

the Socialist

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2010

Editorial

Striking at the Center - IWD 2010

The 100th anniversary of International Women's Day presents an invitation to reflect on the status of women's rights and the long struggle for social equality. For some, this requires a look into the radical history of the early 20th century. Doing so might offer inspiration to new generations of activists who are often trapped by the constraints of the present. Yet, important lessons can also be drawn from more recent episodes in history. For instance, in just the last six years we have witnessed an incipient women's rights movement being channeled into a lobbying and electoral strategy. Three moments best illustrate this damaging transformation.

Despite the increasing boldness of the anti-choice protesters from the 1980's into the turn of the century, a certain rebirth of the feminist movement seemed to be afoot in April 2004. A sea of pink Planned Parenthood signs filled the streets of Washington DC as nearly a million people turned out in an attempt to defend hard-fought reproductive rights – mothers and daughters and even grandmothers with their granddaughters marched together. People were on the move, angry and willing to make the kind of sacrifices popular movements are nurtured on. All that was needed was some organization.

Such a movement never materialized. Established feminist groups seemed satisfied to fight off parts of Bush's legislative assault by lobbying efforts and doling out fairly large sums of campaign contributions to Democrats. While they followed this path, the anti-choice movement grew by seeping into state government posts, pressuring and shuttering clinics and developing the capacity and will to carry out violent acts of terror. In an odd reversal, it seemed conservatives were more concerned with movement building



than progressives.

The shooting death of late-term abortion doctor Dr. George Tiller in May 2009 was merely the pinnacle of this wave of reaction. One day after the shooting, hundreds of protesters assembled in New York City's Union Square. The crowd experienced emotions ranging from anger to sadness to guilt at not having done more. Still, there was a sense that this might be a moment to gather the political strength necessary to beat back these attacks. Many mentioned the power of the 2004 march.

When the speakers stepped to the mic, the crowd waited with anticipation to see what they would be called on to do. Would people be asked to forgo their summer vacations in order to support clinic defense? Would a new grassroots women's rights movement be initiated? What sacrifice would the leadership demand from a clearly motivated crowd?

Money. The clear message repeated by speaker after speaker was the need for more money. Money to support a legislative agenda, money for campaign contributions and money to keep paying the

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Statement of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control - a non-racist, classless, feminist socialist society... where working people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future - to a real radical democracy from below. The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support militant working class struggles and electoral action, independent of the capitalist controlled two-party system, to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions - radical and fundamental changes in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations - to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

From Exploitation to Organization An Interview With Domestic Workers United

On January 21, 2010 *The Socialist* spoke with Joycelyn Gill-Campbell, an organizer for Domestic Workers United (DWU). DWU is an organization, “of Caribbean, Latina and African nannies, housekeepers, and elderl caregivers in New York, organizing for power, respect, fair labor standards and to help build a movement to end exploitation and oppression for all.” DWU is currently waging a campaign in support of a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights that would, for the first time in history, provide domestic workers with all of the labor protections afforded to other workers. Joycelyn immigrated to the United States from Barbados, twelve years ago. She worked as a domestic worker for nine years, has been involved in DWU for eight, and has been working for the organization for two years.



employers to go about their chosen professions. That is, you have like two families who doctors or lawyers when there’s the nanny looking after their children then they can go about, safely about, to what they enjoy most of all, and that’s their chosen profession.

TS – Domestic Workers United organizes these domestic workers that are clearly so important to our society and our economy and the family and the lives of these children. So

why do domestic workers need this organization? What is the plight of domestic workers?

J– Well actually, I think your question is addressing why a Domestic Workers United. Domestic Workers United was formed in 2000. It was formed out of CAAAV (Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence) who were organizing Asians

and the Asian community and there was no one really organizing the immigrants from the Caribbean and the Latin countries. So, we discovered that these workers were exploited and abused, they were made to work long long hours for little pay... since you had domestic workers working fifty and sixty hours for even less than minimum wage, which is like two hundred, two hundred and fifty dollars a week. I myself can attest to that, having worked in this industry as a nanny before becoming an organizer with this organization,

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The Socialist is always looking for fresh material, which highlights the struggles of the working class. News stories, first-person testimonials and all forms of the arts are welcome. Please limit letters to 500 words and articles 1,250. Submit as doc or rtf file.

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**Solidarity and Greetings for
International Women’s day
2010**

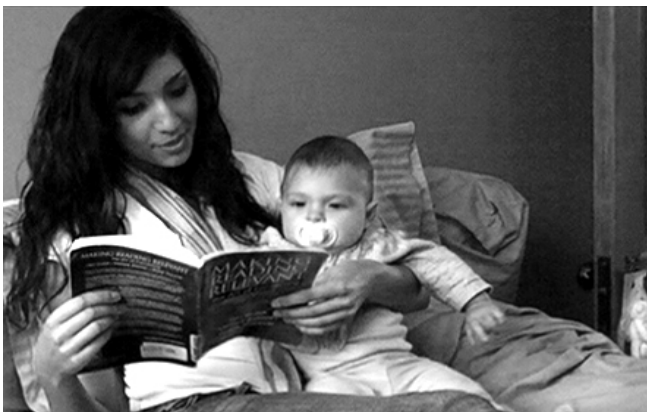
Maggie Phair

Socialism is necessary but not sufficient.
-Mickey Porges, feminist

Sex, Shame, and MTV: Beyond a Culture of Repression

by Kristin Schall

Each week, the MTV series *Teen Mom* gives viewers a glimpse into the lives of four young women as they struggle with the challenges of motherhood. For teen moms Farrah, Maci, Amber, and Catelynn, the joys of motherhood are often overshadowed by the harsh realities of economic insecurity, a lack of access to education and traditional gender roles. For 1/3 of teen girls in the US, this show is not a voyeuristic experience, but a mirror of their own reality. With the US having the highest teen pregnancy rate in the Western world, it is no wonder that the cable channel that has been the pulse of teen culture for the last twenty years is highlighting this reality.



