

Socialist Women



Publication of the Socialist Party Women's Commission

Fall 2008

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Socialist Women

Publication of the Socialist Party
Women's Commission

EDITORIAL COLLECTIVE
Courtney Campbell • Susan Dorazio •
Breck Guise

DESIGN
Skipper Hammond

Socialist Women welcomes articles,
reviews, poetry, graphics, and letters.

Send Correspondence to:
Socialist Women
43 Taylor Hill Road
Montague, MA 01351
e-mail: susandor@crocker.com

To join the Socialist Party Women's
Commission e-mail list, go to [sp-usa.org/
mailman/listinfo/women_sp-usa.org](http://sp-usa.org/mailman/listinfo/women_sp-usa.org).

For more information about the Socialist
Party USA, please write to:

Socialist Party USA
339 Lafayette St., Room 303
New York, NY 10012
Phone: (212) 982-4586
e-mail: SocialistParty@sp-usa.org
Web: www.sp-usa.org

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About this issue...

As we all know, after enduring many many months of campaigning by the candidates of the two major corporate parties, "election season" in the U.S. has gone into over-drive. Millions of dollars are being spent on manipulating the electorate to favor Tweedledum over Tweedledee. On November 4, some percentage of eligible voters will decide the lesser-evil winners of the 2008 election for President, Vice-President, and legislators at the State and Federal levels. In almost all cases, these will be members of the mainstream parties, lackeys of global capitalism.

Meanwhile, our radical activism continues. As democratic socialists, we initiate demos for national health care, take part in national anti-war conferences, disrupt "business as usual" at Starbucks, work with immigrant-rights coalitions, organize rallies and circulate petitions in honor of Rosie Jimenez and for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment, and write letters in support of human service workers confronting union-busting tactics.

Does electoral politics fit into our activist agenda? Can and should we develop our fighting spirit when it comes to electoral action, the way we do for such issues as worker/community control of health care, stopping imperialist wars and occupations, and guaranteeing full reproductive justice and abortion rights to all women?

Our answer is "yes". As socialist feminists, we have a unique analysis and perspective to bring to women's rights/liberation issues. This is particularly important when it comes to electoral activity, where it is so easy to get caught up in the politics of reformism.

In this issue of *Socialist Women* we are offering you a wide range of information, opinion, and creative expression regarding women and the vote, and other matters related to making our individual and collective place in the world. We think that the net-effect will be to increase our commitment to political action as an important means of movement building, and to bolster our confidence that we can effectively participate as socialist feminists in the electoral arena.

Members of the Scottish Parliament, Carolyn Leckie and Rosie Kane, march with comrades from the Scottish Socialist Party. Photo courtesy of Alister Black



We'll vote with you: The right of the illiterate to vote in Brazil

by Courtney J. Campbell

"It's like you're blind, even though you can see," Juliana explains. "You see the code and know that it means something to someone else, but no matter how long you stare, you can't seem to decipher it."

Juliana (not her real name) pauses to answer her cell phone, now vibrating on the table between us. Soon, I overhear a one-sided conversation about the possibilities and impossibilities of credit card payment. She pulls out her Brazilian identity card and asks me to read her personal information out loud, repeating the words and numbers through the phone line as I decipher the code.

Juliana and her parents are among the 11.1 % of the Brazilian population that according to official statistics cannot read or write, although this number is often contested as being unrealistically low. Juliana is almost completely illiterate, able to push numbers on her cell phone, but not to read or write even the most basic words. She also belongs to the first generation in her family to exercise full electoral rights (or at least to be allowed to vote. It is still not possible for an illiterate to be a candidate for public office).

While the right of women to vote in Brazil was recognized in 1932, the right of the illiterate to vote was not recognized constitutionally until 53 years later, in 1985, through the 25th amendment to the constitution, and then again in the new constitution of 1988 that affirmed the right of the illiterate, and the obligation of the literate, to vote. This change in electoral law, however, was not a gift or donation on behalf of the literate population; it was the result of decades of struggle.

This struggle was initially launched by the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB Partido Comunista Brasileiro), formed in 1922, and deemed legal in 1945. Once obtaining legality (albeit temporarily), the PCB entered into high electoral gear, releasing on November 13th of the same year their electoral program. Among the demands contained in



Graffiti art and photography by Amber Santos

this program was the right for "the illiterate, soldiers, and marines to vote".

The electoral campaign resulted in the seating of 14 federal senators from the party in 1946 and 46 state senators in 1947, 9 of which were in the State of Pernambuco where Juliana currently resides. In the following years, the city where Juliana lives, Jaboatão dos Guararapes, became the first to elect a Communist mayor, and the state also gained a governor backed by the PCB.

The PCB's demand for electoral rights was not limited to simple rhetoric. One of the federal senators from this state of Brazil was Gregório Bezerra, himself illiterate until the age of 25, and thereafter self-referred to as semi-literate. It was Bezerra who suggested to the other PCB senators the presentation of a bill to Congress that would recognize the right of the illiterate and soldiers to vote.

Unfortunately, the bill that the PCB presented in 1946 to Congress was not approved. However, the right of sergeants and sub-officials of the Brazilian Armed Forces to vote was allowed, which Bezerra recognized as "a step ahead" that "opened the path to conquering the right to vote for all Brazilian citizens, whether they know how to read or not, whether they are in the military or otherwise. After all, the blame for a citizen not being able to read does not pertain to this citizen, but to governments that do not know, or do not care to know, how to manage public policy to benefit the people."

