



Québec may soon fly its own flag as an independent nation

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So what's there to laugh about in a world that's all too serious?

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The Freedom Socialist

Voice of Revolutionary Feminism

October-December 1995

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Push for privatization and free trade — no good for workers, no cure for economy

BY STEVE HOFFMAN



The high priests of Wall Street have declared a religious revival to worship the twin gods of free trade and privatization. Though the crisis-pitted economic

landscape looks like Armageddon, finance capital assures us that a resurrection is at hand.

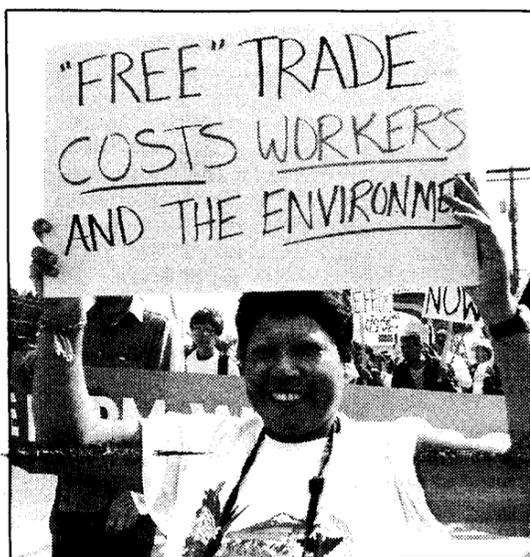
Big money automatically reacts to a slump or a crisis by trying to maintain its gigantic profits above all. It thrives by sacrificing workers, either by shipping their jobs to lower-paid workers abroad or by acquiring public services and industries and then laying off workers, busting their unions, and intensifying speedup. Or it sacrifices workers by sacrificing production, closing plants and making its money instead by manipulating the flow of money itself.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, global tithe-takers for the wealthier nations, organize this plunder internationally. Their "stabilization programs" and "development projects" are meant to insure that Third World countries maintain the low-end position in the global hierarchy.

Encouraged to borrow money to develop an export capacity, Third World countries then must pay exorbitant interest rates, falling further into debt as they borrow money to pay the interest. Ultimately, they lose their ability to feed and clothe their people, as export production chokes off production geared to domestic needs.

The double jihad of free trade and privatization is meant to re-sanctify a global economy in decline by producing more of what capitalism creates best: inequality between rich countries and poor countries, and between rich and poor in every country.

Free profiteering. Multi-national corporations use free trade to pit workers of different countries against one another, in order to drive all wages and conditions to the same low level. Demands for wage increases, health and safety rules, environmental protections, or higher corporate taxes to pay for education and social programs are met with the threat to move production abroad. The AFL-CIO estimates that 1.2 mil-



Rally of United Farmworkers of Wash. State.

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)—a far cry from Clinton's promised gain of 100,000 jobs.

Free trade has landed in less developed countries, such as Mexico, like social napalm. Mexico's currency chaos illustrates the hair-trigger instability caused by the unregulated flow of capital that accompanies free trade.

Following the IMF creed, Mexico floated short-term bonds to pay off long-term debts, in effect manufacturing money without the backing to maintain its value. The consequent plunge of the peso devastated its economy. At least a half-million workers have lost their jobs, and the government predicts even bigger waves of layoffs in the coming months. Inflation is expected to reach 42 percent, while the minimum wage will go up only 10 percent.

After the peso disaster, Clinton had to bypass Congress and quickly cobble together a bailout to the tune of 49.8 billion dollars to avoid a meltdown of the global financial markets.

Currency traders, who control two

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Dateline Australia

International protests detonate against French nuclear testing

Thousands of demonstrators in Papeete, Tahiti's capital, clashed with riot police lobbing tear gas. They first set the airport on fire and then torched French government offices.

As Papeete burned, protesters across Europe chained themselves to French embassies.

At this writing, a general strike is on in Tahiti, and the union representing Polynesian technicians on Moruroa itself is threatening a walk-out. A strike by these workers could directly affect France's ability to conduct the rest of its seven or eight intended tests.

Opponents meet at ground zero. Well before the September 5 blast lashed the Pacific, Chirac's plan to renew testing just one month after the 50th anniversary of the U.S. nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was drawing fire from environmentalists and anti-colonialists alike. In some countries, the political

Richter scale has not registered such mass upheaval since the movement against the Persian Gulf War.

In Australia, 25,000 demonstrators blocked streets in Sydney on the French holiday Bastille Day on July 14. And on Hiroshima Day on August 6, huge angry crowds turned out for union-endorsed actions in every capital city and major town.

Australian high-school students are in the streets in record numbers, postal

workers won't deliver to French embassies, and firefighters won't protect French government property. Many Australians are demanding an end to uranium sales to France.

Through the summer, outrage was voiced by unionists in Paris, rubber-tapper workers in Brasilia, and surfers in Hawaii and England. Israel, Japan, South Africa, Germany, and Fiji were all sites of protest. In Tahiti, a march

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French president Chirac; Nagasaki sky, Aug. 9, 1945.

BY ALISON THORNE

Despite white-hot opposition on every continent, French President Jacques Chirac on September 5 resumed underground nuclear tests at the Moruroa atoll in French-ruled Polynesia.

This blast, more powerful than the one that leveled Hiroshima, brought more than the Moruroa lagoon in the South Pacific to a boiling point. It transformed what had been a steadily growing protest movement into an uncontrollable explosion.

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Zapatistas ask the people 6

A recent international plebiscite supported the Zapatistas' demands. Our editorial advocates adding "¡Viva el socialismo!" to their program. *En español y en inglés.*



What? Socialism in America? 7



Of course, why not, and here's how, says Clara Fraser. Everything you always wanted to know but were too skeptical to ask about setting up a post-capitalist society.

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State of U.S. education. Racism, sexism, ignorance and strife: why are the schools in such bad shape? Teachers, students and parents discuss what can be done.

Freedom Socialist Credo

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

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

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

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

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

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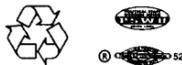
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Publishers play the game with two sets of rules

BY SANDY NELSON

I can't help but be amused when media moguls argue with a straight face that a reporter's political activities off the job compromise a newspaper's "appearance of objectivity" while a publisher's activism does not.

What *isn't* funny is that many publishers use this argument to disenfranchise newsroom employees. My employer is one of them.

The News Tribune of Tacoma, Washington banished me from reporting and transferred me to copy editing in 1990. Why? Because management objected to my off-duty work for a city initiative protecting gay men and lesbians from job and housing discrimination. TNT said I could return to reporting only if I dropped out of politics totally.

I refused. How dare they order me to relinquish constitutional rights that they themselves would never give up!

In 1993, with backing from the American Civil Liberties Union, I sued.

A TNT story the next day quoted both Gillenwater defending Blethen's corporate giveaway and me attacking their double standard.

Incredibly, next to this article was an outrageously self-serving sidebar called "Worker's Views Don't Represent News Tribune." It chronicled many of what the paper obviously considers my most provocative involvements as a radical, like my advocacy for Black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Gillenwater's political activities, which would merit a special section, went unmentioned.