Teen Mom is a follow up to the series *16 and Pregnant*, which followed six teenaged girls through their pregnancy as they navigate the transition from carefree teenager to mother. What is striking about the two shows is the conservatism of their values. Of the six young women who took part in the earlier series, only one, Catelynn, chose to give her child up for adoption. Not once was the option of abortion discussed by any of the young women. Traditional family structures are clearly favored, even when the emotional well being of the woman is at stake. For Maci and Amber, the decision of whether to remain in their dysfunctional relationships is often depicted as a choice between be-

ing a good mother and sacrificing their mental health and personal happiness or leaving their child's father and damaging their child. The only single mom on the show, Farrah, is depicted as irresponsible, selfish, and neglectful. Regardless of their relationship status, it is clear that the mothers are expected to fit into a narrow and out-moded definition of the role of mother. Those in relationships depend on their boyfriends for financial security and serve as primary caretakers of the children. Their requests for help from their partners so they can pursue an education are often depicted as selfish, and single Farrah's desire to maintain some semblance of an identity separate from "mother" is offered as a prime example of bad parenting.

These regressive depictions, it seems, are meant to discourage teen pregnancy, which, on the surface, is a worthy goal. However, the series falls into the same trap as even the most progressive and comprehensive of sex education programs--turning sexuality into something to be ashamed of and motherhood into a punishment for that shameful behavior. MTV promotes sex education through the show by encouraging viewers to visit the website *stayteen.org*. The site is about as comprehensive as sex education in the US gets. The site has it all, from information about condoms and hormonal birth control to STD and HIV protection. However, the real message of the site is abstinence. The primary message of the site, which is representative of comprehensive sex education sites in general, is "there is no shame in abstinence." However, it implies that there is shame in having sex, but they are providing the information about how to stay safe for all the people who make the bad decision to have it.

This attitude toward sex also comes through on the show. In one instance, Catelynn goes to her doctor for birth control and is ashamed to openly discuss her sex life. In another, Farrah discusses getting birth control with her parents and she is told that she should have no need for birth control because she shouldn't put herself in a situation to need it. Both of these instances reveal the real problem with sex education in America. The desire for sex is pathologized; it is made into something to be repressed and controlled. The emphasis on abstinence shuts down dialogue and makes engaging in sex a shameful act. And, as in the case of Maci, who lost her virginity to her boyfriend and got pregnant, virginity or motherhood are presented as the only responsible options.

A more healthy approach to sex education would send the message that there is no shame in abstinence,

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Our Unity is Power, Our Victory Secure **by Mojgan Ghafari Shirvan**

Mojgan Ghafari Shirvan is a playwright, stage director and actress, now living in London. Mojgan, along with an estimated 1.5 million others participated in the mass march to Tehran's Azadi Square this past June, to demand that votes be counted fairly in Iran's 2009 presidential election.

On 22nd Khordad (12th June) we went out to vote and we saw very long queues for voting in the hot weather of Tehran, without any shelter from the sun. We also saw many soldiers in the streets and couldn't understand why they were there.

As with many other Iranians, that Saturday night was the worst night of our lives. They began to count the votes at midnight and nearly finished it



I am an Iranian woman who was born in London just a few months before Iran's Islamic Revolution began in 1978. Like many other Iranians, my parents were inspired by the utopian possibilities offered by the changes then underway in our country. They returned, and took me with them.

I have always believed in and supported the Iranian reform movement. Before the 2009 election, I was trying to convince people around me to take part in the election as a civic duty and vote. I was going to vote for Mr. Mir Hossein Mousavi.

Before the elections, we had amazing days and nights in Tehran. Iran's society demonstrated a political enthusiasm that I hadn't seen before, even in 1997, when reform candidate Mohammad Khatami was elected president. Political campaigning was lively; out in the street, you saw people everywhere who were supporting this or that candidate: some with green ribbons tied around their wrists or green headscarves or cloths to support Mousavi, some wearing the badges of "Change for Iran" to support Karroubi and some who had attached Iran's flag on their car's antenna to support Ahmadinejad. The televised debates made street politics even livelier.

before the morning. Imagine, almost 40 million votes "counted" in a matter of hours! The results were impossible to believe.

Once the fraud became clear on Saturday and Sunday, sporadic demonstrations began. Our energy was high, but our numbers small. The riot police easily suppressed us. We were really exhausted, out of energy and depressed after coming back home from our failed demonstrations. But our movement was just beginning. The Silent Demonstration of Monday 25th of Khordad is my best and the most special experience of June 15th. That afternoon, a big demonstration from Enghelab square to the massive Azadi square was planned and we all decided to take part in it. Our emails, twitter accounts and phone texts hummed with activity. In the morning, rumours spread that it was too dangerous to go out. The police, it was said, had permission to shoot the demonstrators. We overcame these rumours, but set out with fear in our hearts and the thought in mind that our demonstration may be a matter of life and death.

