

volume 1 number 2

DEC. '70-JAN. '71

25cents

Published by WOMEN of Youth Against War & Fascism

BATTLE ACTS

'...no more traditions' chains shall bind us...'



STATEMENT of YAWF WOMEN

The following statement by YAWF Women was issued at the RPCC. Several thousand copies were distributed to the participants in the Washington convention.

We're here, as women, at the Black Panther Party's call for a Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention, to pledge full and unstinted support and solidarity to the Black Panther Party, which has made this historic gathering possible.

And we are here as women to express the demands, the aspirations, and the goals of the Women's Liberation Movement. That means we are here to express our anger about our oppression, past and present; we're here to make sure we are truly represented in the revolutionary struggle and its documents; and we are here to join our strength and our determined spirit with all the other oppressed peoples gathered here who are fighting for liberation so that together we can destroy our common enemy and establish a new system that meets the needs of all of humanity.

No founding mothers?

As women, our rights have been totally excluded from the U.S. Constitution that was drawn up nearly two centuries ago by the white "founding fathers." From the beginning, laws based on that Constitution kept us from an education, control over our own bodies, divorce, property ownership, public

speech, and decent working conditions outside the home—to mention only a few of the areas of obvious discrimination.

And today, after a century of struggle, and the winning of the right to vote, that same Constitution serves to legitimize the victimization, degradation, subjugation—subtle and blatant—of women, not just in this country but all over the world.

We are the outsiders

We are tired of being outsiders. We are angry because we have been systematically denied the right to determine the course of our lives. We have discovered that our most private, personal nightmares are shared, to one degree or another, by other women. No longer will our lonely cries of anguish be muffled behind the clatter of dishes being washed or the coos of a newborn child. No longer will the traditionally labeled "women's problems"—those of sustaining the present generation and nurturing the next—be ours alone.

We are declaring war on this system of imperialist male supremacy. We need a new constitution that we have a part in writing. It was with this conviction that we attended the first session of the Constitutional Con-



vention held in Philadelphia last September. Unfortunately this effort was marred by some who sought to exploit the mere beginnings of the truly historic effort on the part of the Black Panther Party. They sought to gloss over the double oppression of Black and obliterate the special experience of the oppression of Black women.

Out-of-bounds in Philadelphia

While blatantly overstepping their bounds as whites, this group of women sought to invalidate the experience of Black women and ignored the special character of the struggle of Black women to gain their full equality. This resulted in a full-fledged attack on the Black Panther Party. Not only was Huey summarily dismissed as a sexist, but the entire Black Panther Party was attacked, with the result that white women—presumably with a profound women's consciousness—were, in fact, attacking not only Black men, but Black women as well. In so doing, they denounced the Black Liberation struggle, and in particular its most revolutionary advance guard—the Black Panther Party.

Black women feel the full force of the system's oppression in two dimensions: one they share with white women—male supremacy, and one they share with Black men—white supremacy. Since most Black women choose to struggle for liberation with Black men, can we not then assume that the over-

riding problem of Black women as they see it is that of white supremacy?

How relevant to Black women's lives are the white middle class women's demands for "the abolition of the nuclear family" when Black families are being savagely uprooted by lack of jobs, education for children, nourishing food and health care.

Nixon's analyst of the problems of Black people, Daniel Moynihan, places the problem entirely in the lap of the Black women; he blames her for creating a "matriarchy" that "castrates the Black male." In that way, he and his fellow white supremacists can deny their role in the oppression of all Black people. White women who do not recognize and grapple with the dual nature of the struggle of Black women—against white supremacy and against male supremacy—sound just as viciously racist as Moynihan.

Black women & white women — each taking care of business

Black women and white women have a common objective in ending male supremacy. But white women and Black women have different problems on the road to that objective. Obviously, the first priority of the Black woman is to fight against white supremacy. For the white woman to show solidarity to the Black woman, she must understand this, and help here in that struggle.

"We came (to the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention) as revolutionary women to express our demands and join in solidarity with the Black Panther Party and all oppressed peoples who are struggling for liberation." Thus began a statement of solidarity (see full text below) which was drawn up by a women's workshop and was approved by a majority of the women who had gathered at the Women's Center in Washington for the weekend of the Constitutional Convention. It was a far cry from the bitter and sometimes openly racist attacks

women's college — while the Panthers were denied any facilities in Washington to hold the convention. It was clear that the women's movement was not considered to be a threat by the same government which had worked so hard to keep the Panther Convention from taking place.

'Seize the building'!

The discussion finally crystallized around the proposal of one sister from YAWF Women who suggested, "Let's seize the time and seize the

Women at the RPCC

Reprinted from Workers World

by Naomi Cohen

on the Panther Party which were expressed by some women at the first convention in Philadelphia last September. And it reflected what seemed to be a new mood among the women there.

About 1,000 women attended various workshops at Trinity College where the women's center was set up. The topics for discussion included women and imperialism, sexism and racism, a women's party, among others. A workshop on how women relate to the Constitutional Convention came out with the solidarity statement quoted above. At the same time that the solidarity statement was being drafted, the discussion in the workshop on sexism and racism turned to the problems the Black Panther Party was facing in Washington.

Many of the women were acutely aware of the fact that they (the majority were white) had been allowed to have the facilities of Trinity College — a Catholic

building for the Panthers." This spontaneous proposal was picked up enthusiastically by other women in the workshop and a hot debate ensued. Many women realized what a great thing it would be for the women's movement to take such a strong action in solidarity with the Black liberation struggle. We were at least 1,000 strong; we were already in possession of the building; we could offer it to the Panthers as a liberated zone for the convention; we could take responsibility for the action as women, struggling to see that the Revolutionary People's Constitution was not thwarted by government sabotage.

The atmosphere was electric with excitement; the debate went back and forth; some women feared that such an action would antagonize the nice liberal administration of the college which had granted us the space for the women's center. Women replied that that was irrelevant—we were faced with the much more serious problem of the government's attempts to destroy the people's convention, that if women had the means to help solve that problem, it was more important for us to act in solidarity with out Panther sisters and brothers.

It was finally decided that all the women's work-

Continued on page 14



from the Black Panther

Women's solidarity statement

We came here as revolutionary women to express our demands and join in solidarity with the Black Panther Party and all oppressed peoples who are struggling for liberation.

The ruling class has consistently attempted to sabotage the necessary work we came here to accomplish. We consider this sabotage just as blatant an attack as if the pigs physically assaulted us with clubs and tear gas. We see this attack as an attack on all of us.

We will not allow the ruling class to divide us any longer and we will have our Constitutional Convention.

FREE ERICKA!

by Pam Meyers



The Free Breakfast for School Children Program was to begin in a few weeks. There were plans for a free medical clinic. The Black Panther Party chapter of New Haven, Conn., was growing, and the Black community was very receptive. But in a predawn raid, May 22, 1969, the police smashed the programs by arresting the leadership of the New Haven chapter. That meant Ericka Huggins, Deputy Chairman of the Connecticut Black Panther Party, was thrown in jail.

Today Ericka is on trial for her life, along with Bobby Seale, National Chairman of the Black Panther Party. The charge is conspiracy to murder. But the only conspiracy Ericka and Bobby are "guilty of" is working day in, day out to feed hungry school children and to free all Black Americans.