In hearings in my case in Pierce County Superior Court this year, TNT lawyers claimed that when a reporter is an activ-

dreds are signing postcards urging direct state Supreme Court review of Hogan's rulings.

Readers know that newspapers are run to make profits, and *that's* what causes bias. If anything, people believe that journalists are too detached and unfeeling. The last thing they want is for reporters to become *more* removed from or ignorant of the communities they cover.

Readers want a press that is informed, interested, responsive and responsible. So do I. That is the kind of reporter I was and that I intend to be again.

Meanwhile, the mountain of hypocrisy grows.

For example: Kelso Gillenwater agrees to chair the state

Higher Education Coordinating Board — but continues to bar me from public demonstrations. And TNT reprimands me in 1994 for publicly testifying at a state Senate committee on behalf of gay rights — and then in 1995 secretly lobbies the same legis-



Left: Nelson was taken off reporting for going to bat for gay rights. Right: Publisher Gillenwater steps up to the plate for a new ballpark. Wake up the umpire!

Stadium throws spotlight on hypocrisy. In September, TNT escalated the battle, printing a redbaiting "news" article that listed my recent political activities and presented *their* side of my lawsuit. What triggered this? My criticism of their high-profile support for a controversial ballot measure.

Along with his counterparts at Seattle's two daily papers, TNT publisher Kelso Gillenwater is promoting taxpayer funding for a fancy new stadium for the Mariners baseball club. Their partisanship reached new heights when Seattle Times publisher Frank Blethen announced he was giving free ads worth \$40,000 to the stadium cause!

At a Sept. 7 press conference called by an anti-stadium group, I denounced the publishers' hypocrisy in cheerleading the ballpark effort while politically benching their employees.

ist, the public will suspect bias in everything he or she writes. They presented the newspaper as a custodian of the public trust, *obligated* to skewer the free-speech rights of its workers. Their oratory about objectivity and credibility would bring tears to the eyes of a person who didn't know better.

It apparently convinced Judge Vicki Hogan. In January, she ruled that the state constitution doesn't apply to people who work for private employers. In May, she ruled that a campaign-reform law protecting against job discrimination because of people's political activities doesn't apply to people who work for newspapers.

What do readers want? The public is not so easily impressed by empty rhetoric about sacred standards. Sixteen thousand people around the world have petitioned the TNT to return me to reporting, and hun-

lature in an attempt to rescind a law that is one of the linchpins of my case! (We counter-organized—openly—and they didn't succeed.)

Join a major-league team. Such dirty pool only strengthens my resolve to fight until all workers in Washington — and all journalists in the corporate media — are free to exercise the same rights as their employers.

I've been sustained for five years by the generous support of people who share these goals, and I'm relying on your ongoing help in order to *win*.

We are looking for organizations to sign on to a "friend of the court" brief being written by the National Lawyers Guild in Seattle. If a group you belong to is interested, please write to the National Lawyers Guild at 2005 Smith Tower, WA 98104, or call them at (206)622-5144.

Let's hit this one out of the park! □



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Dateline Canada

Québec independence a step forward for all workers in the Americas

BY MARCEL HATCH

Second-class citizens in their own land — that has been the lot of Québec's French-speaking majority, the Québécois, since the 1759 British victory over the French on the Plains of Abraham outside Québec City.

Now the residents of Canada's largest province, who are one-third of Canada's population, confront an opportunity to establish a separate national state. Amid a groundswell of support for sovereignty, provincial First Minister Jacques Parizeau has put forward a referendum on the issue for October 30.

Parizeau's Parti Québécois represents the interests of Québec's business owners, not its workers and Native First Nations. Once Québec is self-governing, however, the same economic and social dissatisfactions that are prompting the Québécois to embrace independence will inevitably sour them on "their own" capitalist class and its politicians.

A nation founded on national oppression. Wars over Canada between France and England ended soon after the French defeat in 1759. In 1867, Britain brought the provinces together into a new federation with the formal right of self-government. It hoped thereby to block U.S. annexation of Canada, assimilate the still-rebellious French-speaking population (francophones), and exterminate the Native bands.

Indians, francophones, and Métis (people of mixed Native and European ancestry) all mounted challenges to the new state. Their protests were put down, but the struggle of Canada's national minorities for self-determination was far from over.

The Québécois are a historically developed community sharing a common language, culture, territory, and economic life — in other words, a nation, and one that is three times the size of France and rich in resources. Seventy to 80 percent of their industry, however, is



Militant march in Montréal for an autonomous Québec.

owned by the U.S. or English Canada.

Francophones have endured the worst of what Canada has to offer: the lowest wages, hardest jobs, highest unemployment, dirtiest slums, most inferior schools — and, above all, persecution of their language.

Quebeckers responded by becoming Canada's most militant and anti-imperialist subjects. They overwhelmingly refused to fight in both world wars. They are the most highly unionized workforce in North America, at over 40 percent. They led the Canadian struggle for the eight-hour day and initiated its abortion-rights campaign.

Québec labour is in the forefront of the push for independence. Also favouring sovereignty are Québec's progressive activists, most of its Left, and a minority of its capitalists. Opposing separation are the federal government, the federal New Democratic Party, the ultra-right Reform Party, most of the English-speaking Left, the U.S. establishment, and the capitalist majority both inside and outside Québec.

Native bands, many of whom are anglophone (English-speaking), tend to be suspicious of independence because its "official" champion, the Parti Québécois, does not want to grant indigenous peoples the same right to self-determination that the PQ itself seeks.

Polls show Québec as a whole divided in half over separation. No wonder Quebeckers are hesitant: each time the question arises, Canada bombards them with warnings of political, economic, and even military retaliation.

If Quebeckers choose autonomy, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and his associates threaten to deny them jobs in English Canada and destroy their economy by forcing the new nation to make payments on Canada's debt.

Burden rests on anglophone Left.

Most anglophone left groups acknowledge Québec's status as a nation, but refuse to support independence. They rationalize this capitulation by invoking the urgent necessity for maximum working-

class unity to combat the government's relentless austerity drive.

Cohesion is certainly needed. But it is Canada's exploitative ruling class, backed by the federal government, that divides ordinary Canadians, not the independence movement.

Unity is possible only among equals. Solidarity can be realized only when leftists of the oppressor nation — Canada — break with their government to support Québec's national liberation.

A steppingstone toward ending exploitation. Independence would shake the Canadian and U.S. capitalists to the core, inspire other workers and strugglers for indigenous rights throughout the hemisphere, and embolden the Québécois to reach new heights in their uninterrupted quest for justice.

If the referendum wins, Quebeckers can begin immediately to wrest the fruits of independence — industry, land, and resources — from Parizeau and his crowd.

How? One way would be to demand formation of a constituent assembly with broad authority, made up of elected delegates from the labour, left, and mass movements, with representation from Native nations. This body could propose a draft constitution, settle Native land claims fairly, nationalize banking and industry, and supervise negotiations with Canada.

Another would be for labour and its allies to hold their own convention to develop and push for a workingclass program for new Québec.

Whatever path they take, Québec's workers and First Nations will not be truly independent until they rid themselves of foreign and domestic profiteers. But precisely because independence by itself will not solve their problems, they will not stop there. With increased confidence, they will fight on until they achieve a decent life for all. □

Thanks to eibie Weizfeld in Québec for contributing to this report.

