

Australian fascists run for cover from egg-pelting protesters

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Twenty-five years after Stonewall, gays still have a lot to riot about

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The Freedom Socialist

Voice of Revolutionary Feminism

June-August 1994

Volume 15, Number 2

(\$1.00 outside U.S.) **75¢**

Crime & Punishment

Facts tell a different story than media, cops, and Congress

BY LINDA AVERILL AND ANDREA BAUER

Larry Fisher will spend the rest of his life in prison because he put his finger in his pocket, pretended it was a gun, and robbed a sandwich store of \$151. This was Fisher's "third strike" under a new Washington state law that is supposed to protect the public from dangerous career felons.

Fisher racked up his first two strikes by stealing \$360 from his grandfather and \$100 from a pizza joint, physically harming nobody. His total take: \$611.

Oliver North, on the other hand, stands a good chance of becoming a U.S. senator from Virginia. He is campaigning on a platform of getting rid of "drugs and thugs." Ironic, given that North was a key player in the huge, covert operation to fund the Nicaraguan contras by various illegal means, including support for people whom U.S. authorities consider international terrorists and drug lords.

Which man is the menace to society? Government and big business have a list of people they would like to see take the fall for crime and violence: Dark-skinned gangbanger teens toting Uzis. Welfare moms who won't work and keep making babies. Homeless beggars.

Not held culpable are the Savings & Loan sharks, responsible for probably the biggest

- There is no new "crime wave." Though it's up from several decades ago, the U.S. crime rate has actually dropped in recent years. Violent crime fell by 3% in the first half of 1993.
- The crime-hysteria campaign is aimed at those people least likely to be victims — affluent whites. Young Black and Hispanic women in the inner cities are at least twice as likely to be raped or robbed than women in suburban and rural areas.
- Youth are getting a bad rap. 83% of murdered children and half of murdered teens are killed by adults over 20, not other young people.
- The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, locking up 455 out of every 100,000 citizens and spending \$21 billion annually to build prisons and house inmates.

Sources — Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Department of Justice; Calif. Dept. of Justice; *Time*.

heist of the 20th century; the Pentagon, the number one perpetrator of violence worldwide; nor the government, whose pro-business policies have forced nearly 15 percent of the population below the poverty line.

The War on Poverty has become a war on the poor, and Uncle Sam wants to enlist *you*. He is using the fear of mayhem in the streets to spread paranoia and hostility among the already divided U.S. working class.

Blaming the victims. The current hysteria is focused on youthful crimi-

nals. Sensational stories of teenagers casually shooting adults and each other fill the media.

But the true epidemic of "youth violence" is the rampage *against* youth.

Nine out of ten murders of young people in the industrialized world happen in the U.S. Most of them are committed by adults.

In 1992, cases of beating, killing, rape, molestation, and criminal neglect against minors rose by 15 percent in Los Angeles County. Yet President Clinton, in a speech there decrying "13-year-olds gunning down 9-year-olds," did not even mention adult violence against kids.

Crime springs from poverty. Even to call the assaults that *are* committed by teens "youth violence" is misleading. It masks the race, gender, and class aspects of crime by youth.

Juvenile girls, for example, are only two percent of violent lawbreakers.

And young criminals are disproportionately youth of color. Two-thirds of all juveniles incarcerated are now racial minorities, up from less than half ten years ago.

This has nothing to do with a "breakdown of family values," as the Daniel Moynihan and Bill Clinton would have us believe. It is because *poverty creates crime*. Crime rates are higher for people of color because poverty rates are higher (and because of racism regarding who's arrested and convicted). *Poor* whites and *poor* people of color commit crimes at roughly the same rate.

Economic deprivation is the real crime of violence, and three million children — nearly one-fourth of all U.S. infants and toddlers — are its victims.

Abused, ill-educated, discriminated against, brutalized by police, facing a jobless future, and often filled with self-hatred and rage at society: is it any wonder that many poor young people

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Peace on the Streets Youth of color talk about solutions



Kevin Turner, 20, youth outreach worker for People Of Color Against Aids Network in Seattle

"It makes me sick to think of all these Black people who've been in power and who look at young people like we're no good. I'm being judged by my own people. We don't know who to trust, not even amongst ourselves. Young African Americans don't want to *do* anything right because it seems like nothing is right. We have to create for ourselves, think for ourselves."

"**People are always being accused** of being gang members just because of the way they dress, or talk, or their race. Kids join gangs because that's where they get attention. The media focuses on kids who have a 4-point GPA or kids who are in gangs and flunking. Adults need to focus on kids in general, average kids, and not just on smart ones and ones in gangs."

Jessie Clay, 14, Portland, Oregon; enrollee in the "I Have a Dream" Foundation, which guarantees college tuition to high school students

Adrienne Weiler/FS



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Vol. 15, No. 2

June-August 1994

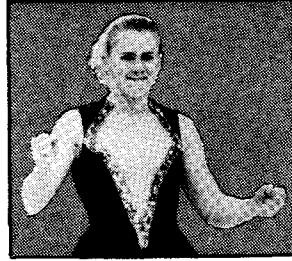
Sexism: the enemy within

Debra O'Gara looks at books about the Black Panthers by Elaine Brown and David Hilliard. The lesson? A revolutionary party needs revolutionized gender relations.



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Unscrupulous by nature?



Are Tonya's tawdry tactics just another manifestation of human nature? No, says Clara Fraser, who probes the material origins of backstabbing and money-grubbing.

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International

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Lesbian/Gay

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Traffic in ideas

I am an activist from a communist and feminist group, Mobilization, that works in Quebec.

Here's my subscription. Please send me some past issues and some of your important documents, particularly on the feminist question, and I will pay for them. I can send you some issues of our review, written in French.

Our two-year-old group is resolutely internationalist. We plan some day to spread out our action into English Canada.

Jacques Saintonge
Laval, Quebec, Canada

Letters

the choice and how to impact it.

After reading the book I realized that, as a Jew, I have spent most of my life trying to figure out what I would do when they came to round me up. That's probably a good part of why I am a radical. The book made fascism very real to me, and spurred me even more in our work.

Adrienne Weller
Freedom Socialist Party
Organizer, Portland, Ore.

Left vs. fascism

Your March-May issue was well received here. One particular article, "The Case for the Vanguard Party," was exceptionally well thought-out and well written.

On the question of left unification, a prime example can be drawn from the young Italian Communist Party, which had rejected Trotsky's "united front" program due to policy conflicts with other Left parties in the early years of Mussolini's rise to power. The rejection of this program ultimately led to the defeat of the proletariat by the reactionary fascist squads, fascist dictatorship, and Italy's part in World War II.

In another note, there's lots of gang warfare in Auckland, and the way it's being handled by the media and the general public reminds me of the blindness and stupidity surrounding similar situations in the States.

Meeghan Truelove
Auckland, New Zealand

Truelove is an FS contributor who is touring the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, and Southeast Asia. —Ed.

Maori rights

New Zealand is a young country, colonialism happened rapidly, and the ramifications of the treaty between the Maoris and the Europeans are still being sorted out. At the moment Maoris are winning loads of cases that give them special land and fishing rights, and Maori culture is experiencing a renaissance — after decades of suffocation it's breathing again as both Maoris and Pakehas (whites) study Maori protocol, learn the language and practice Maori arts.

On another note, there's lots of gang warfare in Auckland, and the way it's being handled by the media and the general public reminds me of the blindness and stupidity surrounding similar situations in the States.

Meeghan Truelove
Auckland, New Zealand

Conner is organizing urgently needed support for two death-row prisoners. To help, contact him at the address above. —Ed.

Schindler's List

After reading the book Schindler's List, I went to the film. Both were very disturbing.

