants. This one is aimed at women, Blacks, and other minorities. And also the whole of the working class. You can be sure that a "Right To Work" initiative (that is, a "Right to Scab Initiative") is not far behind.

The truth is that minorities are still under-represented in skilled jobs, professions, and management. Whites hold two-thirds or more of those choice jobs. In 1990, 30-year-old white male college grads earned an average of \$39,200, about \$4000 more than their nearest competitors, Asian men.



Women and African American men still get the short end of the economic stick. They are also the ones who are still last-hired and first fired.

Capitalism has a desperate need to divide the working class into ethnic sectors. In order to continue their undemocratic rule, the ruling class must divide races and sexes one from another. That's what the so-called "Civil Rights Initiative" and Proposition 187 are about. **LET'S MOBILIZE TO DEFEAT IT! FIGHT BACK!**

—April 1995

## The Rich Get Richer—Of Course!

Wouldn't you just know it! The newspapers were full of the information that the rich got even richer this year than they were last year.

Federal Reserve figures from 1989, the most recent available, show that the wealthiest one percent of U.S. households—with a net worth of at least \$2.3 million each—own nearly 40 percent of the nation's wealth.

In fact, the richest families of the United States own an even higher percentage of the wealth than in all other industrial countries. The wealthiest one percent of the British population own a "mere" 18 percent of the wealth there—down from 59 percent in the early 1920s.

And guess what? If all plans go forward in Congress, the rich are due for an even bigger increase in their wealth. The Republicans closed their 100-day 'Contract with America' program by passing a massive tax cut for the rich. They had the help of 27 Democrats who voted with Newt.

Clinton has shown what he meant when he said that he wants to "work with the Republicans." A bipartisan bill co-sponsored by Democratic Senator Carol Mosley-Braun and Republican Bob Packwood that would provide \$30 million in tax relief to one person (multi-billionaire Robert Murdoch) was passed by both houses of Congress. Clinton signed it into law.

Even the *Wall Street Journal* called the tax-cut package "the biggest bonanza in years for the wealthy." Under the "Contract on Americans," the richest one percent of taxpayers will get 20 percent of tax savings and the richest 10 percent will get 47 percent.

This is not even "trickle down." It's more like trying to pour molasses at the North Pole. In order to take care of their contributors, Congress must cut even more from social programs such as health, welfare, and education.

The capitalist class is getting a little worried. Some, the major conservatives, just want to ram ahead and take the rest of the bread out of the mouths of babies, and not leave even a crust.

Others don't want to rock the boat too much. They wonder just how much the working class and poor will take. What happens if the oppressed and exploited

start getting restless about the shafting they are getting?

Shortly before the French Revolution in 1789, Marie Antoinette, when told that her “subjects” were starving for bread, said, “Let them eat cake.” Modern capitalism in the United States has said, “Three strikes and you’re out.”

Evolution was not only responsible for humans evolving from ape to man. Social systems also evolve—from barbarism to slavery, to feudalism, to capitalism. Each stage of the social order developed, and then died of its own inability to meet the needs of the majority. Near the end of each social system massive disruptions occurred leading to wars, diseases, mass starvation, and rebellion.

Probably the most successful economic system has been modern imperialism. Each developed capitalist country has sacked and sucked dry the undeveloped countries. Like great white sharks in a feeding frenzy, they have swallowed the oil, minerals, and forests, fouled the rivers and oceans, and enslaved and murdered native peoples. All in the interest of preserving and enriching themselves.

They have purchased and prostituted the armies, the police, the politicians of Third World countries. For instance, the United States trained, supported and supplied arms to Defense Minister Hector Gramajo in Guatemala. His job was to prevent a revolution by peasants and workers in that country.

The military of that country, according to author and researcher Susanne Jonas, is responsible for a scorched-earth policy that destroyed 440 Mayan villages, leaving 100,000 unarmed civilians dead.

We shake our heads in misery and sorrow when we witness Waco, Texas, and now Oklahoma City. The FBI-CIA and the media were quick to witch hunt people of Middle Eastern origin and other immigrants before it was established that home grown right-wing terrorist groups were to blame.

Who is really responsible for this crime? I place the blame at the feet of an economic system that has outlived its usefulness and like an exploding volcano is spewing its destruction in every direction.

The end of world capitalism is long overdue. It must be replaced with an economic system based on the needs of the whole human race. Only in that way can we evolve toward a really humane society, where sisterhood and brotherhood replace the capitalist hoods. —May 1995

## **‘Operation Uphold Democracy’—Ha!**

Ever since the Vietnam War went bad, the United States has been trying to create new and better names for their wars. They hope this will make them more acceptable to the mothers and fathers who might lose a son or daughter in the slaughter.

They have been calling them “operations,” rather than wars, which makes one think of a medical term rather than a bloody conflict.

And they now do “surgical” strikes rather than a bombing attack upon a defenseless population. Doesn’t that sound much nicer? You immediately think of laser surgery to remove cataracts or warts.

The U.S. government revealed what “surgical” removal really meant in Iraq. Remember the bombing of the Iraqi troops when they were retreating from the war? Thousands of Iraqi soldiers were murdered while in retreat. Unlike the heroes in the old Wild West movies, the U.S. troops were ordered to shoot the Iraq soldiers in the back.

The problem with names such as “Operation Uphold Democracy” is that every once in a while someone in the military takes it seriously and really tries to uphold democracy.

One such man is Captain Lawrence P. Rockwood, a military intelligence officer stationed with the 10th Mountain Division.

Captain Rockwood, when serving in Haiti, considered it his duty to try and uphold democracy in that undemocratic country. He received a court-martial for his efforts, and was thrown out of the Army.

Rockwood had tried to interest his superior officers in looking into the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince for human rights violations. When he could not convince the officers to at least search the prison to see if political prisoners were being tortured, he decided to do it himself.

Capt. Rockwood explained his one-man intervention by telling how his soldier-father had taken him to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany when he was a boy. His father taught him about the individual soldier’s duty to human rights over rote obedience. And he explained the Nuremberg Principles.

Under the Nuremberg Principles, established by the Allies after World War II, a crime against world law can be subject to punishment; heads of state can be held responsible; and obeying orders does not exempt subordinates when there is the possibility of a moral choice.

Captain Rockwood insisted that throngs of political prisoners in Port-au-Prince were at heightened risk as Haiti’s despotic *de facto* regime was on the verge of collapse. This point was supported by the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, a private advocacy group.

To his superiors’ claims that no intelligence reports of prison abuse in Port-au-Prince were ever received, Captain Rockwood insisted that the Army never sought them out in the first place.

When he could get no action from his superiors, he went to the prison himself. Once he was inside the prison, the Haitian authorities summoned help from the United States Embassy.

A military attaché, Major Roland S. Lane, told the court martial tribunal that he had arrived to find a self-righteous and antagonistic captain “trying to take action into his own hands” during a “fragile” period of transition in Haiti.

The captain was eventually talked into unloading the weapon he was carrying and obeying an order to leave the prison. He was taken to an Army hospital for a psychiatric examination and was cleared as healthy.

His commander, Lieutenant Colonel Frank Bragg, testified at the court-martial that Captain Rockwood was shouting and had a “contemptuous attitude” after he returned from the prison.

Colonel Bragg said he repeatedly ordered the officer to be silent and “shut up,” but the captain shouted, “I’m an American officer. I’m not a Nazi officer and I want a full accounting of human rights abuses.”

Captain Rockwood’s main goal is to obtain the fullest possible hearing of his cause. He opposed prosecution attempts to drop one charge of “conduct unbecoming an officer,” a charge that his lawyers say is crucial to his ability to explain his motives and, if necessary, to appeal to international forums for relief.

But the Army is too smart to allow Captain Rockwood to continue his fight. He was sentenced by a court-martial to a discharge from the service, but he escaped a prison sentence.

Captain Rockwood told reporters afterward that since he considered discharge the most severe penalty he had faced, he was not relieved by the absence of a prison sentence. “I am a soldier,” he said, “It is my profession. It’s my vocation. So I am not relieved by this sentence whatsoever.”

What Captain Rockwood didn’t understand is that “Operation Uphold Democracy” was in reality “Operation to Stop a Revolution and Keep the Status Quo in Haiti.”

And it has worked so far. The rich are still just as rich in Haiti and the poor are poorer than ever. That’s the United States’ way of bringing justice to the poor and exploited in every country they invade.

But what Captain Rockwood has done is remind us of Noam Chomsky’s statement on human freedom:

“If you assume that there’s no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, there are opportunities to change things, there’s a chance you may contribute to making a better world. That’s your choice.” —June 1995

## **Government’s Offensive Against The Right to Choose Is Still on the Move**

Using parliamentary tricks and a filibuster, the Republicans succeeded in killing the nomination of Dr. Henry Foster for the post of surgeon general. For two days an attempt to cut off parliamentary delay fell three votes short, and the nomination was removed from consideration by Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole.

The debate reflected the bottom of the barrel in intellectual repartee when Senator Bob Smith (R-N.H.) waved a model of a fetus and vivid pictures of unusual abortion procedures in an attempt to make a case against Foster. Smith admitted he was not accusing Foster of personally performing those types of abortions. But he said, "He's not blocking them either.... If you're not a murderer, but you don't stop someone from committing a murder—I think you can draw the conclusion."

The right to choose is under heavy fire in Congress. A dozen abortion-related bills—many taken directly from the Christian Coalition's political and social manifesto, the "Contract With the American Family"—are pending in Congress, and at least that many are now under discussion.

On June 15, the House passed a bill to reinstate a ban on abortions at American military hospitals overseas, and a House committee opened debate on the most controversial measure—to ban and criminalize a particular class of abortions. Other legislation under consideration is:

- Repeal or modify Title X of the Public Health Service Act, which has provided family planning programs, including abortion counseling, to low-income women and adolescents.
- Refuse to provide financing to institutions favoring a policy of the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education requiring obstetrics/gynecology programs to provide training in abortion procedures.
- Overturn an executive order by President Clinton lifting a Reagan-era ban against using foreign aid for abortion counseling or referrals.
- End or severely curtail financial support for agencies, like the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, that offer family planning programs that provide abortions with private money.
- Limit federal Medicaid money for abortions to only those instances when a woman's life is threatened, and end the use of Medicaid financing for abortions when pregnancies result from rape or incest.

The Christian Coalition and other groups are demanding even more. They want to overturn executive orders that allow federal money to be used for fetal tissue research and the clinical testing of the abortion drug RU-486. They also want to restore the Bush administration's prohibition on counseling women about abortion at family planning clinics that receive federal money.

They want Republicans to use their congressional power in the appropriations process to restore the ban on the use of federal money for abortions for women in federal prisons, prohibit the District of Columbia from using local tax revenue to pay for abortions, and restore the Reagan-era policy that prohibited the federal employees health benefit plan from covering abortion.

Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, said about the Christian right, "Their goal, however long it takes them, is to make all abortions under all circumstances a crime. They cannot

immediately criminalize all abortions under all circumstances, but they have begun to move us step by step down that road.”

Actually, these attacks against abortion serve both the Democrats and the Republicans. Politicians would rather attack the victims than have their real masters, the capitalist class, attacked.

Just as California’s Proposition 187 points the finger at immigration, and away from high unemployment and homelessness, so the attack against abortion, affirmative action, and other social issues covers up the crimes of Congress against the American people. While poverty is at an almost all time high, Congress cuts spending on education and social services and increases defense spending.

Furthermore, while congressional members accuse Dr. Henry Foster of murder, they totally ignore the murders of clinic doctors and aides by anti-abortion terrorists.

While there have been some demonstrations by pro-choice activists, the major pro-choice organizations have relied on working exclusively within the Clinton administration. The pro-choice movement is bound to be defeated if it relies on capitalist politicians to protect women’s rights. —July 1995

## Capitalism—‘Through the Looking Glass’

In order to understand capitalist ethics, you have to accept the “looking glass concept.” In Washington, D.C., there are lots of lobbyists known as “astroturf.” They aren’t real. They look like real people, but they digest money like a cow eats corn shucks. And the truth is beyond their understanding.

They form groups that have public-interest sounding names but are just the opposite of anything that is good for the public. Philip Morris, for instance, backed the California ballot initiative group, “Californians for Statewide Smoking Restrictions,” which really was designed to get rid of most of the smoking restrictions in effect at the time.

The Alliance to Keep America Working is not a pro-workers’ group but an anti-union organization financed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and large corporations. They want to “Keep America Working” all right—but at sweat-shop wages and conditions.

The American Council on Science and Health lobby calls environmentalism “unscientific.” They are funded by big chemical manufacturers. They probably have psychics on their payroll.

Citizens for a Sound Economy is a group that fights health care reform and is against warning labels for substances like alcohol. They are financed, of course, by tobacco and alcohol companies.

The Institute for Justice is an anti-environmental regulation group funded by Philip Morris and other like-minded corporations. The National Wetlands Coalition is in favor of commercial developments that destroy wetlands, and is

funded by Chevron, Shell Oil, and others of their ilk.

The Safe Buildings Alliance is funded by manufacturers such as Owens Corning who produce hazardous building materials like fiberglass insulation. And the Sea Lion Defense Fund lobbies for increasing the legal fish catch and is financed by the Alaskan fishing industry.

Hold on! There's more! The United States Council for Energy Awareness is pro-nuclear and funded by General Electric and Westinghouse; they bring Three Mile Island to light.

The Wilderness Impact Research Foundation is funded by the National Cattleman's Association and other groups with mining, ranching, oil, and gas investments. They really want to have an impact on the wilderness.

These examples of "astroturf lobbyists" were bought to you by the Center for Media and Democracy, 3318 Gregory Street, Madison, WI 53711. They will send you a sample newsletter if you ask.

However, it is not just in Washington, D.C. that life is a bad joke. Take Cleveland, Ohio, for instance.

According to an editorial in the July 25 edition of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Judge "Mike" Mestemaker (a fitting name) is up to his hips in messy judicial orders:

"The latest mess gumming up his judicial robes was an order that Scott Hancock, convicted of punching his girlfriend and mother of his baby, follow up his abuse with a trip to the altar as part of a nine-month probation. Even the boyfriend griped he wasn't ready (obviously) to say, 'I do.'"

This was not the first time Mestemaker used marriage as a cure-all. He once told Sara Whalen, 25, the mother of a three-year-old, to marry the baby's father as a condition of her six-month probation for domestic abuse. Whalen pleaded no contest to slashing her boy friend's face, arms, and back in a fight.

And when an American-born Latina woman appeared before him in July, accusing her boyfriend of beating her, Mestemaker turned it into an immigration issue. She should return to Mexico, he suggested. "Could we get foreign aid from your native land for you being here?" he asked.

Personally, if I were a judge I would order Mestemaker to marry Sara Whalen and hope he doesn't get her angry. No, on second thought, that woman is too good for him.

A story from the *Plain Dealer* of Aug. 5 is about another judge who's in a lot of trouble:

"Common Pleas Judge Michael Gallagher, who once called for legalizing drugs from the bench and said only an 'idiot' would use them, was arrested Thursday as he served cocaine to an undercover drug agent at his Lakewood home, according to federal officials."

Even before he was elected as a judge, Gallagher had been in trouble with the law. In 1982, he was charged with domestic violence against his wife, but the charge was reduced to disorderly conduct. In 1986, he pleaded guilty to another charge of

domestic violence, but a \$1000 fine and a 180-day jail sentence was suspended.

That guilty plea came after the same woman, by then his ex-wife, told authorities that Gallagher had pushed her to the floor and tried to suffocate her with a towel. “I really didn’t hurt her,” Gallagher said. “It wasn’t anything major, but I shouldn’t have done it.”

I suppose his “it wasn’t anything major” meant that he did not succeed in killing her. Unfortunately, those who would judge us and imprison us are working for a system that has no shame and no justice—capitalism. —September 1995

## **When You Gotta Go, You Gotta Go! Arise Ye Grandmothers! Stand Your ground!**

The Sept. 6 *New York Times* printed another “Through the Looking Glass” article. There was this grandmother who took her grandson, William, who is four years old, to Central Park. The grandmother’s name was Nancy Stein.

Nancy and William were strolling through the park when William said he had to take a tinkle. Who’s to know how far away from the toilet they were? Nancy, like a good grannie, told her four-year-old to go tinkle in the bushes. You know how hard it is for a four-year-old to control his bladder for any length of time, and it’s very embarrassing to walk around with wet britches at that age.

Mrs. Stein looked for a sign of where the nearest toilet might be, and as usual there was none. She even asked people sitting on the benches if they knew where the nearest toilet would be, and they could not help her.

William was practically dancing by this time—so he went and tinkled in the bushes. I’ve seen full-grown men doing that and never gave it a second thought.

But Nancy and William did not consider the ever-vigilant park police. While William was going in the bushes, two of New York’s Finest Park Police were surveying the park from 500 feet away with their binoculars. They hopped onto their motor scooters, and quicker than a speeding bullet, swooped down upon the criminals.

The cops arrived with the ground still wet and Grandmother Stein buttoning up her grandson. Caught in the act. When the police demanded her identification, she said, “You have to be kidding.”

“No ma’am,” said the officer, and he wasn’t.

She was given a ticket for “noxious liquid.” William had become an industrial polluter—another “Love Canal” or “Three Mile Island” in the flesh.

Mrs. Stein sent in the \$50 fine but wanted to contest it. On June 14, she went before an administrative judge, William Morley, at the Environmental Control Board. Despite his sympathy, he would not reduce the fine. Justice must be served.

Thank heavens William didn’t pee three times. Think of it, three strikes and you’re out.



Her husband, Edward McDermott, appealed to the mayor. “Last week,” said *The Times*, “Mr. McDermott received a letter from Lana M. Johnson, the Ombudswoman from the Environmental Control Board, who reviewed the case at the request of the mayor’s office. She said she was referring the matter to the Appeals Unit of the Environmental Control Board, where staff members will review the record, and to the Sanitation Department.” Go figure.

What’s going on? Well, the cities need money, lots of it. So they have taxed diapers, soap, and beer. Some cities even tax cookies. But they know there must be other ways to make a buck, especially off of working people.

So they make just about everything possible a crime: Sitting on park benches after 8 PM, parking your car on the wrong side of the street or facing the wrong direction, not getting your car smogged at the right time, smoking in the wrong place at the wrong time, and teenagers who are out after the curfew.

All of this means big bucks in the hands of politicians. It also means that they can reduce the taxes of large corporations and get bigger campaign contributions while finding even more ingenious methods of picking our pockets. While we sleep, they pass laws. And we get fleeced.

If I read the end of Mrs. Stein’s story, I will pass it on. —October 1995

## Women’s Work Is Never Done

On August 30, representatives from more than 180 United Nations member-states and women’s rights advocates from every continent convened in Beijing for the UN Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW).

The Non-Governmental Organization Forum met simultaneously in Huairou, about 30 miles outside Beijing.

About 20,000 people attended the Forum, which ended on Sept. 8. The participants staged many demonstrations around women’s issues and lobbied the FWCW on the proposed Platform for Action.

That document—which sets goals for accelerating the achievement of equality, development, and peace—focuses on eliminating discrimination against women in 12 key areas: poverty, education, health, violence against women, armed conflict, economic structures, women in decision-making, policy and program planning, human rights, media and communications, environment, and the female child.

The section on health sparked the greatest debate—especially in regard to issues such as sexual rights, sexual health, abortion, and adolescents’ rights to reproductive health information and services. The governmental delegates approved the health section in its entirety by Sept. 13.

Paragraph 97 of the FWCW health section states that the “human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality—including sexual and reproductive health—

free of coercion, discrimination, and violence.”

Anyone reading the wording of the health section will immediately realize that it means all things to all people. For instance, when it calls for “equal relationships between men and women in matters of sexual relations and reproduction,” it negates women’s rights to full control over her reproductive rights.

While Paragraph 107 calls for the end of “punitive measures against women who have undergone illegal abortions,” it holds back from the call for legalizing abortion in every country.

And while Paragraph 108 takes into account “the rights of the child to access to information, privacy, confidentiality, respect, and informed consent” on “matters concerning sexuality and reproduction,” it then acknowledges the “responsibilities, right and duty of parents and legal guardians to provide... appropriate directions and guidance in this area.”

Although the women’s conference tried to deal with some of the worst outrages against women and children, we still must deal with the private profit system—capitalism—which denies women full equality and economic equity.

The low wages paid to women worldwide pay off in higher profits to the corporations and substandard living conditions for women and their families.

The fight is worth fighting, but it will require the full mobilization of women and men, working together, to replace a system that produces only for profit with one that produces for human need. —  
October 1995

## **The Dubious Attacks Against ‘Reasonable Doubt’**

Every day for the whole time the O.J. Simpson trial was being televised, a good friend of mine and I would argue. From the beginning, he thought O.J. was being framed. But I was so angry at O.J. Simpson for having beaten his wife that I could only think him guilty.



Actually, my feeling was that any man who would abuse his wife in such a violent fashion should be tried and convicted.

And I watched Marcia Clark, the lead prosecutor, question Mark Fuhrman, about his racism. There he sat, in the jury box, lying like Ollie North, saying that he might have used the “N” word 10 years ago, but he certainly has never, never used that word since.

My friend said, “He’s lying,” and I said, “I don’t think so.” After all, he looked so clean-cut and serious. Which just goes to show—you can’t tell a racist book by its cover.

By the time the trial was over and Mark Fuhrman had been exposed as a raging racist and a cop who bragged about how he, along with most of his fellow cops, had framed innocent people just for the pleasure it gave them, I was convinced that indeed O.J. Simpson was being framed.

If I had been on that jury I would have had to vote, NOT GUILTY! And the jury did the only thing it could have done. The prosecutor had not proved him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

But what gets me is that Marcia Clark knew when she was questioning Fuhrman that he was lying. Certainly, if the defense knew he was a racist, the prosecution knew it.



Each side, if they are worth their salt, research every witness with a fine tooth comb. So both Clark and Chris Darden, the co-prosecutor, had to know exactly what Mark Fuhrman was. Their only hope was that he would slip by, but that hope was blown out of the water by the revelations of a screen writer who had interviewed Fuhrman and had the decency to turn over that interview to the defense.

The chances are that not just a few members of the Los Angeles Police Department were in on cooking the evidence against O.J.

In the same way, the probability is high that the police, FBI, and court system framed up—or set up—Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and nine other Muslims on charges of a “conspiracy” to blow up the UN building and other New York landmarks.

The only real witness against these defendants was a highly paid FBI informer who had a record an arm long. Like most paid informants he is highly motivated to tell his bosses what they want to hear.

The prosecution was unable to establish any direct evidence to link Sheik Rahman to the “conspiracy.” Instead, they tried to prove that Rahman had been in touch with radical Muslims in other countries, and thus part of a vast international jihad, or Holy War. He was convicted on the flimsiest of circumstantial evidence.

“Reasonable doubt” went out the window in that trial, as the jury declared Rahman and his followers guilty.

In regard to the O.J. Simpson verdict, all the screaming and shouting has allowed some politicians and legal academics to float the idea that perhaps we should no longer use “reasonable doubt” to find someone innocent.

This has been one of the foundations of American law. It was created especially so that the innocent would have a fighting chance when falsely accused.

Remember that “you are innocent until proven guilty.” It’s a pain in the rear, of course, for prosecutors, cops, and judges. Think how much quicker they could end their cases and retire to their country homes and relax in splendor if they could just pronounce someone guilty at the start of a trial.

The most shameful conduct was by the Los Angeles chapter of the National

Organization for Women. When O.J. was scheduled to be interviewed on national television, Tammy Bruce, the chairwoman of Los Angeles NOW threatened a boycott of NBC. L.A. NOW even announced that they would picket the TV studio.

Strange that they didn't picket Oliver North or Claus von Bulow. Oliver North, who was convicted of perjury, has his own right-wing radio show and even ran for Congress. O.J. Simpson, in contrast, was found not guilty.

As for me, I'm glad that the O.J. jury saw through the prosecutors' weak case. That jury should be congratulated, not vilified. That's the real feminist position—not the mean-spirited action of Los Angeles NOW. —November 1995

## Uteruses 'R' Us

Politicians in Utah have come up with a new growth industry: Babies. The state would give \$3,000 to every unwed mother-to-be (as long as she is over 18), but only on the condition that she put her child up for adoption. Then the state would charge the adoptive parents \$3,000, thus cutting its losses.

According to Craig Taylor, the "young conservative" state senator who devised the bucks-for-babies deal, "It tries to provide an incentive for good." In this case, *The New York Times* points out in its Nov. 12, 1995, edition, "good" appears to mean discouraging poor, unwed women from getting abortions. Senator Taylor's proposal is part of a welfare-reform package to be considered by the Utah legislature when it meets in January.

Common sense would dictate, of course, that unwed mothers who choose to keep and rear their children, rather than adopt them out, could certainly use the \$3000 to help cover the cost of childbirth and upkeep. But the plan would not give the unwed mother a dime if she insists on keeping her baby. That, you see, would cut out the commodity aspect of babyhood and destroy baby selling as a budding commercial industry.

Three thousand dollars comes to less than \$300 a month—a total of 42.5 cents an hour for 10 months labor and birthing. Labor doesn't get much cheaper unless you're working in a rug factory in India and you're under the age of eight.

And what happens to the babies who don't get adopted? Will they be put to work when they are six years old to reimburse the state of Utah for the cost of their upkeep?

Questions, questions. What happens if the customer (the adoptive parent) is dissatisfied with the product (the baby). Is there a money-back guarantee? Can they use Mastercard or Visa? What about a down payment and a low interest loan?

And while we're at it, what about the father of the baby? It's true that the mother is unwed, but unless you have a really firm belief in immaculate conception you must know that he contributed something to this little creature. Doesn't he have a right to a cut of the \$3,000? Nothing has been said about his concerns.

At the present time, Utah evidently has not thought of franchising this new

industry to the so-called “private” sector. But you just wait. I know capitalists, and they jump in with both feet if there is a buck to be made.

Look at the private prison system. It’s booming. The private prisons even have lobbyists of their own. They lobby very hard for “victims’ rights,” which, of course, means longer prison sentences and more private prisons. It’s like a body and fender shop lobbying against traffic lights and highway dividers.

So we can just envision Utah’s “free marketeers,” with a stable of unwed mothers-to-be, taking out full-page ads in the local newspapers and offering “better babies,” “prettier babies,” “no money down,” “no payment until after Christmas,” and “low interest rates.” Come on, it’s got to happen! This is capitalism—the free world!

Actually, capitalism has been buying and selling people since it was first developed. What the capitalists do is buy the labor power of the working class and use it to produce commodities for the market. They use up as much labor power as they can—and as fast as they can. Then, when the body gets slow—as all bodies tend to do—the capitalists show the worker the door and hire another younger body that will produce faster.

So it’s not such an unusual thing for capitalism to just switch to selling humans outright, at birth. Any system that can make a commodity out of psychic power, or crystals, or nuclear bombs can certainly turn a baby into a commodity.

—December 1995

## 1996

### Suffer the Little Children

Christmas is supposed to be for children. Every year, many parents run up new debts on their credit cards to provide their children with Christmas toys. They do without just to make their children happy for this day. It is a burden they will suffer gladly. But they are the lucky ones.

Other parents have to stand in long lines with their children at a church or fire station so their children may receive at least one toy for Christmas. Many families will have their Christmas dinner at a shelter or church—one more inadequate way to feed some of the millions of poor who cannot feed themselves.

But that, too, means a long line and standing out in the cold, waiting to be let into the church or shelter. That’s Christmas in the good old U.S.A.

The United States—along with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Brunei—are the only nations who have refused to sign-on to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The richest country refuses to recognize the basic human rights of children.

One hundred sixty nations have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But how can the United States recognize basic rights of children when it is

violating them? Articles 37 and 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child set juvenile justice and penal standards consistent with the age of the child. Yet in one state after another, governors and legislatures are setting new standards of punishment for children.

In New York, for example, Governor Pataki is proposing new legislation to curb youthful offenders. If passed, New York state could become the leader in finger printing 11-year-olds for shoplifting, imprisoning 12-year-olds as adults for “joyriding,” and instituting a “two strikes and you’re in jail” policy on youthful offenders. Merry Christmas, kids!

With the cutbacks in education and welfare planned by the fat and bloated legislatures, “getting tough” on crime will be a necessity for the rich. While working people and their families are getting poorer, the rich are getting richer.

In the United States, wealth is distributed more unequally than in any other industrial country. By 1992, the super-rich almost doubled their slice of the nation’s wealth from 22 percent in 1978 to 48 percent. They are closing in on Brazil, where the top one percent owns half of that country’s wealth.

Between 1983 and 1989, the top 20 percent of wealth holders received 99 percent of the total gains, and during that same period the top one percent got 62 percent of the new wealth generated during the 1980s “boom.” Between 1989 and 1992, the super-rich one percent did even better, getting 68 percent of all the new wealth.

Meanwhile, down in the dungeons over the last 15 years, the bottom 20 percent has taken home a decreasing share of the wealth they produce. If all the proposed budget cuts go into effect in the coming year, the income of the poorest fifth would drop by 23 percent—mostly in Medicaid cuts, with a 5 percent drop in income. No wonder the capitalist class will need new prisons.