...Healing

from page 8
underpinning for the Jewish homeland that robbed Palestinians of their homeland — "is simply to support affirmative action on the international scale."

The authors fail to see that the nationalism of both Zionism and the Nation of Islam is as dangerous to their own communities as it is to others. This is because reactionary nationalism makes enemies out of people who should be allies and keeps oppressed people hostile to each other and segregated.

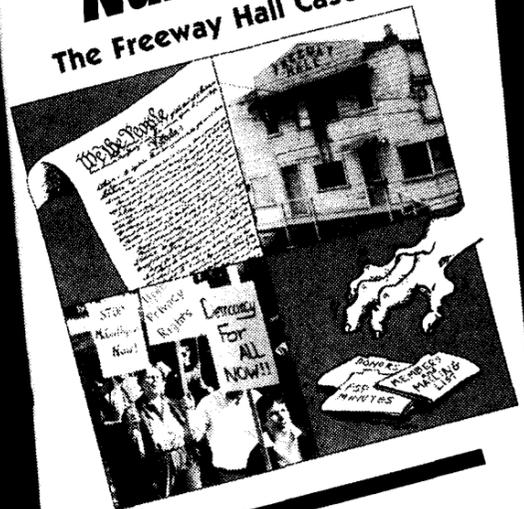
Just do it! West and Lerner are a big disappointment. They flirt with Marxism and tip their hat to feminism, but never commit to a genuine relationship with revolutionary politics, as they must do if they really want to bring Jews and Blacks together.

Tellingly, in West's long (but admittedly incomplete) list of "towering Black and Jewish figures," he leaves out the most incendiary firebrands, like Malcolm X and Karl Marx. For his part, Lerner specifically rejects down-to-earth, in-the-streets organizing around concrete daily issues, the only real way to rebuild the sturdy bridge between Jews and Blacks that existed in the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

But heroes like Malcolm and Marx are just the models we need. And through united struggle, the healing can begin. □

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...global green

from the cover

trillion dollars worth of capital, can, in a fit of collectively superstitious keystrokes, move billions of those dollars in or out of an economy in mere seconds. A recent *Business Week* article frets: "So powerful has this force of money become that some observers now see the hot-money set becoming a sort of shadow world government — one that is irretrievably eroding the concept of the sovereign powers of a nation-state."

Capitalism's Catch-22. The big economic chill that drives capitalists today to such extreme measures springs from the basic mechanics of capitalist production. Advances in technology reduce the amount of labor, which is what produces profit, in

each commodity. The falling *rate* of profit compels the capitalists to produce on an ever-more-massive scale and to slash wages, until the market is glutted and workers can no longer afford to consume what they have produced. Plants are shut down, workers are laid off, and recession ensues, which only exacerbates the problem.

As a short-term solution, the big industrialists scour the world in search of cheap labor and resources, investment opportunities, and markets for their goods. But this just reproduces the difficulties on an international level — and eventually leads to war. In the long term, there is no solution to this conundrum. Wall Street's salvation plan amounts to, "If you can't solve a crisis, deepen it."

Global liquidation sale. Having convinced Third World countries to open their economies to foreign investment, the IMF

must then impose draconian austerity measures in an attempt to contain the catastrophe that follows. "Privatize all your public assets and slash your social programs so you can keep making interest payments on your debt," says the IMF, "or we'll let your economy roll into the abyss."

Peru is one of the places most devastated by this belt-tightening. All of Peru's state-owned industries — some 220 total — are being offered up to corporations and banks from the U.S., Japan, and Western Europe at fire-sale prices. On average, those already sold have laid off 52 percent of their workforces. Between 1990 and 1991, following the removal of government subsidies and price restraints, real wages fell by two-thirds.

Typically, most of Peru's foreign investment has gone into export production and extraction of natural resources. After the corporations have made their quick profits and loaded up on cheap raw materials, they will leave an economically ruined country behind.

In the U.S., too, the debt serves to justify an anti-worker steamroller, one that threat-

ens to mow down everything from Medicare to meat inspections (military spending excluded, of course).

Privatization of government services is offered as a panacea for U.S. budget woes, with rosy predictions made of cost savings through increased efficiency. But a 1992 General Accounting Office study showed that eleven out of twelve privatized services were more expensive than public operations. Any actual money-savings are achieved through drastic reductions in the level of services.

The government is playing Santa Claus as union-buster, transferring valuable public assets to private hands and, in the process, taking aim at public workers, the fastest-growing and most militant sector of labor.

Can capitalism be reimposed? Of course the granddaddy of all privatization experiments is the attempt to shepherd the workers states back into the capitalist fold. The prospect of exploiting continent-sized new markets seemed like a perfect cure for an ailing profit system.

What "going private" has meant to me: two

Rise of HMOs brings decline in healthcare and job conditions

BY ADRIENNE WELLER



I've been privatized! I work at the Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU), formerly a state agency. In July, we left the state system and became a public corporation with a board of directors "just like any modern business," as its boosters like to say.

Now we are freed from state regulations and standards. More of our work can be contracted out, for example, and the Oregon law mandating equal pay for work of comparable worth no longer applies to us.

It feels like I've been mugged. I've been roughed up and my wallet's been lightened. Adding insult to injury, I'm told it's for my own good and the good of the patients (excuse me, "customers").

OHSU the workers have been callously offered a raise of just 2.5 percent — after four years of a pay freeze and no cost-of-living raises!

Management pushed for privatization to profit from the trend toward managed care in Health Maintenance Organizations. HMOs shift money to top administrative salaries and bonuses by cutting care, jobs, and lower-level salaries. Doctors must speed through treatment and scrimp on procedures in order to shave costs. Resources for child health are eliminated.

Hospital CEOs who adopt these policies are no less than murderers, because they are increasing the disparity in income levels and this is what increases national mortality rates.

Unions are fighting the closure of a local hospital run by Kaiser, the demise of which will eliminate thousands of jobs and hundreds of beds in predominantly Black North Portland. Many of this hospital's patients will end up at the new lean and mean OHSU machine.

What can we do to stop the unhealthy growth of privatized healthcare?

First of all, we need militant leaders who are willing to organize angry workers to tackle the system. In my case, AFSCME officers actually backed the move to go corporate. They encouraged skeptical union members to believe that a public corporation would raise their pay and improve their jobs.

The HMOgenization of my workplace could have been stopped by an aggressive, union-led campaign aimed not just at OHSU employees, but at all the area's health care workers and healthcare users, especially the Black community. We could have organized a joint walkout at OHSU and Kaiser and gotten tremendous support from the public.

We have the ability to stop management from destroying our jobs and downgrading our services. We just need to demand that our leadership wield the power we already hold in our hands. □



Adrienne Weller

Australia throws jobless to mercy

BY DEBBIE BRENNAN



Australians are constantly bombarded with the analysis that tiny decreases in unemployment figures mean the economy is growing, even though hundreds of thousands of workers have been fired in recent years. I lost my community service job two years ago when government funding was cut. Those of us in the crowded social security queues, supplementing our paltry welfare payments with occasional work, have a different understanding of the "recovery."