We arrived half an hour late and joined the other demonstrators from a side-street, a short distance

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IN THE NEWS

New Jersey Socialists Push Forward

The Northern New Jersey Local continues to meet monthly in Montclair township, and Hudson and Bergen counties. The local recently held a march and vigil to mark the 8th anniversary of the use of the US military base in Guantanamo as a detention and torture facility and to call for its immediate closing. The event was in coordination with Witness Against Torture's campaign to shut down Guantanamo.

The local also recently co-sponsored a forum with the Greens on the coup in Honduras and will co-sponsor another on the Supreme Court's decision to allow unlimited corporate contributions to political campaigns.

Northern NJ will be organizing forums this spring, will hold actions for International Women's Day and will organize a trip to DC for the March 20th anti-war actions there.

Mourning the Loss of Feminist Activists in Haiti

Among the 150,000 killed in January's earthquake in Haiti are three activists known for their advocacy on behalf of women and girls. Myriam Merlet was the former chief of staff of Haiti's Ministry for Gender and the Rights of Women. Lawyer, Magalie Marcelin founded Kay Fanm, an organization that addresses the issue of domestic violence. Anne Marie Coriolan served as an adviser to the women's rights ministry and was the founder of the organization, Solidarity with Haitian Women, she also helped make rape an important issue in Haitian courts. With the loss of these three important women, there is concern about the future of Haiti's women and girls.

Anti-Choice Protestors Target University of Wisconsin Medical Center

One year after the announcement that the University of Wisconsin Medical Center plans to offer abortions to women up to the 22nd week of pregnancy anti-choice protestors continue to target the center. Because of the potential risk to the security of women and doctors at the center, second trimester abortions have yet to be added to the services offered by the center. "We will not do anything that will increase the risk of security problems at the site or the threat of harassment from those who oppose providing abortions" said UW

Hospital spokeswoman Lisa Brunette to the Wisconsin State Journal. This UW controversy points to the inroads anti-choice protestors have made in traditionally pro-choice parts of the country.

Women's Rights Activists Released from Prison in Iran

34 women from the group, Mourning Mothers, a group founded in the wake of the June protests in Iran made up of mothers of those killed, imprisoned or missing, were released from prison in early January. The women had spent three weeks in prison after being arrested at a peaceful protest in Tehran. Activist Shirin Ebadi, sister of one of those arrested, told Al Jazeera, "They thought that by [arresting my sister] they could keep me quiet. After three weeks they realized that there was no point and I wasn't going to stay quiet. So they let her go." Women continue to play a critical role in pushing the reform movement forward in Iran.

"Until the spirit of love for our fellow workers, regardless of race, color, creed or sex, shall fill the world, until the great mass of the people shall be filled with a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice cannot be attained, and there can never be lasting peace upon earth"

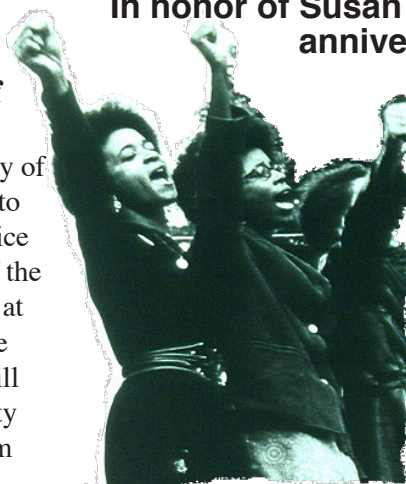
—Helen Keller

In Solidarity on this International Women's Day 2010

The Socialist Party of CT
www.socialistpartyct.org



In honor of Susan Dorazio on the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day for her tireless work as a true socialist feminist.



The Brattleboro Area Socialist Party

Looking Toward New International Structures in a New Era of Socialist Feminism

by Susan Dorazio

One hundred years ago, the German revolutionary socialist, Clara Zetkin, proposed, and the women of the Socialist International approved, a call for an International Women's Day. This annual event would be an explicitly socialist response to the major issues facing women in the opening decades of the 20th Century. These issues, in particular the rights of women workers and the right of women to vote, centered on conflicts in the workplace and community brought to the fore by rapid industrialization in the US and Europe.

Zetkin and other socialist women, including the women of the Socialist Party of America, were determined to distinguish their participation in women's and workers' rights struggles from that of the liberal parties and organizations. For example, for socialist women, the main thrust of woman's suffrage wasn't the promise that women would civilize political discourse through their moral superiority. It was simply their civil right as community members. And, as workers, they were participating in militant actions for good wages, benefits, and working conditions, rather than lobbying for protective legislation.

For socialist women in 1910, political action was to be based on a socialist platform that would further the building of a revolutionary working class movement by challenging the assumptions of capitalism and the dead-end strategies of liberal reform. Political action was to be consistent with the socialist principles and program that formed a socialist alternative to the capitalist system.

One hundred years ago, as now, a united working class, organized across national borders, was a basic tenet of socialism, forming the basis of such international gatherings as the Socialist International in Copenhagen in 1910 that gave rise to International Women's Day. Over the past century, the effects of invention, technology, world wars, large-scale immigration, and the daring accomplishments of artists, writers, political theorists and activists – not to mention the dramatic photos of earth from space—have vastly increased people's global consciousness.

Thus, as we socialists move the theory and practice of internationalism into the second decade of the 21st Century, we have the potential for bringing about broader and deeper forms of internationalism, ones that take the principle of solidarity to new levels.

One such possibility is an international socialist feminist work group growing out of personal and political contacts among women comrades in the democratic socialist movement. Coming together at the interna-

tional level, on both a personal and political basis, will enable us as to confront critical global issues—such as the climate crisis, the economic meltdown, imperialist wars and occupations, erosion of civil liberties, and the deterioration of the infrastructure of our cities, towns, and regions— in a particularly concerted and cooperative way.

