

# Women and Revolution



Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League X-523

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# Smash Anti-Abortion Terror!

Abortion clinics are under a state of siege across the nation. In Brockton, Massachusetts, one of the largest private clinics in the country announced abortions will no longer be performed there. "We do not make this decision of our own free will," said the January 18 statement by Goddard Medical Associates; "acts of terrorism around the country and the constant harassment of our patients and ourselves have forced us to make this decision." The following day, a bomb threat forced dozens of patients at the Manhattan Eastern Women's Center out into the freezing street. The women, angry and frightened, some groggy from anesthetic, pulled their coats on over the blue paper hospital gowns, helpless victims of a concerted campaign of terror by anti-woman bigots and religious nuts who intend, whatever it takes, to overturn women's right to legal abortions.

In the scores of firebombings and hundreds of other attacks, it is only pure chance that no one has yet been killed. But death is written all over the "right to life" campaign of terror, as vicious reactionaries seek to drive working-class and poor women back to the rusty coat hangers in the back alleys. The anti-abortion terror-bombers have felt the wind in their sails and the nod of approval from the White House. On January 22, the 12th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, 70,000 anti-abortion fanatics massed at the Ellipse in Washington, D.C. They cheered for Ronald Reagan, who addressed them through a special television hookup—the first time ever a president has addressed this annual ultra-reactionary mobilization. While cautioning against "violence," Reagan solidarized with the assembled bigots and urged that abortion be done away with for all time. This demonstration was the crowning touch to Reagan's obscene inaugural carnival, which piously professed "Christian values" and the "American way," while record numbers of the homeless were starving and freezing in inner city hellholes across the face of one of



McCracken/Pensacola News-Journal  
**Aftermath of Christmas bombing of Pensacola, Florida abortion facility. Right-to-life terror campaign means murder.**

the richest nations on earth. Desperate women, along with blacks and minorities and strikers and "reds," find themselves high up on the government's hit list. In February the White House held a special viewing of the video "The Silent Scream," produced by anti-abortion fanatics, showing an alleged 12-week-old fetus being aborted by suction. A gynecologist narrates how "the child" tries to move away, and states, "We see the child's open mouth in a silent scream...." Leading specialists in neuroembryology have pointed out what the film doesn't mention: that the fetus shown may in fact be 16 weeks old and that it takes at least 24 weeks for a fetus to develop the electrical nerve impulses to register pain. No matter—Reagan has bought up thousands of copies of this spurious propaganda piece to send to Congressmen, community groups and libraries across the country.

Late last December, the federal government served unprecedented notice to abortion clinics that they could expect to be bombed between January 20-22. Sure enough, a rash of bomb threats was reported in the days leading up to the inauguration, including at clinics in Washington, D.C. and Huntsville, Alabama. On January 22 in New York, courageous abortion rights advocate Bill Baird held a press conference outside St. Patrick's Cathedral. "I've gotten threats all week long that I would be dead before the day is out," said Baird. He noted that the FBI's refusal to consider such attacks "terrorism" is a reflection of Reagan, who is "anti-woman, anti-abortion." Baird, who operates abortion clinics in Boston and Long Island, had earlier announced he was posting armed guards around his facilities (*New York Times*, 12 January). His clinic in Long Island was firebombed six years ago, while 50

## Women and Revolution

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people were inside. Baird says he gave the FBI evidence in 1980 that clinic bombings were being planned at the National Right-to-Life Convention at Anaheim, California.

The wave of public outrage against FBI director William Webster's declaration that the clinic bombings don't constitute "terrorism," and perhaps the suggestion by Baird and a few others that abortion clinics might be undertaking measures of self-defense, seems finally to have got across to the government the idea that some of the murderous bomber bigots were going too far. On January 20, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms announced the arrest of three men charged with bombing seven abortion and family planning facilities in Washington, D. C., Maryland and Virginia, as well as allegedly planting a pipe bomb at an American Civil Liberties Union office in Washington.

Those arrested and their supporters are bloody-minded fanatics. The Christmas bombers of three abortion clinics in Pensacola, Florida, said this was "a gift to Jesus on his birthday." John Burt, a Pensacola anti-abortion bigot who operates "Our Father's House," a home for pregnant women, called the bombers "heroes," while bragging to the press about his past as a Ku Klux Klan nightrider against the civil rights movement. Pro-life "Nonviolent" Action Project co-founder John Cavanaugh-O'Keefe told the *New York Times* (20 November 1984): "Any pro-lifer that does not feel the urge to respond to the violence of abortion with violence has lost all feeling for anything." It is a symptom of the reactionary Reagan climate that these apologists for terrorist bombings are receiving a wide—and often sympathetic—press.

Meanwhile, abortion and family planning clinic operators are feeling increasingly desperate—and isolated. Rad-lib civil libertarian Nat Hentoff of the

pressure the FBI to act against the clinic bombers. This is a fatuous perspective. Relying on the bourgeois courts and secret police to defend women's rights, even in the most liberal of times, is at best an illusion; at worst, a formula for cynicism and despair and the abandonment of any fight for the real interests of the working class and poor.

NOW supported Cold Warrior Democrats Mondale/Ferraro, who responded to the Reaganites' charge that abortion was "murder" by mouthing a few pieties about "choice" (as if women who can't afford expensive legal abortions ever really had any). They flaunted their personal abhorrence of abortion, leaving the millions of women who've had abortions to the eternal hellfire and damnation threats of fundamentalist preachers and the Catholic church, Reagan's major ally in this assault on women. (The Catholic church recently managed to legally block the construction of a Planned Parenthood clinic in New York state.) The bourgeois Democratic Party is no friend of the working people—it was under President Carter, after all, that the Hyde Amendment banning federal funds for abortions under Medicaid was passed, while he coldly told poor women, "There are many things in life that are not fair."

Particularly disgusting was feminist author Betty Friedan's attack on Bill Baird. "Counterproductive" and "disruptive," she charged, saying he was driven to play the "knight in shining armor rescuing the meek woman" (*New York Times*, 29 January). Well, it's a good thing somebody is standing up to the Reaganite assault—Friedan sure hasn't. Baird's clinic in Hempstead, Long Island, the first in the country, opened 20 years ago, providing abortions to women too poor to pay and to teenagers, even when it was illegal. It was in fact in large part due to his militant efforts that the right to abortion became a national issue in the 1970s. He has been shot at, beaten up, spat on, arrested and jailed—eight times by his count. The son of Scottish/Prussian immigrants, raised in a poor family in Queens, Baird has never stopped fighting for his beliefs and for women's rights.

For the bourgeois feminists, in contrast, the main concern is achieving positions of power within the bourgeois state and capitalist infrastructure—they have always opposed "free abortion on demand." But of course for well-off women, abortion has never really been a problem. The wives, sisters and daughters of the ruling class will always be able to get their abortions, legal or not: in this country, the rich buy their rights. The workers must fight for theirs!

To put the fear of god into the "god-fearing" anti-abortion terrorists will take integrated working-class defense guards protecting women's fundamental right to free, safe abortions. The Spartacist League, which has been in the forefront of mass militant mobilizations in defense of blacks and minorities, immigrants, Jews, homosexuals and all the oppressed against Klan and Nazi provocations, stands ready to assist in the self-defense of abortion clinics. We fight for a revolutionary labor movement which will fully champion the struggle of all the oppressed against the arrogant capitalist reaction which today targets fundamental rights for women. ■



W&R Photo

**Bill Baird, courageous abortion rights fighter for 20 years, denounces Reagan as "anti-woman, anti-abortion" outside St. Patrick's Cathedral, NYC, January 22.**

*Village Voice* castigated "selfish women" who have abortions merely for "convenience," while the feminist movement has done little or nothing of use. Some women's groups have been reduced to praying that no Supreme Court justices will die in the next four years (opening the way for Reagan appointees to overturn the legalization of abortion). The National Organization for Women (NOW) has been organizing vigils to

# Letters on "Something About Incest"

We are pleased our article "Something About Incest" (W&R No. 28, Spring 1984) provoked so much response—both favorable and critical. Rather than responding to each letter individually, we are taking up the various criticisms and themes raised by our readers in the course of this issue's article on "The Uses of Abuse," as many of these points are intimately connected to our discussion of the current hysteria sweeping the country over sexual abuse of children.

## A Signed Article, Yes— Editorial Policy, No

Iowa City, Iowa  
4 March 1984

Comrades,

... I don't want to get into a lot of commentary in this letter. I have read only the shortest articles in the last WV (349) and a few of the articles in W&R 28. I have no particular comments on previous things. I will say a few words on the W&R article on incest. Generally I think it was a good article and should have been published. However, I think it should have been a signed article. Some of the generalizations in it are just too sweeping to be scientifically acceptable—we are scientific socialists after all. I still strongly object to your defense (albeit backhanded) of religious fanatics denying their children access to what modern education that does exist. No, I don't think that killing the parents is the answer, though in practice the parents themselves contribute heavily to setting up situations where this can happen. So far it appears that only the real crazies have been involved in shoot-outs, others being content with prayer, passive resistance and court cases. We after all are for separation of church and state, including the schools from the church. The article also makes what may with further investigation—going to a movie doesn't constitute psycho-sociological research, and certainly not a proof(!)—prove to be an indefensible distinction between the negative effects of parental sexual encounters on boys and girls. I said that I wasn't going to get into a lot of commentary and I am not. Suffice to say while the article has some very good parts, it also has some very sloppy parts, and doesn't reflect well on the editorial board with implications for party line. A signed article, yes (preferably "cleaned up"); editorial policy, no.

In solidarity,  
Loren Schutt

## The Feminist "Good Girl" Syndrome

[received 26 April 1984]

Dear Comrades:

You said it all in your incest article—in the libertarian Marxist spirit—without shirking. This approach, I fear,

is as unpopular today as the military defense of the degenerated and deformed workers' states. Most feminists would have taken the opposite tack, for it is the essence of the bourgeois feminist (still caught in the "good girl" syndrome) to be mercilessly ascetic, to eliminate human enjoyment from our relation to nature, to eliminate the human senses, and finally to eliminate the human brain. Unfortunately, you can't make a revolution without a brain, as some of the poor souls in "Women Against Pornography" must be discovering, wallowing with right-wing politicians and 42nd Street realtors. Thank you for providing the Marxist feminist alternative in your exceptional journal.

Communist Greetings!  
Price

P. S. What I love about you Comrades is that you don't throw out the penis with the bathwater.

## Freud and "Natural Sexual Incongruity"

New York  
24 May 1984

To the Editors of *Women and Revolution*:  
Comrades,

The authors of "Something About Incest" (W&R 28) admit that incestuous relations (especially between father and daughter) can create deep psychological wounds. While the article is vague and tentative about exactly what psychological processes are responsible for these wounds, there is a strong suggestion that they are inflicted because of the guilt and secrecy attending the violation of the social prohibitions needed to maintain the nuclear family. I think some elementary distinctions are in order. There are undoubtedly many instances of sex between consenting relatives (cousins, brothers and sisters and, in some cases, between fathers and their grown daughters) that are classified and prosecuted under the legal rubric of incest for no other reason than to maintain the sanctity of the family. Such laws do in fact comprise a puritanical restraint upon consensual relations. But if bourgeois society commits the crime of lumping legitimate liaisons together with oppressive ones in order to chastize them equally in the name of family morality, W&R comes perilously close to making the reverse error of condoning exploitative relations along with consensual ones in the name of sexual freedom. The most glaring example is the article's failure to make any distinction between other forms of incest and the imposition of sex upon pre-pubescent children by their parents.

Let us look more closely at the passage from Freud cited by the authors. It depicts a relationship between a father and his very young child. The sole significance extracted by W&R from this passage is the conflict

*continued on page 11*

# Children, Sex, State Witchhunters: The Uses of Abuse

In New York and Los Angeles police prowl the streets, interrogating potential prey for sex crime raps. Terrorists plant bombs in abortion clinics across the country. In Washington thousands of right-to-lifers mob the inauguration. In San Francisco AIDS victims are thrown out of hospitals by panicked staff. In the Midwest feminists and fundamentalists crusade together against pornography. To paraphrase Sir Edward Grey, the lights are going out all over America. Incest, child abuse, AIDS, abortion, homosexuality, pornography, GIs "missing-in-action," capital punishment, gun control, have become political footballs in the hands of the ruling class. Those of us too old for the state to get to testify as child abuse victims will remember a time when fluoridation of the nation's water produced a comparable hysterical furor over this "commie plot." One comrade bitterly commented: "It was simpler in the first witchhunt, there were more communists around. In those days they got people for their politics; now they're trying to get them for their Polaroids." As Dorothy Parker bemoaned—and the Moral Majority would have it—everything good is either illegal, immoral or fattening.

Reactionary and idiosyncratic fetishes evoke comparable passions in different societies. While culturally revolting to us now, for many peoples cannibalism has been a cherished custom perhaps only recently abandoned. In India there is the tradition of suttee—nicely captured in the story of the Indian man who complained to an intervening British officer, "But it is our custom to burn a woman on the funeral pyre of

her husband." The Englishman replied, "And it is our custom to execute murderers."

In the Muslim East a leading opponent of the Sudan government was publicly hanged on January 18 for calling for mildly democratic reforms; Sudan's president Nimeiry announced a day later there'd been no hand amputations of thieves in three months because "there haven't been any serious thefts since then." Mountain tribes in Pakistan murdered the first people who tried to introduce iodized salt into a population that, because they ate mined salt, had 30-40 percent goiter. And Saudi sheik Abdul Aziz Bin Baz has railed against co-education in Kuwait, while expressing the view that the world is flat. Despite what Reagan may believe, flat-worldism is not a hot topic in the Western world. Though before sneering too much at the fundamentalist Muslims, let us not forget the Scopes monkey trial—or the fact that in parts of the U. S. A. Darwin's evolutionism is described in science texts alongside creationism as just another "theory."

As Marxists, not sociologists or professional researchers, we address such social issues precisely because they have become politicized. Like the subjects of art, literature and science, the social question of incest, to take one example, is peripheral to our political program, and we do not require our members to take a position on it. For that reason, our article "Something About Incest" (W&R No. 28) could have been signed by its authors. It was not, because it took a clear-cut

*continued on next page*

**Salem witch trials, 1692:** Mass hysteria, inflamed by young girls who writhed in court, pointing to "witches," led to hanging of 20 innocent townspeople, jailing of hundreds of others. It's happening again today: witness small town of Jordan, Minnesota, where last summer 24 adults were accused of running sex rings with and murdering children, before witch-hunting prosecutor's case finally collapsed.



position only on the political question involved—intervention by the state—and was sufficiently algebraic on the social/scientific issues that all members of the editorial board felt they could fit in their own arithmetic. Some questions must remain questions, as our article sought to explain, surely in bourgeois society, and possibly in a socialist one.