Living on the underclass has been hard, but at least the government used to provide a minimal welfare stipend for jobless workers. In 1991 the federal Labor Party government abolished this important gain. Now the unemployed only receive an "allowance," if they fulfill the terms of a Commonwealth Employment Service contract.

It gets worse. Already downsized, the CES is now being privatized. Its job-placement function, once integrated into the social security system, has been turned into a separate corporatized agency called Employer Assistance Australia (EAA). CES unionists expect the government to try to abolish their agency entirely in the next couple of years.

Threatened with losing my allowance, I was recently summoned to the local CES office for assignment to a case manager. I was told I could choose EAA or one of five private competitors. I was handed a brochure explaining that case management is about ensuring "that long term unem-

ployed people receive the benefits of the benefit system. The purple capitalist says: "ALTERNATIVE AGEMENT ARE FREE. Social Security may you fail to obligation."

Under gime, workers are into comp employment "agement" "job seeking" "job I don't told, will

This system heavy toll alike; stress retraining undertake through t

It's a battle out of war — unless by cutback

...No nukes!

from the cover

led by women flooded French government offices.

Far-flung resistance came together off Moruroa in an international flotilla of more than twenty ships, including official representation from Cook Islands and New Zealand. On the eve of the tests, French navy commandos stormed and seized two Greenpeace ships and a French sailboat.

Poisoning the Pacific. The Chirac government claims that its tests are perfectly safe, but its reassurances just won't wash.

France has now detonated 176 nuclear explosions in Polynesia — 44 of them in the atmosphere. Moruroa, which is a coral reef growing on top of a submerged, extinct volcano, is already riddled with closely spaced cavities filled with highly toxic waste. Scientists are concerned that more blasts will

break off sections of the atoll, spilling radioactive material into the ocean.

The people of the Pacific are already paying with their health for previous testing above and below ground by France, the U.S., and Britain. The United Nations estimates that 150,000 people have died or will die from French tests alone. Cancers, stillbirths, and miscarriages are skyrocketing.

In an attempt to hide the truth, France has stopped releasing public-health statistics for Polynesia.

Devastated by colonialism. The indigenous people call Tahiti-Polynesia "Te Ao Maohi" — Land of the Maohi. They are clear that their troubles began when the European colonists arrived — first the British, then the French.

Before the foreign invasions, the Maohi lived in an economically stable, communal, and matriarchal society in harmony with

the environment. Colonialism robbed them of their land and brought poverty and economic dependence.

Renewed testing has boosted support for the Tavini Huraatira, the Polynesian Liberation Front, which is leading enormous anti-nuclear and pro-independence rallies in Paapeete. Leader Oscar Temaru warns, "The idea of independence is growing very fast, and the French government knows it."

Tavini Huraatira activist Chantal Spitz toured Australia to build solidarity for the independence struggle. "French nuclear testing," she said, "can happen in Moruroa because French Polynesia is French and not Polynesian. The only guarantee for a forever nuclear-free Pacific is a forever colonialism-free Pacific."

Internationalism can stop the tests. Words like those are not music to the ears of

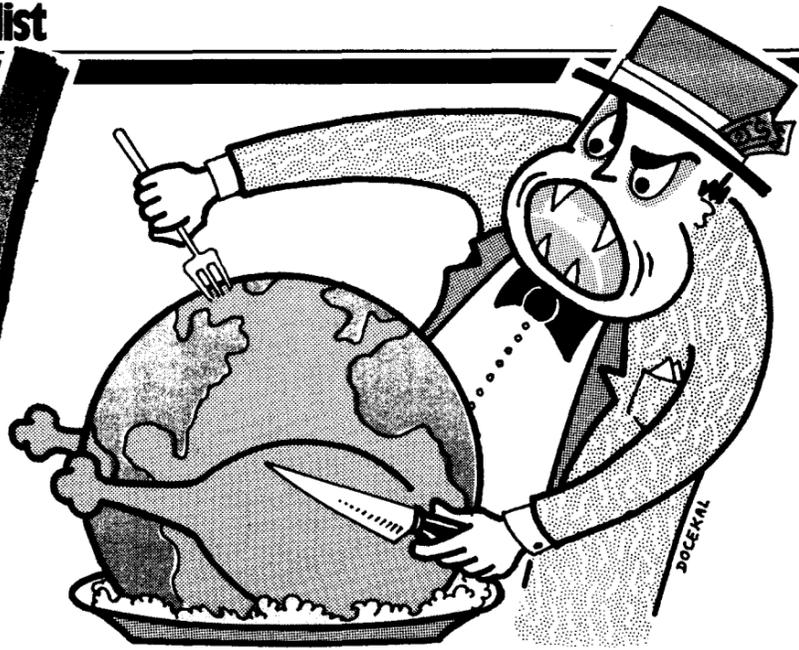
Australia's government, which has its own imperialist interests in the area — as seen by its role as regional boss in Pacific heads-of-government meetings.

The official Australian response to the new round of tests was at first tepidly critical. Pushed by domestic abhorrence of France's actions, the Labor Party government of Prime Minister Paul Keating adopted a more assertive posture.

However, Foreign Minister Gareth Evans rushed to assure the world that while Australia might deplore the nuclear tests, it did not dispute France's right to its Pacific territories. "We believe France's presence in the Pacific has played a very helpful and constructive role," Evans said.

Anti-nuclear and anti-colonial activists in Australia and across the globe have shown that they are not waiting for their governments to do the right thing. They are taking matters into their own hands, and may soon prove that there is at least one force stronger and more indivisible than the atom: the power of people united across national borders to fight for justice and survival. □

The return of testing has inflamed the Polynesian independence movement.



But the IMF's accelerated plan of "shock therapy" has been an unmitigated disaster. In Russia, more than half of the Gross Domestic Product is now generated by the private sector. But the GDP has plunged by almost half in four years, poverty has grown rapidly, and hundreds of thousands of workers have been forced to strike over unpaid wages.

Similar tragedies have induced voters to bring members of former Communist parties back to power in several countries, including Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, and Hungary.

Turning back history is proving to be a perilous and formidable task indeed.

Labor's ranks revolt. Top bureaucrats in the labor movement around the world conceive of the battle against free trade and privatization as a fight for "fair trade," leading them to slavishly support the protectionist, national-chauvinist aims of the avaricious bosses in a particular industry.

Further weakening their position, they refuse to break with the bosses' political parties. In last year's U.S. elections, for example, the AFL-CIO endorsed 59 House Democrats and five Senators who had voted for NAFTA.

And labor officials are buying into the idea that the answer to the economic dilemma is to "boost productivity through labor, management, and government cooperation," in the words of Democratic Labor Secretary Robert Reich. This collaboration is the essence of IMF-style "tripartite" agreements, or "social accords," used from Australia to Slovakia to co-opt unions into helping implement layoffs, wage decreases, speedups, and social-service cuts.

Fortunately, labor's ranks worldwide are leaving bureaucrats at the altar. On April 20, Danish workers 150,000-strong walked off their jobs in solidarity with bus drivers fighting privatization being implemented by the country's Social Democratic Party. In May, 50,000 Brazilian oil workers struck against privatization and layoffs. Five million Italian workers held a general strike to stop the liquidation of their pension funds.