The founders of International Women's Day were inspired by working class women taking their demand for women's and workers' rights to the streets. In this spirit, and to motivate the formation of a work group, we should ask: How can we transfer this grassroots focus to the international level? At the same time, how can we bring our international perspective to our local and regional political work? And in both cases, how can we apply feminist process to international, cross-cultural, communication?

First of all, we need to proceed from the conviction that the concepts of socialist feminism, and structures such as an international socialist feminist workgroup, are essential to the goals and methods of the democratic socialist movement. This sense of purpose will arise from our belief that this effort prefigures the kind of structures and processes we will expect in the socialist society we are working to create.

Coupled with conviction and purpose must be persistence. Forming such a work group won't be easy. Language, cultural, and political differences will impede us. The stresses of poverty, lack of support services, and too many demands on our time and energy are also inhibiting factors. But we can't give up. Those of us who have been able to stay in touch with socialist feminist comrades here in the US and other parts of the world can attest to what an important and energizing experience it is.

In building the workgroup, there will be many socialist feminist principles to keep in mind. For one thing, the projects that we embark on must put related issues in a socialist feminist context. This may seem obvious, but all too often our organizing efforts get derailed as we defer to liberals, rely on hierarchical structures, or avoid discussion of political differences (for example, the role of electoral activity in party and movement building).

Deciding on specific projects will also be challenging. Two recent events may serve as examples of how our workgroup could coalesce for action. One is the proposal this past November by Hugo Chavez for the formation of a 5th International. By including the worldwide celebration of the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day among its recommendations, the international conference in Caracas,

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From Exploitation Continued from p3

and I was paid two hundred and seventy one dollars every two weeks... every two weeks... for a total of a hundred and thirty hours in two weeks. So, when you calculate you can see that that was less than minimum wage. So to that end is where we started organizing domestic workers to fight for their rights. And a lot of them have been and still are exploited and abused both mentally, physically.

TS – I've been to some of your events before and read a lot of your literature and one thing you talk about a lot is the specific nature of the home as a workplace and how that affects the work relationship. Can you say something about that?

J – Yeah, the home of the employer is our daily workplace. But because there are no set guidelines, no protections for the people who are working within this work place. You know, it's such a unique history. No right to organize, no right to collective bargaining, no right really, you know, to any real protection. So it is that, so unique that the way to fight, even to negotiate for a raise can cause you to lose your job.

TS – What is Domestic Workers United actively doing? Tell me about your campaign.

J – Well actually, we are at present campaigning for a Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. And we not only are campaigning for the Bill of Rights, which I will come back to later, we campaign against the injustices that employers have been rendering upon the workers in this industry. And this industry has over 200,000 domestic workers both in New York City and the greater metropolitan area. And that's why we really had to address, through a survey that we did at the convention we had in 2003 when we ask the members what they wanted and they wanted to have real protection. They wanted to have paid vacation, sickness benefit, paid holiday. In actual fact, the workers were asking to be treated like real workers, so that's when we came about with the law students of NYU (New York University) and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice and drafted the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights. And the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights is asking for paid vacation, sickness benefits, notice prior to being fired, paid holidays, and as a matter of fact what the Bill is asking for is for the workers to be treated like real workers and it doesn't cost the state anything.

TS – And what strategies and tactics are you using to try to get this bill past?

J – Our strategies and tactics vary, and we keep coming up with meaningful tactics that have led us so far to the bit of history where the Assembly (New York

State Assembly) has passed the Inclusion Bill of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, which is part of our original bill. And we had the Harlem Dinner, which was honoring the domestic workers in Harlem. We've had a town hall meeting, which was sponsored by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, which is an organization which organized the employers. It's of the synagogues and they organize employers to be in support of us. So we used that [] We ran rallies, we've campaigned in Albany, we've done lobby days with the legislators, sent testimonials of workers to Albany, and we had the first ever public hearing of domestic workers in New York. We've also formed a national alliance of domestic workers, and this too is because this is not centered here, but it is nationally where there are over two million domestic workers who are also being exploited and abused. So we began to strategize all of the local level at the national level, where we form a united front to help counter act the problems.

TS – Some of the events that you have put on that I have been particularly interested in have been when you come to the defense of particular domestic workers who have been wrongfully fired or faced particular abuse. Can you talk a little bit about that?

J – Yah, you know, being that there's no safety net for the workers, and these workers have been in crisis long before the crisis, and a lot of the employers are even using the economic crisis to fire the workers or dismiss them or do the same amount of hours in less days for the same pay. And we have had great success in the cases because we have never lost a case. We have won over five hundred thousand dollars for domestic workers who have been exploited and abused.

TS – Have you seen the act of engaging in organizing itself, besides the particular demands you make, as a positive effect on the women who have engaged in it, in other words, creating feeling of empowerment and that sort of thing?

J – You know this organization of domestic workers have employed hundreds of women, locally and on the national level. Because this organization is women led. It's not really that it's feminist, but you know most people today thought that women did not have the power really to organize because I remember when we first started organizing people thought that we couldn't do it. Now, today, they are asking us "how did you do it? To get to this level?" But we got to this level by a lot of sacrifice and determination. Determination to have representation for this industry which is mostly women, and women of color, and immigrants.

TS - Since I've known about your organization, you have seemed like an organization that is really going to achieve something. Is there anything else we haven't covered?

