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BATTLE ACTS

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

...the father kisses the mother goodbye and goes off to work. The kids polish off their cereal and head for school. The mother lovingly watches them go and then gets down to business with a broom or the dishes....

This is the "ideal American family," star of stage, screen, magazines, embedded in the thinking of millions of people in this country.

The idea that this family is not the eternal, unchangeable and universal form of human relationships comes as quite a shock—heresy!—to many women and men. Yet the family has been in a constant process of change and evolution since the dawn of humanity. And like all other relations among people, the family structure is ultimately based on the productive forces and forms of a particular society.

How a society provides clothing, food and shelter also accounts for the way people marry and raise children. This materialist approach to the sacrosanct family was made by Frederick Engels in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" over eighty years ago, but it has lost none of its relevance to the struggle for women's liberation since then.

The earliest form of family life was communal. With few or no tools to cope with a hostile environment, all members of this communal family had to cooperate to survive.

The natural division of labor between the sexes based on bearing and nursing children did not exclude women from taking part in work that was as necessary and important as the men's. Women gathered plants for food, did weaving and pottery; men hunted and fished. Everything was shared. And women and men were equally respected members of the community.

Because it was impossible to trace the paternity of a child in this family arrangement, descent was traced through the mother, reinforcing the position of women.

The tie between woman and man could be simply dissolved by either, in which case the children remained with their mother. Property, which at this stage consisted only of a few ornaments, utensils and tools, was also kept in the female line when an individual died.

What tore apart the communal household and changed the pairing couple into the monogamous family—with the man dominant—was the creation of surpluses, as agriculture and the domestication of animals were developed. These surpluses occurred in the areas of work that fell to the men according to the division of labor by sex. So the extra, the wealth, became the property of the men.

The accumulation of surpluses caused profound changes in all human relations. Slavery arose as labor power became capable of creating more than it used up to maintain the slave. Not only did differentiation according to wealth destroy the old cooperative society and force it to break up into separate family units, it caused differentiation within the family. The man now had more property than the woman. He wanted that property to remain with his family and his children; to do this he had to know who his children were. He had to replace descent through the mother (mother-right) with descent and inheritance

EVOLUTION

through the father. With his new wealth and power, man overthrew mother-right and took possession of woman as the bearer of his authenticated heirs.

Monogamy arose out of new property relations as a way of keeping property within the male line. Adultery on the part of the woman was severely punished. Woman's position was lowered from that of an important contributor to the communal household to that of the bearer of sons. The work she did lost its social character and was degraded to private service for the man. She became part of the man's property too, to be used or disposed of like any other piece of property.

This relationship has prevailed, with some modification, right up to the present. The woman in the home, with no independent source of income, no independent relation to production, derives her status from her husband's (or father's) job. And even when the woman is a wage-earner, the weight of social custom makes her still serve and defer to the man.

Although the property considerations—that make marriages among wealthy people like business mergers—do not apply to the majority of working people, who have little or no property, the ideas and ideology of the property owner dominate the entire society.

In discussing the family in the United States today, it has to be kept in mind that this country has oppressed Black and other Third World peoples. Among them oppression has torn apart many families by making it impossible for the man to support his wife and children in the way white bourgeois society dictates. This racist discrimination throws a monumental burden especially on the Black woman. Not only must she provide for her children through the lowest-paid, worst kinds of work or through welfare, but she must also face the daily barrage of insults and abuse that is this society's only reward for her hard, hard struggle.

With white people, the family makes woman dependent on the man, by denying her the right to exist, let alone earn a living, outside of her relationship to husband and children. But in binding her to the man, the family also chains the man to his job, to his oppressor. He knows that he is responsible for earning a livelihood for his wife and children, and this makes him cautious, conservative on his job and in his outlook and often resentful of the wife who spends his money, the kids who tie him down, the elderly parents he must help care for.

This family is also distinguished by remarkable inefficiency—millions of separate cubicles the woman isolated following an endless cycle of cooking-cleaning-shopping for four or five people. What could be more inefficient than the appliances—which we are told we can't do without—that lie unused in the closet most of the time? But from industries' point of view, what is

OF THE FAMILY

by Ellen Catalinotto



Cuban family

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more profitable than selling 20 million vacuum cleaners, guaranteed to self-destruct within three years, each one of which is used maybe once a week for a few hours?

The family as we know it today is an institution of private property, based on the enslavement of women. And its destruction among Black and Third World people is the result of racism and poverty. Often in any family the pressures that bind people together can mangle and distort whatever love and affection the marriage and conception of children were once based upon.

But some day the family will be replaced by a better system—where women are treated as equals, where society takes care of every child's needs and the government provides substitutes for the daily household duties that grind us down. Then people will really be free to love each other. Only by ending the rule of profit and property can human relations—women and men—be set free.

Children's liberation NOW

All of us—but especially those who have children or who work with them and love them—know that just as the ruling class of this society does its best to crush the mind and spirit of any adult who tries to speak out and act against repression, so it starts at a very tender age, in a thousand and one insidious ways, to restrict the minds of our children—to make children accept their rules, without question, without rebellion. It has traditionally been women who have had to bear the greatest responsibility for child rearing, so it is not surprising then that it is women who feel the oppression of children the most. We want to respond to that by bringing new ideas, liberating ideas to children. On this page, we want not only to present a mixture of new ideas and stories for children of different ages but to include from children the beautiful, creative thoughts that children always have, but which the schools so quickly seek to destroy. We welcome any ideas, especially from children, that would help make this page a living experiment in children's liberation.



Glenda Jones

THE DAY CARE CENTER

written by a participant

...starts at 12:30 P.M. It ends at 5:30 P.M. It is at the Y.A.W.F. Youth Office, at 58 or 78 who knows what street? in Manhattan. -- it's on Saturday.

It's lots of fun. When we first come, (well, we take off our coats, don't we? and then..... (usually) we paint or color.

Some times there's a "big event". Examples:

- 1) Day-glo paint. (In the morning)
 - 2) baking or cooking (after painting or coloring)
 - 3) Decorations for Christmas Party (sometimes morning)
 - 4) Christmas Party (After lunch ??)
 - 5) Birthday Party (after lunch)
- exc. exc. exc.

Sometimes we go outside or to the park.

Lunch is at about 1:00, 1:30 or 2:00.

If there's anything else you want to find out about it....well, go there yourself!

P.S. There are desks and chairs.

by Sara

The following has been adapted from the book "How Man Became a Giant" by M. Ilyin and Y. Segal, published in the Soviet Union. A limited number of copies may be ordered from Battle Acts at \$2.00 each, plus postage.

What Columbus Really Discovered!

In school you all learn that Columbus discovered America and found a "New World." There's even a special day named after him, which I'm sure you all like because it means a day off from school. But you know, Columbus and the other explorers from Europe didn't really find a "New World." America is really a very old world, and the Indian people whom Columbus met had been living here for many thousands of years.

The European explorers like Columbus thought the customs of

the Indians were wild and strange. The houses, clothing and ways of the Indians were not in the least like their own. But what they didn't know, in fact what no one realized until hundreds of years later, was that the ancestors of the Europeans, in fact the ancestors of all human beings, once lived very much like the Indians whom the explorers first met.