The peasant rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico inspired by NAFTA is still gaining support both nationally and internationally. When the government-controlled unions canceled this year's May Day march for fear that things would get out of hand, 70,000 workers ignored their misleaders and stormed Mexico City to protest layoffs and privatization.

The Russian strike over some 1.14 billion dollars in unpaid wages, held for one day in August, included factory workers, teachers, electricians, and many others. Demonstrating workers carried red flags, called for President Yeltsin's resignation, and labeled the government as criminals who steal from the people.

Keeping the lights on: a matter of public power

BY HEIDI DURHAM



"That man may use it freely as the air he breathes, the waters of the rivers, the winds of heaven."

These words, embossed on a beautiful mosaic at the headquarters of Seattle City Light, reflect the founding principle of publicly run providers of electricity.

At the turn of the century, investment companies, brokerage firms, and private utilities based largely on the East Coast tried to block the establishment of public power companies in the northwestern U.S. Today, they threaten the future of government-owned power once again.

The issue remains the same. Who should control and benefit from the natural resources — workers or profiteers?

Private vs. public tug-of-war.

Early power companies run for profit not only charged their customers exorbitant rates, but also refused to operate in rural communities because of the higher costs of setting up service.

In response to the unregulated monopolies, a grassroots movement sprang up to demand the establishment of public utilities. In the Northwest, it included workers, farmers, unions, and socialists.

Opposed at every step by the private power companies, the campaign eventually won the legislative victories that allowed for creation of large government-run utilities.

As more and more Public Utility Districts were organized, the power trust fought back, often through bought-and-paid-for politicians. In 1931, Seattle Mayor Frank Edwards fired J.D. Ross, the visionary head of Seattle City Light, because Ross was delivering power at half the cost of City Light's private competitor.

But support for public ownership was so strong that in an election recall vote, the mayor was dumped by 90 percent!

Rule of the bottom line. The current craze for deregulation hit the power industry in 1992, with passage of the

National Energy Policy Act.

Both public and private utilities operate as regional monopolies because of how electricity is transmitted. Until the act passed, most customers couldn't choose their supplier. Prices were regulated heavily by government agencies.

The bill's supposed intent was to nurture competition by de-monopolizing the industry and letting the market set prices. Backers claimed this would result in cheaper electricity and better service.

Hah! The only consumer groups this act benefits are the large industrial and commercial buyers, who are able to bargain for their power; they can threaten to take their substantial business elsewhere. But the rest of us have no chips to play with, and the littlest consumers end up subsidizing the savings of the biggest.

Dark days of market anarchy.

The act also allows privatization to sneak in alongside deregulation.

Previously, only utilities who owned portions of the country's power grid could transport bulk power from a generating source to a buyer. Now, owner utilities must grant non-owners access to any unused space on their system. This means that middlemen can make a quick buck off publicly built, owned, and maintained

utilities by hitching a ride on their grid — purchasing electricity from one utility and selling it to another at a markup.

"Open access" poses the threat that greedy speculators will strain delivery systems past their capacities, making service disruptions common.

The good news is that utility worker unions in California and Wisconsin are battling layoffs induced by the "streamlining" that deregulation brings.

The current move toward wide-open markets could literally return us to the dark days at the beginning of the century. Only through *nationalization*, not privatization, will we the people have a chance to keep the lights on. □

Heidi Durham is a pioneer woman in the electrical trades. A 21-year veteran of Seattle City Light, she is now a power dispatcher.

Deregulation is a debacle for consumers — just look at the airlines.

Not a system we can live with. The IMF has done a damned good job of proving Marx's prediction that capitalism would increasingly concentrate wealth in the hands of a few and misery in the lives of the many. There is no more lucid argument for socialism than the global economy today.

The dead, irrational religion of capitalism cries out to be replaced with the living, logical science of socialism. Privatization must give way to collectivization and "free

trade" must give way to trade without exploitation.

The only force capable of wresting these changes from the international guardians of the status quo is an *international united front of labor*, in alliance with all the oppressed. Workers are the ones with the need and the ability to create a world in which goods are produced and distributed not as tribute to the god of profit, but to raise the quality of life for all. □

stories

Corporate agencies

people share in economic "In bright hospitals, it adds CASE MAN- SERVICES " But: "Your security allow- be stopped if to meet your S..."

this new re- employed e conscripted ulsory "conferences" run by the private ent agencies. My "personal case man- hasn't been finalised, but I've already ure to join a "job club" for intensive ng." Translation: being railroaded into a want. My experience as a teacher, I'm help me into market research!

tem is meant to be punitive, exacting a on social security workers and "clients" s reigns on both sides of the counter. It urdly inefficient. In an attempt to get I applied for a government subsidy to an editing course, but approval came o late because of the staff shortages.

zarre and scary process. Cutbacks and on cost jobs. Now the people thrown k face losing their meagre welfare cheques hey go through another system driven ks and privatisation. □



Debbie Brennan

Alison Thomas/FS

FREEDOM SOCIALIST PARTY & RADICAL WOMEN

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JOIN US IN THE STREETS!

Editorial

Zapatistas win broad mandate

IN AUGUST, THE ZAPATISTA National Liberation Front held an international plebiscite on their struggle. The poll's results strongly legitimized the EZLN, with almost 60 percent of the 1.2 million Mexicans who voted saying that the Zapatistas should become a new and independent political party.

The rebels sought the opinions of revolutionaries and activists around the world. The Freedom Socialist Party was among the respondents, and here's a sampling of what we said.

FIRST OF ALL, WE URGED the Zapatistas to make their abstract demands — for things such as liberty, justice, and democracy — *concrete*. (Even the cruelest dictators claim to stand for freedom and justice.) The way to do this, we believe, is by hammering out an unblushingly anticapitalist program that incorporates specific transitional demands. These would include the right of workers to control and run industry in the interests of the majority and the restoring of Mexico's collective lands to landless peasants.

The EZLN asked whether the equal participation of women in civic life should be guaranteed. We said, absolutely! But why should this question be put to a vote? Gender equality is a fundamental principle, and revolutionaries should fight for it regardless of public opinion. Leaders must lead — and that means taking stands that are controversial or unpopular.

IF IT CHAMPIONS THE CAUSE of all those whose rights are most frequently denied — like women, Indios, peasants, and lesbians and gays — the Zapatista revolt will strengthen the rights of everyone. It can develop into a magnet for the regroupment of the radicals in every movement who are seeking to gain liberty, justice, peace, and democracy for Mexico in the only way possible: through socialist revolution throughout the hemisphere. ¡Vivan los Zapatistas! ¡Viva la revolución en América! □

Los Zapatistas obtienen una aprobación general

EN AGOSTO, EL EJÉRCITO ZAPATISTA de Liberación Nacional realizó un plebiscito internacional acerca de su lucha. Los resultados de la encuesta legitimizaron con fuerza al EZLN con casi un 60% de los 1.2 millones de mexicanos que votaron para indicar que los Zapatistas deberían convertirse en un nuevo partido político independiente.

Los rebeldes buscaban las opiniones de los revolucionarios y activistas de todo el mundo. El Partido de Libertad Socialista (Freedom Socialist Party) fue una de las organizaciones que respondieron, y éste es un ejemplo de lo que dijimos.