The film told important truths about the Nazis, but it carried on many misconceptions. I wish a film would be made that shows that industrialists financed the Nazis, that many others besides Jews were in camps, and that many Jews resisted (a TV program shows the Sobibor rebellion) while others collaborated.

The book makes clear how much Jews worked with Nazis against their own people. We all need to learn how deadly collaboration is, especially those who may not realize that they are collaborating. This would help us to fight the Nazis today.

The book and film show that people can be evil or good, without explaining what determines

So it's hip-hip hurray for gays and lesbians — and AIDS [sic] (after all we must have something to concern us). ["The Love That Dare Not Speak Its Name in the Army," Clara Fraser, Vol. 14 No. 2.] But how does a gay man make love to a lesbian woman (excuse — womyn). The entire article reflects the author's disappointment with her marriages.

Leon Goodman
New York City

Tobacco row

I recently attended a dinner/discussion sponsored by the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women. The discussion and the food...could not have been better. The air quality was terrible.

The cigarette smoke was thick and my lungs were burning. I was

told that the "air scrubbers" were working... Anti-smoking groups have proven that the "scrubbers" are ineffective...

I find it troubling that some capitalists are more enlightened than some socialists on this health issue. The policies of the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women are shortening the lives of children, nonsmokers and even smokers...

I regret to say that I won't be attending any more functions at New Freeway Hall, even though future events look inviting.

Greg Hart
Seattle, Washington

The FSP puts all the resources we can into making our facilities healthy. (New Freeway Hall is getting an upgrade soon, thanks to a concerned donor.) But we strenuously object to the campaign that scapegoats smokers for the health crisis in the same way that youth and the poor are being scapegoated for the urban crisis (please see cover story). —Ed.

Stateswomen

Enclosed is an article that reports that women have taken the helm of leadership in four Moslem countries. Does this development reflect a revolutionary undercurrent? I'd like to see some ongoing analytical reports on this in the FS.

Sam Kahl
Portland, Oregon

Soul food

Enclosed is \$5.00 for a subscription. I'm very proud of you!

My highlight of the year was going to the Environmental Law Conference in Eugene in March. As an advocate for indigenous peoples, Mother Nature's salvation, and peace with Justice, I felt like the conference was a "religious" experience!

Jane Fowler
Bend, Oregon

Claim deflated

The Federal Reserve, a private corporation with private — not public — interests at heart, has upped the ante on inflation. Their claim that their inflation of interest rates deflates the rate of inflation is utterly absurd. Raising the prime rate deflates the economy, slows individual prosperity, and makes as much sense as using a gas pump to fight a house fire. Talk about lunacy and voodoo economics, now we have it! And, I've had it!

David Johnson
Seattle, Washington

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The Freedom Socialist (ISSN 0272-4367) is published quarterly by the Freedom Socialist Party, New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118. Phone: 206-722-2453. Subscriptions: 1-year \$5.00 (institutions \$10.00), 2-year Supporting Sub \$25.00, 3-year Sustaining Sub \$50.00, 5-year Sponsoring Sub \$100.00. Add \$5.00 for overseas airmail. Back copies \$.75 each. Checks or money orders to Freedom Socialist at the address above.

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Dateline Australia

Nazi scum on the run in Brunswick

BY ALISON THORNE AND PETER MURRAY

In March, two huge rallies in a working-class, multi-racial suburb of Melbourne thoroughly humiliated peddlers of white power ambitious to establish a base there.

A band of Hitlerites called National Action (NA) is stepping up activity in Brunswick. But when they announced a plan to rally during a multi-cultural street party, diverse forces came together under the banner of Brunswick Against The Nazis (BATN) to drive them out.

Demonstrators rout fascists. The result was stunning. Endorsements came from as far away as the Anti-Nazi League in Britain, United Front Against Fascism in the U.S., and Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party in the U.S. and Canada.

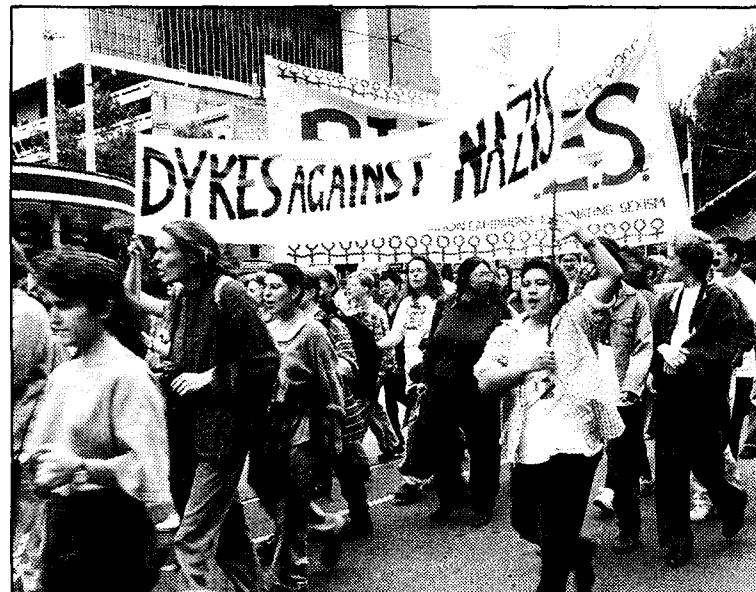
More than 700 people turned out to defend the street festival, and NA postponed its rally. The demonstrators, buoyed by victory, marched to the next suburb and protested outside the Citizens Electoral Council to expose its links with U.S. ultra-rightist Lyndon LaRouche.

NA held their "rally" the next weekend. Ringed by cops, they waved Australian and "white power" flags and attempted to spew out their racist, anti-immigrant, sexist, homophobic bile. Across the street a crowd gathered, chanting "Asians are welcome, Nazis are not!"

NA leader Michael Brander took the podium and tried to speak. The chant grew to a roar. Reinforcing the message

of the words, people began pelting the brownshirts with eggs. Brander copped one in the face; counter-demonstrators cheered. "I thought you'd left," said one anti-fascist. "Nah, we ran out of eggs and I went to buy some more," her friend replied.

The anti-fascist crowd surged forward. The cops made an escape route that allowed NA to scurry up a side street.



March 12, 1994. After successfully driving the Nazis out of Brunswick, these Australian bigot-busters carry their banner on to the International Women's Day march.

ing that it "gave the fascists publicity."

This head-in-the-sand approach is no use to the victims of Nazi thugs. The ultra-right threat is real; 20 NA goons bashed 15 people in Adelaide just days after the victory in Brunswick. To ignore the white supremacists gives a green light to their harassment and violence and allows them space to recruit.

The supposedly Trotskyist Spartacist League (SL), on the other hand, calls on paper for "mass labor/black mobilisations to crush the Nazis." But although BATN organised endorsements from two key unions, SL refused to lift a finger, characterising BATN as "grotesque."

Their gripe? Precisely the involvement of the established union movement! BATN asked an ALP politician and a trade union officer to speak, and it pushed individual city council members to break with the official position by endorsing the rallies. But because the ALP-dominated council is part of the government, the SL accused BATN of appealing to the state instead of organising the masses.

The SL writes stirring phrases in its journals, but abstains from getting its hands dirty in the everyday class struggle.

Fascism's aim is to smash working-class organisations so that bosses can exploit workers unchecked. This is why it's vital to mobilise trade unions in the battle to defeat Nazism.

The stance of the SL is anything but Trotskyist. In the 1930s, Leon Trotsky was the leading proponent of the united front, which brings groups with differ-

ent programs together under working-class leadership to defeat a common enemy. During fascism's rise, Trotsky warned that the German Communist Party was making a tragic mistake by refusing to form a united front with the Social Democrats. The Communist leadership claimed that the reformism of the social democracy was as dangerous as Hitler.