In the second volume of his memoirs, Bezerra dedicates several pages to the topic of universal suffrage. In one selection, he focuses specifically on the contradiction present in granting the

right to vote to members of the non-productive classes (i.e. the latifundio and "entreguistas" - Brazilians willing to hand Brazilian industry over to imperial powers), while denying this right to illiterate peasants. This section starts with the call to "take a look at the absurdity" as he then compares a couple that "doesn't produce, and sometimes doesn't even pay taxes, true parasites that live off of the work of others" to the illiterate peasant couple who is "hard-working, intelligent, responsible and capable of taking initiative ... honest, and competent within their field" and who "carry out all of their responsibilities toward society", yet are not allowed to vote.

Later, Bezerra continues this comparison focusing specifically on the peasant woman, stating that while a prostitute (whether metaphorical or otherwise) can vote if literate, "The female peasant with four, six, eight and, at times ten children, that beyond caring for them, feeding them, dressing them, securing studies for them, labors the whole day helping her husband in his work, and who, upon returning from the field still has to go to the kitchen to cook dinner for her husband and children; and who on Sundays and holidays, instead of enjoying natural and logical relaxation, washes her children's and husband's clothing or sews and mends ..." can neither vote nor be voted for.

The description of the peasant woman that Bezerra provides could easily apply to Juliana. Juliana was married (unofficially, of course) at the age of 13 to a man a decade her senior in the Pernambucan countryside.

See Voting in Brazil on page 13

Women, Prison, and the Vote

by **Stephanie Cholensky**

Women, minorities and the poor have been disenfranchised and denied their basic human rights throughout history using a variety of means. An increasingly popular way to do this is through our ballooning state and federal prison systems. Women only make up a small percentage of the one in every 142 Americans incarcerated today, but because of this their plight is more easily ignored.

Of the total number of incarcerated women, only 14% have committed any violent offense, while 75% are mothers, and their children's primary caregivers. By denying these women the right to vote, not only are their voices silenced, but they are also not able to represent the best interests of their children by way of the ballot box. At the same time, they are not able to introduce their children to this basic democratic process.

Voting Rights

The United States is not the only country that prohibits convicts in most states from voting; however, most countries that share this injunction restore the right to vote after a sentence is fulfilled. In the few European countries that have such voting restrictions, they are rarely mandated, but rather are a decision left to the courts on a case-by-case basis. This controversial issue gained international attention when the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the British government was violating the European Convention on Human Rights by denying their convicts the right to vote. South America overturned their voting restrictions in 1999, while the Canadian senate overturned theirs on the basis of unconstitutionality in 2002.

Currently, 1 in every 40 Americans is disenfranchised because they are or have been in prison. This amounts to 5.6 million people who live in a self-proclaimed democracy but are unable to vote. Taking away their right to vote:

- Helps perpetuate the human rights abuses happening to all prisoners in the United States and beyond
- Disproportionately eliminates the poor and minorities from the voting pool
- Is a violation of human rights, changing the right to vote to a privilege

that the government has the ability to take away for reasons it decides

- Inhibits prison reform and makes prison matters that are in the hands of elected officials a virtual non-issue on the campaign trail
- Does not deter crime, but does inhibit rehabilitated ex-cons from being a fully functioning member of society and taking interest in current affairs
- Is taxation without representation, since prisoners are still required to pay taxes on any savings they have or earnings they make
- Weakens our democracy: all Americans should have the opportunity to vote on issues concerning them and to vote for their representatives

Other human rights issues facing women convicts

The Institute on Women and Criminal Justice reports that the rate of women being incarcerated is growing twice as fast as the rate for men in the United States. As outlined in *Women in Prison: a fact sheet from Amnesty International*, incarcerated women commonly face infringements on their human rights that male prisoners do not. Women face sexual abuse and extortion in facilities where the guards are 70% male, fearing that they will be violently retaliated against or lose privileges such as visitation time with their children if such crimes are reported. Reproductive care in prison is inadequate if existent, and the continued practice of shackling during labor can result in complications and even brain damage to the baby.

The majority of women are incarcerated for either property or drug-related crimes. With mandatory sentencing laws in place in many states, women are serving more and more time for non-violent, first time

offenses. The expense of the escalating number of women inmates has been used as an excuse to cut drug treatment programs by more than 50%. In fact, cutting these programs is likely to add to the prison population by increasing the possibility that women with drug addiction who cannot afford a private treatment facility will likely re-offend.

Without the vote, women convicts are denied an important way to bring public attention to their situation. However, neither the vote nor public opinion, alone, will bring about significant changes. Unless women prisoners and their allies come together and take action around a comprehensive program for prison reform, human rights abuses in women's prisons are likely to get worse. Such a program would include decriminalization of prostitution and of drug use; the expansion of community release programs and other alternatives to prisons; community-based, client-controlled rehabilitation centers; an array of fully-funded support services; a wide-range of educational opportunities; and the creation of good entry-level jobs with full benefits.

