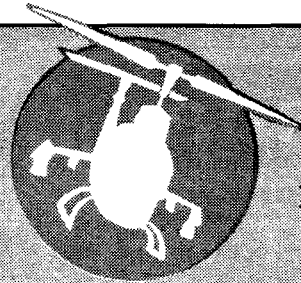




A final farewell to Gloria Martin, a radical for all seasons

Centerfold



"Peace" in Bosnia bought at price of its annihilation

Editorial page 6

The Freedom Socialist

Voice of Revolutionary Feminism

January-March 1996

Volume 16, Number 4

(£.75 UK) \$1.00

Public schools under fire

Rightwing reformers deserve an "F"

BY KAREN GWALTNEY

There's much talk today about the "crisis in education," and it's certainly true that the schools are in danger. But from what?

Not from made-up villains like uninvolved parents, lazy and unqualified teachers and their greedy unions, unmotivated kids who would rather shoot crack than crack books, immigrant students overwhelming the system, or general moral rot and slack standards.

No, the schools are threatened by a crowd of so-called reformers who hate the **fundamental idea** of public education — free, equal schooling for all, regardless of race, sex, national origin, income, or ability.

Divided over basic aims. The issues of race and universal education have been completely connected throughout U.S. history. In fact, public education originated in much of the country in response to a broad popular movement to educate freed slaves after the Civil War. And ever since the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court declared school desegregation illegal in *Brown v. Board of Education*, public schools have been a battleground.

The promise of public education is that it will provide quality education for all students. But this is at odds with

• Out of 19 top industrial nations, the U.S. took 17th place in public spending for education in 1992 — and came in last for compensation of teachers.

• The U.S. is the only major industrial country to fund schools primarily through local property taxes — an inherently inequitable method. The corporate share of these taxes fell from 45% in 1957 to 16% in 1990.

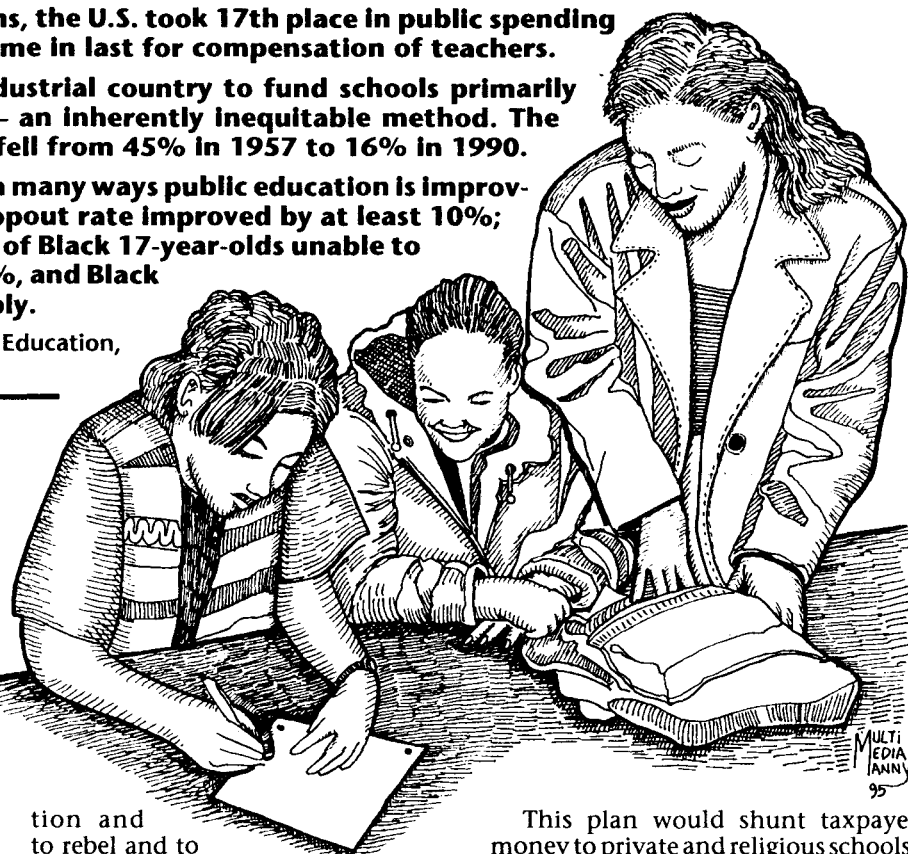
• Doomsayers to the contrary, in many ways public education is improving. From 1978 to 1992, the dropout rate improved by at least 10%; from 1971 to 1988, the number of Black 17-year-olds unable to read shrunk from 18% to just 3%, and Black students' math skills rose sharply.

Sources — *The Nation*, U.S. Dept. of Education, and *Rolling Stone*.

what corporate America really wants from the schools. Why should society invest money in helping students to realize their full potential as human beings when so many of them will just end up flipping hamburgers, assembling microchips, standing in unemployment lines, or sitting in jail cells?

The more education lives up to what it should be, the more it jeopardizes the status quo. Enemies of the schools don't want children to learn that people of all colors *can* get along, and that we are not inherently destined to be divided along lines of race, gender, nationality, or sexuality. They don't want kids to learn to think for themselves, to ask why a very few are very rich and the rest of us are poor and always struggling.

Young people have a natural impulse to ques-



tion and to rebel and to make common cause with others — just think of the tremendous student demonstrations against anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California. Those with a stake in the present system think schools should be a place where these inclinations are snuffed out, not encouraged.

The rotten new agenda. After undermining the schools for years with funding and personnel cuts, ideological warfare against multicultural programs, and attacks on teacher competence, rightwingers now have the chutzpah to demand "reform"!

Many of the current proposals flow from a 1991 Bush administration report called "America 2000: An Education Strategy" that essentially concluded that our public schools are beyond help, too rotten to revive. The conservative solution? Help them die — put school assets up for grabs and turn them into privately run businesses.

This plan would shunt taxpayer money to private and religious schools. Parents could get vouchers to pay part of the cost of private tuition, but those without enough money to pay the difference would be excluded.

Moreover, for-profit schools could turn away any students they chose. Said Loren Parks, founder of Parks Elementary School in Gresham, Oregon, "This is not a school for students who...are a potential problem."

Thus, lower-income students and students with special needs — many of them immigrants and children of color — would be dumped into the poorly funded remnants of the public-school system.

And what of the quality of the private schools themselves? Don't bring to mind posh prep schools; instead, think of Burger King, which has opened high schools in at least fourteen cities. Unsurprisingly, test scores have dropped in many of the schools that have been given to business to run.

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our turn!

Students, teachers and parents speak up



Maria Perez, 15, a ninth-grader at Sam Barlow High School in Gresham, Oregon

"At Barlow, there are a lot of students who don't like me because I'm Mexican. I would like to see everyone get along with each other. In some classes if there are students who don't get along, they just change them to another class. It would help if there were classes to make them understand that it doesn't matter what religion you are or where you come from. Or maybe have students work together so they can learn about who the other person is."

"Whether kids work at school or not depends a lot on the teacher. Things like rewards would help kids to learn more, like a 'student of the month' award. Also, kids can't stay cramped up in one spot for a long time. Having 20 minutes to eat lunch and 20 minutes to burn it off would help. And I don't think Black history is covered at all. They only give Blacks one month out of the year and give whites 11 months. I think that affects kids a lot."



Robert Allan, 14, a ninth-grader at Mount Rainier High School in Federal Way, Washington to page 3

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Farrakhan and O.J. Simpson are celebrated for exposing the racist system — but, our editorial notes, that doesn't mean they've earned acceptance as long-term standard-bearers.



Calif. strikers hang tough

6, 7



A four-year walkout by Diamond Walnut workers, mostly women and people of color, points the way toward a unified and more successful labor movement. *En español y en inglés.*

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No letters to the editor appear in this issue so that we could make room for our centerfold tribute to Gloria Martin. Readers will find them in their regular spot on page seven next time. Please see the bottom of this column for our postal and e-mail addresses.

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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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. Fax: 206-723-7691. E-mail: freedomsof@igc.apc.org. 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. For Australia and Canada, see back page.