ANTES QUE NADA, EXHORTAMOS a los Zapatistas a que sus exigencias abstractas — cosas como la libertad, justicia y democracia — las hagan *concretas*. (Aun los dictadores más crueles proclaman su apoyo a la libertad y la justicia.) En nuestra opinión, la manera de llevar a cabo esto es elaborando un programa anticapitalista sin inhibiciones que incorpore demandas de transición específicas. Entre éstas estaría el derecho de los trabajadores a controlar y dirigir la industria de acuerdo a los intereses de las mayorías y la restauración de las tierras colectivas de México a los campesinos que no la tienen.

El EZLN preguntó si se debería garantizar la participación equitativa de las mujeres en la vida cívica. ¡Nosotros dimos un "sí" absoluto! Pero, ¿por qué esta cuestión se debe someter a votación? La igualdad de acuerdo al género es un principio fundamental y los revolucionarios deben luchar por él independientemente de la opinión pública. Los líderes deben dirigir, y esto significa tomar posturas que sean controversiales o no populares.

SI ABOGA POR LA CAUSA de todos aquéllos a quienes se les niegan sus derechos — como las mujeres, los indios, los campesinos y las lesbianas y gays — la sublevación zapatista fortalecerá los derechos de todos. Se podría convertir en un imán que vuelva a juntar a los radicales de todos los movimientos que estén buscando el obtener la libertad, la justicia, la paz y la democracia para México de la única forma posible: a través de la revolución socialista en todo el hemisferio.

¡Vivan los Zapatistas! ¡Viva la revolución en América! □



Humor

So what's to laugh about?



BY
HENRY
NOBLE

In this issue we introduce both a new feature for the FS, an intermittent humor column, and its author, Freedom Socialist Party National Secretary Henry Noble.

A long-standing member of our editorial board, Noble assumed his position as the party's overall organizer last year. Noble is a highly regarded Jewish and labor activist who can be relied on to keep hold of both his wits and his wit, no matter how challenging the assignment.

The Big Red Joke Book leads off with this typically neat quote from British writer, socialist, and Spanish Civil War veteran George Orwell.

Every joke is a tiny revolution. If you had to define humor in a single phrase, you might define it as dignity sitting on a tack. Whatever destroys dignity, and brings down the mighty from their seats, preferably with a bump, is funny. And the bigger the fall, the bigger the joke. It would be better to throw a cus-

tard pie at a bishop than a curate. The truth is that you cannot be memorably funny without at some point raising topics which the rich, the powerful and the complacent would prefer to be left alone.

So here I am writing a humor column. At the moment it seems a big job to find something funny to write about. Everything's so deadly serious. For example, while dashing to a rally the other day, I called out to a friend, "Isn't it a nice warm day?" — only to have her answer that unusually high

My old friend Vince would describe an obsessively talkative guy as someone who, when asked for the time, would tell you how to build a clock. Such people used to be annoying, but *rare*. Now they're everywhere. Those of you who ride municipal buses find them in the next seat more often than not these days.

Unaccustomed freedom. I take this as a further indictment of capitalism, of course, for making living conditions so awful that ready complaint is on every lip. And for speeding up our lives to such an extent that people must take whatever opportunity is afforded to share their innermost thoughts.

I'm recently retired from a ten-year stint at Boeing, where people were conditioned to know that a passing greeting of any variety was just a personable acknowledgment of someone's presence and not an invitation to stop and chat.

Now that I'm on the streets more, I figured it was up to me to devise a way to avoid entanglements while not being rude. I certainly didn't want anyone to take offense at me or, by extension, at the FSP. Perhaps a well-timed smile or nod or wave would do.

But in working on this piece, I realized I had it all backwards. For the first time in my life, I can take the opportunity to slow down — to stop, listen, comment, and look for the tiny revolutions all around me. Future columns will reflect what I learn. □

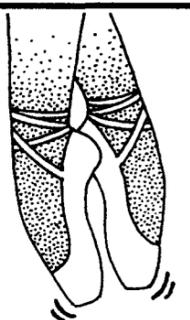
In a single phrase, you might define humor as dignity sitting on a tack.

temperatures have produced the sudden, ecologically unsettling appearance of lightning bugs in Seattle, a portent of universal skin cancer and the melting of the polar caps.

Acquaintances are responding to even the most casual "Hi, how're you doin'?" with tales of job loss, health problems, or, worse, relationship woes. In self-defense I made my greeting less personal, switching to "How's it goin'?" Now I get told in angry detail about whatever the personal effects are of Newt's or Bill's latest outrageous rip-off of the working class.

Your generosity swept us off our feet!
\$25,000 Socialist Feminist Fund Drive leaps over goal!

But it's not too late to contribute! Send donations to:
Freedom Socialist Party, 409 Maynard Ave. S., Suite 201, Seattle WA 98104.



Letters to the Editor

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Send us FSP lit, please

Recently we have begun to report on books and pamphlets — we would be very interested in reviewing theoretical materials the Freedom Socialist Party produces. Several of our readers, particularly in the former Stalinist countries, mention your ideas in their correspondence, and we have everything to gain from the interchange of analysis and experience.

International Viewpoint
Paris

SOCIALISM FOR SKEPTICS

Communism's detractors lack long-term vision

Clara Fraser in "World of Tomorrow in Sound Bites," Vol. 16 No. 2: "Our major talking heads stigmatize communism as an untried pipe dream, a brutal dictatorship, a failed experiment. Like Hamlet, they would 'rather bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of.' Stuff and nonsense. The Wright Brothers' first planes didn't fly. Spacecraft still blow up. And computers generate more headaches than solutions (my personal opinion!). All beginnings are rocky."

Wise, and to anyone with an attention span over 10 seconds, obvious. Thank you for your sanity.

Jonathan Maddox
jmaddox@neumann.une.edu.au

Utopia exists!

Having lived in communal societies for 20 years, I agree that Utopia is not only possible but already happening wherever people are free enough to allow it.

But I doubt it can "come down from above." My experience is that it comes up from the bottom, and builds. To start such a community we're now searching for a few outstandingly competent people who want to live together in love and honesty.

If interested, e-mail me or call (215)849-1259.

Art Rosenblum
artr@netaxs.com

ABORTION DEBATE

Armed clinic defense will make matters worse

I share Linda Averill's anger over attacks on clinics, but her recommendation that clinic defenders arm themselves with guns is terribly misjudged. (Vol. 16 No. 1, "How to Stop Anti-Abortion Terror?") It suggests a careless acceptance of Reagan-style militarist rhetoric.

It's likely the thugs will respond with even more violence. These are religious fundamentalists who are not afraid of a martyr's death. Paul Hill sought one, putting up no defense at his trial. John Salvi, Averill's example, has requested the death penalty if convicted.

Averill's suggestion is rational if she wants anti-abortion blood to balance the scales, but not if she wants to safeguard abortion rights.

Greg Marks
marks@math.berkeley.edu

FREEDOM NOW?