The health care system in the United States is already an international disgrace. The uninsured have swelled from 37 million to 43 million in the last few years. Cutbacks in health care are closing emergency rooms, and clinics and public hospitals are being sold off or destroyed in New York, Los Angeles and other cities. Most of the hardships will fall upon children.

The richest one percent of families will each receive almost \$19,000 per year in tax breaks. The \$21 billion that they will receive is 42 percent more than the total tax relief for all families that earn less than \$50,000 a year, more than 61 percent of American families. That’s capitalism. It won’t go away by itself. Only an outraged nation of workers and the poor can change the future. If we are to survive and save the children, this will have to be done. Have a Happy Revolutionary New Year!

—January 1996

## **Drop the Charges Against Kawana Ashley!**

I am writing this article on Jan. 22, the anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade*

decision, which was supposed to make abortion a decision between a woman and her doctor. Since that time, the courts and Congress have passed one law after another to destroy a woman's right to choose.

Every U.S. president since then, whether Democrat or Republican, has bowed to the wishes of the radical right and Christian fundamentalists to place obstacles in the way of a woman getting an abortion.

Kawana Ashley is a victim of those laws—which are aimed especially at poor women. She is a 19-year-old single mother with a three-year-old daughter. She and her daughter live with her grandmother in Florida.

When Ms. Kawana discovered she was pregnant, she was frightened because she felt that her grandmother would not allow her and her daughter to continue living with her if she had another child.

She began to look for an abortion. However, she was already in her fourth month. She discovered that any abortion after 20 weeks would cost \$1,300 to \$1,600. She had no hope of getting that amount of money. Finally, when she was in her 25th week, she shot herself in the stomach in a desperate attempt to end the pregnancy.

The child, who was shot in the wrist, was delivered by Caesarean section and died after one week because of underdeveloped kidneys. It was at this moment that the state of Florida decided to crush down Kawana even more than she had been.

Kawana Ashley was charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter and was held in the Pinellas County jail on \$50,000 bond. Ms. Ashley was charged with manslaughter because under Florida law a fetus able to live outside the womb is considered a person. The greater charge of third-degree murder was added because the death resulted from an illegal act—that is, the illegal manner of the abortion.

A judge dismissed the third-degree-murder charge, but she still faces the manslaughter charge. The state attorney is appealing the third-degree-murder charge in hopes of getting it reinstated. Her Public Defender, Bruce Michael Johnson of Clearwater, Fla., says that Kawana was released from jail on her own recognizance and is awaiting trial.

Who is to blame for Kawana Ashley's problems? She was a poor woman who did not have the money to get an early abortion. Forty-four states have no Medicaid funding for abortions. Eighty-three counties in the United States have no abortion providers.

The only way to prevent future Kawanas is to provide free abortion to all women who want one. At the same time, this country should provide full funding for any woman who wants to have her child. This would mean medical and living expenses for both mother and child so that the mother can provide a stable environment for herself and her child.

All of this could be done just by taxing the rich instead of working people. It could be done by dumping the massive military budget, which is used to keep



Third World countries under the thumb of the imperialist powers.

Every year, 200,000 women worldwide die from illegal or self-induced abortions. Anyone astonished by Kawana Ashley's use of a gun to abort herself should realize that desperate women will do anything to prevent having a child they cannot afford.

The criminals are not the thousands of Kawana Ashleys but the state which creates them by depriving them of the opportunity for real choice.

Fortunately for Kawana Ashley, there are groups around this country which will take up her cause and give her support. One such group, from which I got this information, is the Baltimore affiliate of Bisexual and Radical Feminists.

And you can send help to Kawana Ashley in care of her Public Defender, Bruce Johnson, Clearwater, Florida. She needs our support!

—February 1996

## When You Come to San Francisco...

"Wear a flower in your hair." Remember that old song? You should be in San Francisco on April 14, flower or not, to join thousands of women and men who are marching for the rights of women. The march, organized by NOW, is calling for: "No retreat on affirmative action; protect abortion and reproductive rights; stop all forms of violence against women; demand lesbian, gay, and bi rights; end the war on poor women."

I will be marching because Shannon Lowney and Leanne Nichols, two clinic receptionists from Boston, cannot be there to march. They were murdered at the Planned Parenthood and the Preterm clinics on Dec. 30, 1994, by John Salvi. After the murders, Salvi was hailed as a hero by anti-choice groups.

I will be marching because Dr. John Britton and clinic escort Jim Barrett were murdered at The Ladies Center Clinic in Pensacola, Fla., in July 1994, and clinic escort June Barrett was injured. Their murderer was Paul Hill, another anti-abortion extremist. He was also treated like a hero by the anti-choice fanatics.

We should march together because up until the beginning of last year there have been four attempted arson/bombings at clinics, five arson attacks, three bombing attacks, 10 cases of severe vandalism, assaults, and other extreme incidents, eight attempted murders, and five murders—all directed against pro-choice clinics and all in the name of saving the fetus.

From July 1994 through December 1994, an estimated \$670,335 damage was done to the clinics of abortion providers by arson and bombing incidents. Most of the criminals were never caught.

Besides the sneaky goons that attack in the night, we have Congressional goons and a presidential goon who attack us in plain daylight.

The very latest attack came Thursday, March 28, 1995, when the House gave

final approval to a bill that would outlaw a specific type of late-term abortion. The vote was 286 to 129, as 72 Democrats joined 214 Republicans in support of this outrage against women's choice. The bill has already passed the Senate. The bill bans procedures that may be needed to preserve the health of some pregnant women and even their future ability to have children. Many late-term abortions are given when the fetus is dead or is so severely deformed that it would have no chance of living after birth.

The Center for Disease Control reports that 1.3 million abortions were performed in 1993, and fewer than 1.5 percent were performed after 20 weeks.

While whining that he, too, hated late-term abortions, President Clinton, who knows it's an election year, said that he might veto this bill.

While all of the legislators were saving the fetus—normal or not—they were also in a heated race to remove poor women from welfare, food stamps, and health care. To prove just how much they care about children, Congress has passed legislation to allow states to refuse children of undocumented workers the right to public education and health care.

Military personnel have also been denied the right to abortion at military hospitals—the wives of military enlisted men as well as the women who are serving in the military. Considering all of the military crimes against women from Okinawa to the Tailhook affair, you would think that Congress would at least protect a women's right to choose. They certainly protect their own healthcare provisions from hair transplants to cosmetic surgery.

When we march in San Francisco on April 14, let's show our anger and our determination to win, once and for all, full reproductive rights for all women. For ourselves, our daughters, sisters, mothers, and for all generations to come

—April 1996

## **No Equal Rights in Alabama or California**

In what seemed like a case of “Alabama Mad Cow Disease,” Ron Jones, Alabama's Prison Commissioner, announced on April 26 that he was going to place women on the prison chain gang. This was to get back at male prisoners who had sued the state, charging that chaining male prisoners was discrimination against men.

Naturally, Mr. Jones—who once ordered pink jumpsuits for male inmates who masturbate in front of female guards and visitors and who supports “caning” to discipline inmates—resorted to putting women in chains so that he could show his support for equality between the sexes. But only, he specified, if both sexes were in chains.

But the governor, Fob James, disagreed. He said, “There will be no women on any chain gang in the state of Alabama today, tomorrow, or any other time under

my watch.” Governor James had appointed Ron Jones prison commissioner in February 1995.

Jones revived chain gangs for male prisoners as part of a campaign to make prison life more unpleasant. Other exciting initiatives taken by Ron were making inmates smash rocks into pebbles and forcing them to share bunks in 12 hour shifts. Jones also had stirred resentment among some personnel because he wanted to cut their salaries by 20 percent and turn the prison system over to a private corporation.

Now, the question is, did the governor fire him? No, of course not. Ron Jones will return to his previous job as warden of the Elmore Correction Facility.

However, Warden John Nagle, who is presently in charge of the Elmore Correction Facility, was a little put out when reporters told him he was being replaced by Jones. “What do you mean? I’m the warden,” Nagle said. “What you are telling me is I am being replaced and don’t know it.”

The only solution is to arrest more people and build more prisons so Governor Fob James can give more of his friends “rewarding” job opportunities.

That’s precisely what’s being done in California—the state that “knows how.” In the last 10 years, that state has built 20 prisons. During the same period, one state university campus and one University of California campus have been built. There have been 26,000 jobs added to various state corrections departments compared to 8000 jobs lost in higher education.

The Department of Corrections’ operating budget increased 14 percent a year while the whole state budget increased only 7 percent a year. In 1985, there were 7570 prison guards; in 1990, there were 14,249; in 1994, there were 25,547. The yearly salary for a prison guard with six years experience is higher than for a starting tenured associate professor at the University of California.

“Affirmative action” in the prison system is off and running. When it comes to prisons and jails, ethnic minorities have far outnumbered whites. For instance, in California, even though Blacks make up only 6.8 percent of the population, they constitute 31.4 percent of the prison population.

Meanwhile, whites, who make up 55.6 percent of the population, are only 29.6 percent of the prison population. In fact, California, which claims to have the biggest and the best of everything, certainly ranks high with jailed people. California has the highest incarceration rate in the world.

And why not? For prison officials and construction contractors alike, it pays to pack the jails.

Where did I get these insane figures? Thanks to the Prison Activist Resource Center, P.O. Box 3201, Berkeley, CA 94703. One last figure: California spends \$5.6 billion on incarceration and \$4.3 billion for higher education. Happy May Day!

—May 1996

## Unwed Teenage Mother Mummy Found

Five centuries ago, in 1996, the waning years of the capitalist empire in the United States, a girl with long black hair and a graceful neck, dressed in fine alpaca wool, knelt on a cold, windswept summit in Washington, D.C.

She was in the presence of politicians, both Democratic and Republican, and surrounded by offerings of budgets, money and gold. As she bent her head, a powerful blow was delivered, cracking her skull above the right eye and causing death by intercranial bleeding—one more ritual sacrifice of a non-virgin to the mountain god of profit.

Actually, this is a report in the May 22 *New York Times* of a female teenage mummy found in Peru. She was sacrificed to the mountain god of Nevado Ampato.

As I read it I thought of the presidential candidates who are dancing a mad dance for voters, each calling for more sacrifice from the poor and from children. Both Clinton and Dole are chanting, “I can get it for you cheaper.”

Clinton has endorsed the “Wisconsin” plan for cutting welfare. And, of course, Dole yelled “foul” because the Wisconsin plan was created by the Republicans and heartily endorsed by the Democrats.

The term “welfare mother” has become a battle cry for the politicians who are making scapegoats out of immigrants, the elderly, teenagers, the homeless, and the unemployed. Even more important for the capitalist economic system is placing the blame for its woes on the backs of the poor and unemployed, and those who must turn to welfare in order to survive.

The politicians hope that pointing the finger at them might stop the working class from figuring out why downsizing creates massive profits for the rich, and why wages keep going down and profits keep going up.

Will the Wisconsin plan work? Only for the already rich—not for the poor. The Wisconsin plan, known as W-2, was passed by the Wisconsin legislators on March 14, 1996. It will abolish AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children), require virtually all recipients to work, and place a lifetime limit of five years on receiving benefits. This will require 53,000 people to “work” whether there are jobs or not, and a doubling of the state’s childcare capacity.

Seventy percent of those who receive AFDC are children, and most of the other recipients are their mothers. Under W-2, mothers of children as young as 12 weeks will be forced to work. If parents fail in their attempt to find work, W-2 offers no safety net for children other than foster care.

W-2 participants, custodial parents who are not disabled and who earn no more than 115 percent of the federal poverty level, will report to job centers, where they will be channeled into available full-time jobs. Those finding actual employment will be eligible for food stamps and state and federal Earned Income

### Tax Credits.

Under certain circumstances, they will also be eligible for health and childcare benefits. If participants cannot find unsubsidized work, they will be expected to work in a subsidized trial job (the employer gets the subsidy), or assigned to a community service or transitional job with a subminimum wage in the form of a “grant.” No other cash support will be provided.

Clinton has already announced his support for this “wonderful” plan and has gone even further. He has announced his intention to force all unwed teenage mothers to live with their families in order to collect welfare for themselves and their children.

The capitalist system is in deep trouble. It is imperative that the capitalists’ hired politicians keep the rabble “in their place.”

The only way to conquer the working class is to divide them from each other—by race, age, and sex—by any means necessary. But you know what? It won’t work. Human sacrifices never work. —June 1996

## **Black Churches Burning— Bring the Racists to Justice!**

Since 1990, over 80 churches have been vandalized, firebombed, or burned. All of these churches have had predominantly Black congregations.

The government says there’s no evidence of a conspiracy in these burnings. Attorney General Janet Reno stated, “I don’t think we can talk about patterns based on what we have seen to date, and every case is different, but clearly there has been evidence of racial motivation.” Here, at least, she hit the nail on the head: These burnings are racist in nature.

The investigations have been racist also. In January, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (BATF), while investigating the torching of the Inner City Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., polygraphed the pastors, fingerprinted church members, showed up unannounced at job sites and homes, and implied that church members burned their own church.

In April, when local and federal authorities investigated the burning of St. Paul’s Primitive Baptist Church in Lauderdale, Mississippi, they blamed the deacon of the church, saying he might have been careless with a cigarette. The Local NAACP said the accusation “drove the deacon to tears because he loved his church and felt extremely humiliated that he would be accused of burning it down.”

In Alabama, the state Attorney General, Jefferey Sessions, who is running for Congress, interrogated Black ministers and church members about their voting habits. He accused Black clergy of burning their own churches and participating in

voter fraud, and required them to take lie detector tests to prove their innocence.

It is no accident that there was a total of 13 church burnings in the South around the time of the Martin Luther King holiday. Even though no conspiracy of any single group has been proven, two men were arrested and charged with arson of two churches in South Carolina. Both were reported to have attended Ku Klux Klan rallies near one of the burned churches.

One of the men, Timothy Aldron Welch, was carrying a membership card in the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan when he was arrested.

You might think that white racists who profess to be “Christian Knights” would prefer Black people to be down on their knees in prayer. But they must know that Black churches have played an important role historically in organizing Black people in defense of their rights.

The Civil Rights Movement came out of Black churches in the 1950s and early 1960s. Many defense cases were mounted for Black victims of this racist society who were often activists from Black churches. Any organization whose members are an oppressed people must speak to that oppression. And white racists know it.

The fact that many of the churches that have been burned have had both Black and white members suggests that racists had an added reason for burning them—because they were integrated.

Donations from around the country and from all races have poured in to help rebuild the churches. But the federal government seems to be in no hurry to apprehend the arsonists. Only during the past few weeks has President Clinton seen fit to say anything on the subject.

We live in a country where politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, are using every racist trick they have up their sleeves to get elected. They fuel the scapegoating of immigrants, Blacks, and poor people on welfare in the hope that “divide and conquer” will work once more.

Racism hurts all workers, male and female, Black, Yellow, Brown, Red, white, foreign and native-born.

When one group is forced to work for lower wages and under oppressive conditions, the standard of living for all workers is pushed even lower.

That’s one reason why everyone should oppose racism and demand that the government begin to find the church burners instead of blaming the victims.

—July 1996

## Capitalism Is Losing Its Gene

In *The New York Times* of July 26, there is a story about gene experiments that removed the gene *fsoB* in mice, which caused the mice to be unable to nurse their young. Instead of caring for their offspring, they left them scattered around the nest, and many of them died from lack of care.

The article reminded me of this capitalist economic system, which has a complete lack of care for either the young, old, or in-between.

Capitalism has a defective built-in gene called profit—and profit is all it cares about. The drive to make ever greater profits drives the system to ride roughshod over every human need.

One article after another has been printed in the newspapers about how the rich are getting richer while the poor are driven into deeper poverty. The report of the United Nations Survey on Human Development published on July 10 concerning the gap between rich and poor leaves one gasping out loud.

The report noted that “an emerging global elite, mostly urban-based and interconnected in a variety of ways, is amassing great wealth and power, while more than half of humanity is left out.” This was according to James Gustave Speth, an American who is administrator of the Development Program.

One figure from the Cato Institute’s “Project on Global Economic Liberty” was particularly shocking. Worldwide, the institute said, 358 billionaires control assets greater than the combined incomes of countries with 45 percent of the world’s people.

How do these figures relate to real human life? In an article on Mexico in *The New York Times* of July 20, the down-to-earth reality becomes clear. The gap between rich and poor turns into a chasm in that country. The wealthiest 10 percent control 41 percent of the wealth, and the bottom half of the population receives only 16 percent of all national income.

How long will the “underclass” allow the rich to rest their feet on the necks of the poor?

The *New York Times* article starts off: “One simmering Sunday in May, a hundred peasant farmers stormed a luxurious hillside mansion here (Tepoztlan, Mexico), and, in a scene out of an old newsreel of the 1910 Revolution, pounded on the gates with machetes and their clenched fists until the wealthy owners abandoned their brunch and fled.

“Peasants now stand guard around 35 miles south of Mexico City. They have painted ‘House of the People’ on the imposing wooden doors, but they still find themselves ogling such luxuries as the artificial lake just inside the gates and the mounted bison head on the warehouse wall.”

“‘The only thing that one can feel is embittered,’ said Guillermo Noriega Garcia, 56, a farmer who took part in the assault on the 20-acre estate that stands in the middle of parched subsistence farms. ‘How can it be that one man has everything and others don’t even have water?’”

Other incidents have given the rich of Mexico more wrinkles. A train robbery near Monterrey was reminiscent of the 1910 Revolution, when peasants routinely assaulted trains. In the modern version, the attackers included children and housewives like Argelia Espenosa, who was almost arrested for trying to bring home a bushel of corn.

“We would have milled the corn and used it to make tamales and tortillas,”

said the 37-year-old woman, whose husband, Alberto, was arrested with a sack full of corn on his shoulder. "It wouldn't have gone to waste."

*The Times* pointed out that for the Rev. Rodolfo Reyes, a local priest, the assault was a manifestation of Mexico's smoldering economic and social crisis. "I see it as a sign that says, 'Hey, be careful,'" he said.

Is that what capitalist newspapers such as *The New York Times* are saying to the super rich? "Hey, be careful!"

It won't work. Like hogs at a trough, the owners of the wealth of nations want more and ever more for themselves. They have their nose in the trough and will trample the poor—men, women, and children—if they get near them.

They will only cease their rape of the world's natural resources and wealth if there is an organized power that does have the weight and muscle to move the rich out of the way and take over in the interest of all of the oppressed.

As Nicanor Demesa Ortiz, one of the people who took part in the land takeover in Mexico said, "We tried to talk to the rich people, but they never paid attention to us. But what we did here was to show that no one, no matter how powerful or influential, is immune to the power of the people or to what is right."

Hey, be careful! —August 1996

## Deep into S&M, Or Kick Me Around for Four More Years

I watched as much as I could possibly stomach of both the Republican and Democratic Party conventions. They reminded me of that old joke, "When do you know politicians are lying? When their lips are moving." And their lips were moving constantly!

The Democratic Party convention was the most revealing of all. It was not unexpected that the very day Clinton was accepting the nomination for president—while mouthing "family values" and how he was the bridge to the future—his top advisor, especially on family values, resigned in scandal.

Dick Morris, 48 years old and married, resigned because he had forgotten his own family values and had been dallying with a \$200 a night call-girl for over a year.

Not that I care about which politician is screwing who in Washington, D.C. I am far more concerned that the politicians are really screwing the working class and the poor. But good.

What is amazing is watching the so-called liberal Democrats apologize for Clinton. In fact, even San Francisco Supervisor Tom Ammiano (a Democrat himself) said they were the "Stepford Democrats," referring to the movie "The Stepford Wives." Even though the "liberal" Democrats were uncomfortable with Clinton's retreats on gay rights, welfare reform, and many other issues, they were



rushing and gushing with everlasting loyalty and devotion to him.

Just think how horrible it would be if the Republicans won! They might increase the defense budget, repeal welfare legislation dating back to 1935, pass more anti-Cuba bills, and cut off food stamps to people who do not get enough food as it is. In other words, if the Republicans got into the White House, they would do exactly as Clinton has already done.

Whenever a Democrat or Republican utters the words "family values," I want to vomit. At the present time, over 50 percent of Black children, 40 percent of Latino children, and 24 percent of white children live in poverty. The new welfare reform law signed by Clinton will throw one million more children into poverty.

The new welfare law denies food stamps and SSI payments to noncitizen immigrants, permits states to refuse Medicare benefits to new immigrants, limits food stamps for unemployed workers not raising children, and denies cash aid and food stamps to persons who have been convicted of felony drug charges.

And to be sure that the unemployed have an even tougher time, the Republicans and Democrats have eliminated a \$3 billion jobs program.

In California, Governor Pete Wilson is implementing the new welfare law to the hilt. He has eliminated prenatal care for undocumented immigrant women.

While the Democrats are crying "shame," it is their president who signed that disaster and who has promised to "end welfare as we know it." And that's the only promise that he has kept, as far as I know.

In *The New York Times* of Aug. 25, there was a picture of John J. Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, with Vice President Al Gore.

The article goes on to explain that "by November the AFL-CIO plans to have spent \$35 million this year on political advertising and organizing with money raised from special assessments on union members.... From January 1995 through June 1996, unions gave \$4.6 million to Democratic committees."

Now if the AFL-CIO is looking for somewhere smart to invest its millions, I would urge them to look to Detroit, where workers have been on strike for one year against the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Detroit News*.

These newspapers are using every scab strikebreaking method they can think of to break the workers' spirit. Can you imagine what a shot in the arm it would be if the labor bureaucrats would take that \$35 million and organize a national march of working people in that city?

If they want to catch the attention of the rotten political scum in Washington, D.C., I can think of nothing more attention-getting than a Million Working Person March in Detroit.

It would certainly catch the interest of the scabs.

But one million pickets would also draw the world's attention, and it could signal that workers have given all they can. They have given at the offices, at the factories, on the highways, in the mines, mills, and smelters of this country. Now

they want to get a little back.

There is no “lesser evil.” The worst evil is lying down and letting the corporations walk over your back. —September 1996

## **The New Witch Hunt Against Immigrants**

The latest witch hunt against immigrants is quite familiar to anyone who has read the history of the United States.

The construction of the first transcontinental railroad was built by 3000 Irish and 10,000 Chinese, working for one or two dollars a day in the 1860s.

By the 1880s, the Chinese numbered 75,000 in California. Immigrants were coming to this country by the hundreds of thousands. Irish, German, Italians, Poles, Russian Jews, and Greeks. There were 5.5 million immigrants in the 1880s, and 4 million arrived in the 1890s.

As to the conditions of the Chinese in California, here is an obituary for a Chinese man named Wan Lee written by Bret Harte: “Dead, my revered friends, dead. Stoned to death in the streets of San Francisco, in the year of grace 1869 by a mob of halfgrown boys and Christian school children.”

In Rock Springs, Wyoming, in the summer of 1885, whites attacked 500 Chinese miners, massacring 28 of them in cold blood.

It was some years before the hostility between the various ethnic groups was overcome by their joining together in strikes and to form unions.

Just as Congress has acted against immigrants in 1996, so they did in the 1920s. Congress passed a law favoring Anglo-Saxons and limiting or keeping out Latinos, Slavs, and Jews. No African country could send more than 100 people; 100 was also the limit for China, Bulgaria, and Palestine.

The ruling class financed the Ku Klux Klan and began a witch hunt against both Blacks and immigrants. They were fearful of socialists and communists among them.

Congress began its (Attorney General) Palmer raids against trade unions and the immigrant community. The law that financed the Palmer raids is quite similar to the “Anti-Terrorist” campaign of this present administration and the bipartisan Congress.

During World War II, the government of the United States built massive concentration camps for citizens of Japanese ancestry despite the fact that they were American citizens. Land, homes, and bank accounts were confiscated from the Japanese Americans and turned over to white farmers and bankers.

Most of these attacks against immigrants took place during an economic recession, except for the attacks against the Japanese during the Second World War. The rulers of this country were able to turn the fear of unemployment into a fear of the immigrant.

Today, we are supposedly in the midst of a so-called “growth” period, so why this need to raise the levels of hate against innocent people?

Let’s look at “downsizing” and you can see the need to find someone to blame it on. Since 1979, 43 million better-paying jobs have disappeared. While the Clinton administration boasts that 27 million new jobs have been created, the wages are much lower.

Just think, the largest employer in this country is Manpower Inc. They rent out 767,000 “temporary” workers a year to corporations and other businesses at lower wages and no health or other benefits.

While every congressman and congresswoman is cutting welfare for both legal and illegal immigrants, let’s get a look at the real “welfare bums.”

This government gave \$1.6 million to McDonalds to help them market Chicken McNuggets in Singapore from 1986 to 1994. Westinghouse got “depreciation” on their machinery, saving them \$215 million in taxes in 1993. Meanwhile, they eliminated 24,700 jobs.

The government gave \$278 million in technology subsidies to Amoco, AT&T, Citicorp, Du Pont, General Electric, General Motors, and IBM between 1990 and 1994, while these corporations cut 339,038 jobs and posted profits of \$25.2 billion in 1994 alone.

Exxon was able to deduct nearly \$300 million on the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and \$11 million went to Pillsbury to promote the Pillsbury Dough Boy in foreign countries.

(I got all these facts from “Downsize This,” a new book by Michael Moore. Get it fast; there’s much more information in the book than I have room for.)

### **Where is our money going?**

Not to immigrants, that’s for sure. The U.S. federal budget for fiscal year 1997 shows that the government will spend 55 percent on the military, 6 percent on physical resources, 12 percent on general government, and 30 percent on human resources. In 1996, Congress—with the president’s support—added \$7 billion to the military budget.

It’s the need for capitalism to constantly cut wages while the bosses receive welfare from the government that is pushing the anti-immigrant cold war.

It is in the interest of all working people to put a stop to the immigrant bashing.

If history teaches us nothing else, it should teach us that an injury to one is an injury to all. It should teach us that solidarity with the oppressed is in the best interest of all working people, regardless of color or language. —October 1996

## **Sometimes You Can’t Win for Losing**

Sometimes, it seems that the whole world has gone a little crazy, especially where females are concerned.

*The New York Times* of Oct. 28 carried a story of a 17-year-old woman, Amanda Smisek, seven months pregnant, from Emmett, Idaho. She received a court summons last spring charging her with a crime she had never heard of—fornication.

“My mom went down to the library and looked it up in the dictionary,” Miss Smisek said while feeding her newborn son, Tyler, his bottle. “Nobody ever told us it was illegal for two people of the same age to do that.”

Aha! But in Gem County, Idaho, the prosecuting attorney, Douglas R. Varie, came up with a 1921 law prohibiting fornication, or, as the statute defines it, sex between unmarried people of the opposite sex.

Of course, this is an election year and (you guessed it) Varie is running for reelection—unopposed, as a matter of fact. Here are the gentle words of why he is charging Amanda with fornication:

“Children having children impose a heavy burden on society,” Mr. Varie wrote in an open letter of explanation to residents. “It’s a sad thing for a child to only know his or her natural father as someone who had a good time in the back seat of a car.” I wonder how Varie knew about backseat good times?

Our hero, Prosecutor Varie, the galloping gonad, has charged 10 other pregnant teenage girls with fornication, along with their boyfriends.

He had learned about the pregnancies through teachers, family members, or social workers. According to Varie, juvenile records are sealed automatically when the convicted teenager reaches the age of 18.

Most of the teenagers charged with fornication have pleaded guilty. Smisek refused and demanded a trial. Amanda was found guilty at her trial but fortunately the sentences for Miss Smisek and her boyfriend did not call for jail terms or fines. She was defended by the American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho.

Another strange story concerns the state of Pennsylvania—the state that requires the consent of parents before a girl under the age of 18 can acquire an abortion.

Rosa Marie Hartford, aged 40, has been convicted in Laporte, Pa., of interfering with the custody of a minor. Her crime was taking her son’s 13-year-old girlfriend to Binghamton, N.Y., for an abortion. New York does not have parental consent laws.

This is the first conviction of its kind in the country. Ms. Hartford, who lives in Shunk, Pa., could be sentenced to seven years in prison.

The law under which Ms. Hartford was prosecuted makes it a crime to knowingly take a child under the age of 18 from a parent without permission to do so.

The 13-year-old had left a note saying she was going to a friend’s house after



school. Instead, she was driven by Ms. Hartford and a friend to the Southern Tier Women's Services Clinic in Binghamton, N.Y., where she was given a safe and legal abortion. The girl's mother had notified the police that the girl was missing—she did not know she was with Ms. Hartford.

Ms. Hartford, while helping the 13-year-old girl, was also concerned with her 19-year-old son who had gotten the young girl pregnant. Her son certainly needs medical attention and help for his sexual sickness concerning children.

But Ms. Hartford deserves a medal for what she did for the young girl.

Evidently, the young girl felt she could not confide to her parents about her condition. She did trust Ms. Hartford enough to tell her.

