

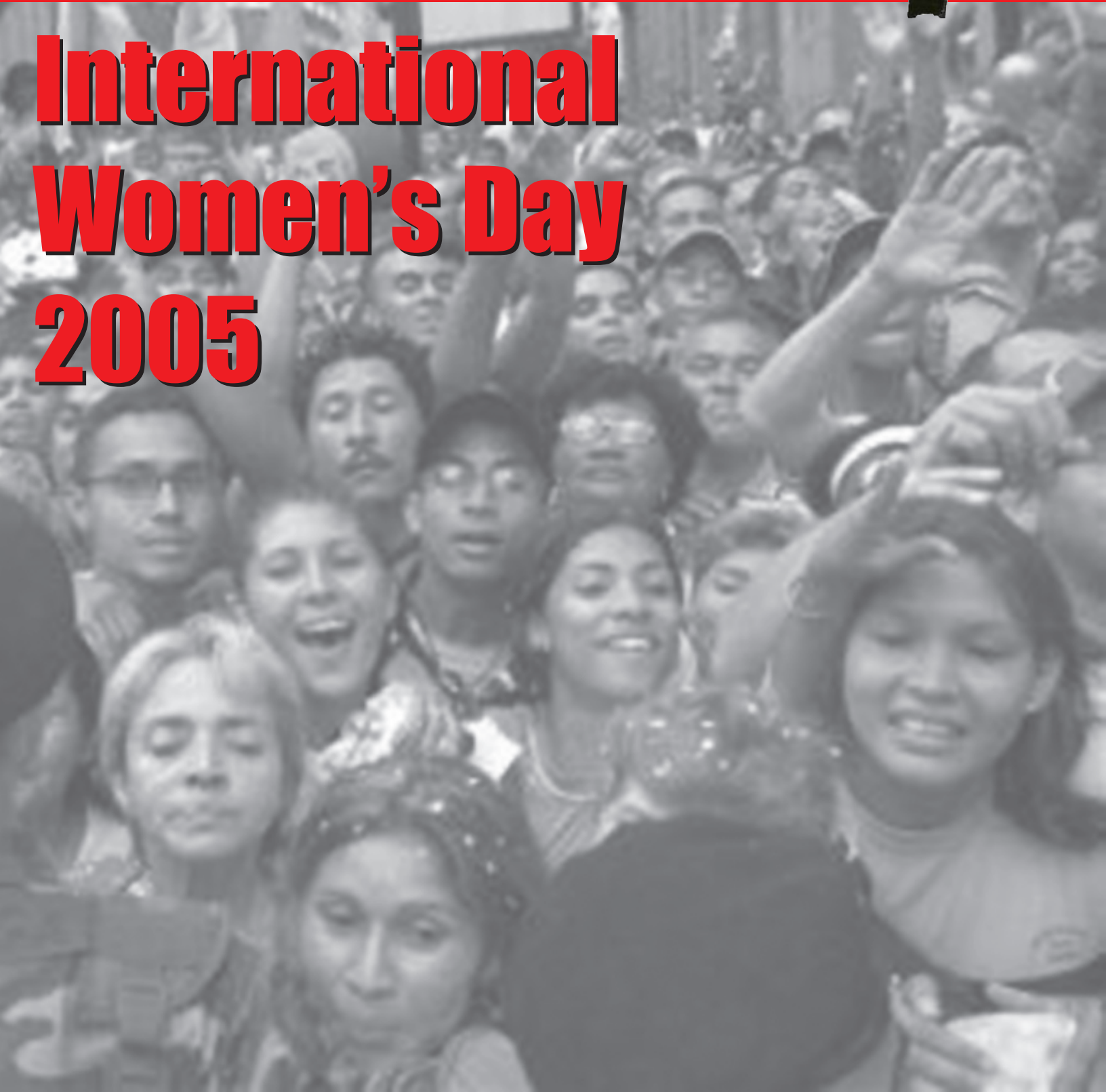
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**T
H
E** **SOCIALIST**

Magazine of the Socialist Party USA



**International
Women's Day
2005**



THE EARLY HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

1909 — The Woman's National Committee of the Socialist Party calls for a national day of protest on the last Sunday of February. Its goal is to connect the issues important to working women to the middle-class dominated suffrage movement.

1910 — The Women's Congress of the Socialist International meets in August in Copenhagen and approves the call for an international day of protest. The specific date is left open to the participants in each country.

1913 — Russian socialists begin celebrating International Women's Day. Their intention is to organize rallies for the same day as that set in the United States, but since the Gregorian calendar lags several days behind the Western calendar, the events take place in early March by our reckoning.

1917 — In Petrograd, the capital of Russia, tumultuous demonstrations are sparked by the celebration of International Women's Day. Defying a government ban, tens of thousands of women march to demand an end to World War I, sparking a revolution that topples three centuries of czarist autocracy. The initial demonstration takes place on March 8, by the Western calendar, which then becomes the internationally accepted day of protest.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2005

International Women's Day is a day socialist feminists everywhere can be proud of, and should organize around, for three good reasons: its past, its present, and its future.

Its past is a tribute to the dedication of the socialist women of the first decade of the 20th century who founded it.

They remain powerful models for us in their willingness to confront numerous dangers in order to help achieve for all women such basic civil rights as suffrage, such basic economic rights as good wages and safe working conditions, and such basic human rights as control of one's body.

Its past is a tribute, as well, to the Russian women whose courageous protests on International Women's Day in 1917 led to the downfall of the czar and soon afterwards Russia's decision to withdraw from World War.

Its present is testimony to the continuity between the struggles then and now. Sad but true, nearly 100 years after the founding of International Women's Day, women throughout the world continue to fight for economic, social, political, and interpersonal justice and equality.

We still suffer the most from war, mili-

tary occupation, and the deterioration — or just plain lack — of health and social services, and educational and employment opportunities. But like the radical women of the last century, we persevere, and take every opportunity to present our vision of peace, our strength as women, and our history as activists.

Its future is our potential to replace patriarchal global capitalism with a different kind of society. One that is truly democratic and egalitarian. One that is nurturing, cooperative, compassionate, and non-violent. One that finally brings to an end the gross inequities and dire circumstances currently facing most members of our world community.

Coming together for International Women's Day actions and events this Tuesday, March 8, will not only energize our current efforts for the immediate withdrawal of the United States from Iraq and Afghanistan, to redirect national revenue from military spending to education and social services, and to build solidarity with radical women on all continents.

It will bolster our link to those who came before us, and strengthen our resolve to continue to move forward to a world free of U.S. imperialism.

Feminism is a social movement to confront, counteract, and eradicate *forms of oppression towards women. This oppression is rooted in societies dominated by men, money, and competitive values and takes many forms, including discrimination in many areas of economic, social, and political life — leading to the loss of educational, employment, and leadership opportunities; stereotyping — leading to severe restrictions on personal freedom; and pervasive violence — from belittling to battering to murder. The oppression of women is an outgrowth of the twin evils of patriarchy and capitalism, and can only be overcome through the awareness, actions, and solidarity of women of all classes and ethnicities, on a worldwide basis, in conjunction with a movement for fundamental social change toward the replacement of capitalism with democratic socialism.*



— A Statement from the Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA

The Socialist Editorial Staff

Editorial Collective for IWD 2005 Issue

Susan Dorazio, Ruth Greenberg-Edelstein, Tina Phillips, Viji Sargis, Edith Wilson

Layout

Martin Schreader

Special Thanks

Lorraine Borwick, Sarah Wagner

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Contact the SPUSA

Socialist Party USA
339 Lafayette St., No. 303
New York, NY 10012
Phone/Fax: (212) 982-4586
SocialistParty@sp-usa.org
www.sp-usa.org

Submissions

Send all correspondence to:
The Socialist Magazine
339 Lafayette St., No. 303
New York, NY 10012

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Cover Art: Venezuelans, primarily the poor and women, rally in support of President Hugo Chavez after his victory in the August 15, 2004, referendum.