Support letters needed

This December, Lorenzo L. Stone-Bey will have served 20 years on a life sentence and be eligible for parole. We are asking for supportive letters to be sent to: Indiana Parole Board, 5321 Indiana Govt. Center So., 302 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204. Please send copies to Stone-Bey at P.O. Box 41 #10006 IDU/2W17, Michigan City, IN 46360.

A first-time offender, Stone-Bey was imprisoned at 17. He has spoken out for the rights of prisoners and oppressed peoples and against youth violence and human rights violations.

Lorenzo L. Stone-Bey
Legal Defense Committee
Michigan City, Indiana

U.S. HYPOCRISY

Business leaders were Nazi sympathizers

In his book *Trading with the Enemy*, Charles Higham recalls that during WW II oil companies, financiers and some leaders of industry conducted "business as usual" with Hitler's Nazis in blatant disregard of the Trading with the Enemy Act.

None were tried and jailed for their criminal behavior. Details were hidden from public view. How different was this from the present U.S. anti-Cuba vendetta, in which lies and illegalities proliferate?

Ed Simpson
Apsley, Ontario

INTERNET NEWS

Gay weekly on-line

The *Seattle Gay News* is now "on-line." We would appreciate it if you would publish our URL: <http://www.sgn.org/sgn>.

James Arnold
Seattle

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



Clara Fraser

Socialism for Skeptics VI: Comes the revolution— a simple "to do" list

We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order... The labor movement, in the name of peace and socialism, shall win, and fulfill its destiny.

—V.I. Lenin, Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants Deputies, October 26, 1917

AND WE SHALL NOW PROCEED to construct a basic design for a socialist order in these not-so-United States.

Our super-pragmatic American minds have difficulty visualizing the changeover from capitalism to socialism. But to build socialism in an advanced capitalist country is not a daunting problem.

What's enormously hard is throwing the process into reverse! The backward forced march imposed upon the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is a ghastly shambles because it is utterly anti-historical and blindly regressive.

In moving toward socialism, however, the winds of progress impel you full speed ahead. And launching a society run by and for workers involves following a clear roadmap no harder to draw up and stick to than the daily task list of a mother, secretary, teacher, computer programmer, electrician, or chef.

Black poet extraordinaire Langston Hughes provided a nuts-and-bolts blueprint in *Good Morning, Revolution*, 1973.

Listen, Revolution,

We're buddies, see—

Together,

We can take everything:

Factories, arsenals, houses, ships,

Railroads, forests, fields, orchards,

Bus lines, telegraphs, radios,

(Jesus! Raise hell with radios!)

Steel mills, coal mines, oil wells, gas,

All the tools of production,

(Great day in the morning!)

Everything—

And turn 'em over to the people who work.

Rule and run 'em for us people who work.

ANOTHER GOOD STARTING PLACE for our journey is Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's thumbnail review in *The Rebel Girl*, 1955, of a seminal 1888 work.

"Looking Backward by ... Edward Bellamy ... portrayed an ideal society, due to the abolition of banks, landlords and capitalists. It was an imaginative description of what a socialist America could be like, with collective ownership of all natural resources and industries and full utilization of machinery, technical knowledge and the capacities of her people."

Another preview, from Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848:

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible."

And finally, James P. Cannon, founder of U.S. Trotskyism, in *America's Road to Socialism*, 1953:

"The working class ... will take hold of society and set up its own government ... and use all the concentrated power of this state to suppress any attempt at counterrevolution by the capitalists... The first task of the new government, once it has established its authority, ... will be to abolish private property in the means of production... Industry will be nationalized and operated according to a plan."

WE CAN MAKE ALL THIS HAPPEN, you know, all of us together. Just clip the following post-seizure-of-power menu, memorize it, and slap it on your fridge door.

1. Restructure the government into divisions and jobs that make sense, reflect our needs, and express our hopes and ideals.
2. Squelch any counterrevolutionary machinations; peaceably remove as many kvetches as possible.
3. Expropriate the expropriators. In one fell swoop, transfer all private property from the giant capitalists to public ownership. Nationalize the banks, great factories, natural resources, agribusiness, communication and transportation networks, utilities, media conglomerates, and like that.
4. Plan and reorganize these operations to create full employment, maximum output of needed goods, and an efficient, environment-friendly, and waste-free production process.
5. Back to basics — complete funding for enriched education, training, health, housing, recreation, and the general welfare.
6. Let a million cultural flowers bloom! Spark an explosion of rich, creative, diversified, and exciting art in all its forms.
7. Have a nice life for a change! □



Ernest Mandel 1923-1995

Ernest Mandel, eminent leader of the Trotskyist Fourth International, died of a heart attack on July 20 in Brussels, Belgium. He was 72.

In more than half a century of revolutionary activism, Mandel played a pivotal role in reconstituting the Fourth International in a time of crisis, fought Hitlerism in the Belgian resistance, and popularized socialist ideas in writings such as *An Introduction to Marxist Economics*.

In expressing condolences to Mandel's colleagues and his wife, Anne, the Freedom Socialist Party wrote, "The profound challenges facing worldwide Trotskyism since the breakup of the Soviet Union clearly show the vital importance of leaders like Mandel who fought fascists, Stalinists and reaction to keep permanent revolution and internationalism alive as a theory and practice..."

"The legacy of Mandel's achievements and lifelong commitment gives us confidence that new women and men leaders will emerge to unify our movement and build the global socialist democracy we all aspire to." □

Mary Pitawanakwat 1950-1995

Ojibway Native Mary Pitawanakwat, winner of a celebrated race discrimination suit against the Canadian government, died July 10 in Regina, Saskatchewan at age 45. She leaves behind two children and the fruits of an uncompromising legal battle that won stronger human rights protections for public employees.

While tirelessly exposing Canada's weak enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, Pitawanakwat raised a family and fought breast cancer.

Writing to Bob Hughes, her partner, Seattle FSP Organizer Gerry Hoddersen said Pitawanakwat embodied the Cheyenne saying that the heart of a people is not broken until the women's hearts are on the ground. "Mary's heart never hit the ground for long... Her example encouraged others to take a stand ... not just in Canada but across the globe." □

Voices of Color

What road for healing the divisions between African Americans and Jews?

Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin,
by Cornel West and Michael Lerner
New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.
Hardcover, \$24.95.

BY PHILLIS WHITMORE AND ADRIENNE WELLER

"Voices of Color" is the column of the National Comrades of Color Caucus of the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women. The NCCC asked Jewish colleague Adrienne Weller to join caucus member Phillis Whitmore, an African American, for this issue's story. Whitmore is a Portland, Ore. campaigner for immigrant and gay rights and against police brutality. Portland FSP Organizer Weller is an anti-Nazi activist and staunch unionist.



Authors Michael Lerner (left) and Cornel West.

Reading *Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin*, an old saying came to mind — if two Jews are in a room talking, you end up with four opinions. Black scholar Cornel West and Jewish writer Michael Lerner certainly have plenty of opinions, most of them inconclusive and self-contradictory.

Their book is obviously well-intentioned and often fascinating. We read it hopefully, looking for an examination of the conflicts between Jews and Blacks and proposals for concrete steps to resolve them. But what we found were two professional pessimists who dialogued for 276 pages without ever saying what the basis is for anti-Semitism among Blacks and racism among Jews.