The failure of the two tendencies to forge an alliance divided and immobilised Germany's proletariat — the only force with the power to stop Nazism.

The SL, with its pose of theoretical "purity," commits the same error.

Capitalism needs scapegoats. With the blessing of big business, Hitler appealed to the "little people" ruined by Germany's economic crisis, offering them scapegoats and simple answers. Today, NA is emboldened to organise in a multi-cultural suburb like Brunswick because similar conditions exist. Brunswick has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the state. Many people are hurting, and they are looking for someone to blame.

The ALP and trade union officials peddle "improved international competitiveness" as the solution for Australian capitalism. Yet the heart of the problem is the cut-throat nature of capitalist competition itself, which forces the bosses to produce goods ever more cheaply by sacking employees and squeezing more from those who remain. Without militant leadership, insecure and impoverished workers turn upon each other.

BATN provides a model for fighting the Nazi agenda of divide and conquer. And its successes strengthen workers' resolve to find real solutions to the poverty, misery and despair which are the sustenance of fascism. □

...Crime

from the cover
turn to guns or drugs?

Lock 'em up and throw away the key. The solution offered by Democrats and Republicans is more punishment. This year's model is the Omnibus Crime Bill now in Congress.

The House and Senate versions are similar. The Senate's would build new prisons, put 100,000 more police on the streets, lengthen sentences, toughen penalties against young offenders, and greatly expand the use of the death penalty. It would cover the 22.3-billion-dollar price tag by axing a quarter of a million federal jobs.

But more punishment won't solve the problem. It's a proven failure. The inmate population has *tripled* in a decade, and crime hasn't dropped.

Instead, the fight against crime is just multiplying racist, sexist, and anti-youth injustices.

• Blacks convicted of killing whites are sentenced to death more than seven times as often as whites who kill Blacks.

• A Clinton task force recommends cutting unmarried teenage mothers off welfare unless they live with a parent or guardian. Two-thirds of these young women were victims of sexual and other physical abuse, mostly in the homes Clinton wants to force them back to.

• A young person imprisoned for murder in California spends an average of 19 months more behind bars than an adult murderer does.

Launching a holy crusade against crime doesn't fix the problem, but it

gives law enforcers a huge battering ram against civil liberties. Clinton is also pushing to allow police to raid public housing without warrants.

And the law-and-order solution permits authorities to sweep up rebels, potential rebels, and those who are just tragic reminders of the system's collapse, and warehouse them out of sight.

No peace without justice. Crime is hardly a new problem. Charles Dickens chronicled the plight of Great Britain's poor during the Industrial Revolution, when labor was at capital's mercy and life was cheap. It wasn't until the rise of a strong labor movement, which won improved living standards for workers, that crime declined.

The first step toward eliminating crime and violence is to create *jobs* through a full-scale program that provides well-paid, productive employment to everyone.

Women need wage equity, childcare, and shelters from abuse. Parenting classes should be freely available to all.

Inner-city communities need civilian review boards with real power to check racist police brutality.

Kids and adults both need access to multi-lingual, quality education, including ethnic and women's studies in the high schools. Young people, too, need shelters from abuse, and they need 24-hour drop-in and recreational centers.

How do we pay for all this? De-fund the Pentagon, the biggest, baddest, most heavily armed criminal of them all!

Society's fundamental well-being and the security of future generations must become non-negotiable items. The system we live under now has *way* more than three strikes against it. It's time for one last summary execution. □

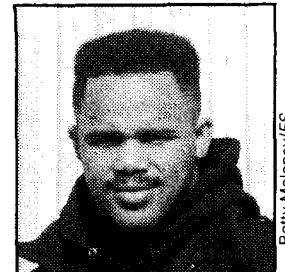
...Young people speak out

from the cover

"More cops are the wrong solution. That just adds tension to the inner cities. Prisons aren't the solution. It's easy for the state to lock a prisoner up, but hard to allow that prisoner opportunities to be productive.

Jobs are the solution. There are no jobs out there. A lot of people who commit crimes are forced to. I think if they were presented job opportunities you would have a whole new different person and type of community."

Kenya Moncur, 20, a senior at Kean College in Union, New Jersey



Betty Maloney/FS

"What the Chicano students in Oregon want is equality. We don't have that many opportunities to take any kind of Chicano or Latino classes and those that are offered don't really represent who we are, where we are coming from.

Another important thing is bilingual and bicultural staff, especially in the high schools. It's important to be bilingual, but I don't think it's enough. You have to be bicultural to really understand what a group's needs are."

Mary Gonzalez, 19, president of MEChA at Portland Community College



Kari Kramer

"The violence comes from society. It's a violence of inequality, police brutality, poverty, dehumanization, unemployment, and not having a fair chance to live, learn, and contribute.

We need to provide support for students such as mentoring. We need to find jobs and training for kids. We need to move away from this selfish, self-serving capitalistic ideal and work collectively to alleviate the problem."

Makissa Bevels, 23, a graduate this year of the University of California at Berkeley

"Our tolerance for other people has just gone so far below zero that instead of trying to solve problems we just try to get rid of them as quickly as possible.

There's too many divisions among people. People don't recognize the samenesses and similarities they have, and that everyone is just out to do the same thing — the pursuit of happiness and life, liberty, and all that. I think that we are too segregated as a culture and as a society to understand that we're all the same."

Yoshiko Matsui, 18, American Friends Service Committee Gay and Lesbian Youth Program, Seattle

25 years after Stonewall

Fired up and not gonna take it any more Gay liberation movement tackles unmet demands

BY LINDA AVERILL

On June 28, 1969, in the early hours of the morning, New York police got a big surprise during a routine raid on the Stonewall Inn. The cops had brutalized and bullied the customers at this Greenwich Village bar countless times before, but this night proved to be different.

The patrons — drag queens, street youth, gays of color, dykes, and transgenders — fought back.

Their rebellion sparked three days of rioting and skirmishes with cops. It also marked the turning point for sexual minorities, who had been labeled as depraved and forced to live in the closet or on the fringes of society. Stonewall signaled the dawn of a new movement for social justice launched by people with little to lose and much to gain.

Still in Kansas, Toto. Gays, bisexuals, and transgenders have made great strides in twenty-five years. Out gays and lesbians are wowing Broadway, advising the White House, leading unions, and raising families.

And yet liberation is partial and tenuous. The past year, which featured a spectacular presidential sellout on gays in the military and a sinister batch of anti-gay ballot-box measures, shows this dramatically.

The conditioned response from a layer of professional gay bureaucrats is to tell their constituency to lay low, to forswear being too uppity or flaming, to cultivate respectability and cozy relations with Democrats.

But a growing number of lesbians and gays are saying *basta!* Enough! They are

ready to build on the unapologetic fight for equality begun at Stonewall. They are up front and on the move, and their own history points the way forward.

Fight fire with fire. The organizing against today's "family values" hucksters can benefit from the lessons of the late 1970s. It was then that Anita Bryant, a former Miss America turned orange juice queen, headed efforts to overturn an ordinance protecting gays from discrimination in Dade County, Florida.

Bryant's initiative campaign portrayed gays as child molesters. In response, gay liberals avoided confrontation with the bigots and relied instead on a very cautious strategy: they raised thousands of dollars, hired Democratic Party consultants, and waged a last-minute media blitz.

This approach failed. When the votes were counted in the summer of 1977, Bryant triumphed two to one.

Gay rights laws in three other locations were similarly reversed within a year.