Had she not depended on Ms. Hartford, she might have done what hundreds of other young girls have done. She could have found an unsafe illegal abortionist or tried to abort herself and become another tragedy.

I know that had Ms. Hartford done for one of my daughters what she did for that young pregnant 13-year-old, I would have been profoundly and forever grateful to her.

Ms. Hartford was defended in court by Kathryn Kolbert of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy.

She said, "If my client had taken this girl to New York State to buy a toothbrush or to go to the mall, I'm betting that Max Little (the Sullivan County District Attorney) wouldn't have bought this case.... Nor would the case have been prosecuted if any other medical procedure been at issue."

These laws against a women's right to choose are just waiting to be broken—but how many victims such as Ms. Hartford must we have before they are repealed?

Here's to you, Ms. Hartford. May your tribe increase! —November 1996

## Scrooged Again!

OK, the election is over—we lost. Wage slaves-0, Capitalists-1. Hasn't it been ever thus?

With our President and Congress, corporate welfare programs should reach new heights. Since 1987, Intel and IBM have been subsidized by taxpayers to the tune of \$100 million a year.

Ralph Nader estimates that welfare for capitalism has set us back \$167 billion or \$900 for every American adult. Who says there is no Santa Claus?

Companies such as Hughes Aircraft, IBM, and Honeywell have received about \$700 million in tax dollars. McDonalds Hamburgers has received \$195,000 and Dole Fresh Fruit got \$616,640, Sunkist got \$65 million, Blue Diamond (almonds) \$32 million, Gallo wines \$22.3 million, Tyson (poultry) \$9 million, and Pillsbury scooped up \$8.35 million.

Naturally, you can't keep handing out welfare to the rich and to the poor at the same time. Someone's got to take the back seat. So the government has decided to just cut off the poor, the elderly, the disabled, and children and immigrants.

States are rushing to cut off welfare for the needy. California is already planning to cutback on prenatal benefits for immigrants despite the fact that health care workers have said that without prenatal benefits the cost of care for unhealthy children will soar.

New York's workfare plan is useless because it demands that women on AFDC must work while there are simply no childcare programs for the children.

The Families and Work Institute, a nonprofit research group based in New York, did a study recently of childcare in 225 homes of relatives and non-relatives of mothers receiving Aid to Families With Dependent Children in Los Angeles, California, Dallas, Texas, and Charlotte, N.C. Only 9 percent of the home care was rated high-quality. Fifty-six percent of the home care was rated as custodial and 35 percent was judged harmful to the children's social and educational development.

New York City officials estimate that by the year 2000 an additional 300,000 children under the age of 12 would need subsidized care under existing income limits.

But the government of this wonderful country will be sending out letters to 260,000 children who receive disability benefits under the Social Security Administration notifying them that they could be losing their benefits.

It is estimated that 10 to 20 percent would eventually lose their benefits. We can't finance McDonalds and disabled children at the same time.

In California, the outlook for children is nothing less than alarming. Spending on K-12 education has been reduced 6.4 percent since 1989. Governor Wilson is proposing another 2.3 percent cut. Spending for 41 other education-related programs has dropped 26.1 percent. California ranks among the bottom four states in education spending for children.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) has been cut more than 25 percent and the government wants to cut 11 percent more. Cuts have been made in three medical care programs leaving two million children uninsured. And since 1989, 900,000 more children are living in poverty. Children now make up 47 percent of the state's poor. Are there no workhouses?

California now spends \$5.6 billion on jails and prisons and only \$4.3 billion for higher education. Think how the need for prisons will increase for this generation of children.

Worldwide, one child dies of hunger every eight seconds. Dr. Kay Killingsworth, secretary general of the World Food Summit, stated that, "Agricultural production has basically kept pace with population growth over the past 50 years, and at the moment there is enough food to go around. It's inequitably distributed—with the result that food does not reach the needy."

In Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol," Scrooge, after seeing Christmas future, became a changed man and was concerned with the poor and the infirm.

But we live in a Scrooge economic system. Capitalism is concerned only with profits not with human needs. They intend to drive down the living standard as far as possible in order to increase their enormous wealth. But there is hope.

Hope lies in the working class and their ability to tear the wealth out of the hands of the rich and to create a society organized around the needs of everyone.

We see hope in the French working class who are winning the fight against their capitalists, in the Canadian working class who are winning the battle to stop cuts in their social gains.

And I am sure that the American working class will learn the lesson of their French and Canadian brothers and sisters and put a stop to the pillage and looting of American capital.

They will revolt because necessity makes heroes out of ordinary people. The history of the United States is rich in working class heroes and that history is not yet finished. We ain't seen nothin' yet.

Have a happy holiday. —December 1996

1997

## A Tale of Two Nations

Since this is the season to "honor" the holy mother and her attempt to find hotel space in Bethlehem in the past, we should look at the treatment of mothers in the United States today.

On Dec. 16, 1996, the Supreme Court, in a 6 to 3 decision, ruled that the parent-child relationship is so fundamental that a state cannot prevent poor people from appealing the termination of their parental rights simply because they lack the money to pay court costs.

The decision overturned a ruling last year by the Supreme Court of Mississippi, which barred a mother who could not afford more than \$2000 for a trial transcript from appealing a family court decision that freed her two young children for adoption by her former husband's new wife.

The husband had custody and claimed that his former wife never visited the

children. But the wife, Melissa L. Brooks, claimed that the husband and new wife prevented her from visiting her children.

This mother was never accused of abusing or neglecting her children. Her only crime was being poor. She could not oppose the decision of the courts to grant custody of the children to her husband because she could not afford the transcripts of the trial. In the United States, being poor is grounds for snatching children out of the arms of their mothers.

Another example of anti-maternal activity on the part of the government is the cuts in benefits for disabled children.

Alexcya Marshall is a 20-month-old baby who laughs and coos but does nothing much else. She has cerebral atrophy, a form of cerebral palsy. Her brain has not grown to normal size and her weight, 19 pounds, is below normal for a child of her age.

Her mother, Ashanti Abdur-Rahaman, is 24 years old. She is a community college graduate and works a 40-hour week. She earns \$300 a week and receives \$495 a month from Supplemental Security Income. Out of that she must pay for childcare and health care for her daughter.

"I don't know if she's going to walk or talk or do anything the rest of her life," her mother says. Now she is frightened that the government is going to cut off her daughter from benefits. Ms. Abdur-Rahaman has already been notified by letter that the new cuts could eliminate benefits for her daughter. The government has notified the parents of about 260,000 children that they, too, may be eliminated from the assistance program.

Martha E. Ford, assistant director of ARC, formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens, asked, "How many kids are going to be knocked off to satisfy a budget issue? Whatever the number, that's not going to change the fact that there are children with severe disabilities, and this income provides them a maintenance program."

Now let us go to that country in Northern Europe, Norway. How do they treat mothers? As a single mother under Norway's welfare system, you will get special subsidies for the children and paid leave from your job so you can stay home and rear them.

An example is Dr. Sidsel Kreyberg, a 42-year-old pathologist. According to *The New York Times*, "When her husband left her in 1987, leaving her with two young children, she was immediately embraced by the state. For nearly eight years, until both children reached age 10, the state paid her a pension. Other support systems included free day care, subsidized housing and vacations, and free medical and dental care.

"The government also footed the bill for Dr. Kreyberg," *The Times* article informs us, "to fulfill her ambition of getting a Ph.D. in epidemiology at the University of Oslo. Now she is off welfare and has a better-paying job than before she went on."

Here are just a few of the social benefits of living in Norway:

Annual stipends of \$1620 for every Norwegian child under 17, which rise



slightly for every other child as a family grows, and rise still higher if the family lives in a remote part of the country. Retirement pay, equivalent to industrial workers' pensions, for all homemakers, even those who have not worked outside the home. Forty-two weeks of fully paid maternity leave. Reimbursement for all medical costs exceeding \$187 a year per individual.

The 165-member parliament in Norway is dominated by the Labor Party. Although it is a reformist party, the Norwegian Labor Party's policies reflect to some degree the organized strength of the working class.

But our country, the richest in the world, is dominated by the Democrats and Republicans—in reality, a one-party system that gives welfare to the rich and starves the poor.

Happy New Year; this economic system can't last forever! It's too mean-spirited.  
—January 1997

## Clinton Can't 'Just Say No'

A few weeks ago, President Bill Clinton went on national television and urged the nation's teenagers to just say no to sex and drugs. He sounded very much like Nancy Reagan and her "JUST SAY NO!" campaign of the 80s.

It didn't work then and Bill knows it won't work now. But it makes good copy; especially to the so-called "moral majority."

Bill Clinton is not exactly the poster boy for a just say no campaign. In fact, I doubt he's ever said no to anything he has wanted. I'm certain that he did not tell Paula Jones to just say no when he asked her for oral sex in his hotel room, and he sure as heck didn't just say no to her.

Nor did he just say no when it came to campaign contributions from illegal sources that he had to return after the elections.

Bill Clinton is a slider and slipper; he is sliding to the right as fast as his body will allow him. However, there are a few things I would like Clinton to just say no to.

He can just say no to the cuts in welfare that are going to grind even more thousands down into poverty. Instead of talking about school uniforms and curfews for young people, why not see to it that no child goes to school hungry or has to sleep in a car or on the street?

The Luxembourg Institute, in a study done in 1995, reported that the United States accounts for 70 percent of the poor children in the 18 richest industrialized nations.

Why not make sure that every child has medical coverage, so they can receive immunization shots?

In California, for example, only 57 percent of children have received their immunization shots that would prevent polio, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, mumps, measles, and rubella by the age of two.

In fact, two-year-old California cattle are better immunized than our two-year-old children, according to Dr. John Maas, extension veterinarian at the University of California, Davis.

Bill Clinton could just say no to the privatization of city hospitals. They were built and paid for with workers' taxes and are now being turned over to corporations whose only interests are making massive profits. This will make it impossible for the poor to receive even a minimum of health care.

You can be sure that diseases such as tuberculosis and other contagious diseases will not stay confined to the "poor" community but will spread to others.

It will be far more costly to stop these diseases once they spread than to stop them before they start.

Bill Clinton could just say no to the \$7 billion increase in the 1996 military budget. Fifty-two percent of our tax dollars pay for wars, past and present.

Bill could just say no to spending \$130 million for the LHD-7 amphibious assault ship, \$974 million for the LPD-17 amphibious transport ship, \$500 million for military construction projects, \$493 million for the B-2 bomber, \$363 million for the F-15 fighter, \$213 million for the F/A-18C/D fighter, and \$75 million for the Blackhawk helicopter.

Why the hell do we need all of that crap when we have children going to school with empty stomachs?

I'm sure that if he wanted to, Bill could learn to just say no to the corporate rich and yes to our children. But he would no more say no to his corporate backers than he would to Paula Jones.

If the working class and the poor of this country want to change their downsized lifestyle, then they will just have to say no to both Democrats and Republicans.

Workers will have to get on with organizing to take back our country from the corporate rich who know how to get our president to just say yes, yes, yes.

—February 1997

## International Women's Day '97

On March 8, 1908, women garment workers marched through New York City's Lower East side protesting sweatshop working conditions and also demanding the vote. Clara Zetkin, the German socialist, was later to declare that day International Women's Day in support of the marching garment workers.

Aided by both suffragists and socialists, women workers demanded protective legislation for workers, no child labor, a minimum wage, and a shorter work week.

From 1890 to 1910, the number of women workers doubled to eight million.

At the same time, many trade unions were formed that represented women. The International Ladies Garment Workers union was formed at this time.

Garment workers worked from 4:30 a.m. until 7 p.m. Most were immigrant women who did not speak English. But these women did provide the spark that was to launch the struggle against child labor and the eight-hour day, as well as the fight for women's suffrage.

On March 24, 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist factory caught fire. One hundred and forty-six people died. They were mostly women.

The Triangle factory occupied the top three floors of a new 10-story building near Washington Square in Manhattan. The factory owners kept the doors to one of the stairwells locked. This was done, the bosses claimed, because "it is difficult to keep track of so many girls."

The other exit was partially blocked by a partition that had been put there so a watchman could search the women's purses as they left at the end of the day.

The fire at the Triangle garment factory was just one consequence of the general unsafe working conditions for factory workers. There had been other disastrous fires in other sweatshops.

Following the fire, once again, workers took to the streets in a massive memorial march for the dead women and to demand safer working conditions as well as shorter hours.

### **Sweatshops still**

The first International Women's Day march was March 8, 1908, 89 years ago. And today we still have sweatshops, workers who are fighting for their jobs and livelihood, and a capitalist class just as heartless as that of yesteryear. And we still have politicians who jump when the ruling class demand it.

In San Francisco, a Nike shopping mall has opened—a sparkling monument to sweatshops in Indonesia, China, and Vietnam. Nike Chief Executive Officer Philip Knight is one of the richest men in the world. He is said, by *Fortune* magazine, to be worth \$5.2 billion.

In contrast, in 1996, the wage in the Nike factory (made up of mostly women workers) in Indonesia was \$2.25 a day. It was estimated that a livable wage in Indonesia is about \$4.25 a day.

Nike's advertising budget is \$280 million a year: how else are you going to force parents to shell out \$75 for a pair of sneakers for their kids? Just one percent of that advertising budget would raise the income of all workers in its six Indonesian factories at least above the poverty line.

But just as the capitalists of the early 1900s tried to exploit workers to the limit, so do the capitalists of the 1990s. It's how they make their millions—it's what they do. Only massive action on the part of the workers can stop them.

### **Action! Motown '97!**

And there will be an event that would make those working-class fighters of the

early 1900s proud. The AFL-CIO has called for a national labor march on Detroit on the weekend of June 13-14. It will be called "ACTION! MOTOWN '97."

The march is for the striking Detroit newspaper workers, who have slugged it out with the owners of the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News* for 19 months. They have sat down, walked thousands of hours on the picket lines, held rallies, and traveled over this nation to let other unions know of their struggle. They stand in the best tradition of working-class heroes.

In a show of their solidarity for all working people they have asked and gotten the dates of June 13-14 to coincide with the Days of Action in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

In November 1996, the workers of Toronto called their own DAYS OF ACTION and shut down that city to protest the cutbacks in social gains made by the Canadian workers.

The entire labor movement, as well as the women's movement, should make plans now to be in Detroit on June 13-14.

The U.S. working class has taken some real blows against their living standards. Downsizing and plain old out-of-job sizing is leaving thousands of working families deep in debt and unstable, even though the capitalist class is raking in the wealth of this nation like a whale sucking in plankton.

We have the golden opportunity to repay our foremothers and forefathers by taking up the struggle.

We're just as strong and just as brave when given the opportunity. The opportunity is coming June 13-14.

REMEMBER, 'ACTION! MOTOWN '97.' —March 1997

## The Crackdown on Dead-Beat Kids

Everyone knows the expression "dead-beat dads," but thanks to the government in Washington, there are now dead-beat kids.

According to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* of March 12, here is what's happening in Ohio:

Just a few weeks after Julie Jeffers gained legal custody of her four-year-old nephew, Clarence, the postman delivered a surprise. It was a notice that Clarence owed the U.S. government \$760.

The bill was for welfare over-payments that a previous caregiver had collected on Clarence's behalf during the summer of 1992. And there was a warning attached: a penalty waited if the child didn't soon pay off his debt.

Welfare officials would withhold \$20 a month—until the \$760 was paid in full—from whatever U.S. subsidized public assistance grants Julie Jeffers had been getting for sheltering the youngster.

Jeffers said that with three children of her own, she was barely making ends

meet. Food, rent, and utilities took most of her money. Paying back \$20 a month for Clarence would probably mean turning off the telephone.

Actually, there are dozens of other examples in Ohio and other states of the federal government's demands for repayment from children. In fact, this has led to a clash between Ohio and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, headed by Donna E. Shalala, who was appointed by Clinton. (Clinton is the president who acts like he cares for children.)

The *Plain Dealer* reports that "federal officials insist children are legally responsible for the debts of adults who cheated the welfare system. The state of Ohio contends that collection from these children is not reasonable as children cannot be liable for the debts of their parents.... Legal services lawyers in southern Ohio said yesterday that such bills were not uncommon."

"I know of one case where a woman who is 20 got a bill dating back to when she was 14," said Robin Bozian, managing attorney of Southeastern Ohio Legal Services in Marietta. "Her parents were dead, and they were going after the kid."

Another case involved a woman in Cincinnati whose aunt had received welfare payments for her and her brother when she was a child. Her brother moved out of the house, and it was not reported to the welfare department.

The woman has received a bill for \$8327 in welfare overpayments collected by the relative between 1987 and 1989, when the woman was a teenager.

All of this seems unbelievable if you don't understand those blobs of toxic waste that rule in Washington D.C. From the White House to Congress, they are all out to bleed the poor and working class so that their rich owners, the capitalist class, can remain unfettered from paying even a small share of the social debt.

While the federal government is adamant about the poor paying their debts, it winks at wealthy criminals.

A newsletter distributed by Project Censored at Sonoma (California) State University provides an example of how slow Washington is to go after white-collar criminals:

"While corporate, or white-collar, crime costs America 10 to 50 times more money than street crime, the Justice Department (DOJ) continues to show little interest in taking the problem seriously.

"Of more than 51,000 federal criminal indictments in 1994, only 250—less than one-half of one percent—involved criminal violations of the nation's environmental, occupational health and safety, and consumer product-safety laws."

"In the years between 1970 (when OSHA was created) and 1992, 200,000 Americans died at work, a significant number [of] which resulted from known negligence by the employer. Nevertheless, in those 22 years, OSHA has referred 88 criminal cases to the DOJ, which prosecuted 25 and sent one executive to jail. He served 45 days."

According to Barry Hartman, who was first deputy and then Acting Assistant Attorney General for the DOJ's environmental and natural resources division,

“environmental crimes are not like organized crimes or drugs.... There you have bad people doing bad things.

“With environmental crimes, you have decent people doing bad things. You have to look at it that way.”

He forgot to add that the so-called “decent people” also are big contributors to political campaigns.

Those are just the environmental criminals. For even bigger crooks, just think of Ollie North and his band of looters or the Savings and Loan million-a i r e bank robbers.

Someone has to pay. So, as usual, it's the children of the poor who are the victims. Perhaps the big feds can bring back indentured servitude for those children who fail to pay their “debts.” —April 1997

## The President's Dog and Pony Show

The circus is over in Philadelphia. The President's Summit for America's Future has ended, and it was, in Shakespeare's words, “full of sound and fury—signifying nothing.”

Clinton called for volunteerism and warned that government could not do “everything.” Or, more to the point, government will not do anything.

This amounts to George Bush's “Thousand Points of Light.” Neither of these presidents intended to eliminate the homelessness or the hunger that pervades this country.

Clinton, under investigation for turning the Lincoln Bedroom into the “Donors' Motel,” needed to clean up his tarnished image. But he did not want it to cost anything, so he lined up a bunch of celebrities to headline the show—Gen. Colin Powell, George and Barbara Bush, Gerald Ford and Nancy Reagan, Jimmy Carter, Oprah Winfrey, John Travolta, Tony Bennett, and even Brooke Shields.

All called for volunteers for America. Yet not one of them volunteered to call for a fair trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, in his own city, Philadelphia.

As far as I could tell, the only person who allowed a whiff of truth to seep into this dog and pony show was former President Jimmy Carter. His participation was made by videotape.

Carter said, “The divisions between many of us who have many opportunities and those who feel they have none are growing deeper. ... Children are dying, in body and spirit.”

“There has been a hardening of concern in the federal government, a sternness about people who are unfortunate, a condemnation of people who are different from ourselves, a discrimination against people who are poor and deprived that is quite traumatic in its impact.”

He spoke about the increase in prisoners. He said that when he was governor of Georgia he and Governor Askew of Florida and Governor Bumpers of Arkansas had “an intense competition” over who had the smallest prison population.

“Now, it’s totally opposite,” Carter said. “Now, the governors brag on how many prisons they’ve built and how many people they can keep in jail and for how long. Three strikes and you’re out. In Georgia, we’ve got a two strikes and you’re out.”

Speaking on the benefits of the conference, he remarked, “It depends. Obviously, if it’s just a publicity stunt or a flash in the pan to get headlines for a few days or a few weeks, it’ll be forgotten.

“There’s no doubt it will do good because of the commitments I’ve seen here in Philadelphia and around the nation. But I would say compared to what has been removed from the beneficial side, low-income family lives will not nearly be restored by this.”

Carter represents a section of the capitalist class that fears Clinton and his buddies may go too far in battering the poor and set off a rebellion.

This Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future was designed to hide the bad economic news that most working people and poor people face each day. It was held to hide the fact that “wealthfare” for the rich and hunger for the poor will grow.

While Clinton called for volunteers for the poor, he is volunteering the wealth of this nation to the rich.

Here are some of the big give-aways to the already rich and famous:

“Military Waste and Fraud, \$172 billion a year; Social Security Tax Inequities, \$53 billion a year; Accelerated Depreciation, \$17 billion a year; Lower Taxes on Capital Gains, \$37 billion a year; S&L Bailout, \$32 billion every year for 30 years; Agribusiness Subsidies, \$18 billion a year; Tax Avoidance by Transnationals, \$12 billion a year; Insurance Loopholes, \$7.2 billion a year; Nuclear Subsidies, \$7.1 billion a year.

“Aviation Subsidies, \$5.5 billion a year; Mining Subsidies, \$3.5 billion a year; Oil and Gas Tax Breaks, \$2.4 billion a year; Export Subsidies, \$2 billion a year; Timber Subsidies, \$427 million a year, not counting tax breaks.”

These are just a few of the rip-offs for the capitalist class, which purchased Congress and the White House. No wonder they have to put on a dog and pony show for the masses.

(The facts are from “Take the Rich Off Welfare,” by Mark Zepezauer and Arthur Naiman. Published by Odonian Press.) —May 1997

## **Abortion Bans: El Salvador and Here**

The political slimies in Washington, D.C., are doing it again. Once again, they

are trying to pass a ban on what they call “partial birth” abortions.

The vote for the ban by Republicans and Democrats in the Senate was just short of the two-thirds majority needed to override President Clinton’s veto. But Senate “Right to Lifers” indicated that if the bill is vetoed, they will bring the issue up for a vote again and again.

So-called “partial birth” abortions are seldom used and only to save the life of the mother. The “partial birth” is used only when the fetus is dead, so badly deformed it would not live after birth, or when a woman would lose her life during birth.

In fact, doctors know that if this ban is passed, it would not eliminate a single abortion; it is just a political posture for the “Right to Lifers.” Women would still be free to use other necessary methods.

That being said, it is important to realize that every bill passed to prevent one type of abortion is another step toward stopping all abortions.

An example of what the “Christian Coalitions” really want is the ban on abortions passed on April 25 in El Salvador. The revised code increases the penalties for violations: an abortion provider or a woman who obtains an abortion faces a prison sentence of two to eight years. Causing an abortion without a woman’s consent is to be punished with a four-to-eight-year sentence. A health professional found to have performed an abortion will be jailed for six to 12 years.

A new article in the bill sets a 12-to-15 year sentence for anyone found to have induced a woman to seek an abortion, helped her to pay for the procedure or otherwise facilitated a pregnancy termination. If that person is the father of a fetus, the penalty is to be increased by one third.

Catholic leaders have stated that Archbishop Saenz Lacalle will seek to have the constitution amended to establish that every person has the right to life from the moment of conception. This makes El Salvador’s abortion law the strictest in the world.

Of course, none of the laws will stop abortion. They will only ensure that many more women will die in the hands of illegal abortionists. I wonder if the holy Archbishop will also come out against the Salvadoran death squads. It’s not likely, since those who are murdered by death squads are already born.

This is the kind of hell that the religious right wants to impose on all women. In fact, Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, which lobbied for the “partial birth” ban, was so buoyed up by their success that he is aiming even higher: “When this is over, I want to move on to an up-or-down vote on second and third trimester abortions,” he said.

The goal of removing choice from women is part of a larger move of government to take away the rights of every working person. The new laws permitting young people to be tried as adults, the laws that, in the name of “drug abuse,” give the federal government even greater rights to search without permits, to read personal mail, and to invade every segment of our private lives is part of a bigger plan.



The cutback of social services, education and welfare; the drive against immigrants and anyone of foreign birth; the use of unpaid prison labor; the drive to build more prisons and increase the use of the death penalty—all are aimed at the living standards of the working class.

Driving down living standards and attempting to cut the ability of workers to fight back are all done to increase the profits of the capitalist class of this country.

Taking away choice for woman is just another effort to take away any choice for working-class and poor families. On any of these issues, solidarity is essential. An injury against one is an injury against all. That's a lesson we had better remember!

—June 1997

## America: Land of the Free?

The United States has more people in its prison system than any other country in the world. Yet the prison population is on the increase, as is the death penalty.

Actually, this country looks like some mad monster in its attempt to jam even more and more young people into its already overcrowded prisons. Here is a case in point:

In Port Washington, Wisconsin, Kevin Gillson, an 18-year-old, was labeled a sex offender for getting his 14-year-old girlfriend pregnant. He faced up to 40 years in prison for sexual assault of a child.

Kevin wanted to marry his girlfriend, and both the girl and her mother did not want him to go to prison. But the judge was magnanimous, and Kevin was sentenced on June 24 to “merely” two-years probation.

The effort to saddle young people (some of them very young) with severe punishments is more and more becoming the norm in our capitalist society. Some of the news stories seem like jokes:

A six-year-old boy, Johnathan Prevette, was separated from his classmates on the charge of sexual harassment. He had kissed a six-year-old-girl on the cheek. In punishment, he was suspended from school.

He said he missed his friends and coloring. He also missed the ice cream party honoring pupils with good attendance.

His teacher saw the “crime” the youngster had committed and decided he should be punished. He didn’t go to prison as a sex offender, but he will certainly have some unusual memories of his first kiss.

In a similar case, prosecutors in Arlington, Va., graciously decided to drop the charge of aggravated sexual battery filed against a nine-year-old boy (who had been accused of pressing himself against a girl in a school lunch line) because of his age.

However, he was transferred to another school. His lawyer told the boy, “Congratulations, you are not a criminal.” “I’m very, very, very happy,” the boy

said. "I'm going to eat pizza."

Parents and grandparents, too, have been ensnarled in the capitalist court system.

A grandmother, Darleisia Wilson, in Akron, Ohio, who was taking care of her two grandchildren, was booked for child endangerment.

The grandmother had to drive to the store, so she took the infant out to the car and put it into the car seat.

She turned on the motor in order to heat up because it was cold and went inside to get the other child. At that point, some ass stole her car with the infant inside.

The car and child were found some hours later, but the grandmother was charged with child endangerment. She will have to go through a court trial and possible fine because her car was stolen.

Mrs. Tatiana Glotova was charged with child endangerment, and her seven-year-old child was placed in foster care. She had taken her son to a park and was resting under a tree when her son tried to take a bike away from another child.

So, of course, the police arrested the mother and took her son away.

Mrs. Glotova is a single parent and works from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., five days a week, at one of her jobs. She works from 8 p.m. to 2 a.m. at a restaurant two or three evenings a week.

When she gets home, she gets tired, (I don't know why) and goes to sleep. Her son has been known to slip out of the house and play on the street late at night.

The justice of capitalism is not to help her with childcare services but to take away her child and charge her with child endangerment.

Now we have other children who are in trouble and need help rather than jail time:

Melissa Drexler, 18, will face charges of murder for giving birth in a bathroom and suffocating the baby by placing him in a plastic bag.

This woman had to be in shock at the whole thing.

She went to her high school prom with her boyfriend, complained of stomach cramps and went into the bathroom, gave birth, cut the umbilical cord with a metal container filled with sanitary napkins, disposed of the baby, and then went back to the dance.

All of this amazes me. Didn't her parents know she was pregnant? No one offered her help at any stage of this situation.

Once again, it is capitalism and its idiotic "morality" that forces young people to hide the most natural things human beings do.

And finally, we have the 12 year-old grandson of Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, who died of burns on June 23. According to police, her grandson admitted to starting the fire because he wanted to go live with his mother instead of his grandmother. He is being charged with murder.

This child will have to live with guilt for all of his life. He needs help, not jail or juvenile prison.

That's what Betty Shabazz would want. That's what any person with human feelings would want

Capitalism murdered her husband; must it also have the blood of her grandson?  
—July 1997

## Criminals Making Criminals

The slimeballs in Washington, D.C., are busy making more laws against our youth. In fact, the more rotten the politicians, the more they look to burden young people with their (the slimeballs') guilt. They're praying that if they yell loud enough about the criminal youth, their own criminal activity will be overlooked by voters.

Both Democrats and Republicans are working overtime to increase penalties against youth entrapped in the criminal "injustice" system.

They propose to prosecute more juveniles as adults and loosen federal mandates requiring that juvenile and adult prisoners be housed in separate facilities.

Meanwhile, at the state level, juveniles who commit serious crimes are increasingly being tried in adult courts and getting stiffer sentences that must be served in adult prisons.