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The Socialist is always looking for interesting, insightful, well-written stories. In particular, we are looking for works that highlight the struggles and triumphs of the working class. We will accept news articles, stories about organizing and protests, but we are also looking for short fiction, poetry, and music/arts/theater/film reviews for our Red Arts section. Please mark Letters to the Editor as such and limit them to 250 words; articles should not exceed 2,500 words. Submit as e-mail attachments in MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text (.rtf) format to SocialistParty@sp-usa.org, or by mail to: **The Socialist, 339 Lafayette St., No. 303, New York, NY 10012.**



WOMEN ADVANCE SIGNIFICANTLY IN VENEZUELA'S BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION

By Sarah Wagner

With the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998, Venezuelan women have taken the first step towards regaining social, political and economic rights so long denied to them under their previously pacted democracy.

In one of his first acts as president, Chavez called for a Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution that would serve as the catalyst to change the stagnant and exolusionary fabric of Venezuelan society.

Women played a key role in the process of drafting this Constitution, achieving an unprecedented social and political victory, as well as one of the most advanced constitutions in the world with the incorporation of gender perspective and non-sexist language.

The Constitution guarantees full equality between men and women in employment, recognizes housework as an economically productive activity thus entitling housewives to social security benefits, acknowledges the sexual and reproductive rights of women, and obligates the state to provide accurate information about family planning, as well as addresses discrimination, sexual harassment and domestic violence.

María del Mar Alvarez, the National Defender of Women's Rights notes, "In this revolution women have participated extraordinarily. Usually feminism caters to the upper and middle classes. However, this revolution has woken women up and

feminism is reaching the popular sectors. Now all women know they have the right to participate."

The National Institute for Women (INAMUJER), an organization created by the Chavez government in 2000, is currently in the process of educating women to defend the political rights that they have thus so far achieved and building/expanding on these rights in order to achieve a truly democratic society, not only politically, but also socially and culturally in which men and women are valued as equals.

INAMUJER organizes educational campaigns on sexual and reproductive rights and prevention of violence against women. It has also set up a free telephone hotline for victims of domestic violence, as well as a shelter, Casa de Abrigo for women in fear of their lives.

According to Maria Leon, the President of INAMUJER, the fight for women's rights in Venezuela has taken on a new meaning within the Bolivarian Revolution.

"We have a president who understands the problems of women. Chavez has supported this organization and its projects. He never stops speaking about the problems of women. For the first time, we are a social issue. Women recognize him as their leader. One can see this because there are more women actively participating in this revolution than men."

INAMUJER also evaluates public policies directed towards women in order to assure that they guarantee equal opportunities. Together with a network of lawyers, social scientists, intellectuals, and femi-

nists, the organization is drafting amendments to the Social Security Law, fighting to surpass the 30 percent quota of women in government positions, sensitizing police officers, lawyers, and doctors to gender and violence issues and promoting the abolishment of the Penal Code and the drafting of another that incorporates gender perspective and does not contradict the laws in the Constitution.

Through the creation of the Women's Development Bank (BANMUJER), Venezuela has also taken steps to eradicate the growing phenomenon of feminization of poverty.

Currently, over 70 percent of impoverished Venezuelans are women. BANMUJER recognizes that unless economic conditions for women improve, it will be almost impossible to establish themselves on equal ground with men, legally, politically, and socially.

Therefore, it has developed a network of promoters that visit the 149 most impoverished and densely populated districts throughout the nation on a weekly basis in order to offer women low interest loans called microcredits.

As a social development bank, its mission is to empower women politically, socially, economically and culturally.

BANMUJER is unique to all financial institutions because in addition to granting loans and providing administrative training and creating jobs, it promotes integral development of its clients by providing workshops on a wide range of issues, including women's rights, discrimination and violence against women, sexu-

al and reproductive rights, integral health, gender perspectives and feminism.

It also stimulates the participation of women in the construction of a more just and equal society in accordance with the Constitution, thereby fulfilling the objective of reducing poverty and improving the quality of life for impoverished women. Since its creation in 2001, BANMUJER has granted over 40,000 microcredits and generated over 80,000 jobs in the country.

Along with Barrio Adentro, a program set up by the government in which Cuban doctors provide free health care and medicine to impoverished areas, free school breakfast programs, the redistribution of idle lands and adult education programs, women's poverty and issues are each being aggressively addressed, and women are changing the complexion of Venezuelan society.

"We are amidst a profound social transformation in which discrimination, prejudices, and the injustices against women are coming to the forefront. This revolution has recognized women as human beings. But we still are unable to say that we have eradicated discrimination against women in society or even in the minds of women. Discrimination is a phenomenon that has existed for centuries and it is impossible to eradicate within five years. Our values do not change overnight. However, Venezuelan women now know that this revolution is for them too and they are beginning to wake up."

Under the government of Hugo Chavez Frías, women have been instrumental in initiating legal and institutional reforms, and have made significant and rapid progress in creating NGOs, increasing their representation in politics, and defending their democracy.

In the participatory democracy of the Bolivarian Revolution, in which the rights of citizens are not defined as purely political but instead embark on encompassing social justice and gender equality, women have the potential to construct a new humane society which could not only change their reality but also set an example for the world in terms of gender equality. ★

Sarah Wagner is a researcher and writer for the website [Venezuelanalysis](http://www.venezuelanalysis.com) (www.venezuelanalysis.com) who is currently living in Venezuela.

'FEMINIST AID' SPONSORS BENEFIT

By Ann Ferguson

On the evening of October 24, 2004 a non-profit solidarity group called Feminist Aid to Central America and the Hispanic Caribbean in the Pioneer Valley of Massachusetts sponsored a benefit dinner for a women's center in Puerto Rico called Woman and New Family (Mujer y Nueva Familia). This center, directed by Onelia Perez, is located in Barranquitas, a poor rural town located in the mountainous region of the island. Its work with local women concentrates not only on family planning for women but also other issues, particularly domestic and sexual violence against women. It sponsors consciousness raising groups on self-esteem for women and violence against women, and sees itself as aiding women not just as survivors of patriarchal practices, but as potential activists in a movement against domestic violence in their families and communities and in favor of more just treatment of women and children.

The Center for Woman and the New Family has a partnership with Professor Liliana Cotto of the University of the West Indies in Puerto Rico. This partnership provides student interns and helps with publicity and fundraising. Although the center has received some government aid in the past, the new governor of Puerto Rico has refused to release funding already promised. The center has been attempting to restore the funding by outreach to private donors to fill in the shortfall. Raising some funds was one of the goals that the benefit dinner sponsored by Feminist Aid had in mind, but the dinner also aimed to spread the news about how women in Puerto Rico are organizing against a problem also faced by women in the U.S.

The dinner, cooked by group members and hosted in his home by a supporter, raised \$1,200 to contribute to the center. This was a great success, given that Feminist Aid is a very small group of only five active members and no paid staff. The event, however, is a typical one for Feminist Aid, whose annual budget, completely made up of donations from small donors, is about \$2,500. Since its inception in 1990, the group has raised funds for small donations to self-help and social justice projects

of women's groups in Central America, and more recently, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, that are explicitly feminist in their goals. These have included women's centers and economic cooperatives, sex education, family planning, feminist radio groups, labor union women organizers, women's peace and human rights groups, and writers and artists recording women's history and art.