The current hysteria over child abuse in America underscores and magnifies many of the points in our article. Raping, beating and otherwise abusing children are utterly horrendous crimes—yet state intervention, with its cruel tortures of prison cells and sadistic punishments, its barbed-wire-surrounded orphanages and reform schools, is often not much better. As we noted in “Something About Incest”:

“The most savage indictment against this vicious state is that it is probably better to stick with your Bible-belt drunken violent father and your pathetic family life than to fall into the clutches of the law. It is particularly bitter to have to say this, because the child abuse, the wife-beating, the endless humiliations of children and women that happen within the family are utterly abhorrent to us, and we understand the terrible oppression of women which the family represents.... The fact is, under contemporary capitalism, in the absence of an alternative, the family structure is about all a kid’s got.”

### An Epidemic of Hysteria

There’s an “incest epidemic” in America, declared one participant in a Congressional subcommittee hearing last August. The hearing brought together crazed fundamentalist bigots, anti-porn feminists, “incest survivors,” and parents of abused children in a compendium perfectly reflecting the state’s conscious campaign to inflame political passions on the questions of incest, child abuse and sexuality generally. The panel heard scare stories that “hundreds of thousands” of “child predators” are roaming the country, that one out of every four girls will be molested before her teens, that pornography leads to child abuse. *Life* magazine (December 1984) continued this summer’s media frenzy in a 20-page spread on “The Cruellest Crime,” claiming a child is sexually molested “every two minutes” in the U.S. Even *Penthouse* weighed in this January with a scurrilous article by Allan Sonnen-schein railing against “an organized conspiracy to encourage this terrible crime,” viciously attacking the NAMBLA group, which simply advocates the right of consensual sex between youths and adults.

Media-hyped hysteria over sexual abuse of children spread all summer, centering at first on accusations against teachers and staff in preschool and day-care centers in Manhattan Beach, California, and in the Bronx. As police, social workers and doctors interrogated hundreds of children in Los Angeles and New York, anger and panic spread. New York mayor Ed Koch called for “whistle-blowing” by parents and day-care workers and for fingerprinting all employees, and social therapists publicized special programs to teach kids “no touch” areas of their bodies. Three government officials were forced to resign, one in California accused of child molesting, two in New York accused of covering up the day-care scandals. Parents have pulled

their children out of school and tried to remove teachers they suspect may be child molesters. One Nigerian student in East Oakland was beaten to a pulp, his apartment vandalized and his car destroyed by neighbors when two girls he’d befriended claimed he’d fondled them.

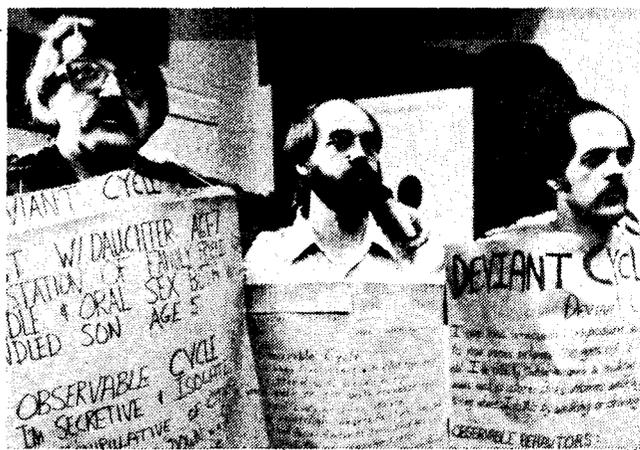
In late August the hysteria came to a head. In a veritable reenactment of the Salem witch trials, 24 adults in the small town of Jordan, Minnesota were charged with luring 40 children, including some of their own, into wild and weird sex saturnalias. It began when a babysitter was accused of abusing his young charge and agreed to accuse others. The town’s children were questioned and accused still others. The kids were put in foster homes, prevented from seeing their parents, and interrogated repeatedly under the direction of the county prosecutor, a self-proclaimed “crusader against child abuse.” One couple’s trial began in August—but one child broke down on the stand; another recanted part of his testimony, and the babysitter, who had sworn he had been at orgies with the accused, couldn’t even identify him. Finally, all the babysitter’s testimony was thrown out when it came out he’d been promised leniency if his testimony convicted others.

The couple was unanimously acquitted on September 20, while the prosecutor dropped the charges pending against the others on October 15, claiming further prosecutions would “impede a major criminal investigation.” It turned out she had hundreds of pages of notes including statements about a ritualistic murder of three boys. But there were no bodies, and no missing children. Except of course the children still missing from their own families—as of this February, 16 out of the 27 children interrogated were still in foster homes, their cases “pending.” And the lives of dozens of people dragged through this witchhunt have been ruined. The Minnesota attorney general announced on February 12 that the entire investigation had been “a tragedy,” and that no charges would be refiled, while dismissing the murder allegations (*New York Times*, 13 February).

Meanwhile, the Manhattan Beach McMartin nursery school case has turned into an ongoing over-six-months-old pretrial hearing. Children have told lurid stories of satanic sex rituals and “naked games” involving the 77-year-old school founder, her daughters, grandchildren and three teachers; and described the murder of pets, including a brown pony—but under defense questioning have recanted many of these stories. While the hearing drags on, the nursery school has long since been shut down, as have at least five other childcare centers in Southern California in the past year as a direct result of child abuse allegations.

In the Bronx, the closing of the Praca day-care center has left a whole community of largely Puerto Rican working parents without any day-care facilities. In the barrage of frightening stories about “strangers,” sex rings and day-care scandals, there’s one story that hasn’t appeared: what about the needs of the poor and working women who rely on preschool and day-care centers to take care of their kids while they earn their living? The reactionary bias of many pushing the investigations of day-care centers is that they are in and

People convicted of child molestation are routinely beaten and shunned by other jail inmates. The "alternative" special programs offered some, as described by *Life* (December 1984), are chilling. At Oregon State Hospital (right), sex offenders write out their "deviant cycle" and "observable behaviors" on big posters hung in their rooms. Sessions are held where female victims of non-related crimes confront the inmates. In the "treatment lab" the men are shown pornographic slides of children (where are the child abuse charges against this porn ring?); when they get aroused, the "therapist" administers a hit of ammonia into the guy's nose and an electric shock in his groin. The men must learn to believe that their behavior is wrong. The description could have been taken from the Chinese Cultural Revolution: the *dazibaos*, the public humiliation, the struggle sessions. Here's what the director of the prison unit of this "model program" has to say of its effectiveness:



"There are no cures in this business. About the only thing we haven't tried is Magnum therapy—blowing their brains out with a bullet."

of themselves somehow subversive, dangerous institutions and that what we need is a return to the "good, strong, two-parent family situation," as LAPD cop Ralph Bennett told *Penthouse* magazine (January 1985).

The violent abuse and rape of children is a terrible crime. The problem is that once the question of "child abuse" has become a political football, the state willfully will not tell the difference between Jack the Ripper and Lewis Carroll. A stranger who lurks in school yards, offers candy to a little girl then rapes and maims her and a father who takes showers with his pre-pubescent daughter are both telescoped into a common juridical scheme. The child abuse dragnet has pulled in a father in Baltimore because one of his daughters fondled his genitals and the other saw him pee; the director of the Minneapolis Children's Theatre was arrested for having a three-year affair with a 15-year-old boy. And a couple in Chicago were arrested, the father convicted and the family run out of town—just because the guy had taken some snapshots of his daughter, fresh out of the bath and naked, doing somersaults. Just the mere accusation of "child abuse," even if no charges or convictions result, is enough to taint or ruin a person's life forever. And let us not forget that the mother of Patrick Mason—the five-year-old black child gunned down while watching TV in his own bedroom by an Orange County, California cop—was accused of "child abuse" for the "crime" of having to work for a living.

Meanwhile, someone has murdered and dismembered over 50 young men in the Midwest. These heinous crimes have gone on for over a year, and the killings continue! *Gay Community News* (8 September 1984) carried a chillingly neutral account of a homosexual suspected by the police. But of course there's no "hot line" for 16 to 21-year-old gays or poor black kids who disappear by scores each year. In this witchhunt atmosphere, where political crime categories are created out of social issues, not only are the innocent often destroyed, but in the general hysteria the guilty

may well escape to continue their violent crimes—and that too is a terrible outrage.

### The Uses of Abuse: State Hypocrisy and Cruelty

The hypocrisy of the government's concern to "protect our children" is mind-boggling. Infant mortality rates in the U.S. are a shocking reflection of racist savagery. In 1981, black infants were twice as likely as whites to die before their first birthday—the rate was 10.5 deaths per 1,000 white babies and 20 per 1,000 for blacks, while in some parts of the country the black infant death rate has exceeded that of many Third World countries (*The Nation*, 9 June 1984). Reagan's White House has pushed through an economic austerity program that ensures no future for the vast majority of youth who do grow up. Left-leaning journalist Alexander Cockburn, now writing for *The Nation* (1 September 1984), put it nicely:

"The Reagan Administration has, after all, knowingly inflicted enormous suffering on children. It has cut school lunches, cut Aid to Families With Dependent Children, cut child-abuse programs. As psychohistorian Lloyd deMause puts it in his new book, *Reagan's America*, after four years of Reagan we have 'over twenty million children suffering needless pain, hunger and death with barely a mourner in sight.' The displaced response has been the sudden discovery of, and campaign against, child abuse."

As for day-care centers, an urgent necessity for the growing numbers of mothers who must work, the administration has done just about everything possible to ensure that these already inadequate facilities will continue to suffer. In 1980 the Department of Health and Human Welfare had to withdraw its proposal to establish standards for federally funded day-care centers because of intense opposition by industry and by fundamentalist religious groups! Reagan cut federal subsidies in 1981 for day care for low-income families, then cut grants used for the regulation of other pre-schools, stating regulation was "not necessary." Child

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molestation in fact runs about last in a long list of problems besetting day care in the U.S. The *Wall Street Journal* (5 September 1984) described them as "major transmission centers" for infectious disease, and some workers admit that many facilities are little more than warehouses for children. Instead of seeking to upgrade and make centers safe and healthy places, this government prefers to scandalize and terrify parents with the "child abuse" campaign, leading to simply shutting down day care, thus trying to force many women who have no choice but to work back into the home full time.

And then we have Reagan's spiritual lieutenants of the Moral Majority. The Moral Majority has heretofore opposed all laws against child abuse—that is, against the beating of children. *Penthouse*, in its February 1982 issue, before it threw its lot in with these would-be witch burners, did an exposé on the Moral Majority's defense of child-beatings and physical discipline in fundamentalist schools. The *New York Times* (3 June 1984) ran an article on the New Bethany Baptist Church for Boys in South Carolina where students were beaten with a plastic "rod of correction" and kept in jail cells. Forty-three students had to be taken into emergency custody when the director was charged with kidnaping, unlawful neglect and conspiracy.

The purpose behind this "child abuse" hysteria is to force people back into the rigid confines of the family. A strong, preferably religious, family is a must to ensure discipline, obedience and the inculcation of reactionary values; anything that threatens that has got to go. Reagan needs an ideologically compliant population to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome" so he can lead the country successfully into war against the Soviet Union. Under Carter and the Democrats we got the born-again Christians, anti-gay witchhunts and anti-porn crusades; under Reagan it's all that plus the Moral Majority, anti-birth control, anti-abortion terrorists and now this displaced "child abuse," anti-childcare hysteria. The first Cold War in the late '40s and early '50s was similarly associated with a sharp swing to the right on social questions. Highway billboards read "The family that prays together stays together." Another, signed by J. Edgar Hoover, read roughly "Communists hate God, send your child to Sunday School this Sunday."

### Children and Sexuality

We live in a world that is brutal, ignorant, anti-sexual and hostile. Our social relations reflect that, all the more when there is discrepancy between people in size, age, force, class. Our "model" as children is the patriarchal, monogamous family where what little sex there is is reserved for adults. All these things combine to make it virtually impossible to sort into neat, objective, static categories the spectrum that lies between rape on the one hand and full consensual sex on the other. That is in part why our article on incest in the last *W&R* provoked so much controversy. Some of the objections we received come under the category of beating a dead horse. For example, one comrade called in and said, "How can you talk about effective consent when a kid can't even choose whether he eats his



United Artists

**In the movie *The Children's Hour*, maliciously fabricated accusations of lesbianism made by children ruin two teachers' lives. In today's witchhunt atmosphere, accusations alone—true or not—are enough to destroy people's lives.**

spinach!" Certainly more graphically put, but not different from our statement that:

"The question is one of effective consent. One might say that a girl of 11 is too young, whereas one of 14 is able to decide for herself what she wants to do. But in a situation as embroiled and sensitive as the family, mechanical guidelines break down."

But the human species does have a history, and as Marxists we can offer some general social considerations based on that. Human sexuality is a relative thing—relative to the nature of society, class, individual. In our society today, children are considered asexual creatures (one could not launch a political campaign against child sexual abuse on any other assumption). From his letter it appears that Jim C. agrees. He reiterates Freud's comments about sexual incongruity—adding the term "natural"—and declares that children are "psychologically incapable of comprehending" sexual advances. Jim C. believes this changes at puberty, and sees it as an immutable genetic fact upon which social culture can have no effect. Jim C. attributes to Freud the exact opposite of Freud's position on the emotional disparity between parents (i.e., adults) and children. One of Freud's most important insights—and the one considered most shockingly wicked by his contemporaries—was in fact that children are born with sexual urges and that their first sexual objects are their parents. It is children whose erotic drives are relatively uncontrollable, not their parents. Anyone who has taken care of young children knows that their need for physical gratification (of many kinds) is more constant, demanding and less postponable than that of adults. Indeed, Freud's entire theoretical premise is that individual maturation and the development of civilization in general is based on the *postponement* (i.e., repression and sublimation) of instinctual gratification. (Of course, to some extent Freud's worldview was affected by the deeply con-

straining, sexually repressive Victorian values of his society.)

Jim C. actually undercuts his own argument when he calls parental sex with children "pre-civilized." This is literally correct: in hunting/gathering societies—which comprised about 95 percent of human existence—restraints on sexual activity were at most a generational, not a familial, consideration. In Engels' seminal *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, he makes the point that the conception of incest developed relatively late: "Not only were brother and sister originally man and wife; sexual intercourse between parents and children is still permitted among many peoples today." The whole idea of incest is impossible until the crystallization of exploitative class society when the question "Where do babies come from?" was either asked or answered. Moreover, when the concept of incest was invented, it was a taboo against marriage, not sex.

Nor is the belief in child asexuality a static element of class society. In *Centuries of Childhood*, Philippe Ariès describes the lack of sexual reserve of and toward children in the Middle Ages and comments:

"The attitude to sex, and doubtless sex itself, varies according to environment, and consequently according to period and mentality. Nowadays the physical contacts described by Heroard [court physician to the French king Henri IV] would strike us as bordering on sexual perversion and nobody would dare to indulge in them publicly. This was not the case at the beginning of the seventeenth century."

Ariès goes on to chronicle the "real propaganda campaign," largely by the Catholic church, to instill modesty in children as part of a more general change then taking place in the conception of childhood.