Anthony Lewis, in his column, "Abroad at Home," in the July 7 *New York Times*, reported on several cases of children caught up in the "criminal injustice" system:

"Rodney Hulin Jr., a 16-year-old Texas schoolboy, was charged with arson in 1995 in a fire that did \$500 damage to a fence. When he admitted his guilt, he was sentenced to eight years in prison.

"He was sent to an adult prison in Brazoria County, Texas, on Nov. 13, 1995. Two weeks later, he wrote his father that he had been raped by another prisoner: 'I was examined by Dr. Davis and he found two tears inside my rectum-butt. I will be taking an HIV test in a few days because there are about 2200 inmates here, half are HIV positive.'

"He asked the warden to be put in a safe place but was turned down. Over the next few months, he was repeatedly beaten and sexually assaulted. He asked his father to 'pray that I will get out of here alive.' On Jan. 26, 1996, Rodney hanged himself in his cell. He was in a coma four months until he died."

Rodney Hulin Jr. was murdered by the state of Texas for \$500.

President Clinton has proposed a bill to toughen the treatment of youthful offenders, declaring it his "top law-enforcement priority" this year.

Meanwhile, a House bill would allow federal prosecution of children as young as 13 as adults, and require adult prosecution for those 14 and older who are charged with certain violent crimes. It would require states to prosecute children 15 and older as adults for those crimes. It would ease the rules against mixing children with adult prisoners.

Mark I. Soler, president of the Youth Law Center, gave some examples to a Senate judiciary subcommittee of what happens when juveniles are mixed with adult prisoners:

A 15-year-old girl in Southeastern Ohio who ran away from home for one night, then returned voluntarily, was put in jail by a judge to “teach her a lesson.” She was an “A” student, who had never been in trouble before. On her fourth night in jail, a guard sexually assaulted her.

Kathy Robbins, a 15-year-old in Northern California, was jailed when she violated the local curfew by being out after 10 p.m. After a week, she hanged herself.

In Boise, Idaho, Christopher Peterman, 17 years old, was put in jail for failing to pay \$73 in traffic fines. Other prisoners tortured and finally murdered him.

Anyone with more intelligence than a snail should understand why children should not be jailed with adult prisoners. The prison system is designed to turn even the most moral person into a person who is riddled with hate.

The politicians know this. And yet, Republicans and Democrats are vying with each other to pass the harshest crime bills—as long as none of them or their children are brought before a judge and asked to pay the piper.

What is evident is that capitalist politicians will play hangman to both adults and children and not show an ounce of human remorse in doing so.

Our children are fodder for the capitalist class. And the rulers of this country are living in a dream world if they think that they will escape unscathed in the aftermath of these crimes against children. —August 1997

## **Sacco & Vanzetti: Murdered 70 Years Ago**

Seventy years ago, on August 27, 1927, two working-class heroes, Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco, were put to death in the electric chair by the state of Massachusetts. They were on death row for over seven years.

The whole case was a frame-up from beginning to end. They were put to death because they were revolutionaries and because they would not plead guilty to crimes they had not committed.

They were proud to oppose the capitalist system and proud to have fought for their fellow workers, for trade unions, and the rights of immigrant workers (such as themselves).

Their case had many similarities to that of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who faces death in a murder frame-up today. But that’s hardly surprising; the same system of corrupt politicians, judges, and corporations ruled this country at that time as now. Only the names have changed.

The Russian Revolution had taken place in 1917. All over the world, workers and oppressed people began to look to that revolution as their own. In the United States, the ruling class began to implement a massive witch hunt especially

against foreign workers.

Newspapers and propagandists hired by employers' associations fomented anti-Red feelings in order to justify the brutalities of the suppression of strikes by steelworkers and lumber workers.

Every city and state had their own "red" squads and private super-patriotic hysterical organizations.

Civil rights and civil liberties were thrown out the window. The Department of Justice had agents scattered throughout the country with instructions to find "REDS." They enlisted the aid of local police and judicial authorities as well as the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution.

On May 3, 1920, an Italian printer, Andrea Salsedo, who had recently been arrested in Brooklyn, N.Y., on "suspicion of radicalism," crashed to his death from an 11th-story window of the U.S. Department of Justice office in New York City.

A fellow prisoner, Roberto Elia, also an Italian radical suspect, was hastily deported; but before leaving he had made an affidavit to the effect that he and Salsedo had both been tortured by the Department of Justice men in order to force them to confess that they had been "violent anarchists," the penalty for which was deportation to the Old Country.

There was an immediately outcry, which the Department of Justice tried to hush up. The leaders of the protest movement in Massachusetts were Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, both Italian immigrants who were supposed to be connected with the so-called Galleani group of anarchists in Boston.

Sacco had come to the United States at the age of 17. He became a skilled shoe-cutter and had the respect of his fellow workers—as well as his employer who considered him the "fastest edge-trimmer of some 3000 who have passed through my factory doors." In 1918, he was a minor leader in a long shoe workers' strike.

Vanzetti's early years in the United States had been hard. Unemployment and "greenhorn" hardships drove him to Plymouth, Mass., where he went into cordage production. In January 1916, he led 4000 rope and twine workers out on strike. The strike was won with increased wages, but Vanzetti was blacklisted and he became a fishpeddler.

On May 5, 1920, both Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested, soon after they had made arrangements for a Salsedo protest meeting the following Sunday.

They were charged with the payroll robbery of a shoe factory in Braintree, Mass., and with murdering the paymaster and his bodyguard.

The judge —like Judge Sabo in Mumia's case—was blatantly prejudiced against the defendants—and against all immigrants and "radicals." Despite numerous witnesses who swore that they had been with Sacco and Vanzetti many miles away at the time of the incident, they were convicted and sentenced to death.

Masses of people all over the world joined in their defense. Over 18,000 rallied

in New York's Madison Square Garden. But the ruling class had decided, despite the mounting evidence of their innocence, to execute them. And they were executed on Aug. 27, 1927.

In a revelation of the undaunted spirit of these two men, on April 9, two weeks from their execution, Vanzetti made this extraordinary statement:

"If it had not been for [this case], I might have lived out my life talking on street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and triumph.

"Never in our full life can we do such a work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident. Our words, our lives, our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! The last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph!"

The verdict of history belongs to Sacco and Vanzetti. FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!  
—September 1997

## A Tale of Two Women

The untimely death of the Princess of Wales is sad. She was only 36 years old, with a pumpkin of a former husband, the Prince of Wales, and two young children.

The press has been in a state of hysteria in its undying love for Princess Diana. They speak often and reverently of her good deeds and kindness. And in truth she did visit sick children in hospitals, children who were mutilated by land mines, many of which her own country manufactured and planted. She also spoke out for people who were sick with HIV.

It is interesting how she acquired the title of Princess of Wales, and her former husband his of the Prince of Wales. Neither was born in Wales. They were not Welsh by birth, nor did they migrate to Wales.

They were the Prince and Princess of Wales because the Anglo-Norman monarchy conquered the people of Wales in a long series of wars that concluded in 1265. Subsequently it crushed a series of Welsh revolts. In the 1500s, the English monarchy decided that Wales was to be integrated into England.

Personally, I have always wanted to be known as the Princess of Missouri. But since I don't have an army and don't like to travel that much, I am very sure that the people of Missouri will not accept my wish to be their princess. It hurts but I am a survivor.

Now let's get to the other woman. Her name is Roisin McAliskey. She is in prison because she is Irish and she is loyal to the idea that Ireland does not belong to the British.

In November, Roisin McAliskey will have been imprisoned for one year, without a trial and without any evidence. She gave birth to a daughter in a prison hospital.

The British have accused her of having plotted to bomb a British army base in Germany. The German government gave a description of the so-called terrorist and it did not even remotely resemble Roisin. The British suggested to the Germans that they ought to reconsider the “suspect’s” description.

Roisin was arrested when she was four months pregnant. When she was eight months pregnant, after being subjected to months of deprivation in prison, she weighed only 95 pounds. She was suffering from severe asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and an ulcer. She was held in solitary confinement 23 hours a day, strip-searched daily and interrogated regularly.

The British authorities told Amnesty International that Roisin would be forced to give birth in shackles, and that her new-born baby would be taken from her, even though other women prisoners are not subjected to the same treatment.

Only a worldwide outcry saved Roisin from this fate. She was removed to a regular hospital to give birth to her daughter, and then the court finally decided to transfer her to a mental hospital rather than return her to prison immediately after the birth, as the police had demanded. She has the baby with her, but she is still locked up, denied bail and denied trial.

There is another reason that the British authorities decided to frame up Roisin. She is the daughter of another Irish fighter, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey. Bernadette is not a terrorist, but she has led thousands of people in Northern Ireland in demonstrations against the British government’s control of Northern Ireland.

Now back to the Princess of Wales. In spite of her good works for many causes, not once did she speak up for Roisin McAliskey. You would think that as a mother, despite her title, she would sympathize and speak out against the brutal treatment of Roisin. After all, Diana was quite candid about her own treatment by the British royal family, and went to the press with her grievances.

When she spoke out against land mines, that was good. But a dangerous landmine is on the doorstep of England. And that is the oppression of the people of Northern Ireland. Roisin is just an example of this oppression.

Princess Diana would have done the British people a good service if she had spoken out against the treatment of the Irish prisoner Roisin McAliskey. But she didn’t, and now it’s too late.

But you can help Roisin. Donations can be sent directly to Bernadette McAliskey (major American bank check or international money order), payable to Bernadette McAliskey, Account #26231022. Mail to First Trust, Branch Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland. —October 1997.

## **Adrienne Rich, Poet Of Honor**

Something unusual has happened. For the first time in history, a poet, Ms. Adrienne Rich, has turned down the National Medal for the Arts as a protest. She

was disturbed by the widening gap between those who have wealth and power and those who do not.

Ms. Rich is 68 years old and has published more than 15 volumes of poetry since 1951. Her most recent, "Dark Fields of the Republic: Poems 1991–1995," is





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published by W. W. Norton.

Jane Alexander, the chairwoman of the National Endowment for the Arts, said of her, “Ms. Rich is eminently qualified to receive this distinguished award from President Clinton.” Ms. Rich evidently didn’t think Clinton was qualified to give it.

She said, “I am not against government in general, but I am against a government where so much power is concentrated in so few hands.”

Ms. Rich said her decision “was not difficult; it was a quick response. I felt I cannot be used this way.... The very meaning of art, as I understand it, is incompatible with the cynical politics of this administration.”

She continued, “Art means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of power which holds it hostage.” You’ve got to love a woman like Adrienne Rich.

The ruling class of this country simply does not like art. Unless they own it and can hang it in their drawing rooms. But the artist has to die poor and undernourished in order to be declared an artist later.

We have on the Statue of Liberty a great poem by another great poet, Emma Lazarus. It’s from her sonnet, “The New Colossus,” and it reads:

*Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*

The Statue of Liberty stands about 1.6 miles from Manhattan, where the poor wait in long lines outside soup kitchens, and the homeless sleep out in the open, cold weather or hot.

It is no wonder that the imperialist powers who own the politicians are now campaigning to remove Emma Lazarus’s poem from the statue. That compassionate welcome stands for everything they are against. What would they replace

those wonderful words with?

I think if the ruling rich got together they would write something like this:

***Give me your oil fields, your rivers and your mines, also your rain forests***

***Tell the huddled masses to forget breathing free air***

***We will send you land mines, military supplies***

***to keep your wretched refuse from rebelling.***

***Send us your ex-military dictators, your rich and fashionable.***

***We will send you factories with three-tiered low wages to keep  
the tempest-tossed homeless, so overburdened they won't try to overthrow us.***

Now that's the kind of poetry the capitalist class supports.

I'm glad there are poets such as Adrienne Rich. She speaks for the multitude; the rich speak for themselves. She speaks for me and you! —November 1997

## Dorothy Day: A Saint?

Dorothy Day died in 1980. If she had lived until today, she would be 100 years old. She was born on November 8, 1897.

The Archbishop of New York, Cardinal John O'Connor, has plans to make her a saint. But I doubt if this will fly. Dorothy Day was too good to be a saint. She was a founder of *The Catholic Worker*, and really believed in the Christian idea that the meek should inherit the earth.

Five years after she converted to Catholicism, in 1933, she founded *The Catholic Worker*, a radical newspaper. She made her own home a place for the poor to obtain food and shelter. In a short time, many such "Houses of Hospitality" were established across the country. There are still 141 here and overseas, more than when she was alive.

The monthly newspaper reached hundreds of thousands with its message of absolute pacifism, personal responsibility for helping the poor, and utopian communitarian anarchism. In other words, she was almost a communist. This was being preached during the Depression, when the majority of working people did not have much confidence in capitalism.

The message of pacifism and helping the poor led Catholic workers to endure imprisonment as draft resisters in World War II and the war in Vietnam, to join picket lines and hunger strikes for civil rights and union recognition, and to court arrest for refusing to pay war-related taxes or participate in civil-defense exercises.

Dwight MacDonald wrote a profile of Dorothy Day 45 years ago for *The New Yorker* magazine. He said at the time that "many people think that Dorothy Day is a saint and that some day she will be canonized." But Dorothy Day shook this off. "When they call you a saint," she said, "it means basically that you are not taken seriously."

However, J. Edgar Hoover took her seriously. He called her “a very erratic and irresponsible person,” whose activities “strongly suggest she is consciously or unconsciously being used by Communist groups.” Of course, J. Edgar tried to slander as a Red anyone who spoke up for civil rights or against war.

He forgot the story in the “Good Book” about feeding the multitude with bread and fishes. If Hoover had been alive in the time of Christ, I’m sure he would have driven in the nails.

Dorothy Day’s life before she became a Catholic was quite eventful. She had a stormy love affair, a pregnancy that ended in abortion, and a brief marriage to a wealthy Greenwich Village writer.

In other words, she lived the life of a lot of women who have undergone many disappointments and survived them all. It was certainly a test for her work in the Catholic Worker organization.

Historically, many utopian societies were based on the Christian faith. They believed that mankind and womankind could live and work together in harmony, grow their own food, weave their own cloth, and tend their own cattle.

But these communities were based on agriculture, not capitalism, which believes that profit comes first and humanity last.

December is the month to celebrate the birth of Christian beliefs. Unfortunately, we live in a society that represents the worst of capitalism. And portly priests and televangelists represent the most eager capitalist spokesmen.

Today child poverty in the United States is the worst among the richest nations. More than one in five children go to bed hungry—if they have a bed. Capitalism does believe in “suffer the little children.”

The Dorothy Days of the world are still out fighting hunger, homelessness, and the exploitation of working people. We do have the power to change the world so that we can live in harmony and eliminate hunger, wars, and poverty everywhere. But a saint will not do the job.

Only the power of the working class and all of the oppressed, united, can change the world. —December 1997

**1998**

## **The AIDS Epidemic: Murder on a Large Scale**

Monday, Dec. 1, 1997, was designated World AIDS Day. A UN medical panel has evidence that the AIDS epidemic is far worse than previously thought. It is believed that there are 16,000 new cases a day, worldwide, of people infected with the AIDS virus, HIV.

Instead of 23 million people infected (the 1996 estimate), the United Nations now puts the figure at 31 million. The UN AIDS study reports that 1600 children under the age of 15 are infected each day with HIV, and that 1200 other children

die from AIDS each day. Over 8 million children who are not infected with AIDS have lost their parents to the disease.

According to the study, more than 90 percent of new infections occur in developing countries. Of 5.8 million newly infected with the virus this year, 4 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1.3 million in South Asia and Southeast Asia, 47,000 in Caribbean countries, 44,000 in North America, and 30,000 in Western Europe.

These are poor countries, and the infected people have little or no access to new drugs on the market that could expand their years of life. We are talking here about an expense of hundreds of dollars a month, when most of the people in developing countries do not earn a hundred dollars a year.

Even the World Bank is warning of disaster if the disease is not stopped. The World Bank's study of the global impact of AIDS shows that the virus is hindering progress in many developing nations. "AIDS is reversing decades of progress of improving quality of life in developing countries," said Martha Ainsworth, a senior economist at the World Bank and an author of the study.

Since 1981–1982, the world capitalist class has been holding their fingers in their ears and have refused to recognize the epidemic for what it is—a monster. It has already destroyed the lives of more people than have been destroyed in both world wars, most of them young and at their most productive age.

Instead they have encouraged the religious community to look at AIDS as strictly a disease of homosexuals and to piously say that it is God's warning against homosexuality. Gay bashing has become a way of life for some idiots.

As usual, capitalism has used the disease to reap profits. Huge pharmaceutical conglomerates have held HIV-positive people hostage to their own profits—and each company keeps its research secret from the others.

Once again, I will tell the capitalist class how they can find a cure for AIDS: Just like they were able to create the atom bomb when they wanted to. They hired the finest minds in the scientific world, built them a whole city, with homes for their families, and told them to go to work on the bomb.

Money was not a problem. However, they did not give each scientist the right to privately sell the bomb for the highest price. The bomb belonged to the government.

Today, this government is wealthy enough to do the same thing. Hire the finest scientific minds, give them the best equipment, tell them to work together, not in secret, and to come up with a cure for HIV. We could do that. We should do that. It's only the profit system that stands in the way.

Only bloodthirsty thugs like the capitalist class would place profits before human needs. Until we get rid of that class, disease and pollution will poison our brothers and sisters around the world. —January 1998

## In Defense of a Woman's Right to Choose

On Jan. 29, in Birmingham, Alabama, another family planning clinic was destroyed by a deranged “pro-life” bomber. An off-duty police officer who had been moonlighting as a guard at the clinic was murdered and a nurse was critically wounded.

Law enforcement authorities said that the bomb was designed to kill people. It was timed to go off at 7:30 a.m., just when the clinic was opening and people would be sure to be on the premises.

The anti-abortion fanatics stop at nothing in their campaign to end a woman's right to control her own body. Since 1987, there have been 199 violent attacks on abortion clinics. Six people have been killed.

Actually, despite the massive attacks against clinics, the majority of the public still supports a women's right to choose.

I have a dog whose name is Roe V. When I took him to the SPCA, the attendant said his name isn't spelled right—it should be Rover. I told her that I had gotten the dog on Jan. 23 and decided to name him after my favorite anniversary, the Roe v. Wade decision of January 22, 1973.

The attendant whooped and held up her right hand with a fist. She was a young woman and probably had no idea what it was like when abortion was illegal.

I, on the other hand, had had two children and two illegal abortions before they were legal. Each abortion was dangerous, and I was forced to go to the hospital and receive treatment and blood transfusions.

I, like millions of other women who had undergone illegal abortions, was lucky to live and be able to raise my daughters.

Hundreds of other women were forced to undergo hysterectomies or died due to back-alley abortions. That's where the forces of evil—misnamed “pro-life” — blood suckers would force women to return to.

The minute Roe v. Wade was won, anti-abortion forces, both Democrats and Republicans, were acting to overturn the law.

President Carter was the first to act against women by endorsing the Hyde Amendment, which denied funds for abortion to women on welfare. When he was questioned about the unfairness of this decision, the president replied that rich women had always had things that poor women did not have.

However, it was the Webster decision in 1989 that gave states the green light to pass their own restrictions on abortion, including parental consent laws that required women under 18 to get their parents' permission for an abortion.

Other demented laws specified a 24-hour waiting period and that any woman wanting an abortion must go through counseling on the procedure.

Now Congress is arguing against late-term abortions. Congressmen stand up and whine about the poor fetus; they don't whine about cutting children off wel-

fare or that this country has the highest percentage of children living in poverty of any industrialized Western nation.

Late-term abortion makes up a minute percentage of all abortions. It is only done when the life of the mother is endangered, or the fetus is so deformed that it will not live past the birthing, or if normal birth could cause the woman to undergo a hysterectomy and never be able to have children again.

Picture a fetus that has no brain, and several organs—stomach, liver, intestines—are growing externally. Now imagine a neighbor from down the street ringing your bell to tell you that he or she doesn't think you should have an abortion and that you should go ahead and give birth, even if you may not live through it.

That's what happens every time a Bible thumper stops a woman at a clinic and demands to tell her what she should do with her life. They are not stopping to tell you that they will provide all financial aid for you to raise that child. No, that would make your life too easy. They are there just to tell you how to live your life.

Actually, millions of women, young and old, have defeated the anti-life forces of the "pro-life" groups at the clinic doors. They have organized and marched by the thousands against the reactionary policy of the politicians, the churches, and the demagogues who yell and pray outside of clinics.

It should be legal for any woman, of whatever age, to determine themselves if they are ready to have a baby. If they are not, they should have abortions available to them, free if necessary.

And any woman, whatever her age, who says she wants to have her child should have all social services available to her, including prenatal care, financial aid, and, when needed, childcare, for her child. Every child should come into the world a wanted child and a well-cared-for child.

This country has the money to see to it that there are no poor, unwanted children. That's what socialism would do. What is not needed are rich, hypocritical politicians, who make their living from contributions from the capitalists who give them their job qualifications for office.

Defend a women's right to choose! —February 1998

## **Weapons of Mass Destruction in Noe Valley**

Noe Valley is the San Francisco neighborhood I live in. We heard that the officials of Oakland, California, had declared that weapons of mass destruction existed in Noe Valley and that they were sending troops to search every nook and cranny to find them.

We had no idea what weapons were hidden nor where. In fact, the most destructive massive weapon I had known was tobacco, and no one in Noe Valley even smoked. What they did do was hang out in Juice Bars and drink Starbucks coffee.

When the choppers began to fly overhead and demand that we open our doors, all the neighbors did just that. In marched the uniformed personnel and even a few meter maids. They were intent on searching our files—in my case, they really had to work hard because I'm not a filer.

More of the residents gathered outside and began to yell at the military—were they searching for butter or bleached flour?—both weapons of mass destruction as we all know. In the Oakland papers, there were charges of mad Noe Valleyians on the loose and even hints of mad cow disease on the loose in Noe Valley.

We were warned that Oakland had a right to send in troops whenever it desired and that if we did not hand over the weapons of mass destruction we would be bombed with some very smart bombs by some very dumb bombers.

To their credit, our neighbors in Diamond Heights, the Castro, and the Mission districts massed thousands of pickets demanding "Hands Off Noe Valley." They, of course, knew that their neighborhoods would be next.

Thanks to El Niño, Oakland was able to park an aircraft carrier on 24th Street in Noe Valley, which eliminated any possibility of parking there to shop. The natives were really getting restless and resentful.

Clinton went on the network media to congratulate Oakland in its effort to stop weapons of mass destruction and to say that the "silent majority" supported this action even though they were silent about it. He, of course, warned that the people of Noe Valley need not expect Washington or Oakland to lift sanctions against us.

What sanctions? Instead of alternate parking on Tuesdays and Fridays, there would now be alternate parking every day of the week. This was designed to divide the people of Noe Valley and force them to fight each other for parking spaces.

And besides, the city needed the parking fine money to finance another war against other neighborhoods in San Francisco.

We of Noe Valley saw the handwriting on the wall. We organized a massive anti-war movement to stop the government from destroying other neighborhoods. We stood united.

When you think about what the United States is doing to Iraq it seems as mad as declaring war on Noe Valley. But the war against Iraq is real and not mad at all.

The United States is declaring that it has the right to invade, bomb, and wreck any country in the world when it thinks its interests are threatened. Or, I should say, when its capitalist interests are threatened. No country can escape the threat of destruction from this country's insane drive to increase the profits of the rich.

In 1991, when the United States bombed Iraq, they murdered 250,000 people in one week. Since then over a million people have died from sanctions, mostly women and children.

Do not believe it when Clinton and his co-thinkers say there may be a deal with Saddam Hussein. All of the destructive weapons are in place for the United States, only waiting until they can use other excuses to destroy Iraq.

Already, there have been demonstrations against the government's war policy in every city in the United States. The people know they have nothing to fear from Iraq but a hell of a lot to fear from the government.

Stay vigilant! —March 1998

## **‘And the Children are Free to Run in the Night’**

When we read of Jonesboro, Arkansas, where two young boys, ages 11 and 13, killed four schoolmates and one teacher and wounded 10 others, we are stumped to find answers.

Loaded with semi-automatic weapons, they hid in waiting until a planned false fire alarm emptied the school and then began firing. Why?

This is not the first time young people have participated in deadly acts. A few years ago, children ages 10 and 11 threw a five-year-old child to his death from a housing-project window.

The question is not only *why* but *what can be done* to prevent child killings—as well as child victims. Newspapers are full of stories of where to place the blame: television, parents, schools, and guns. What they don't want to come up with is how to solve the problems.

Children, even more than grown-ups, can hate. They can be furious over being slighted by parents or teachers or friends. They can wish for the death of a close friend over a small issue such as having that friend dump them for another friend. What is not news is that the National School Safety Center says that 80 percent of violent children are victims of neglect and abuse at home.

When I was a child, many years ago, I went to a school where most of the children were from poor families. At our school we had a nurse on full-time to see to our health. We were given all of our shots and vaccinations at school. In the morning we had to line up in the lunchroom for codliver oil.

We received a free hot lunch and were taken, free of charge, to a local dentist for our teeth. This was a public school!

We had a music teacher, a gym teacher, and even a drama teacher—where we gave plays for other students and teachers. We were, if we were female, given instruction in sewing and cooking. Boys were given shop class and learned the art of building balsa-wood planes.

Why? The country was in a great depression, and working people were fighting for better jobs and higher wages, and for unions to protect them.

The government, under fire from the majority of its citizens, decided to give a little to the schools because parents did not have the income to feed, clothe, and house their own families.

Today's families are in a worse position to care for their children. Single parenting, or two parents working full-time, without the extended family of yester-



year, place an impossible burden on parents, teachers, and schools.

It is necessary today to put in place social services and support systems for children and parents that might not have been necessary in the 1930s, '40s, or '50s.

We need music teachers, gym teachers, drama teachers, school nurses, and supervised after-school services for all children.

Sports, music, arts, and science can help occupy the time of children—even allow them to dream of better things to come. We need smaller classes so that teachers will be able to judge their students' emotional situations as well as help them when needed.

In other words, the public school system can play the support role that families need—but only if schools are given the wherewithal to do it.

Why can't we have this? Because there is an economic system out there taking the wealth from workers and placing it into the pockets of the rich. For instance, a Bank of America Corporation CEO just got \$21 million in salary for 1997. Of course, most of it was tax free to him.

That's why our children are not receiving the care they deserve. Where will the next disaster strike? Which other 10 or 13-year-olds will be tainted for life with violence?

A great poet who I know put it well into wonderful words:

*I dream of a time when the domination of the wealthy over the poor is no more  
When all vestiges of human slavery are mere relics in a grand and earthly museum  
Where everyone's work is a playful joy and children are free to run in the night  
And wild things seek their place and hide, then silently explore with us beside.*

—April 1998

## Lock 'em Up! Shut 'em Down!

On April 20, a 10-year-old boy and his mother went to a restaurant to eat. The boy lost his temper and kicked at his mother. The waitress immediately called the police. The police handcuffed the boy and put him in jail overnight. "To be arrested for something like that," said Andrew's mother, Arlene Martin. "It was ridiculous. I couldn't believe it was happening.

"When they put handcuffs on him, I was completely shocked. He just sort of brushed my leg. It was nothing."

The police said that the way the law was written gave them no choice, that the domestic-violence law required the fourth-grader to be arrested before the violence escalated.

Judge Peterson criticized the rules that allowed the arrest. "The tragedy," he said, "seems to be that we've reached the point in the juvenile justice system where policies and fear of political repercussions completely obliterate common

sense.”

Even more lacking in common sense is a statement by Rep. Jim Pitts of Texas, who is asking for the death penalty for children as young as 11 for crimes of murder. As of now, Texas allows executions for 17-year-olds.

Last year, California Governor Pete Wilson said he would consider a state law allowing executions of 14-year-olds “as a possibility.”

Not to be outdone, one day later, the speaker of the California Assembly, Cruz M. Bustamante, said he might, “with a tear in my eye,” support executions for “hardened criminals” as young as 13.

Why not get them in the delivery room? (Before they become “hardened criminals.”) Wouldn’t that save the state some money?

A report by the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty notes that only six countries in the entire world execute juvenile offenders: Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and the United States.

The report also argues that the process for juvenile death sentences in this country is racist: two-thirds of those on death row for juvenile murders are members of minorities.

And now there are efforts to build “death rows” in juvenile detention centers.

Here is the record of the “LAND OF THE FREE”: The federal government spends more on incarceration than on elementary and secondary education and job training combined.

Racism is a big part of that expense. African Americans represent 12 percent of the U.S. population, 13 percent of U.S. drug users (the majority of drug users are white), 55 percent of those convicted of drug possession, 47 percent of those convicted of a felony, 74 percent of those in prison for drug possession.

People of color represent roughly 70 percent of the over 1.1 million people incarcerated and the vast majority of the 5.3 million people under state control. (These figures came from the Criminal Justice Consortium.)

In California in the last 10 years: 20 prisons were built, but only one State University campus, and one University of California campus; 26,000 jobs were added to the state Department of Corrections while 8000 jobs were lost in higher education.

The yearly salary for a prison guard with six years experience is higher than for a starting tenured associate professor at the University of California.