Prison reform is not a popular issue for a politician to embrace. Allowing former and current prisoners to vote if they so choose might change this. In this electoral season, prisoners and community activists alike need to put forward a Declaration on Prisoners' Rights: one that includes the right to vote as one aspect of a massive reform of the United States judicial system. Human rights for all humans!

Stephanie Cholensky is the chair of the Socialist Party of Minnesota/SP-USA and is also working hard to get Socialist Party USA candidates on the ballot in MN. She is a biochemistry major at the University of Minnesota and works as a radioactive waste technician.



Graphic by Ari Moore

The Short History of Women in Swedish Electoral Politics

by Irene Elmerot

Many Swedes have long been a bit ashamed that we couldn't put forward a woman as the head of state, even though the Parliament acknowledged the right of the present crown princess Viktoria (born in 1976) to inherit the crown of Sweden. The first party in Sweden to name a female as party leader was the Farmers' party now called the Centre party, naming Karin Soder to that post in 1985. In 1995, Maria Leissner became party leader of the social-liberal Folkpartiet (People's party). A good description of this party comes from Wikipedia: "In the party platform the party calls for 'social responsibility without socialism'". In 2001, the Centre party once again chose a female party leader, who's been their leader ever since. Only in 2007 did the Social Democrats manage to get a woman up front, and that seemed to be more or less an obligation by that time. There were several candidates to choose from, but faithful party functionary, Mona Sahlin, wanted to take on the post, and was elected.

By the beginning of the 1990's, a male party leader, Bengt Westerberg of the social-liberals, was calling himself a feminist, but it wasn't until more than ten years later that a party focused on feminist issues arose: the Feminist Initiative (in Swedish Feministiskt Initiativ). This was founded in 2005 by the former socialist-left party leader, Gudrun Schyman, together with the researcher and professor of gender science, Tiina Rosenberg, and former student organization chairperson, Sofia Karlsson.

Unfortunately, the party immediately got a lot of negative media coverage for focusing on the differences between people in the party leadership, and on such radical ideas as a gender-neutral name proposal (an attempt to counter the practice of the gender-specific naming of children). Due to all the negative publicity, the party never got into either the Swedish parliament or any regional or city council. After that, the word feminism was almost banned from the list of



Founders of Feministiskt Initiativ relaxing in central Stockholm during the national election campaign of 2006

words to say if you wanted positive attention. It seemed that Sweden wasn't yet ready for radical feminism.

Sweden got a right-wing government in the elections of 2006. But this government (formed of four parties: the previously-mentioned social liberals and Centre party, together with the Christian Democrats and the liberal conservative Moderaterna party) managed to get more women in the government than previous social democratic/socialist party/green party governments-- including the Burundi-born Nyamko Sabuni of Folkpartiet as Minister for Integration and Equal Opportunities. At least women didn't lose official power. Feministiskt Initiativ first said they wouldn't go through another electoral campaign, but recently the current party leader, Gudrun Schyman, told the press that they will be running for the European Union elections in 2009. So people may yet again choose to vote for them.

In Sweden, you are allowed to vote for nothing. You go to the local election hall, but you pick a ballot with nothing on it, and then put it in the ballot box as usual. This is an interesting way that many have used in Sweden to show that they support the system of voting, but there's absolutely nothing they'd consider voting for. Some say it's a way of "chickening out", while others find it an excellent way of showing the establishment that they don't find any of the parties worth

voting for. In the 2006 elections, 1.74% voted "blank", as it's called.

I haven't been able to find out if this has ever been discussed within feminist circles as a way of protesting, but I wouldn't be surprised if someone made a survey showing that women-- in order to show that they might accept parliamentarism as a whole, but not any of the existing parties-- use this method more often than men do. In the last few years this method has lost some of its value, since the blank votes are counted amongst the "not valid" ones, together with, for example, double votes in the same envelope. Still, it puts pressure on you to choose to vote or not to vote, instead of doing something in-between.

Something worth considering is whether the Swedish government is (or, for that matter, considers itself to be) more legitimate than the US government because some 82 per cent of the entire population voted in the Swedish election, compared to the much lower percentage in the US. Is voting equivalent to getting your voice heard or not? Does voting make any difference? Maybe the only truth is, as Emma Goldman once said, "If voting could change anything, they would make it illegal."

Reading and hearing about Hillary Rodham Clinton in the news this past year has been something of a déjà vu experience for us Swedes. It seems the US isn't even ready for a not-very-radical female president. So the question arises:

See **Sweden** on page 7

Challenging Capitalism as a Socialist Candidate: Maybe We CAN Win For Losing

by *Marsha Feinland*

This year marks my tenth candidacy for public office in 22 years, either as a Peace and Freedom Party candidate or as part of a local progressive or radical coalition. I think these efforts have been small and tangential, but real steps in helping to build the socialist movement to which I am committed.

The socialist movement in the United States is tiny and highly fragmented, struggling under the weight of a culture of possessive individualism and permeated by anti-communism. Consequently, our electoral efforts are not of the magnitude of a mass working class party contesting for power. So what are they, and how are they helping to build what we need to build?

My candidacies have fallen into two categories: local campaigns around very specific issues, and partisan campaigns for regional, state and local office. The former offer a greater opportunity to be "taken seriously" or even to win office. The latter allow us a chance to criticize

the capitalist system and its two ruling parties as we fight to replace them.