Feminist Aid started after a successful delegation of women construction workers, called Brigada Companeras, went to Condega, Nicaragua to build a school, and hired and taught local women construction skills in the process. They left behind their tools for the local women who started their own carpentry and construction workshop.

When they needed start up money to build their shop, Feminist Aid was organized to collect contributions from friends. In the 1990s when the newly developing independent Nicaraguan women's movement started creating other self-help groups and political coalitions, Feminist Aid also raised money for them, as well as expanding through activist networks to fund small women's empowerment and movement projects in Guatemala, Honduras, Cuba, Haiti and now Puerto Rico. The group also sponsors visitors from these countries to inform the community about women's groups and projects in these poor Spanish-speaking neighbors to the immediate south of the U.S. whose social movements are usually invisible to North Americans.

Members of the group feel strongly that personal solidarity across borders which includes material support and education of North Americans about women's self help and social justice movements in other parts of the world, particularly poor countries in the south, is key to the struggle for women's liberation both home and abroad. ★

Ann Ferguson, a teacher and writer from Western Massachusetts, is one of the founding members of Feminist Aid, and currently one of the organizers of a conference on women and globalization for the new Center for Global Justice in San Miguel De Allende, Mexico. Website at www.globaljusticecenter.org.

MASS MURDER IN CIUDAD JUAREZ

By Eric Chester

Ciudad Juarez is an industrial city of two million people, located on the border of Mexico and the United States, directly opposite from El Paso, Texas. During the last twelve years, more than three hundred and fifty young women have been brutally murdered in that city, and the killings continue to this day. Although Mexican police have arrested several suspects, no one believes that most of those responsible for the murders have been discovered or prosecuted.

Over the years it has become increasingly clear that these killings are not the work of a single serial killer. Most of the victims were raped before being killed. Many victims were also savagely beaten, and their bodies mutilated. The murderers are deliberately seeking to terrorize the young women of Ciudad Juarez.

These hundreds of deaths are not the result of the demented fantasies of a single insane individual, or even of a few isolated individuals. Instead, the killings shine a glaring light on the destructive impact of the flinging together of cultures and economies, as the entire planet becomes fused into one integrated capitalist market economy.

Transnational corporations, most of them U.S. based, have moved into northern Mexico looking for low-wage labor and lax environmental controls. More than 150,000 residents of Ciudad Juarez are currently employed in maquiladoras, factories producing exclusively for the U.S. market. Since NAFTA went into effect, these goods are allowed into the United States duty free.

The maquiladoras keep out unions, while paying less than \$5 a day with no benefits. Seventy per cent of the workforce is made up of young women, who the corporations believe are the most easily intimidated and exploited. Most of these young women come from small peasant villages in the interior of Mexico. So far, the corporate strategy has worked. The maquiladoras are highly profitable and worker resistance has been minimal. Most



Women march in Ciudad Juarez for justice for their murdered sisters.

of those murdered since 1993 had been working in the maquiladoras. Many of them were last seen either going to, or leaving from, their workplace.

Increasingly, investigators have become convinced that the killers are acting out of desperation and rage. The invasion of transnational corporations into Ciudad Juarez has turned the traditional culture of Mexico, a culture that was greatly affected by hundreds of years of Spanish colonial rule, upside down. Men find it difficult to find employment, their skills devalued and demeaned.

At the same time, women are no longer economically dependent on men, and are therefore more willing to assert their rights as equals. The murders in Ciudad Juarez are, in effect, casualties in an unannounced conflict, as some men seek to restore the traditional role of women through an all-out war of terror. This would account for the disinterest shown by the Mexican authorities. It is not only that women's lives, especially the lives of single working class women, are under-valued in a society that esteems bravado and the worship of the innocent virginal mother. Since the killings uphold the subordination of women, they have attracted the tacit sympathy of elements within the power structure.

The police have so mishandled the continuing investigations that many observers are convinced that the authorities are deliberately covering up for the killers, in part because some of the killings may have been committed by police officers.

Amnesty International recently issued a report denouncing the Mexican federal government for its reluctance to actively

pursue the murderers. Certainly as socialist feminists we must add our voices to those demanding that the killings immediately end, and that those responsible be brought to justice. Yet the killings in Ciudad Juarez are indicative of a far deeper set of problems. The border between Mexico and the United States is a flash point.

Nowhere else can the harsh contrasts and horrific consequences of globalization be so clearly seen. Indeed, the disintegration of Mexican society has become so profound that mass terror has become acceptable. Of course, violence against women is a problem that extends far beyond Mexico. In the United States, authorities have been willing far too enough to turn a blind eye when it comes to the homicide of poor and working class women. The recent wave of social service cutbacks has left an even greater need for increased funding of shelters for battered women.

On International Women's Day, socialist feminists reaffirm our belief that the creation of gender relationships based on respect and equality is a central component of our movement to build a new, egalitarian society.

Creating a safe space for the women of Ciudad Juarez and all other cities and towns around the world will require a struggle that tightly links the issues of class and gender. Building a new society will involve both an end to class exploitation and a defeat of patriarchy in all its forms. ★

Eric Chester is a member of the Tom Mooney/Western Massachusetts Local, Socialist Party of Mass., and author of the new book, True Mission (Pluto, 2004).

EL ASESINATO EN MASA EN CIUDAD JUÁREZ

Por Eric Chester

Ciudad Juárez es una ciudad industrial de dos millones de personas, localizado en la frontera de México y los Estados Unidos, al frente de El Paso, Texas. Durante los últimos doce años, más de trescientas cincuenta mujeres jóvenes han sido asesinadas brutalmente en esa ciudad, y la matanza continúa hasta este día. Aunque la policía mexicana ha detenido a varios sospechosos, nadie cree que la mayoría del los responsable de los asesinatos han sido descubiertos o procesados.

Al pasar los años, es cada vez más claro que estos asesinatos no son la obra de un solo asesino. La mayor parte de las víctimas fueron violadas antes de ser asesinadas. Muchas de las víctimas también fueron salvajemente golpeadas y sus cuerpos mutilados. El objetivo de los asesinos es aterrorizar a las mujeres jóvenes de Ciudad Juárez.

Las centenas de muertes no son el resultado de las fantasías dementes de un solo individuo loco, ni aún de unos pocos individuos aislados. Al contrario, las matanzas son un ejemplo deslumbrante del el impacto destructivo del choque de culturas y economías, al fundirse el mundo en una economía integrada de mercado capitalista.

Las corporaciones transnacionales, la mayoría de ellos basados en los EE.UU., han traído sus operaciones al norte de México en busca de la mano de obra barata y de las leyes del medio ambiente poco exigentes. Actualmente, más de 150.000 residentes de Ciudad Juárez son empleados en las maquiladoras, las fábricas que producen exclusivamente para el mercado estadounidense. Desde que el TLC entró en vigencia, el producto de la maquila entra a los Estados Unidos libre de tarifas de importación.

Las maquiladoras impiden los sindicatos y pagan menos de cinco dolares al día sin ningunos beneficios. El setenta por ciento de la fuerza laboral esta compuesta de mujeres jóvenes, ya que los corporaciones creen que ellas son mas fácilmente

intimidadas y explotadas. La mayor parte de estas mujeres jóvenes vienen de las áreas rurales en el interior de México. Hasta ahora, la estrategia de las empresas ha trabajado. las maquiladoras han sido sumamente lucrativas y habido un mínimo de resistencia por parte de los/as trabajadores/as.