The attitude toward children today is linked to the myth of female asexuality. All children are supposed to be asexual until puberty, at which point boys are expected to become instantly sexually aggressive. Girls are not, even after they are "properly" married at a "proper" age. Most women in fact enjoy genital stimulation, but this is often not only ignored but denied. Ninety-nine percent of boys begin masturbating one second after puberty; ask a woman when she did, and you'll get every answer from "ever since I can remember" to "never." Even the Harlequin pulp romances reflect this myth. The "needing to be unlocked" heroines of "women's romance literature" reinforce female asexuality and are so popular because they allow women to redirect their sexual impulses to a "socially acceptable" aesthetic plane.

The question of sexuality is also intimately class related. Statistically for both men and women, the higher one's class status, the more postponed the act of sexual intercourse. But while more oppressed classes carry less sexually constraining baggage, their sex lives suffer the burden of their oppression. Brutalized populations have brutalized sex (though this tells you precisely *nothing* about any particular individual). Pictures from *Life* magazine of those convicted of child molestation and their families are indicative: they are lumpenized, bitter, both helpless and hopeless—in short, victims of capitalist society.

And if this is true of poor whites in the U.S., it is

magnified for black people. It is not accidental, for example, that open homosexuality is less frequently found and less tolerated among the black population. When homosexuality has come to evoke rape by fellow inmates in prison hellholes, it can hardly be seen as mutual physiological and emotional pleasure. Likewise, when one's socially backward, unemployed and non-providing, affection-starved—or call it "emotionally battered," if you like—father (or more likely the guy one's mother is currently shackled up with) comes home drunk and screws everything in sight, incest tends in fact to be abuse.

The question of prepubescent sex is every bit as socially relative. Children's expression of sexuality tends to reflect what they've had brought to them. A child can be intensely interested in sex, but without any understanding of the act of intercourse he would express this as occasional prurient sexual curiosity. Freudian psychologists believe that very young children are sexually inquisitive and then at about the age of six until puberty go through a period of latency. It may be that this is a glandular phenomenon and that sexual exposure before puberty can at best be merely comforting and at worst painful and deforming. This is more true for boys where orgasm is physiologically linked to ejaculation (girls don't have that problem). At puberty a child's sex hormones activate and sexual awareness and interest come boiling to the fore. What happens then is that young men and young women are sexually impacted on each other at the height of their socialized sexual differentiation, without any preparation or know-how, without much access or opportunity—and that's fairly painful and deforming too.

But what if children grew up in a sexually open environment free of constraining taboos? Where they watch their parents make love; where they're allowed to explore their own bodies and the differences between theirs and their siblings' and between theirs and their parents'; where someone older gently and patiently teaches them a thing or two? The point is, we *don't know* how much is genetic and how much is social.

### **Damned If You Do, Damned If You Don't**

So it is at least conceivable that cross-generational sex is not at all times and everywhere synonymous with child abuse. But what to do when real abuse has taken place?

Jim C. misses or willfully refuses to see the central point of "Something About Incest." We are opposed to state intervention into cases of incest not only because this brutal state will inevitably make things worse, but also because we are opposed to incest being *defined a priori* as a crime punishable and punished by the bourgeois state. Yes, in many cases incest is psychologically damaging to the child, who does not fully comprehend everything adults do. But perhaps even more damaging are many other kinds of parental behavior (which the young child cannot fully comprehend either). What of parents who neglect their

*continued on next page*

children, starving them of physical affection and attention? What of parents who set impossible standards of behavior as a condition to express love and approval? (Not to mention the traumas of death and divorce, for which young children often blame themselves.) We believe there is no reason to single out incest *per se* as a relationship which justifies state intervention. To do so leads in the direction of some kind of sexual totalitarianism.

We are unalterably opposed to the mandatory reporting laws which *force* state intervention into people's private lives, because they ensure not only the *maximum* devastation of all parties involved, but also deter those who need counseling from seeking it. Occasionally intervention is unavoidable. In our recent article we mentioned deadly family violence. Another example is the case of the Jehovah's Witnesses: they are against blood transfusions. We would oppose any attempt to force one on an adult, but we are in favor in life-threatening cases of giving one to a child *over and above* his parents' objection. And it's not that we're always opposed to the use of the courts in child abuse cases. The problem, however, is that we live in a bourgeois society where "justice" exists only for the ruling class and the courts are primarily vehicles to keep everyone else in line.

Then there is the question of corroboration. In the past making charges stick was extremely difficult: acts of molestation are rarely public, leaving it a matter of the assailant's word against the victim's—by definition a child whose uncorroborated testimony was until 1974 deemed suspect by federal law (as is that of felons and ...atheists!). An onslaught of demands for procedural "reforms" has changed this. Only two states now demand the corroboration of child witnesses, and about half the country has eliminated competency requirements for children under ten. Some jurisdictions are waiving "hearsay" rules so that adults may testify as to what children have told them; others have proposed using videotapes of children talking to social workers as evidence rather than having them testify in court. These "reforms" create a special star chamber where the right to cross-examine is removed because they don't want to subject the "little one" to court. Evaluation of child testimony is a tricky business. It isn't that children are all liars or have defective memories; they aren't and they don't. But they are usually incapable of balance and are highly susceptible to suggestion. Especially uncorroborated, their testimony should be heard and evaluated on an individual basis. We note the hypocrisy of those who believe kids are uniformly too young and tender for sex or court appearances, but old enough to convict someone else on the basis of their word alone.

We are reminded here of *The Children's Hour* by Lillian Hellman where two female teachers were accused by their students of lesbianism. Although fabricated by kids who were mad at them, the accusation stuck and the teachers' lives were ruined. For those who object that fiction "doesn't constitute psycho-sociological research," there is the real life experience of Charles Daniels, a black man, who recently won \$600,000 from the City of New York for

four years of wrongful imprisonment. Despite alibi witnesses, he was convicted for the sexual attack and attempted murder of a two-year-old boy on the uncorroborated testimony of a ten year old. After investigation brought out the fact that the cops purposely withheld evidence that the witness was emotionally disturbed *and* had identified someone other than Daniels, the charges were dismissed (meanwhile, Daniels lost four years of his life—and was beaten and abused while in prison). And when a population has been whipped into hysteria, extreme injustice is even more likely—as in Jordan, Minnesota, where children described in lurid detail orgies and murders for which there was no objective evidence and which they later recanted.

Child abuse is not the only issue in this society where you are "damned if you do, damned if you don't." In the past it was equally difficult to get a conviction for the crime of rape, the only felony for which uncorroborated testimony by the victim was insufficient. A change in the corroboration rules made it easier for a woman to prosecute; it also made it easier for cops to railroad the accused, and in this racist society the new laws were used to further victimize black people. As in cases of incest, it is inevitable that ambiguities about consensuality will arise. This is especially true in the new rash of cases of "marital rape"—marriage itself is supposed to be a straitjacket guarantee of sexual monogamy/monotony (that's why there are laws against adultery). The new laws inevitably leave open the possibility of accusations motivated by malice or revenge.

Jim C. asks us to guarantee "freedom from the imposition of adult sexuality" by condoning action in the courts in general. We do have a positive program: for workers revolution to build a socialist society, creating the framework for justice. Even in that context when, for example, an allegation of sexual abuse is made, one would have to determine, first: did it happen? This is not easy. Then, one might apply the bottom-line standard: did they both like it at the time, especially the younger one? Again, not easy to ascertain. So you are back to "damned if you do, damned if you don't" whenever there is an intervention by a powerful third party, i.e., the state.

But we do not and *cannot* offer the bourgeoisie a program to run their capitalist state, nor can we tell *them* how to untangle the web of repression the bourgeois family represents. In February 1975 we carried a (signed) article in *Young Spartacus* (No. 29) called "Rape and Bourgeois Justice." Our conclusion to that article aptly reflects the problems of child abuse cases:

"Within the confines of capitalist society and through the 'justice' of the bourgeois state, the search for an equitable administration of justice for the crime of rape is caught in a maze with no exit. Each proposed solution, from legal reform to direct vigilante retribution, runs into flat contradictions arising out of the intersection of sex, race and class in this capitalist society...."

"Only in a workers state will men and women stand in full equality before the law, the administration of which will be a part of the creation and maintenance of a social fabric of well-being for the population as a whole." ■

# Letters...

(continued from page 4)

between the mutual dependency entailed in a sexual relationship, on the one hand, and the very non-mutual relationship of authority between parent and child, on the other. Overlooked completely are Freud's references to the child's being "prematurely aroused," to his "imperfect control of his natural needs," and to the "grotesque and tragic disparities" between the incestuous partners. Freud obviously thinks that, in addition to role conflict, there is a *natural sexual incongruity* between child and adult. This is not, in my opinion, another example of Freud's nineteenth-century sexual hang-ups.

It is one thing to say that "children are sexual beings," and quite another to ignore the world of difference between the inchoate sexual impulses of a child and the strong and well-defined sex drives of an adult. Compare the "dirty" gossip and behavior of a fifth-grader who is equally curious about matters sexual and scatological with the locker-room conversation of a high school sophomore. The difference is not merely in received codes of social behavior but also (forgive me) in their genes. It consists in the quantum leap in the intensity of sexual desire accompanying the onset of puberty. Puberty is considered a way station in life by all societies that I know of. It may be refracted differently through the prism of culture, but social culture can neither constitute nor obliterate it.

Is it any wonder, then, that in all cases of child/parent sex I have read or heard about, sex is initiated by the parent? The parent wants sex, while the child is, at best, bewildered. The sexual strivings of a grownup are, in the nature of the case, alien to the child. It makes no sense to speak of equality where the parties involved are inherently unequal, or of effective consent where one party cannot know what he/she is consenting to. The abuse involved in this kind of incest is indeed rooted in the nuclear family but not, as W&R implies, because the partners feel guilty about transgressing assigned familial roles. This may compound the problem. The real crime, however, consists in the fact that parents use the authority conferred by the family to impose something for which children are physiologically unequipped, psychologically incapable of comprehending, and physically incapable of resisting. It is not the violation of social taboo, but the violation of the child's *personality* on the most intimate level that accounts for the injury of incest.

W&R's underestimation of the seriousness of incest leads to a position that would deprive children of their only recourse against it. Only in cases where force is used, we are told, are children or their advocates justified in taking the offending parents to court. But if the owner of any sweatshop in New York's garment district can compel adult Latin immigrants to work for fifty cents an hour without holding a gun to their heads, how much greater must be the power of parents over children who are dependent upon them for every material and emotional need? Being able to substitute the threat of force for force itself is a singular advantage

enjoyed by those invested with absolute power.

One thing that makes the power of the family patriarch less than absolute is a series of legal protections, in part the legacy of the great bourgeois revolutions, intended to insure that, however oppressive the family remains, it shall not become an institution of social slavery. Neither the wife nor the wife's property belong to the husband; parents cannot force their children to work in factories, deprive them of an education or promise them in marriage. Children are recognized as possessing distinct personalities, and are entitled to the minimal conditions necessary for their normal development into adulthood. Freedom from the imposition of adult sexuality, it seems to me, is one of these conditions, one, moreover, which can only be enforced if children have the right to remove either themselves or the offending parent from the home in which they are being molested. This often cannot take place without custody fights, which, for good or ill, are conducted in the bourgeois courts.

W&R points out that these courts are more often the despoilers than the upholders of democratic rights. And it is undeniable that anyone petitioning the courts for relief against the infringement of such rights always faces the risk that the "remedy" will be worse than the injustice he sought to rectify. But should this consideration prevent individuals and groups, including the

*continued on next page*

## International Spartacist Tendency Directory

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<b>Lega Trotskista d'Italia</b> .....	Walter Fidacaro C.P. 1591 20101 Milano, Italy
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<b>Spartacist League of Australia/New Zealand</b> .....	Spartacist League GPO Box 3473 Sydney, NSW, 2001 Australia

Spartacist League, from pursuing litigation where elementary democratic considerations are involved? Are abused children any less entitled to do so? The alternative—the only one that *W&R* appears to leave to children who have been made the erotic playthings of their parents—is submission to a sexual initiation that is not only premature but pre-civilized.

Jim C.

## Few Socialist/Communist Journals Would Dare

Bristol [England]  
23 June 1984

Dear Comrades,

Whilst on a recent miners demonstration in Cardiff I agreed with one of your comrades to take a strike special subscription (£1.00 for 5 issues). I paid him 20p and agreed to send on the remaining 80p. That I am doing.

I also purchased a copy of the *Solidarność* pamphlet (and have read it) and a copy of *Women and Revolution* (Spring '84) more recently. I was most interested in the article on incest which I thought was bold and perceptive. There are few socialist/communist journals that would have dared tread on such "delicate" ground, more power to your elbows. I have also enclosed £1.50 for the next four issues of *Women and Revolution* hoping that they will be of similar quality....

Yours' with comradely thanks,  
Ian Denison

P.S. Do you have any publications on Ireland?

## No Consensual Sex Should Be Prosecuted

New York, NY  
July 13, 1984

Dear *Women and Revolution*:

Your article "Something About Incest" (*Women and Revolution*, Spring 1984) was thoughtful and insightful. Not only was your analysis good in the abstract, it was concrete and on the mark. Your writer certainly did her homework!

Most left groups seem unable to deal intelligently with issues of sexuality, despite the fact that sexual pleasure—and sexual misery—occupy an important part in the life of the masses. When it comes to sexual taboos, you can count on most of them to parrot the line of the liberal wing of the bourgeoisie—if not of the right.

No consensual sex is bad. No consensual sex should be prosecuted. I have personally known of cases of homosexual incest that I did not consider "liberated," and of which I did not "approve," but in which the teenage boy was a willing participant and could hardly be said to have been harmed. Incest does present

problems that other forms of cross-generational sex—man-boy love, for instance—do not. In incest, the young person is to some extent trapped in a family situation from which he/she cannot easily escape, whereas in man-boy relationships the boy is free to come and go as he pleases.

One point you might have made is that in the United States, social policy is to keep the family together at all costs. Therefore, the father who is involved with his daughter—the most common form of incest, and probably the most potentially damaging to the psychological outlook of the young person—is rarely prosecuted and rarely goes to jail. But completely consensual, even joyful, relationships between a gay man and a gay boy are prosecuted with a vengeance. In no case of man-boy sex that has involved the North American Man/Boy Love Association, for example, has any boy or any parent of any boy made any complaint against any man. It is the heterosexist state that makes the complaint by seeking out and coercing boys to testify against their older lovers. As Lt. William G. Thorne of the Bergen County (NJ) Prosecutor's Office said in one such case last year: "The big problem is getting under-age boys to testify against their male lovers.... The interrogation can be intense.... We've got to crack the boy and it's not an easy thing to do."

Your reasoned approach to taboo sexuality is refreshing. Let's all work together to get the state out of our bedrooms!