Liberal non-critique of capitalism. Lerner and West attribute the tensions between Jews and Blacks to a rampant "ethos of selfishness" that can be countered by religious renewal, or nationalism based on spiritual ideals, or an emphasis on personal relations. They offer solutions that are lighter than air to material problems firmly rooted in a specific type of economic system, one that depends on scarcity of opportunity and competition among workers to

keep wages down and profits up.

Lerner champions a broad ideology he calls the Politics of Meaning, a philosophy so abstract, non-threatening, all-purpose, and multi-class that even Hillary and Bill Clinton can embrace it.

He thinks that "for Jews ... the central question is the nature of Jewish identity." One way for Jews to "get a sense of their value," he says, is "by really reclaiming their religious heritage." He believes that the other route is "through a nation state," the legitimacy of which would be determined by "the extent to which it lives according to God's will!"

Similarly, West sees hope for Blacks in "Christianity's universalistic ethic."

West and Lerner are trying to analyze Black/Jewish antagonism without asking the crucial question: who benefits?

Falling prey to cultural nationalism. Missing the fundamental reason why Blacks and Jews are divided means missing the vital connection they share: the common experience of being exploited,

oppressed, and scapegoated by the same enemy.

This makes West and Lerner susceptible to the defeatist mentality that feeds cultural nationalism. West, for example, admits that he thinks "it's unlikely that we'll ever overcome racism."

By cultural nationalism we mean cultural chauvinism and nationalist sentiment among people who don't actually make up a nation, which we define as a community bound together over time by a mutual language, culture, economy, and territory.

Blacks in the U.S. are not a nation — which does not make their freedom struggle any less crucial!

And Jews in Israel are not a historically developed nation, but an illegitimate settler-state — which does not diminish by an iota the horror of the Holocaust and need to end anti-Semitism! Jewish nationalism in the U.S. also takes the form of anti-assimilationism, of urging Jews to separate from the rest of society.

West and Lerner do not attempt to spell out exactly what a nation is, and both are ambivalent about nationalism. They believe nationalism is limiting, but find excuses for the nationalism of their own groups.

When Lerner labels anti-Semitic Black nationalist Louis Farrakhan a "racist dog," West defends Farrakhan. West would rather call Farrakhan "a xenophobic spokesperson when ... dealing with Jewish humanity." West sees the nationalist aspirations of Blacks as a dead end; but, he says, "The progressive Black nationalist position is the closest I come to."

On the question of Jewish nationalism, Lerner, too, is inconsistent. On one hand, he criticizes Israel's abuse of the Palestinians and contends that ultimate salvation for Jews "will involve the disappearance of nation states and the creation of an international order." But until that time, he says, he will "support Jewish national aspirations to protect us from xenophobic nationalism and fundamentalism that still threaten to use the Jews as the 'demeaned other.'"

He says that to support Zionism — the ideological

to page 3

Wall Street Journal slams Freedom Socialist Party in front-page fantasy about radical groups

BY LINDA AVERILL

The *Wall Street Journal* — mouthpiece for the bankers, brokers, and bosses who brought you the peso meltdown, S&L fiasco, and uncountable other tragedies and screwups — devoted part of its June 16 cover to trashing the Left.

WSJ handled its subject just about as deftly as its capitalist subscribers run the global economy.

Reporter Laurie Cohen quoted various radicals, among them New York FSP Organizer Stephen Durham. Her quizzical proposition — that "The Movement" is pretty still nowadays — was custom-concocted to soothe readers concerned about the anger and revolt their system is brewing.

Her superficial, sloppy, and snippy article oozes with errors of fact and red-baiting bias. But hey, our name is spelled right.

In case you missed it, here are some quotes and paraphrased tidbits, with our replies.

WSJ: "There is no intellectual left. Its traditional base, the labor movement, has been effectively demolished." We know this because only 41 people showed up for a Revolutionary Communist Party rally

we went to.

FS: What does a small turnout for one specific rally have to do with whether an intellectual Left exists? If only 41 people attend one specific symphony performance, does that prove the U.S. has no culture?

If the Left is so trivial, why are we on page one?

And as for the rumored death of the labor movement, *WSJ* should pay more attention to itself. It's been reporting on labor's upswing, especially in the public sector.

WSJ: The Left is "marginal groups" having "no impact."

(This quote, like the first one we cited, is attributed to Noam Chomsky, but if his comments came out as mangled as ours, we forgive him.)

FS: Something called *Buckingham Palace Journal* might have taken similar potshots in 1773 at "fringe radicals" who dumped tea in Boston Harbor.

But technology and modern ruling classes are cast aside, fractions become multitudes, little guys become big guys. How many of his junior high classmates would have dreamed that

nerdy, isolated Billy Gates (we're guessing here) would grow up to be the richest man in the world and get to hang around with Steven Spielberg?

WSJ: Most radical-left groups face funding problems and have to scrape for resources.

FS: No — really?!? News flash!

We're always broke. We spend more than we have. When we get more, we spend more. In this, we operate like the government we

want to overthrow — but on a more modest scale, of course.

WSJ: The FSP, its sister organization Radical Women, and other groups with "hardly familiar names" grew out of the Socialist Workers Party, "which was founded in 1928, a year when a May Day rally in New York drew a million people."

FS: Oops. The SWP began in 1938, and Radical Women didn't exactly grow out of it. But worse is Cohen's blithe leap over nearly 70 years of history.

The 1928 May Day rally was gigantic because workers were buoyed up by the 1917 Russian Revolution. Now, with the fall of the USSR (after seven-plus decades of intense capitalist effort), many leftists are disoriented and discouraged.

But *WSJ* has heard of comebacks, hasn't it? Richard Nixon,

Michael Jordan, Monica Seles... Japan? Any bells ringing yet?

WSJ: Left organizations revolve around "gray-haired veterans of days when it was easy being red," like Clara Fraser, FSP "matriarch." These anachronisms can't attract converts.

FS: Color problems! FSP founder Fraser is salt-and-pepper, she'll have you know — not gray — and being red has never been easy. Fraser spent the McCarthyite 1950s working sometimes incognito after Boeing blacklisted her. She's fought many a court battle to

keep jobs, children, party headquarters, and home.

Let's end by talking about recruitment — and rejection.

Every election, more voters boycott the bosses' two parties. In contrast, in a 1991 bid for Seattle City Council, first-time FSP candidates Yolanda Alaniz and Heidi Durham drew terrific support, with Alaniz winning 20 percent of the vote.

Just one case, yes, but highly significant. *We're gaining on them*, and they know it.

The radical movement defunct? The *WSJ* doth protest too much, wethinks. □

Justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal!



Death-row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, a radical journalist and former Black Panther framed for the murder of a Philadelphia cop, won a temporary stay of execution on August 7 through the efforts of a growing worldwide protest campaign. Says Abu-Jamal, "Let us utilize this precious time to build a stronger and broader movement, to not 'stay' one execution, but to halt them all." Supporters still must fight for a retrial to save Abu-Jamal's life and gain his freedom. To donate or help, write: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001. (Checks to Bill of Rights Foundation, earmarked for Mumia Abu-Jamal Legal Defense.) □

L. Whitehorn/Prison News Service