La mayor parte de las mujeres asesinadas desde 1993 fueron trabajadoras en la industria de la maquila. Muchas de ellas fueron vistas por ultima vez yendo o viniendo de las maquilas. Los investigadores han llegado a ser convencidos que los asesinatos son un acto de desesperación y rabia. La invasión de las corporaciones transnacionales en Ciudad Juárez han afectado la cultura tradicional de México, una cultura que por siglos fue afectada por el colonialismo español. los hombres difícilmente encuentran el empleo, ya que su valor como obrero es desvalorizado.

Al mismo tiempo, las mujeres ya no dependen económicamente del los hombres, por lo tanto están más dispuestas a afirmar sus derechos de igualdad. Los asesinatos en Ciudad Juárez son, de hecho, el resultado de un conflicto imprevisto, al ver hombres dispuestos a restaurar el papel tradicional de las mujeres a través de una guerra de terror sin cuarteles. Esto puede ser la razón del desinterés mostrado por las autoridades mexicanas. no es sólo que las vidas de las mujeres, especialmente las vidas de las mujeres solteras de la clase obrera, son infravaloradas en una sociedad que venera el machismo y el marianismo. Ya que los asesinatos apoyan la subordinación de mujeres, han atraído la simpatía tácita de elementos dentro de la estructura del poder.

A habido tanta negligencia por parte de la policía en las investigaciones, que muchos observadores tienen la convicción de que las autoridades encubren deliberadamente a los asesinos, en parte porque algunos de los asesinatos pueden haber sido



cometidos por la misma policía.

La organización Amnistía Internacional publicó recientemente un informe que denuncia al gobierno federal mexicano por su desgana en la captura de los asesinos. Ciertamente como socialistas feministas nosotros debemos agregar nuestras voces a aquellos que demandan un fin inmediato a los asesinatos, y que los responsables sean traídos frente a la justicia.

Los asesinatos en Ciudad Juárez son indicativos de problemas mucho mas profundos. La frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos es una área a punto de estallar. En ninguna otra parte son tan claros los contrastes y las consecuencias horribles de la globalización. la desintegración de la sociedad mexicana es tan profunda que el terror en masa ha llegado a ser aceptable.

Por supuesto, la violencia contra las mujeres no es un problema único a México. En los Estados Unidos, las autoridades también están dispuestas de hacerse de la vista gorda cuando viene al homicidio de las mujeres pobres y de clase obrera. La reciente onda de recortes en los servicios sociales ha dejado una necesidad mas grande para aumentar la financiación de los albergues para las mujer víctimas de la violencia.

En el Día Internacional de las Mujeres, Las/os socialistas feministas reafirmanla
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Rearranging Minds

By Tina Phillips

Reading the last few chapters of *1984* were much more scary than any horror movie I have ever seen. As I read about Winston being tortured into submission my heart began to beat rapidly and I found myself in a terrible bind: I did not want to read another word, yet could not put down the book, desperately wanting to know if he could escape his torturer.

No, instead of the liberating ending I had been hoping for, the dystopian classic showed me the most horrible thing I could ever imagine: being tortured so much that your mind set is permanently changed.

I kept thinking Winston could find a way to kill himself, at least then he wouldn't have to become what he spent the whole book fighting against being: a lover of big brother. Unfortunately, *1984* is not just a book, and torture is not just a literary tool of fright.

In the case of Latin America, torture was a harsh reality. Latin American dictatorships used torture on dissidents to either shut them up or gain information from them. Torture was also used as a systematic tool to oppress the citizens and make sure they would send a message to others not to fight against the government.

Even more sickening is that the United

States played a part and still does. According to Lars Schoultz, a leading academic specialist on human rights in Latin America, "[aid] has tended to flow disproportionately to Latin American governments which torture their citizens."

The U.S. government has been training Latin American military officers at the School of the Americas (SOA), whose graduates include some of the most notorious dictators and human rights abusers.

A few of them include: "Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, former president of Argentina, accused of perpetrating the 'dirty war,' in which an estimated 30,000 disappeared; Gen. Hugo Banzer, the Bolivian dictator who developed the Banzer Plan, which became the blueprint for repression in Latin America; Robert D' Aubuisson, founder of the death squads in El Salvador; Gen. Hector Gramajo, Guatemalan Defense Minister, notorious for instigating the death of thousands; and, of course, [buddy] Gen. Manuel Noriega of Panama, now serving time in a US prison on drug charges," (www.a4a.mahost.org/soa.htm1). The SOA trains military officers who learn "interrogation techniques," what people who believe in human rights call torture.

Torture has been defined many ways in the past including inducing physical pain,

mental stress, and/or suffering on a person (for various reasons including punishment or to obtain information).

It has also been defined by the Geneva Convention (which lays out proper conduct towards military officers and civilians during an armed conflict) as: any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

It also states that no exceptional circumstances whatsoever, whether a state of war or a threat or war, internal political instability or any other public emergency, may be invoked as a justification of torture. Since the U.S. has signed onto the Geneva Convention it is part of our constitution.

The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment within the Declaration of Human Rights was also signed by the United States. It states, "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

The torture used in Latin America included suffocation, electric shocks, repeated beating, and rape. Many were also dropped from helicopters into rivers, where they drowned.

Many women suffered under the oppressive tyranny of Latin American dictatorships. Many were simply "disappeared." One day someone would be there and the next they were gone; never to be seen again. Some were women who were working against the government and some were mothers of those taken.

Mothers in Argentina formed an organization, Mothers of the Disappeared. Ev-

Continued on page 12



SEXISM, LANGUAGE AND THE CULTURE WAR

By Martin Schreder

There is no such thing as a “prefab” Socialist. That is, no one enters the Socialist movement with a fully developed political consciousness. Everyone comes to our movement with a certain amount of political “baggage” they got from their experiences in capitalist society.

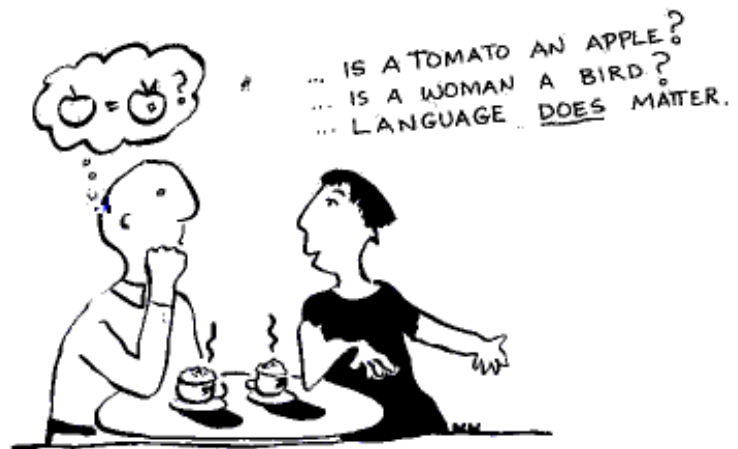
Sometimes that “baggage” is relatively basic, like mistaking Stalinism for socialism or judging social class solely by income. Most of the time, these problems can be handled in an easy manner — sometimes before the new comrade even signs the membership form. Other times, however, the “baggage” is more subtle and ingrained, and it takes a longer, more systematic struggle to overcome.

Such is the case with language and its relationship to fighting institutionalized sexism.

Every day, we are bombarded with sexist imagery and messages in the media, the educational system, politics and society in general.

Whether we are talking about commercials for home cleaning products, relationships between boys and girls on the playground, or societal definitions of gender roles, sexist stereotypes and language reinforce divisions between men and women.