But when anti-gay initiative drives sprouted in California and in Seattle, Washington in 1978, militant feminists got busy early. The Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women were among those who organized grassroots, democratic coalitions that included unions and people of color communities on the basis that an injury to one is an injury to all.

These activists rejected the clubhouse policies of racist, sexist, and anti-radical exclusionism that serve to divide and weaken the movements. They exposed the homophobes' broader agenda. And they won.

Much of the impetus for mutual solidar-

ity came from lesbians and gays of color. The 1979 First Third World Lesbian/Gay Conference in Washington, D.C. drew 450 participants who called for coalition-building, an end to the deportation of undocumented workers, respect for Native sovereignty, and more. They adjourned in time to lead the massive 1979 March on Washington for gay rights.

To party or to rebel? A contradictory situation marked the early '80s and polarized the lesbian/gay community. It was reflected in regular debates over "celebration vs. politics" at the annual pride marches.

On one hand, a contingent of comfortable, successful gays, mostly white males, argued that militancy was passé.

On the other, most lesbians and gay men felt all too keenly the effects of a right wing re-energized by Ronald Reagan's election as president.

For lesbians and gays who had to live in the real world, it was *la lucha continua* — the struggle continues!

Sexual minorities fought disparate treatment: Asian American educator and writer Merle Woo successfully sued the University of California at Berkeley over race, sex, sexuality, and political ideology discrimination;

Perry Watkins, a Black, gay soldier, took the U.S. Army to the U.S. Supreme Court over his right to serve. He also scored a victory.

At the same time, lesbians and gays provided leadership in many other arenas, such as the mobilizations against the draft and in defense of abortion clinics.

Hysteria over AIDS revives gay militance. Then, in the mid-'80s, AIDS hit. While Congress proposed quarantines and forced testing and spread fears about the "gay plague," thousands died.

The crisis bitterly revealed the fragile "progress" of the movement and how much work was yet to be done.

The 650,000-strong 1987 March on Washington to demand government help, not hysterics, epitomized the movement's explosive response. And it highlighted the birth of defiant, action-oriented groups like ACT UP and, a few years later, Queer Nation.

These organizations grabbed media headlines and put the government on the defensive over its callousness and lynch-mob posture about AIDS.

But a victory today for lesbian/gay rights against the right wing's determined and methodical assault requires a new level of nationally focused radicalism.

Standing up for civil rights

PWA Steve Farmer released from Washington state prison

After serving two and one half years of an unjust sentence, Steve Farmer won an imperfect but milestone victory in January, when he was released on conditional clemency.

Farmer, a former flight attendant from Seattle, was convicted in 1988 at the height of AIDS hysteria for "communicating with a minor for immoral purposes" (taking photos of a nude 17-year-old male prostitute).

County prosecutors bent on advancing their careers seized on Farmer's case, seeing it as an opening to institute widespread mandatory HIV testing.

With the eager cooperation of much of the media, they spread flagrant lies about Farmer, portraying him as an out-of-control child-killing machine.

Despite the obvious fact that Polaroids don't transmit HIV, officials ordered that Farmer be tested against his will. When he turned up HIV-positive, he was slapped with a scandalously long seven-and-a-half-year prison sentence, three times the norm.

Justice denied. Farmer fought back from the start. But in the

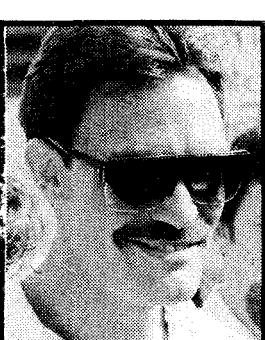
beginning, many gay organizations and individuals refused to join him. An exception was the Stonewall Committee for Lesbian/Gay Rights, which helped Farmer gradually attract broad support by educating the public to the fact that the railroading of Farmer undermined everyone's privacy rights.

Farmer and his defenders eventually won a state Supreme Court ruling that said Farmer's test was illegal, a precedent-setting decision that should spare anyone else in Washington from his ordeal.

But, in the cruelest of ironies, the court lacked the political nerve to overturn Farmer's outrageous sentence.

Perseverance pays. After ceaseless prodding, the state finally agreed to let Farmer go for health reasons after he developed full-blown AIDS. But even then the battle was not over.

When Farmer was resettled into confinement in a local AIDS hospice, the police and media



Let's talk!

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OREGON

Portland: Northwest Service Center, 1819 NW Everett Rm. 201, Portland, OR 97209. Ph. 503-928-3090. FAX 503-223-2390.

WASHINGTON

Port Angeles: 512 E. 7th, Port Angeles, WA 98362. Ph. 206-452-7534.

Seattle: FSP National Office, Bush Asia Center, 409 Maynard Ave. S. #201, Seattle, WA 98104. Ph. 206-682-0990. FAX 206-682-8120.

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

MINNESOTA

Mankato: 109 Morningside, Mankato, MN 56001. Ph. 507-386-1647.

Radical Women & Freedom Socialist Party



A one-million-strong march on Washington, D.C. on April 23, 1993 (both photos) features a middle-finger salute (right) in a confrontation with religious fanatics.

more: finished business

Bigotry at the ballot box. In Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, and Washington, statewide anti-gay initiative drives are underway. Numerous cities are facing similar battles.

These measures are part of a nationally coordinated onslaught, based on a multi-issue ultraright agenda, that gets financial and political support from the Populist Party and other Nazis.

Lon Mabon, the leader of Oregon's anti-gay campaign and an anti-abortion crusader, shuttles all over the Northwest to rally his troops. In Cincinnati, Ohio, leaders of a gay-rights repeal effort are also trying to roll back protections for people of color.

In Washington state, gay activists have matched the rightwingers with a multi-pronged approach of their own, forging powerful links with Blacks, Jews, and labor, among other communities. Mutual aid to beat the reactionary threat is their watchword.

A class act is needed. The times cry out for this kind of coalition-building, for serious radical leadership, and for an anti-capitalist program.

Let's face it. Reformist gay movement honchos have proved beyond a reasonable

doubt that being respectable and relying on the Democrats is the slow road to Nowhere.

The right wing has a program and a long-term plan; the gay movement needs one.

A great place to start would be with helping to form a **labor party**, so coalitions don't have to be re-created from scratch every time the right wing charges into battle again.

A labor party could also take us **beyond** endless, repetitious face-offs over basic rights. Then, we'd have the energy and means to eliminate the dirty little secret that the family values folks are trying to protect: capitalism. This system's whole existence depends on inequality, division, stratification, and a rigid, patriarchal sexual code.

We don't need it. Humankind doesn't have to live like that. The proud queer outcasts who sparked Stonewall and have been in the trenches ever since have the power to unite every freedom struggle and to turn history's tide.

The transformation is long overdue. Socialism and ruby slippers for all! □

rights and winning

New Jersey okays turnpike leafleting

Stephen Durham, gay movement pioneer, scored a victory for free speech in December 1993 when the Cherry Hill Municipal Court in New Jersey dismissed charges against him for leafleting at a turnpike rest stop.

In its decision, the court promised to bring the statute under which Durham was cited into line with the state and federal constitutions.

(But stay tuned, as the Turnpike Authority has yet to implement this.)

Red light for free speech. Durham stopped at a rest area named after Walt Whitman en route to the April 1993 National March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Rights. He was distributing a leaflet called "On The Barricades for Lesbian/Gay Rights" when troopers arrested him for breaking a law that forbids pamphleteering on state turnpikes.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a motion challenging the statute as a violation of Durham's First Amendment right to free speech. □

Turbocharged support. Hundreds of petitions flooded the court on Durham's behalf, coming from as far away as Australia and as nearby as New York City, where Durham is well known as the local Freedom Socialist Party Organizer and a tenants' rights activist.