Yours for sexual freedom,  
David Thorstad

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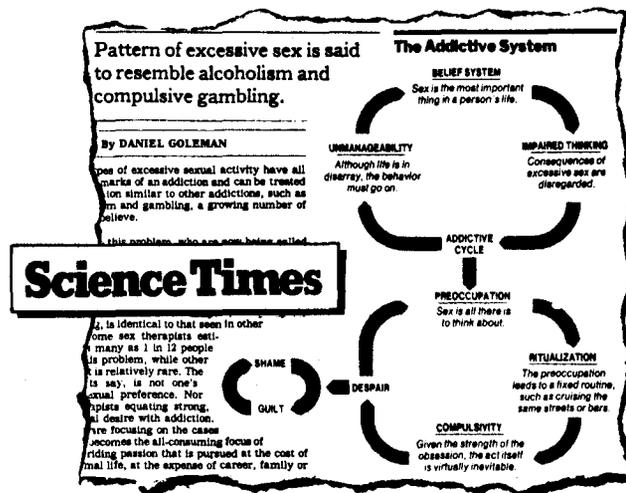
# The Moral Majority Takes Over the Science Times **Sex: Is There Ever Enough?**

The following editorial note and letter are reprinted from *Young Spartacus* No. 122, November 1984.

The last few years—under both Democrat “born-again” Carter and Moral Majority Republican Reagan—have witnessed increased government meddling in the totally private matter of consensual sexual activity. Homosexuality is ruled unprotected by constitutional rights; Reagan tries to outlaw teen sex with his “squeal rule”; campaigns against pornography burgeon in city after city. The former Miss America, the delicious Miss Vanessa Williams, the first black woman ever to win the rhinestone tiara, was pressured into resigning her title because she had posed for nude photographs (in sexually explicit scenes with a white woman)—while the new Miss America is a bible-thumping Mormon from Utah who collects soap for a hobby! “Cleanliness is next to godliness” sums up the sexual program of the Moral Majority, which wants to make itself the dictator of every American’s conscience.

But now the government and its lackeys in science and medicine are ruling that not only are many kinds of sexual acts wrong/sick/illegal/evil, but so is “too much” of any kind! The lead article in the 16 October [1984] issue of the *Science Times*, the *New York Times*’ weekly section on science news, was “Some Sexual Behavior Viewed as an Addiction,” which outlined sex therapists’ “discovery” of “sexual addicts.” While this term is not yet a formal diagnostic category in medicine or psychology, many researchers are working up a definition. Leading “sex addict” proponent Dr. Patrick Carnes states, “the problem is simply that sex has taken over their lives.” We ask ourselves, what is so bad—or unusual—about this? That this article, a hodge-podge of moralism and eclectic psychologizing, should be published as a piece of “science” only underlines its potentially sinister consequences.

One “expert,” Dr. John Money, director of the psychohormonal research unit at Johns Hopkins Medical School, is quoted, “some male fetishists [sic] report having orgasms up to 10 times a day. We don’t know why they have that capacity, but one day I’m certain we’ll find out the underlying neurochemistry is unique.” And it is equally “certain” that then the (jealous?) Dr. Money will diligently apply himself to “curing” the “affliction” that is the desire of most healthy men and women. This Dr. Money is the same ghastly white-coated doctor wielding hypodermic needles that the Spartacist League wrote about in “Anti-Sex Drugs Deform Male Prisoners” (*Women and Revolution* No. 18, Spring 1979) for his “cure” for “sex offenders.” Dr. Money tested his new drug, a hormone called anti-androgen, not only on “sex offenders,” but on men showing patterns of “violent behavior”—manifested not only in attacks on people, but also on objects! He claimed, “you can revert their sex drive



back to the prepuberty level.” That the *New York Times* quotes this sinister experimenter in chemical castration as a legitimate “scientist” says a lot about Reagan’s America.

We defend any consensual sexual act as a private matter; the days when sex therapists occupied themselves with helping people have a better time in bed were a small step in the right direction.

We print here a letter [not published] to the *Science Times* by Walt Senterfitt of the editorial board of *Women and Revolution*.

22 October 1984

*New York Times*  
 229 West 43rd Street  
 New York, NY 10036

Attention: Editor, *Science Times*

Dear sirs:

Your article, “Some Sexual Behavior Viewed as an Addiction” (16 October 1984) is an eclectic broth of totally dissimilar sexual phenomena with an overlay of Moral Majority-ism. But it is an extension of reactionary sexual unease.

Surely there are many sexual pathologies but somebody’s attempt to put them all under one roof is a reductio ad absurdum. No longer are only qualitative departures from the sexual norm (whose?) to be condemned, but now also even the simple quantitative ones.

Perhaps the man who wanted to screw five to ten times a day, to his wife’s frigid dismay, needs not to be cured but either better technique or a new wife. A lot of women do, you know. Or do you?

Sincerely,  
 Walt Senterfitt,  
 editorial board,  
*Women and Revolution*

# Down with the Reactionary Anti-Porn Crusade!

## Granddaughters of Carry Nation in Bed with Jerry Falwell

Reprinted from *Young Spartacus*  
No. 123, December 1984/January 1985

**MADISON**—Formerly a hotbed of campus protest, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's "radical" reputation has given way in large part to smug, "me generation" liberalism. The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), scabs on the anti-Vietnam War movement, carry a lot of weight in city and county government. With prudery that suits Madison's Protestant environs, "alternative" lifestylism has been institutionalized. You will live a wholesome life. Some manifestations are just plain silly: Madison was declared a "nuclear-free zone" and sandwiches come with beansprouts whether you order them or not. Some are absolutely infuriating: liquor stores close at 9:00 p.m. and you can't buy cigarettes anywhere on the huge UW campus.

The latest target for moral uplift of the community is pornography—*Penthouse* and *Playboy* have been pulled from the Student Union newsstand on the dubious grounds of "low circulation." DSAer Kathleen Nichols, a Dane County supervisor, is proposing legislation modeled on Andrea Dworkin's Minneapolis ordinance to make pornography a civil rights violation. Material in which "people" are "reduced to body parts," "presented in postures of sexual submission" or "presented as whores by nature" would be outlawed (*Badger-Herald*, 8 November 1984)! Under this law, you can't consent to buy, sell, photograph or pose for pornographic pictures. As the *Badger-Herald* commented, "Groups normally in solidarity, such as pseudo-feminists and homosexuals, are at odds. Groups normally in opposition, such as pseudo-feminists and the local fundamentalist ministers, support the ordinance." Talk about obscene!

We print below a slightly edited version of the *Spartacus Youth League* statement submitted to the *Madison Isthmus* and *UW Daily Cardinal*. It appeared in a shortened version in the *Isthmus* (16 November 1984) while the *Cardinal* has refused to publish it.

Contrary to prevailing liberal opinion, Madison is part of Reagan's USA, albeit with a twist. Witness the New Right's drive to "clean up America." It's going strong in Madison. There's legislation to ban dirty pictures. On 19 October 1984, demonstrators picketed



Der Spiegel

**Carry Nation: The intemperate 19th century saloon-smashing, hatchet-wielding, "smut"-busting enemy of the people and their pleasures. Ms. Nation disrupted burlesque shows with hymns and speeches; drove her husband to drink.**

at a State Street porno store; someone stenciled "Burn Me Down" on the wall—and they mean it. Rampaging fundamentalists? Nope. This particular anti-sex crusade is led by Madison's "alternative" to the Army of God—the "radical" feminists.

Finding Robin Morgan in bed with Jerry Falwell may surprise some who thought feminism had something to do with women's liberation. After all, the '60s feminists posed as right-on revolutionaries. They rejected "male-defined" sex roles, denounced "family values" as scams to keep women isolated, dependent, condemned to domestic servitude. They worried about racism and poor people. But the feminists never opposed the oppressive capitalist system itself: their "program" consists of escapist lifestylism, "consciousness raising," "womyn's" vegetarian co-ops. That's why the feminist "movement" didn't move. It remained confined to rarefied microcosms like Madison, lily-white and

**Government Hands Off Sex, Booze, Porn!**



Janie Eisenberg

**Vicious and obscene: Feminists ally with right wing in anti-porn demonstration at Times Square.**

middle-class.

What's left of the "movement" no longer even worries about real human oppression. While the feminists are busy trying to stamp out fishnet stockings and high heels, genuine assaults on women's rights go unanswered. Legalized abortion is seriously threatened; abortion clinics get firebombed, their patients harassed, but you don't hear a peep from the feminists. Then there's the case of Patricia Ridge—a single, black, working mother. Last year her five-year-old son was shot pointblank in her bedroom in a Los Angeles-area housing project by a white cop. The cop got off, but a grand jury tried to charge her with everything from child neglect to Murder Two. The Marxist Spartacist League came to her defense. But the organized feminists did nothing. For them, "women's oppression" equals nude photos: they're blind to real class and race oppression facing working-class and black women.

This "Take Back the Night" crusade is a slice of middle America at its worst—about as progressive as forbidding sex education. It dovetails with the current incitement of every backward, sexist, racist, jingoistic prejudice of American society in preparation for war against the USSR. The Democrats and Republicans have been humming "Onward Christian Soldiers" since Cold War II began under born-again Jimmy Carter; with Reagan the crusade has reached new lows. They both want a "prepared" society with social relations straight out of "Leave It To Beaver." No "extramarital" sex, no porn, no abortion, no gays.

The feminists even share Cold War/Moral Majority terminology (e.g., "Porn is the new terrorism"). And there's a certain ideological congruence. The feminists basically buy the Moral Majority's "me Tarzan, you Jane" view of human sexuality: women are gentle nurturers, children are "innocent" and asexual, while men are sexual aggressors. That's what "Pornography is

the theory, rape is the practice" boils down to: men are barely controlled rapists—all it takes is a little leg to set 'em off. In that case, why stop with censoring *Penthouse*? According to Annie Laurie Gaylor, editor of the *Feminist Connection*, Rubens and Titian can go too: they painted women ravished by swans! (Perhaps when Gaylor leaves the *Connection*, she can get a job at the Elvehjem Museum chiseling the genitals off classical statues.)

Then there's the touchy question of First Amendment rights. With the exception of the rabid crackpot Andrea Dworkin, most feminists try to squeak past it by making a snooty differentiation between pornography and "erotica." It works like this. "Erotica" is printed on expensive paper with "tasteful" hand-drawn illustrations; "pornography" goes for \$2.50, with tacky overexposed photos. As the saying goes, "perversion" is what you aren't into.

As Marxists, the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth League oppose all attempts at puritanical censorship, whether launched by outright reactionaries or feminist ayatollahs. You can't legislate sexuality. We defend the right of consenting individuals in any combination of age, race, sex, in any number, to engage in the sexual activity of their choice—or look at the photos of their choice—without state intervention.

Pornography is not violence: it's fantasy. Rape is a form of violent criminal assault. Among other things, we advocate the repeal of gun control laws: women should have the right to carry arms and use them in self-defense. To argue that "porn is rape" or, like Robin Morgan, that any sex not initiated by a woman is rape, is—aside from being pretty damned presumptuous—to trivialize and confuse the issue. Capitalist society—its forced poverty, rigid family structure, hypocritical straitjacket morality—breeds the poisonous frustrations that explode in violence. The liberation of women requires getting rid of the repressive constraints imposed on women by the nuclear family, thus creating the possibility of new relationships based on social equality—free from compulsion and stultifying "mor-

*continued on page 21*

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# The Grimké Sisters: Pioneers for Abolition and Women's Rights

By Amy Rath

"I want to be identified with the negro; until he gets his rights, we shall never have ours."

—Angelina Grimké, address to  
Women's Loyal League, May 1863

Angelina and Sarah Grimké were two of the earliest fighters for black and women's rights in America. Although far from being socialists or revolutionaries, the Grimké sisters of South Carolina were among the foremost fighters for human equality of their time, the 1830s and the tumultuous era which saw the birth of the abolitionist movement, foreshadowing the great Civil



Sarah Grimké  
1792-1873



Women: A Journal of Liberation  
Angelina Grimké  
1805-1879

War which freed the slaves. They were also among the first women to speak publicly on political issues. "Genteel society" objected to the fact of their public appearances—and even more to the content of their speeches. Thus the first serious, widespread discussion of women's rights in the United States was directly linked to the black question and the liberation of the slaves, questions which 25 years later would tear the nation apart in civil war.

Further, the Grimké sisters' almost visionary commitment to the fight for the liberation of *all*, exemplified in Angelina's famous statement to the Women's Loyal League, stands in stark contrast not only to early abolitionist anti-women prejudices, but also to the later, shameful betrayal of black rights by feminists during the Reconstruction era. "The discussion of the rights of the slave has opened the way for the discussion of other rights," wrote Angelina to Catherine E.

Beecher in 1837, "and the ultimate result will most certainly be the breaking of every yoke, the letting the oppressed of every grade and description go free,—an emancipation far more glorious than any the world has ever yet seen."

The sisters and Theodore Weld published *American Slavery As It Is* (1840), the most influential anti-slavery document until Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Though they had essentially retired from active politics by the time of John Brown's courageous raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, the actual opening shot of the Civil War, they deeply believed in his cause. Angelina's stirring "Address to the Soldiers of our Second Revolution" (given at the May 1863 Women's Loyal League convention) advocated massive arming of the former slaves as part of the Union Army, and remains today a remarkably radical and prescient analysis of the implications of the Civil War:

"This war is not, as the South falsely pretends, a war of races, nor of sections, nor of political parties, but a war of Principles; a war upon the working classes, whether white or black; a war against *Man*, the world over. In this war, the black man was the first victim, the workingman of whatever color the next; and now *all* who contend for the rights of labor, for free speech, free schools, free suffrage, and a free government... are driven to do battle in defense of these or to fall with them, victims of the same violence that for two centuries has held the black man a prisoner of war.... The nation is in a death-struggle. It must either become one vast slaveocracy of petty tyrants, or wholly the land of the free."

## Pioneers for Abolition and Women's Rights

On February 21, 1838, hundreds of people swarmed to the great hall of the Massachusetts State Legislature. Angelina Grimké, the first woman ever to address an American legislative body, would argue for the most controversial subject of the day: the immediate abolition of slavery.

This speech—which continued over three days, despite efforts by pro-slavery forces to stop it—was the culmination of a nine months' tour by Sarah and Angelina Grimké, the first women agents of the American Anti-Slavery Society (AASS), founded in 1833. While their speeches began as "parlor meetings" in private homes or church halls for women only, such was the power and growing fame of Angelina's oratory that men began to slip into the back to listen, and the Grimké sisters became the first American women to address what were then called "promiscuous" audiences.



NY Public Library/Schomberg Collection

**Abolitionist Wendell Phillips addressing an interracial crowd on Boston Common.**

Uprouar swept genteel society across the nation. The Grimké sisters were breaking the rules of ladylike decorum by their “unwomanly” displays. Angelina was popularly called “Devil-ina”; “Fanny Wrightists!” screamed the pro-slavery press. (Fanny Wright was a Scots utopian socialist who toured the U.S. in 1828 for abolition, public education, women’s rights, the ten-hour day and “free love”; she set up an anti-slavery commune and edited a newspaper. When these projects failed, she left the country, having made little impact.) “Why are all the old hens abolitionists?” sneered the *New Hampshire Patriot*: “Because not being able to obtain husbands they think they may stand some chance for a negro, if they can only make amalgamation [interracial sex] fashionable.”