Sandy Nelson vs. The News Tribune Unions and activists tell court, "It's our case too!"

BY LINDA AVERILL

Across the U.S., workers at places like Boeing and Staley are drawing a line against layoffs, take-backs, and worsening job conditions, thereby turning their own strikes and lockouts into important showdowns for the entire labor movement.

In Tacoma, Washington, reporter and radical Sandy Nelson has drawn a line like that with her employer, *The News Tribune* (TNT). But her battle is not on the picket line, it's in court. And her issue is the right of journalists to be politically active off the job — a litmus test for the free-speech rights of all workers.

As the state Supreme Court decides whether to accept direct review of lower-court rulings against this award-winning reporter, support for her is pouring in. Like other pivotal labor and civil-liberties struggles, Nelson's case has become a magnet, attracting assistance from a wide range of organizations and individuals — most recently through signatures on friend-of-the-court briefs on her behalf.



Sandy Nelson

"The right to be active in the community and to freely express your political views off the job...must belong to everyone equally."

— AFSCME Local 2083, Seattle

Support for appeal builds. TNT transferred Nelson from her education

beat to copy editing in 1990. Management said her off-duty involvement in a campaign to win an anti-discrimination law for lesbians and gays in Tacoma threatened the *Tribune's* "appearance of objectivity." This is a smoke-screen invoked by news bosses who want to hang on to their own political freedoms, but deny them to their workers.

When Nelson protested, TNT delivered an ultimatum: choose reporting or politics. Instead, Nelson and the Newspaper Guild fought this unfair edict. Later, after the Guild was decertified as a result of a union-busting campaign by the *Tribune's* owner, McClatchy Inc. of Sacramento, Nelson filed suit, backed by the American Civil Liberties Union.

In pre-trial skirmishes during Spring 1995, county Superior

Court Judge Vicki Hogan sided with TNT. She ruled that the First Amendment freedoms of publishers outweigh a state law, passed by initiative, that is supposed to protect activist employees from discrimination. Hogan also held that state constitutional guarantees cited by Nelson don't apply to private-sector workers.

The Washington State Labor Council is one of many groups urging the state Supreme Court to accept review of Nelson's appeal directly, without having to go through intermediary courts.

Wrote the WSLC: "...some employers attempt to maintain a 'politically neutral' workforce...Such restriction on off-duty political activity by employers is sufficiently pervasive to chill the political involvement of

TNT escalation fails to strike Nelson out. Meanwhile, TNT continues to play hardball, hoping that Nelson will cave in before her case reaches trial. In an Oct. 14 memo, Managing Editor David Zeeck raised the stakes, telling Nelson that, having lost her reporting position, her editing job is in jeopardy as well. "Your continued high-profile political activity stands in stark contrast to the ethical behavior of your co-workers," he charged.

In rejoinder, Nelson reiterates the issues that have made her case a rallying point for so many. "The problem with TNT's position is that workers are accustomed to democracy in this country. We were raised with the idea that it is our right and responsibility to speak and demonstrate freely as citizens of a democracy. "All management's appeals to 'credibility' and keeping the news 'free of partisan influence' can't hide the basic fact that they are attempting to take that right away," she says.

In a written response, Nelson reminded Zeeck that the union contracts of the state's two largest daily papers explicitly protect their newsmen's ability to engage in off-duty activities — and so did the *Tribune* before McClatchy got rid of the union there.

Help Nelson win! In defiance of McClatchy's machinations, Nelson's bonds with the labor movement and her union are strong. Her defense committee meets in the Newspaper Guild's Seattle offices. At a huge rally of Boeing strikers in November, the Guild distributed en masse its leaflet tying Nelson's case to union-busting at Detroit's newspapers.

The message about Nelson's case is getting out far and wide. Rosario Ibarra, a leader in the National Democratic Convention, which works with the Zapatistas in Mexico, has endorsed it. So has Anne Northrop, a prominent ACTUP activist in New York.

You too can help Nelson achieve her goal of holding the line for workers' right to organize and speak out. Urge any groups you are a member of to sign on to the supporting brief; write the National Lawyers Guild at 2005 Smith Tower, WA 98104, or call them at (206)622-5144. □

workers. As a result, a large and important segment of the political community is suppressed."

The WSLC, Local 82 of the Newspaper Guild, and the National Lawyers Guild also plan to file briefs supporting Nelson's actual appeal.

In a letter seeking signatures on its brief, the NLG pointed out that winning Nelson's case "is particularly important if employees are to be able to confront the right wing agendas facing voters in initiative campaigns and legislative races."

The Pierce County Central Labor Council, AFSCME Local 2083, the Lesbian and Gay Legal Society of the University of Washington School of Law, and the magazines *Toward Freedom* and *The Progressive* are a few of the groups that have signed on so far.

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Call, write, or stop by and visit!

Dateline Canada

Big business manipulates Québec vote

BY RAGHU KRISHNAN

Last issue, *Dateline Canada* reported on the build-up to the October 30 vote on Québec sovereignty, and explained why the Freedom Socialist Party supports independence: Québec has all the cultural and historical attributes defining a nation; it has long been abused and exploited by English Canada; and the independence movement has the potential both to grow into a challenge to the whole capitalist status quo and to galvanize the liberation struggles of other oppressed nations.

This issue we invited Socialist Challenge/Gauche Socialiste, affiliated with the Trotskyist Fourth International, to contribute a guest commentary analysing the vote's outcome. Author Raghu Krishnan is an anti-racist activist of South Asian origin based in Toronto.

In these dark days of cynicism and fatalism, the sovereignty movement in Québec has sent the rest of Canada and the world a message of hope and resistance. Despite threats and blackmail from the business community and "the markets," opposition from the White House, and hostility and paternalism from the rest of Canada, just under one half of voters opted to take a further step down the road to the creation of an independent Québec.

This is a remarkable result, and — with 94 percent of those eligible voting — a democratic exercise matched in recent times only by the first post-apartheid elections in South Africa.

Sadly, the performance of English Canada in this exercise has been nothing short of disgraceful.

Business subsidises "lovestest." Far from being a show of "love" for Québec, the march on Montréal on October 27 was a last-minute, desperate attempt to secure victory for the "no" side of the referendum battle and reinforce a siege mentality in English Canada.

The operation was openly financed and

promoted by business, politicians, the Ministry of Transport, and major media outlets, violating Québec election spending laws and the right of Québec citizens to make their decision free from outside interference. It made a mockery of even the most basic notion of self-determination.

A few examples: Federal corporations gave their civil-servant employees paid leave of absence to attend the rally. The Liberal Party and the federal government

voted to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. Alluding to fears expressed by the Japanese admiral responsible for the attack, Manning said he hoped the vote had "awakened (the) sleeping giant...of Canadian nationalism," and that the giant would strive to "build a better country for all who are proud to be called Canadians."

This aggressive message of English-Canadian defiance is aimed not only at the majority of Quebecers who see them-

lect and emotion."

Québec Premier Jacques Parizeau's referendum-night remarks blaming the defeat on "money and the ethnic vote" were clearly unacceptable. It is one thing to denounce the bullying tactics and partisan manoeuvring of big business, quite another to associate big business willy-nilly with Québec's "ethnics" — as if all Québec Anglophones (English speakers) and Allophones (people whose first language is neither French nor English) were millionaires.

Similarly, it is one thing to be concerned and disappointed that Allophones and Anglophones voted virtually as a bloc against sovereignty, quite another to scapegoat "the ethnic vote" for the sovereignty movement's inability to secure a majority in the referendum. Parizeau's remarks are a setback for those in the sovereignty movement and among Québec's non-French-speaking and immigrant communities who have worked over the years to develop a vision of Québec citizenship not dependent on ancestry or language.

Left solidarity needed. One can only hope that the post-referendum demoralisation of pro-sovereignty forces is not too great. The course of the campaign brought polarisation along class lines and a shift to the left by the "yes" side; ideally, these developments will bring the sovereignty movement more in tune with the interests and aspirations of the workers, rural communities, youth, students, artists, feminists, and intellectuals that support it.