The War Resisters League, American-Arab Relations Committee, New York Committees of Correspondence, and some of Durham's neighbors were among the many groups and individuals who mailed protest letters.

In a letter from Lesbian and Gay Solidarity in Australia, Michael Schembri wrote: "That the rest stop is named after Walt Whitman, the USA's famous homosexual poet, whose poetry extols democratic republicanism, adds to the shame of the police involvement in such harassment."

The outpouring of support demonstrated to the state that there is widespread determination to defend First Amendment rights for everyone, including gays and radicals, says an elated Durham.

Walt Whitman would be proud. □

New state law bolsters Sandy Nelson case

BY ROBERT NATHAN GUERRERO

Award-winning journalist and socialist-feminist activist Sandy Nelson has added new ammunition to her groundbreaking legal case against *The News Tribune* (TNT) of Tacoma, Washington. She has amended the lawsuit, filed with the backing of the state American Civil Liberties Union in 1993, to include recently published state legislation that explicitly prohibits bosses from discriminating against employees because of their work for or against any political party, candidate or issue.

The powerful law was passed in November 1992 as part of campaign-reform Initiative 134. According to Nelson's lawyers, James Lobsenz and William Bender, it is grounds for re-establishing her as a reporter at once.

"This law goes to the heart of Sandy's case," said Lee Solomon, outgoing chair of Nelson's defense committee, "because TNT used Sandy's advocacy of a Tacoma gay rights law as a pretext to derail her reporting career and banish her permanently to copy editing."

Anti-discrimination testimony brings censure.

The Tribune, which yanked Nelson from the education desk in 1990, continues to harass her for her political outspokenness. Management chastised Nelson for testifying on February 17 before the state Senate Law and Justice Committee on behalf of a bill to ban discrimination against gay men and lesbians throughout Washington.

Nelson's testimony, solicited by legislators who knew of her case, used her own example to show the need to protect sexual minorities from job and housing discrimination.

The Senate failed to pass the bill. This can only encourage the ultraright zealots who are sponsoring Initiatives 608 and 610, which would explicitly permit discrimination and would block the passage of any future gay civil rights laws.

And an emboldened TNT management threatened Nelson in a March 3 letter with discipline and "further isolation" if she continues to engage in undefined "high-profile political activities" and fails to disclose such activities — in advance — to her employer.

Reprimand rebounds. Management's threat created an uproar.

It prompted on-the-spot protests from Nelson and her co-workers, one of whom confronted Managing Editor Jan Brandt directly.

And it added urgency to an international petition campaign launched by supporters of Nelson's reinstatement in Australia and Canada. More than 1,000 signatures from around the world are to be delivered July 1 to publisher Kelso Gillenwater in honor of the First American Revolution, which secured the rights Nelson is fighting to exercise.

Coverage of the escalating harassment against Nelson in the *Seattle Gay News*, the lesbian magazine *Deneuve*, and Tacoma's Black community newspaper *The Northwest Dispatch* prompted an unprecedented number of requests for Nelson to discuss her experiences.

In April, Nelson spoke at the Education Writers Association conference in Seattle and the Northwest Women's Studies Association conference in Tacoma. An article on the campaign to get back her beat and byline is due to appear in the book *Uncommon Heroes*, which will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, a gay movement landmark.

Recent case endorsers include Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, authors of *Lesbian/Woman*, and feminist Kate Millett. Nationally syndicated "Media Beat" columnist Norman Solomon offered to speak on Nelson's behalf at September forums in Portland and Seattle.

The court case is also moving forward. On top of trying to use the campaign practices law to gain Nelson's immediate return to reporting, attorneys Lobsenz and Bender are doing trial prep work that includes taking a statement from Managing Editor Brandt.

Readers can help win justice for Nelson by sending endorsements and donations to the Sandy Nelson Defense Committee at 4023 N. 34th St., Tacoma, WA 98407. The committee can be reached by calling (206)756-9971 or faxing (206)759-3988. □

Robert Nathan Guerrero is the Nelson defense committee chair, a Tlingit tribe member, and a singer and recording artist.

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Editorials

South Africa: so much to celebrate, so far to go

A DAY HAS ARRIVED that most South Africans and millions of justice-seekers around the world hoped they would live to see: the fall of formal apartheid.

IT WAS A LONG, BITTER, bloody road home for South Africa's 30 million Blacks. The prisons, mines, and shantytowns are full of the ghosts of those who gave everything they had to bring one of the globe's most repressive governments, backed by the U.S., a step closer to defeat.

This was not a path South Africans walked alone. People everywhere did what they could to bring down white rule. In the 1980s, the fight against apartheid was one of the most inspirational features of a mean-spirited decade.

There was good reason to celebrate as South Africans went to the polls together for the first time.

BUT AFTER ALL THAT, the journey is far from over. Because fundamentally, the shackles holding down Blacks are not legal, but economic.

The Black majority need jobs — half are unemployed — housing, water, electricity, education, and healthcare. Most are much more militant than their leaders in the African National Congress. There is widespread realization that nothing short of socialism will be able to deliver the goods.

The dawn of parliamentary democracy in South Africa signals a new day, and a new struggle, that is only just beginning. □

How low can Gov. Pete Wilson stoop?

CALIFORNIA'S GOVERNOR is proof of one thing, at least: Whatever else it takes to be a successful capitalist politician these days, it requires a willingness to be really nasty.

Republican Pete Wilson is campaigning for reelection, largely on the strength of "taking California back" from undocumented workers — as if the state's problems could really be the fault of its most exploited and marginalized residents. He wants to withhold citizenship from their U.S.-born children and deny undocumented families public education, emergency medical services, and prenatal care. He has created a racist climate where Klan-type violence against immigrants is flourishing.

Statewide, Democrats and Republicans are falling all over themselves to see who can play roughest in the anti-immigrant crackdown. Wilson's Democrat opponent, Kathleen Brown, has called for Army patrol of the border.

THEY'RE NOT GOING TO get away with it. An encouraging sign was a May 28 immigrant rights rally of nearly 25,000 people in downtown Los Angeles, the biggest demonstration in recent southern California history.

Listen up, Pete: No human being is "illegal." Open the border! □

Arson won't burn bridges built by pastor

THE DAYBREAK FIRE in May that incinerated New Hope Baptist Church, home to a mostly Black working-class congregation in Seattle, lasted a mere couple hours. It was already being broadcast as a two-alarm blaze by the time fire trucks arrived from four blocks away. By then, flames were exploding out of both ends of the wooden structure.

Within hours, city officials declared the church wiring at fault. Case closed.

BUT MANY PEOPLE BELIEVE that's a cover-up. There are just too many coincidences.

The church's pastor, Reverend Robert Jeffrey, is a courageous crafter of alliances. Two days before the fire he had delivered a rousing speech at a rally opposing Washington's two anti-gay ballot measures, Initiatives 608 and 610.

Reverend Jeffrey is spearheading an African American economic self-help effort called Campaign 5000. Before the gay rights rally, his church had already been the target of harassment by both anti-Semites in the Black community who object to the support he has won from Jews, and by rightwing homophobes who support the state initiatives.

Jeffrey, his congregation, and his many allies are determined to rebuild the church and launch Campaign 5000 on schedule. It looks to us like somebody with matches loathes the idea of a revitalized, broadly inclusive civil rights movement and thinks that Reverend Jeffrey is making too many friends. But the fire meant to terrorize this exciting new coalition is only serving to radicalize it. □



Dateline Canada

Trend of cutting pay and hours a bogus solution to job losses

BY MARCEL HATCH

Overworked or unemployed and impoverished. That's the situation for more and more Canadians as employers slash jobs and speed up production to keep their "competitive edge" in the '90s.