Many Socialists can easily spot and point out the more obvious and blatant expressions of sexism we see in society. And yet, they may themselves be a link in the chain of sexism in this society. While having a conscious ability to combat sexism and women’s oppression where they see



it, these comrades may also contribute to that oppression with their choice of words and language.

For example, on more than one occasion I have heard comrades use the most widely recognized derogatory term for women, “b****,” in social settings — sometimes among solely other male comrades, sometimes in mixed company. Generally, when the term is used, it is not being used to describe women, but rather as a verb, expressing disgust (“quit b****ing”) or as a term of subordination (“he’s acting like a little b****”).

Other derogatory terms, generally associated with women or a woman’s body parts, are also found to come out of the mouths of comrades who think themselves politically advanced and even revolutionary socialist-feminists. I find no need to list them all, since I can imagine that readers can probably figure these out for themselves.

In my dealings with such comrades over the years, I have found that challenging them on their use of language often leads to bitter defensiveness on their part, combined with a delicate string of rationalizations meant to offset and justify their use of sexist terminology. Even the most carefully-conceived intervention against such terms and language couldn’t avoid traveling this course — and thus resulting in comrades taking the political criticism as a personal attack.

What these comrades don’t seem to realize is that, even if they are not using the term as a description of women per se, the context in which they use the terms often betrays the inherent backwardness and oppressive character of their speech.

You do not have to be a rocket scientist

to know that terms like “b****” developed a social definition as epithets against women in general (regardless of their specific origins). What may require a little more thought is the relationship between that social definition and the use of the term as defining something or someone as a subordinate.

What kind of message does it send — to people in general and women in particular — when a self-described Socialist uses such a term, even in this context? Does that comrade see all women as subordinate, or just so-called “b****es?” Does that kind of hairsplitting really matter? In my view, it does not. In spite of all protests to the contrary, terms like this are not “gender neutral” by any means.

Some comrades might point out that they know women who accept its usage or even use it themselves. Some women comrades may even make this point themselves. However, I cannot accept such a rationalization as anything more than what it is: a rationalization.

In any society, the prevailing ideas and doctrines are developed by and stem from the ruling class. In this country, it is the ruling capitalist class that develops those doctrines, and the capitalists’ media and institutions that promote and reinforce them.

Capitalism needs to keep a division between men and women in order to maximize its profit margins. Any look at the gap in the pay that men and women receive for equal work or work of comparatively equal value, for example, exposes this reality. Thus, capitalism promotes the maintenance of all sorts of sexist dynamics in society — some open, some hidden

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SOCIAL SECURITY AND SOCIALISM

By *Mary Alice Herbert*

A statement Virginia Woolf made, as she contemplated events leading to World War I in Europe, has become a mantra of sorts to me.

She said, "...as a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world."

When I compare my situation to that of the majority of my sisters around the world I realize how fortunate I am.

As a retiree I receive monthly checks from my teacher retirement and from Social Security I mourn the fact that many women in Latin America have lost similar income protection because their governments privatized the public retirement insurance programs.

Now individuals are in the position of having to choose among competing insur-

ance systems out to make a profit. Furthermore, the debt incurred by the governments to make the changeover has significantly contributed to economic meltdowns such as in Argentina.

For me Social Security makes the difference between a bare-bones retirement to a comfortable one, but I know that it is the sole source of income for a quarter of U.S. retirees.

When Social Security was passed here in 1935 as part of the New Deal, it was meant in FDR's words "to give some measure of protection to the average citizen and to his family against the loss of a job and against poverty-ridden old age." It was never intended to be the sole income for retirees who were also assumed to have pensions from their jobs and to be able to save some money as well.

The fact that so many U.S. retirees have only SS is the result of the loss of pen-

sions for the majority of us and the fact that real wages have dropped so low, as a result of globalization, that for most of us saving money has become impossible.

This is particularly true for elderly women. In the face of these realities, Social Security does need to be fixed to provide a decent guaranteed annual income for all retirees and elder citizens. However, this should happen not by changing the essential nature of the system, but by putting more money into it.

The redistribution of wealth that has taken place in this country over the past two decades has widened the gap between rich and poor and produced more income that is not taxed by Social Security. If all earned income were taxed, instead of only the first \$88,000, there would be plenty of money for the system.

If wealth were also taxed, as it should

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Language...

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— as a means to maintain itself in power.

The indoctrination of men and women in the capitalists' hierarchical structure of society reinforces each person's role. It should be no surprise that many women, including women Socialists, would be accepting of sexist terminology and language; they, like the rest of us, have been taught from birth by capitalist society that it is the norm.

Nevertheless, the persistence of this indoctrination should not be celebrated or accepted. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of Socialists, men and women alike, to struggle with our comrades who still hold these backward views and habits.

Male Socialists have a special role in this struggle. Building unity that extends beyond paper appeals often requires that those from oppressor backgrounds go through a period of proving themselves to those from oppressed backgrounds.

Just as white Socialists have to go through a process of proving themselves to their African American or Latino comrades, so male Socialists have to go

through a similar process with women comrades. Far from it being a specifically women's issue, combating sexism within our own ranks requires the active participation of male comrades.

The last defense that many who use sexist terminology and language rely upon in order to deflect criticism of their backwardness is the accusation of political correctness, or PC. "You're just being PC," they say. "Stop being so PC." My reply to such arguments is: Yes, I am being PC, and I will not stop being such.

Political correctness first began in the 1930s as an effort by radicals and revolutionaries to bring about a cultural change in the relations between people — specifically working people — from oppressor and oppressed backgrounds. It was a weapon in the hands of the left and working class, used in the "culture war" of the day.

Unfortunately, few of us were around in that time. The "culture war" we know today is the one that has been waged virtually unchallenged by the capitalists since the 1980s. That war, which has been waged against the efforts of past generations to undo the damaging effects of racism and sexism (and homophobia!), has been more or less a success for the capitalists.

It has been so successful for the capitalists because much of the left capitulated to the anti-PC backlash (buying into the caricature of PC popularized in the 1980s). Few leftists fought the "culture war" waged by capitalism; fewer understood the long-term implications of a capitalist victory in this "war."

But the "culture war" is not over. On the contrary, with every generation the battle has to be renewed. This means that Socialists still have an opportunity to wage a consistent struggle against these attacks.

The Socialist Party USA's "Socialist Values" campaign offers us a unique opportunity to begin organizing and mobilizing for this struggle. We need to take advantage of the platform we have in this campaign to educate people about the importance of language and terminology in the struggle for social equality and liberation.

We can start this effort by educating our own comrades about the use of language and terminology. ★

Martin Schreder is a railroad worker, a member of the SP-USA's Labor Commission and Chairperson of the Detroit Socialist Party.

'COUNTER-RECRUITING' IN OUR HIGH SCHOOLS

By Jane Newton

As women throughout the world struggle to make ends meet in order to provide even the basic necessities to themselves and their families, military recruiters in the United States have a yearly budget of close to \$3 billion — more than enough money to maintain a solid on fertile recruiting soil: our local high schools.

Bush's "No Child Left Behind Act" sees to it that, unless told otherwise, the names, addresses and phone numbers of all students in their last years of school are given to the recruiters. The ASFAB test, which many schools use, gives the military even more information about students. The recruiters, also through the No Child Left Behind Act, have unquestioned access to our schools.

Therefore, along with groups all across the country like the American Friends Service Committee and the Veterans for Peace, some of us in Vermont have formed a group of people, who, for lack of a better name, call ourselves "counter-recruiters," or ARM, (Alternatives to Recruitment by the Military).