In 1994, I was elected to the Berkeley Rent Stabilization Board as a member of a slate supported by a coalition of local progressive groups. Berkeley has enjoyed one of the most effective rent control programs in the country, secured in the early 1980s by an ordinance which featured vacancy control and just cause for evictions. However, by 1994 the Rent Board was controlled by landlords who managed to amend the ordinance and significantly raise rents.

The victory by four of the five members of our slate gave the pro-tenant forces a slim majority on the board. We were able to slow down the rent raises and increase services for tenants in need of help. However, in 1995 the state legislature passed a bill abolishing vacancy control statewide, thus ensuring the eventual rise of rents up to the "market rate."

With their mission accomplished, the

landlords stopped running candidates for Rent Board. Our coalition took over, but timidity prevailed because of fear of what the legislature might do next. The real problem was that the militant tenants' movement of the '70s and '80s had dwindled, its organization (the Berkeley Tenants' Union) disbanded. Without a movement, even a pro-tenant elected board could not think about challenging the state-wide real estate interests.

I came out of that experience distinctly unimpressed with parties that measure their success by the number of local officials they have elected. If a coalition of parents, students, teachers and other school employees and community members were to elect school board members who worked with the coalition to gain control of the schools and the resources to run them as they wished, that would be a real advance in the struggle. In most cases, winning a

See *California* on page 16

Hillary claims that back when she voted to let Bush go to war she never expected Bush to actually start a war with Iraq. She says she had no idea he'd really do it. The invasion was a big surprise to her!



On the internet you can read newspapers from Europe. For two months before the invasion, European papers reported that Bill Clinton was the top lobbyist that Bush sent to gain support for his war plans. Bill Clinton spent most of his time trying to convince British Labor Party officials.



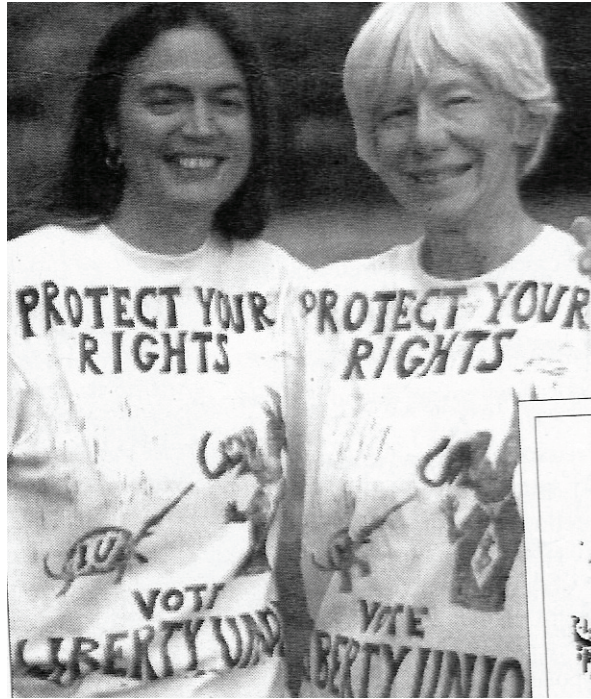
Saying “Yes” Again to being a Candidate for Public Office

by Jane Newton

Talking about my experience as a candidate for the Liberty Union party of Vermont is not easy. Most of what I did was out of loyalty and love, a realization that the platform of the party (and that of the Socialist party which is close) fit into what scraps of ideas I clung to about what would make our world better, and a fleeting belief that I could do it even though I was hampered by a lifelong fear of speaking (and now, added to that, the creeping forgetfulness of age).

Being a Socialist Woman was not something I thought about. I just tried to manage anxiety, and hope like crazy that I would say something that needed to be said and could only be said by someone who didn't care about votes. Sometimes it seemed as if I did it, and felt proud, but almost right away my sense of accomplishment would fade in the face of a System that is one of endless power, corruption, lies, money, war, billions of dollars, hundreds of years of empire, murder, and suffering around the world.

I wanted to say “no” this time, but the times that I was a candidate in the past and spoke up, or out, even timidly, for peace and social justice, made me realize that this had been a gift of badly needed confidence, for which I will always be grateful.



Murray Ngoima and Mary Alice Herbert, candidates for Lt. Governor and Governor, Liberty Union Party, Vermont, 1996

It's different now. I feel sadder and more hopeless about the world that I am leaving for my children and grandchildren (and the children forever, if they live). The electoral system is so corrupt and so bent on excluding us, that, along with my fears and forgetfulness, I am truly at a loss to explain why, this time, I didn't say “no.”

Maybe it is the lingering memory of a brief taste of glory that comes when you dare to speak and then people clap and tell you that you did a good job. (I can see that being a successful public figure might be addictive.) Maybe I have a tiny bit of ridiculous hope left somewhere that says that somebody has to speak out and it might make a difference, that my kids might be proud of me, and even though I get kidded a lot in a nice way, that's attention too. So I suspect that my reasons are not just loyalty to Liberty Union. Just as I go into the High Schools to “counter” the military recruiters, and stand on street corners with a poster that says “honk for peace”, or get arrested at Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant, there is just a glimmer that someone, somewhere, might notice and, because of ME, the world might somehow pull itself back from the brink.