This "New World" was a world without money, without rich or poor. The strangers from across the sea thought all people in the world were divided into masters and servants, landlords and peasants, because that's the way they ran their world. But here all people were equal. Here no one owned a palace or even a house. Whole clans (that means everybody in the family, from grandparents to cousins) lived together and everyone was responsible for feeding and clothing this

DAUGHTER, NO LONGER PITIED

by Emily Hanlon

large family. The land did not belong to any one person, but to the tribe as a whole. There were no serfs who worked for masters on his land. Here all people were free.

In Europe there were Emperors, Kings, and Princes. But here there were neither kings nor thrones. The council of chiefs decided all the affairs of the tribe in the presence of the entire tribe. The chief was not the master of the tribe. In some Indian languages the word "chief" simply meant "speaker."

In the Old World, the King was the head of the nation, and the father was the head of the family. The King judged and punished his subjects. The father judged and punished his children. But here in the New World the father had no power over his children. The children belonged to the mother and remained with her. Here is what an early explorer wrote: "The women usually run the house, and they always stand up for each other. They keep their food and other provisions in common. Women have a lot of power. The choice of a chief is always up to the women."

In the Old World a woman was her husband's servant. But among the Indian tribes a woman was the head of the house, and sometimes even the head of the tribe.

All of this was very puzzling to the Europeans. They said that the Indians had wild ways and that they were "savages." In fact, it was the Europeans who acted like savages toward the Indians—taking their land and killing many of them to make way for the settlers.

They had by that time quite forgotten that their own ancestors had once lived in exactly the same way. In fact, how many of you knew that this is the very same way your ancestors lived?

Adapted by Helene Gershowitz

And now
for hours, endless hours, that child fought
to be born;
and for hours, those pain full hours
I cursed my woman's body
and place.
I cursed my unborn child, and prayed —
a son —
to make a place in history for me.
And in moments of calm, I pitied —
a daughter —
to suffer in my place for the history of my sex.

How many women have cried out
in anguish through our silent years,
our silent history, in pity —
a newborn daughter!
because our history lied
and our truth lay buried
under the drudgery of woman's work and obedience.

And only my mother and her mother and
her mother...
only they know and I know and
all women who suffer know
the infinity of our sufferings,
the infinity of our strength;
and how the men, the men we love,
our fathers, our brothers, our lovers, our husbands,
suffer at the hands of those
who deny us our history, too —
suffer at the boss's hand —
and weary, frustrated, make us suffer, too.

And now
for hours, endless hours, as that child fights
to be born,
I feel the strength of my woman's body,
the strength that is life,
the strength of centuries
of birth and pain and work
that brought us nothing —
solitary anger.
And I know that child,
unborn woman,
is struggling for birth
to join in struggle,
to fight beside me,
to carry on my place —
no longer in silent anguish,
no longer with solitary strength,
no longer bearing the brunt of our men's
weariness and frustration;
but Women together, fighting, remaking our history.

And now
for hours, endless hours, as that child is fighting
to be born,
I know the strength of my woman's body.
And I know that child —
unborn woman, unborn man —
no longer silent, obedient and weary,
no longer alone, is fighting
to be born —
a warrior.

To the concerned people of New York:

We the prisoners of the Women's House of Detention wish to inform you of the barbaric conditions we are subjected to by the correction officials here in the House of Detention. The system breeds mental degradation and physical deterioration. The majority of us are Black and Puerto Rican. We cannot afford the ransom the courts call bail. It is apparent to us that you, the public, are not aware of the barbaric conditions that exist here.

Our grievances are:

1. We do not receive adequate medical attention. We do not have a doctor on duty twenty-four hours a day although there are seven hundred and fifty-four women in here. The doctors we do have are old and senile.

a. We ask that all doctors practicing medicine here be required to take a Medical Board examination at least once a year.

b. We ask for a doctor to be on duty twenty-four hours a day.

c. We ask that it be a requirement that any inmate suffering from any medical problem be permitted to see a doctor at any time, day or night, and that it not be left to the discretion of the officer on duty or the nurse in attendance.

d. We ask for first-rate medicine; that it be labeled properly and after it has lost its potency it be thrown out.

2. We do not receive an adequate diet. We do not get any fresh vegetables or any fresh fruits. Our diet consists of beans, rice, potatoes, and powdered milk. We get hot cereal twice a week, one boiled egg once a week. The rest of the days we get cold cereal and powdered milk. The meats that we eat are as old as the building we must live in.

a. We ask for our meats to be inspected.

b. We ask for at least one glass of fresh milk daily.

c. We ask for fresh vegetables and at least one piece of fruit a day.

d. We ask for citrus juices once a day.

3. The House of Detention is infested with mice and roaches. They roam the building freely, carrying filth and disease. We are often bitten by these germ-carrying rodents. There is no extermination system.

We ask that an exterminating company be allowed to come in twice a month to eliminate these health hazards.

4. There are four punishment strip cells where we are put if we receive an "infraction." The cells do not have any toilets, sinks, or mattresses. In them we are stripped of all our clothing. We do not receive any bedding for the cold tile floor. We are allowed to shower only every five days. We ask that these cells be shut down immediately.

5. We are beaten by the male guards. We ask that male guard brutality be stopped immediately. We are harassed and threatened with an infraction by the female guards. We ask for the harassment to be stopped.

6. Our funds which are sent and brought to us are misappropriated. We ask for an investigation.

7. We are unable to purchase in commissary

letters from our

bras, panties, socks, or stockings. None of these are given to us by the state as long as we are being held in detention. We ask that we be allowed to purchase bras, panties, socks, stockings, bobby pins for our hair, hair rollers, makeup, large rubber combs for the sisters in here who cannot comb their hair with the very small combs we can now buy, creams for our faces, lotions for our bodies so that we can care for ourselves as women.

8. We are two in a cell. The cells are five feet by nine feet. Out of a fifteen-hour day, we are locked up eleven of those hours. We ask for longer recreation periods.

9. The adolescents are separated from the adults as long as they are on detention floors. Once they have been sentenced, they are put in the same corridors as the adults. We ask that the adolescents be kept separate from the adults after sentencing.

10. When we are appointed a legal representative by the courts they do not come to us to discuss the facts of our cases. We ask that the courts require a visit to be made by the court-appointed legal representative to us, the accused, before we go to court.

11. We are often brought to court and required to wait in the bull pen five or six hours in order to see a judge only to be told our cases have been adjourned. We ask that when we are brought to court that we see the judge.

12. There are some of us who have been here twenty months and still have not gone to trial. We ask for speedier court dates. We ask that our court dates be made known to us.

13. We have been raided at five-thirty in the morning, made to strip off all our clothing and to squat down, our personal belongings being thrown on the floor. The adolescents have been made to go into the kitchen and strip off their clothing in front of everyone.

We ask that the stripping of inmates be stopped immediately.

We have refused to lock ourselves in our cells to protest this inhuman treatment and have been met with water hoses turned on us by the prison officials. We are locked in our cells for eight to ten days as punishment for protesting. All of our privileges are taken away.