English-Canadian leftists could boost this process immensely by interacting in a supportive way with pro-sovereignty forces in Québec. In fact, the left's own survival as a viable force — one that defends universal social programs and promotes "people before profits" — depends on it recognising that it has much more in common with the sovereignty movement than with the likes of Preston Manning and Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. □



Jacques Boisjot/CP



Shaun Best/Reuters

Above: Opponents of independence celebrate as they watch the voting reports come in. Left: Separatist Québec Premier Jacques Parizeau blames the narrow defeat on "the ethnic vote."

paid for 11 chartered flights to get people there. The airlines and railways offered

hugely discounted tickets — as much as 90 percent off — to rally-bound travellers.

In line with the warlike atmosphere whipped up in English Canada, Preston Manning, leader of the right-wing populist Reform Party, likened the strong "yes"

selves first as "Québécois," but also at Native peoples and those who favour a more multicultural, pluralistic approach to Canadian citizenship.

Where is the outrage over Manning's comments in those English-Canadian circles so quick to jump on remarks about ethnicity made by pro-sovereignty leaders in Québec? There is none. In two juxtaposed editorials, the *Globe and Mail* even had the gall to call the sovereignty movement "narrow, parochial and defensive" while praising Manning's "vision, intel-

...Schools

from the cover

Serious problems riddle other reform initiatives, also. "Restructuring" of the school day creates chopped-up schedules and diminishes the time that students spend in class, leading to speedup for already overloaded teachers. A not-yet implemented plan in Oregon, where the reform movement is strong, would test students at the end of grade ten and issue certificates of competency to those who passed. This would cheat teens of two years of education, but save money for the public or private school operator.

Workers fight the decline. Teachers are fighting back. In Portland, Oregon, they may soon walk out for the first time. In Tucson, Arizona, teachers, parents and students are protesting unilateral decisions by the school board to eliminate over 100 aides from bilingual programs and to remove the cap on class size. In Fife, Washington, striking teachers recently held out for 37 days — and defied a court order to go back to work — until they received a decent contract.

Teachers are gaining in militancy as they are ordered to do more with fewer resources and less authority. Fully mobilized, they could exert enormous influence over the course of education — 56 percent of them are unionized, and one of the largest U.S. unions is the 2.2-million-member National Education Association.

Students before profits. Teachers will need to marshal all of their considerable power if the real problems facing the schools are to be solved. A few examples:

- Our national dropout rate is a staggering 25 percent.
- English-as-a-Second-Language programs are being axed. (The ESL program

this writer taught in closed down at the same time that several new teaching positions opened up — in the local juvenile detention center. Prisons, not schools, are a growth industry.)

• Sexism, racism and homophobia still permeate the culture of secondary schools. Girls are still expected not to excel scholastically or athletically, but in drill-team and cheerleading competitions. Blacks and other youth of color, especially the boys, are singled out for discipline. Student activists for gay and lesbian rights lose their academic honors. Truly multicultural curricula are still rare.

To create a superlative educational system, parents, teachers, students, and workingclass communities need to organize together to take control over both the pursestrings and policies of our schools. The current push for site-based councils sounds like a step in this direction, but these councils are actually designed to occupy activists with secondary problems like the configuration of the school day, while leaving the power to hire and fire and make the big decisions in the hands of a few highly paid administrators attuned to corporate desires.

What's really needed are increased funding for schools through increased corporate taxes; freely elected school boards; technology to assist teachers, not replace them; smaller class sizes through hiring more teachers; affirmative action in hiring and promoting teachers and staff; and an end to racist and sexist tracking of students.

In a nutshell, reactionaries don't like public education because it smacks too much of socialism. But the truth is, only in a socialist society will education and the well-being of our youth become genuine priorities. □

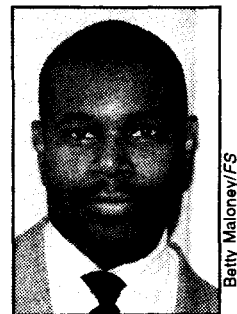
Karen Gwaltney has taught ESL, English, and Spanish to students of all ages for 17 years, working both in the U.S. and abroad.

...Students, parents, teachers

from the cover

"In some of our urban schools we can't even get one computer. But then if you go to some suburban areas it seems like just about every class has a computer in it. It's the same with books. We are being shortchanged. They think we will be happy with what they give us and say that it's okay, but it's not. For so long we've sat back and said nothing. Now it's time for us to speak out. We want the same for our children in the urban areas that they get in the suburban areas. Every child in America should have the opportunity to get the best-quality education so that they can make something of their life."

Kermit Stokely, parent of a second-grader, president of PTSA at Morton Street Elementary School in Newark, New Jersey



Betty Maloney/FS

"One thing I've seen in the schools is that teachers build a sense of community in the classroom and that empowers students. Teachers form cooperative groups of four to six students each and they work together on a project. There is a goal for the students to accomplish and they get to know others different from themselves. If we were to build a sense of community in integrated classrooms, then hopefully the children would carry that experience into their personal lives to deal with racism and sexism."

Helen Joe-Lew, bilingual resource teacher serving four elementary schools in San Francisco, active member of Assn. of Chinese Teachers



"There are teachers who enter inner-city schools who have had no preparation for going into a culture they don't know or understand, or they may have prejudices from living in a racist society. Once they get there, if they are racist or do discredit our kids, there is nothing we can do to get that teacher out of the classroom. We need community oversight, where parents can go into the classroom to watch what is going on and offer suggestions if they have a child who is having a hard time, and demand that teachers teach our kids. If you treat the children with respect they will treat you with respect."

Mabie Settlege, science teacher at George Washington Carver Middle School in South Central Los Angeles

"Regardless of things I read in the press sometimes, I think schools are really doing a good job. The people on the front line probably have a concerned and frustrated reaction when they feel diminishing support for education or for them as teachers. Those people over the years that I have seen are for the most part an extremely committed group of people and do a very good job."

Clarence Arnold, former junior-high teacher, school psychologist for the special-education district in McHenry County, Illinois

Born just a year before the 1917 Russian Revolution, Gloria Martin was a child of four when U.S. women finally won the vote. She was 79 when she died of cancer on November 22. A primary engineer of the fusion of women's liberation with socialism, an inventive and down-to-earth organizer, and a fiery, give-'em-hell speaker who frequently waved a red bandanna to end presentations, Gloria made an indelible impact on her world.

Gloria, a working mother of eight children, was raised in the South during Jim Crow, an experience which shaped her into a bracing critic of capitalism and its underpinnings, racism and sexism. Her political career began in the 1930s in the Communist Party's youth affiliate, the Young Communist League (YCL), but she came into her own three decades later inside the Trotskyist and feminist Freedom Socialist Party.

A long-standing member of the FSP's leadership body, the National Committee, Gloria will be sorely missed by her comrades for many reasons. Not the least of these is the sense of confidence and commitment she instilled in several generations of up-and-coming radicals. Yolanda Alaniz, a Chicana activist and writer who worked closely with Gloria in FSP and its sister organization, Radical Women, describes Gloria's influence this way: "She taught me how to be a bold feminist and speak my mind. I loved her direct and blunt way. It had a bite and kick which helped keep you on track."

From the grassroots. Gloria was born June 3, 1916 in St. Louis, Missouri. She grew up there and in Asheville, North Carolina. In her early twenties, her hatred of racism led her to sign up with YCL to do battle against segregation in St. Louis. During World War II she quit YCL, disgusted with its sexism and the twists and turns of policy dictated by Stalin.

But Gloria didn't quit fighting racism. After moving to Seattle in 1950, she became involved with the Congress of Racial Equality and the NAACP. In 1966, she joined with Black women to organize welfare recipients into the group Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) Motivated Mothers; in the following years, she worked in numerous other antipoverty projects.

It came naturally for Gloria to campaign shoulder-to-shoulder with low-income women, because Gloria was poor herself. She supported herself and her family through a variety of hardscrabble jobs like cleaning, leather-crafting, and chicken-plucking. Hers

was not an episodic battle for abstract aims, but a consistent and ever-expanding war against concrete want and injustice — and for revolution in the here-and-now.