The Congregationalist church, the descendent of the New England Puritans, issued a “Pastoral Letter” condemning the Grimkés for leaving “woman’s sphere” and going against the biblical injunction of Paul: “I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” Sarah answered this, and other attacks, in the brilliant *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*, the first American book on the rights of women, predating Margaret Fuller’s more famous work by six years.

In her arguments Sarah relied extensively on biblical sources, for to her it was important to prove that the equality of the sexes should be a Christian belief, and she wanted to show that women had the right and duty to work for the emancipation of the slave. Her concrete solutions to women’s oppression were naive: for example, she suggested that husbands should content themselves with baked potatoes and milk for dinner, to give their wives time to educate themselves. She never understood that the institution of the family itself necessarily stands in the way of women’s freedom. Indeed, she could not reconcile herself to the idea that divorce should be legalized. But for all these limitations, Sarah’s book is the pioneer American work on the subject. She was deeply interested in women workers, and polemicized against unequal wages; she attacked with great bitterness the lack of educational opportunities for women and their total lack of legal

rights. “I ask no favors for my sex,” she wrote, “All I ask our brethren is, that they will take their feet from off our necks, and permit us to stand upright on that ground which God designed us to occupy.”

Many fellow abolitionists demanded that the sisters give up their arguments on women’s rights, fearing that it would detract from the more important question of the hour: freedom for the slave. But Angelina pointed out that the outcry against women’s public lecturing was a tool of the slaveholders: “We cannot push Abolitionism forward with all our might *until* we take up the stumbling block out of the road... Can you not see the deep laid scheme of the clergy against us as lecturers?... If we surrender the right to *spea*k in public this year, we must surrender the right to petition next year, and the right to *wri*te the year after, and so on. What *then* can *woman* do for the slave, when she herself is under the feet of man and shamed into *silence*?” (emphasis in original; letter to Theodore Weld and John Greenleaf Whittier, 20 August 1837).

**The Making of a Southern Abolitionist**

The sisters’ effectiveness as abolitionist agents had to do not only with the power and sweep of their arguments, but with the fact that they were native-born eyewitnesses to Southern slavery. Yet precisely because they were gently bred daughters of one of South Carolina’s most prominent slaveholding families, they had not seen the worst of it, as they themselves were quick to point out. They did not see the slave gangs on the plantations, the brutal whippings, but the “better” treatment of the house and city slaves.

Sarah was born in 1792. The invention of the cotton gin in her infancy led her father, like many others, to expand his plantation holdings and build up his slave force. He was one of the wealthiest men in Charleston, the political capital of the South, and a veteran of the Revolutionary War, a former Speaker in the state House, a judge and author. Sarah grew up with every advantage that wealth and position could offer a woman of her time. But instead of satisfying herself with

*continued on next page*



American Antiquarian Society

**In the 1830s pro-slavery mob violence against the abolitionist movement was widespread throughout the North. A contemporary engraving shows the destruction of abolitionist Elijah Lovejoy’s printing press in Alton, Illinois. In 1837 Lovejoy was murdered by a pro-slavery lynch mob.**

embroidery, piano and a little French, she studied her brother's lessons in mathematics, history and botany, and declared her wish to become a lawyer. Her family mocked her; her father forbade her to study Latin. Perhaps influenced by her own educational frustrations as well as her childhood revulsion for the slave system, she started to teach her personal maid to read. "I took an almost malicious satisfaction in teaching my little waiting-maid at night, when she was supposed to be occupied in combing and brushing my long locks. The light was put out, the keyhole screened, and flat on our stomachs, before the fire, with the spelling-book under our eyes, we defied the laws of South Carolina."

As an adult Sarah's aspirations to make something of her life turned in the one direction open to "respectable" women of her day and class: religion. She became a Quaker. Later she converted Angelina, 12



Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

**John Brown (left), the great radical abolitionist. Above, an engraving depicting the Harpers Ferry insurrection in 1859. The Grimké's hailed Brown as a great martyr of the abolitionist movement.**

Library of Congress

years her junior. Before joining her sister in Philadelphia, the Quakers' center, Angelina undertook a personal conversion crusade against slavery among her family and friends. In her gray Quaker dress, she started arguments at tea against the sin of holding slaves, becoming quite unpopular with Charleston's ruling elite. Inquiries were made about her sanity.

Convinced at last that there was no future in this, Angelina went north. But she could not be satisfied with the orthodox Quaker doctrine, which at that time included colonization as a "solution" to slavery. Black "Friends" were made to sit on a separate bench. In the early 1830s Angelina became interested in the growing abolitionist movement, and was horrified at the violence the free North turned against anti-slavery spokesmen. William Lloyd Garrison was barely saved from lynching at the hands of a Boston mob in 1835. Theodore Weld was repeatedly mobbed as he toured

the Midwest, as were many others. Early in the decade Prudence Crandall was forced to close her school for black girls in Connecticut when the well was poisoned, doctors refused to treat the students, and finally a mob torched the school building. In 1838 a pro-slavery mob, egged on by the mayor himself, burned down Philadelphia Hall, which had been built by the abolitionists as a partial answer to their difficulty in finding places to meet. An interracial meeting of abolitionists was in progress there at the time; two days earlier, Angelina and Weld had married, and the attendance of both blacks and whites at their wedding fueled the fury of the race-terrorists.

The abolitionists were part of a broader bourgeois radical movement, the 19th century heirs of the 18th century Enlightenment, Protestant religious ideals, and the American Revolution so dramatically unfulfilled in the "Land of the Free" where four million suffered in slavery. Although opposition to slavery was by no means as widespread in the 1830s as it was to become immediately before the Civil War, nonetheless many prominent men, such as the wealthy Tappan brothers of New York and Gerrit Smith, the biggest landowner in the North, had joined the movement by the middle of the decade. Many of the abolitionists had been part of the religious and intellectual upsurge which swept the United States after 1820. Ralph Waldo Emerson and other Transcendentalists were formulating their philosophy. Religious revivalists such as Charles G. Finney, who converted Weld, preached temperance and that slavery was a sin against god.

Angelina became convinced that god had called her to work actively for the emancipation of the slaves. Defying the Quakers (who later expelled the sisters when Angelina and Weld married in a non-Quaker ceremony), the sisters went to New York where they participated in a conference for the training of abolitionist agents. Thus began the famous speaking tour of 1837-38.

The politics of the Grimké sisters was radical bourgeois egalitarianism profoundly rooted in religion. They believed that slavery was a sin, that as "immortal, moral beings" women and blacks were the equals of white men. They argued that slavery was contrary to the laws of god (the Bible) and of man, as put forth in the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence; they disagreed with Garrison's view of the Constitution as a "pro-slavery" document. Again unlike Garrison, they wrote and spoke for rights of education and property for free blacks as well, and bitterly denounced racism within the abolitionist movement. They were the integrationists of their time.

For many years, however, the sisters agreed with Garrison that slavery could be done away with peacefully by moral persuasion. They preached a boycott of slave-made goods (Angelina's wedding cake was made of "free" sugar by a free black baker). One of Angelina's first writings was "An Appeal to the Christian Women of the Southern States," widely circulated by the AASS, in which she urged Southern women to begin a petition campaign for immediate emancipation, to free their own slaves and to educate them. When copies of this pamphlet reached Charles-



NY Public Library



Rogers/Library of Congress

The gruesome whip-scarred back of a slave who escaped from a Mississippi plantation in 1862 to join the Union Army (left). Ex-slaves made up the ranks of the Union's first black regiment, the First South Carolina Volunteers (above).

ton, the postmaster publicly burned them and the police informed the Grimké family that if their daughter ever attempted to set foot in the city, she would be jailed and then sent back on the next ship.

The sisters were also for many years staunch pacifists, as would be expected from their Quaker background. Sarah took this to such an extreme that she denied that abolitionists had the right to arm themselves in defense against pro-slavery mobs. This became a subject of controversy in the abolitionist movement in 1837 when publisher Elijah Lovejoy was murdered in Alton, Illinois by a mob. True to her pacifist idealism, Sarah questioned his right to bear the gun with which he tried to save his life.

### Splits and the Coming Storm

By the 1840s the Grimké sisters had largely withdrawn from public activity. In part this was due to ill health Angelina suffered as a result of her pregnancies, as well as family financial problems. But much of it was probably political demoralization. In 1840 the abolitionist movement split over the issues of women's rights and political action. The Garrisonian wing wanted to include women in the organization, but was opposed to abolitionists voting or running for political office, since Garrison believed the "pro-slavery" U.S. Constitution should be abolished and that the North should expel the South. The other wing, represented by eminent men like the Tappan brothers, excluded women from office within the organization, was against women's rights, and wanted to orient to political work in Congress. Since they agreed with neither side in this split, the Grimké and Weld retired to private life. In later years Angelina spoke bitterly against "organizations."

Meanwhile, however, on the left wing of the abolitionist movement there were gathering forces which saw the irrepressible and inevitable necessity for a violent assault on the slave system, to end it forever by force of arms. The brilliant black abolitionist Frederick Douglass and John Brown spearheaded this growing conviction. As we noted in our SL pamphlet, "Black History and the Class Struggle," "Douglass' political evolution was not merely from 'non-resistance' to self-defense. Contained in the 'moral suasion' line was a

refusal to fight slavery politically and to the wall, by all methods. That is the importance of the Douglass-Brown relationship: together they were planning the Civil War." And it was John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859 which galvanized the nation; abolitionists who the day before were pacifists took the pulpit to proclaim the necessity of a violent end to the slave system.

The Grimké sisters and especially Theodore Weld had earlier become convinced that only war could end slavery. Sarah believed she had communed with John Brown's spirit the night before his martyrdom at the hands of Colonel Robert E. Lee, acting under command of President Buchanan. "The John Huss of the United States now stands ready ... to seal his testimony with his life's blood," she wrote in her diary. Two of the executed men from the Harpers Ferry raid were buried in the commune at Raritan Bay, New Jersey, where the sisters and Weld were living at the time. The graves had to be guarded against a pro-slavery mob.

When the Civil War officially began the Grimké did emerge briefly from private life. They were staunch

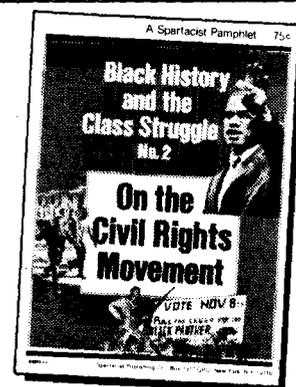
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Workers Vanguard

**In 1984 Spartacist League supporter Ritchie Bradley scaled a flagpole in the San Francisco Civic Center and tore down the Confederate flag, hated symbol of slavery. Today, over protests of Democrat "Dixie Dianne" Feinstein, the Union "California Hundred" flag flies over SF.**

Unionists, supported the draft and were critical of Lincoln for not freeing the slaves sooner. They were founding members of the Women's Loyal League. It was at a meeting of this group that Angelina made her famous statement: "I want to be identified with the negro; until he gets his rights, we shall never have ours."

### **Reconstruction Betrayed: Finish the Civil War!**

Following the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction, the most democratic period for blacks in U.S. history, the former abolitionist movement split again. During that period, women suffrage leaders like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony—formerly avowed abolitionists—turned their movement for women's rights into a tool of racist reaction. They organized against passage of the Fifteenth Amendment because it gave votes to blacks and not to women (the Grimké sisters were silent on this question, even though this disgusting racism was foreign to everything they had fought for). Stanton and Anthony worked closely with such racist Southern Democrats as James Brooks, because he purported to support women's suffrage. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Standard* (1865), Stanton wrote,

"...now, as the celestial gate to civil rights is slowly moving on its hinges, it becomes a serious question whether we had better stand aside and see 'Sambo' walk into the kingdom first. . . . In fact, it is better to be the slave of an educated white man, than of a degraded, ignorant black one."

It was Frederick Douglass who fought this racist assault. Douglass had been a fervent supporter of the

infant women's rights movement, which began largely as a result of the chauvinism which women anti-slavery activists encountered from many abolitionists. At the 1869 convention of the Equal Rights Association, Douglass made a final attempt to win the suffragists from their reactionary policy:

"When women, because they are women, are dragged from their homes and hung upon lamp-posts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed upon the pavement; when they are objects of insult and outrage at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have [the same] urgency to obtain the ballot."

At this convention Douglass proposed a resolution which called the 15th Amendment the "culmination of one-half of our demands," while imploring a redoubling "of our energy to secure the further amendment guaranteeing the same sacred rights without limitation to sex." And for the rest of his life Douglass remained a staunch champion of women's rights.

Though the Civil War freed the slaves, it was not the fulfillment of Angelina's vision of a great, all-encompassing human emancipation. The betrayal of Reconstruction by the counterrevolutionary and triumphant capitalist reaction of the 1870s, in which the bourgeois feminists played their small and dirty part, left unfulfilled those liberating goals to which the Grimké sisters were committed. Yet Angelina's statement—"I want to be identified with the negro; until he gets his rights, we shall never have ours"—was and is true in a way the Grimkés could not understand. Their social perspective was limited to the bourgeois order: they never identified property as the source of the oppression of both women and blacks. Indeed, as bourgeois egalitarians, the basis of their arguments was that women and blacks should have the same right to acquire property as the white man and that this would liberate them completely.

As Marx noted:

"The present struggle between the South and North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other."

—"The Civil War in the United States,"  
*Collected Works*, Volume 19, 1861-64

The system of "free labor," capitalism, won out. Radical Reconstruction, enforced by military occupation, sought to impose equality of bourgeois democratic rights in the South. It was defeated by compromise between the Northern bourgeoisie and the Southern land-owning aristocracy, thus revealing the ultimate incapacity of bourgeois radicalism to finally liberate any sector of the oppressed. This failure and betrayal of Reconstruction perpetuated the oppression of blacks as a color caste at the bottom of American capitalist society. This racial division, with whites on top of blacks, has been and continues to be the main historical obstacle to the development of political class consciousness among the American proletariat. It will take a third American Revolution, led by a multiracial workers party against capitalism itself, to break the fetters of blacks, women and all the oppressed. ■

## Viva Vanessa!

First black Miss America, Vanessa Williams, was forced out by dirty hypocrite businessmen when nude photos appeared in *Penthouse*. It's no joke (right): Real '85 Miss America is a Mormon who collects soap.



Chiapel/Penthouse



## Anti-Porn Crusade...

(continued from page 15)

al" restrictions. In short, women's liberation requires socialist revolution.

While the feminist anti-porn crusaders rely on candlelight vigils, their Reaganite allies have access to systematic state repression and vigilante terror. And Reagan has launched a full-scale attack on democratic rights. Political opposition becomes "terrorism." Cop/media hysteria about child abuse at daycare centers carries the message that the only safe place for kids is locked up at home with a non-working mom. If your sexual preference doesn't suit Jerry Falwell, you could be locked up for life.