### **FOLKS, WE MIGHT AS WELL BE LIVING IN A POLICE STATE.**

If you think the prisons are crowded now, just wait until the working class begins their fightback! However, that will be the beginning of the end of this system of repression.

And I personally hope to be here when we shove the politicians and their corporate buyers into a locked cell and throw away the key. —May 1998

## Suicide by Cop?

Twisted logic, in an article by Todd Lewan printed in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on May 4, 1998, claims that many of the people who have been shot down by cops are really asking for the cops to help them commit suicide.

The author quotes Dr. Harvey Schlossberg, retired director of psychological services for the New York City police department, to justify this unlikely theory.

Schlossberg states, "It's another form of euthanasia, like when people reach out for Dr. Kevorkian. Only here, people are in mental pain, and the doctor is the cop."

If it is true that "people" are in mental pain, then why shoot them to death? Why not shoot them with a tranquilizer dart in the shoulder, arm, leg—and then give them help for any mental disorder they may have.

After all, isn't that what they do to animals who are in distress or difficulty?

There is no doubt that people can become desperate enough to do anything. Just imagine yourself going into a bank with a gun and saying, "give me all your money." Most of us could not do it.

But if humans get desperate enough, if they have nothing to lose, they just might do it. It would mean they no longer cared about life because it's most likely they'll be killed in the attempt.

What this article tries to do is cover up the massive amount of killing by cops that goes on in this country every year.

Even in this article, where the authors try to justify police murder, they tell of stories where the offender is shot many times—not once, but 10 and more times. The police method is to kill, not wound.

Just pick up any newspaper and there are usually reports of police killings and also reports of angry citizens who are outraged by police killings in their community. Unnecessary killings.

One such story is of a young man walking along a busy street eating a candy bar wrapped in a metal wrapper. He was shot by a cop because the cop thought it was a gun.

In San Francisco, in May of this year, a 17-year-old girl was shot to death while sitting in the car of a man who was being sought on drug charges. Seventy-five people protested the murder of this young woman, who was innocent of any charges.

In New York, the son of Iris Baez was choked to death in front of her because his football struck a police car.

Aaron Williams, an unarmed African American man, was beaten, stomped and pepper sprayed to death in front of his house by 13 San Francisco cops.

In 1991, police corruption in Philadelphia was exposed, which led to the freeing of 160 wrongfully convicted prisoners and a shakeup of the police department.

When you read that the cops are shooting out of the goodness of their hearts, don't believe it. They are not roving Dr. Kevorkians who are just helping people

commit suicide.

What is happening is that people are getting outraged at the legal mass murder by police officers with guns in their hands. They are beginning to march and demonstrate against the racism and use of deadly force by police departments.

Tell me, did the 82 adults and the 21 children of Waco, Texas, want to commit suicide or was it mass murder by the upholders of law and order? After the cover-up unravels, we will know that it was mass murder, unnecessary and deliberate.

All of us have watched the people of East Timor overthrow a brutal police force, the military, and finally their government.

When the forces of law and order are viewed by the majority as corrupt and dangerous, then they can no longer control the majority for their masters who pay them.

That's what rogue killer police forces are all about. —June 1998

## Who's a Hate Group?

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a liberal civil rights group in Birmingham, Alabama, has listed the Nation of Islam (NOI) as a hate group along with 474 others in this country.

The SPLC, which began its "hate lists" in 1981, has been a respected group that provided a useful service in revealing "hate groups." But by adding the Nation of Islam to its list of "hate groups," it destroys its own credibility.

"Hate groups are based on a number of criteria" said Joe Roy Sr., director of the SPLC's Intelligence Report. "We look at groups based on their racial hatred and we look at the activities of its membership from their publications and transcripts."

The Intelligence Report reads: "We hesitate with a group like the Nation of Islam because we recognize that its racism is largely a response to white racism." Well, duh.

To put the NOI on the same list with violent white-racist groups like the Ku Klux Klan defames this Black organization and distorts what it stands for. Just because the NOI recognizes the need for self-defense does not mean that it advocates violence.

This decision opens the door to violence-bating other groups of oppressed nationalities in this country that similarly advocate self-defense tactics.

Actually, the NOI has never been involved in any kind of hate violence in its 60-year history.

But I can easily describe hate to anyone who will listen. Let's take a look at Jasper, Texas. On June 7, three white men tied a Black man to their rear bumper and dragged him to his death. He was James Boyd Jr., 49 years old.

The three white men—Shawn Allen Berry, John William King, and Lawrence R. Brewer—had all done time in prison. Berry and King served time for a bun-

gled burglary, and Brewer seven years for peddling cocaine. While in prison, both Brewer and King joined the Confederate Knights of America, a hate group.

In describing prisons, Mark Potok, a spokesman for the SPLC said, "The truth is the level of racism in prison is very high. The truth is, you may go into prison completely unracist and emerge ready to kill people who don't look like you." Evidently that's what happened in this case.

But don't think that Jasper, Texas, is the only place where hate thrives.

On June 8, Victor Palmer, Victor Triollion, Celia Rivera, Diseree Butler, and Butler's daughter, 11-month old Keianna White, were walking on Page Street in the Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco when they were surrounded by about 20 white men, who assaulted them.

McDavid, one of the white men, pulled out a knife and began attacking all three adults. McDavid knocked over the baby's stroller and said, "Fuck the baby." He has been arrested and is being held on \$60,000 bail. A protest against this racist act was held on June 20 in the Haight-Ashbury.

Has NOI Minister Louis Farrakhan ever tied a white man to his bumper and dragged him to death? How many whites have been found hanging from trees, left there by Black men.?

If the Southern Poverty Law Center can answer yes to those questions, then they might have a right to call the NOI a "hate group."

If not, they should remove the group from the list and apologize immediately.

The truth is that the United States ruling class has an ongoing history of racism and vicious crimes against Blacks and other ethnic minorities.

The capitalist class has a material interest in dividing and ruling the working class, Black and white. This is not the time to muck up that truth with lies about the Nation of Islam. —July 1998

## **Congress Targets Abortion Rights**

Much has been written about this being the 150th year of the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York.

Last month in Seneca Falls, while the National Organization for Women listened to Hillary Rodham Clinton pledging her support, Congress was rushing around like a chicken with its head cut off, making laws against the rights of women.

This is an election year and, as we all know, members of Congress would dance with the Devil if it would get them elected. Their first attack was, of course, against the most helpless, the pregnant teenager.

The House approved a measure to make it a crime to take minor women across a state line to get an abortion in order to evade parental notification requirements.

It makes no difference if your grandmother, favorite aunt, or closest friend drives you to an abortion clinic for a safe legal abortion, they will be charged as criminals and face fines or a year in jail. Of course, they could drive you across the state line to a shopping mall, bowling alley, or to get your nose pierced and they wouldn't be committing a crime.

This anti-constitutional law was approved 276 to 150. It had the support of both political parties. Twenty-two states have laws requiring a girl under 18 to get permission of at least one parent or grandparent if she wants to have an abortion.

Why do young people have to go across state lines to get an abortion? In many states there is only one clinic where they can get an abortion, and anti-abortion activists are trying to close as many as they can.

Between May and early June of this year alone, 19 abortion clinics—10 in central Florida, five in New Orleans and four in Houston—were squirted, sprayed, or injected with butyric acid, an intensely noxious industrial chemical.

The attacks have sent scores of workers and patients to hospitals with nausea and respiratory problems. Many clinics were closed for weeks until hazardous-materials cleanup crews could be called in and exposed surfaces could be replaced.

The recipe for butyric acid was printed in a manual circulated by the anti-abortion movement's violent right wing since the early 1990s. Anti-abortionists call it "Liquid Rescue."

Since this is an election year and the worms who want to lead us are crawling from under the rocks for votes, they are also getting worked up against their favorite subject—the "partial-birth" abortion.

What is "partial-birth" abortion? One of the clever legislators in Congress actually referred to a nine-month "partial-birth" abortion! But there is no such thing.

Late-term abortions are performed by the medical profession in some cases in which the fetus is so deformed that it cannot live or is already dead in the womb, or the mothers' life is in question if she gives birth.

In Virginia, U.S. District Court Judge Robert E. Payne issued a preliminary injunction blocking enforcement of the state's "partial-birth" abortion ban, which was signed in April by Governor George Allen.

Judge Payne said, "'Partial birth' abortion is a term coined by legislators, anti-abortion activists, and the media. It has no legal meaning."

In a two-week period in June, federal judges in Florida, Iowa, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin issued rulings temporarily blocking those states' anti-"partial-birth" laws. But that doesn't stop the big-mouths in Washington from passing one law after another against this procedure, which may save women's lives.

If the women's movement really wants to honor the early feminists who met at Seneca Falls, they will get women, old and young, by the thousands into the streets, marching to defend their most important victory—the right to control their own body. They can't do it by sitting and listening to Hillary Clinton spout off.

—August 1998

## Black Youth March for Justice

In my article in the July issue of *Socialist Action* called “Who’s a hate group?” I said the Southern Poverty Law Center was wrong for labeling the Nation Of Islam a hate group.

I still maintain I was right and the SPLC was wrong. After reading of the struggle of the organizers of the Million Youth March to get permits to march in New York City, and the “hate” articles in *The New York Times* against the Million Youth March, I can see I was even more right.

The ruling class of this country is frightened that a million Black youth even want to march. So they persist in calling it “a hate march,” and an “anti-Semitic march” instead of what it is—a march for justice.

The ruling class of the United States, the ones who buy the politicians, who own the banks, the factories, the airlines, the railroads, the shipping fleets, and the raw materials such as mines and oil fields, are a small group.

The working class and oppressed minorities are the majority, so it is imperative that the owners try to divide the workers, and those who would be their allies, in a struggle by any means necessary. That’s why they attack the Million Youth March.

The Million Youth March represents a section of the population who are angry at the racism and the constant attacks against the African American people of this country, especially young Black males.

Who fills up the prisons in this country? A great proportion are Black. Who are forced to live in ghettos and fight to get a good education and jobs? Blacks and other ethnic minorities.

An example of the way young African American men are treated was printed in *The New York Times* on Aug. 24. Michael Jones, 16, was bicycling in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area in Brooklyn, N.Y., where he had attended a block party. He was riding his bike with his friend Jermain Congress.

At the block party, young people had been shooting each other with water pistols. Two plainclothes police officers jumped from their car and ordered Michael to drop his water pistol. As he was dropping it, the police opened fire.

Michael is in critical condition at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn with 17 gunshots in his legs. When questioned, a police investigator, who insisted on anonymity, said the shooting appeared to fall within department guidelines. The guidelines must read: “If he is Black, it’s OK to shoot!”

That’s why there is a Million Youth March.

The rulers of this country are spending more money on prisons than on education. And if you want to find out about getting a fair court trial, just ask Mumia

Abu-Jamal, who has sat on death row for 16 years after being framed up by the Pennsylvania injustice system.

The Million Youth March should be a warning to the rulers of this country who think they can get away with murder, and with crushing the hopes and aspirations of millions of young African Americans. The youth are marching for a just cause.

I hope that millions of working-class people who have been down-sized, out-sized, and everything else-sized will watch this Million Youth March and decide to copy them. It isn't just Black youth who need to march for their rights. Millions of working-class people want to fulfill their dreams of a bright and happy future.

To all young people on the march: You are the upholders of truth and freedom. This is your day, and the future is yours! —September 1998

## Questions for the Grand Jury

I watched the master, President William Clinton, at work before the grand jury. All of the questions had to do with whether he diddle with Monica Lewinsky or not and, if so, how did he diddle and where.

These were easy questions for The Master. He said, yes, he diddle but that was not sex “as he knew it.” Remember when they asked him if he ever smoked pot? The Master said he had had a pot cigarette in his mouth but he did not inhale. That was not smoking pot “as he knew it.”

All of the questions asked were easy for The Master. Here is what I would have asked if I were on that grand jury:

Do you know that low-wage workers, working at the minimum wage at 40 hours a week, make \$10,700 a year, which is \$2900 below the poverty level for a family of three?

Do you know that more Americans are in prison today than live in the cities of San Francisco, Boston, and Denver—combined?

Do you know that child poverty in the United States rose by more than 26 percent from 1970-1996?

Do you know there 16 million more households in the United States than there are adequately paying jobs, a shortfall that has been growing since 1970?

Do you know, Mr. President, that entry-level wages for male high-school graduates fell 28 percent from 1973 to 1997?

Do you know that a recent survey of 152 countries found that the United States was only one of six with no national policy requiring paid maternity leave?

Do you know that, according to a study prepared for Congress, more than 30 million Americans are hungry, unable to buy food for themselves and their families for some part of each month?

Do you know the number of hungry people in this country has increased by



half since 1985?

Do you know that Bill Gates's net worth has jumped 40 percent from a year ago to 51 billion dollars? The average net worth of the top 200 billionaires was \$4.7 billion, up from \$3.9 billion in 1997?

Do you know that more than 400,000 Americans have already died of AIDS and another 1 million harbor the virus? And 21 percent of all new HIV infections are women, up from less than one percent in 1981?

Do you know that credit card debt has doubled in this decade alone and one-third of Americans describe themselves as heavily or moderately in debt?

Now, President Clinton, please answer, if you can, these questions on Iraq, which have to do with your seven-years of sanctions against that country.

Do you know that over 1.2 million people, the majority of them children, have died as a result of medical shortages, due to your sanctions?

Do you know that one out of every four young Iraqi children is malnourished? More than 4500 children under the age of five are dying each month of hunger and disease?

Do you know that since the onset of sanctions, there has been a six-fold increase in the mortality rate for children under five and the majority of the country's population is on a semi-starvation diet?

Do you know, Mr. President, that I don't care diddley-squat what you and Monica did in your office, but if I were on this grand jury I would bust you for what you have done to the oppressed and working people of this country and what you and your Wall Street buddies are doing to the rest of the world?

Don't try to worm yourself out of the blame. You're the president of this country. You have the ability and duty to make changes that could change the facts above. But you haven't done it because your loyalty belongs to those who have the money and power, not to the masses of people who make up this country.

You are dismissed, Mr. President, and are you ashamed of yourself? I didn't think so. —October 1998

## The Right to Privacy

In 1965, in a case called *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution guarantees a right to privacy.

(Although Connecticut had banned any form of birth control, Estelle Griswold opened a Planned Parenthood clinic there, and her staff gave birth control information to married couples.)

In 1973 the Supreme Court ruled again, in *Roe v. Wade*, that a woman's decision to have children is her private choice.

Any law that tries to interfere with this choice during the first three months of pregnancy, the Court said, violated a woman's right to privacy



Nevertheless, since 1973, state after state has written laws that eliminate the right to privacy for most women and infringe upon their right to choose.

Two of the most outrageous examples of attacking a women's right to privacy occurred this month in Cleveland and New Orleans.

Michelle Lee, who lives in Shreveport, Louisiana, knew she should not have another child. Her heart pumps so weakly and irregularly that she has waited two and a half years for a new one.

She went to the Louisiana State University Medical Center (LSU), which had been treating her for five years.

Under state law, a public hospital can not perform an abortion unless a woman's life is endangered. A committee of five LSU doctors decided that Lee's case didn't meet the test—her chances of dying weren't more than 50 percent.

Actually, I wouldn't let one of those five doctors set my leg if it were broken. I don't like their odds.

Luckily, Lee received support and donations from around the country, which enabled her to travel by ambulance to Houston, Texas.

An obstetrician-gynecologist, Bernard L. Rosenfield, performed the abortion at Houston's St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital with the help of a cardiologist. Rosenfield, who read Lee's medical records, said LSU's decision was "really insane.... If you take a heart that is failing and increase its workload (during pregnancy), you have an extremely high chance of death."

Another example of legal idiocy came from Cleveland. Yuriko Kawaguchi, a 21-year-old former student at the University of California at Berkeley, was sentenced to six months in prison after pleading guilty to a forgery charge.

She had been enlisted by two men to fly with them to Cleveland, where they tried to use forged credit cards to buy computer equipment. They were arrested by police before they could leave the store.

Gary Daniels of the ACLU said the crime was a fifth-degree felony under Ohio law and usually carried a sentence of probation.

But this young woman was pregnant and wanted an abortion. Judge Patricia

Cleary of Common Pleas Court declared she'd use the full six-month sentence to block Kawaguchi from having an abortion.

It was while Kawaguchi was in jail, waiting to enter her plea, that she found out she was three-months pregnant. Soon, her pregnancy had progressed past the point at which MetroHealth Medical Center, which services the county jail inmates, would perform the procedure.

Judge Cleary refused bond for Kawaguchi and said she should be deported. Kawaguchi has lived in this country since she was 11 months old.

Even the director of the INS, who is reviewing the case, said the value of the fraud would have to be more than \$10,000 dollars to make her subject to deportation. Her defense lawyers said the value of her crime was not more than \$300.

Kawaguchi was finally released from jail on Oct. 13 after Judge Cleary's decision was overturned. The last news from Yuriko Kawaguchi was that she would go ahead with the pregnancy and adopt the baby out.

Here are two cases where two women were denied their right to privacy and their right to choose.

They have had their private lives invaded by the press, television and radio. Their privacy has been destroyed by institutions that are supposed to protect those very rights.

Those institutions are a reflection of an economic system that has no concern for human rights or women's rights. —November 1998

## **Are there no workhouses... no prisons?**

If the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge came to the U.S.A. this Christmas he would feel right at home. This is his kind of system—corporate capitalism rules, in Congress and the workplace.

And yes, the United States has prisons and ever more prisoners. The exploiters' slogan is "build 'em fast and pack them in."

For instance, in Austin, Texas, an 11-year-old girl has just been sentenced to a 25-year prison term, accused of murdering Jayla Belton, who was two years old. Lachesha Murray will spend Christmas at the Giddings State Home and School, a juvenile prison 60 miles from Austin, and 60 miles from her family.

Texas justice was in full flower. Lachesha was in police custody two years ago when, without her family's knowledge and without the benefit of a lawyer, she was interrogated by detectives for at least three hours about Jayla's death.

At the end of that tape-recorded interrogation, Detective Sgt. Ernesto Pedraza gave her a statement to sign, a statement she had trouble reading and clearly did not understand. After she signed the statement, she was charged with capital murder.

Her first trial, on charges of criminally negligent homicide, was held just two months after she was charged. The public defender was given a pittance to defend

her and, of course, she was sentenced to 20 years. Later, a judge threw out the verdict and ordered a new trial.

Substantially more money was provided for the second trial. There were no witnesses who testified that Lacrosha had attacked Jayla. There was no physical evidence connecting her to the child's death. There was no motive. And now there were experts ready to testify that Jayla's death had been due to long-term physical abuse and neglect.

If justice had been done, the prosecutor would have dropped the case and gone after the mother of Jayla and her boyfriend.

But of course, justice was not done. Instead, the prosecutor dropped the charge of murder and substituted the charge of "intentional injury to the child." That charge carries the same maximum penalty upon conviction as capital murder, 40 years.

All references to the death of Jayla were removed from the prosecution's pleadings. Lacrosha was accused technically of causing "bodily injuries that created a substantial risk of death." The jury returned a guilty verdict, and Lacrosha was sentenced to 25 years.

So much for justice. No Barbie dolls for Lacrosha, no Christmas tree for Lacrosha, no justice for Lacrosha.

In Chicago on Nov. 15, 22 people who had been on death row and were later released went before a gathering against the death penalty and told their stories. A total of 73 men and two women have been released from death rows in this nation since 1972.

They have been found not guilty after serving five, 10, or 15 years waiting to be murdered by the state. That's what the death sentence is.

Just listen to the story of Joseph Burrows, 45, who was a housepainter in a small town in Illinois. He says he will never be the same—he is a dead man walking.

Three times he was on the row; the state set a date to kill him. In his soul, each death date ate him up a little bit more. "After a while," he said, "it affects you so bad that you're not the same person no more."

Mumia Abu-Jamal has been on death row for 17 years. His trial was a disaster from beginning to end. If there is any justice, that man will receive a new trial, and if it's a fair trial he will walk out of prison and join the 75 people who have been released from their death sentences and finally freed.

"Free at last, thank God almighty, free at last!" We will work toward that end.

As Justice William J. Brennan Jr. said in 1994, "Perhaps the bleakest fact of all is that the death penalty is imposed not only in a freakish and discriminatory manner, but also in some cases upon defendants who are actually innocent."

—December 1998

# 1999

## Bill the Barbarian

Bill Clinton, president of the United States, just as Bush before him, proved to the capitalist class that he was their man. He carried out a ruthless war against a harmless people, Iraq, to prove that the United States can bomb and march into any country, any time, without a moment's notice.

I read Major Gen. Smedley Butler's speech delivered in 1931. He was the former commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps. He won two Congressional Medals of Honor. This is an excerpt of his speech, titled "War Is a Racket":

"War is just a racket. A racket is best described, I believe, as something that is not what it seems to the majority of people. Only a small inside group knows what it is about. It is conducted for the benefit of the very few at the expense of the masses.

I believe in adequate defense at the coastline and nothing else. If a nation comes over here to fight, then we'll fight. The trouble with America is that when the dollar only earns six percent over here, then it gets restless and goes overseas to get 100 percent. Then the flag follows the dollar and the soldiers follow the flag.

I wouldn't go to war again as I have done to protect some lousy investment of the bankers. There are only two things we should fight for. One is the defense of our homes and the other is the Bill of Rights. War for any other reason is simply a racket.

There isn't a trick in the racketeering bag that the military gang is blind to. It has its "finger men" to point out enemies, its "muscle men" to destroy enemies, its "brain men" to plan war preparations, and a "Big Boss" Super-Nationalistic-Capitalism.

I suspected I was just part of a racket at the time. Now I am sure of it. Like all members of the military profession, I never had a thought of my own until I left the military service. My mental faculties remained in suspended animation while I obeyed the orders of higher-ups. This is typical of everyone in the military service.

I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street.

The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals, and promotions. Looking back on it, I feel that I could have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was to

operate his racket in three districts. I operated on three continents.”

Major Gen. Smedley Butler was absolutely right. He fought to keep U.S. capitalist investments safe. And Bill Clinton is doing the same thing. When they bomb Iraq they are telling the whole world that they can and will do whatever is necessary to save the profits of the multi-corporate interests of this country.

Have a good new year and keep up the struggle against the modern pirates of Wall Street. —January 1999

## Shoot to Kill

On Dec. 29, Tyisha Miller was murdered in her locked car in Riverside, California.

Here is the story from *The New York Times*: “Shortly before 2 a.m. on Monday, authorities received a 911 call saying that a woman in a car at a gas station in Riverside was asleep or unconscious with a pistol in her lap.

“At 2:01 a.m. four Riverside police officers, three white and one Hispanic, arrived and tried to wake up the woman as she sat in her locked Nissan Sentra with the windows rolled up

“A few moments later, Ms. Miller was dead. Family members said her body and car was riddled with as many as two dozen bullets.

“Just after the shooting, the police said that Ms. Miller had shot at them once and, fearing for their lives the officers had returned fire.

“Today, though, a police spokesman, Sgt. Chris Manning, said it was unclear whether Ms. Miller had fired. But, Sergeant Miller said, Ms. Miller did grab the gun after the officers smashed the driver’s side window to get to her.”

The reason her family and friends had called 911 is that they had seen her in her locked car, asleep or unconscious, her seat reclined. The car’s radio was blasting and the heat was turned too high.

According to the Riverside Press-Enterprise, Anthonete Joiner (Tyisha Miller’s cousin, who was 30 feet from the car when the police started shooting and who had called 911 to summon an ambulance) said that her cousin “was lying in the car shaking, her eyes rolling and mouth foaming.”

Ron Butler, Ms. Joiner’s uncle, who had gone to help Tyisha because she had a flat tire, said, “She wasn’t a criminal. She was a young girl with a flat tire and she fell asleep.” She was murdered in her sleep.

### Philadelphia ‘killer cop’ allowed to go free

Supporters of 19-year-old Donta Dawson, shot by Philadelphia police officer Christopher DiPasquale, were stunned when a municipal judge freed the cop of all charges on Jan. 6.

The night he was killed, police found Dawson sitting in his car. As one officer reportedly reached into the car and turned off the ignition, DiPasquale shot

Dawson fatally in the head. At DiPasquale's trial, 11 police officers testified they had thought Dawson had a gun—yet no gun was ever found.

According to J. Whyatt Mondesire of the NAACP, the ruling “effectively cheapened the lives of every Black man in Philadelphia.”

Reports of police shootings of unarmed people are a regular occurrence. In Washington, D.C., just since 1990, 85 people, the great majority unarmed, have been shot to death by police. In the last five years, there were 640 shootings by police, many provoked over minor incidents such as traffic violations, resulting in 57 deaths.

Of 422 police shootings reviewed between 1994-98, only two resulted in criminal charges against the police. One officer got probation; the other, 15 days in jail. In other words, the police have a license to kill.

Top officials of the D.C. police department blamed the increased police shootings on the “War On Drugs.” They said that a new handgun had been introduced that requires considerable training to use and that newly recruited police officers are poorly trained.

So why turn them loose on an unarmed population? As usual, those who were shot by police were mostly Black. Not drug runners, but Black people.

In his State of the Union address, President Clinton promised to put 5000 more police on community streets. You can bet that's one of his promises he will keep.

We don't need more police and more military buildups. We need more jobs with living wages, more housing, more schools, smaller classes, more childcare centers in those schools, with early childhood development teachers, and more after-school centers for school age young people.

That's what we need, while the capitalist class needs more police, more military, and more scabs.

Eight hundred people attended the funeral of 19-year-old Tyisha Miller in Riverside. They mourned for her and they expressed the outrage she could not. We mourn for her and all the other victims of police madness. —February 1999

## **The End of Welfare as We Know It**

The UN Development Program's 1998 report estimates that for the developing countries, “the additional cost of achieving and maintaining universal access to basic education for all, basic health care for all, reproductive health care for all women, adequate food for all, and safe water and sanitation for all is roughly \$40 billion a year.”

The report points out that “this is less than 4 percent of the combined wealth of the 225 richest people in the world.” Bill Gates could lay the foundation with first-year funding and still have \$20 billion left over.

At the end of 1997, Bill Gates was worth more than the combined Gross National Products of Costa Rica, Guatemala, and the other five countries of Central America. A year later, in November 1998, he was worth more than the

GNPs of Central America plus Jamaica and Bolivia. Gates increased his net worth over the last year by more than \$2 million an hour.

Still our Congress worries about the ability of rich people like Gates to keep his head above water. They are planning an across-the-board tax cut that gives 62 percent of its benefits to the richest 10 percent of the people. The lowest 60 percent of income earners would get a tax cut averaging \$99 while one percent of the taxpayers, who make more than \$301,000 a year, would receive a cut averaging around \$20,700.

Where will all this money come from? Congress claims that this country has a \$63 billion dollar federal surplus. The surplus does not come from income taxes but from Social Security taxes. If you exclude Social Security taxes, the federal surplus is just barely in balance; the surplus is provided by the deductions from the pay checks of American workers.

So the across-the-board tax cut takes payroll taxes from the average American and gives most of it to the richest 10 percent of the people.

At what point on the income scale do Social Security payroll taxes stop? At \$72,600. In other words, a \$500,000-a-year stock broker is paying the same in Social Security taxes as the guy making \$72,600—but the stockbroker is getting much, much more out of the tax cut.

That's why they're saying Social Security is going broke. That's why Congress is thinking of extending the retirement age to 69 instead of 65.

The punks in Congress defend the across-the-board tax cut by saying that the poorest workers pay no federal income tax at all. But guess what taxes poorer workers still have to pay? Payroll taxes, including Social Security.

So their money will be funding the tax cut for our \$500,000-a-year stock broker and, oh yes, for the \$2 million-per-hour Bill Gates.

What's happening here? The government has cut welfare, health care, education, food stamps, and every program that would make life a little more secure for our poorest citizens—but Congress wants to take that money and give it to the capitalist class that pays for electing them.

UNICEF says that 33,000 children die from preventable diseases. That's 33,000 children per day worldwide!

The No. 1 killer of children younger than five in the world is pneumonia. Three million younger than five die from it annually. But it is treatable, usually curable, with \$1 worth of antibiotics.

The second-biggest killer of children younger than five is diarrheal dehydration. It's treatable with a dilute solution of sugar and salt spoon-fed to the child. Many families in the Third World nations are not aware of the treatment, or they do not have clean water.

The No. 3 killer of children worldwide is measles. It is preventable by immunization. Ninety percent of the world's children are immunized. But if it were 91 percent, 10,000 children would be spared.



Will the world's richest barbarians help the poor? NAY! LET THEM EAT CAKE!  
—March 1999

## ‘Child is Pending’

A Black woman has been accused of recklessly causing the death of her son.

Tabitha Walrond, a 19-year-old welfare recipient, gave birth to her first child on June 27, 1997. She decided to breastfeed him. But seven weeks later her son, Tyler Isaac Walrond, died in her arms of malnutrition. Now the mother is charged with homicide.

When she was 15, Tabitha Walrond underwent a breast reduction operation. She did not know that this could affect breast feeding. The medical personal at the hospital did not inform her of this possibility, and she continued to breast feed her baby without knowing that her breast milk was inadequate.