Says Gloria's son Tom: "Her whole life was her commitment to others. I became a social worker because of the values she taught."

To Marxist feminism. After so many years in the trenches as an instigator of change for poor and working women and women of color, Gloria was more than ready for the reinvigoration of feminism that caught fire in the 1960s. She forged practical and theoretical links between women of the Old and New Left through her popular and pioneering class "Women in Society," launched in 1966 at Seattle's Free University.

There, Gloria collaborated closely with veteran agitators like Clara Fraser, who led a Seattle exodus from the Socialist Workers Party that year and founded the FSP. Gloria joined the fledgling party when she saw it shared her dedication to women's rights, revolutionary socialism, democracy, and principled politics.

Fraser and Gloria worked with young women in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) to create Radical Women in 1967. RW's goal was to teach women the leadership skills, social history, and workingclass consciousness they weren't learning in the male-dominated antiwar, antipoverty and civil-rights movements.

The new group was heavily instrumental in forging a multiracial coalition that won abortion rights in Washington state three years before *Roe v. Wade*.

"To Gloria, building women's leadership was all-important," Fraser says. "She believed women's place is at the head of all the movements for radical change."

Our teacher, our comrade. I first met Gloria in the early 1970s during an historic staff walkout at

the University of Washington, where I was a secretary. Gloria coordinated the activities of RW and FSP members on campus in that fray, and that's where I and many others learned the ABCs of militancy — everything from how to set up a strike kitchen and picket line, to how socialism and gay rights are related. Gloria made being a Marxist feminist the most rational, natural thing in the world — for women and men.

And Gloria showed us how to be fearless about putting our convictions into practice. In 1969, when cops and agents around the country were trying to destroy the Black Panther Party, Gloria led in organizing multiracial defense guards for the Seattle Panthers.

Gloria was FSP organizer from 1973 to 1978, decisive years when the party developed from a lone outpost in the Northwest into a national organization with a quarterly newspaper. I was the first of many to leave the Seattle fold to establish branches in other cities — in my case, Los Angeles. Gloria gave us the training and self-assurance to strike out on our own.

Gloria was a frontrunner not only in politics but in pizzazz. She relished songs and dancing and skits, and she did her best to educate the rest of us in the art of putting on the hilarious, satiric, and extravagant FSP and RW productions she was famous for.

Gloria was also a demystifier of Marxist theory, that bastion of male prerogative. I once admitted nervousness to her about tangling with the Spartacist League because, I said, "They always quote Lenin at me." "Don't worry," she assured me with her trademark acidity, "They misquote Lenin, and don't understand him anyway."

The truth is that Gloria, who had to quit high school to help support her family during the Depression, was one of the most educated people I've ever met. She

read everything, and like Malcolm X, exhorted us to do the same.

Woman of letters, internationalist, optimistic rebel. Gloria was a lover of literature and a tireless archivist of feminist memorabilia. In 1980, she opened Shakespeare and Martin Booksellers (later Shakespeare & Co.), which specialized in offering rare tomes and hidden herstory.

Books were just one of Gloria's passions. She was an ambitious and creative gardener, a nurturer

of stray cats, and a frequent globetrotter who traveled to England, France, and the Middle East.

Gloria didn't much like writing herself, but she authored a book nevertheless. *Socialist Feminism: The First Decade, 1966-76* is an engrossing account of the FSP's first ten years and the epochal events we were a part of.

Gloria leaves countless legacies behind. In hospice care in her last week, she was surrounded by relatives, friends, and colleagues; each had a story to share of how they had benefited from her bottom-



In tribute

"Gloria was a self-taught leader, self-taught because no men around her could teach her a thing about leading women. What she taught to herself and to all women is the need for women to lead themselves and to do it with gusto and guts, and with great fanfare and high style, the style of the workingclass rebel girl."

MIKE WARNER,
Gloria's son,
a Marxist feminist
like his mother

"Gloria was a real warrior with the courage to stand up for what she believed in, and she helped to make the world better for people, especially women. With her gentle strength and determination, Gloria was a good role model for us all, and my life is richer for having her as a friend."

JANET McCLOUD,
longtime advocate for
Native American and human rights

"It's the truth that Gloria had a big, big heart. She cared deeply for art that had a human resonance. In the bleakest of times, when one needed it most, she gave me support, courage, and a piece of her wit — to keep on keeping on."

SELMA WALDMAN,
artist and activist

"When I remember Gloria, I think of the time when the police had us surrounded and were ready to attack the Panther headquarters. Gloria was one of the first to show up pulling up with a carload of her collection of dogs, joining the community in force. Gloria always being in her place."

form



Gloria speaks at a 1969 welfare-rights rally, one of a series of stormy mass hearings at the Wash. state capitol.

In her own words

From "Women in the American Revolutionary Struggle," 1970 Radical Women resolution.

In years past, revolutionary women had auxiliary roles in the movement, doing the Jimmy Higgins work of typing, cooking, and handing out leaflets which the men composed in smoke-filled rooms... Women no longer accept this... Women write the leaflets they hand out and women make their own speeches about their own oppression. They also have some of the answers to solve their own problems, and the will to change the present capitalist system.

From *Socialist Feminism: The First Decade, 1966-76*, published 1978.

Dozens of alleged revolutionary grouplets mushroomed and then degenerated or disappeared during the first half of the 1970s. But we endured, stabilized and gained politi-

cal and numerical strength...

Our program was dynamic, flexible, and clearly differentiated from the ultra-left rhetoric of that period's motley collection of whiners, windbags, Napoleons, counter-culturalists and worry-warts...

We always expected women to bring interracialism to the modern struggle... An interracial, intersexual, pro-workingclass mass movement, unified around the complementary needs and demands of minorities, women, labor and gays, would challenge the basic foundations of the system. This is the KEY to revolution!

From Martin's statement as a Freeway Hall Case defendant. The case, which became a battle over the right to keep membership lists and minutes private, was won by FSP in 1992.

If there is a threat to our freedom we must struggle to maintain that freedom. I lived

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Clara Fraser

VALEDICTORY for a free spirit

According to an old Russian proverb, friendship is friendship, but politics is politics. The point, of course, is that the two should not be confused or allowed to impinge on each other in an unethical way, as happens all too often.

So how wonderful it is when no "buts" separate the two experiences, when a buddy is your close political ally, a comrade your boon companion. To be linked in this special kind of connection is a blessing of serendipity, a lovely stroke of fate that is rare and precious.

I am fascinated by long-term relationships — Marx and Engels, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. My own life has been a shifting kaleidoscope of events, organizations, movements and human ties. People who have been steadfast amigos for decades are by now relatively few. And Gloria Martin was the shining star in that constellation of enduring pals.

GLORIA WAS A HISTORIC FIGURE in the pantheon of U.S. rebels. (I almost wrote Gloria "is" because her death is still unnerving and unreal for me.) Her accomplishments as organizer, historian, catalyst, invigorator, instructor, and popularizer of class struggle theory and practice were legion. But what was unique and particularly priceless was her extraordinary gift for friendship. I have rarely encountered anyone who surpassed her in this talent.

At every crossroads I faced, in every situation demanding a new and untraveled path, in every endeavor that was hard or tiring or discouraging, Gloria was there for 40 years, unfailingly just *there*, to encourage, support, scold, push, persuade, pressure, and impel.

I can still hear her refrain as she buoyed me up over the tumultuous years: "Clara, you can do it... You *must* do it... You can do it better than they can... Try it and you'll see it will work... Go for it, Clara... Just tell me what you want me to do!"

Wordsworth, the English poet, wrote of "A perfect woman, nobly planned/to warn, to comfort, and command." Yes, I knew her. Gloria.

DAMN, WE HAD FUN together. We loved the opera and theater and movies, and we journeyed to memorable writing retreats in the mountains and at the seashore, warbling pop classics for hours en route. And since we were usually the oldest folks around, we were the most dedicated socializers; we could drink everyone under the table and outsmoke and outdance the youngsters. We were always the last to leave a party.