That's no idle threat. The campaign for "decency" has been viciously anti-gay from the start. Vanessa Williams lost her crown not least because those photos were of lesbian sex. Boston-area photographer George Jacobs got 20 years for the "crime" of having consensual sex with his 14-year-old roommate. Jacobs was tested to determine if he was a "sexually dangerous person" and could have been put away in a mental hospital permanently. The cops and press went wild over NAMBLA (North American Man-Boy Love Association), an organization for the defense of civil rights of "men and boys involved in consensual sexual and other relationships with each other." NAMBLA members were beaten, framed and sent to psychiatric institutions. And that's *nothing* compared with the Justice Department's plan to research "behavior modification, chemical treatments, physiological studies of those suspected of psychosexual dysfunction—as evidenced by...their divorces or homosexuality" (*Village Voice*, 7 August 1984)!

The reactionary nature of anti-porn legislation masquerading as protection of "civil rights" is spelled out in a new law pending in Suffolk County, New York. The bill is identical to Dworkin's Minneapolis anti-porn

law, minus feminist verbiage. It's sponsored by groups like the National Federation for Decency (an actual organization!) explicitly to "wipe out sodomy" and, according to one supporter, "pornography [that] could cause social decay leading to a possible communist takeover"!

It's not like the feminists can't smell this anti-gay stench; far from it. Kathleen Nichols, lesbian activist member of the "Democratic" Socialists of America, is the Dane County supervisor behind the Madison censorship. This bigot told *OUT!* magazine that if the ordinance closes adult bookstores where gay men meet, all the better to stop AIDS because "that kind of anonymous sexual congress has resulted in 5500 cases of AIDS" (*OUT!*, September 1984). For this anti-democratic liberal, male gay sex is a health hazard. This is vile anti-gay bigotry. Do lesbians active in the anti-porn movement believe that once they outlaw everyone else's sexual practices, their own will be protected? They're on mighty thin ice. Check out Khomeini's Iran: no porn there—and they stone homosexuals to death.

Pornography reflects, and only reflects, some human behavior. In this violent, irrational society, those reflections sometimes aren't pretty: but you can't change society by changing its images on a screen. "Positive images" won't materially advance the cause of women's equality any more than those movies with Sidney Poitier as the black neurosurgeon changed the harsh reality of racist oppression. Socialist revolution alone can create the economic basis to replace the nuclear family and liberate women. We don't pretend to know what human relations in socialist society will be like. But we assume that, liberated from the artificial constraints currently imposed on human expression, sexuality under socialism will be more free, more open, more tolerant, more rich and more diverse. May the day come soon.

Carla Norris  
for the Spartacus Youth League

## FBI Admits: Marxists Are Not Terrorists

Under the U.S. attorney general's 1983 Guidelines on "Domestic Security/Terrorism," the FBI is directed to obliterate any distinction between "terrorism" and political opposition to the government. This is a set-up for wholesale state assault on the left. The Spartacist League sued against the application of these sinister Guidelines to our organization and in November 1984 we won in a legal agreement the FBI's acknowledgment that Marxists are not terrorists. This was the first successful direct legal challenge to the FBI Guidelines.

Central to our victory against the secret police was their change of definition of the Spartacist League: the FBI has now retracted its former set-up "definition" of us which maliciously attributed to us a conspiratorial putschism, and substituted a new one which defines us as exactly what we are—a Marxist political organization. The SL legal Complaint directly challenged the pretexts the secret police have used for decades to harass and victimize the Marxist movement for "crimes" of ideology. The FBI in agreeing to change its definition of the SL concedes our lawsuit's central claim: that Marxist political principles and advocacy cannot be equated with violence, terrorism or a criminal enterprise.

In today's Cold War climate intended to regiment and intimidate the populace, lawful dissent is now presumably to be limited to college professors writing letters to the *New York Times*; all other political opposition is to be smeared as "terrorist." Ask a Black Panther who survived the FBI's COINTELPRO frame-up and murder operation what it means to be labeled "terrorists" by the state. Abroad, "terrorism" has become the official designation for Salvadoran peasants struggling against the death squad regime, black South Africans fighting apartheid, or Palestinians starving in refugee camps. The American ruling class—this most bloodthirsty imperialist power in history, who once boasted they could bomb Vietnam back into the Stone Age, and who lovingly nurtures regimes of torture, racist savagery and mass murder all over the world—intends to wage preventive war against all opposition at home. Thus the FBI Guidelines seek to criminalize as "terrorists" the Marxist movement, which has been subjected to over 60 years of "surveillance" (a very polite and passive word for a very aggressive policy of spying, disruption and frame-up) without ever being found guilty of anything other than those "crimes" of advocacy.

In undertaking our suit against the FBI, we were under no misapprehension that the capitalist secret police have changed since the days when Prussian agents harassed Karl Marx. Therefore we have no idea what interpretation the FBI gives to their agreement; we can be sure their spying, harassment and deadly "disruption" of the left, labor and black movements will continue whatever the niceties of bourgeois legality at any given point. But our suit has punched a

hole in their ideological and legal cover for witchhunting and worse. Our victory against the FBI, undertaken in conscious pursuit of our own self-defense against the real terrorism of the U.S. state, is also a victory for the civil liberties of everyone in this country from whom the vicious capitalist regime perceives a threat.

This gratifying victory is intimately linked to our fight outside the courts against racism and reaction. We have been the spearhead of the opponents of fascism and racist murder who have by militant mass action in the streets stopped the KKK and Nazis from rampaging for genocide in the heart of the big Northern cities. When the fascists said they would rally in Detroit to celebrate their 1979 Greensboro massacre of five left-wing anti-racist activists, we mobilized 500 auto workers and socialists to demonstrate that the Klan would not ride there. In June 1982 in Chicago, when the Nazis staged a provocation against "Gay Pride Day" (gambling that unionists, Jews, blacks would never come forward to defend homosexuals), we brought out 3,000 militants to shout the Nazis down. And in November 1982 more than 5,000 people, most of them black unionists and ghetto youth, mobilized by the SL-initiated Labor/Black Mobilization, defied Ronald Reagan and stopped an attempt by the KKK to march in the nation's capital for the first time since 1925.

The same spirit of class-struggle defense of all the oppressed has guided our legal challenge to the FBI. The struggle for legality is precious to us, and we will continue to use all the legal and political means at our disposal to fight against today's "McCarthyism with a drawn gun." As we said at the outset of our suit against the FBI: "We do not intend to be blown away—faceless, nameless victims in the dead of night. As the organization which embodies the continuity of revolutionary Marxism in the U.S. today, our task is too important: the liberation of the workers and oppressed from the chains of this decaying, racist system through victorious socialist revolution." ■

### Support the Partisan Defense Committee

The successful conclusion of the Spartacist League's suit against the FBI strengthens all of us by striking a blow to the government's deadly equation of Marxism with terrorist conspiracy. The Partisan Defense Committee, the anti-sectarian, class-struggle legal defense organization in accordance with the views of the SL, undertook the financial support of this important case. We faced the vast resources of the United States government. Victories cost money and we have incurred substantial debts. Please help by sending donations to Partisan Defense Committee, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

# God and the Pentagon

In Chile, when the Pinochet junta took power in the bloody 1973 coup, overthrowing the elected government of leftist Salvador Allende and launching a bloodbath of tens of thousands of workers and peasants, the Catholic archbishop staged a Te Deum mass to anoint the new rulers with the will of god. (The CIA had given its more temporal blessings beforehand.) In Washington, when Ronald Reagan was re-inaugurated on January 20, the cabinet attended a religious service at the Washington Cathedral where Billy Graham delivered god's endorsement: "There is a mandate higher than the ballot box, and it comes from the Almighty," said the veteran evangelist.

But Graham is considered slightly "pinko" in present ruling circles in Washington, for denying religious persecution in the Soviet Union and calling for peace during a trip to Moscow last year. Jerry (God is a Republican) Falwell, the ordained minister of this administration, declared that Reagan's re-election was a cause to "rejoice and shout hallelujah!" Now, Catholic bishops are joining hands with born-again TV revivalists in the cause of anti-communism, anti-abortion and eliminating the separation of church and state—a fundamental democratic gain of the American Revolution and a religious principle of the "founding fathers." This god business has gotten so out of hand, a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* (30 December 1984) reveals, that it has affected the highest level of American government—the Pentagon.

By and large the top brass has fallen in step with their civilian leadership. General John Vessey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has urged audiences at prayer breakfasts around the country to "enlist in God's army," once leading repeated chants of "Hurrah for God!" (apparently replacing "Go Army! Beat Navy!").



Admiral James Watkins, chief of naval operations, blamed the deaths of 241 U.S. Marines in the 1983 Beirut bombing on "the forces of the anti-Christ." "And one colonel on the staff of the Joint Chiefs, apparently after a reprimand for using a mild curse in the chiefs' super-secret conference room called the 'tank,' has a small sign on his desk that reminds him 'never, never, never' to use such language there again" (*Oakland Tribune*, 1 January).

So cussing is out, but we doubt that confession is in—not for these war criminals, anyway. Even some of the religious commissars in the U.S. military don't put much stock in these conversions. "Some Nazis were moral individuals who committed heinous crimes," says Rev. Kermit Johnson, the Presbyterian former army chief of chaplains. "Some of our presidents were personally immoral yet pursued highly moral policies." Rev. Johnson resigned from the army protesting the Reagan administration's "immoral" policies on Central America and nuclear arms, and says his views are close to the Catholic bishops who favor a nuclear "freeze." The administration's claim that its plans for space-based "defensive" weapons are more moral, he says, is "cynically done" and in fact encourages a preemptive first strike.

Republican Reagan with his denunciations of the Soviet "evil empire," just as Democrat Carter with his hypocritical anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade, is preparing for world war. And just as the imperialists' war preparations target democratic rights in general, religion is mobilized in the service of Armageddon. But Cardinal Spellman's blessings of American troops in Vietnam weren't able to stave off U.S. imperialism's groveling defeat, and no matter how much the generals proclaim "God is on our side," it will not save the bloody system which produced the My Lai massacre, the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the firebombing of Dresden, from ending up on the ash-heap of history. ■

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## Red Avengers Expose S.F. Women's Center Thought-Police: "Beware Lady Dobermans in Anti-Soviet Heat!"

Thanks, Red Avengers! It's about time somebody exposed the baby bureaucrats and would-be lifestyle dictators of the San Francisco State Women's Center. The Red Avengers certainly have produced very satisfying squeals of outrage from the Ms. Piggys and their student government friends, who can't understand why the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League won't roll over and play dead when they try to outlaw us, ban our literature and intimidate students from reading Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

This past November, Women's Center head Judy Moore went into a frenzy at a "candidates' debate" at which Spartacist League candidate for SF Board of Supervisors Diana Coleman debated Sylvia Weinstein of Socialist Action and Democrat Julianne Malveaux (formerly of the Carter administration). Our lit table "invaded her inner space," so she called the cops to whisk it away (including works by Marx and Lenin), and we protested. During the next days the student government launched a witchhunt against the SYL, threatening it with a South Africa-style "banning" from their sacred turf.

Thus was born the Red Avengers, who appeared on campus November 12 in Groucho Marx glasses, "Ms. Piggy" masks and a Red Devil and witch outfit or two, distributing underground "Communiqué No. 1: Beware Lady Dobermans in Anti-Soviet Heat..." which stated: "The Spartacus Youth League of San Francisco State University has been driven underground by gestapo persons and rabid doberman pinchers of the female persuasion crawling between the toes of the FBI." A campaign of lying, slanders and police intimidation was let loose against the SYL by these frenzied, scared and demoralized pro-Mondale student careerists. So the Red Avengers struck back with willful mockery of this beansprout totalitarianism, defying both threats and pathetic bribes—"Gag on your benefits! We won't take one dime from the agents of Amerikkkan imperialism!" said Red Avengers at a student government meeting which threatened to take away the SYL's funding. Ultimately the petty bureaucrats succeeded in banning the SYL for a full semester (until May 1985), while one comrade (from the Berkeley campus) still faces police charges of "trespassing." It's pretty dirty business. "Venceremos!" say the Red Avengers.

It really is all about book-burning. May students read Marx? Here's what the hysterical Judy Moore herself angrily wrote (her violence to the English language is



Young Spartacus

"Ms. Piggy" of the "Oh-So-Official Women's Center."

preserved) to a member of the Lesbian Gay Union who defended the SYL on December 10: "Spartacus Youth League for reasons only to themselves made it a point to harrass me in a way that can only be defined as *OPPRESSIVE*. 1st, As Director of the ♀ Center I had a right to choose what type of material would be involved in any event we sponsor.... If I didn't have to devote 30 min arguing with them I could have concentrated on other event problems." Yes, life is hard when you don't have *TOTAL CONTROL*; instead of Baby HUAC perhaps "Baby Doc" (as in Duvalier, Haiti) would have been a better tag for Moore.

But at least life got harder for the baby dictator. She went on: "The next 4 days bust loose into *hell!* You see people wearing pig masks and devil masks. One is dressed to be you.... Now you're *BABY HUAC* (It took me 3 days to find out what HUAC was) ... This is getting personal. The Women become *Wombats*. You walk through campus to have someone in a groucho nose call you Lady Doberman.... In all this gibberish is some shit about helping the Black *MASSES*. I'm Black why are they *Fucking* with me. Another flyer. Now your sex life and professional life as a student is up for public scrutiny. Am I a public figure?... You come to the Center to see Viva Vanessa written on the door of the Center." Moore is the perfect me-generation infantile

egotist turned book-burner.

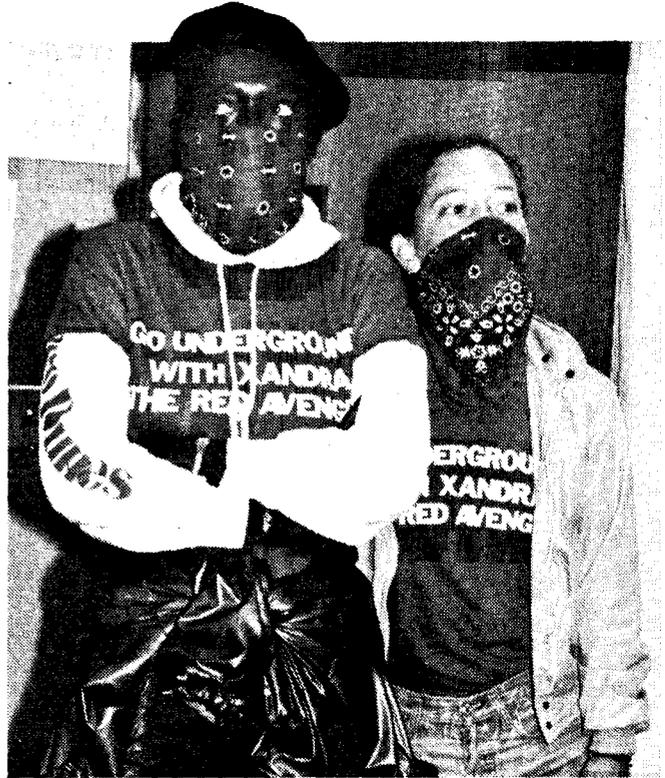
Actually, nothing personal, Ms. Moore: You're just another generic petty-bourgeois horrified by hard communist politics. Reminds us of Trotsky's comments on an outraged lady poet facing the Russian Revolution:

"Only yesterday she was a Petrograd lady, languid, decorated with talents, liberal, modern. Suddenly today, this lady, so full of her own subtleties, sees the black outrageous ingratitude on the part of the mob 'in nailed boots', and, offended in her holy of holies, transforms her impotent rage into a shrill womanish squeak (in iambs). And indeed, if her squeak will not shatter hearts, it will arouse interest. A hundred years hence the historian of the Russian Revolution will perhaps point out how a nailed boot stepped on the lyrical little toe of a Petrograd lady, who immediately showed the real property-owning witch under her decadent-mystic-erotic Christian covering."