The ruling class has decided that the "crime" of fighting to free her people must cost Ericka her life. But, even under the threat of death, Ericka has not been intimidated. Instead, by her dedication, strength and revolutionary optimism, she has exemplified revolutionary Black womanhood in the struggle for the liberation of her nation. And she has become a shining example and inspiration to all women, Black and white, in the fight to break the chains of women's oppression.

Ericka's history of fighting oppression is a long one—long because she's Black and because she's a woman. Being Black means literally fighting from birth to survive, let alone getting an education or a

decent job. Being a Black woman means fighting the heaviest burden of society's racist male chauvinism—the deepest degradation, the most extreme exploitation.

Many women when faced with their husband's death, become immobilized with grief. But not Ericka. Even though Ericka's husband, John, Deputy Minister of Information of the Black Panther Party, was murdered in the struggle in January 1969 in Los Angeles and even though this happened just weeks after their first child was born, Ericka's revolutionary step did not falter. Ericka responded by going to New Haven to set up a Black Panther chapter. Her efforts were proving so successful that the ruling class found it necessary to take the entire New Haven Panther leadership off the streets.

It is said that she was the force and the spirit of the Panther Party in New Haven. So it is no wonder that the ruling class has tried to crush her revolutionary enthusiasm and devotion by holding her in jail without bail since May 1969--not to mention by threatening her very existence.

As a prisoner of the war against Black America, she has seen atrocities in Niantic State Prison for Women. Two Panther sisters, Francis Carter and Rose Smith, were forced to give birth under armed guard. Both women were denied prenatal care. All the Panther sisters were held in solitary confinement, under armed guard, with no exercise, rotten food and lights shining in their cells 24 hours a day. The news of this torture brought over three thousand women to New Haven in November 1969 in protests.

Last summer, Ericka and Francis went on a hunger strike. Peggy Hudgins, another of the New Haven 9 (as the framed-up Panthers are known), was suffering from rheumatoid arthritis brought on by lack of nourishing food, exercise or medical care. So Ericka and Francis gave her whatever edible food they got and struggled against the prison authorities at the same time.

Although the ruling class has been forced to lower the charges on most of the New Haven 9 and most are now out of jail (with the exception of Lonnie McLucas who has begun serving a 15-year sentence), the ruling class is concentrating its war against the Black Panthers in the frameup of Ericka and Bobby. The ruling class does not want the daring, will and conviction that these two Black revolutionaries express by their very lives to exist in the Black Liberation Struggle. In practice the ruling class is showing that a Black woman is considered an equal when she fights for her people's liberation.

Seeing her in court is a truly inspiring experience. Her spirits are high and she is very strong even though she faces the electric chair. It is women like Ericka who will show us the way to true humanity. We must not lose such a valuable teacher, such a revolutionary sister!

FREE ERICKA! FREE BOBBY! FREE ALL
POLITICAL PRISONERS!

The struggle for the liberation of Palestine has affected the entire world; and the fact that Arab women have taken such an active and courageous role had a profound impact on the Women's Liberation Movement in the U.S. We see women who have been bound by centuries of tradition of subservience to men, women who lived under imperialism for over a century, women who are desperate with hunger and privation, leap into the forefront of the revolutionary struggle. We see women who as a whole have had little education and little contact outside

Zaala-

by Veronica Golas



their homes take up arms to regain the homeland of the Palestinian people. These struggling women deserve, and have, our deepest respect.

The following interview is a personal account by

a young Palestinian woman, Yusra Ibrihim, of her memories and thoughts about the liberation struggle of Palestine and of women. Yusra is now living in the U.S.

angry women

Q. Where were you born?

A. In a refugee camp near Jerico. When I was about two years old I moved with some of my family to a town near Jerusalem. I used to go to the camps to visit the rest of my family who were still there.

Q. What were the conditions you lived under?

A. My family lived in huts, or tents. Each family had to build a little apartment of bricks made from soil. We lived in one room. We lived on about six cents a cay. The women there had nothing. The men had no work. We had nothing—nothing to eat. I think the dogs ate better than we did.

We had no facilities in the one room. What could you have if you had 9, sometimes 13 kids—what could you have? No refrigerators or anything like the rich, besides, we had no food to put in a refrigerator anyway.

Q. What do you remember of the June 1967 war?

A. They (the Israeli soldiers) used to come every day, about 6:00 in the morning and say, "you have to get out of the house. We have to search the house." We would say, "you just came yesterday; there was nothing here." But we would have to leave and go to the mosque. And they would take everything. We stayed in the sun; it was June and very hot. The way the soldiers acted showed us that they wanted Jerusalem immediately. So they were searching the houses, making a census—people who were not in Jerusalem at the time of the census were not allowed back into the city; even if they had only gone away for a visit.

One day, in the afternoon as we were sitting outside, the soldiers said we could go. We had been in the hot sun, without food, from six in the morning until three in the afternoon. We rose to get ready to go home, then we heard shots. The soldiers fired from the rooftops; the children were screaming. We sat down again. I don't know what was happening to make the men fire, but I think it was to show the people they were defeated.

Q. Do you still have friends in Palestine?

A. Yes, my girl friends whom I went to school with and my sister-in-law. My sister-in-law, Ayesha A'udi, is a guerrilla, and she is now in an Israeli jail. I came here (to the U.S.) to "get ahead," to get an education, and my friends, who stayed home

are really getting ahead by fighting and doing their part for the revolution, more than I am.

Q. Why would a Palestinian woman become a revolutionary and how does this process take place?

A. Arab women have been oppressed through the centuries, by men and by imperialism—by the Ottoman Empire, the British, and now by the U.S.-Zionist imperialists. She has always remained in the home and had many children; she had no education and didn't work outside her home. She never associated with men. So she has to break through these old traditions, these years and years of tradition.

Now she sees war everywhere, she lives in refugee camps, her husband cannot find work and must go to other countries for work. The women are left alone. She meets fedayeen (commandos) in the camps; her children join the Ashbal (guerrilla schools for the youth); and then she might start cooking for the fighters, bring them food, then go to classes. Some women knitted sweaters for the fedayeen and had to smuggle them across the borders.

She begins to write letters of solidarity to the fighters. (The fedayeen teach the people to read and write in the refugee camps.) And now there are women's organizations she can join. The more she begins to do, the more she wants to do. The Arab woman already knows that her main enemy is imperialism and that for her to be free, Palestine must be free. With this knowledge she goes to the camps and learns to use arms, and to fight with her brothers and sisters.

Q. Who are the women fighters that you especially admire?

A. Jameela Boherid fought against the French in Algeria. She had two brothers and she fought with them in the mountains. And she did as well as any of the men. I think she did better than the men. I think she is respected in the whole world. Then Ameina Dahboar—she fought and was the mother of five heroes who died in the struggle. She was in the PDF (Popular Democratic Front). And Leila Khaled. There are so many.

Q. Do you see a link between the women's liberation movement here in the U.S. and the struggle in Palestine?

A. I think women's liberation can succeed in a socialist world. It can't succeed in the capitalist world. I think we need a whole social revolution.

Q. What would you fight for as a Palestinian and as a woman?

A. I would fight first for the liberation of Palestine and then for women's liberation, although they depend upon one another. But I think most of us, most of the women, would first try to liberate Palestine. If they liberate Palestine, they would liberate themselves.