Our group was started in Brattleboro by



people in the Brattleboro Area Peace and Justice Group, and has spread out to the north so that we now go into schools as far up the state as Woodstock. A few days ago we found people interested in going into high schools in Claremont N.H., and, because New Hampshire's Fall Mountain High has Junior ROTC, we are hoping to go there too.

Until recently, when, because the courts have become more conservative, we were asked not to bring a lawsuit against schools that would not let us in, we felt secure in asking principals to let us "table" along with the recruiters because a few years ago the Ninth Circuit Court in California upheld the principle of "equal access," which

states that students must be presented with both sides of controversial issues so they can make informed decisions. The court ruled, "The (school) board cannot allow the presentation of one side of an issue, but prohibit the presentation of another," and that, "It has long been recognized that the subject of military service is controversial." Now we just keep our fingers crossed.

We do not tell students what to do or what not to do. We go into schools, two at a time, once or twice a month if we're lucky, hopefully as often as the recruiters. We "table," usually for an hour during lunch time, handing out information, some of which counters the often inaccurate or exaggerated claims of the military, and some of which offers information about subjects like Depleted Uranium that the military hopes to avoid. We have information about conscientious objection, scholarships and loans, and when possible, alternatives to military service. Sadly for us and for the children, but to the delight of the recruiters, poverty, unemployment and the soaring costs of college have made alternatives hard to find.

Over the year or so that we have been doing this, things have been changing. Fears about the draft; mixed messages from Canada, increasing numbers of deserters, talk of making the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) harder to leave and the status of Conscientious Objector harder to reach, have caused some of us to change our tune.

One of our most effective counter-recruiters and by far the hardest worker, is a Vietnam Veteran from Windham named Gary Cheney. He has begun to ask children directly if they are willing to kill and if they are not, there is nothing the military can do about it but throw them in jail; a decision, he tells them, is brave, if not braver than going to war. We can no longer make promises to kids in this terrifying world. ★

Jane Newton is member of the Southern Vermont Local, SP-USA, and was the candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives for the Liberty Union Party of Vermont in 2004.

RESISTANCE TO OPPRESSION ACTIVITIES IN THE MID-ATLANTIC — A BRIEF REPORT

The New Jersey Socialist Party has been busy fighting racism on several fronts.

1. We have been staging protests and distributing literature to would-be recruits in front of the military recruiting offices in Paterson.
2. We staged protests in front of the armory in Teaneck.
3. We also marched in Newark in defense of "undocumented labor" so called illegal aliens. *No human is illegal!*
4. We have been involved with the detainee issues and enlightening the public about the illegal detentions.
5. We picketed the Bergen County jail and protested the detentions.
6. We are also fighting the neo-Nazi group called the National Alliance, based in Elmwood Park.
7. We are also working with a rehab facility to help with their literacy program for juveniles.
8. We are planning to attend the counter-inaugural in Washington, D.C.

There are several youth groups who are working with us, including Bergen Action, Students for Peace and Justice from William Paterson University.

— Dr. Viji Sargis

CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY FEMINISTS FORM A COALITION FOR WOMEN'S LIVES

By Susan Dorazio

Initiated by members of the Tom Mooney local of the Socialist Party, a Coalition for Women's Lives has been formed in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts and southern Vermont. It is an outgrowth of the March for Women's Lives that drew an amazingly massive and diverse number of people to Washington, D.C. last April 25, and the Socialist Party organizing conference in the Bay Area of California last July that resolved to make abortion rights, in particular the repeal of the Hyde Amendment, a top priority of the Party.

The underpinning of the Coalition is the increasing desire of feminists in our area to make links between each other's issues, projects, and events. While the necessity of coalition-building has been a given among radicals, it's really since September 11 that left-liberals have become convinced of the worth of "diversity of tactics" as a collective goal.

This recognition has led to better communication and cooperation among indi-



viduals and groups on the Left, and more focused efforts to coordinate our actions and events.

Another factor behind the viability of the Coalition is its organizational framework. The design of the Coalition is simple ("low maintenance" is how we described it initially), and it has steady growth built into it. This is because it follows a grassroots, community-building model, and it does not require the time commitment that inhibits many women from joining organizations.

The Coalition is organized around a calendar of vigil/speak-outs that address many different, but intimately related, domestic and international issues, and that welcome a range of ideas and strategies for effecting social change.

So far, the Coalition for Women's Lives has sponsored vigil/speak-outs around Rosie Jimenez Day, Veterans Day, Human Rights Day, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Coming up are events in honor of International Women's Day, the Week of the Young Child, May Day, the Stonewall Rebellion, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki Remembrance Week.

The whole series takes place nearly monthly, from October 3 until August 6. Different people step forward to facilitate each event, dividing up such tasks as writing the press release and e-mail notices, designing and distributing flyers, and handling the transition from the vigil to the speak-out on the day itself.

What those of us currently involved in the building and maintaining of the Coalition find exciting and important is the clear and direct connection it has to the anti-glo-

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Minds...

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ery week in the central square, these mothers would gather wearing black dresses and white kerchiefs, they would carry pictures of their loved ones, and they would demand answers from the government. They wore a white rose bud if they hoped their loved one was still alive, and a red rose bud for the dead.

From Argentina the march of the mothers spread to El Salvador and other countries. Tens of thousands of Latin American mothers have had family members abducted — "disappeared" — by death squads. The Mothers of the Disappeared continue to parade on the streets every Thursday at 3:30 p.m., in the famous Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires.

A good book to read about the disap-

peared is *Imagining Argentina* by Lawrence Thornton. It is about the thousands of Argentineans disappeared without a trace into the general's prison cells and torture chambers. While mothers suffered with their children gone, young women continued to fight the actions of the government.

These women fought against their oppressive government, which tortured thousands and forced hundreds of thousands into exile. Dictators destroyed their countries' constitutions, their political parties and congress, their trade unions, free universities and other public services, and instilled censorship.

Many young women took up the resistance to government repression and the poverty and helplessness that encompassed them. A good book to read about this is *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. It is about four sisters fighting

against the Dominican Republic Trujillo dictatorship.

Some progress has been made since then. The Chilean government has offered lifelong pensions to more than 28,000 people tortured by agents of General Augusto Pinochet's military government.

Chile's Supreme Court has ruled the country's former President Augusto Pinochet is fit to stand trial on murder and kidnapping charges. However, it is still in question whether the ailing former dictator will ever actually stand trial.

Meanwhile, the United States has Guantanamo and the Abu Ghraib "scandal." and the U.S. Congress will in all likelihood confirm Alberto Gonzalez, crafter of the Administration's torture policy, as the next Attorney General.

The "war on terror" and the dirty wars in Latin America were said to be fought in the name of democracy and freedom. Yet

SISTER ACT IN ACTION

By Lorraine Borwick

The following is from October 15, 2004, edition of Scottish Socialist Voice, the publication of the Scottish Socialist Party.

The Socialist Women's Network (SWN) was set up to bring together women both inside and outwith the SSP, who identify themselves as socialists.

We discuss issues that affect women such as domestic violence, childcare, women's history and globalisation.

But we're not just a talking shop.

We want to actively engage against the injustices in our world, and campaign on various issues at a local and international level.

In December 2003, the first SSP Women's Forum was held in Edinburgh.

This historic event was a fantastic success — 40 women from all eight regions of Scotland attended, to debate Prostitution Tolerance Zones, the women's movements of the 1970s, globalisation, asylum and Dungavel detention centre, where many women have been incarcerated alongside their children.

We also discussed future priorities, campaigns, education and activism.