—Literature and Revolution

Judy Moore will be lucky to be a footnote to history. As for SF State, the moronic bureaucrats of its Women's Center and student careerists generally, we say: Your sandbox is built on sand! Your stupid little titles, orders, rules and playpen money are just so much vaseline to ease your penetration by the bourgeois state. What does the SF State Women's Center do, besides act as thought police, anyhow? We note it has been accused of conducting "an unofficial boycott of homosexuals" (Phoenix, 18 October 1984)—and this in San Francisco!

Red Avengers Communiqué No. 1 stated, "Perhaps we are witnessing the rebirth of something like the National Student Association, a CIA creature whose cover was blown in 1966. That's how Gloria Steinem got her start as a CIA spy on Communist youth." Behind the frenzied bureaucrats at SF State stand the real repressive forces of the bourgeois state, as the SYL noted in a special "Young Spartacus/Underground Spartacus" supplement last November: "The communiqués received from the Red Avengers hold up for scorn the strutting little junior-grade book-burners who are replicating in the confines of their campus sandbox the



Young Spartacus

"Venceremos!" say Red Avengers, friends of the Underground SYL.

panoply of sinister forces whose intent is to set up and destroy revolutionary Marxists with lies and cops. The whole thing has the stench of the FBI's COINTELPRO, the state's preferred undercover method of wiping out any perceived political opponents of the government, part of ideological regimentation of the population for war."

We reprint below "Counter-Communiqué No. 1-1/2 (excerpted) from "Ms. Piggy" to "Good boys and girls," which was circulated 19 November 1984 at SF State campus after it fell into the hands of the Red Avengers.

## COUNTER-COMMUNIQUE NO. 1-1/2

FROM: Ms. Piggy, Esq., Ph.D.,  
Führette-in-Chief of the Wombat Center

TO: Good boys and girls

RE: Totally unauthorized commie literature and rally

1. It has come to my attention that completely non-permitted subversive Bolsheviki propaganda is being circulated on this campus by the self-designated "Red Avengers of the Underground Spartacus Youth League." My flunkies advise me that some of these ignorant sluts and low-class riffraff have even gone so far as to impersonate Me. Further, these people reportedly held a commie rally at 12:30 PM last Thursday in the Student Union cafeteria.

continued on next page



Young Spartacus

The feeling is mutual. Judy Moore (left), Women's Center head and would-be baby dictator.



Seven little Ms. Piggies go to free market. Bottom right: Renee "Freikorps" Frye. Her "sisters": top, from left: Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi, Jeane Kirkpatrick. Bottom, from left: Golda Meir, Hitlerite filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl, Dianne Feinstein.



Young Spartacus

**ACHTUNG! NOW HEAR THIS!**

- i. This Marxistic, Trotzkyite trash is *not* stamped and counter-signed by Myself and Big Brother. This is *prima facie* proof that it is *ipso facto* (that's pig Latin) unlawful, unladylike, unauthorized, prohibited, forbidden, not nice, naughty *und sehr verboten*. DO NOT READ IT! It is hereby CANCELLED.
- ii. Subversive Russia-lovers are definitely agents of the devil.
- iii. Those caught reading aforementioned smut *will* be punished. Report yourself to: Campus Frog Bureau of Insemination (FBI), c/o Wombat Center, J. Edgar Hoover Memorial Union. Repeated infractions may

result in clitorectomy and/or castration....

v. ...Now, commie weasels... if you won't "grow up" like those nice Human World Party people and Democratic Socialists it'll be more pig slop for you! Off with your heads!

2. The Thursday 12:30 Red Avenger rally to raise funds for the purchase of advanced Soviet anti-aircraft missiles for Nicaragua was an outrage and an intolerable affront to: Dianne Swinestein (aka the Falling Wonder), Phyllis Schlafly, Lady Di, Margaret Thatcher, the Queen of England, Jeane Kirkpatrick, the late lamented Indira, and all my other Sisters. You know what happens when you cross me and my girls, the direct descendants of Lizzie Borden and Carrie Nation....

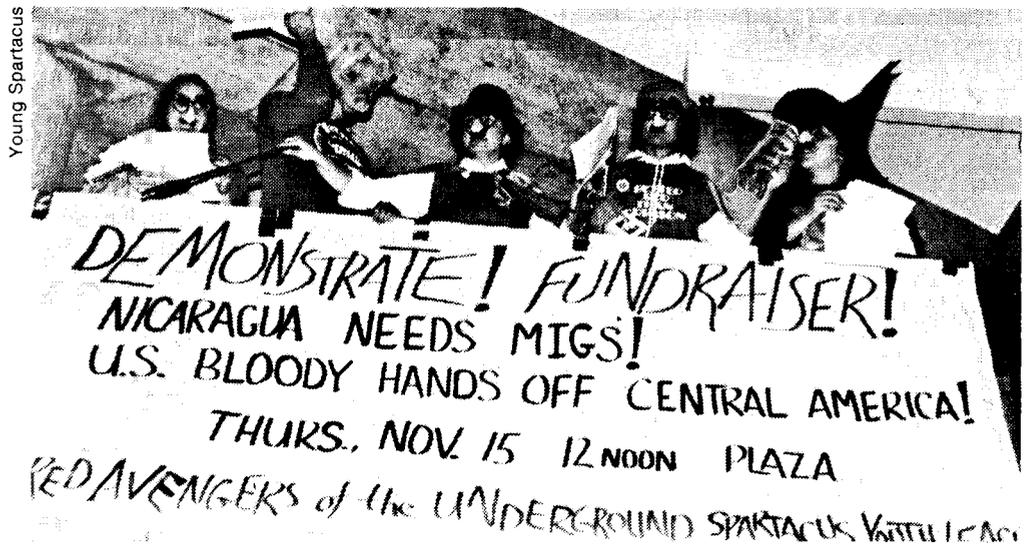
3. My colleagues and lackeyettes called the cops (how I love 'em!) to cart off those Marxist books at the Debate. Cross my heart and hope to die, those books assaulted me. Sociable Tea Biscuits and Red Revolution do not mix or match, as Miss Manners or Emily Post will tell you. Then Renee Frye called the cops to arrest a black trade unionist supporter of the Red Avengers after he aided that slutnik Xandra when Renee Freikorps attacked her. Yes, I *do* love the cops, but I'm still not satisfied. Be advised that My Administration is weighing the following additional measures:

- a. an invasion of SF State by the Marines (if Ronnie says OK);
- b. a quarantine by the 7th Fleet;
- c. getting Pres. Duarte to lend me some death squads...
- g. Korean Air Lines spy plane to buzz Red rallies, with simultaneous activation of U.S. RC-135 recon aircraft and other goodies.

In any event, a Pot-Luck Book Burning and Doberman Beauty Contest will be held soon. Your friendly local American Anti-communist Alliance squad leader and Girl Scout cookie salesperson will advise you of the time and place.

4. Now, my children, never forget:

- x. Communism saps precious bodily fluids and



Young Spartacus

Red Avengers of Underground SYL surface at San Francisco State; rally to raise funds for military defense of Nicaraguan revolution.

**DEMONSTRATE! FUNDRAISER!**  
**NICARAGUA NEEDS MIGS!**  
**U.S. BLOODY HANDS OFF CENTRAL AMERICA!**  
**THURS., NOV. 15 12 NOON PLAZA**  
**REDAVENGERS of the UNDERGROUND SPARTACUS VITTEL KACI**

could lead to fluoridation.

- ix. Communists fight imperialist war, racial and sexual oppression, unemployment, and other sacred foundations of our American Way of Life.
- viii. In awful Russia there is free medical care, no unemployment, no slumlords, no Dixiecrats and in general no way of advancing Ms. Piggy's career in the Democratic Party.
- vii. Xandra comes from the Russian name Xandropova.
- vi. It is a proven fact that Marxism makes hair grow on your palms. It has been linked to impure thoughts, pleasure, masturbation, pornography, pleasure, taking your clothes off, heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and other sources of bestial orgasms. It is a social disease.
- vi(a). These people, in their mad desire that you seek to change the world, could actually make it harder for you to be clean cannon fodder for invasion of Central America, WWII, and other

worthy causes. Besides, there is mounting evidence that Karl Marx was a foreigner.

- v. There is no Point v.
- iv. Nancy Reagan is a Person too.
- iii. There is too a pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow. (I have a bridge to sell you, too.)
- ii. If I play my cards right, I might get to be U.S. Dictator of Grenada some day, or at least of Treasure Island. Today SF State, tomorrow the world!
- i. Revolution is definitely not authorized by the SF State Bondage and Disciplinary Review Board.

**Are You Now or Have You Ever Been? You Better Not! Down with Intelligence—Long Live Death!** (My very favorite Francoist slogan)  
**MIGs No! Pigs Sí! Oink if You Love the Bourgeoisie! Go Back to Russia, Commie SYL Perverts!**

Ms. Piggy, Esq., Ph.D.

RSVP

Nov. 18, 1984

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## Women Workers Struggle in Sri Lanka



Sri Lanka

A leader of Polytex strike addresses a support rally at Colombo University. The rally was organized in May 1984 as part of the international Spartacist tendency's fundraising efforts on behalf of striking women textile workers at Polytex. These young Sinhalese women, working for about \$1 a day and often housed in miserable company barracks, struck and won against union-busting firings. Oppressed Sinhalese women workers—along with an earlier massive strike of the mainly “stateless” Tamil plantation workers—have taken the lead in class struggle against the repressive, bonapartist, pro-U.S. regime of J.R. Jayewardene.

In the Tamil north, the vicious reign of indiscriminate terror by J.R.'s army of occupation has driven Tamil youth demanding a separate state of “Eelam” into open insurgency. It is the Sinhalese-chauvinist state which has forcibly separated the island's peoples, with government-instigated bloody pogroms which smashed Tamil businesses in the south and

terrorized the plantations, sending tens of thousands of desperate refugees fleeing for their lives. Meanwhile the army has stepped up its wholesale war against the population of the north. Now Jayewardene, trying to seal off the north by naval blockade, is driving the fishermen to destitution and flirting with acts of war against his mammoth neighbor, India.

What is needed is a Trotskyist party to lead the working people of the island—the Sinhalese masses being starved according to the dictates of U.S. imperialism and the IMF, as well as the oppressed Tamil minority—in united struggle against capitalism. A proletarian revolution on the island must be the springboard to revolution for the impoverished masses in India's prisonhouse of nationalities. For the right of Tamil Eelam! Down with J.R.'s dictatorship! Trincomalee harbor must not fall into the bloody hands of U.S. imperialism! For a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka!

## British Miners...

(continued from page 32)

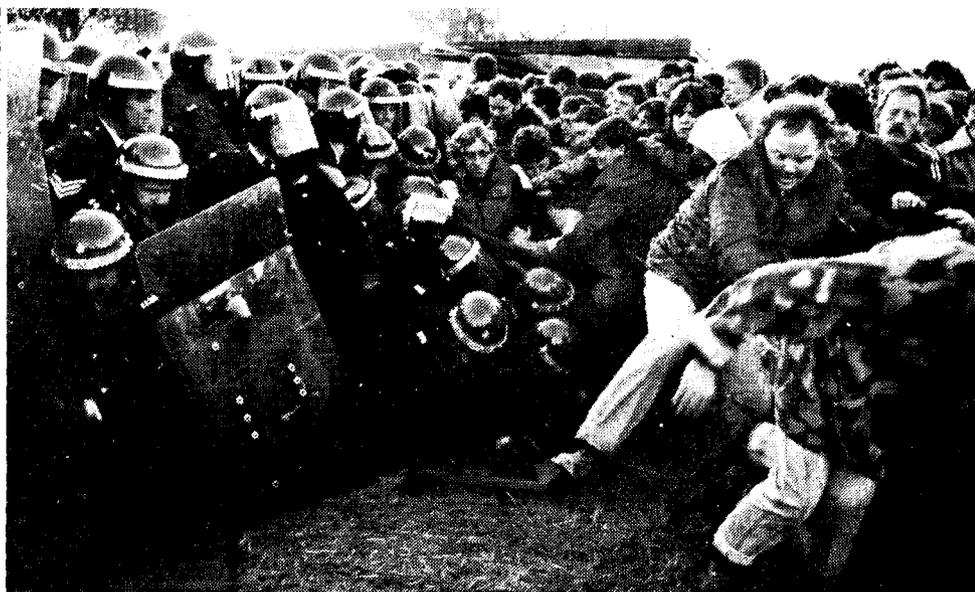
on through to join a demonstration in Leicestershire. In addition to organizing collections of food and money for the strikers' families, the women have been active strike militants. Their participation on picket lines has been especially important given the awesome scope of police attacks, where sometimes hundreds of miners are arrested in a single swoop. When 20,000 coal field women and supporters marched through London last August 11, one prominent slogan was “No surrender!”

Here in the United States, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee have been campaigning to win political support among American unionists for the embattled British miners, and to raise desperately

needed funds for the miners and their families. As of February 16, a total of \$16,905.63 had been raised. W&R appeals to our readers to generously support this effort. Please make checks payable to: Aid to Striking British Miners' Families; mail to: Partisan Defense Committee, Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.

I'm a member of the British section of the Spartacist tendency, and I'd like to take a few moments to describe to people particularly the British miners' strike which has been going on now for about nine months, I believe. In fact, we had a demonstration recently in London organized by the Spartacist League on the question of South Africa, where a number of miners attended. And we raised the slogan, “African Gold Miners, British Coal Miners—Same Enemy, Same Fight,

John Harris/IFL



**Kellingley, October 1984—Class war in Britain's coal fields as pickets battle cops.**

Workers of the World Unite!" [Applause.] And this slogan had a really powerful resonance—one which is very deeply felt in Britain, primarily as a result of the experience of these miners after nine months on strike. Because you have to understand, two miners have been killed on picket lines; several others have died on the way to picket lines; and most recently people have been killed trying to salvage coal from rubbish tips in order to heat their homes. If you imagine what it's like to have been without money for your family for nine months—no money for food, they have no heating, nothing like that.