We the oppressed women of the New York House of Detention humbly seek your support and help. We who are your fellow human beings need you, the public, to help us in our struggle to eliminate these injustices.

Captive Sisters in the House of D

imprisoned sisters

To our Friends, Sisters, Comrades,

To the many hundreds of you who protested Sunday, December 20 at the Women's House of Detention in New York City. We all want to thank you for your support. It strengthened us all to know that you are willing to help us, the prisoners of consistent injustice, eliminate these barbaric conditions we are subjected to.

Do not go home and think that your task is done. Your shouts of burn the house down and power to the people are not enough. Let us not stop at this point. We are the power! We the people. Let us forget our petty grievances with each other. Our task must be to close down all the concentration camps around the country.

Let us stand in unity and show the Lindsays, the Rockefellers, the Nixons, Reagans and Agnews that we the people! the power of the United States, will no longer tolerate the imperialist standards of this society. Let us have a one day work stoppage throughout the country to show the world that we the people! the power, want freedom, justice, and equality for all men.

Captive Sisters, House of Detention

Earlier last month, when judge murtagh revoked my bail, I had the ironic pleasure of revisiting the women held inside new york city's only female detention center. In the six days that I was there, something struck me that had previously passed as another hopeless trait of capitalism. I would like to describe it here and now along with its connection to a well known principle, "information is the raw material for new ideas." Information: to most sisters in the women's house of detention, there is little practical difference in bails of \$100,000, \$10,000, \$1,000 and \$100. A large amount of women are being detained at amounts ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. Simultaneously, a great deal of the charges accompanying these bails are what we shall refer to as survival (or defensive) offenses. This means that these charges stem from acts which, if successful, would have eased some of the economic burden of the sister, thus eliminating any need to steal, prostitute, con, stick up or sell marijuana or drugs.

Obviously the problem, from the beginning, was an economic need--thus we have a political contradiction. When the trained mercenary (police) discovered this act of defense, he at no time inquired of the sister why she felt such a compulsion to risk death or imprisonment for such a small act. It never occurs to him to investigate the situation fairly and objectively. He needs to make only his monthly arrest quota to insure his job security....

Meanwhile the sister is taken to a jail cell, where she is booked and held pending trial. No one has yet asked her if she is innocent, or if her actions were justified, or even if her children are taken care of in her absence. Either the same night or the following morning, she is taken before a judge. He does not speak to her at all....

The asst. district attorney reads off the charges with one or two new ones added for good measure, then he recites a well used speech about the criminal threat the woman poses on society. He asks the judge to set bail at some ridiculous amount that has nothing to do with the constitutional requirements for bail....

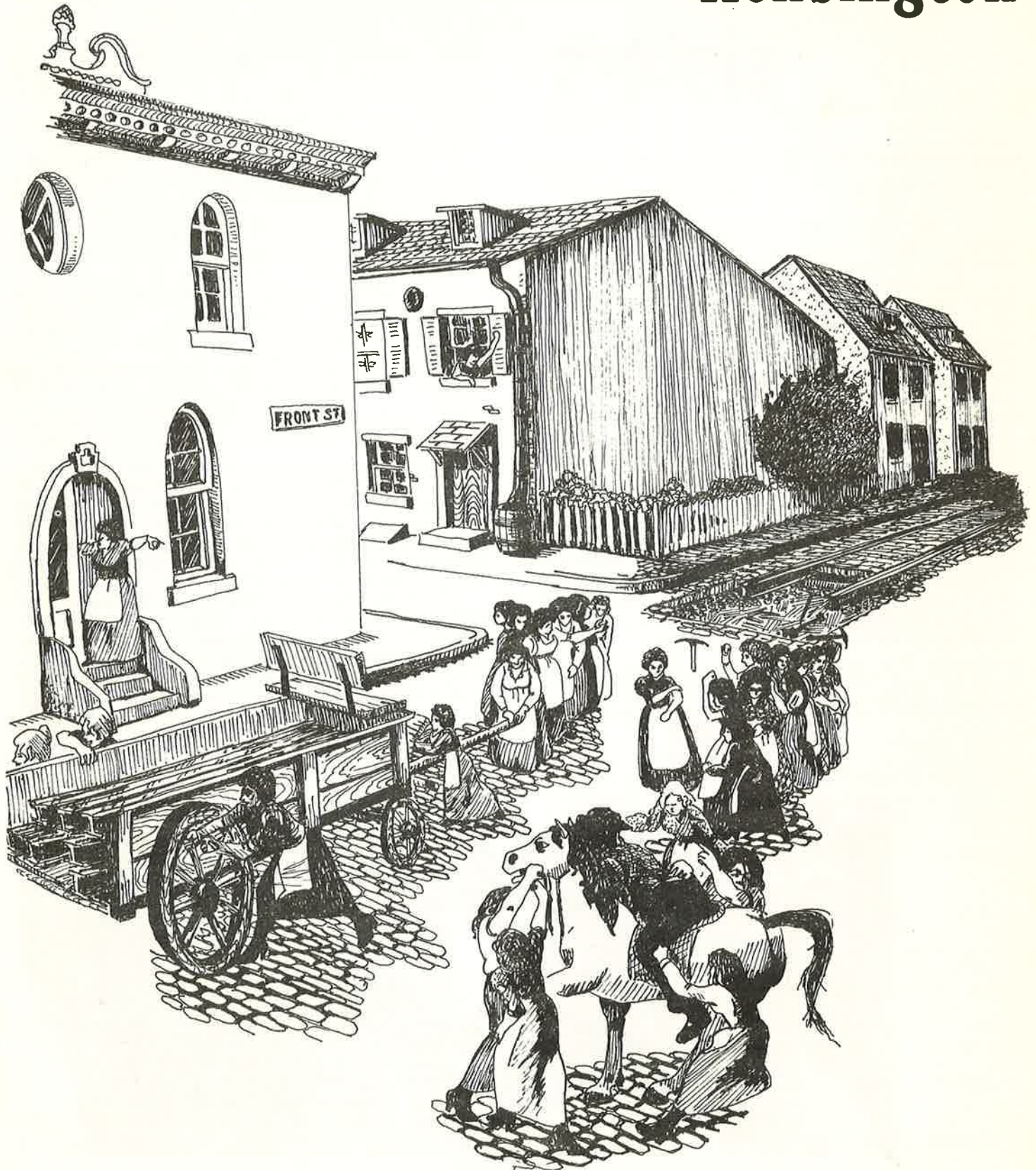
The judge follows the suggestion of the asst. district attorney and sets bail. He does not ask her

continued to page 18

Joan and Afeni at Dec. 20th demonstration at the House of D.



Kensington



Women Stop Railroad Construction

by JoAnn Frankenhauser & Judith Biggin, Phila. Free Press Collective

Our history books do not teach us the history of working women. Nowhere in our textbooks, for example, do we find any mention of the militant women of Kensington, Pa., who in March 1840 led a successful struggle to prevent the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad from running through their community. Their story is a tribute to the power of women united in struggle.

Kensington had long been a self-governing working class community, established by Swedes some 40 years before the landing of William Penn and his fellow Quakers in 1682. By the 1840's Kensington was made up of mainly English working class people, the sons and daughters of indentured servants and recent immigrants. Philadelphia, only a mile away, was by contrast inhabited by wealthy Quakers and businessmen; working people were discouraged from settling there.