In Canada, a nation of 27 million people, 1.6 million are involuntarily idle. Youth with little work experience compete against the middle-aged and nearly retired for a diminishing pool of lower-paying, frequently part-time jobs. Meanwhile, 1.25 million full-time employees labor 50-plus hours per week.

In the face of this debacle, government and corporations are beginning to propose "easing unemployment" by cutting work-week hours — with a proportionate cut in pay. But already, almost half of all working moms barely live above poverty!

Workers get less for producing more. Economic crisis comes at a time when workers are cranking out **more**, faster, thanks to automation and increased efficiency.

Today's employee produces more in three days than his or her 1960s counterpart did in five. Canadian workers should be able to enjoy full employment and shorter hours.

But the benefits of workers' increased production have not gone to them. The wealth has been siphoned off by capitalists in the form of super-profits. Hiring fewer workers who produce more, for the same or lower wages, the ruling class is making a mint and creating a growing resource of desperate reserve labour.

Liberals lead the assault. Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and his Liberal Party have a plan that is supposed to boost jobs. They propose to redistribute work so that those now unemployed will get the fifth day of work of those who have jobs. But their four-day work-

week comes with four days' pay and benefits — and will really mean a 25 percent speedup, not new jobs. Meanwhile, the scheme provides an excuse to slash welfare and unemployment benefits.

Canada is not alone in this approach. In Germany, thousands have been laid off in mine and factory closures. Women's workforce participation has dropped 16 percent since reunification. The government is proposing a four-day work week with a 20 percent drop in pay.

In Canada, 136,000 workers representing 9,000 companies have already been forced into work-sharing. Bell Canada, which employs 47,000, recently cut work hours

Workers now produce more in three days than they used to in five. They should enjoy full employment and shorter hours.

to avoid layoffs. Bell's profits soared, but employees found they now perform five days' work in four days — with increased stress, but reduced income and benefits. No new jobs have been added.

The Canadian Labor Congress, although on record against reduced hours and pay, hasn't condemned Bell's contract. However, some militant unions are demonstrating their willingness to fight.

Labour pushes back. In autumn of 1993, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) in Windsor, Ontario negotiated a reduced work-week for 4,200 Chrysler Canada workers. They won fewer hours, **more** pay, no loss of benefits, elimination of overtime, childcare, wage equity, and a third shift employing 800 new workers! And they have recently extended the same contract to several Ford Canada plants.

In British Columbia, the Hospital Employees Union, whose 67,000 members are predominantly women and people of color, negotiated a historic contract stipulating a

36-hour work-week, pay raises, and long-term job security.

Such victories must be multiplied. The labour movement must demand that jobs be restored — without further impoverishing workers — through a campaign for something like 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay.

This would be a step toward an even fairer solution, an overall sliding scale of hours and wages. Such a system would divide all work on hand between all workers. The work-week would adjust accordingly. Wages would remain at the level of a full work-week, but would slide to follow the movement of prices. A programme of public works would guarantee full employment.

And on the fifth day we should rest. The current situation, in which the wealth that workers create is denied them, is not new. The whole economic and social system rests on the daily theft by capitalists of the surplus-value produced by workers with each exertion of their muscles, brains, and nerves.

The fight for better distribution of work, with living wages for all, is a fair and equitable way to reclaim some of that value for ensuring the survival, health, and well-being of the class which brought it into existence.

The belt-tightening measures introduced by the Liberal Party need to be met by labour with demands for 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay, abolition of overtime, a substantial raise in the minimum wage, equal pay for comparable work, and full benefits to part-time and domestic workers. And the reformist-socialist New Democratic Party, or any other party which seriously claims to represent the working class, should embrace, fight for, and build upon this call.

If the bosses protest that they can't afford these changes, let them perish. Workers will manage the world better and will use the wealth they create to enrich the lives of all. □

Voices of Color

Invisible Women Sexism in the Black Panther Party

BY DEBRA O'GARA

A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story, by Elaine Brown. New York: Anchor Books, 1994. Paper, \$14.95.

This Side of Glory, by David Hilliard and Lewis Cole. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993. Paper, \$11.95.

The energizing and fundamental role women play in revolutionary organizations came home to me afresh as I read recent memoirs by Elaine Brown and David Hilliard, both former leaders in the Black Panther Party.

The two authors show us the reasons for the party's spectacular rise — and also its agonizing fall. Their books reveal, directly or indirectly, how sexism helped destroy the Panthers.

Source of hope and strength. Hilliard and Brown both recount their experiences growing up Black and oppressed and learning how to survive.

For them, as for many others, the BPP and its visionary Ten Point Program gave direction and potency to their daily fight against racism. They show how the party's internationalist, integrationist, and socialist politics grabbed the hearts and minds of Blacks and people of all colors radicalized by war, injustice, and broken promises — in the U.S. and globally.

So what happened?

Brought down by disrespecting women. In *This Side of Glory*, Hilliard relives the war waged on the party by the police and FBI — the infiltration, murders, and arrests. With refreshing honesty, he lays bare the destructive internal trends, fed by the government's dirty tricks, that became entrenched practice: the paranoia that turned comrades against each other, the culture of drugs and gangsterism, and founding hero Huey Newton's progressive isolation and one-man rule.

Hilliard has more trouble, however, in discussing sexism. But he says enough for a reader to conclude that poisoned

male-female relations must have played an enormous part in disintegrating the party.

In contrast, Brown's *Taste of Power* vividly describes the pervasive and sometimes brutal ill-treatment that female Panthers faced — physical abuse, exploitation as sexual prizes and workhorses, and denigration of their abilities.

As early as 1969, Brown realized that women "would have to fight for the right to fight for freedom." By 1975, she concluded that "the value of my life had been obliterated as much by being female as by being Black and poor."

But, like many Black

Central Committee.

Believing the other women would collapse in a direct confrontation over sexism, Brown says, she literally ran away from the fight, leaving the problem of women's role in the BPP unaddressed and unresolved.

What happened to Regina Davis illustrates perfectly how women's second-class status devastated the party.

As in every other movement, women were the backbone of all the Panthers' administrative and organizational work, particularly the Survival Programs. It was these community projects — childcare, breakfasts, schools, clinics — that won broad support and counteracted the media image of the Panthers as gun-toting thugs. And when given the chance, the women also showed themselves to be keen thinkers, innovative strategists, and moving orators.

On paper, the Panthers called for gender equality. But instead of being recognized, developed, and utilized, their many unacknowledged women leaders were sabotaged, demeaned, and punished for being uppity. The result was a divided and fatally weakened organization.

Learning from history. As the Black Panther chairperson, Brown had more influence than any other woman. Her failure to challenge female invisibility inside the party was a tragedy not just for the Panthers but for the feminist movement, which relies on the pace-setting contributions of radical women of color to remain healthy, united, and effective.

But, over the years since then, other women of color — writers, union and grassroots organizers, lesbian activists — picked up the torch and showed in life and theory how feminism is an organic part of every liberation movement.

Brown and Hilliard, and the incredibly significant party they belonged to, could not break free of the sexism of the time. But learning from their struggles will help today's anti-racist revolutionaries, women and men, create a new organization that takes up where the Panthers left off. □



**Free Huey Newton rally, Oakland, Cal., 1968.
Panther women, despite second-class treatment,
were first-rate troops in the Black Power struggle.**

The Vanguard (1970), Beacon Press

women, Brown believed then that feminism was strictly for well-off whites, and was put off by the predominant radical-feminist ideology of the era — that is, the idea that gender concerns are more important than race issues and that men are the enemy, not capitalism.

Brown admits that she did not always speak out against female subordination in the Panthers. Instead, she concentrated on shoring up her own tenuous leadership position, conferred on her unilaterally by Newton. To stay on top while Newton was in prison, she relied on the "normal" macho enforcement techniques.