She did not know of the dangers because, even though she qualified for medical coverage for both her son and herself, she was denied medical help for him.

Ms. Walrond received her prenatal care through a Medicaid-managed health care plan. Tyler was supposed to be enrolled there before his birth. But because the baby lacked his Medicaid number, he was turned away for care when his mother bought him in for his checkup.

Four months before the birth of the baby, the family began to try to get approval for Medicaid coverage. They made separate trips to at least three city offices, including one to Tremont Multi-Service Center Number 41 six days before he died. Each time, the city's Medicaid computer came up with the word “pending.”

So what we have here is murder by a system that refused care for a baby and a serious attempt to charge the victim, Ms. Walrond, with the crime.

Tyler was never examined by a pediatrician when Ms. Walrond went to the clinic for her postpartum check up. Even her own doctor noticed that Tyler, then five weeks old, looked underweight.

Her doctor should have checked Tyler for potential problems because he had been delivered by Caesarean because of fetal distress. Ms. Walrond developed a fever and blood clots that kept her in the hospital for 12 days.

In that time she was allowed to nurse only for the first three days and the last two because she was being treated with medication. No one checked Tyler, since his medical coverage was “pending.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that breastfed newborns be checked after they have been home for 48 hours. But pediatricians still typically schedule a baby's first check-up at two weeks of age, with a second check-up at six weeks for immunizations.

Ms. Walrond's face still lights up when she recalls her 3 a.m. breastfeedings of

Tyler. “When he would hear my voice, you’d see his little face turning in my direction, and his eyes would open wide and he’d stop crying,” she said.

Here is a mother who did everything she could to care for her child. She was given the royal runaround by a system that has no heart—a system that has dollar signs instead of a conscience. And, of course, that wants to place the blame for Tyler’s death at his mother’s door instead of its own.

The blame for Tyler’s death is not “pending” as far as I’m concerned.

The economic system called capitalism is responsible for this baby’s death. The time is short for that cold-blooded system to continue. And it’s not “pending.”

—April 1999

## Mothers Day 1999

The first Mothers Day proclamation was written by Julia Ward Howe. It was a poem titled “Mothers Day Proclamation, 1870.” Julia Ward Howe also wrote the lyrics for the Battle Hymn of the Republic. Her proclamation starts:

“Arise, then, women of this day! Arise, all women who have hearts, whether your baptism be that of water or tears! Say firmly: We will not have great questions decided by irrelevant agencies. Our husbands shall not come to us, reeking with carnage, for caresses and applause.

“Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn all that we have taught them of charity, mercy, and patience. We women of one country will be too tender of those of another to allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs.

“From the bosom of the devastated earth, a voice goes up with our own. It says, ‘Disarm, Disarm! The sword of murder is not the balance of justice. Blood does not wipe out dishonor, nor violence indicate possession.

“As men have often forsaken the plow and the anvil at the summons of war, let women now leave all that may be left of home for a great and earnest day of council.

“Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead. Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means whereby the human family can live in peace, each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar, but of God.

“In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask that a general congress of women without limit of nationality may be appointed and held at some place deemed most convenient, and at the earliest period consistent with its objects, to promote the alliance of the different nationalities, the amicable settlement of international questions, the great and general interests of peace.”

Not bad for a woman who wrote this before the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean war, the Vietnam War, the many, many wars against the people of Central and South America, the war against the people of the Middle

East, Iraq, and now on the brink of the war against the people of Yugoslavia and any other country that stands in the way of continued profits for the world imperialists!

Imperialism has decided it has waited long enough for the Eastern European countries to jump onto the “free world,” which is not going to be free to the people of Eastern Europe. This war against Yugoslavia is a real wake-up call to Russia, China, and Cuba that “Uncle Sam Wants You” real bad.

Let’s view the “free world” in its richest country, the USA. These figures are from Stephanie Salter’s column in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 11, 1999:

Hundreds of thousands of America’s children are suffering from disease, hunger, serious injury, and educational failure from living in substandard shelter, 21,000 children have stunted growth, and 120,000 suffer anemia because their families must choose between food and rent.

Ten thousand children between the ages of four and nine are hospitalized for asthma attacks each year because of cockroach infestation at home.

Meanwhile, less than one-third of households (29 percent) owned stock worth more than \$5000 in 1995.

Almost 90 percent of the value of all stocks and mutual funds owned by households was in the hands of the top 10 percent. And that top 10 percent wants the wealth of the rest of the world too.

They are willing to bomb any country back to the Stone Age in order to get it.

So, happy Mothers Day to all of those who march against the NATO (U.S.) war. Some day, we will have a real happy Mothers Day, when the workers of the entire world arise and take it for themselves. —May 1999

## Just Call 1-800-NATO

Sir, are you an imperialist in need of help? Is there a country which is closing its borders to private investment opportunities, to private ownership of its nationalized banks, to nationalized capital-flow, indulging in “financial repression?”

Just call 1-800-NATO, and we can solve your problems. We have the bombs, planes, and capital back-up to insure that any Third World country can be yours for the asking.

And don’t think this will be expensive to you as an imperialist. There is money just waiting for this undertaking: social security, health care funds, food stamp money, and any other funds that are being promised to the needy, but are really being used to fund the rich, who act like the most needy of all.

After all, this is the Free West, and who but the “free world” imperialist should benefit from our experience in the game of war.

Most important, don’t be afraid of being charged with being a “war criminal.” We can bomb a country back to the Stone Age and then charge that same coun-

try with being a “war criminal.” As an imperialist, you can see the humor of this.

Look at what we have been able to do in Yugoslavia. We, NATO, have been carrying out brutal air strikes, sowing desolation, death, and terror in a country of millions. We, NATO, have cut electricity and heat to a million people overnight, cut communication, all sources of energy and transport, destroyed civilian centers that provide vital services to entire populations, and are bringing ruin to all the means of life built up by a nation—including their water supply.

And we, NATO, have killed or injured thousands, and all in the name of stopping ethnic cleansing.

It's true that liberal smart mouths would point to our treatment of African Americans or Native Americans as an example of U.S. ethnic cleansing, but since we imperialists have control of the media those stories won't go far.

What can we, NATO, promise you, our valued imperialist?

We can promise to abolish credit controls, deregulate interest rates, allow free entry into the banking industry or, more generally, into the financial-services industry.

Making banks autonomous (that is, freeing them from ad hoc interference in day-to-day management!) Putting banks into private ownership! Freeing international capital flows!

And just think of your control over raw materials, mines, rivers, forests, and oppressed people. You, valued imperialist, can't ask for more than that. And it's all free, thanks to the American taxpayer!

What about the ethnic Albanians and Kosovo people who have been repressed by Milosevic and who have become refugees in other countries?

Not to worry, my good imperialist, just think how we in the “Free West” have used the Puerto Ricans, and Latino refugees—exploiting them in our fields and factories for the enrichment of you, our valued imperialist.

We in the “Free West” are absolutely opposed to ethnic cleansing; what we support is ethnic exploitation.

Of course there are radical anti-war activists who will be demonstrating against our “just” intervention in other countries.

And it is true we are very busy intervening in Iraq, Latin America, and Africa.

But believe me, Mr. Imperialist, when we of NATO take on an assignment of cleaning out a country for imperialist investment, we do a great job.

Yugoslavia is just the start. You will be hearing our report back on our assessment of China, Cuba, and Russia—and we feel that we can be of even greater use to you in the very near future.

Please feel free to call us at 1-800-NATO, or you can e-mail us at [nato@kill.com](mailto:nato@kill.com).

—June 1999

## ‘Memories of My Mind’

This is a song written by my friend Jack:

*If you see me sitting with a teardrop in my eye,  
It's just a memory passing by  
And if you see me walking and I don't say hello  
It's just a memory that I know  
Time goes fast, time goes slow, it's always been that way  
Changes come and changes go, and there's really nothing else to say  
Life's been good, life's been sad, life's the best thing I've ever had  
And I'm thankful for the memories of my mind.*

Jack is a retired San Francisco Muni bus driver who has raised four sons and nursed his wife, who died of cancer. He would be the first to say he's no different than millions of other working-class people who just do what they think is right and necessary—and he is right.

But that is what gives the working class their edge and their will to struggle. Many workers are artists whose work we will never see or hear. They do it between going to work, shopping, and cleaning the house. They do it to take their mind off bills and jobs and to expand the beauty that is in their mind.

That's why they go to see science fiction movies or to watch Miss Marple uncover the killer. It gets them away from everyday labor on the job.

Their boss owns their body on the job, but after work their mind is their own to create music, paint on canvas, photograph scenes that appeal to them, or tinker around with wood and nails.

The working class also has the ability to create a society where everyone will be an artist, a scientist, clean up the environment, or create educational centers for everyone, young and old.

We are coming up on the Fourth of July, the day we celebrate our independence. It came out of a revolutionary army made up of shipbuilders, iron workers, shoemakers, farmers, longshoremen, carpenters, etc. Oh yes, and flagmakers.

Unfortunately, that revolution traded the tyranny of the monarchy for the tyranny of the capitalist class. It was an unfinished revolution as far as the working class was concerned.

Certainly it was not a step to freedom for the African American slaves in this country—who remained slaves until the Civil War, and then were forced into economic slavery.

Workers not only have the ability to make music, poetry, and art; they also have the remarkable ability to change the course of history, to fling themselves into battles that bring them closer to freedom.

Garment workers marched in the streets for the eight-hour day and for safer

working conditions. Millions of workers, male and female, marched to end child slavery in the sweat shops of the capitalist class. Hundreds of thousands of women marched in the streets for the right to vote.

In the 1930s, women and men workers joined together to fight for union rights. In San Francisco and Minneapolis the working class brought the capitalist class to their knees. The battle cry of “solidarity” became the lance that pierced the hearts of the ruling class.

In the '50s, it was Black youth who marched against Jim Crow in the South. The African American struggle cleared a path for Northern civil rights and for students at colleges throughout the country to fight for free speech and the right to organize on the campus.

The Vietnam War gathered all of these different groups—young, old, Black, white, Hispanic, male and female—into a fight which resulted in the end of that imperialist war. Whenever workers have fought for their rights it has resulted in the expansion of the rights of everyone.

The next struggle is for workers everywhere to end this system of exploitation and unjust wars. Only they can create a society where every individual can bring his or her abilities together to build a better world for all. Solidarity is the glue that can make it work. —July 1999

## A Fungus Among Us

Reading the morning newspaper is enough to strike fear in the hearts and minds of every one of us. In *The New York Times* of July 27, there are two stories on the first page that should shake us out of morning lethargy.

First is the story that the Environmental Protection Agency will ask the government to pass legislation to remove the additive MTBE from gasoline because it is polluting our drinking water. It was supposed to make our air less poisonous to breathe.

The gasoline companies, which increased the cost per gallon when they added MTBE, are now going to raise the price per gallon for taking the poison out. Either way the oil companies win. We lose.

In 1990 Congress passed rules that oil companies put an oxygenate, (a chemical that incorporates an oxygen atom) in gasoline to promote more thorough burning in engines. Most oil companies chose the ingredient known as MTBE, or methyl tertiary butyl ether.

What was designed to clean the air has turned into a poison in our drinking water. Five to ten percent of our drinking water is contaminated with MTBE, which has proven to be a carcinogen by the EPA because it has caused cancer in animals.

The poison affects small children the most. Especially small children who drink water in their bottles with formula.

Why wasn't this tested before it was added to gasoline? Why does the government use the population as laboratory rats for its experiments.?

Now comes an even bigger danger—a fungus designed to be dropped from a plane onto marijuana plants.

For years drug agents have been stalking the marijuana crops growing in Florida. Now the “brains” of the state’s Office of Drug Control think they have the solution. They are planning to dust suspected areas with a marijuana-eating, soil-borne fungus called *Fusarium oxysporum*.

The fungus, a bioherbicide engineered specifically to attack plants like marijuana, is otherwise “harmless,” insists the Montana company that developed it.

Jim McDonough, who was hired by Governor Jeb Bush to head Florida’s Office of Drug Control, is considering a plan to use the fungus. (Governor Bush was involved in the great Savings and Loan debacle several years ago, and we are still paying for that!)

Now that McDonough is beginning to encounter strong criticism by many environmentalists for the fungus proposal, he vows that the fungus will not be used until it is tested in rigidly controlled conditions at a Florida site.

David Struhs, secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, spelled out the dangers in a letter to Mr. McDonough dated April 6, 1999.

“*Fusarium* species,” he wrote, “are capable of evolving rapidly. Mutagenicity is by far the most disturbing factor in attempting to use a *Fusarium* species as a bio-herbicide. It is difficult, if not impossible, to control *Fusarium* species.”

“I personally do not like the idea of messing with mother nature,” said Bill Graves, senior biologist at the University of Florida Research Center in Homestead, Fla.

“I believe it’s going to create its own problems. If it isn’t executed effectively, it’s going to target and kill rare and endangered plants.”

The mutated fungi can also cause disease in large numbers of crops, including tomatoes, peppers, flowers, vines, and corn.

In Peru, angry farmers have recently accused the United States of using a soil fungus to destroy coca in the Upper Huallaga Valley, saying that fungus has spread to banana, yucca, tangerine, and other food crops.

So in reality, the United States has already tested its fungus in Third World countries. Now they are ready to test it here.

History shows that if there is a profit to be made from DDT, MTBE, or any other poison, then capitalists will be ready to use it. All it has to be is profitable.  
—August 1999

## Religion v. Reality

In August, the Year of Our Lord 1999, the Kansas state Board of Education

passed a decision to delete any references to Darwin's theory of evolution from the science curriculum in the Kansas public schools.

The Board of Education seems to have made its ruling on the basis that "events witnessed by humans can be known with certainty, and events not witnessed can only be guessed at."

Of course, there will be plenty of fundamentalists who will swear they see Jesus behind every tree—and who are we to scoff at their eyewitness account?

Yet in one letter to the Aug. 16 *New York Times*, a Mr. Ben Normark says that the eyewitness account of the Kansas education board is dubious at best.

Normark points out that "this theory is surely as alien to historians, jurists, and every other kind of scientist as it is to evolutionary biologists. Even those who prefer teachers' instructions to follow this theory might pause if judges followed suit, instructing juries to disregard DNA evidence, ballistics—indeed all forensic evidence—and routinely dismissed charges in all cases lacking eyewitnesses to the crime itself."

Normark continues, "Virtually every advance in every field of inquiry since the invention of writing has relied on evidence other than eyewitness accounts, which have not themselves noticeably improved in reliability in the last few thousand years."

Credit must be given to the teachers of science and biology in Kansas, most of whom say they will continue to teach evolution despite the decision of the Board of Education.

"If you take away evolution because it's a theory, you can't teach science," said Steve Angel, a chemistry teacher who is president of the school board in Topeka and a member of the committee of experts whose standards were rewritten by the state board. "All of science is theory."

So we are back to 1925 again to hash over the Scopes Trial. On July 10, 1925, in Dayton, Tennessee., John Thomas Scopes, a teacher of science in Rhea High School, was charged with violating the Tennessee state law prohibiting the teaching in public schools of any theories that deny the divine creation of human beings as taught in the Bible.

Scopes, a biologist, had been teaching evolution. The basis for the sensational nature of the trial was laid by the increasing alarm of Christian fundamentalism over the challenge raised by science and evolutionary theory to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures.

The American Civil Liberties Union in New York City offered to defend any teacher who would personally test the constitutionality of the Tennessee statute by his or her classroom teaching. Assured of support, Scopes formally violated the law, and the public prosecutor in Dayton indicted him.

The case and its lawyers captured the attention of the press and it became a national issue. The two lawyers were William Jennings Bryan for the prosecution



and Clarence Darrow, the most famous criminal lawyer of his generation, for the defense.

The judge prevented any testing of the civil liberties issue of the constitutionality of the law or any testimony as to the validity of the doctrine of evolution. The sole relevant issue, said the judge, was whether Scopes had actually taught evolution. Scopes said he certainly had.

Bryan made the serious mistake of letting Darrow get him on the witness stand. Darrow examined Bryan on his beliefs on fundamentalism and on science. The examination, perhaps Darrow's most animated and sarcastic courtroom performance, was devastating to Bryan. In fact, Bryan died five days after the trial ended.

However, Scopes was convicted and fined \$100. The defense appealed the case to the state supreme court. In 1927, the court upheld the constitutionality of the 1923 law but cleared Scopes on a technicality.

So teachers of Kansas, if you want to teach the truth and try to open students' eyes to exploring the great wealth of science—be prepared to go to trial!

The world needs teachers who dare to improve the minds of their students. The world needs minds that are not blinded by religious fundamentalism.

—September 1999

## Creative Police Work

There is another big scandal in the Los Angeles Police Department.

The last major scandal was the beating of Rodney King. Cops had stopped his car and were beating him until he had lost consciousness; he was then accused by the policemen of having beaten them.

If a person had not recorded the police brutality on video, the true facts would have never been known. Rodney King would have rotted in prison for having threatened the police. Instead the video was shown on national television and scandalized the LAPD.

Now, as usual, the LAPD is up to its badge in scandal. This time it is a confession by one of their own—Officer Rafael A. Perez. Not only was this officer guilty of stealing eight pounds of cocaine that had been confiscated by police, but he also told investigators he and his partner had shot an unarmed, handcuffed gang member three years ago and then framed him by planting a 22-caliber rifle near his paralyzed body.

The gang member, Javier Francisco Ovando, 19 years old and an undocumented immigrant, was paralyzed by the shooting, confined to a wheelchair, and sentenced to 23 years in prison.

Ovando was released from prison on Sept. 16 but is under police watch in a downtown hotel. He has not even been able to see his two-year-old daughter or

any other member of his family.

The original police report filed by Officers Perez and Durden said Ovando had been armed with a rifle, after he burst into an apartment where the officers were staked out on a gang investigation. But now Mr. Perez admits that Mr. Ovando did not break into the apartment and was not armed.

Instead, Perez claims, Officer Durden argued with Ovando and then drew his sidearm and shot him, prompting Perez to fire his weapon too. Perez said Officer Durden then left the apartment, and returned with a rifle found in a gang sweep days earlier, and placed it near Ovando, having filed off the serial number.

However, Ovando disputes this and told an investigator he was in his own apartment in the building when two officers knocked on his door, handcuffed him, and took him back to their stakeout, where he was shot in the chest by both officers. Ovando says Perez then grabbed him by the front of his shirt, held him upright and shot him in the head.

Mr. Ovando was charged with two counts of assault with a firearm on a police officer. He did not testify at his trial, according to the court papers, because his lawyer advised him that “he would not be believed by a jury.” Who would believe the true story?

These officers work out of the Ramparts Division, which critics say was a semi-autonomous system that tolerated extreme tactics. Mr. Chang, an attorney who is representing the accused police officers says, “It’s just developed and grown and gotten pretty bad. The citizens they serve and protect play hardball, and I guess they’re playing hardball back.”

Just who are the citizens who are served and protected by the Ramparts Division? I hope I’m not one of them.

Every once in a while, the curtain of “law and order” is lifted so that we can get just a small picture of how it operates.

Another article on the death penalty in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 28,



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says that this will likely be a record year for U.S. executions. Texas, of course, has the most, 25, with Virginia and Missouri running closely behind.

The United States has executed 576 convicted killers since 1976. Currently, about 3,565 people are on death row across the nation.

I wonder how many of them had lawyers who urged them to “cool it” because the jury would not believe them. Will you feel safer after these people are executed?

—October 1999

## Quality Childcare Is Good for Children

It's also true that if children are fed healthy, nutritious meals they won't die of hunger.

The knowledge about quality childcare has been around since World War II, when the federal government, needing the labor power of women, invested millions in childcare services so women could work in the war industries. Immediately after the war, regardless of need, the government did away with funding childcare, hoping this would drive women back to their homes.

On Oct. 22, *The New York Times* ran a full page on the results of a study on childcare that began in 1972 and followed 111 African American families in the Chapel Hill, N.C., area until the children were adults. The program, called the Abecedarian Project, involved families whose infants were medically healthy but demographically at risk for failure in school and beyond.

Half of the children were randomly assigned to full-time day care from infancy to age five, while the others received only nutritional supplements and some social work. They attended comparable public schools from kindergarten on.

With low adult-child ratios and a stable, professional staff, the educational program consisted of a series of 200 simple games focused on language development, starting with visual stimulus for tiny infants and leading to scavenger hunts and

mazes for older toddlers.

What did the study show?

Thirty-five percent of those in the day care program attended a four-year college before their 21st birthday, compared with 14 percent of the comparison group. At age 21, twice as many of the day care graduates (40 percent) were still in school; 65 percent of those who received the intervention either had a good job or were in college—compared with 40 percent of the others.

Fewer of the participants in the childcare program had children of their own by age 21; those who did become parents did so, on average, past their 19th birthday, while the parents in the other group were about 17.

“The so-called efficacy question, whether you can effect development in the pre-school years is resoundingly answered in the affirmative,” Craig T. Ramey, director of the study, said at a news conference. “It has become crystal clear that if you wait until age three or four you are going to be dealing with a series of delays and deficits that will put you in remedial programs.”

“The argument that we can’t afford this is absolutely bogus,” Dr. Ramey said. “We get what we pay for. We’re the richest country on the face of the earth; we’re the richest we’ve ever been. We’re not number one in the world in education, in health care, in social services.”

The results of a study on world hunger were announced about the same time as the results of the above study on early childhood development. The Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, said, “Hunger has been decreasing everywhere in the world—except in Africa and the United States.”

In this country, he said, “in all states, hunger is just a few dollars away for too many families.”

Nationwide, 9.7 percent of American households—or about 10 million individuals—go without food because they cannot afford it, according to a new study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

That, my friends, is capitalism. The richest country in the world has children who go to bed hungry every night. “Let them eat cake,” said Marie Antoinette before the French Revolution. Remember? —November 1999

## The Real Killers Among Us

The capitalist class, the drug cartels, and the profit motive have allowed millions to die from the HIV virus. The real killers of those millions are the imperialist capitalists, who profit from drugs that—if made affordable—could arrest the disease that is destroying millions of lives in third world countries and minorities in this country.

Over 11 million children have been left orphaned by AIDS since 1981. By the end of next year, some 2 million more children will lose their mother or father.

Over 10 million in sub-Saharan Africa, 200,000 in South and Southeast Asia, 100,000 in Latin America, 83,000 in the Caribbean, 70,000 in North America, 15,000 in North Africa and Middle East, 9000 in Western Europe, 5600 in East Asia and Pacific, 500 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and less than 500 in Australia and New Zealand. These numbers represent HIV-negative children who have lost their mother or both parents before age 15.

Dr. Peter Piot, the head of the UN program on AIDS, told about the lives of these orphans. All but 5 percent of the world's orphans live in countries below the Sahara. In the past, age-old networks of immediate and extended families would have cared for these orphans. But the traditional African extended family is breaking down under the unprecedented burden of the pandemic.

Orphans are "the most forgotten aspect of the AIDS epidemic," said Dr. Piot. He said that for many of these children, the future is bleak. Many end up as child laborers or roaming the streets, leaving them prime targets for gangs and right-wing militias, and creating more child armies like those that participated in massacres in Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa.

Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, president of the UN General Assembly, said that had so many children been orphaned in wealthy parts of North America or Europe, "their fate would have already been declared a human tragedy."

The orphan issue affects people of all ages. In Africa in 1998, 200,000 people were killed in wars and conflicts while AIDS killed 2.2 million others. "The worst is yet to come," the UN report stated.

Children are growing up knowing little about their parents and many find themselves thrust into the role of mother or father, or both, as they look after siblings. And Africans who were expecting their children to care for them in their advanced years now have to care for their grandchildren.

The National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS joined with the United Nations in calling for widespread AIDS counseling and volunteer testing for HIV, support for the psycho-social needs of orphans, and increased community protection of women's and children's rights.

Even more important is the need to realize that the corporate drug companies are making enormous profits out of this killer disease.

Combinations of newly developed drugs have cut the U.S. AIDS death rate in half since 1996. But at the cost of more than \$1,000 a month, such therapies are out of reach for third world countries, where 90 percent of the world's people with AIDS reside. So the capitalists are plotting to prevent countries from making their own drugs, saying this is an assault on "intellectual property."

The drug companies are fighting parallel importing, which would force a drug company to license its patent to a local manufacturer, making the cost of drugs much cheaper than importing them from the parent company.

I have a simple suggestion: let's nationalize all drug companies—declare them

an enemy of the people—and take them over and distribute any and all drugs as needed. Make it illegal for any company to own drugs which are needed to let people survive.

Use the defense budget to build drug manufacturing outlets in any country that needs it. No profits on human lives—human needs before profits! That's a simple solution to a massive outrage of a problem. —December 1999

2000

## Children Here and There

You can know a country by its children—the way it treats them and the way it wants them.

Recently, in Houston, Texas, the city put up a billboard pleading for mothers not to abandon their babies. It reads, “DON’T ABANDON YOUR BABY! Take your child to an emergency medical technician at a fire station or hospital. Call (1-877) 904-SAVE.”

The reason for this unusual billboard is that by September 1999, a total of 13 babies had been discarded in 10 months. Three of the babies were found dead.

“I don’t think we know enough to say why this happens,” said Michael Kharfen, a spokesman for the Federal Administration for Children and Families. “This must be the most extreme act a person can take, to leave a child in a dumpster or public park.”

One of the mothers was a 15-year-old high school student who dumped her dead newborn infant in a high school trash bin. She has been charged with murder.

Where were her parents, or counselors, or people who cared for her? Someone must have known she was pregnant—who did she have to confide in? Who could she have turned to for help?

While the federal government tracks statistics on so-called “boarder-babies”—children left in a hospital maternity ward by drug-addicted or HIV-infected mothers—it does not keep data on discarded newborns. Why? Would the numbers of abandoned infants be an embarrassment to the richest country in the world?

Just recently we have received word from one of the smallest nations, which is not rich and is currently under the fist of the world’s richest country. How are their infants doing?

On Dec. 27, *The New York Times* reported in a dispatch from Cuba that the infant mortality rate in Cuba, which already had one of the lowest infant mortality rates in the world, fell even further in 1999.

Health Minister Carlos Dotres said that the infant death rate had fallen to 6.5 deaths per thousand from a rate of 7.1 per thousand the previous year and 11 per thousand a decade ago.

Free health service for all, a rarity in Latin America (it doesn't exist in the United States), has been one of the main features of President Fidel Castro's government since the revolution in 1959.

Cuba currently has 3,140 medical personnel assisting international organizations in 58 countries around the world, including the poorest regions of Central America, the Caribbean and Africa. Some 447 Cuban medical workers are in Venezuela to help the flood-ravaged nation.

Cuba offers a free medical education to 1,912 students from 18 countries in the region at the new Latin America School for Medical Sciences in Havana.

Now we come to one of the great crimes of the United States, that of kidnapping a six-year-old Cuban child after his mother took him in a boat bound for the United States. The child was the only person to survive the trip, after he was rescued by a U.S. helicopter from the waters off Miami.

He was then given to relatives in Miami, and the U.S. government has refused to return him to his father in Cuba.

His father, both sets of grandparents, aunts and uncles and thousands of Cubans have requested his return to his family in Cuba. Rallies have been held all over Cuba demanding the return of Elian Gonzalez.

Elian talked to his father over the phone: "When are you coming here?" his father asked. "I will be there in a few days when my vacation is over," Elian said, and then he started crying.

This country has enough shame on its shoulders. Do not bring more by keeping this child away from his family. He has a right to grow up in a country that cares for its children. That country is Cuba. —January 2000

## Who Cares for Children?

Articles have begun appearing in the press recently about the children of former welfare mothers who are getting sub-standard childcare.

Tom Zoellner of the *San Francisco Chronicle* writes, "Mediocre childcare is harming the basic development of about 1 million American toddlers whose mothers have left welfare rolls to go back to work, according to a study released yesterday."

The study by Dr. Bruce Fuller of the University of California, Berkeley and Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan of Yale University, involved nearly 1,000 single mothers moving from welfare to work.

They found that many of their children had been placed in childcare where they spent hours watching television or wandering aimlessly and had little interaction with their attendants.

They interviewed mothers and visited these childcare settings in California, Connecticut, and Florida. The children were one to three-and-a-half years old.

"Welfare reform promised two things," Dr. Fuller said, "to move people

from welfare to work, where it succeeded in spades, and to improve kids' environment over time.

"It's too early to say that kids are worse off in mediocre childcare than they were at home with their mothers on welfare, but this study did find early warning signals of a childcare problem that's going to get worse as the work requirements of the welfare laws ramp up from 30 percent to 50 percent of the women getting assistance from welfare."

"We know that high-quality childcare can help children, and that poor children can benefit the most," Dr. Kagan said, "so we hope this will be a wake-up call to do something about the quality of childcare in this country. The quality of day-care centers is not great for middle-class families, but it's surprising and distressing to see the extent to which welfare families' quality was even lower, with some exceptions like the day-care centers we saw in California."