CUBA--

Women in Revolution

by Mary Jo Wuetrich

Chicago YAWF Women

Mary Jo Wuetrich is a YAWF Woman from Chicago. She is a member of Local 484 of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union, and she is active in the women's struggle, most recently speaking at a rally in support of miners' widows. Mary Jo wrote the following article based on first-hand experiences and information she gained while serving in Cuba in the Second Venceremos Brigade.

Prior to the revolution, Cuban women were considered to be little more than chattel. They were merely property to be handed from father to husband, with little voice in their own lives and none in the government and institutions that controlled them. Economic power was completely out of their hands. Education for women was limited, at best, and they were basically relegated to a life of subservience in the home. Their productivity was limited to having children and perhaps some type of home industry. Women remained in the home, held as a reserve supply of labor to be hired for the most menial jobs at the lowest possible pay. When the hunger and deprivation became too much to bear, their only recourse was to beg for money to feed themselves and their children—over 25,000 Cuban women were forced to beg or sell their bodies. Nearly 12,000 women survived in this degrading manner, prostituting themselves for the rich, white American tourists and businessmen.

The revolution has brought about a profound change in the lives of Cuban women. The revolution is not just for Cuban men but for all Cuban people. Women realize this and are participating fully in the new social order. Education has been completely opened up to the people, and women have taken their rightful place in the schools. In 1960, 90,000 women participated in the year-long mass mobilization against illiteracy, which gave Cuba the highest literacy rate in the world according to United Nations figures. Fifty percent of all students studying to be doctors are women, as are 30 percent of the engineering students. Many schools are administered by women.

I would like to stress the importance of the educational system in breaking down the myth and traditions of male superiority. Starting in the lower grades both girls and boys receive shop training; in the upper grades the children are on work-study programs, which means girls work equally with boys. In the work program, while they devote half their day to a regular scholastic program

and the other half to some form of productive work, like building an irrigation system or planting a new citrus field, the young women are there, driving tractors, planting, digging, whatever is necessary to complete the task. When they are old enough for military training, the women receive it along with the men--the women in the Cuban militia are an integral part of that country's defense.

One of the chief concerns of poor and working class women in the U.S. is health and child care. Under the capitalist system, where doctors and pharmaceutical companies make millions of dollars in profits off of people's misfortune, accidents or illness can also mean poverty from astronomical medical bills and loss of jobs. This is not the case in Cuba where all medical care is free. Before the revolution, hospitals were few and expensive. Doctors were mainly specialists who served only the wealthy. Since the revolution many hospitals and dozens of polyclinics have been built and doctors are being trained as quickly as possible to serve the needs of the people.



Women workers in Cuba, relaxing after fieldwork



Cane cutters and militiawomen of the Sierra Maestra arriving at Uvero.

Women no longer have to fear the economic implications of childbirth. They are given paid leave six weeks before and six weeks after birth. The baby can be left in a free childcare center from the age of forty-five days. The mother can pick the child up in the evening or only on the weekend as she pleases. At the age of six, the child can enter boarding school with the same arrangement. Therefore the mother is free to work or go to school and participate actively in the political and cultural life of her country. Of course, this is assuming the woman wants to have a child. If she doesn't, contraceptives are free and available without restriction. The most widespread methods are the diaphragm and the intrauterine loop. The pill is not considered safe enough for distribution and, because health is not a commodity in Cuba, it is not distributed. Abortion is safe, free, legal and on demand.

Most important is the Cuban women's new political awareness and power. From the popular, mass-based Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), with one and a half million members, to the women on the Central Committee of the Communist Party, women are playing a strong role in the governing of their country. They are active in the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR), which is the local political unit in Cuba. The CDR was active in the anti-illiteracy campaign and aids in the equal distribution of scarce commodities. Political education on the local level

is also one of the many responsibilities of the CDR. Half of the membership of the Union of Young Communists are women. These are young people who are vanguard workers or students, who not only work or study as well as they can, but also realize their responsibility to assist and encourage others to develop to the best of their capabilities. There are women like Haydee Santamaria who fought in the mountains and is now on the Central Committee of the Communist Party and director of the Casa de las Americas, and Clementina Serra, also on the Central Committee and head of the National Day Care Program.

All over Cuba, women have a strong sense of the importance of the role they play not only in the development of their own country, but also in the world struggle. They identify strongly with the women of Vietnam and Palestine who are struggling for their liberation. They are also familiar with and support the Black Panther Party (Las Panteras Negras).

In the short space of eleven years, Cuban women have made great strides, from a near-feudal existence to revolutionary socialists. They are well educated and well prepared to defend their new freedom and to continue to struggle until the liberation of all people is a reality and the ideal of the new woman and new man is achieved in a socialist society.

VENCEREMOS!

waitressing

Tips 'N Trays

by Elizabeth Ross

All restaurant work is lousy. The cooks are in a vile temper because of the heat and the speed-up; the dishwashers are miserable because of all the slops, the boiling hot water and the low pay; all the kitchen workers are brutally exploited and harassed and hate their work.

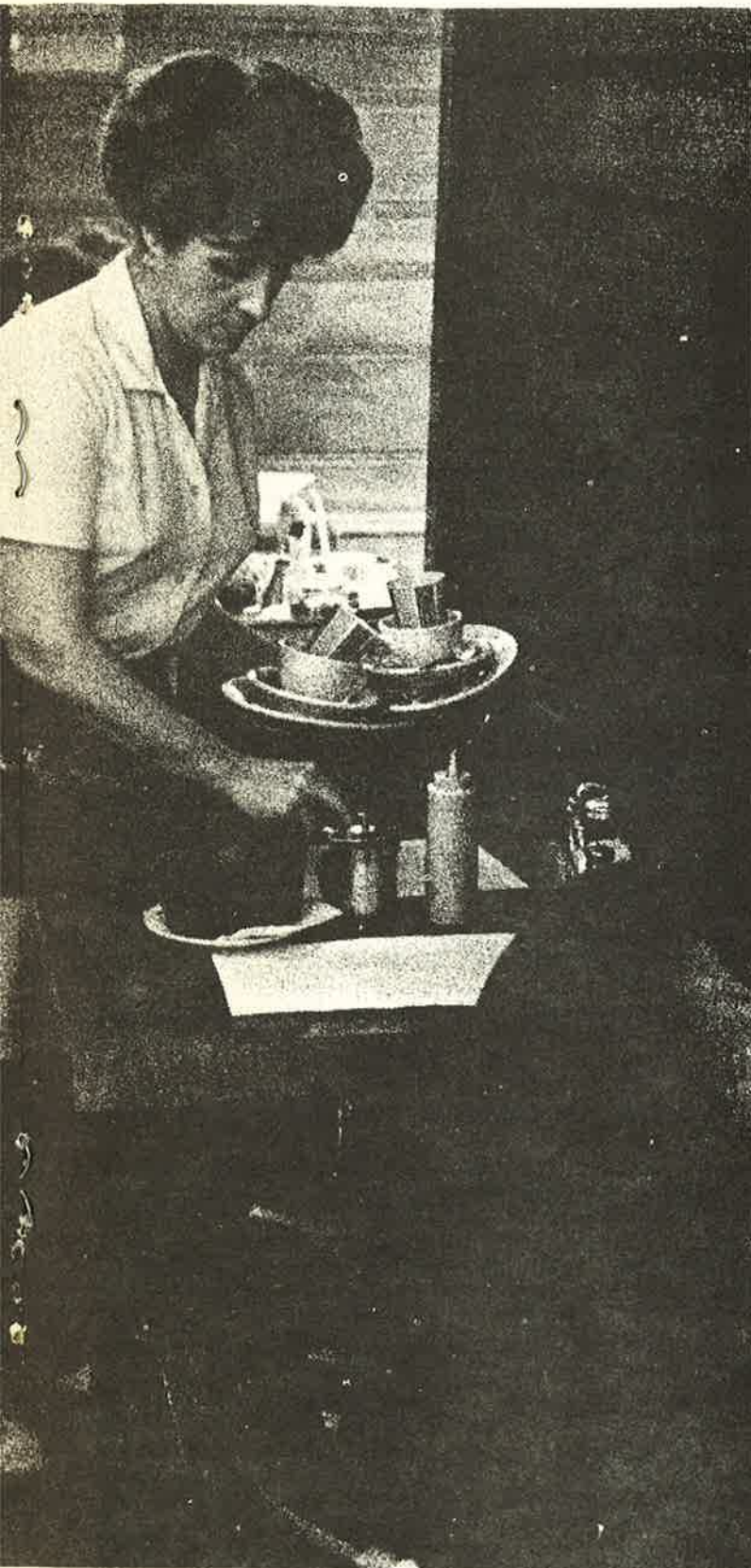
Waitresses are in a special category though. They have to face the customers, be pleasant and subservient even when the "guests" are unreasonable or insulting, they have to take all the male-chauvinist remarks or lose their tips and, to top it off, are at the mercy of the cooks, too. Any cook who has a grudge against a particular waitress can hold up her orders, mix them up and make it impossible for her to keep her job. (Male waiters have it tough, too, but waitering is work few men will put up with. In 1968 there were only 331,000 waiters in the U.S. That figure includes bartenders—there are a lot of them—while in the same year there were nearly a million waitresses.)