The SWN believes that International Women's Day (8 March) should be celebrated as part of the socialist calendar. We'd also like to see everyone — women, men and children — joining in the 16 days of action against violence against women in November.

The gatherings are really friendly and take place in each other's houses or at local community centres.

The SWN believes that women experience the world in different ways from men.

We are paid less, one in four of us experiences domestic violence at some point in our lives and we still bear the burden of housework, and childcare.

The SWN believes that this kind of inequality is not natural — therefore it's vital that we continue to fight for what we mean by "equality."

To achieve change, we think that it is crucial that we work alongside men in the struggle to end violence and poverty.

But women need, and are entitled to, a safe and comfortable space to discuss ideas

Torture continues to be used as a means of oppressing people all over the world, and in our own prisons in the United States. It must be rejected and ended based on the rule of law and human rights. As people living in the U.S., we must demand that our government follow its own laws, uphold human rights, put an end to the SOA and torture around the world.

However, unless we abolish the capitalist system that drives the systematic use of torture, it will never end. As long as capitalism and imperialism are U.S. policies, torture will be an unspoken of policy as well and torture will continue to hurt, scar, and devastate women and girls. ★

Tina Phillips is a student at California State University-Hayward where she is studying Social Justice. She is a member of the SP-USA, YPSL and Peace and Freedom Party of Calif.



and develop our confidence.

The SWN aims to provide that kind of forum. Many of the women speaking up in our meetings are doing so for the first time; male-dominated meetings, especially political ones, can be intimidating.

Our aims can be summarised as follows:

- To work with women locally in our communities and workplaces, and to link up with women's groups all over the world
- To develop women's political confidence through education, workshops and discussion
- To develop a socialist, feminist perspective
- To campaign for a real representation which ensures that our voices are heard
- To strengthen the SSP by involving women at every level
- To promote socialism locally and internationally
- To record our experiences, voices and stories

Why not join the SSP women's e-group, where you can talk to other women about socialism, feminism — and knitting! E-mail lorraneborwick@blueyonder.co.uk to sign up. ★

Scottish Socialist Party Website
<http://www.scottishsocialistparty.org/>

America has helped overthrow democratically elected governments and put right wing dictatorships in their place.

In the mid-1900s, U.S.-sponsored coups supporting corporate interests occurred all over Latin America, including Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Argentina, and Chile. Furthermore, when the people of another country try to democratically change their own government, the U.S. has stepped in to fort their efforts because the U.S. government is trying to protect their own economic interests.

Currently U.S. soldiers and U.S. contractors operate in Colombia to support the Colombian military in the country's civil war and to protect oil pipelines. In early April 2004, rightwing paramilitary forces attacked an indigenous Wayuu village, killing and torturing children and adults, causing hundreds of residents to flee their homes.

Social Security...

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be, good benefits could be paid to everyone and less could be deducted from the pay of poorer workers. Indeed, many of our full-time workers now are too poor to pay income taxes on their inadequate earnings, but are still hit with high payroll taxes for SSW and Medicaid.

Why is the Bush administration so eager to privatize a system that has worked well, despite its problems? Why are Republicans pushing for a plan which, according to Barbara B. Kennelly, Chairwoman of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, takes “Americans out of the community pool, where we share the risk, and puts each of us into our own pool of one to fend for ourselves. That’s fine if you’re rich.”

I suspect that many neo-cons see this as the last of the “socialistic” New Deal that needs to be stamped out once and for all, and others see it as a money making opportunity.

A local fair economy group I’m active in brought a speaker from the Economic Pol-

icy Institute, Christian Weller, to give several presentations. He said that women could not possibly do better than their investment in Social Security no matter how well the stock market performs. We tend to live longer than men, have lower incomes during our working lives and less in savings, and we are more likely to receive survivor benefits.

Weller also refuted that argument that men of color are often “cheated” out of benefits because many of them don’t live long past 65. The fact that many more of them collect disability insurance during their working lives and the survivors benefits their families receive more than compensate for this disparity.

About 30 percent of SS disbursements are disability and survivor benefits which could be difficult to finance if private individual accounts are allowed and the government could go \$1 to \$2 billion more in debt to finance the transition, according to Weller.

When Social Security was instituted in 1935, it had been part of our party’s platform, along with most of the rest of the New Deal initiatives, since the turn of the century. The passionate campaign speech-

es that Eugene V. Debs and Norman Thomas had made at election time brought these ideas into public consciousness and made them acceptable.

Lets all get involved in protecting this bit of economic democracy that still exists in the U.S. and become an example for the rest of the world. Norman Thomas used to say that the Democrats were always stealing our ideas. *Let’s give them something to steal!* But let’s retain our identity as SP-USA members.

As socialists, we need to expose the scare tactics being used by the would-be privatizers. We need to make our voices heard and to do all we can not only to prevent privatization of this essential program but to demand changes that will guarantee elder citizens the income — the true “social security” — they deserve. ★

Mary Alice Herbert (Mal), a retired elementary school teacher, lives in Putney, Vt. She is on the executive committee of the Peace & Justice Caucus of the National Education Association, a member of the SP-USA and the Liberty Union Party of Vermont, and was the SP’s candidate for vice president in 2004.

Coalition...

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balization and anti-war efforts of women activists over the past five years.

Here in Western Massachusetts, and I’m sure in other parts of the country as well, women have become much more open to thinking and talking about the causes of exploitation and injustice from a systemic, anti-capitalist point of view since the WTO demos in Seattle and the Stop the War actions after 9/11.

By adopting a structure like the Coalition for Women’s Lives, women activists will gain exposure to democratic socialist feminist analysis in a way that accepts, yet challenges, where they are personally and politically.

Also, of course, the exchange of feelings, ideas, and experiences with people new to radical politics enriches the work of those of us who are already working within the democratic socialist feminist movement.

I hope this encourages you to form your own local Coalition for Women’s Lives in order to 1) honor and build on the grassroots efforts of the April 25 March For Women’s Lives; 2) acknowledge the significant role of women in the anti-globalization and anti-war movements of the past five years; 3) recognize the enormous and disproportionate impact on women — especially low-income, elderly, and women of color — of war, militarism, and the current economic/social/political crisis (jobs, housing, health care, child care, discrimination); 4) explore the connections between our lives, work, and struggles— locally, nationally, and internationally.

Let’s come together and stand in solidarity and sisterhood for a democratic socialist feminist global society. ★

Susan Dorazio is a child care worker and activist, the convener of the Women’s Commission of the Socialist Party USA, and a member of the Tom Mooney/Western Massachusetts Local of the Socialist Party of Mass.

Asesinato...

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creencia que la creación de relaciones de género basadas en el respeto y la igualdad es un componente central de nuestro movimiento para construir una sociedad nueva e igualitaria.

La Creación de un espacio de refugio para las mujeres en Ciudad Juárez, y en todas las ciudades y pueblos del mundo entero, requerirá una lucha que liga los asuntos de la clase y el género.

La construcción de una nueva sociedad implicará un fin a la explotación de las clases y la derrota de la patriarquía en todas sus formas. ★

Eric Chester es un miembro de Local Tom Mooney/Western Massachusetts del Partido Socialista de Mass., y el autor del nuevo libro, True Mission (Pluto, 2004). Traducción por Raul Cano, un trabajador social y un miembro del Partido Socialista del Valle.