I could tell Gloria anything. Yet we almost never spoke of intimate, personal matters — we just intuitively respected privacy rights. The kind of let-it-all-hang-out binges prevalent these days were never in vogue with us.

We talked politics. Current events and ideologies and philosophy. Organizing. Art and books, childraising and cooking, decorating homes and headquarters, writing and gardening. And we found so much to laugh about, people especially.

DID WE EVER DISCUSS PEOPLE! Political comrades, sisters in women's liberation, friends of all colors and sexualities in the civil rights movements and antipoverty programs, and scores of associates from our jobs and neighborhoods.

We had personality-haunted imaginations — very female! We cared about our colleagues. We analyzed them, admired them, worried about them, gloried in them, deplored their crotchets, and plotted ways and means of helping them find and express and excel themselves.

We viewed people from different angles, each of us seeing a different side of a person first. But with our once-over completed, a synthesis was usually achieved, melding what was consistent and contradictory, apparent and covert, in that individual.

After all, we were in the business of training women to be leaders in their own right. And to lead others, you must be able to lead yourself, to understand yourself, to set high standards for yourself. But it was not an easy job imparting these concepts to women emerging out of the 1950s and '60s to whom emancipation was a startling and often terrifying notion.

Gloria took on the task with relish, however, and never tired of praising the women and men who benefited from her guidance and gave back to the movement. And she always mourned a little for those who got away — the children, in effect, she had lost.

ONE OTHER SALIENT POINT stands out: She was that rare bird whose radicalism increased, intensified, and expanded as she aged. She did not mellow, as in marshmallow. A detached armchair observer she never became. Indignation over injustice raged with an ever-searing flame in her soul, and her yearning for revolution became poignantly urgent and all-encompassing.

"I hate this system more than I ever have in my whole life," she told me a few months ago. "It makes me sick. I want total change!"

WHEN SOME PEOPLE DIE, they leave yawning gaps. Gloria's death has left a vast crevasse for hundreds of us who loved her, because she managed to make all of us something of what we are today. We can only fill that void by seeking to emulate her glowing, effervescent spirit of revolt. □



Gloria and Clara, 1988.

K. Merrigan/FS

Gloria Martin

irrepressible,
inspirational
pioneer of
socialist
feminism
1916 - 1995

less faculty for human sympathy. Among the gifts she leaves to us is her trust in a revolutionary future. When Gloria was elected Seattle RW organizer in 1990, at the age of 74, she said: "We have to fight for survival issues. But then we have to go further. We have to change the system, or we'll be fighting all our lives for the same thing... When people have had enough, revolution can happen suddenly. Our job is to be ready for it." Amen, Gloria! We'll be ready, thanks to you.

— MONICA HILL

A public memorial will be held in Seattle on Sunday, December 17, at 2:00 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center; call (206) 722-2453. For information about later memorials in Vancouver (B.C.), Portland (Ore.), San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Melbourne, please see the phone numbers listed in the FSP and RW directory on page two.

"One of Gloria's strongest ambitions was to open a museum to celebrate women. She gathered a fine collection of books by and about women — as well as leaflets, posters, programs, photographs and postcards. She gave this collection much love and attention, and organized it meticulously so it was ready to be used. Most amazing to me is the fact that she "knew" each woman she documented and her story; each one was her friend."

RAYA FIDEL,
professor of library and information science

"Visiting Shakespeare & Co. one day, Gloria loaded my arms with books from Australia, South Africa, the world. "Got this one, Nell?" Gloria asked as she puffed on a cigarette. The printed page — a connection to Gloria and her love for words, for revolution and a better world."

NELLIE WONG,
poet and
San Francisco
Bay Area FSP organizer

up, grades and a couple the rest of the coming the cops to back off. ve me energy just ence."
IRON DIXON,
Black Panther

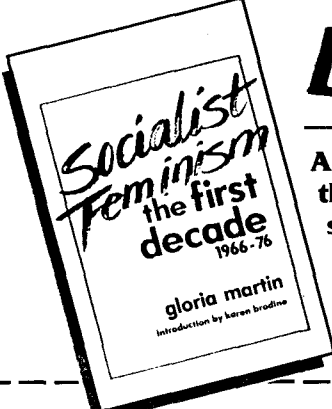
in the McCarthy years... The big issue case is precisely the defense of all our national freedoms — to think, speak, thoughts and your political views without fear of reprisal... seventy years old (I seldom mention it) but if I must spend time in jail, so will not go quietly, but I will know I am going, and thousands of other will know as well.

Women Poets, "dedicated to Karen Brodine, Yung, Merle Woo and Nancy Reiko Kato.

er words shatter myth, risms shatter sun, r verses probe and search, veins of women's lives, finding light, they shape it incandescent song.

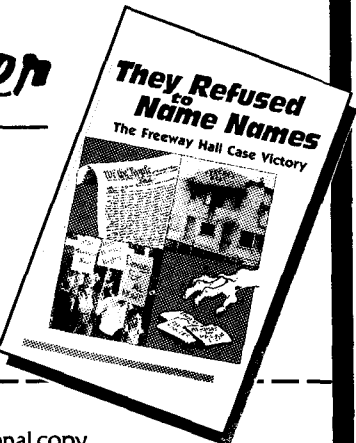
ations in remembrance of Martin may be Red Letter Press for the Gloria Martin Lions Fund at Bush Asia Center, 409 4th Ave. So., Suite 201, Seattle, WA 98104.

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Editorials

Bosnia: no peace under capitalism

THE DEBATE OVER U.S. INTERVENTION is often framed in the mainstream press as, "Is Bosnia worth shedding 'American' blood for? Are U.S. interests really at stake, enough to risk our troops coming home in body bags?"

These are not the proper questions. Well, maybe they are for political calculators like Bill Clinton — but not for workers.

The relevant question is, what is our government up to?

U.S./U.N. intervention in Bosnia serves no altruistic or democratic purpose. The soldiers are being sent there not to enforce peace — an impossibility in any event — but a shabby, tragic deal ratifying the ethnic partitioning and dismemberment of a once truly multicultural region.

Why? What are the globe-marauders after?

A huge incentive is the need to protect existing investments and the chance to get in on the spoils of war — things like armament profits and exploitation opportunities.

But the U.S., at bottom, is worried about the embers of communism. Turns out they weren't really doused in Russia or Eastern Europe. Are they still glowing in what used to be Yugoslavia? Or have people accepted the breakup of their workers state and given up their socialist aspirations? Are they actually ready to welcome the U.S. and its allies as their saviors?

Bill Clinton is about to find out. □

O.J. and Farrakhan center stage, with real leaders unrecognized

WHY DID SO MANY BLACKS CHEER when O.J. Simpson was acquitted of the killings of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman — even though Simpson is at best a woman-abuser and very possibly a double murderer? And why did so many African American men flock to the Million Man March called by Louis Farrakhan — even though Farrakhan is an anti-Semitic and homophobic race separatist who says women belong at home?

It's not that complicated.

Carbon copies of evil cop Mark Fuhrman have brutalized and falsely imprisoned Black men seemingly forever. O.J. Simpson became an icon when his battery of high-priced legal talent exposed the staggeringly ugly, super-entrenched nature of racism in the "justice" business — and then freed him from its clutches. And Farrakhan? Nobody *sounds* more radical in calling down the wrath of heaven on white supremacy. And for a lot of Blacks angry and frustrated with daily injustice and the politicians who sanction it, any opportunity to march on Washington is not to be missed — no matter who's in charge.

But it isn't that simple, either. Neither Farrakhan nor O.J. would be celebrated for even an hour if heroes weren't so hard to come by.

WHERE DID ALL THE LEADERS GO? They existed in the '60s. But the powers-that-be wiped them out — not just with bullets, but by promoting the myth that it was assertive Black women, not racism, that held Black men back. In fact, it was strong women like Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker who galvanized the Black movement, organized it, and kept it together.

This created a problem not for their brothers, but for the rich and powerful. White liberal sociologist Patrick Moynihan, with the backing of the whole inexorable establishment media and PR machine, rushed to the rescue with the myth of the emasculating Black matriarch.