She reports that she was finally goaded into action when Regina Davis, who managed the Panthers' highly praised school, ended up in the hospital. "The Brothers" had beaten Davis up and broken her jaw because she reprimanded a male colleague for not carrying out an assignment.

Brown writes that when she told Newton of her anger over the attack, he refused to break solidarity with the men, challenging her to a debate in the

demeaned, and punished for being uppity. The result was a divided and fatally weakened organization.

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Clara Fraser

Socialism for Skeptics III — Clans or Klans: choose one

ANYBODY WHO SPEAKS UP for socialism is bombarded with the objection that cooperative and mutually supportive relations among people are a fantasy.

Homo sapiens are intrinsically individualistic, competitive, and egotistical, claim the cynics — it's just the way we're genetically programmed. Survival of the fittest and all that jazz.

This robotic response from apparently thoughtful folk is nonsense. The overwhelming historical evidence about our true nature amounts to an incredible chronicle of humankind's endless struggle to make life better — for everyone.

Confirmed Cynic (CC): STARS IN YOUR EYES soap opera. All people care about is taking care of numero uno, by any means necessary.

That's the way it's been since we first walked erect. In the movie *Being Human*, Robin Williams' caveman feels most passionately about "mine." In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Primitive Man resorts to violence instinctively before he's hardly clambered out of the primordial gloop.

Me: THAT PORTRAIT OF HUMANITY is as phony as Bill Clinton's liberal image. Early humans lived in matriarchal and later patriarchal clans in which everybody contributed to the group welfare. The norm was the collective ethic.

But things changed — because different kinds of economic and social organization create different kinds of people. Today, in a system designed to produce profits for the few at the expense of the many, we are slugged into brutalizing each other for money, jobs, education, love, food, a place to live, recognition, self-esteem, everything.

The poor rarely understand that they lack the basics because of the way international capitalism works. They think they suffer because other cultures, races, religions and countries deprive them of what is rightfully theirs. So they resort to hysterical nationalism, unwarranted patriotism, rapacious competition, and desperate acquisitionism — convenient substitutes for revolutionary action on a global scale to remove the root cause of all the terrible infighting. When "me" replaces "we," everybody dies.

CC: WRONG. WITHOUT COMPETITION, where's incentive? We might be spared embarrassments like Tonya Harding, who went a bit too far. But then again, we'd never have seen Satchell Paige pitch a ball at 90 miles an hour. Why, the free market has brought the world to an apex of prosperity and consumer satisfaction. If men didn't have to make it or starve, why would they strain to do their best? Left to their own devices, most people are lazy bums.

Me: YOU CAN TAKE YOUR ORIGINAL SIN fixation and shove it. It doesn't compute. Everybody loves winning by virtue of excellence and talent. But everybody doesn't love beating down others, degrading and impoverishing millions, and fomenting a host of enemies in order to be a success.

When every aspect of life becomes a virtual duel to the death, the winner generally ends up more tormented than the loser. You actually feel better if you do right.

The only proven motivator is the lure of coming up with a product or outcome or idea that will empower and raise the comfort level of the masses. Billionaires who ream the opposition may be envied, but they are never loved or immortalized in that pantheon of wonderful individuals who left the world a finer place. Who will weep for Donald Trump?

Your specious claim that dog-eats-dog is our paramount inducement to accomplishment is a calumny against history, and a vicious assault on the overwhelming global majority who make their lives meaningful by uplifting others.

CC: PEOPLE MAY WELL BE a mix of good and evil, but stop ignoring the evil part. You can't simply change human nature by writing a new software program!

Me: OH, YES, YOU CAN — with hardware based on a different operating principle.

All great evils — war, poverty, selfishness, religious manias, class and caste divisions, bigotry — are produced by a social machine that runs on exploitation. This terrible Pandora's box poisons human nature just as inevitably as an incinerator burning toxic waste pollutes the environment with dioxin.

Given the proper social technology, we can write our own destinies. A shared and planned socialist world provides the material pre-conditions that impel us to do this.

"But you can't get there from here," say the skeptics. "Never mind our potential in the abstract; those living in the here-and-now are too debased, divided, and demoralized to achieve societal and personal change." That paradox will be lassoed next. □

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¡Cuba sí, bloqueo no!

Caravanista Yolanda Alaniz reports on third aid shipment

Yolanda Alaniz is a Trotskyist feminist Chicana from a farmworker family. A Seattle city employee and leader in the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women, she is also co-author of *The Chicano Struggle: A Racial or National Movement?* She calls her visit to Cuba (and, on the way, Mexico) a lifelong dream come true.

"I think what is admirable is that we have not bent like other countries... We are willing to resist as long as the blockade is there."

Fidel Castro made these comments to the 250 members of the third U.S.-Cuba Friendship Committee caravan on our last night in Havana, March 18. Representing 20 nations, we had been organized by Pastors for Peace to break the immoral and inhuman U.S. embargo by delivering 150 tons of humanitarian aid.

Castro was saying the same thing we had heard from many others during our week-long stay. Cubanos refuse to be starved into submission to the "free-market" economy.

In the beautiful heartland of the revolution, Santiago de Cuba, I spoke with Rosario Fabre Navarrete, the president of the local Federation of Cuban Women, who told me that the people are determined not to let the embargo kill the enormous gains of the new society.

I witnessed these achievements firsthand. The revolution liberated workers, women, poor peasants, and Blacks. Cubanos have full employment and free health-care and education; I was captivated by the children and how they are cared for and taught. Great strides have been made in eradicating racism and sexism.

These accomplishments are the fruits of a workers state — a society where the means of production have been collectivized to benefit the working class — and now they are all in jeopardy.

Blockade causes devastation. In Cuba, the cruel and unusual punishments of the blockade are all around you.

The beautiful Spanish-style buildings are deteriorating, people are very thin, most construction projects are abandoned, and hospital shelves are empty of medicines. It is common to see a tractor or horses pulling a truckload of people.

Crime and prostitution are rising as the quest for dollars, which buy basic necessities on the black market, intensifies. Women are being retrained for service jobs that bring in U.S. currency from tourism.

Mothers worry about the quality of their children's lives.

In the midst of our hectic schedule, I managed to spend one afternoon on the beach with a woman journalist from Havana. We shared stories about our lives as women and mothers. I asked her what happens when she runs out of staples like cooking oil — how does she feed the children? As she tried to answer, she began to cry, and I changed the subject.

Crisis rooted in isolation and incomplete democracy. The problems go deeper than the blockade. Cuba's social transformation was meant to spread like beautiful red wildflowers, to be surrounded by other revolutionary countries who could nurture and protect it. Cuba can no more institute "socialism in one country" than the Soviet Union could.

When all is said and done, its survival depends on workingclass revolt in the U.S., center of world counterrevolution.

Cuba is also held back by the failure of the revolution to flower fully on its own soil. One-party paternalism, however well-meant, is no substitute for real proletarian democracy, in which workers' councils, or soviets, directly control government and the production and distribution of goods.

Some groups suffer more than others for this lack. I interviewed a gay man, frustrated but loyal to the revolution, who told me about ongoing discrimination against sexual minorities and the Communist Party's refusal even to allow him simply to form a gay organization.

However, since that rejection, gay and AIDS education groups have sprung up in Havana. In the realm of gay rights, as in many others like the demand for grassroots discussion of economic policy, people are pushing for change from the bottom up.

But open debate will mean nothing if differing pro-worker programs can't be represented via different workingclass parties.

Officials feel threatened by the prospect of a multi-party system and real workers' control, but these innovations are essential to defeating the Yankee assault.