It is not surprising to me to find that children of the poor are in "bad" childcare. Most of it is in private homes where there is no oversight and overcrowding and very little separation between the ages. It is not that the politicians don't know what children need in the way of quality childcare. But they also know that it means spending money that they need to make war with.

The studies on childcare needs would circle the globe at least twice and reach from here to the moon if laid end to end. For example, the American Federation of Teachers has published a massive study on the subject.

First, the buildings for childcare centers should be safe, including fire-proof buildings and all the necessary exits. It should include separate rooms for eating, sleeping, and playing, as well as an outdoor safe play area. It should include a qualified teacher with an Early Childhood Credential. And then the number of adults-per-child ratio should be low enough so that every child gets the necessary attention he or she needs.

A health-care worker should be in attendance, and any health care should be supplied by the center. Parent-teacher conferences should be held often and at a time when the parents can attend.

The center should be a place where children feel safe and cared for. It should have the kind of toys and books that inspire children to play and be creative.

It should have volunteer programs that include junior high, high-school and college students, both male and female.

The center could supply these youths with the understanding that would make them better parents, and the children would become more relaxed around older people who care for them.

Why can't this be done? Because the bosses in this country, the richest in the world, can't make a profit on these measures. Making a profit is the bottom line for the social class that rules this country. —February 2000



## How the French Deal with Teen Pregnancy

Once again the French have shown more common sense than some people in this country. The government of France is going to dispense the morning-after pill to young women in junior high schools and high schools.

A non-prescription pill called Norlevo will be included in the school nurse's kit along with band aids and iodine. Norlevo is described by the French government as a "late-contraception" pill because it prevents an already fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.

Though the French minister of education made the decision to dispense the morning-after pill, which surprised even the inventors and manufacturers of the pill, public commentary on the issue involved nurses' unions, students' unions, parents, doctors, women's groups, and representatives of the ruling Socialist Party.

All seemed to accept the assurances of the education minister that while no solution was perfect, on balance the decision had been "carefully considered" and "humanely necessary."

Humanely necessary—did you get that, folks? The government education minister wanted to act humanely toward teenage women. How unusual that would be here in the good old U.S. of A.

We have a presidential campaign with four men running around like chickens with their heads cut off—all trying to win the support of "pro-lifers." McCain and Bush both oppose abortion; Bradley and Gore both say they are "pro-choice", with qualifications. Gore says although he's personally opposed to abortion he will uphold the law of the land—that means *Roe v. Wade*.

This means that if Al Gore gets pregnant, he, personally, will not have an abortion—and that's all right with me.

Why is a women's right to choose being debated in an election campaign? What about the right to own slaves—does that belong in an election campaign? What right do right-wing, religious male bigots have to say anything about a women's right to choose? You might as well allow Adolph Hitler a say in circumcision of Jewish males.

What is happening in this country is a serious attempt to do away with *Roe v. Wade*—the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that said the issue of abortion is between a woman and her doctor.

Since that time, law after law has been passed by states to chop away at "choice." States have passed parental rights laws that only allow women under the age of 18 to have an abortion with their parents' consent. States have passed laws that require women to undergo counseling by anti-choice forces 24 hours before getting an abortion.

States are passing laws that will not allow late-term abortions that might save a woman's life. More than 25 years after *Roe v. Wade*, 86 percent of all U.S. coun-

ties have no abortion provider. Family planning clinics have been fire-bombed; clinic workers have been murdered—all in the name of saving the fetus.

The pill that is being given away in French high schools has been banned in this country and is still forced to undergo testing before getting approval from the FDA.

Unfortunately, the women's movement, which used to organize demonstrations of hundreds of thousands in the streets demanding abortion rights, is now giving wine and cheese parties for presidential candidates who should all be neutered for the sake of humankind.

Only when women and their supporters take the streets again will they be able to regain all the rights they have lost these last few years. For themselves and for their daughters—for their rights. —March 2000

## The Happy Imperialist

The happy imperialist is one who can ride roughshod over the world without any worry about getting their just rewards. No one has the strength to “get even.”

NOT YET!

In the March 30 *San Francisco Chronicle* there is an article entitled, “Drug Task Force Conducts Sweep South of Border.” The article starts, “Arresting a record 2,331 suspected narcotics traffickers, law enforcement agencies from the United States and other Western Hemisphere nations have completed a huge bust they hope will at least temporarily restrict the flow of illegal narcotics to the U.S. from the Caribbean and Central and South America, officials announced yesterday.”

The year-long investigation and 17-day sweep, dubbed Operation Conquistador, corralled no high-level traffickers. But it represented an unusual strategy for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, one that DEA official Michael S. Vigil likened to a wide and destructive storm.

Led by the DEA, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the U.S. Coast Guard, the countries' law enforcement agencies, blew across the Caribbean, Central America, and South America beginning March 10. They eradicated cocoa fields, destroyed 94 cocaine laboratories, and searched 7,300 vessels, vehicles, aircraft, and homes.

They hauled in 5000 kilograms of cocaine, 56 kilograms of heroin, 14 kilograms of morphine base, 362 metric tons of marijuana, 73 kilograms of hashish oil, and an array of drug-making chemicals.

About half of those arrested were from the Dominican Republic, which has developed into a major shipment point for drugs coming from Colombia to the United States, according to Vigil.

Now, think WACO but think a big WACO! I bet you thought that most policemen spend their days on the streets of U.S. cities shooting unarmed Black men.

Or attacking mourners marching in the streets to protest the shooting death of an unarmed Black man. No, they've spread their violence to foreign countries, where they can pull all the WACOs they want to without the intervention of masses of people and without any formal investigation of the destruction they have caused. It's all the U.S. government's secret war against drugs.

What we now have is imperialism in all its glory. The U.S. now takes as its right to invade any country at will. Especially the nations of Latin America.

And when didn't the U.S. come up with a good sob story to excuse their imperialist aims? Drugs, Weapons of Mass Destruction, etc., etc. Right now the U.S. is involved in destruction in the Balkans under the guise of self-determination for those people. But they refuse to let the nations of Latin America have self-determination. Instead they send in their weapons of mass destruction to invade and destroy those countries.

But even the most powerful imperialism will meet its end when the masses of people refuse to bow down. And that has been happening. In the last few weeks, we have seen massive marches against police brutality and murder on the streets of U.S. cities.

Seattle was just a small show of outrage by people who are fed up with monopoly capitalism, which treats the whole world as its charge card. The capitalist class have been using their power to rape the world's forests, rivers, minerals, and peoples.

Just remember, "as you sow so shall you reap." The happy imperialist is going to be one unhappy sucker someday. —April 2000

## **We are born naked and hungry; then it gets worse!**

In the good ol' USA it can certainly get worse. Seventy-three young men who are too young in age to vote, smoke, or drink are on death row awaiting execution. Three young men who had committed crimes before they were 18 years old have already been executed.

The United States is the only industrial nation that is executing its children. It is ignoring the humane laws that have existed for as long as 100 years recognizing that young people who commit crimes of murder should not be treated as adults.

It ignores what the American Society for Adolescents tells us: Adolescents who "commit capital crimes very often suffer from serious psychological and family disturbances, which exacerbate their already existing vulnerabilities."

Certainly the U.S. can no longer champion itself as a beacon of human rights. The true nature of these executions exposes the barbaric nature of imperialism.

On Jan. 10, 2000, the state of Virginia executed Douglas Christophe Thomas, and Steven Roach three days later, for crimes committed when they were youths. Texas, which has executed eight juvenile offenders since 1973 and currently has

28 youthful offenders on death row, executed Glenn McGinnis on Jan. 25 for his crimes as a youth.

Organizations such as the European Union, the American Bar Association and even Pope John Paul II sent pleas to Governor George W. Bush asking that he commute McGinnis's sentence to life in prison, but their pleas were in vain. Braveheart George had to get his kicks, so he murdered Glenn McGinnis on schedule.

About 73 other juvenile offenders are awaiting execution on death row throughout the United States. More than two-thirds of them are minorities. Fifty-one percent are Black, 16 percent are Latinos, and 31 percent are white. They are all male. But you will note that most of them are Black.

Out of the 38 death penalty states, 19 execute 16-and 17-year-olds, and four execute those 17 and older.

In 1988, the U.S. Supreme Court held that executing children under the age of 16 violated the Eighth Amendment's ban against "cruel and unusual punishment" because it is contrary to "evolving standards of decency that mark the progress of a maturing society."

Pete Wilson, the former governor of California, who was the godfather of Proposition 21, has floated the idea that the death penalty should be lowered to age 14. Texas legislator Jim Pitts has proposed lowering the age of execution to the age of 11. Isn't that the Pitts?

Soon they will be raiding childcare centers to pick out minority children and throw them onto death row.

This tendency to treat juveniles as adults took a real growth spurt during the 1980s and '90s. The headlines about crack-cocaine and youth gangs gave an excuse to crack down on juvenile offenders.

Last year, Nathaniel Abraham, who was only 11 when he committed murder, was tried as an adult in Michigan. Right now, more than a quarter of youths in adult prisons are between the ages of 13 and 16.

In spite of all the headlines screaming about young gangsters, the truth is that less than one half of 1 percent of American kids were arrested for violent crimes last year. In fact, youth crime has been decreasing in every state.

All but the United States and Somalia have ratified the 10-year-old UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which forbids the death penalty against youths under 18.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which has more than 144 signatory countries, also bans the execution of those who commit crimes under the age of 18. The U.S. has not signed on to this either.

Lets just hope that Elian Gonzalez can get back to Cuba, where they do respect and care for children. —May 2000

## Murder at the Gallop

Just think, there is now a fool-proof way of finding out the guilt or innocence of a person accused of rape and murder: Using the DNA test. But at this time only two states, Illinois and New York give inmates the right to use the latest DNA testing—even though the procedure has freed 72 inmates from prison, eight of them from death row.

You'd think that it would be the police who would insist on using DNA testing, in order not to charge an innocent person.

I have watched those television shows about forensic scientists who are called in to examine a dead body and discover the cause and time of death.

No stone is left unturned (according to the television show) to uncover facts about the dead body. Of course, I am always amazed at the evidence uncovered and the dedication of the law enforcement authorities to leave no stone unturned to find the truth. But not in real life!

DNA evidence from rape kits, like one used in Texas, led to release of 26 percent of main suspects whose cases were analyzed by the FBI. (From *Newsweek*, May 29, 2000.)

On June 1, in Texas, Ricky McGinn was scheduled to be executed by lethal injection for the murder of his 12-year-old stepdaughter.

McGinn, like many prisoners, received poor legal counsel. It took until this May before the trial court in Brown County had received a request that a pubic hair found inside the victim and a possible semen stain be tested.

Now, at the last possible second, Governor George W. Bush has granted McGinn a 30-day reprieve to allow testing of the DNA evidence.

Bush, who has presided over 131 executions—more than any U.S. governor in history—is unabashedly looking for campaign support from some of the millions of Americans who are horrified by the recent discoveries of innocent people on death row.

And yet, in the Roy Criner case in Texas, and several others where DNA tests of semen have ruled out guilt for inmates convicted of rape, prosecutors still refuse to free them. The prosecutors claim that while the victim had another man's semen inside her, she was still raped by the man they convicted.

How can they convict someone without evidence? It is known as the "unindicted co-ejaculator" theory. Sort of like the "theory" of God—never mind the proof, if you "feel" there's a God, that's enough.

In January, Governor George Ryan of Illinois imposed a moratorium on executions in that state after 13 inmates—one of whom came within two days of being executed—were proven innocent. So far, 87 death-row inmates have been released from prison nationally since 1973.

Executions have taken a huge leap since 1976. Texas is the leader—with 218 put to death since 1982. Nineteen Texans are scheduled to die between now and

Election Day.

How many of those men are innocent? Just look at the Los Angeles Police Department and you can see how it is that innocent people are thrown into prison on trumped-up charges.

Currently, there are 9,845 cases that are being reviewed because of frame-ups by the LAPD. After all the lawsuits against the LAPD have been settled, it could cost the city of Los Angeles \$300 million.

This country recently celebrated Memorial Day—a holiday in honor of all those who have died for imperialism. We might also think of all of those who have been executed on death row but who have been innocent. Once they have been put to death, there is no bringing them back. How many more will die because of the injustice of our court system? —June 2000

## How do they die?

Gary Graham (Shaka Sankofa) was put to death at 6:49 p.m. on July 22 by lethal injection.

What is lethal injection? Here is a description from Zolo Angona Azania, who is on death row at Indiana State Prison:

“The extinguishment of a human life by lethal injection is dressed up as a medical procedure which is actually a cold, calculated, ritual murder.

“The condemned prisoner is strapped to the death gurney. The first drug is sodium pentothal. A saline solution is then used to ensure the tube is cleared out so the drugs won’t mix because sometimes there’s a chemical reaction where they can clog. The third one is pancuronium bromide. That is the muscle relaxer.

“The fourth syringe then pushes another saline solution through. The fifth syringe is potassium chloride. That is the toxic drug that stops the heart.

“Following the completion of the injection process, and a five-minute waiting period, the blinds to the witness area will be closed and the physician advised.

“If the offender’s heart has not stopped, the lights shall be dimmed, blinds opened, and the Superintendent or designee shall order the injection procedure to be repeated.

“After this procedure is completed, the blinds will once again be closed, and the physician will again check for signs of life. The physician shall then report his findings to the Superintendent or designee.”

That’s what this government did to Gary Graham. He was 17 years old when he was arrested for the crime of robbery, not murder, which came later. He was an abused child; his mother spent months in mental institutions. His father was a chronic alcoholic who spent years in prison.

Gary Graham committed stupid crimes of robbery and rape, but he did not commit the crime for which he was executed.

Only one witness said she had seen him at the scene of the crime; she had seen him for three seconds from 30 feet away and in the dark. Six witnesses said that Gary was not the killer and four of those witnesses passed a polygraph test.

Gary Graham is an example of the injustice system gone mad. The death penalty serves no purpose except to intimidate and threaten young men of color, and, in fact, the whole of the working class.

There is no one person, no matter how murderous or dangerous, who could possibly murder more people than this government has in the past few years. That includes Colombia, Iraq, the Third World countries—all of whom have felt the terror of U.S. bombs and military might.

In fact, the refrain, “And the Rockets red glare/The bombs bursting in air,” is an apt anthem for imperialism’s strongest strong arm, the USA. As Martin Luther King said, “The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today is my own government.”

To all who have marched against the death penalty and to save the lives of countless Gary Grahams, don’t be discouraged. We have begun the long march to justice, and to an end of the death penalty.

Your acts represent real courage and are a testimony to the true nature of humankind, to the true brotherhood and sisterhood of everyone.

While this government stands in disgrace, you who marched against the death penalty stand shoulder to shoulder with our foremothers and fathers who struggled for human rights for all. We will win! —July 2000

## Viagra for Him—‘Bubkas’ for Her

Bubkas, for those who are uninformed, means “nada”—zippo-nothing. Most health insurance policies do not cover birth control for women. On an average it costs \$300 per year for contraceptives for women—from birth control pills, to the diaphragm, to Norplant. This comes out of a woman’s paycheck to provide for her own healthcare.

Don’t get me wrong; I am in full support of men’s health as well as women’s. If a man feels he can do better with viagra, his health insurance should cover it. Nor should doctors who prescribe Viagra be forced to register with the government, as they are required to do when they prescribe RU 486, the drug that prevents conception by preventing the fertilized egg from attaching to the walls of the uterus. Taking RU 486 results in a miscarriage.

In the past dozen years, 500,000 French women have used RU 486 safely and effectively, but the United States dragged its heels during the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton-Gore reigns. Finally, the U.S. was forced to allow RU 486 to be used,

but the FDA set up some rigid rules: only doctors who perform abortions and have privileges at hospitals less than an hour away will be allowed to use RU 486

When I think of my illegal abortion on a kitchen table in an empty apartment in Staten Island, though I lived to tell this tale, I'm astonished at such rules in regard to RU486. Actually, these restrictions are designed to cut down on women's right to choose. Anti-abortion fanatics would have a difficult time targeting every doctor's office.

Choice for women is getting more difficult each year. In 1999, over 400 anti-choice laws were proposed in 45 state legislatures across the United States. And more than 25 years after *Roe v. Wade*, 86 percent of all U.S. counties have no abortion provider.

This year, the U.S. Supreme Court narrowly upheld *Roe v. Wade* in defeating the Nebraska "partial-birth" abortion ban. When referring to "partial-birth" abortions, you would think that the fetus came out waving to its mom or walking out of the womb. In truth, late-term abortions are only considered when the mother's life is at stake or when the fetus is deformed.

Two years ago, a young woman in her early stage of pregnancy discovered she had cancer. Her doctors urged her to have an abortion because of pregnancy would spread the cancer and because they could not treat her with chemotherapy or radiation while she was pregnant.

However, a flaming anti-abortion nut decided to go to court and have himself declared legal guardian of the fetus to prevent the abortion. Of course, it didn't work, but the pain of having to go into a courtroom to fight the "guardian" was another example of the vindictiveness of those anti-choice people.

Now we have two back-to-back political conventions. The women's organizations are urging a vote for Gore and against Bushwack because of the make-up of the Supreme Court and the danger to *Roe v. Wade*.

Everything women have won has been through struggle—independent of the two ruling-class political parties. We won the right to vote by struggles in the streets; we won the right to organize unions by marching by the millions in the street and by shutting down plants, mines, and other workplaces.

In the meantime, we have not received so much as spit from either party. If you believe you can rely on capitalist parties for women's needs, then I have a "pet rock" that talks, and I will sell it to you for a bargain.

Break with the two parties who would feast on the bones of women. Back into the streets! Together, we are stronger than the capitalist parties. Together, in the hundreds of thousands, we can save the lives of millions of women. —August 2000



## Bringing Democracy to Colombia

In the United States, there is an enormous effort to bring about gun control. But to other countries, especially, military dictatorships, the United States is Santa with a machine gun.

The United States is the world's largest weapons supplier. In 1999 the U.S. sold \$11,768 millions in weapons.

In a report by the Congressional Research Service prepared by Richard F. Grimmett, an analyst who delivers a yearly report to Congress, Grimmett said, "Obviously the United States' position has been consolidated as the leading weapons supplier—both for the world as a whole and for the developing countries."

He went on, "There are very few big sales out there. But for the past 25 years, we've developed relationships with so many countries that now, even though it's a very difficult market, we have a competitive advantage in selling parts and support services."

Guess what services they get—not just a worn-out spark plug! In Colombia, Congress has approved \$1.3 billion for 500 military pilots or advisors, 300 civilian contractors, and military helicopters to help the government of Colombia continue its war against poor peasants and their families.

Here is an example of the so-called war on drugs:

This war is being carried out by the AUC (Self-Defense Forces of Colombia), a right-wing paramilitary army acting with the Colombian government's support. The AUC has prospered because it is well financed from the drug trade and it receives arms from the military.

The way the paramilitary death squads work is very simple and frighteningly successful. Their secret weapon is the massacre, and there is an average of one every day in Colombia.

AUC death squads arrive, with a list on hand, in a community where they contend the guerrillas have sympathizers. Anybody on that list, male or female, young or old, is killed, and often tortured first for information.

The most notorious recent massacre occurred in February, when death squads occupied the village of El Salado in the northern province of Bolivar. For 72 hours they tortured the community, taking victims to the village basketball court where they were laid out on a table and mutilated.

By the time they left, 28 people had been killed.

Last year in Colombia, there were 403 massacres (a massacre is said to have occurred if at least four people were killed in one murderous spree), with a total of 1,865 victims. Some 40 percent of these massacres can be traced directly to the AUC.

It is no wonder that the Colombian trade unions' recent general strike of 700,000 workers included demands for the end of U.S. support to the military.

There is not a country in South America that is not under the thumb of the

U.S. capitalist government—either openly or covertly.

Why? Do they think that open warfare and death squads will turn the hearts and minds of the people toward this “great democracy?” No.

The imperialist class of the U.S. wants the great wealth of the South American countries in its pockets—the oil, minerals, timber, and the low wages and long hours of its workers.

In order to tramp down on the increasing outrage of the people of those countries it needs the paramilitary and the official military to keep the workers and peasants under their heel. It will do the same thing to U.S. workers when the need arises.

This is not a “drug war.” It’s a “for profit” war. Let’s recognize it for what it is.  
—September 2000

## Shipwrecked

What would we do if we were shipwrecked on an island that had no population but ourselves? And if we wanted to survive until rescued?

Understand that among those shipwrecked with us are older people and children, as well as healthy adults, male and female. What do we do to survive?

First, we would have a division of labor. Some would go search for drinkable water, others to look for food, and others to find some sort of shelter for all of us. If they can’t find shelter we would have to build something to protect us from the elements. But first of all we would assign people to care for the children and for those who are old or ill and in need of medical care.

Most important would be the care of the children because the parents could not join in the work while leaving their children in danger or unsupervised.

Making these decisions would be democratic by necessity. Without the agreement of all we would not be able to have a division of labor, nor would



we survive for very long. Leadership would have to be earned by demonstrating ability to plan and by work ethics—not by fiat.

It would be difficult. Tools would have to be made, food would have to be gathered or hunted, local plants would have to be tested for medical use, clothing would have to be created from whatever is useful, and fire building would become a necessity. All of these actions would require talent and inventiveness—which all humans have the ability to develop and expand.

It does not take an Einstein to develop the basic knowledge needed to survive. Nor to organize a society to provide care to those who need it, especially the children. But unfortunately, we live in a system that values people the least and private property and profits the most.

Capitalism needs profits above all else. If a profit cannot be made, then nothing has a right to exist.

That's why the capitalist class is working overtime to destroy public schools and turn them into profitable enterprises, starting with the voucher system. The voucher system promises better schooling, but like Firestone tires they will explode once our public schools are in private hands.

Then it will be the parents who will be bilked out of every penny in order to have schooling for their children. Just as a college education costs thousands of dollars today, so will education in the private elementary and middle schools.

Even prisons are not neglected by the profit-hungry capitalists. In fact, 1.5 million children in the United States have a parent in jail. This is because of the massive jump in the prison population. The U.S. has more people in prison than China, Russia, or any other industrialized nation. Since 1991, this country's prison population grew by 62 percent to 1,284,894 in 1999.

Capitalism is not good for children or their parents; it is only good for the profits of the few and the misery of the many. What kind of society puts profits first and children last? —October 2000

## Cold-Blooded Murder

Cold-blooded murder is the Israeli army killing the children of Palestine. Twelve-year-old Mohamaned Aldura was murdered on Sept. 29 by the Zionist military. He was with his father who was trying to protect him. His father called out to the Israeli troops not to fire on him and his son.

The son was terrified; he wanted to run but the father held him back with his arm. Then the machine guns fired and the child was dead and the father was shot eight times. When the ambulance came, the Israeli troops murdered the ambulance driver.

It is said that one picture is worth a thousand words. Three pictures will live in my mind forever: The picture of the little nine-year-old girl running naked down a road in Vietnam, her back burned by napalm; the young student kneeling beside her friend who was shot by the National Guard at Kent State; and finally young Mohammed Aldura, murdered by the Zionists, and the father's dazed, unbelieving face while he held his son's body.

If the Zionist troops were in Hitler's Germany they would have been rewarded for their actions. Hitler could not have done it better. In the name of having a Jewish homeland, the Zionist military are doing to the Palestinians what Hitler did to the Jews.

Israel doesn't have gas chambers but it does have helicopters, machine guns, bombs, rockets, tanks, tear gas, and other weapons of mass destruction. The Israeli military is the best armed force in the Middle East. In contrast, the young people of Palestine have only stones and slingshots. Yet in the past six years the Israeli army has killed over 1500 Palestinians.

But it is the United States that must bear most of the blame for Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. It is the U.S. that has supplied the military might of the Israeli army. Why? Is it because the U.S. wanted to protect the Jewish people against anti-Semitism?

No, what the imperialist countries needed was a military presence in the Middle East that would intervene in any Arab rebellion against the imperialist rulers. They wanted a watchdog to protect the oil and mineral wealth that the imperialists viewed as theirs by right. Israel has played that role to perfection.

But now the imperialists are getting worried. There have been massive demonstrations in the Arab countries. Usually the Arab countries condone the demonstrations as long as they are government controlled. But the latest atrocious actions of the Israeli military have outraged the people of the Middle East so much that the governments are concerned about their ability to control these demonstrations.

Trying to keep control of hundreds of thousands of angry people is difficult and dangerous to the rulers of the Arab countries. It could set off a firestorm that could overturn those Arab governments who have tried to satisfy the needs of the

imperialist countries. There is no middle road to peace.

The only hope for peace in the region is for the Israeli people to kick out their war machine and seek justice for the Palestinian people. It is likewise the only hope for the Jewish people themselves. On both sides there are workers who want to take care of their families in peace. Only a democratic secular Palestine can really bring peace to the region. —November 2000

## How the Imperialist Grinch Stole Christmas

There's an organization called the International Monetary Fund (IMF), controlled by the large imperialist countries, which loans money to small developing countries. The money is given to the domestic capitalist class and the country must pay interest to the IMF—a very high interest.

In order to pay the interest, the countries must extract it from the poorest, usually in the form of cuts in health care, schools, and housing, and an increase in the exploitation of their working class. This means a severe drop in living standards.

As an example of what takes place, here are some statistics on children in Latin America, reported by Fidel Castro in his speech at the opening of the 10th Ibero-American Summit in Panama:

“Some 45 percent of the total population in Latin America and the Caribbean region are poor; that is, 224 million people, and 90 million of them live in absolute poverty. More than half of the poor and absolute poor are children and adolescents.”

### Castro Quoted the UN

“Children's Fund: Children are more severely affected by poverty. No other age group is as vulnerable since the physical and psychological damages they sustain affect them for life.”

The average mortality rate for children under five years of age in Latin America and the Caribbean region was 39 per 1000 live births in 1998. Thus, the number of dead children was close to half a million.

Between 20 and 50 percent of the urban population in the region don't have access to basic primary health care or sewage services; in rural areas over 60 percent lack these services, and 50 percent also lack clean drinking water.

This, Castro said, raises by over 40 percent the risk of death from diarrhea, cholera, typhoid fever, and other diseases. Now let's look at other areas of the globe:

Worldwide, it is estimated that 4 million women and girls are bought and sold each year—either into marriage, prostitution, or slavery. Approximately 1 million children enter the sex trade every year. Although most are girls, boys are also

involved. As many as 50,000 women from Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe are brought to the United States and forced to work as prostitutes or servants.

In the United States, in the last decade, hunger-relief agencies have found that the hungriest people are the working poor. There is at least one working adult in 39 percent of households receiving emergency food. Of those adults, 40 percent work at least 40 hours a week.

Of the 21 million needy people seeking emergency food assistance, more than 8 million are children.

Over the last two decades, the poverty rate among families has risen nearly 50 percent. Forty-three million Americans have no health insurance, even for emergencies.

Are we having fun yet? Christmas is on the way—television, newspapers and radios are urging parents to buy, buy, buy. Parents who have already maxed out their credit cards will try to stretch it out even more.

Worldwide imperialism is dragging families and children ever lower. The imperialist Grinch has stolen the youth from millions of children in this world, and this is during “boom” times. What will they do when the boom is gone?

Will they grind up the bones and skin of children for animal feed? If they could make a profit off of them they would. It will be up to the world’s working class to stop them. We have nothing to lose and a world to gain. Merry Christmas.

—December 2000

# 2001

## Grannies of the World, Unite!

The Zionists evidently believe that if they can murder enough Palestinians they will have peace. I think that’s what the Zionists call the “Peace Process.”

Day after day, the Israeli military has thrown everything but nuclear weapons at the Palestinians and they haven’t gone away. Instead, like oppressed people everywhere, the Palestinian youth march relentlessly against the guns, tear gas, machine guns, automatic rifles. They place their lives against the Israeli military might; they die for peace and for their land, which is being wrenched by force from them.

The homes of the Palestinian people have been bulldozed to the ground, their farm lands have been confiscated by Israeli settlers, and the water has been diverted to care for Israeli lands. In order to move within their own borders the Palestinian people must first move through armed Israeli checkpoints.

The picture of the Palestinian grandmother, with a rock in her hand aiming at the Israeli military is an indication of the outrage felt by all Palestinians at the murderous attack against the youth of Palestine. It is a grandmother who is standing with her sons and grandsons. The faces on the young men show surprise and humor at this older woman taking on the Israeli army.

Her fighting stance reveals all the hatred toward the evils of Israel against her people.

Oppressed people will fight back. That's the history of all people who have been forced into exile or servitude by oppressor nations. That's why terrorism exists. When a people are defeated by overwhelming force, then they resort to terrorism. They will not be denied their rights.

General Custer thought he could eliminate the Native Americans with enough guns. But the oppressed fought back with all of their pent-up outrage and Custer went down to defeat. It was a great victory for a great people.

Jim Crow laws were supposed to keep the African Americans of the South in their place. But African Americans took their fate in their own hands and demonstrated that they were indeed first-class Americans. With massive demonstrations in the streets challenging the cops and their dogs and water cannons, they won the sympathy of millions of people everywhere in the country and won their rights.