But, really, I'm kidding. I get very sad. So maybe saying “yes” one more time is a tiny, short-lived antidote to being so hopeless and sad.

Jane Newton does counter-recruiting in seven schools in southern Vermont and is trying to make sure the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant closes down in 2012.

Sweden

Continued from page 5

is electing a female party leader or head of state a feminist goal? And if so, is that still enough reason to actually cast a vote for a woman candidate, or not?

Do we gain or lose anything by voting? Or is it mainly a way to put the spotlight on the alternatives that actually do exist beside the mainstream parties and persons? The arguments always pop up every four years, and I guess it's up to each of us to decide for ourselves what we believe in. By not voting, we can argue that the

government, whatever and wherever it is, isn't really valid, if not even half of the population (or 75 per cent of the population) voted in the election.

The fact is, though, that there will still be a government. So, should we instead make an active choice and perhaps even join a party, so that at least we can say that even if we don't like the way this country is being run, we've done our part and we try to fight in a way that this society understands? Should we stand outside the polling stations and give people reasons not to vote, or should we get in there and vote for something, even though the

party or the person might not make it anywhere and never make a difference?

Discuss it, debate it, and do what you think is right. After all, the rise of Feministiskt Initiativ in Sweden made people discuss female political power even more, and whatever we think of Hillary Rodham Clinton's politics, she definitely prepared the way for future female presidents, even of the USA.

Irene Elmerot is a translator and proofreader and a member of the IT/media Göteborg section of the Swedish anarcho-syndicalist trade union federation, SAC.

Some Guidance From History on the Matter of Voting

by *Susan Dorazio*

Voting is a conundrum for many of us working within movements for radical social change. Thorny and

related issues of gender, color, and class surface, and must be dealt with. Here in the U.S., Tuesday, November 4, 2008, looms large for socialist feminists,

as we grapple with questions about electoral activity in relation to our principles, platform, and organizing strategies. Does voting empower us to organize around immediate demands? Can it challenge capitalism sufficiently to bring about a significant response to these demands? Will it help bring about greater class-consciousness, thus bolstering mass action on the street and in the workplace, around the issues of militarism and social injustice? Is voting a right, a duty, a quagmire, a sham? A path to socialism or a capitulation to liberalism?

These questions were being raised 100 years ago, during the last decade of the long and intense fight in the United States for national suffrage that started with the Seneca Falls Convention on Woman's Rights in 1848 and culminated in the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. constitution in 1920.

Helping us answer these questions today are the perspectives and experiences of five radical women whose lives intersected with the woman's suffrage movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Kate Richards O'Hare (1877-1948); Theresa Malkiel (1874-1948); Klara Zetkin (1857-1933); Emma Goldman (1869-1940); and Sylvia Pankhurst (1882-1960). The range of their opinions and actions regarding women and the vote closely corresponds to our own, and thus can help us gain insight into what voting does or does not mean to us, and for our movement.

Kate Richards O'Hare and Theresa Serber Malkiel--each born about a decade after the end of the Civil War, and both socialists, but from very different backgrounds-- represent positions on woman's suffrage that reflect both the moral fervor of the abolitionist movement, and the social/political optimism that accompanied post-war industrialization.

Kate Richards O'Hare, born in Kansas, was the most prominent woman member of the Socialist Party of America from its founding in 1901 until the First World War. She was a tireless organizer and lecturer, and



Section of Woman Suffrage Parade, Washington, D. C., March 3, 1913

"We Welcome Every Socialist Vote"

—ANNA HOWARD SHAW, President National American Woman Suffrage Association, at Harrisburg, Pa., March 16, 1913.



Section of Woman Suffrage Parade, Washington, D. C., May 9, 1914

WATCH THIS ALLIANCE — Woman Suffrage and Socialism

Issued by the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women, 615 Kensington Building, Boston.

685 Boylston Street, Boston.

Mrs. JAMES M. GODMAN, President.

Mrs. CHARLES P. STRONG, Secretary.

Sophia Smith Research Room

Anti woman's suffrage flyer, Courtesy of Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College

was proud to represent the party at international socialist meetings on several occasions. The passion she brought to the suffrage debate stemmed from her belief in the righteousness of the cause, and in its potential (along with that of industrialization) as a tool for correcting the horrendous social conditions created by capitalism-- thus paving the way for the cooperative commonwealth of democratic socialism.

In her 1914 article "Shall Women Vote?" she says "We demand our franchise that we may peacefully take over the earth and the machinery of production and distribution out of the hands of the greed-crazed spoilers who are making of it a charnel house of poverty, misery, disease, degradation and death. We demand the right to use the earth God made and the machinery man made to feed, clothe, shelter, educate and bless mankind and we further demand the right to use our brains and our ballots to harness the forces of nature and the power of machinery to lift from the shoulders of the human race the brutalizing load of needless drudgery."

Theresa Malkiel, a Russian Jewish immigrant, arrived in the United States at the age of 17. Like so many others, she got a job in the fledgling garment industry, and became a dynamic labor organizer. As a member of the Socialist party, she took charge of mobilizing socialist women in New York behind the campaign for woman's suffrage in the national drive of 1914-1915. She firmly believed that political freedom, as represented by suffrage, naturally evolved from the increasing economic freedom women had been experiencing since the turn of the century.