Once the right of Black women to be prominent was demeaned and a host of principled revolutionaries were assassinated, in exile, or in prison, a void opened up. The celebrity of Simpson and Farrakhan is a creature of this leadership vacuum.

But Black women — and other women of color, and feminists of both genders and all races — are still out there galvanizing. And organizing. And holding together institutions and causes and picket lines.

They are still *leaders*, fighting for the liberation of their race, and of their sex and class as well. And the day these unsung heroes get the support and recognition they deserve will be the day that the system which Farrakhan and Simpson only play at taking on, or take on only out of self-interest, begins to topple. □

Women of the world unite in Beijing

WHILE U.S. NEWS CAMERAS FILMED papal delegates pontificating and president's wives posing at the official U.N. Women's Conference in Beijing this September, the real action was taking place 35 miles away in Huairou at the NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) Forum on Women — an event of great import by virtue of its numbers (more than 50,000), internationalism and diversity.

Too bad that U.S. media badly underplayed this story. But not to worry — women invented the grapevine, after all! We can rest assured that these grassroots feminists, armed with each others names and addresses, inspirations and ideas, will be in touch. □

Voices of Color

Multiracial strikers persevere against Diamond Walnut

BY IMOGEN FUA

It was October 1995 when I visited the picket lines at Diamond Walnut, peak season for this huge processing plant in Stockton, California. Trucks trickled in and out of its half-empty parking lot.

Five hundred workers with Teamsters Local 601 struck the company in 1991 for employer-

paid health benefits and a decent wage. An accompanying boycott has left Diamond with a dwindling pool of customers, forcing it to cut their prices this year in an effort to unload stock accumulated in 1993 and 1994.

The strikers are mostly women — Chicanas and Mexicanas, Blacks, whites, and newcomers from southern Asia. Their walk-out shows vividly how women and people of color are shaking up traditionally conservative unions like the Teamsters.

Workers like those at Diamond Walnut almost have no choice but to be militant. In California, especially, they are in the eye of a political storm created by anti-immigrant Proposition 187, a statewide blitz against affirmative action, and the intense regional impact of NAFTA, which encourages runaway shops and the brutal exploitation of undocumented workers.

The Diamond strikers are showing their sisters and brothers in the labor movement how to challenge the corporate tactics of foreigner-bashing and racism and sexism so workers can pull together to win concrete gains in pay and conditions.

Bosseshed crocodile tears. Before the strike, Diamond had been going through difficult times, and management threatened to transfer the factory to Mexico to lower labor costs. The workers pitched in and agreed to a 30 percent wage cut; Diamond promised to compensate them when it got back on its feet.

By 1991, Diamond was on the

Fortune 500 list of most profitable enterprises. But rather than giving its employees back pay, it demanded more concessions.

The workers felt betrayed. Women I spoke with talked about how they regularly went beyond the call of duty to maintain quality work even after their wages were cut. Their sacrifices failed to make the company more beneficent.

Frances Evans, a single mom and 10-year employee, told me: "We got a raise of a dime and then we had to pay \$30 a month for our health-care insurance, so really we were not getting a raise, they were taking more away from us."

The company has been just as unscrupulous in trying to break the strike and bust the union. It is attempting to get Teamsters Local 601 decertified as the representative of the strikers and current workers. Elections in 1992 and 1993 resulted in the rejection of the union, but both times the union found evidence of management violating labor laws. The National Labor Relations Board is planning a new election.

Battling the corporate Scrooges. Outside the factory gates, I asked retiree Arlene Cutburth what has sustained the long commitment to the strike. "They thought that we old ladies would go away," she said, "but most of us are angry enough to see this through."

Women I spoke with were critical of corporate greed in general, drawing parallels between Diamond and other businesses, like nearby farms that pay their workers the lowest wage legally allowed while their profits skyrocket.

The Diamond strikers are mostly single mothers and

women in their forties and fifties. Many now support themselves in just these kinds of minimum-wage, seasonal, and part-time jobs lacking health benefits. "How do these corporations think we can pay rent, utilities, and medical bills and take care of our children at \$4.25 an hour?" asked striker Donna Ricketts-Umbel, who is holding down a minimum-wage job full-time.

Many of the strikers fit in time for the picket line on the way home from these low-paying replacement jobs. These rank-and-filers are the backbone not only of the walkout, but of the boycott as well, which they seek support for in visits to stores throughout the area. Strikers have also undertaken a national bus tour, lobbied the U.S. Congress, conducted a 40-day fast, and traveled to Europe.

The wave of labor's future. As immigrant farmworkers in Stockton, my Filipino grandparents struggled alongside Chicanos/as and other Asian Americans for better treatment — but they were always ostracized by the unions, crippling their efforts against the bosses.

Now women and people of color are the majority of the workforce, and they are demanding that unions represent them and stand up for their issues. Women of color especially are taking political initiative and assertively placing themselves at center stage. More, they are providing a visionary agenda for the labor movement, one of fighting for an equal sharing of the wealth produced by workers.

By their militance and unity, the Diamond Walnut strikers are helping to point labor in this new direction. As Frances Evans put it, "This is a strike against all corporations and the victory is for all workers."

Readers can help by boycotting Diamond products and by sending a donation earmarked for the Diamond Walnut strikers to Teamsters Local 601, 745 E. Miner Avenue, Stockton, CA 95202. For more information, call (609)546-7475. □

Imogen Fua, who comes from a long family line of U.S. labor activists, is the San Francisco Bay Area Radical Women organizer.

The strikers are helping to steer labor in a new direction

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Voces de Color

Huelguistas multiraciales perseveran en contra de Diamond Walnut

POR IMOGEN FUA

Era octubre de 1995, temporada alta para esta gigantesca planta procesadora en Stockton, California, cuando visité las manifestaciones de huelguistas (*picket lines*) en Diamond Walnut. Unos cuantos camiones entraban y salían del estacionamiento lleno a medias.

Quinientos trabajadores del Sindicato "Teamsters Local 601" hicieron una huelga en contra de la compañía para exigir prestaciones de seguro médico pagado por la empresa y un salario decente. Un boicot que acompañó a la huelga dejó a Diamond con un número reducido de clientes, forzándolo a bajar sus precios en un esfuerzo para sacar existencias acumuladas en 1993 y 1994.

Las huelguistas son principalmente mujeres — chicanas y mexicanas, negras, blancas y recién llegadas del sureste de Asia.

Su plantón muestra claramente cómo las mujeres y la gente de color están sacudiendo a los sindicatos tradicionalmente conservadores como los "Teamsters".

Los trabajadores como los de Diamond Walnut casi no tienen opción de practicar la militancia.

En California, especialmente, están en el centro de una tormenta política creada por la Proposición anti-inmigrantes 187, una guerra devastadora en todo el estado en contra de la acción afirmativa y el intenso impacto regional del TLC (NAFTA), el cual exhorta al traslado de compañías a otros lugares y a la explotación brutal de trabajadores indocumentados.

Las huelguistas de Diamond están mostrándoles a sus hermanas y hermanos del movimiento laboral cómo retar las tácticas corporativas que pretenden hacer chivos expiatorios de los extranjeros al igual que el racismo y sexismo para que los trabajadores puedan unirse para lograr metas concretas en cuanto a salario y condiciones de trabajo.

Los patronos derraman lágrimas de cocodrilo. Antes de la huelga, Diamond había estado pasando por tiempos difíciles y la gerencia amenazó con trasladar la fábrica a México para reducir los costos laborales.

Los trabajadores cooperaron y estuvieron de acuerdo con el recorte de un 30 por ciento en los salarios; Diamond prometió compensarlos cuando se volviera a poner en pie.

Para 1991, Diamond se encontraba en la lista de Fortune 500 de las empresas más lucrativas.

Sin embargo, en lugar de devolverles su dinero a los empleados, exigió más concesiones.

Los trabajadores se sintieron traiciona-

dos. Las mujeres con las que conversé me hablaron acerca de cómo se pasaban de sus obligaciones regularmente para mantener la calidad del trabajo aún después de que les redujeron su salario.

Sus esfuerzos fracasaron en hacer la compañía más benévola.