Even before 1840, poor workers had risen up against the wealthy merchants on a number of occasions to demand and enforce lower prices. With increasing industrialization, struggle grew around inhumane conditions in the factories, where up to 75 per cent of employees were women and children. Statistics on Kensington at that time show high productivity, yet none of the profits went to the workers. Along with inflation, long working hours, and bad conditions came the railroads, which replaced canals as a means of transportation and disrupted communities in their path.

What happened in Kensington was typical of profit-hungry monopolies like the railroads. Without consulting the community, politicians and railroad officials proposed to run the railroad right through the heart of Kensington, near Town Hall. On March 2, the Commissioners of Kensington, reacting to community pressure, arrested several members of a railroad company crew who were removing paving stones before laying the roadbed. The railroad company quickly had the courts issue an injunction preventing interference with the construction.

Failing to get justice in the courts, the people took to the streets. On March 9, as railroad workers began tearing up paving stones for the railroad, Kensingtonians picked them up and put them back. Three were arrested on charges of riot. Three days later a crowd of several hundred again harassed the railroad workmen. This brought out the sheriff, 20 deputies, and John Naglee, president of the railroad. Feeling the tenseness and unity of the crowd, Naglee quickly dispersed the railroad workers. The sheriff and his deputies attempted to restrain the crowd but were repeatedly driven away. Finally they gave up and left.

From newspaper accounts it appears the crowd

was mostly women, who poured into the streets from their homes and from the die factory and towed away a wagonful of rails. Others tore up the foundation where ties were to be laid. The women were described as "abandoning their usual occupations and engaging in fierce and rude brawls." The men then removed 200 feet of rails already laid down. It was a clear victory for the people of Kensington. The railroad was stopped cold at Master Street, where it stands to this day.

The response of the establishment press to this episode was swift and sharp, especially in its treatment of women. The Public Ledger in an editorial entitled "Mob" wrote: "A singular and most disgraceful feature of these disturbances was the active participation of women. The most efficacious leaders of the rioters were females. Unsexing themselves for the occasion, these Amazons led on their forces, and both by precept and example incited them to mischief. They prompted the destruction of property, they assailed with blows the officers who attempted to restrain them, they gave life and impulse and energy to the whole proceedings."

As for the men who supported the women's action in defending their community against the wealthy monopolies, the press stated: "It is a sign of evil times when they (women) thus forget what is due to their sex and their station, and rush into the turmoils and conflicts of lawless strife. It is a sign of evil times, also, when their husbands and fathers tolerate such misconduct."

These rich men not only sought to keep women—particularly working class women—in their place; they were also looking out for their own interests in keeping women apart.

They had seen women break step and assume leadership. Most important, however, they had seen the results of such leadership—a successful blow to their own material interests. And they were frightened. That this was true can be seen from the following editorial, carried in one Philadelphia newspaper: "Once cut loose from the gentle restraints of sex, and taught by experience that when united they are not only formidable but irresistible, what shall hinder them hereafter from renewing and repeating upon every provocation, real or imagined, the turbulence which, when once tasted, to ferocious natures never loses its relish."

"It is a fact which all history confirms that mobs of women are always more cruel, relentless and destructive than those composed of men, and it is an evil day for any community when this portion of its members evince a determination to resist and overbear the law."

OFF THE BOSS



"Why, I'll just get my 'girl' to do it." "You made one mistake in this letter. It should be perfect. Do it over." "What do you mean you haven't gotten the letter done? I dictated it to you 15 minutes ago. What do you do all day?" "What do you think we're paying you for? To sit and gossip all day? You're very lucky to even have this job. You are replaceable, you know!"

That's the kind of abuse a secretary has to take every day that makes being a secretary one of the most degrading and dehumanizing jobs. The work itself is boring, tedious, unproductive and uncreative and necessitates subordinating your own needs and personality to that of your boss. Just as the wife is supposed to serve her husband, so the secretary is supposed to serve her boss—serve him coffee, make his appointments, type his letters, answer his phones and do anything and everything else he demands of her.

And if the boss wants to call you stupid, inefficient or lazy, you're supposed to sit with your tail between your legs, submissively answering, "Yes, sir." Heaven forbid a secretary should answer back! That would mean that she has a will and spirit of her own—something that threatens the boss's superior role. All he cares about is that you're there to do his work. If the boss goes for a two-hour lunch, "on business," that's okay; but if the secretary comes back five

minutes late, there's the boss, running around in a frenzy, yelling, "Where is she? Where is she? She's five minutes late. My phone has been ringing for ten minutes and she's not here to answer it!"

I work in what is called a "nonprofit" organization, and at one point I worked for the Medical Director, a doctor and his assistant, a woman. The first week I was there, he didn't deign to say "hello" to me or even ask me what my name was. He was too "good" for that—I was just a lowly secretary, put there to do his work. Every day they would pile more work on me—letter after letter, press release after press release, memo after memo—too much work for one person.

One day, the "good" doctor called me into his office. He looked me straight in the eye and said, "Nikki, you are very inefficient. You cannot type a letter without one mistake in it. You're very slow. Plus, you seem not to really like your job. You're not an 'eager beaver' about your job. And you always look so grim—you never seem to smile! How can I have a secretary who doesn't smile? And if I tell my secretary to do something, I expect her to do it! And not complain about it! Which brings me to your raise. Now, I regard a raise as a reward for good work, and you certainly have not done good work. Therefore, I am not giving you a raise. And from now on, you

SS'S LAP!



better watch it."

I tried to explain to him that one person couldn't do work for two people. But, of course, he didn't listen—I was just supposed to DO, not feel or think.

The verbal abuse, day in and day out, wears you down; and secretaries are constantly being reminded every minute of the day what their job is, what their role must be. And there is also physical abuse. Most secretaries are hired on the basis of how pretty they are, how they smile, what kind of clothes they wear and HOW GOOD THEY WOULD LOOK SITTING ON THE BOSS'S LAP!

Even within the limited framework of secretarial jobs, there is a caste of higher-paid and more prestigious positions. The executive secretary is paid up to \$150 more per week than the average secretary. She therefore gains a more respectable social position in the office milieu—she considers herself superior to other office workers.

In my office, they are starting to fire people—secretaries, of course. What the bosses want is a few "competent" secretaries to do all the work, the work of two or even three women. And, of course, they won't give us any more money. They cry poverty, but they have plenty of cash to re-

decorate their already walnut-paneled, wall-to-wall carpeted offices and give themselves raises!

It's all right for the executives to go into their plush offices and close the door and have their nice little "conferences" (probably about who they're going to fire next). But if the boss sees any of the secretaries talking to each other, he starts ranting and raving about how the "girls" never do any work, how all they do is talk. But they're only covering up the real reason why they don't want us to "socialize"—they're afraid. They're afraid that we might be getting ourselves together.

And that's just what we should be doing. The only way that we secretaries are going to realize our own force is by doing just that—by getting together. Machines do what they're supposed to, they can't talk back, they have no personality. And that's precisely how bosses would like secretaries to behave—like machines. Then they would have no problems.