Many women get work as waitresses because it's one of the few kinds of jobs that are available without previous training, and also because it's much like the kind of work they've learned how to do in the home. It's the kind of menial, hard, low-paying work that women traditionally get. It's the kind of low-status position that 65 per cent of all working women are forced into—service work where the employee has to put up with bad working conditions and degrading, chauvinist remarks to boot.

A waitress works piecework. Unlike most others in the eating and drinking industry who are paid a fixed salary, the waitress is dependent on her tips for a living, and can only make out when she has more work to do than any human being can easily handle. This means she has to constantly push herself to the limit and put on a perpetual smile to please the customers whose tips her livelihood depends on.

(I knew a waitress once who had a job in a club where tipping was not allowed and she was





LNS

paid a decent salary. She said it was the only job she'd ever had that she enjoyed. Her relationship to the customers was on an entirely different basis—it wasn't so much the slave-master relationship. She said she remembered with disgust all her other jobs where the thought of how big the tip was going to be was always in her mind and the customer's too.)

During the Second World War, I had a variety of waitressing jobs in Buffalo—from hash houses to swank hotels to tea-rooms to night clubs, and I found that the "better" the establishment the harder the work, with the pay only a little higher.

One place I remember vividly was a one-day engagement (thank goodness it wasn't any longer) at the Park Lane, the luncheon spot where Buffalo's elite gathered.

It was a luncheon and fashion show for rich women—with about two hundred women attending, and six waitresses to take care of all their wants. The lunch room was on the second floor, at the top of a winding staircase, and the kitchen was on the ground floor. We had to set up the tables from scratch; there was nothing up there but the bare tables. But we didn't get the salt, sugar, water, ice, silverware, etc., from the kitchen. No, all that stuff was in a sub-basement below the kitchen. So we had to carry it all on heavy silver trays up two flights of stairs before we even started serving the luncheon. As we passed from the kitchen toward the stairs leading to the second floor, I noticed another dining room right beside the kitchen where waiters were standing with white towels over their arms, and one or two guests were seated inside.

"Why don't they have the men work upstairs, and the women in the dining room beside the kitchen?" I asked.

"Oh, they refuse to carry trays up all those stairs," one of the waitresses answered. "The management always has to hire women when they have a special luncheon or banquet in that room."

We held our trays over our shoulders on one hand while the cooks piled one plate on top of another, three or four deep, with silver risers in between. Going up the stairs with that load made your legs tremble, and getting the tray down off your shoulder without spilling anything seemed almost impossible. But somehow we did it, with the sweat pouring down our backs and into our eyes.

Women in the Women's Liberation Movement are often confronted with taunts of, "Do you want to be a construction worker?" Well, if you've ever been a waitress you know what heavy, dirty, exhausting work it is! You're on your feet 8 to 10 hours a day lifting weights and running back and forth.

For this miserable job, the Park Lane paid us each \$2 for the four hours' work (which was twice as much as Schrafft's paid at the time) and the rich people at the luncheon "kindly" took up a collection for the tip. It amounted to \$30—\$5 for each of us, and with the \$2 we got from the management that was \$7—the highest hourly wage I ever made in Buffalo.

I went home dog-tired, but feeling pretty happy to have so much money. Three of the other waitresses were going to work a banquet that evening.

Growing up on Welfare

by Sue Higa

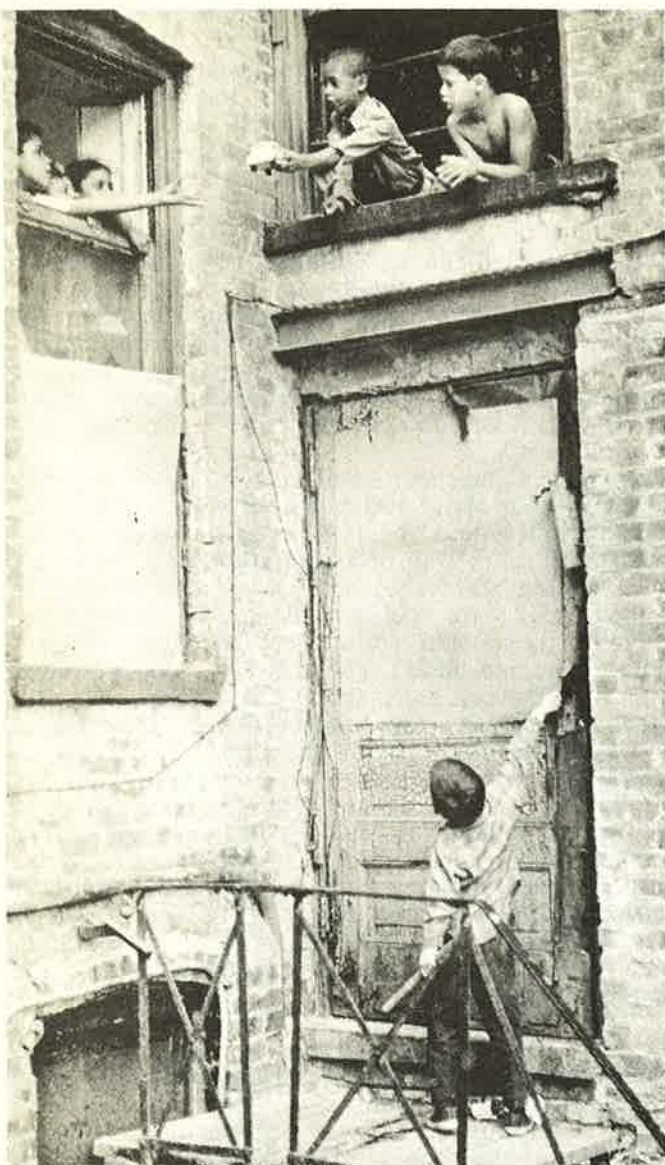
of this decadent society, that those conditions are manifestations of the U.S. ruling class practicing genocide against the poor native Hawaiians.