J - Well, the only thing that I have to say is that we've gotten great support being an organization that is not a union, we are just an organization, we've gotten great support from all the unions 1199 (SEIU), 32BJ (SEIU), you know everybody is on board with us, we've got international support, national support. We've got feminist movements who are behind us, we've got Gloria Steinem, and all of those who are behind us. We've got a lot of men who have even supported us! And it's so amazing to see even on call-in programs (radio) that the last call-in program I had there was one woman that called-in and six men. So you know it's obvious that men are realizing that this is something that had to be done. And we are not really addressing only the domestic industry, we are fighting for recognition and standards for all the working class people, because the working class people are the people that are mostly oppressed in this country. People who are responsible for the infrastructure are the ones who are treated as less than human beings. You know and sometimes I sit and I been on the campaign for so long and I actually thought about if we were to call out a strike one day what can happen and you can just close your eyes for one second and imagine over 200,000 domestic workers in New York City on strike.

TS- Its a powerful image.

J - It just can show you what can happen. So we just keep fighting to have the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, and, at present, we are in a good position. [...] So, right now, we are really fighting and strategizing and meeting because we want the Senate to place the Bill on the agenda for a vote. We know that when it is voted on in the Senate and passed it still has to go back into a conferencing process to be conferenced with the Assembly bill. And that when it's conferenced together then it still has to go back into a vote and when it is voted on and passed then we know we can begin to drink champagne, because the governor has said as soon as this comes to his desk he is going to sign it into law, because the women of this country have been oppressed too long.

TS - You mentioned unions and you mentioned strikes is there any talk about doing those sorts of actions once you have the bill, or do you have any idea of what plans might be?

J - No when we have the bill it's no strike. What we have in place is an educational program where we will

be working with employers. As I said Jews for Racial and Economic Justice have been organizing employers, so we have set out to have a curriculum where we will be educating the employers the best way to deal with the Bill and to build that strong relationship, a kind of worker and employee relationship, so that it will put the bill and what it is asking for into better use. The thing is, the bill is to let employers know that they cannot take the worker for granted anymore. And a lot of faith-based organizations are behind us one hundred percent. And you know we welcome and we appreciate all the support that we have been given. And we know too that the Bill is not going to alleviate all of the problems, it's going to help some of the problems and there will still be fights and there will still be a need to have that on-going education between the two parties, the employer and the worker.

You can contact Joycelyn at: joycedwu@gmail.com

Check out DWU online at: www.domesticworkersunited.org

Sex, Shame, and MTV Continued from p3

but there is also no shame in sex, that the important element is knowing how to make that decision. Progressive sex education would teach that sexuality is a normal, healthy and enjoyable part of being human. It would empower teenagers, particularly young women, to be in control of their lives, know their limits, and be able to discuss sex openly with their partners. Knowing what sex should feel like emotionally, not just knowing that condoms exist, but also how to incorporate their use as a part of sex, encouraging masturbation as a healthy alternative to sex, discussing abortion as a viable option for dealing with an unwanted pregnancy, the addition of this information to sex education would go a long way towards moving away from the shame model and toward an empowerment model. When people are empowered to make informed decisions and to be in touch with their own sexuality, then we can begin to move, as a society, towards a more honest representation and healthier enjoyment of sexuality. This would go a lot further in lowering teen pregnancy rates than scare tactics and shame.

Whatever your fight, don't be ladylike.



Fighting for the
working class,
Socialist Party of
Baltimore.

Post-Bush America: A Site of Family Disintegration and Revolutionary Personal Change

by Harriet Fraad

Post-Bush America is a land of personal suffering, family disintegration, and desperation for women and children. The US family has experienced a class revolution in family and personal life. In fact, that revolution in family and personal life is the only class revolution happening now. It is not recognized as such because class is the most repressed discourse in America. Race, gender and ethnicity are recognized, class is repressed.

What Happened?

Conditions for US women and families began deteriorating in 1970 when real wages froze for the first time in more than a century. For the previous 150 years, between 1820 and 1970, even in the Great Depression, every generation benefitted from higher wages than the previous generation. That was the basis of the “American Dream.” That stopped in 1970. From that time forward, workers’ productivity kept rising while real wages froze (1). The American family wage for white male workers had basically supported dependent wives and children until 1970 (2). Before 1970, every generation was able to increase their consumption. Americans sense of self-worth was, in large part, dependent on their increased ability to consume. By the time Bush took over in the year 2000, Americans had become increasingly desperate. Their sense of personal value was cut along with their salaries. Consumption was undermined and with it self worth.

What Produced the Crisis in Personal and Family Life?

Family desperation pushed women into the labor force to increase money for the household. Adolescents began to work to afford the ever increasing consumption pushed by American culture. In 1970, 40% of US women were in the labor force, many part time (3). By the year 2000, 77 % of US women were in the labor force, mostly full-time, with dwindling governmental supports for daycare, after school programs, elder care social programs (4).

Women’s work outside of the home helped, but it could not make up for what was lost. Women’s work has its own costs, not only the obvious expense of additional clothing and transportation, but also the costs of purchasing some of the goods and services that women had produced at home, free of charge. The latest figures indicate that if a stay at home mother in the US were replaced by paid services the cost would be \$116,805 a year. The domestic services provided

by a mom who works outside of the home would cost \$68,406 per year (CNN, 2008, CBC News, 2008). Families were still financially hurting. Many families became dependent on credit card debt in order to live.

Since productivity increased sharply while wages froze, the wealthiest Americans were appropriating vast amounts of surplus labor for themselves. As one illustration of what that means, Americans went from being the Western nation with the most equal distribution of wealth in 1970 to the Western nation with the least equal distribution of wealth in 2008 (5). The wealthy then issued credit cards in order to loan to the workers the money appropriated from their surplus labor (6).