But, as it is, they're the ones who give us problems. So let's get off the boss's lap and stand together to end this exploitation that we suffer as women and workers!

by Nikki Green

Historically in Chinese society the role of women was that of slave to her husband's family. She was the private property of his family, a source of labor power and a producer of sons.

The Chinese character for women signifies everything that a woman stood for in feudal China:

⌋ a straight back but no head,
— extended arms forced open to any fate, ⌋ a flowing breast,
X crossed legs, 女 and the uterus. That was a woman.



Among the poor it was a common practice to kill girl babies at birth because daughters were considered to be more of a burden than an asset. If a daughter was to be "saved," her feet were bound while she was still a baby, and she lived the first five years of her life in total agony just so that her parents could get a better price for her when they sold her into slavery! In old China a woman could not marry without bound feet.

Girl babies had their feet bound when they were about one year old. The little toes of the feet were crushed backward and the bones were broken so that the feet formed a pattern known as "golden lilies"—this pattern was made to sexually arouse the husband. The binding of feet meant that a normal-size woman had baby-size feet to support her. This crippling, feudal practice was not only painful, but made women the helpless victims of their husbands and families. By the time a woman was 25 to 30 years old, the process of unbinding the feet was excruciatingly painful; yet for centuries the women were forced to unbind their feet for the sexual pleasure of men.

Women were supposed to be kept behind the walls of their husbands' homes, and it was considered a disgrace for women to be seen out of doors. Yet a poor family was forced to either sell their daughter into slavery for what amounted to a couple of meals or put her to work in the fields or in the factories. Because of the severe restrictions on women, to work outside the home was personally degrading to the women who were forced to do it; it made them feel even less than human. A woman who worked in a factory felt the utmost humiliation—her father or husband was paid for her work! If she made a mistake on the job, she was locked all night in a small, narrow wooden cage. The cage was so small that the women could not lie down. They had to crouch on their bound feet the whole night.

In the 1920's a great revolutionary movement was sweeping China. A war of liberation was in the making, and along with this came the cry for women's liberation. Women formed unions to protect themselves. They formed battalions and marched thousands of miles, explaining what liberation meant. Wherever these women marched, they left behind them streets flooded with the bandages from newly unbound feet!

A women's union in Hupeh printed this story told by a 12-year-old slave girl: "My father died and my mother had five daughters. There was no food. The widow was an acquaintance (sic). My mother sold us one by one to her to get food for the others. My

by Sue Steinman

CHINESE WOMEN

an end to bondage

mistress treats me very badly, beating me every day. I said I would go to the women's union for help... My mistress said: 'If you shame me before the women's union, I will get you back and cut you into little pieces.'" The women's union took the young girl in and then taught her to read.

In 1937 Japanese imperialist troops invaded China. During the war that followed, hundreds of thousands of women joined the Eighth Route Army—the People's Liberation Army—to fight the enemy and to organize women. The following is an account of the war years by Soong Ching Ling (better known as Mme. Sun Yat Sen):

The Japanese army showed that it was not only warring against men, but against women also, taking special advantage of the defenselessness of the sex. Chinese women replied with the formation of the Kwangsi Women's Battalion and training in armed self-defense. The Kwangsi Women's Battalion covered 1,500 miles in the first nine months of the



war, often fighting behind enemy lines and in the front of each battle they engaged in.

After World War II ended and a period of reaction set in, Chiang Kai-shek's armies hunted down and murdered all women with big unbound feet and bobbed hair. The very fact that their hair was short and their feet unbound was interpreted as a sign of rebellion. But this did not stop the heroic women's movement. Women began either working underground or dressing as men, and joined the Revolutionary Army to continue their fight for women's liberation and national liberation.

In 1949, with the victory of the revolution, women finally tore off the bandages on their feet once and for all, freeing them to play a major role in every aspect of life and society. If it were not for the initiative of women directly after the war, the Burma Road and The Great North West Highway to the Soviet Union would not have been built.

Today every Chinese woman has an opportunity to

get an education and to be trained in any field—from doctors, technicians, and agronomists to construction and railroad workers. Not only are women being freed from housework by collectivization and nurseries, but they have also assumed political leadership in every level of government, from women's unions to the Communist Party on local and national levels. In fact it was a woman, Chiang Ching, who played an important role in the Great Cultural Revolution in 1966.

No longer a piece of private property, but a valued, independent person, every Chinese woman of today is free to determine all aspects of her own life. How different is the image that Mao presents in the following poem from that of the centuries' old character for women!

These well-groomed heroines carry five-foot rifles
On this parade ground in the first rays of the sun
Daughters of China have uncommon aspirations
Preferring battle-tunics to red dresses.

*"It is time to effect a revolution in female manners —
time to restore to them their lost dignity..."*

a clarion call for women's emancipation



by Alice Robinson

Mary Wollstonecraft did not just write a great book on the rights of women. Her very life was an example of how it was possible for a woman in eighteenth-century England to live a productive life outside of the home in direct opposition to the traditional role of woman as wife and mother.

When Mary Wollstonecraft was born in England in 1759 the lot of a woman was little more than that of a servant to the man she married. Women, whether they were from the rich or poor classes, had no legal rights to their own property in marriage or to their children in cases of divorce.

If a woman didn't marry, her choices were just as bad, if not worse. For an unmarried woman from the middle class, the only occupations open to her were teaching, being a companion for a wealthy lady, or becoming a governess. Or she could live on the charity of a brother, subject to all the humiliations suffered by being a dependent "spinster" in someone else's home.

Mary was brought up in a middle class home where her father had complete authority over her mother. As a child, she had seen her mother helplessly beaten many times by her father. At the age of 19, Mary left home, determined not to choose a stifling marriage as the way out. In her determination to be independent she spent the next eight years educating herself, earning a living first as a companion to a wealthy woman at Bath, then as a teacher and finally as mistress of her own school.

In 1786, at the age of 27, Mary wrote her first book, Thoughts on the Education of Daughters,

expressing the dissatisfaction of many women of her class with their role in marriage. Unable to support herself with the school, she spent a year as a governess in Ireland. At this time Mary decided to maintain her independence by writing. She started contributing to the magazine Analytical Review. Within the next five years Mary became one of the regular contributors to the magazine, published her own book, Original Stories, and translated two books after teaching herself German. For the first time in her life she was continually exposed to the latest ideas and theories and began forming her own radical ideas on the structure of society. Before long Mary took on one of the foremost thinkers of the time — the reactionary Edmund Burke.

From the time Mary had first been a companion at Bath and witnessed the wasteful, extravagant lives of the rich, to the time she spent as a governess in Ireland and saw the extremes between the idle rich and the terribly impoverished, overworked peasants, she had felt how wrong this inequality between rich and poor was. With the advent of the French Revolution in 1789 many English people, including Mary, saw it as the first step in a new era which would emancipate humanity.

When Edmund Burke published his Reflections on the Revolution in France condemning the revolution and pleading for preservation of the old social order -- that is, property rights -- Mary wrote a pamphlet, A Vindication of the Rights of Men. She denounced Burke for wanting to preserve the institutions under which men and women suffered.