Friendship movements to the fore. In the area of international support, the Friendship movements are taking the lead.

The trip I was part of was a thrilling success, beginning with the militancy of the caravanistas' stand against the U.S. government as they prepared to cross the border from Canada. The group as a whole was ready to use civil disobedience if need be. (An exception: nervous members of the Communist League, Canada's parallel to the U.S. Socialist Workers Party. The CL and SWP several times undermined the united front by trying at critical moments to overturn decisions made by the majority and by the leadership, Pastors for Peace.)

The caravan took 13 routes, stopping in over 130 cities to educate about the blockade and driving to Tampico, Mexico, to load the supplies onto a Cuban freighter.

The positive response we met shows how strongly people are still inspired by Cuba's example. To make this tremendous global reservoir of goodwill a powerful tool, Castro needs to organize it.

Now is the time for the Cuban leadership to call for a new regroupment of communists and socialists around the world to defend and expand the Cuban revolution. That is the way to turn crisis into opportunity — to turn the grave that the U.S. is attempting to dig for Cuba into the spadework for a glorious new garden where international solidarity and human potential can blossom. □

La caravanista Yolanda Alaniz reporta sobre el tercer envío de ayuda

Yolanda Alaniz es una Chicana trotskyista feminista de una familia de trabajadores agrícolas. Trabaja para la Ciudad de Seattle y es líder del Partido de Libertad Socialista (Freedom Socialist Party) y de las Mujeres Radicales (Radical Women), es coautora de "The Chicano Struggle: A Racial or National Movement?" (*La Lucha Chicana: ¿Movimiento Racial o Nacional?*) Ella se refiere a su visita a Cuba (y a México, de paso) como un sueño hecho realidad.

"Yo pienso que lo que es admirable es que nosotros no nos hemos doblegado como otros países... Nosotros estamos dispuestos a resistir tanto como dure el bloqueo".

Fidel Castro hizo estos comentarios a los 250 miembros de la caravana del tercer Comité de Envío de la Amistad de EEUU-Cuba nuestra última noche en La Habana el 18 de marzo. Representando a 20 naciones, fuimos organizados por los Pastores por la Paz ("Pastors for Peace") para romper el embargo inmoral e inhumano de EEUU entregando 150 toneladas de ayuda humanitaria.

Castro decía lo mismo que habíamos oído de muchas otras personas durante nuestra estancia de una semana. Los cubanos se rehusan a ser sometidos por hambre a la economía de "libre mercado".

En el hermoso centro de la revolución, Santiago de Cuba, hablé con Rosario Fabre Navarrete, la presidenta de la Federación local de Mujeres Cubanas, la cual me dijo que el pueblo está decidido a no dejar que el embargo destruya los enormes logros de la nueva sociedad.

Yo fui testigo de estos beneficios de manera personal. La revolución liberó a los trabajadores, a las mujeres, a los campesinos pobres y a los negros. Todos los cubanos tienen empleo así como atención médica y educación gratis; a mí me cuestionaron los niños y la manera como los cuidan y los educan. Se han logrado pasos gigantes en la erradicación del racismo y el sexism.

Estos logros son los frutos de un estado de trabajadores — una sociedad donde se han colectivizado los medios de producción para el beneficio de la clase trabajadora — y ahora todos estos logros se encuentran en peligro.

El bloqueo causa devastación. En Cuba, uno se encuentra rodeado en todo lugar por el castigo cruel e inusual del bloqueo.

Los hermosos edificios estilo español se están deteriorando, la gente está muy desnutrida, la mayoría de los proyectos de construcción se encuentran abandonados y los hospitales no tienen medicinas.

El crimen y la prostitución están aumentando a medida que se intensifica la "caza" de dólares, los cuales sirven para comprar artículos básicos en el mercado negro. A las mujeres se les está volviendo a entrenar para empleos de servicios que proporcionan divisas de EEUU por el turismo.

Las madres se preocupan por la calidad de la vida de sus hijos.

En medio de nuestro horario tan lleno de actividades, pude pasar una tarde en la playa

con una periodista de La Habana. Compartimos historias de nuestras vidas de mujeres y madres. Le pregunté qué es lo que hace cuando se le acaban los productos básicos como el aceite para cocinar — ¿cómo alimenta a sus hijos? Cuando trató de responder, empezó a llorar y yo cambié de tema.

La crisis tiene sus raíces en el aislamiento y en la democracia parcial.

Los problemas van más allá del bloqueo. La intención de la transformación social de Cuba era que se extendiera como hermosas flores silvestres rojas y que estuviera rodeada por otros países revolucionarios que pudieran alimentarla y protegerla. Cuba no es más capaz que la Unión Soviética de instituir "el socialismo en un solo país." Al final, su sobrevivencia depende de la sublevación de la clase trabajadora de los EEUU, centro mundial de la contrarrevolución.

A Cuba también la restringe el fracaso de la revolución para florecer plenamente en su propia tierra. El paternalismo de un sistema de partido único, a pesar de tener buenas intenciones, no es un sustituto de una democracia proletaria real, en la cual los concilios de trabajadores, o soviets, controlan directamente al gobierno y la producción y distribución de bienes.

Algunos sectores sufren más que otros debido a esta situación. Entrevisté a un hombre gay, frustrado pero leal la revolución, que me habló de la discriminación continua contra las minorías sexuales y la renuencia del Partido Comunista para permitirle simplemente formar una organización gay.

Sin embargo, a partir de ese momento, han aparecido en La Habana grupos gay y de educación sobre el SIDA. En el área de los derechos de los homosexuales, como en muchas otras, como la demanda de que el pueblo participe en la discusión sobre la política económica, la gente está pugnando por el cambio desde abajo hacia arriba.

Pero el debate abierto no tendrá ningún impacto si distintos programas en pro de los trabajadores no pueden ser representados por medio de distintos partidos de las clases trabajadoras. Los oficiales se sienten intimidados con la idea de un sistema multipartidista y de control real de los trabajadores, pero estas innovaciones son esenciales para vencer el ataque yanqui.

Los Envíos de la Amistad cobran importancia.

En el área de apoyo internacional, los Envíos de la Amistad están a la cabeza.

El viaje en el que yo participé fue un éxito emocionante, comenzando por la militancia de la posición de los caravanistas en contra del gobierno de los EEUU al prepararse para cruzar la frontera con Canadá. El grupo en su totalidad tenía todas las intenciones de recurrir a la desobediencia civil en caso de que fuera necesario. (Excepción: miembros nerviosos de la Liga Comunista, organización canadiense paralela al Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores de EEUU. La LC y el PST minaron varias veces al frente unido al tratar de subvertir, en momentos críticos, decisiones tomadas por la mayoría y por los líderes, los Pastores por la Paz.)

La caravana tomó 13 rutas, deteniéndose en más de 130 ciudades para educar al público acerca del bloqueo.

La respuesta positiva que encontramos es una muestra de cuán fuertemente está inspirada la gente por el ejemplo de Cuba. Castro necesita organizar esta tremenda reserva global de buena voluntad para convertirla en una poderosa herramienta.

Este es el momento de que los líderes cubanos hagan un llamado a los comunistas y socialistas de todo el mundo para que se reagrupen y así defiendan y expandan la revolución cubana. Esta es la manera de convertir la crisis en oportunidad — de convertir la sepultura que EEUU está tratando de cavado para Cuba en el terreno propicio para un glorioso jardín nuevo donde puedan prosperar la solidaridad internacional y el potencial humano. □



Aid delivery celebrated in Havana, March 1994. Alaniz in right foreground. Celebración de la entrega de la ayuda en La Habana en marzo de 1994. Alaniz a la derecha en primer plano.