By the time Bush took power in 2000 there was a crisis of the volatile combination of reduced salaries and accelerated debt. Bush won the elections of 2000 and 2004 in part by selling the fantasy that the US was king of the world and the US male was king of his household. This fantasy was offered when the US economy was no longer singularly dominant and the family was already falling apart. These fantasies are more difficult to sustain after many of the already hobbled social programs that allowed families to survive were cut.

Now, families are in trouble. US family life depended on women’s full time domestic labor to physically maintain home life and on women’s emotional labor to emotionally sustain family security and emotional well being. Women return from work in the paid labor force to work a “second shift” of emotional and domestic labor (7). Sixty percent of American women with children under two are in the paid labor force. Women with children under one who work full time are twice the number of those working part time (US Department of Labor, Bureau of labor Statistics, 2005). Almost 80 percent of mothers with children from 6 to 11 years old are in the labor force.

Because there is no governmental support for American working mothers, 85% of US infants are in substandard daycare while their mothers work. During these formative years the children may spend their days crowded into small spaces sitting in front of televisions in soiled diapers. They may have neither adequate toys nor play space nor supervision. The years from 0 to 2 are crucial years for brain formation (8). Despite this, there is no federal regulation of US daycare centers. Only 15% of US children receive quality childcare. Quality care is very expensive.

Eighty-two percent of childcare and 70% of housework is still done by women alone. Because of their work at home, married women’s work week is 7



hours longer than their husbands. Married women who are employed outside of the home do, on average, more household labor than their unemployed husbands (9). Married women are now the most depressed people in America (10).

The family as we knew it is over. American men cannot and do not sufficiently support their wives and children. Women are overworked and miserable. In a new development US women are now rejecting marriage. For the first time in American history, the majority of women are single (11). Two thirds of divorces are now initiated by women (12). Half of first marriages and 60% of second marriages end in legal separation or divorce. This does not take into account all of the people who end their marriages outside of the legal system. Now 44% of US children are born outside of a marriage (13).

In fact, now women are willing to take a financial hit in order to escape exploitation in the home. US women without children earn as much or more money than their husbands. They can and do leave marriages without financial privation. Women with children suffer financially. Alimony payments are rarely granted and full child support payments are not delivered in full.

What Does This Have to Do With A Class Revolution?

Such changes in households and family life represent a class revolution in the US, the only class revolution that is currently underway. The celebrated and ostensibly “traditional” nuclear family consisted of a feudal arrangement. The woman produced domestic use values, cooked food, order, cleanliness, and use value services such as childcare, care for the sick, emotional services, and sexual services. Her husband, by virtue of his birth right as a male, had the obligation to financially support his wife and children in this feudal household. The man, by virtue of maleness had the right to appropriate and distribute the domestic use values and emotional use value services his wife produced. These patterns have changed.

The women’s liberation movement has eroded the legal basis of men’s rights in the household. For example, spousal violence is no longer legally tolerated. However, male feudal privilege lingers. Domestic violence is still the leading cause of injury and homicide for women between the ages of 15 and 44 (14). Spousal rape is now illegal in all 50 states. However, even today there are lighter penalties for spousal rape than for stranger rape. In 20 states it is still legal for a man to have non-

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Editorial continued from p2

staff at mainstream women's rights groups. The crowd provided plenty, checkbooks flew open throughout the park, but a clear sense of foreboding pervaded. No check, no matter how large, could provide a proper response to a right-wing movement that felt so empowered that it could now carry out political assassinations. Grassroots mobilization from the left was desperately needed, but the only political space offered was one that provided a tax write-off.

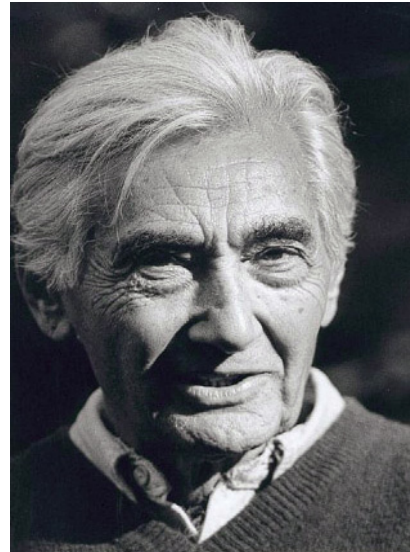
Flash to the great healthcare debate of summer 2009. A Democratic Congress and Presidency bore witness to the ineffectiveness of campaign contributions such as those collected at Dr. Tiller's memorial. In fact, the *Center for Responsive Politics* reports that pro-choice donors have outspent anti-choice supporters by \$3.4 million to \$559,000 since 1989. However, this did nothing to restrain Bart Stupak, a Democrat from Michigan, from proposing an amendment to an already deeply flawed healthcare reform bill that would effectively ban the use of insurance plans to access abortion services. Equally notable, Democratic Representatives Ciro Rodriguez and Harry Teague, two major recipients of Planned Parenthood campaign contributions, voted in favor of the measure.