It was that way with the working class of the USA, which took on the strongest bosses and their private guards as well as the police and national guard. They won the right to organize themselves into unions in the 1930s with strikes, sit-ins, and demonstrations.

Women won the right to vote and they won the right to choose—by massive struggles in the streets and at their clinics. The people of Northern Ireland fought for control of their own country against their oppressors, the British.

If the government of Israel thinks they can continue to oppress the people of Palestine, they forgot their history and the fact that oppression causes people to fight back and to win. It causes grandmothers to join with their sons, grandsons and daughters to take on the worst that Israel has to throw at them.

In the eyes of the world Israel is no longer "oppressed." It has become the oppressor nation and it will never be forgotten. Large demonstrations have taken place in almost every city in the United States in defense of the Palestinians.

The crimes of Israel are being revealed before the eyes of the American people. Israel cannot hide. We won't let it. —January 2001

## **Doctor Death Loves the Fetus**

More people were executed under Bush while he was governor of Texas than under any state. In five and one half years Bush had ordered the execution of 127 people.

So it was certainly heartrending to hear Bush, the president, announce that he was banning the use of federal funds for overseas abortion counseling and family planning services.

He also issued a written statement supporting the anti-choice demonstration in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 23, on the anniversary of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* rul-

ing, which allowed abortions.

Bush's statement to the anti-choice zealots said, "We share a great goal: to work toward a day when every child is welcomed in life and protected in law. We know that this will not come easily or all at once.

"But the goal leads us onward: to build a culture of life, affirming that every person, at every stage and season of life, is created equal in God's image."

He evidently didn't feel that those he executed in Texas were also created in God's image.

Who will be hurt by George Bush's cancellation of overseas federal funds for family planning? Some 585,000 women in Third World countries die every year of pregnancy-related complications.

I was going to write an article about depleted uranium and the insanity of dropping it on the populations of Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Kosovo. But I think the two biggest sacks of toxic waste are Bush and Clinton.

Clinton, because he made sure he was pardoned for his crimes and lies on his last day in office but did not bother to consider the pardon of Leonard Peltier, who has endured 24 years in prison and is considered by Amnesty International to be a political prisoner and is recognized by the United Nations as a Human Rights Defender.

Clinton did manage to pardon Marc Rich, a commodities trader who has been a fugitive for almost two decades. Rich's wife gave lavish gifts to the Democratic Party, and to Bill and Hillary personally.

How do we make the changes that are necessary so women and working-class people can survive? What we need is the old fashioned idea of SOLIDARITY—an injury to one is an injury to all.

That means that such organizations as NOW, trade unions, representatives of oppressed nationalities and minorities, and gays and lesbians must form united actions to begin to fight together for their rights. We must recognize that both political parties, their representatives in Congress, and this whole government are the property of the capitalist class.

When women begin to demonstrate for their right to choice, (and they will), then organized workers with their union banners should be on the march with them.

After all, it is not only women who should worry about the size of their families. Both men and women are responsible for children. And when working men and women go on strike for better working conditions, women's organizations should join their picket lines in solidarity.

But most of all, working-class men and women, ethnic minorities, and African Americans should declare their independence from the political parties of their enemy class—the capitalist class.

Stop begging for crumbs from the table of the rich and start organizing for justice for all. Demand justice and we can win it.



Don't bother with telegrams, letters and post-cards to those in power. All they will give us are "chads." Hold massive demonstrations in the streets independent of the "toxic waste" in Washington. They're our streets; we built them and we should own them. —February 2001

Note: This was Sylvia's last column for *Socialist Action*. The organization, Socialist Action, split apart, in effect, expelling Sylvia along with half of the organization.

The first issue of *Socialist Viewpoint* came out in May, 2001. Sylvia was the Business Manager and continued her "Fight Back" column.

## Right to Life, That's a Lie — They Don't Care If Women Die!

Abortion rights are in trouble. They have been in trouble since the very beginning of the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision in January 1973, which concluded that abortion was a private matter between a woman and her doctor. Ever since then, extreme right-wing religious fanatics have been on a campaign to shut down women's health clinics; sometimes with their bodies; other times with bombs and bullets.

When bomb threats failed to close a clinic, they would try to blockade the clinics by sit-downs and other illegal methods. The Catholic Church always played a central role but the fundamentalist churches also mobilized hundreds of militant anti-abortionists to blockade clinics and prevent women from getting the care they needed.

The women's movement came to the rescue to protect their right to choose. In Boston, a huge mobilization by pro-choice forces chased the "right to lifers" out of the state on Oct. 29, 1988. That was the beginning of a massive mobilization across the nation, of both women and men, to protect the clinics. At dawn's early light thousands of pro-choicers gathered in organized defense, in city after city, to keep the anti-choice fanatics away from our clinics. Needless to say, we kicked ass as far as clinic defense was concerned.

The anti-abortionists then began a systematic terrorist campaign against the clinics. Fire bombings, chemical bombings and the murder of doctors and clinic workers was regularly reported in the newspapers.

Both Democrats and Republicans attacked abortion rights in Congress. The first setback to accessible abortion came in 1977 when Congress enacted the Hyde Amendment. This law cut off federal Medicaid funding for low-income women seeking an abortion. President Jimmy Carter, a liberal Democrat, supported the Hyde Amendment.

On July 3, 1989, the Supreme Court upheld a lower court decision in favor of Webster v Reproductive Health Services of Missouri. The Webster decision

upholds the state of Missouri's right to restrict access to abortion by:

One, prohibiting public funding ("not one penny") to facilities and employees involved in performing abortions except to save a woman's life.

Two, mandating tests for "fetal viability" after 20 weeks of pregnancy, even if the tests endanger women's lives.

And three, prohibiting public funds for anyone who counsels a pregnant women about the option of abortion—unless her life is in danger.

The Webster decision set off a flood of "states rights" laws to restrict abortion even further. Parental consent laws became the norm. Young women under the age of 18 were required to have the consent of at least one parent before she could have an abortion.

This law resulted in the death of Becky Bell, a high school student who was too embarrassed to tell her parents she was having sex. She used a knitting needle to induce a miscarriage and died. Her parents now travel the country speaking against parental consent laws. They know that if Becky had been able to walk into a clinic by herself she would be alive today.

After the Webster decision, the national women's organizations decided to put their effort into electing "good" Democrats to protect women's right to choose. But that abortive campaign—no pun intended—failed with a fatal crash. More and more laws are enacted to prevent women from making their rightful choice. Without massive mobilizations in the streets, and independent of both political parties, *Roe v Wade* will go the way of the Equal Rights Amendment—into the trash can.

Mass demonstrations and massive defense of abortion clinics are inseparable tasks. The only way to counter the "one-two punch" of the government and the anti-choice terrorists is to fight them on both fronts.

These two tasks, if carried out by NOW and all supporters of a woman's right to choose, will have a big impact on the legislatures and the courts.

Women will never accept going back to the days when their choices were bearing children against their will or facing serious risks—possibly death—from illegal, back-alley abortions.

Both capitalist parties have played a treacherous role in opposing women's rights. There are no fundamental differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. And because this is an undeniable fact of American politics, the stakes in the struggle to defend *Roe v Wade* have risen dramatically. To paraphrase an axiom of the workers' movement, "An injury to one-half of the human race is an injury to the entire human race!"

The National Organization for Women (NOW) has called for an EMERGENCY ACTION FOR WOMEN'S LIVES on April 22, 2001, in Washington, D.C. This is an emergency. Assemble at 11:00a.m. at Senate Park (Constitution & Delaware, N.E. and begin the march at 12 Noon for a Rally at 1 PM in

Washington Monument Grounds! March for your lives, your daughters' lives and for human lives. —May 2001

## Children and Parents Need Childcare !

What's the big mystery? If all the childcare studies were laid end to end they would circle the globe and then continue on up to Mars. So is it that difficult to see that parents who work full time need childcare services? That children need quality childcare to develop to their highest potential?

The latest study showed that 17 percent of children who had childcare services were aggressive compared to only 6 percent of children who stayed home with their parents. That's one study. Another one, to be published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reports, "Poor children, who attend intensive preschool classes are more likely to graduate from high school than poor children who have not participated in such programs."

They were talking about "good" preschool. Most of the childcare services in this country are not "good." Children are in warehouses or in private homes where they spend too much time in front of the television.

The San Francisco Unified School District has childcare services that have Early Childhood Development teachers. They used to be required by law to have one adult for every four children and, moreover, outdoor play facilities as well as indoor. They must have a sleeping room for naptime, and food. Children can enter the childcare center at the age of two and one-half. They are taken care of from eight a.m. until six at night. However, there is a long waiting list to get into the centers and even then slots are reserved for the children of low income or single parents.

### Childcare centers in all public schools

Why can't we expand childcare centers into all public schools, middle schools and high schools? Public schools are located in every neighborhood. Parents could drop their children off and pick them up easier. Middle school and high school students could take part in the preschool center and at the same time develop parenting skills that would come in handy in the future.

A few years ago when we were fighting for childcare expansion in San Francisco we had a poster that read, "It will be a great day when our schools have all the money they need and the Navy has to hold a bake sale to buy a ship." We spent too much time organizing bake sales to buy supplies for the childcare centers. That slogan is still valid, unfortunately, because the major portion of our tax money goes for defense. It does not go to the schools, hospitals for medical care or to good housing for people who need it. It goes into new planes that can fly thousands of miles and drop bombs on women, children and men who are unarmed and helpless.

What are the numbers of children who need either preschool or after school care? In 1990 seventy percent of this nation's children were living in homes where every

adult was in the labor force. What we still have is a nation of latch key children. We have parents who have to make a living while worried about their children. We do not live in that period where we lived in the same neighborhood as our parents or where uncles or aunts could serve as childcare providers. Parents are isolated and must bear the burden of full care for their children. No one is there to help lighten the load.

Almost all primitive societies took responsibility for all the children. It is this capitalist system that has placed the full responsibility for the family on parents.

Capitalism is about profits. Nothing else matters—not children, not families. Only by building an economic system where we produce for use instead of for profit can we build a world that's good for children and other living things.

—June 2001

## HIV: The Global Curse

This is the 20th anniversary of the discovery of the HIV virus, the virus that causes AIDS. No one is quite sure how long the virus has been around but they are convinced that it is a virus that mutated from monkeys in Africa.

AIDS has infected 58 million people around the world; 21.8 million have died (36 million infected are still living), including 3 million last year. Each year, 5.5 million are newly infected—15,000 a day. A vaccine is still at least ten years away.

Since 1981, AIDS has killed nearly 450,000 Americans including 18,600 in San Francisco alone. Dr. Helen Gayle, director of HIV prevention for the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, says, “Relatively speaking, this is still a new disease.... And it’s going to get worse before it gets better.... Clearly, the global dimensions of this disease are staggering.”

AIDS has become a worldwide pandemic that can be compared to the Black Death of the Middle Ages. But it covers more of the world and moves more rapidly than the Black Death. In sub-Saharan Africa, 25.3 million are believed to be infected; six million are infected in India and Southeast Asia. AIDS rates in the Caribbean are the highest outside Africa, and this virulent disease is moving into Latin America, China and the nations of the former Soviet Union.

### **Profit motive makes bad conditions worse**

Dr. Gao Yaojie is a retired gynecologist in Hunan province. She was due to collect the Global Health Council humanitarian award for her efforts. The Chinese government prevented her from attending the conference and confiscated her passport. Dr. Gao has become a crusader for thousands of poor farmers with HIV when she discovered that commercial blood collection in the countryside was spreading the virus. The Global Health Council says that Dr. Gao, now in her 70s, “has run a one-woman education campaign about HIV in the poor areas of

## Remembrances



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### What Sylvia Means to Me

BY NAT WEINSTEIN

*A brief note read to Sylvia's memorial meeting—a gathering of old friends and comrades—by Mary Henderson, one of their oldest and closest friends and comrades.*

I'll tell you about Sylvia, as I knew her. She was my first and only love. Most of you know as well as I do that the love between a man and a woman is largely sexual. But throughout our nearly 57 years as lovers, parents, comrades—and this I believe is far more important in cementing a close relationship between lovers than some may think—we were friends.

We knew that we were each other's best friend. For my part I always knew I could count on Sylvia to be on my side even when I was in the wrong. And I think that she felt the same about me.

I am very proud of Sylvia—not only for her many talents and willingness to put the needs of others before her own, but because she was kind and gentle. I am especially proud of her because she was a fighter in every sense of the word. She always fought the good fight with ideas and words—and with her fists when it became necessary. It was good to have her on our side in hard times as well as good times.

Most of all I respect Sylvia, as most of you here also do, for her undying loyalty to the ideas that we embraced throughout our lives.

She was and always will be my one true love. That was my girl, the mother of my children and grandmother of our precious grandchildren—my best friend and comrade.

## My Mother

BY DEBBIE WEINSTEIN

*Debbie's comments were delivered extemporaneously at Sylvia's memorial meeting held September 9, 2001.*

What is my mom's legacy to us? She left us socialism, communism, Marxism. Marxism isn't dead, as the apologists for capitalism would have us believe, given the destruction of the Soviet Union. In this connection, I want to urge young people, old people, all of us to read (or reread) Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*. It is a defense of Marxism and communism, and explains what was good about the Soviet Union and where it went wrong.

You know, my mom would tell everybody—it used to annoy me as a kid—that she was a socialist. Whether she was off to Walgreen's, or around the block or wherever she went, she used to tell people where she stood. And I think she did that because she felt they would agree with her if they only had a chance to be acquainted with the ideas of Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* and his explanation of what happened to the Russian Revolution.

People don't know that the workers in Russia carried out the most democratic revolution that ever took place. We're not taught this in our schools. But my mother taught us that these books belong to everybody. They belong to the average person. You don't need to pass an Scholastic Aptitude Test score to read Marx; in fact, you don't have to pass anything. You don't have to have a high school diploma to read Trotsky or Marx or all the socialist literature that says, "Yes, we can make a better world." Working people—the working class—can change the whole world. That's me and you and almost everybody in the whole world! We want even the capitalists to join us, because their system is going to destroy them along with the world. They are ready to kill the whole world and they don't care just as long as they make a profit. All that counts in our society is what makes a profit. But it's you and me—we do everything—we're the teachers, the workers—we make everything, yet we're divided and we're conquered.

My mother gave me Marx and Engels and Lenin and Trotsky. And I think they're worth reading and rereading—it's enough to read for the rest of your life. And you don't get to read it in schools. They don't want to tell us about it. Schools make you feel like you're too stupid to read things like that. And they demonize Marx and Lenin and Trotsky so that you can't even open up the book because your mind is already closed.

Marx became my great-great-great grandfather. He's yours too. Sylvia was my mother but she was a lot of people's mother. She wasn't just for her own kids. She's for all kids—for poor kids—for the two-thirds of humanity living on two dollars a day or less—not because there is not enough food to go around. It's because nobody can make a profit from sharing the wealth that we all create.

We're talking about socialism and communism because that's what my mom was all about. She wanted us to know what we mean by communism. What is communism? What is socialism? But she encouraged us to find those answers out for ourselves—to read and reread, question and debate. It's okay that we have differences. It's good to talk about differences. You don't hear about differences on the radio. You hear about the Democrats and the Republicans. Socialists don't count. You don't get to hear our point of view.

But my mom knew that when workers begin to open up these books and read them, they will come to the same conclusions as she did. That's what Sylvia is all about. She's a socialist. She's a revolutionary. Her greatness, her goodness, her kindness, and her generosity—all those things she gave freely to all of us along with socialism's theoretical ancestors. That was her contribution to the world—all the tools necessary to create a socialist world. She set an unequalled example by her own life. She gave us a clear path to follow.

## A Letter to My Mother

BY BONNIE WEINSTEIN

*The following letter from Bonnie Weinstein to her mother was read by Carole Seligman at the memorial meeting for Sylvia, held on September 9, 2001.*

Dear Mom,

When I was growing up, you didn't teach me religion or belief in the supernatural or pie in the sky. While my bedtime stories included all the usual children's fairy tales you also included other tales—about how the world could be made better.

You raised me to believe that human beings were basically good and that bad conditions make them bad. You and dad showed me there is enough wealth in the world to satisfy the needs and wants of every person and, in fact, every living thing on the planet.

You both showed me at a very early age that the thing standing in the way of human freedom and advancement was the profit-driven, chaotic system of capitalism.

Without capitalism's need to make a profit above all else, there would not be racism, sexism, war, poverty, waste or the wanton destruction of our environment.

You gave me a wonderful, bright and beautiful vision of the future. If the capitalist system were replaced with a truly democratic socialist system, controlled and operated by the working class as a whole, then we as humans could share all the wealth of the world. We could utilize every modern convenience and advancement in production toward the goal of satisfying the wants and needs of the entire planet through rational planning and cooperation.

You showed me that the workers who make, run, grow, harvest, ship and distribute everything in the world could continue to do these things for the good of all. All we have to do is abolish the private ownership of the means of production, and take it out of the hands of the capitalist class—this tiny minority that rules the world through the threat of death and the annihilation of the planet. We, the working class, through solidarity of organization, conviction and action, could disarm them and end their threat once and for all.

I learned from you that the biggest obstacle in our way is the ability of the capitalists to divide and conquer. They are experts at this. While business is international, they divide us, the masses, worldwide by country of origin, race, religion and ethnic background.

You explained to me the philosophy of the capitalists and how it tears people down. The poor, the capitalists say, are failures at life. It is the strong who are the best survivors, and the stronger you are, the wealthier you are. That is how capitalists teach us to measure self-worth. The work you and I do with our minds



and hands doesn't amount to a hill of beans to them. They are doing us a favor by paying us wages. We labor most of our waking hours while they play golf, and we barely have enough to survive. In this economy today most of us are juggling bills and struggling to keep our heads above water as inflation soars. I see this because of you, mom.

I understand now how individuals blame themselves for their plight in life. The public schools and the mass media instill in children, at an early age, the philosophy of Social Darwinism that equates the social status, strength and quality of a person with the amount of wealth he or she has and can control.

I was given an alternate vision by you—that we are all equal yet unique, that each of us has many talents and can contribute to the whole of society in many ways through the work we love best.

I was given a vision of a beautiful future for all of humanity—a future where the development of each individual to his or her fullest potential is the condition for the development of all. A future based upon cooperation and love of all life, of the world, of all humanity. That is what I was taught by you and dad.

You personified this vision in the contributions you made to me as my loving mother and the contributions you made to the world—to all of us. I know how you loved people, us, the world, life. You never gave up the fight for this beautiful future.

Mom, you worked at every aspect of the struggle, from cleaning the toilets in the office, to mailing out the paper, to producing pamphlets—all in addition to being a wife, mother, grandmother, author of wonderful articles and a powerful speaker. There was no work beneath you as long as it was necessary to the struggle, and you were proud to do it.

I always admired how you made friends with the neighbors, the grocery clerk, the mail deliverers, the pet shop people, and so many others. Your profound respect for people who worked for a living, no matter what they did, showed in your relationships with them. You respected the contributions workers naturally make to the social good when they get the job done. You knew that it was the workers who made value not the bosses. It was the workers who had the ability to organize the world for the good of all. You knew and taught me that it is the workers who hold the future of the world in their hands. That's why you respected them so much.

You instilled in me, by your own life and example, the faith that we can win and that we have nothing to lose but the chains of enslavement and alienation forged by capitalism.

You dedicated your life to creating a world with a bright and beautiful future, filled with fantastic possibilities, and limited only by our imagination—a world where darkness is perceived as undiscovered light and the unknown is perceived as all that can be known. This new world will be a paradise.

## My Grandmother as I Knew Her

BY KEVIN SHEPPARD

*Sylvia's oldest grandson, Kevin Sheppard, gave the following talk at her memorial meeting. He had asked to be the last scheduled speaker because he knew that everyone else would be talking about her political life, and he wanted to talk about her as his loving grandmother.*

*Sylvia gave the same loving attention to her grandsons John Gould and Reshad Karboau.*

*Sylvia loved all children, and children instinctively loved her. She became a loving "grandmother" figure to many.*

First of all I would like to thank everyone for coming here. Sylvia would be upset that you all came here. She'd want you all out there, selling subscriptions or doing something other than just sitting here.

I'm here to tell you the story of Sylvia as my grandmother.

As my grandmother, you would never know she was so deeply involved in politics—except at dinner time when half of you all would be eating dinner in her dining room. Plus a few other times, which I'll fill you in on later. Sylvia and I were very close. I say, "Sylvia," because that's what everybody called her—she never told me to call her anything else.

I would come home from school every day and she would give me what she would call "a special drink," which was a glorified milkshake. Then she would tell me stories of when she was a child growing up on a farm in Kentucky with her brother, Glen, and all the trouble they would get into. And she would tell me other stories; some of them were true, some of them probably weren't so true, but I would never know because she was a fantastic storyteller. I would totally believe everything that she said.

The best times were during the summer. I would get up early in the morning with her and take the dogs to the beach. But it wasn't just a straightforward dog-walk on the beach. She would bring everything she could—pots, pans, charcoal—and she'd make me pancakes, eggs, bacon and sausage—plus stuff not invented yet. We'd butter those pancakes and chow down—then we would run the dogs and just play at the beach.

At times when I was sick and I couldn't go to school, she would take such great care of me that later on, when I was a little bigger, I figured I could pretend to be sick. She would take care of me. She would feed me breakfast, then after breakfast she would make Jell-O. I would watch her make Jell-O for me for after lunch. Nothing was too much trouble for her when it came to me.

She also protected me. I don't really remember this incident. But I was told that when I was a baby, asleep in the crib, she came into the room—I think my mom

came in there with her—and there were three or four large rats hanging on the curtain by my crib. And everybody was petrified by the rats—my mom—everybody.

Sylvia took me out of the crib, then gathered her two cats, put them inside the room and locked the door. About five minutes went by and there was no sound. When she opened the door, she found the two cats were in the middle of the room—petrified. Syl went to the kitchen, grabbed a broom, took the cats out, went inside and closed the door. Next thing all you heard was “Whop! Whop! Whop!”

She did teach me politics a little bit, in her own way. One time when we went to Sears, I was thinking, “Wow, I’m going to get a toy! Or I’m going to get something—we’re going to Sears!” When we got there, there were a lot of people that we knew. We all went inside together and I’m still thinking, “Well, I’ll get something—all these people here doesn’t really matter.” But we all just sat down. I thought it was strange. We all started singing, “We shall not be moved.” And we didn’t move until, I think, the police came. The next day we were outside with picket signs—hitting cars that were trying to go inside—calling them names. Which I thought was pretty cool because I was five years old and was able to curse out loud at adults!

I remember, also, during the childcare movement, I went with her and some other children and grown-ups. We were driving around in a school bus chanting and singing, “Vote Childcare Now—Proposition I”—with a big sound system on the top of the bus. And then Sylvia made one mistake. She let me have the microphone. Prior to that I had been brought to a few antiwar demonstrations. So when I got the microphone, the only slogan I really knew was, “One, two, three, four, we don’t want your fucking war!” Which, again, was cool because I got to curse. But it wasn’t very cool because when you’re trying to get childcare, you don’t really want a five-year-old kid saying that over a loudspeaker, so she took the microphone away from me. But I think the hardest thing for her was not laughing when I said it—trying to be serious about it—while she was laughing hysterically about it under her breath.

As I grew older, she never let me forget my childhood. We always talked about things we did together. Even for my twenty-first birthday, she made a huge cake and decorated it with cowboys and Indians, because when I was little I always wanted to be a cowboy and she remembered those little things. She taught me not to forget them, either.

When I got married, she was very happy. Not because she was happy for me to get married, which she was. But you see, she had three grandsons, and now she finally had a granddaughter. And that was the way she treated my wife, Maria—because that’s just the way Sylvia was. She was the best grandmother anybody could ever wish for. Thank you.

## Sylvia Weinstein Goes to Heaven

She didn't know what had happened...

One minute she felt sick,

Now she felt fine

But didn't recognize anything.

"Welcome!" said a man

In bow tie and suspenders.

He looked familiar,

But so serene.

"Do I know you?" Sylvia asked.

"I got a million votes in jail,"

He said gently. Sylvia said,

"What's going on? Where am I?"

"This is the First Socialist Republic."

The man held out his hand.

There appeared a plate of apple pie

Surrounded by clouds.

"Oh, shit—

Pie in the sky," Sylvia said.

"Is that the deal?"

But before the man could reply

Another, with a goatee, said,

"Stand beside Rosa, next to Emma,

You will speak

For the women of America."

Sylvia, with her four-legged

And her feathered friends—

For it would not be heaven

Without these companions—

Glided onto a stage

Where stood Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

The Old Man himself

Was speaking.

"Workers of the world!"

He said.

"He always starts like that,"

Rosa whispered.

“You know,” said Sylvia—  
The speech was an eloquent statement  
Of hope for the future of mankind,  
But this being heaven

It took only  
A split second—  
“I don’t believe in an afterlife.  
What’s going on?”

“This program is only transitional,” Trotsky smiled,  
Then introduced Sylvia to the crowd.  
“Comrade Weinstein comes to us  
From the struggle for justice of all the oppressed.”

Now Sylvia looked out at the crowd.  
She saw Elizabeth Cady Stanton,  
Che Guevara and Malcolm X.  
She saw James Cannon and Rose Karsner,  
Marvell Scholl and Farrell Dobbs,  
Tom and Karolyn Kerry.  
But mostly she saw  
Just comrades,

Thousands upon thousands of people  
Like herself,  
Women and men she had marched with  
For half a century

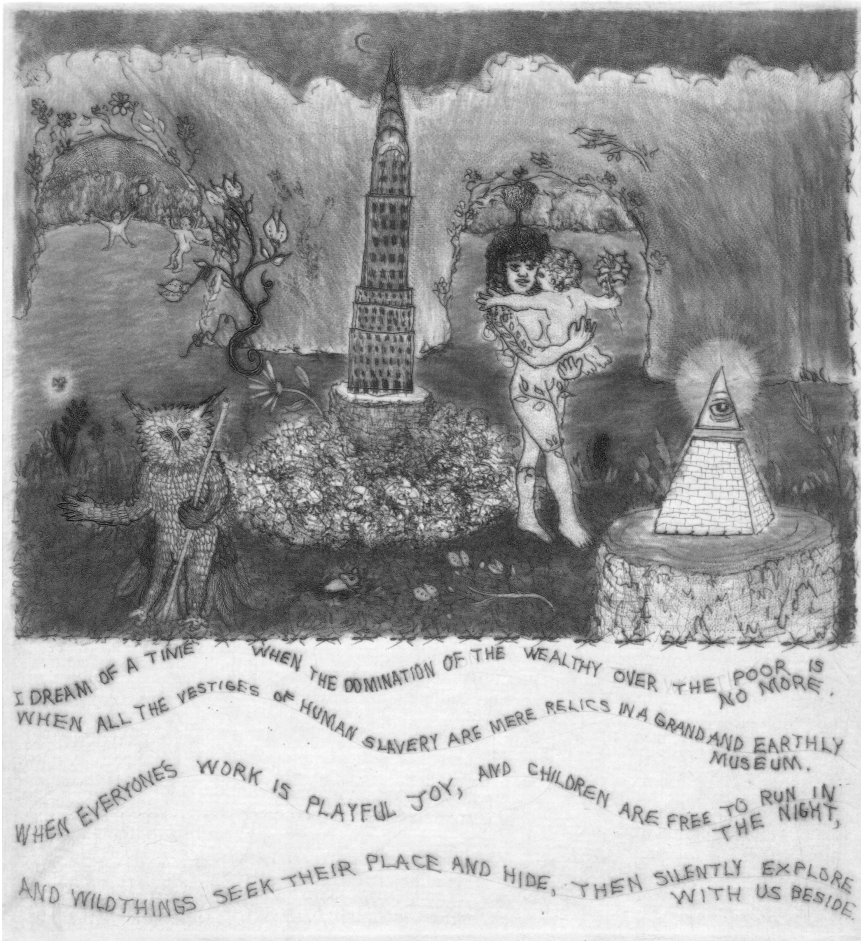
People whose names are not recorded  
In any history book,  
People she loved because  
They were hers and she was theirs.

They were carrying banners and red flags,  
And they were singing  
A song  
That moved her deeply.

There was no need for a speech.  
Sylvia Weinstein’s voice,  
Strong and beautiful,  
Joined with all the others.

—Bob Davis.

*Written in memory of a friend and comrade.*



Etching and poem by Bonnie Weinstein from page 293.

## Text of Poem

I dream of a time when the domination of the  
 wealthy over the poor is no more.

When all the vestiges of human slavery are  
 mere relics in a grand and earthly museum.

When everyone's work is playful joy,  
 and children are free to run in the night,

And wildthings seek their place and hide,



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## Pictures and Illustrations

All photos in this book were candid shots from Sylvia and Nat's photo album and depict her life as a revolutionary socialist and activist throughout her life.

Pictures were not labeled and numbered but express the wide range of social movements she was involved in, including the civil rights, antiwar, labor, child-care, pro choice clinic defense, Mumia defense, defense of the Cuban Revolution and women's rights movements.