She wrote, "When you call yourself a friend of liberty, ask your own heart whether it would not be more consistent to style yourself the champion of property...."

Mary's forthright attack on one of the best known conservative figures of the day put her on a level with the other leading progressive thinkers of her day, at a time when there were but a handful of women involved in the intellectual life of the period.

By now Mary was prepared to write her great work calling for the liberation of her sex. Her years of steadfast determination to be self-supporting and her constant self-education and standing up to the world of men had made her ready. In 1792 A Vindication of the Rights of Women was published. At the time, it was the most radical book ever written demanding equal human rights for women and putting forth a theory on how to accomplish this. In the book she wrote: "It is time to effect a revolution in female manners--time to restore to them their lost dignity--and make them, as part of the human species, labor by reforming themselves to reform the world."

Mary maintained that women are not intellectually weaker than men, but that they are brought up and treated differently. They are given inferior educations--taught only how to be wives and mothers and not reasoning human beings. To Mary, education, requiring judgment and discipline, was needed to make women men's equals.

After the book was written she went to Paris and lived there for four years. While there she had an unhappy love affair and gave birth to her first

daughter. In 1796 she returned to England. One year later she married William Godwin, a well-known radical writer of the time. Six months later, and just six days after giving birth to their daughter, she died. The child was named Mary Wollstonecraft after her mother.

After Mary's death Godwin published his Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and Posthumous Works, a collection of her letters and writings. The bourgeois press, unable to discredit Mary while alive, tried to do so after her death. She was vilified and slandered for her unorthodox social behavior and for her "immoral" writings on women. This slander campaign was so intense that just three years later her name was left out of a major biography of women writers.

But Mary's work was not forgotten. In the middle of the nineteenth century many of her writings were reprinted; and in 1889 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony dedicated their own book on the women's suffrage movement in the U.S. to Mary Wollstonecraft, among other women.

Mary Wollstonecraft's writings and contributions to the cause of women's liberation may now be hidden on the back shelves of libraries. And the history of hundreds of other women who have so bravely struggled for the freedom of their sex may also be untaught in schools and even unwritten. But the time will come when women will write their own history books and the heritage of women will be learned and respected. Then, Mary Wollstonecraft's contributions for the liberation of women will be widely known.

Why is it when a woman gets done carrying 30-pound children and 50-pound grocery bags, figuring out how to manage new shoes for the kids, working for the boss, waiting on her family...

she puts on the television and gets told that...

women very rarely do any useful work, women are weak and not too smart, women are only good for sex.

Then once a year on "Mother's Day" they give us candy and say we're wonderful. But we, as women, have our own real day—International Women's Day—when we don't ask for candy but demand: equal pay for equal work.

an end to inflation.
an end to all discrimination, both open and subtle, that follows us all our lives and which, combined with racism, oppresses non-white women doubly and triply.

The fight of Black and poor women for survival under these conditions of poverty and racism is said by the rulers of this country to be a crime. Women are rounded up each day and thrown into rat holes like the Women's House of Detention with no heat,

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

DEMONSTRATE

Saturday March 6, 1971 1:00 PM

At the WOMEN'S HOUSE OF DETENTION

(Greenwich & 6th Aves.) Day-Care Available

Sponsored by YAWF WOMEN

hot water or decent food.

We must fight to have our sisters behind these prison walls released immediately!

We must fight to win the right to live as human beings should, for decent jobs, food, schools and shelter for our families!

Please call:

242 9225

or

989 3932



women in high school

by Peggy McIntosh

From the day women are born, we are cast into preestablished roles that oppress and exploit us in every aspect of our lives. The "education" we receive in school continues to fortify and build these roles, and by the time we reach high school this oppression takes on more blatant and unique forms.

Discrimination is very blatant in physical education classes. Very often women are only given a small room for gym, while the boys get the larger room and all the intricate gym equipment. One girl I know wanted to join the boys' basketball team. She had the skill, but for a woman that's not enough—the teacher gave her some story about how she might get hurt! Boys are encouraged to go out for strenuous, active sports, while women are given light exercises to keep their bodies slim and attractive. But it is just because women can't defend themselves that they are left helpless in the face of brutal assaults and rape!

Every day we have to face bla-

tant male chauvinism from the men teachers, who, in addition to being sexist themselves, encourage chauvinism in students. For instance, if a woman is interested in sports, or does not dress up as much as the other women, her male classmates joke about her "femininity" and the teacher laughs right along with them. Often it is the teacher himself who makes the remarks.

In the sex education classes (if there are any) no birth control methods are ever mentioned. When women demand this information it is usually denied. We are taught that it is a man's nature to have sex all the time, and that men are interested only in sex. But if we have sexual relations we are "promiscuous."

What are students encouraged to learn in school? First of all, it is only those considered "exceptional" students (almost always white and middle-class) who are "encouraged" to take academic or college preparatory courses. Ev-

eryone else is channeled by the vicious tracking system into dead-end vocational or "general education" courses. Most women are made to take typing and stenography, and when we are to graduate, our worth is evaluated in terms of our typing speed—no matter how good our minds are. In fact, the entire education we are given is good for nothing, except to destroy any thirst for knowledge and learning we had when we first entered school.

We are forced, as are all high school students, to study and learn from racist and sexist history books. All these books begin and end with the big lie about how great American "democracy" and "freedom" is—about how the impoverished, exploited people throughout the colonized world welcome American oppressors as their "liberators."

The only women who are mentioned are women like Ann Boleyn, who prostituted herself to the English king in order to gain power. These history books don't dare mention that ever since the development of private property women have been forced to prostitute themselves to survive and provide for their families—much less gain power! Or worse yet, we read about Betsy Ross, sitting at home sewing the flag. If the brave suffragettes are mentioned at all, we are told that they were foolish, frustrated women who made idiots out of themselves for an unimportant cause. We are not told of the heroic struggles that many American women waged against slavery, at the same time they were fighting for their own rights. Nor are we ever told about the enormous strides toward equality that women in socialist countries are taking now.

High school women, especially Third World and white working class women, are beginning to struggle against the oppression in the high schools. We are fighting against the racist, male chauvinist nature of the schools. We are refusing to accept the lies that are fed to us. We are joining with all our fellow inmates in these jails they call schools to expose and abolish them and the imperialist system in this country that keeps them going.

Women Seize Building!

by Sue Davis

Child care...clothing exchange...book exchange...food co-op...arts workshop...free health care...drug rehabilitation...feminist school...lesbian rights center...

That is the program women representing many groups in the New York City Women's Liberation Movement wanted to set up when, on New Year's Eve, they marched, over 100 strong, down 5th Street and seized a former women's shelter and welfare building, which had been abandoned by the city for the last four years "for lack of funds." Armed with their own will, creativity, and collective power—not to mention brooms, food, sleeping bags, and heaters—the women were determined to provide services long denied them by the city government. Tired of pleading, petitioning, and picketing for necessities of life for women, they took the only measures left to them—they squatted and began renovating the building. They took what rightfully belongs to women, to provide for women.