Of course, a socialist feminist critique extends far beyond abortion rights. Yet, the lesson that the stifled pro-choice movement offers is that the insider strategy being followed by mainstream rights groups has failed. It has failed to secure abortion rights, failed to protect providers and failed to capture the imagination of women, especially young women, searching for a movement capable of turning back the tide of right-wing assault. This special edition of *The Socialist* argues for a new direction by insisting that politically independent, grassroots-based and socialist-informed feminist politics are needed now more than ever. Harriet Fraad's article (pg 10), in this edition, details how a conservative revolution has transformed the very structure of family life in America – leaving women in a precarious position as wage-earners who face a “second-shift” of labor once they return home. Beyond workplace and family life, Kristin Schall documents pop culture attempts to conservatively shape women's attitudes towards sexual pleasure, masturbation and birth control (pg 4). Finally, a more hopeful message is offered by Domestic Workers United organizer Joycelyn Gill-Campbell as she details the manner in which thousands of primarily Caribbean, Latina and African nannies, housekeepers, and elder caregivers in New York have used grassroots power to defend themselves on their worksites (pg 3).

As we celebrate IWD 2010, we call for a reformulation of a socialist-feminist political project

that aspires to critique and transform all elements of our society. No longer willing to accept a comfortable place on the margins, we look, instead, to radically restructure the center of society – to build a society where the great promises of freedom and equality offered by socialism might finally be realized. Lobbying won't get us there, building our power at the grassroots to effect change in the way we live our lives everyday just might.

In honorable memory of Howard Zinn



1922 – 2010

Historian, playwright, social activist
Boston University Professor Emeritus
Author of *Marx in Soho* and *A People's History of the United States*

Your contribution to our lives and our struggle will live on

Courtesy of the Socialist Party of Boston
spboston.org

“The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”

-Howard Zinn

New Era of Socialist Feminism Continued from p7
discussing Chavez's proposal gave socialist feminists extra momentum for sharing ideas for coordinating our IWD 2010 actions and events.

The other event was the UN Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen last December. Local events prior to the Copenhagen meetings, including the many left-wing alternative actions and events during the Copenhagen meetings-- gave both red and green radicals many opportunities to share and discuss their positions on climate change and the environmental crisis.

Over the coming months, many of us will be grappling, personally and politically, with our response to this crisis, and exploring ways that a synthesis between revolutionary socialism and radical environmentalism can be achieved. Central to this effort by socialist feminists will be grounding ourselves in the principles and agenda of revolutionary ecology (as articulated so well by the late Earth First! and IWW environmentalist and labor organizer, Judi Bari)-- an analysis and program that places environmental demands in the context of women's rights, workers' rights, human rights, and civil liberties.

With this in mind, I proposed to my international contacts in Australia, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden, and the US, that our International Women's Day 2010 events focus on stopping the worldwide assault on the public sector, since this assault infringes on all these rights, disproportionately affects women, exposes the heartless and calculated policies and practices of global capitalism, and links our issues to those that socialist women were organizing around at the time of the founding of IWD 100 years ago.

Once we decide on a project, there are several possibilities for collaboration. These include a common set of demands, a joint press release and leaflet, and an online calendar of our various actions and events. We can also share our planning processes, photos, our post-event assessments, and any media coverage we get—and put together statements on issues of both immediate and ongoing concern to socialist women and to the democratic socialist movement.

Future internationally coordinated campaigns could be organized around such issues as violence against women; the economic crisis; war and peace; abortion rights and reproductive justice; heterosexism and LGBTQ rights; women's rights and workers' rights; the intersection of youth and women's issues; and the links between revolutionary environmentalism and revolutionary socialism, including job creation and industrial re-tooling (such as moving from automobile to mass transit production).

In 1910, the women of the Socialist International were deeply committed to helping transform society from capitalism to socialism. These founders of International Women's Day put forward a revolutionary agenda backed by militant activism. Their strategies were based on education, organization, and agitation. They weren't afraid to debate women's rights dissenters in their own parties, or to form left-wing blocks within broad social movements.

Today, we have the means not only to continue their program and tactics, but to take the program and tactics in new international directions. Let's do it.

Susan Dorazio, outgoing convener of the Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA, is currently concluding a 4-month stay in Scotland and Denmark. She can be reached at susandor@crocker.com.

Our Unity is Power: Continued from p5

to Enghelab square. The street was so crowded that it was fully occupied by demonstrators. We jammed ourselves into the sea of humanity. People were silent, but held their hands up, showing a defiant "V" for victory with their fingers. No shouts, no slogans - every time someone began talking, others in the crowd encouraged them to be silent. It was amazing. I was filled with a strange energy that made me feel like crying tears of joy. Walking along with the silent crowd, hands held high in the victory that had been stolen from us, I mounted the fences in the middle of the street and saw another beautiful thing: an immeasurable number of people both in front and behind us. So many others had joined our protest that it was impossible to identify the beginning or end of the crowd.

We went with the crowd to Azadi square and returned home in the evening, full of energy and hope for the future. We were inspired by a special kind of love for the brave people of my country. It was a truly unique experience in my life. In that moment we proved that no fraud, no matter how large, could silence us. We had won at the ballot-box and we were now winning in the streets.

The unity and bravery of the demonstrators at Azadi square are proof that Iranians can make a better future for themselves and their country as they wish. I profoundly believe so and will continue to advance the struggle for reform in Iran.

Comradely Greetings!
Chicago Socialist Party

consensual sex with his wife if she is mentally ill or physically incapacitated (15). The feudal family is dying but its male privileges linger on.

As the feudal family slowly withers, it is replaced by other family forms with other prominent class processes. The fastest growing family form is Marx's "ancient" form of household, which I call the individual form, which an individual, a man, a woman or a person with dependent children, or unrelated individuals live in a household where each individual produces, appropriates and distributes her/his own domestic surplus. Twenty percent of Americans never marry. Individual households are America's fastest growing family form. Most children will spend at least part of their childhood outside of a family with their two biological parents. The individual family form is fast becoming the dominant form of US household. This form is encouraged by American individualistic ideology, feminists stressing female independence and males who want an escape from financial obligations to women and children.