In her pamphlet "Women of Yesterday and Today" published in 1910, Malkiel says "Fulfilling life's duties on a par with man, woman commenced to demand equal rights with him. The Suffrage Convention called at Seneca Falls, N.Y., on June 19, 1848, was a natural sequel to woman's great advance. All through the advance of civilization people demanded and obtained political liberties as soon as they became a telling factor in the economic life of the country." And in "Women and Freedom, also from 1910, she says "The dawn of the Industrial Revolution made possible the realization of equal rights and equal opportunities for man and woman...Her demand for greater rights is the natural offspring of her changed economic condition,

and the growing activity of her brain."

Though speaking from different radical traditions, socialist and anarchist respectively, Klara Zetkin and Emma Goldman were unequivocal revolutionaries and their position on woman's suffrage reflects that.

As a young woman, Klara Eissner Zetkin, became a Marxist and a fighter for women's rights. By the first decade of the 20th Century, she was one of the foremost proponents of a feminist perspective within the Socialist International. In 1910, the SI passed her resolution on the formation of an International Women's Day (inspired by Woman's Day initiated in 1909 by the Socialist Party of America).

As editor of the German Social-

Democratic Party's magazine for women, Zetkin dealt with a series of issues related to the oppression of women in capitalist society. Her support of woman's suffrage was based on the need for women to have full political freedom in order "to work consciously in the battle for the liberation of the proletariat." Woman's suffrage, then, was an essential weapon in the class struggle.

In a speech to the International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart (1907), Zetkin says, in support of a resolution on women's right to vote, "Our demand for the women's right to vote is no suffragettes' request, but a mass and class demand of the proletariat....

See History on page 15

Miss Rose Schneidermann
 Gifted Young Lecturer
 Presents the Woman's Question from the
 Industrial Point of View


Social Worker

Prominent Trade Unionist

"The woman must have bread, but she must have roses too"
 Rose Schneidermann

AUDITORIUM
 JUNEAU HALL
 Thursday, Oct. 3rd at 8 o'clock
 Vizay's Hall, Sunday, Oct. 6th, 3 o'clock

And the following Street Meetings
 Juneau Park--Tuesday, Oct. 1st, at 8 p. m.,
 Wednesday, Oct. 2nd, Mitchell St. and 8th Ave.
 Friday, Oct. 4th Potter and Kinnickinnic Aves.
 Saturday, Oct. 5th Garfield and 3rd St.
 Monday, Oct. 7th, 11th and Vliet Sts.
 Tuesday, Oct. 8th, Grove St. and National Ave.

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF **AMERICAN SUFFRAGETTES**
 ADMISSION FREE  Men especially Invited

Tamiment/Wagner Poster and Broadside Collection, courtesy of Tamiment Library, New York University

How should a woman be a woman? *PROTEST!*

by *Maria Carolina Morais*

About 400 people gathered in Recife, Brazil, to march against violence, and the criminalization of abortion.

How should a woman be a woman? In what ways should she dress so that she won't show too much breast, thigh or curves, nor be seen as a sexual object to which men might have easy access? How and about what should she speak amid a group of men at the table of a bar? What kind of ideas is she "allowed" to have and put into practice? These are questions that might occur to women as they grow up in Brazil and notice that the space that they occupy is still culturally, politically and sexually very confusing. Although many men and women say there's no sexism nowadays, most women can't figure out how to act, and arrange their personalities and features so as not to feel prejudice or to be called "sluts", "dumb", or "tomboys" for their actions and ideas.

Some women here are comfortable with the way things are now, despite knowing that men and women are still not treated equally in this country. Even worse, a considerable number of women help perpetuate gender injustice by preaching and teaching to each other such notions as: "you shouldn't walk like that, you shouldn't say these things, you shouldn't want this, don't dress this way. That's not good for your image, you know." That's why when women get into some sort of argument, some still receive the absurd advice to call a man in order to be more respected. In Brazil, we're still not the ones who really speak; we are the "supporters" who stand by the men, the ones behind the scenes.

However, in many aspects, women have gained a lot of personal space; and, most importantly, rights. Recently, in 2006, there was a great victory when the Government passed the Maria da Penha Law, legally protecting women against sexual and domestic violence.

But the biggest struggles that have to be faced in Brazil concern the cultural mentality of women and men and the Brazilian legal system, which is still very bureaucratic and slow. "What is the place we occupy in this country? Is it the place where we want to be?" These are questions that cannot be left behind. Even more so when considering that a lot of women not only feel psychological oppression for simply being born female, but feel deeply that there are miles and miles to go before they can say "we're free, at last."

pride and landless movements, NGO's and political parties, formed one of the biggest International Women's Day parades the city has ever seen. The plan was to have a march that would go through some major streets downtown to the Campo das Princesas Palace, where the governor, Eduardo Campos, works. All of these 70 organizations together prepared a letter with demands such as the rights of women to have equal wages to men and to own land. But obviously, the most important demands were those that focused on violence against women and the decriminalization of abortion.

Concerning the astonishing homicide rates and the existence of the Maria da Penha Law, which was supposed to have made the number of harmed women decrease, Cláudia Ribeiro, a member of the Women's Group of the Conlutas Movement (linked to the Brazilian socialist party, PSTU) said that "the government has to invest more in women's police stations, women's shelters and psychological support because there are still women who neither have access to protection nor are aware of the existence of organizations that can help and support them".