The building was a shambles, a safety hazard to the community. Broken glass, peeling lead paint, holes in the floors. But the electricity worked, and soon the windows were covered with plastic and the floor was swept. A giant plastic bubble, easy to heat, provided a safe area for the child care center and sleeping quarters in the main room on the second floor.

Two guards stayed by the entrance to the building—a window—around the clock. The only men who were admitted into the building had skills needed to repair and maintain it—skills they then taught the women. They found the boiler had a month's supply of fuel and would take relatively little time and money to repair.

Women began going out to the community, leafleting and canvassing about child care needs. And women began coming in—movement women who heard about the action from friends or the media, and community women who were attracted by the huge sign

strung outside—"Women: This Building Is Yours!" Poor, destitute, hungry, homeless women joined the squatters, eating, sleeping, talking, working with them to make the building livable. Kids came continually and one Sunday about fifty gathered to participate in a children's theater show.

From this grew a spirit, a strength of women acting together, independently, in their own interests. And all this took place diagonally across the street from a police precinct house!

Of course, Mayor Lindsay immediately had one of his community relations men, Geoffrey Stokes, talk to the women. His offer of "leave the building and then we'll negotiate" was flatly refused by the women. Bella Abzug, Congresswoman from the district who had campaigned under the women's liberation banner, promised her public support for the women's building. This support never materialized. When the Stokes approach failed to move the women, Stokes brought in Ronnie Eldridge to talk, woman to women.

But on Tuesday, January 12, when negotiations were underway, the Tactical Police Force and "unidentified" New York City officials surrounded the building with no warning, and when women refused to give it up, they were arrested. They were told: "We'll brick up the windows so you can never reenter this building."

About fifty women returned the next morning for a demonstration. They issued a press release that indicted the city officials for false arrest, bad faith in negotiating, criminal negligence, and attempted murder against the women and children of the community! When the women wanted to enter the building to get their belongings, one police lieutenant began ordering men from the Department of Real Estate to start boarding up the windows. As women rushed to enter the building, to claim what was theirs, cops began streaming out of the precinct house. Angered after seeing women move

freely in and out of the building for nearly two weeks, the pigs proceeded to attack the demonstration—to riot—pushing the women down the street, jumping on photographers and reporters, and beating up any woman who resisted.

Inside the building, a score of determined women read the press release aloud to the crowd outside. One line seemed particularly applicable: "When the people try to provide for themselves they are arrested and sometimes brutally beaten." About twenty cops invaded the room where the women were; they told the women: "either leave or be arrested." The women stood together, finally leaving the building under arrest, chanting and raising clenched fists. When the cops were finished, twenty-four women were under arrest, including two YAWF Women, Sue Davis and Sue Steinman. The charges ranged from assault to criminal trespass.

The spirit of solidarity and strength that developed within the building stayed with the women during their entire time in custody. They literally shook the paddy wagons with their chants. They refused to be called anything but "women," and they constantly demanded their rights—continually calling for food, telephone calls, lawyers. They even put on a karate exhibit -- that freaked out the cops! In court they were greeted by over 100 sisters and brothers who had come to support them -- a welcome sight indeed. All were paroled, even the assault cases.

The fight for the 5th Street Women's Building goes on—in exile. But whether or not that building is finally won for women, the action has inspired women and showed the necessity of struggling to meet their needs. Only when we can really indict the city officials, when we make "power to the people" a reality, will we be able to provide the facilities women need. And the 5th Street Building helps bring that day closer!



Free Angela Free Ericka Stop the war against BlackAmerica



continued from page 7

—letters

if she has eaten recently, if the clothes she wears are her only remnants. He doesn't ask her if her babies are fed everyday or if they have a decent house to stay in. All he does is set what amounts to ransom and confines her to a building where she is guarded, ignored and harassed. There is no point in her even dreaming about going home, because she knows she has no money (if she did she wouldn't be there anyway). Her friends have no money, or if they did, it is just enough to survive with. She faces a one-to three-year sentence, or even a six-month sentence. and she cannot post bail or hire a lawyer. She lays there waiting.

The court appoints, at random, a legal aid. He is employed by the state. He is given approximately ten caseloads a day and is either unable or chooses not to adequately defend any of them....

The legal aid confers with his "client" only on the days she comes to court. He periodically takes a portfolio of cases to the asst. district attorney and asks for deals; in return he promises not to take the state through the costly trial process. He then tells his client to cop out to a lesser charge so that she can get out of jail at the "earliest possible time." She has very little choice—she accepts. The judge first gives her a long speech about her "criminal nature" and tells her to rehabilitate so she can be an "asset to society." Then he gives her ninety days or six months. Sometimes he gives her a year. She is trapped!

She spends the entire sentence counting off days. In jail, she hustles to survive. Strange isn't it? Even in jail, the name of the game is money. She cannot buy cigarettes, personal basic necessities or the Sunday newspaper. The economic need is still there. Her instinctive compulsion for survival moves her to, in effect, pimp off her sisters in jail.

One of the restrictions of women's jails is com-

munications. There is no history of either political or religious struggle in women's detention centers. There were no Muslims who banded together ten years ago for any group victories, against the administration. As a result, these sisters are just now beginning to feel as though they are part of the revolutionary struggle for complete liberation. The cry to free political prisoners is not one which they readily associate with. We have not done enough to help them understand our concern for them. As a result of these conditions, a group of women in new york, have come together in order to eliminate some of these conditions.

We are organizing brigades of women to force the prison administration to admit us into these pig pens so that we can find out from the sisters themselves what their specific needs are. We will then take steps to meet those basic needs, (just as in the medium security of our communities, we are trying to meet the basic needs of our people). We will begin to take the necessary steps to insure the welfare of our sisters. Where there is a bail of an amount that we can raise, we will bail the sister out of the pig pen. We are beginning to send letters inside, so that the sisters know that we are putting our theories into practice. We want to utilize all of the progressive services available so that these sisters are given better treatment. The only way to educate is to communicate. We need help in all areas. We need money, decent jobs, advice, stamps, paper, revolutionary pressure on the prison administration and help for sisters who were addicts at the time of their arrest. We need clothes, houses, beds, every and anything. We need people to help us turn this idea into a revolutionary reality.

SOLIDARITY IN THE STRUGGLE!
SISTERS AND BROTHERS UNITE!

Excerpted from Palante

By Afeni Shakur

New York 21 Communication Secretary
Black Panther Party

diary of a VERY mad housewife

by Diana Leech

7 a.m. Get up. Get the kids up. Start making breakfast—run from the bedrooms to the bathroom to supervise the kids, and then on to the kitchen to watch that the oatmeal doesn't burn. Solve a million problems: "What's the weather like?" "Where's my shoes?" "What sweater should I wear?" Feed the kids and husband and make lunches.

8:30 a.m. Get them all out and on their way.

8:35 a.m. Feel like collapsing, but—now comes the time for organizing the house—make the beds, tidy up, vacuum, dust mop, wash the dishes—Oh! Those miserable, never ending dishes! Then to the overcrowded, hot and noisy laundromat and the constant battle over the machines. (This battle has more than once reduced me to tears!) Then on to the supermarket and the process of sorting out from the mess of overpriced, overpackaged and overprocessed foods, those items that are the most wholesome and within my budget.