Two other class forms of households are emerging. One is a communist household of adults and or adults and children. These households operate according to the communist precept "from each according to his/her abilities, to each according to his/her needs." Domestic tasks and emotional work are shared as is work outside of the home when appropriate. This family form is encouraged by many family therapists, feminists, progressive people, and working couples without children, as well as some with children. It is a slowly growing family form.

There is another form proselytized and reinforced by forces that vigorously deny the collapse of the feudal household. This is the family of the religious right, which captures around 40% of Americans. It is what I call the fascist feudal family. So named, because of its similarity to families in the Third Reich. In the family of the Third Reich, women were to preoccupy themselves with kirche, kuche and kinde, kitchen, church and children. They were denied control over their own bodies through forbidding the use of birth control and abortion. Der Fuhrer was the leader of the man and the man was the leader of the woman (16). Women were to remain as subordinate as they are within the Southern Baptist Convention on men and women in which God is the leader of men who ordains males to lead females. Women are in charge of hearth and home (17). This model is difficult to maintain in today's world, which is why the divorce rate in red states and amongst fundamentalists is even higher than it is in the less fundamentalist blue states (18). American women are less likely to remain submissive while

working to support themselves and their children and a man who cannot alone provide for them.

Secure marriages are a thing of the past. Families and individuals are fracturing under the pressures of transformed landscapes of economic and intimate life. Secure families have been a basic personal support system for all Americans, particularly women. Women's emotional labor connecting with children, relatives and friends has meant emotional survival and sustenance for children, men and other women. It was these networks of women at home that allowed families in hard times to take care of an extra child when a woman went to work or to move in together in hard times, or bring over extra food when a neighbor friend or relative lost a job or was ill. All of these primary crucial networks are breaking.

American women who try to keep their families happy and healthy must now work outside the home while there is criminally inadequate childcare for their children. Exhausted women return from their jobs to households needing domestic labor and both men and children desperately needing attention. Men, whose working conditions and salaries have deteriorated, want women to take care of them when they return. They are reluctant to help with childcare. They want to be cared for as their fathers were, which may explain why 70% of housework is still done by women. Women's lives are ever more demanding, exhausting and lonely.

The American Left is not a unified vital alternative force. It presents nothing but action around particular feminist issues. It lacks a revolutionary program addressing the interconnected issues of national priorities and family disintegration. The family and personal life, which are central parts of people's and particularly women's lives are parts of life that the Left has left alone.

Designing a Left program that addresses the issues created by the conservative class revolution needs to begin by elaborating the skills and knowledge involved in emotional labor. At present women's emotional labor is so undervalued that it is unrecognized. There is no vocabulary to define the knowledge and name the skills that enable women to anticipate and meet people's emotional needs from infancy through adulthood. There are no accessible definitions of that body of knowledge that emerges from attuning oneself to meeting other's needs, and caring for them physically while letting them know that they are valued and loved (19). The Left needs to explain and design a way to reward skills of empathy and connection. We should also elaborate the jobs that domestic work involves, cite their crucial importance, and then create programs

to ease women's domestic labor burden.

A few ideas for platforms that stem from recognizing and ameliorating women's exploitation in domestic labor are providing: low cost nutritious family restaurants, options for healthy nutritious take out food, subsidized house cleaning and laundry services, child care provision modeled on the French child care system, quality after school programs in education, sports and the arts.

We also need programs that could help ameliorate women's burdens of emotional labor, in addition to acknowledging all the skills and labor involved in the emotional labor of caring for others such as:

Providing extra income for jobs that require emotional labor and explicitly rewarding the emotional services provided. These are usually lower paid, female jobs such as nursing, social work, and teaching infants, toddlers, and children from 5 to 8 years old.

Creating an explicitly acknowledged financial incentive to compensate service workers for the part of their jobs that requires emotional effort towards the customer. These incentives might operate for such jobs as health care personnel, social workers, counselors, early childhood educators, secretaries, receptionists, waiters and waitresses, etc.. Emotional helpers would earn a supplement for providing emotional caring on the job.

Creating free counseling centers for couples and families where the explicit labor of understanding and emotionally serving others is valued and taught.

Mandating that ubiquitous, popular 12-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous, and others all include a 13th step which looks at the conditions of existence of addictions in oppressive, authoritarian families and profit hungry corporations such as the liquor interests, the diet and fashion industries, the pharmaceutical industry., the pornography industry, and the industries producing junk food.

Other parts of a Left program built on the analysis above could be;

- Organizing to end gender discrimination in all kinds of labor in both the home and the workplace.
- Mandating adequate and equal wages for men and women.
- Working to to end hiring discrimination against all women and particularly mothers.
- A comprehensive birth control curriculum beginning in the early grades stressing respectful honest decisions about creating a life for which men and women will share equal responsibility.
- Providing courses throughout the life span for both

children and adults to teach skills in working out difficulties in relationships with respect and consideration for the other whether that other is a child or an adult. These courses could give ample opportunities for discussion of strategies for creating egalitarian, communist emotional relationships.

It is crucial for the Left to create a language for and an appreciation of women's domestic labor, our emotional labor and our labor in caring for other people. An explanation of what that labor entails is a crucial step in enhancing women's positions at home and in the workplace. The class analysis above is a basis on which to create such a language and awareness and action. America is a land of personal crisis and family disaster. It is time for the Left to address the problems literally, where we live.

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