Women like Suzana Ribeiro, 42, were there to show their solidarity and to express the importance of fighting for governmental support and social awareness. For the last six years, Suzana's husband had threatened and attacked her physically until she decided to look for help and denounce him at the women's police station a few months prior to the demonstration. By that time, Suzana and her four children were living with her extended family, but she was still receiving threats from her husband. "He calls my mother's house saying that he's going to kill me. When he started to have drinking problems, he became violent towards me and the kids. I couldn't take the suffering anymore. I could never contact any women's rights organizations because



International Women's Day in Brazil

The differences between men and women become even more clear when the State of Pernambuco (on the Brazilian northeastern coast) is taken as an example. Considering the shocking cases of violence women suffer here, International Women's Day, could not be ignored. The State of Pernambuco tops the female homicide rate in Brazil. According to the Social Defense Secretariat, in the first 67 days of this year, 62 women were killed in Pernambuco alone, with 95% of these aggressions committed by men.

Along with this horrific situation is the fact that women still haven't obtained the right to have an abortion in a country where, according to the Brazilian Health Ministry, nearly 870 illegal abortions are performed every day, and from this number 15% of women who undertake this process suffer health complications as a consequence.

These are some of the reasons why, this past March 8, about 400 men and women in Recife (the capital of Pernambuco) from women's rights, gay

he never allowed me to participate in such things. This is my emancipation”, says Suzana. Her husband would face charges for aggression at the end of that same month.

As the protest was taking place, the streets became much more crowded and colorful. There were posters and placards everywhere, groups of actors wearing costumes and performing stagings, and a woman speaking over the P.A. to organize the crowd. The federal senator, Teresa Leitão, was there among other politicians from the Labor Party (the PT is President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s party, that passed the Maria da Penha Law). “The situation in Pernambuco is very troubling, but I believe things are going to get better. Support organizations have been created and money has been invested on the improvement of the whole system”, said Teresa who also mentioned the importance of protesting and publicizing the issue. “Cases of aggression usually get trapped inside the family core,

but they actually involve matters that have to be taken seriously by the public sphere, such as the government and society”, the senator stated.

When the parade finally arrived at the palace, the Governor, Eduardo Campos, did not receive them. Instead, three members of the Governor’s cabinet from the state of Pernambuco, including the Secretary of the Women’s Ministry, represented him and received a commission of protesters who turned in the letter with demands. Still, on that day the Pernambuco Government announced that they would launch the State’s Plan for Confronting Violence Against Women, which intends to enhance actions of prevention and punishment over the next eight years.

On the next day, the protests occurred in a different way: there was a celebratory breakfast at a famous public market in Recife, the São José Market, where pamphlets were distributed with important information for women. Then there was another march toward the 13 de Maio Park (which is also

downtown) and, afterwards, shows, presentations and other attractions took place in different parts of city. In other parts of the country, women also protested and organized similar parades in states like São Paulo, Ceará, Brasília, Porto Alegre and Pará.

Hopefully, these actions are signs of an improvement in women’s social issues in Brazil, although social mobilization still should be much more expansive. But the initiatives to fight and debate about women’s rights are already occurring; abuses and disrespect are not forgotten, and that is where hope casts its light on the women who feel oppressed in Brazil.

Maria Carolina Morais is an undergraduate journalism student currently working as an English teacher in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil, and starting to work with digital media, education and social awareness. She writes for an online literature magazine Poética XXI (poetica.art.br) and has published on the collaborative online newspaper Oh My News (english.ohmynews.com).



photo by Maria Carolina Morais and Courtney Campbell

About 400 people gathered in Recife, Brazil, to march against violence and the criminalization of abortion. Here some illustrate the cross women are expected to bear.

Eye Witness Report on the San Francisco Olympic Torch Protests

by Ardenne Bunde

On April 30, 2008, the Chinese government sentenced thirty Tibetan monks to prison terms ranging from 15 years to life for violent acts, including property destruction, during the anti-Chinese riots in Tibet in March. The Chinese blamed the exiled Dalai Lama for inciting the riots, although his statements as quoted seemed quite moderate. Since then, the international clamor for Tibetan independence has grown exponentially.

I was thrilled to participate in the anti-repression protests in San Francisco on April 9th and 10th when the Olympic torch was passed through the only U.S. city to be so honored. The evening before the actual relay, a large rally was held in United Nations Plaza, featuring speakers and entertainment. Although the weather was quite brisk and windy, and participants sat on the ground in order to see the stage, the spirit of solidarity was strong and no one seemed to mind the slight discomfort.

The protesters in the crowd were a diverse group. Many were Tibetan, Mongolian, or Turkistani, some wearing traditional costumes, and chanting and singing with native instrument accompaniment. It was apparent to me that these people are as distinct physically from the Chinese as they are culturally.

The dancers from Tibet wore white wigs and make-up, and used stylized gestures to portray the situation. The speakers, among them such luminaries as actor Richard Gere and Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, gave passionate pleas to rouse international outrage at the situation in Tibet. A woman next to me nodded in agreement to an address in Tibetan by one gentleman. One of the most moving speeches was from a woman from Turkistan who spoke through a translator. She testified to having been imprisoned and tortured by the Chinese for protesting injustices against her people. Although less is known about the situation in her country, another example of Chinese intolerance of diversity emerged from her testimony.