Frances Evans, madre soltera y empleada desde hace 10 años, me dijo: "Nos dieron un aumento de 10 centavos y luego tuvimos que pagar \$30 al mes por seguro médico, así que no nos dieron un aumento sino que nos quitaron más."

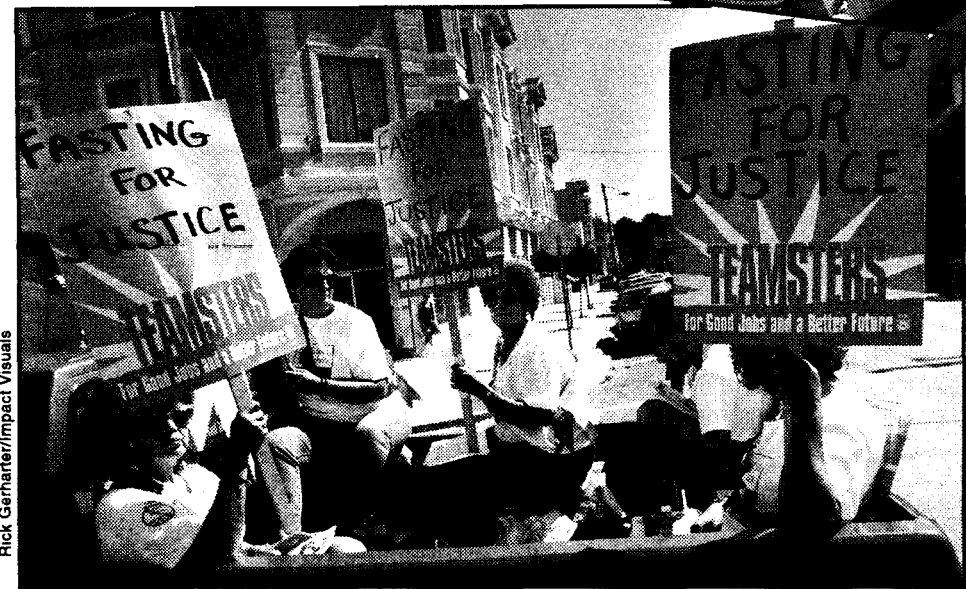
De la misma manera, la compañía ha tenido muy pocos escrúpulos al tratar de romper la huelga y destruir el sindicato. Está intentando quitarles la certificación a los "Teamsters Local 601" como repre-

sentantes de los huelguistas y trabajadores actuales.

Las elecciones de 1992 y 1993 dieron como resultado el rechazo del sindicato, pero ambas veces el sindicato encontró pruebas de que la gerencia había violado las leyes laborales.

La Mesa Directiva Nacional de Relaciones Laborales (*National Labor Relations Board*) está planeando nuevas elecciones.

At right, from left to right: Betty Chambers, Marlene Kalebaugh, Donna Rickets-Umbel, and Rosetta Thompson at the Diamond plant. Below: Show of resolve in San Francisco, August 1993. A la derecha, de izquierda a derecha: Betty Chambers, Marlene Kalebaugh, Donna Rickets-Umbel, y Rosetta Thompson en la planta de Diamond. Abajo: Muestra de resolución en San Francisco en agosto de 1993.



res los salarios más bajos permitidos legalmente mientras que sus ganancias suben estratosféricamente.

Las huelguistas de Diamond son principalmente madres solteras y mujeres de 40 y 50 y tantos años de edad. Muchas de ellas se mantienen con esta clase de trabajos con salarios mínimos, de temporada y de medio tiempo sin prestaciones médicas.

"¿Cómo es que estas corporaciones piensan que podemos pagar renta, gastos de la casa y cuentas médicas y mantener a nuestros hijos con \$4.25 por hora?" preguntó la huelguista Donna Rickets-Umbel,

Luchando en contra de los empresarios avaros. En frente de las puertas de la fábrica le pregunté a Arlene

que tiene un trabajo de tiempo completo con un salario mínimo.

Muchos de los huelguistas hacen tiempo para protestar de camino a casa provenientes del trabajo alternativo mal pagado que tienen que hacer durante la huelga.

Estas "tropas" son la columna vertebral, no sólo del plantón, sino del boicot también, para el cual buscan apoyo mediante visitas a tiendas en esta área.

Los huelguistas también han iniciado una gira nacional en autobús, han protestado en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, han realizado un ayuno de 40 días y han viajado a Europa.

La ola del futuro laboral. Igual que los trabajadores agrícolas inmigrantes de Stockton, mis abuelos filipinos lucharon al lado de otros Asiático-americanos/as y chicanos/as por un mejor tratamiento — pero los sindicatos siempre los hicieron a un lado, imposibilitando, así, sus esfuerzos en contra de los patronos.

Ahora las mujeres y gente de color son la mayoría de la fuerza de trabajo y están exigiendo que los sindicatos los representen y luchen por sus demandas.

Las mujeres de color, en particular, están adoptando iniciativas políticas y colocándose con resolución en el centro del escenario.

Lo que es más, están proporcionando un plan de acción visionario para un movimiento laboral que luche por una distribución equitativa de la riqueza producida por los trabajadores.

A través de su militancia y unidad, los huelguistas de Diamond Walnut están ayudando a dirigir al movimiento laboral en esta dirección.

Como dijo Frances Evans, "Esta es una huelga en contra de todas las corporaciones y la victoria será para todos los trabajadores."

Los lectores pueden ayudar boicoteando los productos Diamond y mandando una donación dirigida a los huelguistas de Diamond Walnut a Teamsters Local 601, 745 E. Miner Avenue, Stockton, CA 95202. Para más información llame al (609)546-7475. □

Imogen Fua, que proviene de una larga tradición de activistas laborales de Estados Unidos, es la organizadora de las Mujeres Radicales del Area de la Bahía de San Francisco.

...Australia

from page 8

nal judge, offered a refreshing class analysis. The present constitution does not spell out any freedoms like those in the U.S. Bill of Rights; in contrast, O'Shane outlined a document guaranteeing human rights, equality, and material security for all.

Jenny Hughey, a founder of the growing Australian Women's Party, argued for a constitution that enshrines affirmative action in putting women into parliament.

Lawyer and author Jocelyne Scutt explained how our form of government developed.

She showed how the white founding fathers consciously shut out women, Aborigines and the poor from public life — sometimes through formal, legal means and sometimes through the power of economics — in order to secure and perpetuate their wealth and privilege.

A constitution for the oppressed.

The plenary demonstrated the potential of the debate over the constitution to be a catalyst for discussion of the need for thoroughgoing social change.

Women, young and older people, and people of colour make up the largest ranks of the destitute; any future constitution must include affirmative action to guarantee us the right to equal participation in political life and must protect our right to speak and organise freely.

The new constitution must also recognise the sovereignty of Aboriginal nations. It must stipulate that all government offices be filled by popular vote, with incumbents subject to recall elections. And a living wage must be guaranteed for everyone, along with free, quality healthcare, childcare, and education, and, for women, free, safe abortion on demand.

Working people's struggle for the inalienable right of the most oppressed to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness will ultimately create a society truly governed by and for all of us. □

Steven Farmer 1956-1995

Washington state political prisoner Steven Farmer died September 25, 1995, from AIDS.

In 1987 Farmer was convicted of photographing two teenage male prostitutes naked. A typical sentence would have been ninety days in jail.

However, state authorities needed a public villain to promote passage of the 1988 AIDS Omnibus bill, a civil liberties nightmare providing for mandatory testing and quarantine. Farmer, chosen as the scapegoat, became the center of a whirlwind of media lies.

More than a year after the photographs were taken, Farmer was forced to take an HIV test. Based on the positive result, he was sentenced to a grinding seven-and-a-half-year prison term.

Farmer appealed to the state Supreme Court, which decided the invol-

untary test was unconstitutional — but refused to shorten his long sentence.

Because of the anti-privacy implications of his case and because he bravely fought for himself as an openly gay and HIV-positive man, Farmer was quickly defended by the Stonewall Committee for Lesbian/Gay Rights, the Freedom Socialist Party, Radical Women, *Seattle Gay News*, and the late state Senator Cal Anderson. They were joined over time by many others, who together won clemency for Farmer in 1993. Although under house arrest, Farmer spent his last two years in a supportive hospice.