First of all, let me say that being on welfare is the most depressing, demoralizing, humiliating experience that any human being can experience. Besides these psychological effects of welfare are the physical side effects that have left deep psychological effects of welfare are the physical side effects that have left deep psychological scars in both my parents and their children.

There were five of us kids, living in a two-bedroom house. My oldest brother, Eddie, and my older sister, Florence, shared one bedroom. My little sister, Beatrice, and I slept out in the living room and my baby brother, Kelvin, slept with Mom and Dad in their bedroom. Dad had a photo studio but he could hardly earn enough money to provide for us. And Mom nursed Kelvin while Dad was at work. Dad was never in a good mood when he got back from work and sometimes he would take his bitterness out on Mom. He beat her in front of us - poor helpless Mom who couldn't speak one word of English. The first time Dad hit Mom, she packed her bags and left us with him. But Mom had nowhere to go; she couldn't speak English; she never had any time to herself to make friends; she had no one except Dad and us kids. After a few hours, poor Mom would be home again, only to return to the laborious, monotonous work of a housewife with too many children.

By the time I started kindergarten, we moved from Building 17 to Building 25 because the latter had three bedrooms instead of two. Whenever Mom had the time, she took out her koto, a huge Japanese instrument that she brought back from Japan. This was her only escape from the miserable life that she was subjected to. She played the koto well, and better than her playing was her singing. Financially, we were worse off than before and Mom ended up selling her koto for two hundred dollars. She was so sad, but I guess we really needed the money.

By the time I was a third grader, Eddie was going to Dole Intermediate School. Besides being a student, he was a newspaper boy. The money he earned from delivering went into Dad's pocket. Eddie got involved in gambling like every kid in Kalihi did, but unlike every kid, Eddie always lost his money. Not only that, sometimes he would come home with a blackeye. Dad would get so furious he'd warn



When World War II broke out and the U.S. went to war with Japan, the War Measures Act went into effect. What this Act did was herd Japanese people living in the U.S. into concentration camps. However, my Dad was one among many who joined the U.S. Army. There were many Japanese people who wanted to be "good Americans," who joined the U.S. Army to prove their loyalty to the American way of life. Dad was stationed in Okinawa when the war ended. There he met Mom, got her pregnant, married her and brought her home to Hawaii. Eight months later she gave birth to my oldest brother, Eddie. Before long, there were five of us running and crawling around, constantly screaming and/or crying.

We lived in the Kalihi area where most welfare recipients reside. Tourists never go into Kalihi because it's the ugliest, poorest section on the island. Spending eight years of my life there, I never realized the ugliness until I got away from Kalihi only to discover something more horrifying than the physical ugliness, more horrifying was the realization that conditions are manifestations

Eddie after literally throwing him against the wall, that he better not gamble again. Eddie never learned though. . . he always came home with money missing or with no money at all. One time, he got suspended from school for gambling and he didn't come home from school until late that evening. By the time he got home, we were all in bed even though we couldn't sleep; we were all afraid for Eddie. Suprisingly, Dad never beat him for getting suspended. Maybe Dad thought that Eddie was incorrigible.

A few months later, everyone in Kalihi got notices because the government had plans to tear down all the houses to make way for the tall welfare buildings that stand today. We moved to Kailua which is basically a middle class area on the other side of the island. Kailua Elementary School was a new experience for me because most of the kids were caucasian. We called caucasians "howlies," meaning whites. There were mostly "howlies" in my new school because the parents of the "howlie kids" were in the military, stationed at Kaneohe Marine Base, which is located next to Kailua. (Hawaii is 3000 miles away from the U.S. mainland and a major military area known as the "Pacific Pentagon." There are 116,000 U.S. military in Hawaii. They add up to one fourth of the population not counting wives and children.)

I didn't like Kailua because the kids made fun of my pidgeon English. I never knew when to use the word is or are. I used to say "bafé" instead of "bathe" and my pronunciation and grammar, they claimed, were so bad! The only people my age I could relate to were the "moke," a term used by "howlies" to mean Hawaiians. (The term "mokes" is analogous to "niggers" used by whites here on the mainland of the U.S.) Flo and I hung around "mokes" for a while. We use to say "fuck" all the time and the more we said it, the better

we felt. I used to say it in front of Mom. What the hell, she didn't know what it meant. In fact, neither did I.

I don't exactly know how it came about, but, gradually Flo and I broke away from the "mokes" and for three years, I experienced nightmares of insecurity in school, always afraid that the other kids would ridicule me and correct me in my grammar. It was during these years that I worked hard, so very hard, to be like the "howlie" kids. . . being able to go to dancing school, having a nice house, parents who could speak good English; in general, not to be different from everyone.

After we moved from Kalihi, and seeing the vast differences between me and all the "howlie" kids, I held a grudge against Mom and Dad for those differences. They never in my life read me a story; they never even bought me a book. Mom couldn't speak English much less read it and Dad never had the time to spend with us. All of my clothes were hand-me-downs. I used to tell Mom and Dad that I would marry a rich man so that my children could have anything they wanted. I told Mom that I would buy her a real diamond ring instead of the fake one she had and that one day I'd take care of them both.

But I had always held a grudge against both my parents for being as deprived as I was, that all of us had missed the attention that our friends had in their family lives. I used to blame Mom and Dad for the agonies we went through. I believed the myth that rich people were rich because they worked harder than the poor and because they were a lot smarter than the poor. Mom and Dad still believe these myths but what they don't realize is that the U.S. ruling class with their army of occupation wants them and people like them to continue to believe that. The U.S. government tells us that we have it a lot better than we would in Asia, Africa, in Latin America, which

is the racist kind of propaganda that keeps the U.S. ruling class on top. The fact is, we aren't better off than the poor in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We are oppressed like the oppressed in Third World countries and the oppressor is the same. When I realized this, how could I blame my parents for the way we were brought up?

EDITOR: LAURIE FIERSTEIN

TECHNICAL EDITOR: MEIRA POMERANTZ

STAFF: YAWF WOMEN

BATTLE ACTS

Volume 1 number 2

first class — \$3.50

third class — \$3.00

one-year subscriptions

YAWF WOMEN

58 west 25th st.

new york, n.y. 10010

FEMINISM and MARXISM

by DOROTHY BALLAN

A materialist view
of women's oppression.