3:30 p.m. The children come home, very often tired and irritated by the oppressive conditions in school. They need comfort and attention but by 4:30 p.m. I'm back to the mad rush of preparing for supper. Some chefs go to school and train for years to do that job alone!

7 p.m. Supper is over, the table cleared, dishes washed, pots put away. Then there's homework to be done and, suddenly, I'm a teacher! Baths to be taken and the kids are put to bed.

9 p.m. I've been working steadily for 14 hours and I'm exhausted. There are still things to do like mending and ironing, but somehow I am always putting them off until it's an emergency. And then, when the day is finally over, I get into bed with the thought that it will all be there again tomorrow and tomorrow....

And then, when someone asks, "What do you do?" I answer, "Oh, nothing. I'm just a housewife and mother." But we women are required to do more things than any person in any kind of job you could name. What other job demands that its worker be cook, cleaner, doctor, lawyer, judge, carpenter, lover, financier, repairwoman and teacher? And all this is without pay, sick leave, and paid vacations! We really hold an extremely important job. We are responsible, almost single-handed, for the health and growth of our children. So why are we made to feel that we are nothing—a zero in this society?

I had always thought of myself as fairly independent of much of society's values, but when I got married something happened. I felt that I was no longer just me, but a "Housewife," and then, when the children came (I have three), a "Mother." I really went overboard serving and catering to my family. But it didn't work. Nobody

was really happy, least of all me. My kids became more demanding and less loving; and my husband couldn't understand why I was so angry so much of the time.

I was confused; here I was married, with a loving husband, children, a home—all the things that I had thought would make me happy, make me more of a woman. So what was wrong? I felt less of a woman and more of a drudge, a mere extension of my family's needs.

My husband would try to help, but still, the burdens fell overwhelmingly on me. At the end of a long, hard day's work I would be tired and frustrated at the pace and boredom of this job. He would come home with only one thought in mind, "to shower, change, sit down, and put my feet up and read the paper." I wanted to do that too, but my job was far from over. The 4:30 to 9 p.m. slot was just beginning! (Of course, rich women can relax all day long if they want to. But at whose expense? At the expense of their maids and cooks who still have to go home at the end of the day and take care of their families.) And despite my husband's best intentions, it sometimes seemed easier to do it all myself, than to answer his questions and direct his efforts.

Just when things seem to be working themselves out, one of the kids gets sick. Then comes the worry, the constant care and the bills. And then, the time when I get sick—I really never thought much about it until last year when I had to stay in bed for a week—there was chaos! But there is no way to get around the chaos unless you have money. Besides the bills, there was no one to care for the kids and the house. Except for the occasional help from a friend, the burden of the work fell on my husband, who still had to work eight hours a day. It made him think twice not only about my job, but the plight of the working mother who has to work two jobs—every day.

When I got sick, that old feeling of wanting my mother to come and take over for me returned. But then, I realized—how many times must she have felt the same way. It was at that time that I began reading about women in Cuba. Women there can go to work, freed from the worry of what to do with their children, because there are free twenty-four-hour day care centers for every child starting at the age of two and a half months. And the women don't have to worry about the kind of care or education their children are getting because day care and education in general are top priorities. At the end of the day, the children are fed and bathed; and the mothers and fathers can eat at cafeterias where they work. Then they go get the children, go home and have time and energy to enjoy being with each other.

Why can't we have something like that here?

WAF GUNG HO?

NO!

reprinted from
A Four-year BUMMER

Kathy Kristian is a WAF at Chanute Air Force Base in Illinois. She joined for a 3-year term and has until 1974 to get out. She joined the American Servicemen's Union (ASU) 4 months ago. Kathy is an ASU organizer.

I've been told that GIs think all WAF are gung-ho. Please believe me, they aren't. I know better than anyone else, because I am a WAF, and I am NOT gung-ho!

Many guys who come into the Air Force complain that they were deceived by their recruiters (I know of one airman who thought he was enlisting for two years right up to the time he was sworn in), but most of you could never even come close to matching tales of woe with a WAF.

First off, a WAF is a prize catch for a recruiter. For a certain reason the Air Force really wants women to enlist, and will go to any lengths to get them to. I originally went to the recruiting station with a girlfriend who wanted to join. The red carpet was rolled out—until I signed the paper. I was chauffeured about in a government car, taken to dinner, and hours on end were spent talking to me, brainwashing me!

Being deceived, enlisted, even though my girlfriend didn't. My recruiter had hit me with a barrage of lies that sounded appealing and reasonably true. I was interested in educational opportunities...so he told me of all the wonderful programs available and the extensive, high quality training the AF provides. Of course he didn't tell me I would be working shift-work and be unable to enroll in

any on-campus courses (my main interest).

As far as the wonderful job training...I attended a 14-week tech school, the first week being K.P. The rest was a "concentrated Mickey Mouse" course that required no studying because the incompetent instructors taught only what we had to know to pass the test. I really can't feel too honored at being an "honor student."

Before I joined the Air Force I was interested in nursing, and was debating about going to school to become a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). My recruiter informed me that I would be a LPN when I came out of the service. To me this sounded rather like a nice deal since I didn't have the money to go to school without acquiring a loan. Of course he really meant I would have the same training as a LPN, but I would have to go to school when I got out if I wanted a license.

I guess every WAF that joins is handed the old line about how much they will be able to travel. Military hops are talked about as if there were jets leaving for all corners of the earth each day, just begging for passengers. But somehow I can't find one. And as far as glamor goes—my baggy uniforms just don't make it; recruiting propaganda never pictures anyone in their fatigues. I wonder why?

I can remember explicitly how I was assured that I would never undergo inspections after basic training, how my job would last eight hours a day, and then I would be free. But with mandatory GI parties once a week (more often if we fail inspection) and being on 24-hour call for hospital alert, I begin to feel lied to.

I guess what hurts most about being a WAF is the reputation

we automatically inherit when we put on the uniform. I was assured by my recruiter that WAF were highly respected by men in the Air Force. We would be treated well, and placed on a pedestal, to be admired and protected. (By the way, we can protect ourselves, recruitersmen.) I know now, however, that most men in the Air Force think we are either lesbians or whores...or to quote one airman "government paid whores."

I never thought of myself as being naive before I joined the Air Force. I honestly thought I had heard all the bad words that existed. However, I have been called some things since I came in, and had to ask the meaning of the word. I never before have been treated so rudely and have found it rather hard to adjust to. Most of you guys have sisters or a girlfriend. How would you react if she was walking down the street on base and someone said to her, "Well, look at the f--- pussy"? It takes a long time to get over the initial pain.

Now that I am in this 4-year prison term, with no time out for good behavior, I am going to demand my rights, and fight any way possible the oppression handed down to me. I refuse to meekly stand by and accept the role the Air Force wishes to hand WAF. The AF may think that because I am a woman I can't think, my commander may tell me I am in a "man's world," my superiors may inform me I am a neurotic because I don't like the sham I was tricked into—but to hell with them. I am a human being, I can think, and I can act.

So WAF, let's get it together! And guys—support us as separate individuals, capable of having minds of our own. Seize the Time!

Kathy Kristian