However, they're pretty solid. They're not going back. Because they know that to go back means 20,000 jobs will be lost, and whole communities will be devastated. And, in fact, several thousand of them have been arrested, just simply for picketing. Thatcher has learned a few lessons from Botha's South Africa. They've recently adopted the tactic, instead of throwing people in prison—you obviously can't throw eight, nine, ten thousand miners in prison, because the prisons will overflow—so what they've started to do is to deport them within the country. People are sent off from English coal mines to the north of Scotland, and are not allowed to return home until after the strike.

So there was a certain identification with some of the stuff that was described recently in South Africa among the British miners. There is, of course, a scabbing operation, pretty well funded, we believe probably by the Vatican. Although if you listen to the news reports, then you could very easily be misled. Because as one miner told us recently in one of our meetings—according to the news reports there are now 3,500 scabs in his pit, which he finds very hard to believe, since only 500 people work there [laughter].

Now, there are two things that I want to draw out from the British miners' strike. One is that such a hard-fought class battle against the Thatcher government has inspired whole sections of the population in support for the miners. It's particularly noticeable among the black and Asian community. Something that is very new in Britain—you have a situation where miners, when

they come into the city of London from their areas in order to collect money, of course the cops hound them throughout London, and arrest them for trying to collect money and so forth. They go along to a pub in the black ghetto, and the cops come into the pub—"Where are these miners?"—they want to arrest them. But the word had gone out that the cops were arriving, so of course the local people had hidden them. You know: "What miners? There are no miners here." Now, this kind of thing never would have happened before, because capitalism fosters those kind of divisions, and given that the miners union is predominantly white, this solidarity is a direct result of the struggle against Thatcher.

Another aspect of it is that women, mainly miners' wives and families, who'd come from pretty isolated communities, have in fact become political and taken on a leadership role in the strike and have organized themselves into strike committees.

And the other thing that I want to draw out of it is on the Russian question. It comes up most concretely and revolves around the question of Polish Solidarność, in Britain, and it's very sharply felt. Because the background to this miners' strike was in fact—the leader of the British miners, Arthur Scargill, happened to mention before a trade-union conference a year ago that Solidarność was an anti-socialist organization. For this he was witchhunted and hounded by not only the capitalist class, the Tory party and so forth, but by a whole section of the trade-union leadership. And it has now become very clear, the people who were most outraged by Scargill's statement are today urging their union members to cross miners' picket lines quite openly. The leader of the Solidarność movement in Poland has sent a message of solidarity... to the scabs. And so Solidarność is hated and despised, not just among the British miners, but among whole sections of the population. Which is actually quite a good thing, because it doesn't bode well for Thatcher's war preparations against the Soviet Union.

They do the same kind of thing there. Talking about  
*continued on next page*

the "evil empire" in Russia. Except that in Britain a lot of the population now doesn't believe it, because they have seen miners go off to the Soviet Union and have very nice holidays on the Black Sea, you know, for their families and so forth. And they see this on television, and say, well, this is "totalitarian Russia"... it really doesn't look so bad looking at it from Britain [laughter].

Now, just in conclusion. One of the things that is patently obviously missing from the situation is a revolutionary party with a policy directed to the overthrow of capitalism. Because in order to cohere together the struggle, particularly in a situation where old frameworks are breaking down within the country, to cohere and direct that struggle requires a program for the overthrow of capitalism. And that's what the existing trade-union leadership and the Labour Party in Britain doesn't have. For example, twice in the course of the miners' strike, the dockers were out on strike, and were sent back, having gained absolutely nothing. Because these leaders understand that in order to go all out and do what is necessary in order to win the strike, you must be prepared to at least play around with the question of power. And that's what they're not prepared to do.

That in a nutshell is the strategy and program that the Spartacist League has been fighting for there. Because simply in order to win this strike, it's necessary to spread it to other sections of the working class. We hope as the outcome of that kind of successful class battle that you will have the basis for building a revolutionary party. Because in Britain, in South Africa, in fact in the U.S., you can have very hard-fought class battles which may lose or in fact may be frittered away, if you're not prepared to go all the way and address the question of power, for the working class in power, like they did in Russia in 1917.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Red Avengers [see article, page 24] is kind of a hard act to follow, but let me make one point that one comrade made in the forum in Toronto the other night: the British miners would really love the Red Avengers.

What I want to try to do is give you a flavor of the political situation in Britain, because it really is in marked contrast with Reagan's America right now. But there's something that I would like to underline, which is that the Thatcher government is in the second term of office and went in with a pretty big majority in the election in 1983, not quite as big as Reagan's. The first real opposition they ran into came from the British miners. And it's important to have the understanding and the hope that Reagan will run into the same kind of trouble, because it really does alter the political contours in the country.

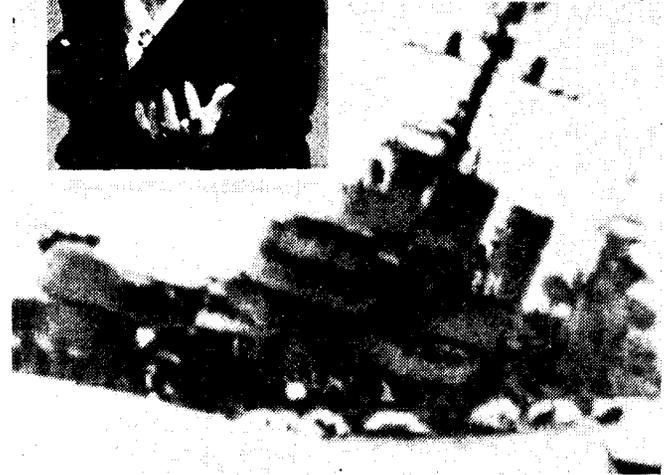
You'll have noticed in the press here recently a lot of ballyhoo about a big "back-to-work" movement. And you could very easily be misled, because if you really added up the figures for people that have gone back to work then you probably would get more than is actually in the miners union, in the NUM itself. However, it is true that there has been a certain erosion within the strike recently. (Unlike what the bourgeois press tells you, it's not because of the Qaddafi connection. Miners think that it's really wonderful if they get money from

Press Association



**War criminal  
Thatcher sank the  
Belgrano, murdered  
368 Argentine  
sailors. Miners'  
victory can sink  
bloody Thatcher!**

Der Spiegel



anywhere, and one of them has said recently, in a meeting where someone mentioned the Qaddafi connection, "Well, you know, if we can't get money from Qaddafi, maybe we can get guns. We can use them." And it's not because of getting money from the Soviet Union—they'd love it.) But as of now, there's not much prospect of industrial struggle alongside the miners, and so they're basically now having to dig in to try and survive through the winter pretty much on their own against all the forces of the capitalist state. And that does have an effect on certain elements in the union.

Now, some of the things that are most striking about the course of the struggle. First of all, the way in which whole sections of the population who are normally deeply divided have rallied behind the miners and have seen in the miners' strike a possible solution to what they suffer under Thatcher. This is particularly true for the racially oppressed minorities. The blacks and Asians in Britain have become some of the most solid supporters of the miners. If you understand that the miners union is predominantly white, and pretty elitist in its political attitudes, for them to find allies in the black and Asian population is really quite a change in British politics. The reason for the identification is that the kind of treatment that's being dished out to the miners in the course of the strike is something that has been dished out to the black and Asian population in the inner cities in Britain for quite a long time.

And there's also the fact that the racial minorities tend to do the dirtiest, most dangerous and worst paid jobs in Britain. In actual fact British mining almost falls into that category, because you have to understand that miners or craftsmen in the British mines might take home, at the end of having worked 40 hours, less than \$100 a week. And that's someone who's gone through an apprenticeship. And it's really dangerous and there's a lot of accidents. So there's that reason for identifica-

tion as well.

It's also true of the Irish population. Previously if you had an IRA bombing in the mainland of Britain, regardless of what the target was, it was always followed by a wave of anti-Irish hysteria. You know, a pretty bad period. Whereas recently when the IRA bombed the hotel where a lot of Tories were staying during their conference the response was everybody cheered because one of the people who suffered most was the employment minister, Norman Tebbit. They showed these pictures on television of this guy lying under four or five floors of rubble and then being dragged out by his feet, and everybody cheered and clapped and thought it was wonderful. And someone had the response, whoever did this should be shot—for missing the target. They're really sorry they missed Thatcher.

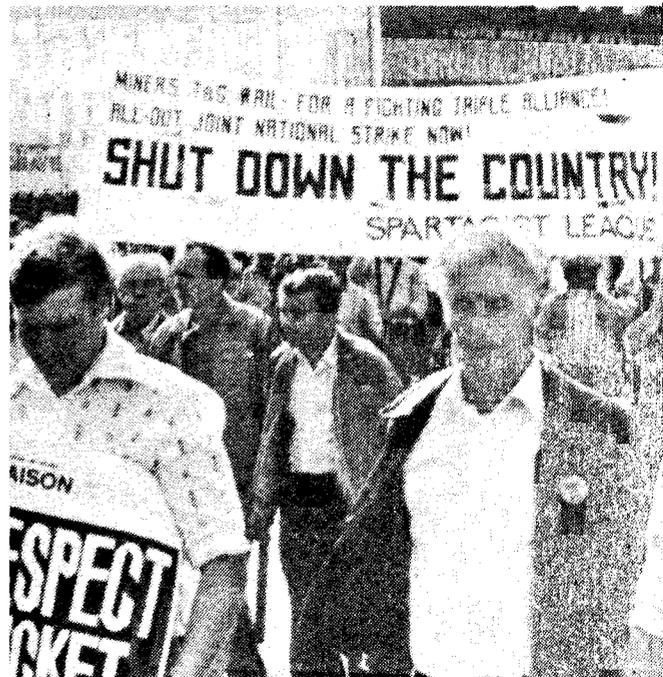
There's also another example of the way in which the social divisions have broken down. There's an organization in London called Lesbians and Gay Men Support the Miners, and they have regular weekly meetings. Miners come along and address their meetings and express their solidarity with them, and they collect money and they give it to the miners. This is previously inconceivable in Britain.

And this seems true in other unions. There's a lot of workers in other unions who really desperately want to strike alongside the miners and to support them, but their leadership really doesn't want to take on that question.

The other thing that's really striking is on the Russian question.... It's really clear that the miners' strike has done more to thwart Thatcher's war plans against the Soviet Union than all the peace demonstrations—and there have been a lot of them in Britain. You know, there's a big CND organization, you've had Greenham Common women, and so forth. And I tell you, the Greenham Common women have become really insignificant by comparison with the miners' wives, who are out there organizing and fighting for support of the strike. And in more ways than one they really are the backbone of the strike.

The third thing is that, given that so much depends on the outcome of this strike, unless you're prepared to address the question of power, then you cannot even bring this strike to the conclusion that is possible. What I mean is that this strike could have been won several months ago. You had the dockers out on strike twice, and Britain is an island economy so the docks are pretty important. The dockers are a militant union. And you have this situation where the leadership of the trade-union movement and of the Labour Party itself are actually divided. The right wing of both the Labour Party and the trade-union bureaucracy—they're openly anti-Russian, anti-Communist; they were the people who really witchhunted [NUM leader] Arthur Scargill when he denounced Polish Solidarność. And it's really clear today, they just tell their members to cross miners' picket lines, ignore the strike and don't give them any money.

On the other hand you've got the left wing of the trade-union bureaucracy and of the Labour Party that are not openly anti-Russian. But they simply will not call their members out on strike action. So you have a



**Spartacist banner in Brighton, 3 September 1984. Miners, railmen, TGWU members must demand a fighting Triple Alliance to shut down the country through all-out strike action.**

situation like when the dockers were out on strike, or the railwaymen. Several hundred members of the railway unions have been victimized, locked out and sent home, for refusing to handle scab coal on the trains. And their union is doing absolutely nothing to defend them, having originally instructed them to not handle the scab coal.

Now, the Labour Party. I believe that never before in its history has the Labour Party been more discredited. And this was as a result of the miners' strike. There's this character Denis Healey in the British Labour Party who's well known to have connections with the CIA and there's a clot of people around him, and we raised the slogan that this guy should be driven out of the Labour Party because the sort of dislocation that it would cause would be really interesting and would break the mold of British social democracy. And Tony Benn came here to New York and various other places and argued that well, of course, the last thing in the world the miners want is to see the Labour Party splitting right now. Well, I'll tell you this is a lie. Most of the miners could see these guys in hell, never mind driven out of the Labour Party. The general secretary of the TUC appeared in a meeting recently and the miners hung up a noose for him in the back of the room. Because you know, they have declared their open animosity to the miners' strike.

We're going to do this fund drive in the U.S. And there's a lot of miners that are really keen to come and meet the Spartacist League and the SYL in the U.S. They're really excited to come here and they desperately need the money. So I think that this will be really important for the international tendency. And it'll be important for the miners. ■

## On Strike Eleven Months Against Bloody Thatcher:



Workers Hammer

20,000 coal field women and supporters march through London, 11 August 1984. "No surrender!" chants expressed their iron determination to win.

# British Miners Fight for All the Oppressed

The British coal miners' strike now in its eleventh month is a crucial class battle whose outcome will shape the social and political climate of the country for years to come. Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is seeking with unrestrained savagery to bludgeon and starve the miners into submission. If the miners lose, they and the whole British working class will be dealt with in the same spirit of limitless vindictiveness that Thatcher unleashed on the helpless young Argentine sailors of the *Belgrano* during the Falklands/Malvinas war. Thatcher personally supervised this gratuitous war crime when the ship, miles from the war zone, was dispatched to the bottom of the icy Atlantic.

But the British miners do not intend to lose. Standing alone thanks to the treachery of the Labour Party/ Trades Union Congress tops, they have held out against everything that bloody Thatcher and her cops could throw against them. They have endured thousands of arrests and countless injuries and they are still fighting. And their courageous defiance of the vicious "Iron Lady" has won to their side the most oppressed layers of

British society. The heat of sharp class struggle has tended to forge a spirit of solidarity between the miners and oppressed sectors such as blacks, Asians and Irish. This political point was emphasized by comrade Eibhlin McDonald, a leader of the Spartacist League of Britain, during her recent visit to the U.S. We reprint below comrade Eibhlin's remarks at a public Spartacist forum in New York last November 16 (originally published in *Workers Vanguard* No. 367, 23 November 1984) and her speech to a national internal meeting of the Spartacus Youth League (WV No. 368, 7 December 1984).

Women have played an active role in the miners' strike. Although women do not work in the British mines, being barred by law from doing so since 1942, the miners' wives have taken their place alongside their men. And they have made their presence felt since the beginning. When one week into the strike Thatcher deployed 10,000 cops in a martial law operation, Kent women beat back a police blockade at the Dartford Tunnel aimed at sealing the Kent strikers off, and went

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