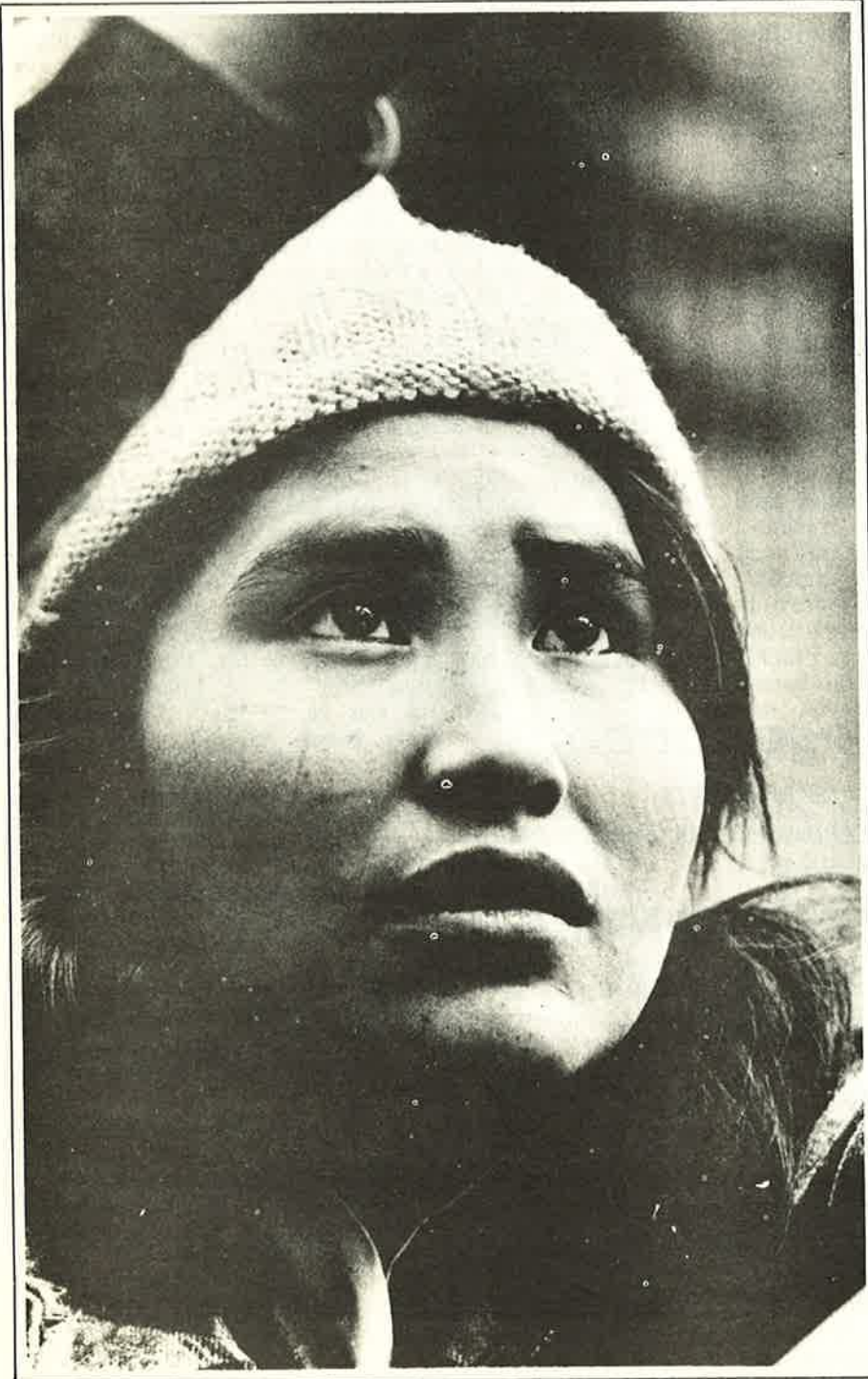
write to YAWF Women

58 W. 25 St.

N.Y., N.Y. 10010 \$1.00

feminist rebellion -1600

The following excerpt is taken from the book The New Indians by Stan Steiner.



Nowhere was the power of women in tribal life more dramatically shown than in the shaping of the Iroquois Confederation of Nations. It was the women of the Iroquois tribes who fought what may have been the first successful feminist rebellion in the New World. The year was 1600, or thereabouts, when these tribal feminists decided that they had had enough of unregulated warfare by their men. Lysistratas among the Indian women proclaimed a boycott on love-making and childbearing. Until the men conceded to them the power to decide upon war and peace, there would be no more warriors. Since the Iroquois men believed that women alone knew the secret of birth, the feminist rebellion was instantly successful.

In the Constitution of Degana-widah, the founder of the Iroquois Confederation of Nations had said: "He caused the body of our mother, the woman, to be of a great worth and honor. He proposed that she shall be endowed and entrusted with the birth and upbringing of men, and that she shall have the care of all that is planted by which life is sustained and supported and the power to breathe is fortified: and moreover that the warriors shall be her assistants."

The footnote of history was curiously supplied when Susan B. Anthony began her "Votes for Women" movement two and a half centuries later. Unknowingly the feminists chose to hold their founding convention of latter-day suffragettes in the town of Seneca, New York. The site was just a stone's throw from the old council house where the Iroquois women had plotted their feminist rebellion.

UNION ORGANIZING

by Barbara Teel

For the last year the office workers at New York University, three-fourths of whom are women, have been fighting for the right to be represented by a union. We have been fighting for higher wages and better benefits for all workers at the university. Even after the administration tried to buy us off with increases, we still make at least \$20 a week less than office workers at several other universities in the New York area.

The organizing drive began a year ago, in the libraries, where the workers made ridiculously low salaries (\$80-90 a week) and worked under

to crush the union, the university, through underhanded maneuvering and legal red tape, kept us from getting a contract.

Now, our job is to convince the workers that the only way to win what we want is to fight for it again -- to join with the students and the unionized maintenance and cafeteria workers and shut down the university!

Union organizing is something most women have little experience with, although women have had a long history of militant labor struggles. Many of us were hesitant about the continual talking with other workers, men and women, and the confrontations with the university administration which are necessary to win union recognition and a good contract. But we soon found out that we were very good at organizing. When we went to the office of the director of labor relations for the university to protest that workers were not being given what the university's rules said they should be getting, we suddenly realized that our delegation was entirely women!

Working in offices, as we do, we have special problems trying to convince workers that they have to fight for their rights. Although most of the office workers voted to have the union represent them in contract negotiations, they are afraid to fight for the things they voted for. Working in isolated offices, they don't realize the strength we have in fighting together. But weeks of talking and a lot of bad treatment from the university, is beginning to push people into the fight.

We have begun to organize a women's group to discuss and fight for our particular needs and grievances as women. We are pushing the demands for maternity pay, maternity leave, and a day-care center. Particular emphasis must be put on the needs of the Black and Puerto Rican women, who suffer most at the hands of the racist university.

One Black woman told me that she must work nights and weekends at other jobs to support her two children. Because day-care centers, even when available, won't take children for just a few hours, she has to worry about where they will be after school. Besides this, if a Black or Puerto Rican woman can get a white-collar job, she has to be super-skilled and super-attractive and then, she is still stuck in a lower paying, back office job.

We are learning how we, as women, can play a significant role in the trade union struggle. When we go out on strike, as we are sure we will eventually have to do, women will be on the front lines keeping scabs out of the buildings.



miserable conditions. After six months of unsuccessful attempts to force the university to recognize that they were unionized and to negotiate a contract, the workers went out on strike. They quickly found out that workers in other offices also wanted to be unionized.

Secretaries, university mailmen, clerks, and other office and technical workers went out on the picket lines with the library workers. The university promised immediate elections for union representation, and the strike was ended. The election was held several weeks later, and most of the workers voted for the union to represent them. But in order

Mother Jones was one of those strong, defiant, revolutionary women that the history books like to ignore. She lived and helped forge that period of history when the working men, women and children fought so valiantly to organize themselves into a force strong enough to defy the merciless industrial might of nineteenth century America.