At a November memorial, Stonewall Committee chair Chris Smith said of Farmer: "He deserved a better world, but he never let the unfairness dealt him in this one stop him from fighting to make it right." □

BOEING WORKERS REVOLT

Bold and inspiring Boeing machinists and retirees have declared war on greedy corporate tactics that imperil all workers.

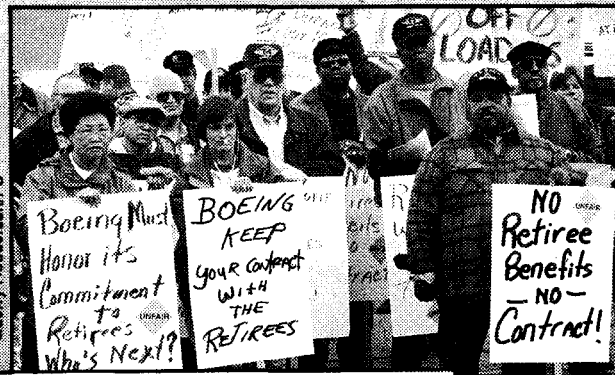
On October 6, 1995, the 32,500 members of Aerospace Machinists District Lodge 751, or IAM, struck over layoffs, health benefits, and wages. They had rejected a company contract proposal that cut into hard-won benefits like premium-paid medical insurance, offered lump-sum bonuses instead of yearly general wage increases, and contained no concessions on job security.

Outsourcing equals union-busting. At Boeing, producer of 60 percent of the world's aircraft, 45,000 jobs have been lost in the last six years. Many layoffs were due to outsourcing — farming out work to subcontractors who use cheap, non-union labor in Asia, Latin America, and U.S. right-to-work states.

Outsourcing means more than wrenching job loss for the higher-paid workers who get replaced. It divides workers on the basis of international competition. Industry giants like Boeing use it to chip away at existing contracts, lowering pay and job standards across the globe. And by constantly reducing union jobs, it dilutes the power of the union — and, over time, threatens its existence.

The solution is for workers like those at Boeing to demand that their employers create more jobs by shortening the work week with no loss in wages and pay union scale worldwide.

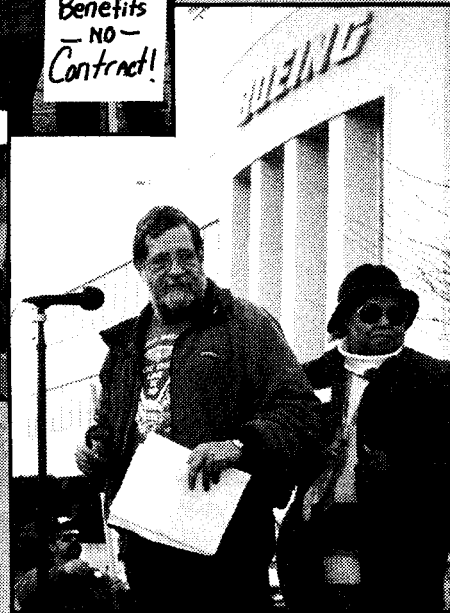
Workers, who produce the profits, should benefit. Last year, the planes created by Boeing workers brought



Left, spirited November 20 rally to protest cuts in healthcare benefits. Below, retiree organizers Henry Noble and Jackie Terrell.



Above: New AFL-CIO officers (from left) Richard Trumka, John Sweeney, and Linda Chavez-Thompson at Nov. 12 mass demonstration in Everett, Wash. How well they organize for the strike nationally will have enormous impact on the labor movement.



in \$22 billion. The company's profits — after footing the bill for premium-paid medical insurance and general wage increases agreed to under the last contract — were \$856 million. Boeing stock rose more than 50 percent, and president Frank Schrontz and four other fat-cat executives got stock-option bonuses totaling nearly \$6 million.

Despite how Boeing carries on about pressure from its competitors, the company can clearly afford to keep providing free healthcare insurance and annual pay increases for all its workers and retirees — it's a question of priorities.

Former and current employees and others are particularly outraged about Boeing's decision to chop away at the

medical benefits promised to retirees, many of whom left early at the company's urging. Retirees, who will suffer most from any increases in medical bills, are a visible and consistent part of the strike effort; one of their prominent organizers is recent retiree and Freedom Socialist Party leader Henry Noble.

In it to win. On November 12, a rousing mass rally in Everett, Washington, attended by the new slate of national AFL-CIO officials, demonstrated labor solidarity and overwhelming community support for Boeing strikers and their demands. Boeing machinists and retirees have struck a nerve.

The strikers are resolved not to let even their own leadership stand in their way. On November 20, with the holidays approaching and after 46 cold days on the lines, strikers rejected a paltry settlement contract approved by local and international IAM officers. Having sacrificed so much already, the machinists refused to quit with their goals unmet.

Boeing workers have shown that they have the stamina and drive to demand that their union leadership organize labor to create mass picket lines, seize control of the bargaining table, recruit the resources necessary from community supporters to keep strikers out as long as it takes to win, and shut Boeing down!

Just as Boeing is a major pacesetter in the business arena, Boeing workers will set the pace for all of labor. You can help them use this strike to uplift working people everywhere. Please send a contribution to IAM District Lodge 751 Hardship Fund, 9125 15th Place South, Seattle, WA 98108. □

Dateline Australia

Women and Labour Conference speakers argue for cutting ties to monarchy

BY DEBBIE BRENNAN

On September 29, 500 feminists and unionists packed the large hall of Sydney's Macquarie University for the Fifth Women and Labour Conference. The takebacks and deprivations of the past decade, and the threat of even greater austerity, made this an urgently needed event.

Workshops covered topics like privatisation, affirmative action, access to education, women's health, reproductive choice, and childcare. The role of union leaders in enforcing industrial "peace" was scrutinised. And Aboriginal women made it clear that indigenous struggle is pivotal to the progress of the whole working class.

Radical Women presented a workshop called "Women Workers: Sparkplugs of Labour." It attracted grassroots feminists who responded enthusiastically to our perspective that because women and oppressed minorities now occupy the most

strategic positions in capitalist production, they also hold the collective power to shut the system down.

To my surprise, one of the hottest sessions turned out to be "Women's Voices/Women's Rights in the Australian Constitution," addressing Australia's relationship to England and the monarchy.

Debate over the constitution can grow into discussion of fundamental social change.

An Aussie republic? Strange to relate, but the head of state of this multicultural South Pacific country is the Queen of England! Her position is not just decorative; in 1975, the crown's representative turned Australia's prime minister out of office. Recently, discussion about chang-

ing the constitution in order to ditch the Windsors and create an Australian republic — a royalty-free government — has become vigorous.

I moved here from the U.S., which, although a republic, is still run by and for the rich. Before the conference, I tended to see the question of monarchy vs. republic as one of whether big business rules Australia through a puppet queen or a puppet president — not a choice that excited me.

In fact, Australian Labor Party Prime Minister Paul Keating and the captains of industry are trying hard to make sure that the population at large does not get too interested in what they are portraying as a dry, technical issue.

They support a break with the monarchy, but only to have its powers transferred to an office occupied by an Australian President. In their design, this new, home-grown sovereign would emphatically *not* be elected by the people, but

picked by politicians. The President would sit above the elected government, which would still be run by the Prime Minister and his or her majority political party.

The opposition parties, meanwhile, full of wealthy pastoralists (ranchers) and other sections of the conservative establishment, want to keep the monarchy. In the end, however, they will probably go along with the so-called "Keating Republic." Whichever way the debate goes, the various components of the ruling class agree that it's a matter for *them* to decide.

Butting into the discussion. The energizing panelists who presented "Women's Voices/Women's Rights" insisted that politicians must not be allowed to hijack these deliberations. They persuaded me that constitutional change is not an irrelevant, legalistic problem, but instead a cutting-edge matter of the community deciding where it wants to go.

Pat O'Shane, Australia's first Aboriginal

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