SOCIALIST PARTY USA NATIONAL DIRECTORY

CALIFORNIA

- ★ **Socialist Party of California**
State Executive Committee
2617 S. Houser Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90016
- ★ **Bay Area Socialist Party**
P.O. Box 22822
Oakland, CA 94609
www.sp-usa.org/basp
- ★ **Socialist Party of So. Calif.**
2617 S. Houser Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90016

COLORADO

- ★ **Socialist Party of Colorado**
State Executive Committee
c/o 2625 Pine St.
Boulder, CO 80302
- ★ **Denver Socialist Party**
P.O. Box 181025
Denver, CO 80218

FLORIDA

- ★ **Socialist Party of Florida**
State Executive Committee
c/o 1706 B Lake Ave
Panama City, FL 32401
- ★ **Jacksonville Socialist Party**
c/o 13938 Manowar Ln.
Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

ILLINOIS

- ★ **Illinois Socialist Party**
State Executive Committee
c/o PO Box 578398
Chicago, IL 60657-8398
- ★ **Chicago Socialist Party**
PO Box 578398
Chicago, IL 60657-8398

IOWA

- ★ **Iowa Socialist Party**
State Executive Committee
P.O. Box 924
Iowa City, IA 52244

MASSACHUSETTS

- ★ **Socialist Party of Massachusetts**
State Executive Committee
c/o 43 Taylor Hill Rd.
Montague, MA 01351
- ★ **Greater Boston Socialist Party**
P.O. Box 541468
Waltham, MA 02454
- ★ **Tom Mooney Local**
c/o 43 Taylor Hill Rd.
Montague, MA 01351

MICHIGAN

- ★ **Socialist Party of Michigan**
State Executive Committee
P.O. Box 3285
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-3285
www.mi-socialists.org
- ★ **Kalamazoo Socialist Party**
c/o P.O. Box 3285
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-3285
- ★ **Detroit Socialist Party**
P.O. Box 19221
Detroit, MI 48219-0221
detroit-socialist@hotmail.com
detroit.mi-socialists.org

NEW JERSEY

- ★ **Socialist Party of New Jersey**
State Executive Committee
P.O. Box 8622
Saddle Brook, NJ 07663
www.njsocialistparty.org
- ★ **North Jersey Socialist Party**
c/o P.O. Box 86
Rochelle Park, NJ 07662
- ★ **South Jersey Socialist Party**
P.O. Box 543
Newfield, NJ 08344

NEW YORK

- ★ **Greater NYC Socialist Party**
c/o 339 Lafayette St., No. 303
New York, NY 10012
www.newyorksocialists.org

★ Central N.Y. Socialist Party

P.O. Box 35113
University Station
Syracuse, NY 13235

NORTH CAROLINA

- ★ **Socialist Party of N. Carolina**
State Executive Committee
P.O. Box 37533
Raleigh, NC 27627
www.ncsocialist.org
- ★ **Salvador Allende Local**
P.O. Box 37533
Raleigh, NC 27627
- ★ **Art Young Local**
P.O. Box 217
Richlands, NC 28574

OHIO

- ★ **Socialist Party of Ohio**
State Executive Committee
c/o P.O. Box 204
Yellow Springs, OH 45387
- ★ **Northwest Ohio Socialist Party**
c/o Geoff Braasch, Secretary
3222 Middlesex Drive, Apt. D
Toledo, OH 43606

OREGON

- ★ **Socialist Party of Oregon**
State Executive Committee
P.O. Box 5633
Portland, OR 97228
- ★ **Clackamas Co. Socialist Party**
c/o 16 SW Monticello Dr.
Lake Oswego, OR 97035
- ★ **Helen Keller Memorial Local**
c/o 3375 NW Fifth Ave.
Ontario, OR 97035
- ★ **Lane County Local**
c/o 1555 W. 18th Ave. #6
Eugene, OR 97402
- ★ **Multnomah County Local**
c/o 6035 N. Greeley Ave.
Portland, OR 97217

PENNSYLVANIA

- ★ **Socialist Party of Pennsylvania**
State Executive Committee
c/o 102 Rachel Lane
Coatesville, PA 19320
www.sp-usa.org/sppa/
- ★ **Berks County Socialist Party**
c/o 273 S. Fourth St.
Hamburg, PA 19526
- ★ **Philadelphia Socialist Party**
c/o 2211 Bainbridge Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146-1130
- ★ **Johnstown Socialist Party**
c/o 331 Threatre Dr., Apt. 1-B4
Johnstown, PA 19526
- ★ **South West Socialist Party**
c/o 4618 Carroll St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

TEXAS

- ★ **Socialist Party of Texas**
State Executive Committee
P.O. Box 2640
Austin, TX 78768
- ★ **Socialist Party of Rio Grande Valley / Partido Socialista del Valle**
PMB 117
East Ruben Torres Sr., Suite A16
Brownsville, TX 78526

VERMONT

- ★ **Brattleboro Socialist Party**
c/o 71 Westminster Rd.
Putney, VT 05346

VIRGINIA

- ★ **Social-Democratic Party of Va.**
State Executive Committee
c/o 251 Finchingfield Ct.
Sterling, VA 20165

WISCONSIN

- ★ **Socialist Party of Wisconsin**
State Executive Committee
1001 East Keefe
Milwaukee, WI 53212
- ★ **Socialist Party of Milwaukee**
c/o 1011 East Keefe
Milwaukee, WI 53212
- ★ **Socialist Party of So. Ctl. Wisc.**
c/o 3206 Gregory St.
Madison, WI 53711

Arts & Culture Commission — Chair: Angel Martinez • www.sp-usa.org/artscommission/

Democracy Commission — P.O. Box 541468, Waltham, MA 02454 • Chair: Matt Andrews • peopleunite@aol.com • www.sp-usa.org/democracy/

Faith & Socialism Commission — 477 Jean Street, No. C, Oakland, CA 94610 • Chair: Antonio Salas • antonios65@earthlink.net

International Commission — Chair: Mark Alper • MarkVA39@aol.com

Labor Commission — P.O. Box 8622, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663 • Chair: Viji Sargis • vsargis@hotmail.com • www.sp-usa.org/labor/

Native American Commission — 2000 Sandy Lane, Pocatello, ID 83204 • Chair: Hunter Gray • www.hunterbear.org/native_american_commission_page.htm

People of Color Commission — 1008 El Campo Drive, San Juan, TX 78589 • Chair: Erik Toren • www.sp-usa.org/poc/poc.html

Queer Commission — 4618 Carroll St., Pittsburgh, PA 15224 • Chair: Steve Donahue • QueerSocialists@yahoo.com • www.sp-usa.org/queer/queercom.html

Women's Commission — 43 Taylor Hill Road, Montague, MA 01351 • Chair: Susan Dorazio • susandor@crocker.com

Young People's Socialist League — P.O. Box 204, Yellow Springs, OH 45387 • www.ypsl.org

NATIONAL OFFICE

Socialist Party USA
339 Lafayette St., No. 303
New York, NY 10012
(212) 982-4586 • www.sp-usa.org
SocialistParty@sp-usa.org

JOIN THE SOCIALIST PARTY!

Annual Dues

- Full-Time Students — \$15
- Under \$20,000/year — \$25
- \$20,000-\$35,000/year — \$60
- \$35,000-\$50,000/year — \$125
- Over \$50,000/year — \$250

Waiver for poverty or hardship

I, the undersigned, desiring to bring about by democratic means a new society based upon democratic socialism, hereby apply for membership in the Socialist Party USA, and subscribe to its principles.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone/E-Mail: _____

Socialist Party USA Statement of Principles

The Socialist Party strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control: where working people own and control the means of production through democratically elected bodies; 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 Socialist Party fights for socially progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support union and electoral actions 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 basis of economic, political, cultural, social and personal relations — to dissolve the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the state.

The Socialist Party is a democratic, multitendency organization, with its structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

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