Mother Jones was a union organizer -- one of the greatest who ever lived. A daughter of an immigrant, Irish railroad worker, her 100 years were ones of back-breaking work, personal heart-break and dedication to the workers' struggle against the bosses. Much of the better living and working conditions which were wrestled from the bosses' grasp may be credited to her dedication.

She was born in Cork, Ireland in 1830. "My people were poor," she said. "For generations they had fought and died for Ireland's freedom." She grew up in Toronto, Canada, and came to the U.S. as a teacher. However, she soon gave up teaching and opened a dressmaking shop in Chicago. "I preferred sewing to bossing little children," she said.

In 1861, Mother Jones married. She was 31 years old -- a "spinsterly" old age for a "lady" to marry! Six years and four children later, a yellow fever epidemic killed her whole family. She returned to Chicago and to dressmaking. She sewed for the rich and lived with the poor. In 1871 the great Chicago fire burned out her sewing shop, and she and thousands of other homeless and hungry workers, lived and starved together.

For 41 years Mother Jones had struggled to survive as a woman, a mother and a worker. At this age her strength, her defiance and her militancy, so often the lonely legacy of the working woman, forged an undying dedication to the union struggle. After the fire, Mother Jones joined the Knights of Labor.

Mother Jones organized during the time of union ferment and the Haymarket massacre. She went wherever there was a need for union organizing. She lived and worked with the workers and their families -- the guts of their strug-

MOTHER JONES

by Helen Richardson



Mother Jones with miner's wife and children

gle was hers. The bosses tried to threaten and intimidate her -- they threatened the people who took her in. But always she defied the orders and went, very often landing in jail when she got to wherever she was going.

In 1899, the United Mine workers began to organize the immigrant workers in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. Mother Jones was there. When the miners began to waiver, she was called to a meeting and she said to them, "You've got to take the pledge. Rise and pledge to stick to your brothers and the union till the strike is won!

"The men shuffled their feet but the women rose, their babies in their arms, and pledged themselves to see that no one went to work in the morning.

"The company tried to bring in scabs. I told the men to stay home with the children for a change and let the women attend to the scabs.... On a given day they were to bring their mops and brooms, and the army would charge the scabs up at the mines.

"I selected a leader... an Irish woman who had a most picturesque appearance. Up the mountain side, yelling and hollering, she led the women, and when the mules came up with the scabs and the coal, she began beating on the dishpan and hollering and all the army joined in with her. The sheriff tapped her on the shoulder.

"'My dear lady,' said he, 'remember the mules. Don't frighten them.'

"She took the old tin pan and she hit him with it and she hollered, 'To hell with you and the mules!'

"He fell over and dropped into the creek. Then the mules began to rebel against scabbing. They bucked and kicked the scab drivers and started off for the barn. The scabs started running down hill, followed by the army of women with their mops and pails and brooms.

"From that day on the women kept continual watch of the mines to see that the company did not bring in scabs. Every day women with brooms or mops in one hand and babies in the other arm wrapped in little blankets went to the mines and watched that no one went in. And all night long they kept watch. They were heroic women. In the long years to come the nation will pay them high tribute....The strike was won."

This was not the only time that Mother Jones and her army of women were seen taking the offensive during a strike—"Join the Union! Join the Union!" was their battle cry. Very often, it was their defiance in the face of bayonets

and soldiers that became the catalyst for organizing the union.

Mother Jones fought at every level and in every aspect of the union struggle from storming the bosses, to agitating among the workers, to finding clothes and food for the strikers and their families. When all the men were sent to jail, it was Mother Jones—if she was not sent to jail, too—who organized the women and children and kept them strong. She traveled from mine to factory, "My address is wherever there is a fight against oppression...my address is like my shoes: it travels with me."

Mother Jones was not only a progressive union organizer, but she was a woman conscious of the plight of her sister working women. All through her autobiography (the only book written on her 100 years of struggle!) she interweaves the militant struggle of the women workers and workers' wives so that their history speaks the truth.

Mother Jones refused to join the suffragette movement because of its roots in the middle class. "The plutocrats have organized their women. They keep them busy with suffrage, prohibition and charity," she said

When asked to speak at a suffragette meeting she said, "You must stand for free speech in the streets."

"How can we," piped a woman, "when we haven't a vote?"

"I have never had a vote," she said, "and I have raised hell all over this country! You don't need a vote to raise hell! You need convictions and a voice!...The women of Colorado have had the vote for two generations and the working men and women are in slavery....No matter what your fight, don't be ladylike! God Almighty made women and the Rockefeller gang of thieves made ladies."

LONG LIVE MOTHER JONES!
LIVE LIKE HER!

Continued from page 4

women at the RPCC

shops should be called together so that everyone could discuss the proposal. About 700 women did come together for the discussion. First, the workshop that had drawn up the solidarity statement asked for the approval of the body. The overwhelming majority of the women there voted for the statement.

Next came the discussion on the proposal to take the building. The same kind of debate as in the workshop ensued, with a large number of women really excited by the idea. There was some confusion, however, as to whether the Panthers wanted the building for the convention. When contacted, they expressed appreciation for the offer, but felt that they could not take advantage of it at that time. Arrangements had already been made for Huey to speak at St. Stephen's Church, so the Panther Party was urging everyone to go there that night.

This information, of course, ended the discussion of the takeover. However, just the idea that the spirit of many of the women there was so high that they had even dared to propose such a bold course of action made the whole meeting a kind of new experience in the women's struggle.

Contrast with Philadelphia

The women's section of the Washington convention turned out to be a very different experience from that in Philadelphia. This was not just because the women seemed to be more together, but because the whole political level seemed to have shifted. Those women who had been most vociferous

in denouncing the Panthers in Philadelphia, urging that women split because they could never relate to such a "male-dominated" convention were not able to mobilize any significant support among the women in Washington. The women's workshops were held, not in the spirit of disrupting or being separate from the convention, but in the interest of relating to the whole event better.

There was a strong differentiation among the women in Washington, and it reflects two basic trends in the women's movement today. In essence, there is an ideological gulf between those women who look upon the struggle against women's oppression to be an integral part of the whole revolutionary struggle of all oppressed people against capitalism, and U.S. imperialism in particular, as against those women who see women's liberation as something divorced from other liberation struggles.

(This is not to say that the former do not see the need for an autonomous women's movement to fight specifically for women, but that women alone are not "the revolution" as some women have put it, and men are not the prime enemy; rather it is the whole system of male supremacy fostered by the capitalist state.)

This ideological difference was the underlying force in many of the disputes which took place in Washington. But it seemed that women who have a revolutionary perspective for the women's struggle were in fact in the majority and were able to carry through their determination as women, to express their support for the Panther Party in its struggle against government repression and to demand women's rights to participate in a revolutionary people's constitutional convention.

demonstration at House of D

by Ellen Pierce

"All I want to know," Angela Davis called out from her cell to the women on the street below the jail, "All I want to know is that you're with me all the way."

"We're with you all the way, Angela!" responded hundreds of Black, Puerto Rican, Asian and white sisters, their fists flying into the air.

The women on the street across from the notorious Women's House of Detention in New York City had gathered there to show our determination to fight for the freedom of our imprisoned sisters—both the well-known political prisoners like Angela Davis and the hundreds of unknown women whose only crimes are being non-white in a racist society, or poor or desperate and fighting for survival.

For more than an hour women marched around the jail. December 20 was a cold day and every now and then a chilly wind would sneak into the narrow streets behind the prison, almost blowing over the women carrying billowing banners. But it couldn't still the voices that shouted "Hey hey, ho ho House of D. has gotta go," and "The rich set the bail, the poor go to jail!" We chanted until we thought we had no voice left, and then a new surge of strength would come from somewhere and we kept on.

It was the sisters inside the prison who provided our inspiration, just as the women demonstrators must have given a feeling of strength and solidarity to those inside.

Plans for a rally at a spot about half a block from the jail were abandoned in favor of allowing women on both sides of the bars to interact at closer range. Joan Bird,

one of the New York Panther 21 who spent over a year in the prison before being released on \$100,000 ransom, and other Panther women led chants and songs. Then the crowd would hush for a while as the sisters inside would shout out to us or



manage to throw pieces of newspapers out of the windows.

Women from the Young Lords Party led chants in Spanish. Whenever prisoners in one part of the fortress yelled out, many of the sisters outside would rush to that area to be able to hear, and perhaps see, her better.

The demonstration was called by the December 20 Coalition and largely organized by the Bail Fund, which is a group of women, including Panther women and YAWF Women, organizing to bail women out of the House of Detention and call attention to the inhuman and brutal conditions inside that institution. Several times the address of the Bail Fund was chanted slowly, in English and in Spanish, so the prisoners could copy it down. Hundreds of women are held for weeks or months before trial because "low" bails of \$25 or \$50 are beyond their reach. On the morning of the demonstration, two sisters had been released through the efforts of the Bail Fund.

When the cops began to pen in the demonstration with barricades, the women did not move back. Instead, Black and Puerto Rican women were lifted onto the barricades on their sisters' arms, in order to get closer still to the prisoners. The defense squads, which were organized in advance by women from the Bail Fund, Youth Against War and Fascism and the Committee of Returned Volunteers, showed both seriousness and organization of the women.

At one point, Veronica Golos of YAWF Women, who was to have chaired the rally, got up on a milk crate and gave a spirited rap to the sisters inside and introduced a sister from I Wor Kuen, the revolutionary Asian organization. The Chinese sister told the crowd of the arrest of two members of I Wor Kuen the previous night and the people responded with money for bail.

Besides Angela Davis, anonymous women called out for more heat in the jail, better food, medical attention around the clock. And one voice, or perhaps it was many voices, kept crying out "Revolution until victory!"

After two hours of this the women finally dispersed, promising the sisters inside "We'll be back—with guns."

nlf women

Continued from back cover
that Vice-president Ky viciously remarked the other day about Mme. Binh's role in the Paris peace talks, "You can never trust a woman in politics."

Never again will Vietnamese women live the way they did under the French when hunger and poverty prevailed, when children were forced to labor, when sickness was rampant, and women were forced to become servants of the French for little or no wages. Vietnamese women will continue to struggle with their people until independence and liberation are finally achieved. Through the struggle they have moved from the state of servitude to one of full participation and feel great solidarity with women throughout the world involved in liberation struggles.

For further information contact

BAIL FUND
P.O. BOX 637

PETER COOPER STATION
N.Y. N.Y. 10003

*Talk not to us of chivalry, that died long ago...in social life,
true, a man in love will jump to pick up a glove or bouquet for a silly girl of sixteen,
whilst at home he will permit his aged mother to carry pails of water and armfuls of wood,
or his wife to lug a twenty pound baby, hour after hour; without ever offering to relieve her.*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton



NLF WOMEN

by Cathy Durkin

The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese women and men against U.S. imperialism is a daily inspiration to the people of the world who yearn to be free. Increasingly women in the American Women's Liberation Movement are looking to their Vietnamese sisters for examples of how to struggle. In a spirit of solidarity with Vietnamese women, American women from coast to coast are commemorating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam on December 20. We know our Vietnamese sisters have been in the forefront of the NLF's entire historic fight. And we are declaring our full support for the countless Vietnamese women who are tortured, murdered, brutally beaten, prostituted and raped, napalmed and thrown into prisons without trials or bail, all at the hands of the U.S. war machine.

Within the past few weeks, several hundred women prisoners in jail near Saigon rebelled against the horrendous living conditions forced upon them and the continued imprisonment of several women whose terms had been finished. When prison officials threatened to ship the women to another prison, they staged a demonstration against their illegal and inhuman incarceration. The police response was the same as it is in this country against oppressed people who dare to rebel - the women

were beaten, tear gassed, and many were badly burned. Their flesh was charred by acid and lye thrown at them by the police.

In Saigon, a group of women have organized the Committee of Women's Action for the Right to Live in order to survive under the brutal conditions of the war. Many of the women whose children are in jail are protesting their imprisonment for daring to speak out against the U.S. war policy. Their children have been tortured - many can no longer walk - they are denied food, drink and medical attention and are jailed without trials or bail or kept in jail after their sentences have been served and have been denied all legal rights.

(In sharp contrast to the new social relations created by the NLF are the old relations of prostitution and servitude forced on multitudes of women by the invading U.S. army. Hundreds of thousands of women whose villages have been destroyed, whose fields have been devastated, and whose families are starving, must survive by selling their bodies. Often whole families are dependent on the earnings of a young girl. No wonder women so earnestly support the NLF!)

In every aspect of organization by the NLF, women cadres are at the forefront. Not only do women participate in provincial liberated Women's Associations (which deal with health, economic affairs, agricultural production and women's and children's affairs), but they are often responsible for the liberation of specific villages, the setting up of liberated governments and the management of local elections once a village is liberated. Many women are on the Central Committee of the NLF and in many liberated towns women are leaders of self-management committees which administer the gov-

ernments of the liberated villages and direct all aspects of village life.

Many demonstrations against U.S. aggression have been organized and participated in by thousands of Vietnamese women. For example, as early as 1960, thou-



ands of women in My Tha province marched on the capital to demand compensation for the burning of six villages. Three women were shot while marching, while a fourth woman took the banner from a fallen sister and continued marching with the support of a crowd of several thousand women and men. The governor of the province was forced to grant compensation for the village due to the strength of the Vietnamese women who stormed his office.

Every day women known as "cannon-speakers" risk their lives in trying to convince enemy troops

to surrender, even going as far as sitting on the enemy's loaded cannons. In 1961 in Ben Tre an entire garrison surrendered due to the skillful and persuasive arguments of the women there!

Many Vietnamese women have been hailed as heroines of the world revolutionary movement for their courageous and selfless activities to liberate their people. Kan Lich is a Vietnamese sister who has been decorated by her people for her superb military ability in commanding entire regiments of troops. Rachem H'Bhan who is now her district's committee of the NLF, led women in her province to fight Diem's troops with firewood and helped to drive them out. Chi Kinh has set up women's committees throughout the liberated areas and continually risks her life organizing elections for the Liberated Women's Association; she is also on the Executive Committee of the NLF for her province and chairwoman of the local Liberated Women's Association. Vo Thi Thang, a 23-year-old revolutionary who executed a traitor has just been sentenced to 20 years at hard labor after being brutally tortured by the U.S. military.

That the role of Vietnamese women differs from that of women in the U.S. and in Saigon is clearly demonstrated at the Paris peace talks, where the only woman representative is Mme. Binh and the many women with her in the PRG delegation in Paris, represent the strong role women have in the national liberation movement of Vietnam, while the other all-male delegations reflect the male chauvinist character of the nations they represent. Male supremacy is such a dominant characteristic in the U.S.-Saigon ruling circles