The next day at 8:00 a.m., the

marchers crossed the Golden Gate Bridge hoping to meet the torch bearers en route. However, the torch had been taken on an alternate route to avoid a confrontation with the marchers and the bad publicity it would engender. The same tactic was used in Australia.

Since then, the torch has traveled to Asia. On May 8th, a specially designed flame (to accommodate the frigid temperatures, winds, and lack of oxygen) was carried to the top of Mt. Everest by a Tibetan woman. Despite the token

gesture, the conflict is far from over.

There are scattered reports of mass detentions of up to 100 people, mostly monks, but including two nuns, as well. The Chinese authorities have held at least one meeting with the Dalai Lama, who is asking for some autonomy for the Tibetans and greater respect for their traditions and unique culture. The Chinese, on the other hand,

See *Torch* on page 13

From the Socialist Party USA's International Commission's Statement on Tibet

The Socialist Party USA urges the Chinese government to immediately withdraw all of its troops from Tibet so as to permit the people of Tibet to determine for themselves whether they wish to remain an autonomous zone within China, or a totally independent state. At the same time, the Socialist Party calls upon the Tibetan people to respect the rights of all of its citizens and to cease all forms of violence directed at the people or property of those who, with the encouragement of the Chinese government, have moved from China to Tibet.

The future of Tibet cannot lie in the creation of a theocratic feudal state such as that which existed prior to 1951. The Tibetan government in exile has recognized that a democratic representative government must provide the basis for a new Tibet. Such a democracy would recognize the rights of all of its residents, no matter what their ethnic origin or religious practice, if any, might be.

The Socialist Party stands with all who seek a more democratic China. In particular, the Socialist Party USA supports the Chinese working class as it develops its own independent institutions, including trade unions. Only a mass-based social movement that brings together workers and peasants can overthrow the current regime and move China toward a genuinely democratic socialist society. A socialist China would respect the right of the Tibetan people to create their own path forward.

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continue to maintain that Tibet is part of China. For the Chinese government, independence for Tibet is not an option.

At this writing, the Olympic Games are approaching, and international pressure favoring the Tibetan position is being brought to bear on the Chinese government. There is talk of boycotting the games in protest, and calls for global sanctions of different types. No one knows what may happen in the short time remaining.

The Tibetan struggle for some measure of self-determination and recognition of their basic human rights on the part of the Chinese government is similar to other struggles by racial and ethnic minorities throughout the world. It is a struggle that all democracy-promoting persons, particularly democratic socialists and their political candidates, must support.

Ardenne Bunde is a retired teacher of Spanish and French in the Milwaukee public schools and at the university level. She is also a translator, human rights activist, concert singer, and member of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin/SP-USA.

Voting in Brazil

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Her husband lived on the land of his "patron", performing various services in exchange for food and shelter. By the age of 18, Juliana already had 3 children from this marriage, and by the age of 22, had decided to search for her own way of life. Juliana works as a housekeeper in the city now, but is seeking the much aspired position of nanny that would secure her a Brazilian minimum wage with which she hopes to pay child support to her ex-husband and to gain the economic stability needed to see her children more often.

She shows me photos of three smiling children - two boys and one girl. I comment that they have her blue-green eyes. They are truly beautiful children, each with equal amounts of cheer and mischief in their expression.

Who We Are...From the SP-USA Statement of Principles

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

"Do they study?" I ask her. They do. Juliana recognizes the importance of being able to read and write in society and even hopes to return to study, herself. Of course, it's difficult to fit in a trip to a class between job searches and if she does gain a position as a nanny, her freedom will be severely restricted, as she will have to live with the family she serves. But to her, it is more important that her children have food on their table, that they have the opportunity to read, and that their rights are secured.

Juliana, a 23 year-old under-employed illiterate mother living with her sister, believes that some social change can be achieved through voting. She votes in each election - local, state or national - and provides me with developed explanations of candidate policy and party platforms. Juliana might not be able to decipher the code of written language, but who is better acquainted with the social injustices found in capitalist society?

Vote, Juliana, vote. We'll vote with you.

In addition to the interview with Juliana, the book "Memórias, Gregório Bezerra, Segunda parte: 1946-1969" published by Editora Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1979; statistics from the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2006; and articles from the website "Vermelho: A esquerda bem informada" were consulted to construct this article.

Courtney J. Campbell is a member of the Socialist Party of Michigan/SP-USA. She recently obtained her Master's degree in Education from the Universidade Federal de Pernambuco in Brazil and soon will start her doctoral studies in the History Department at Vanderbilt University. She has had poetry, reviews and essays published in several print and online journals.

Truth du Jour

by Steven B. Smith

Get the truth
Get your red hot truths
Truths du jour
Truths of the day
Today's truth today
Your style of while
Your version emergin'
Too truths
Truce truths
Which truth you want
We got em all
Today's truth at today's price
For today's people
Step right up
Step right in it
kleenex xtra
(remember,
we are the fine print.)

Steven B. Smith - poet 45 years, artist 44 years, ArtCrimes publisher 23 years, AgentOfChaos.com 7 years, Walking Thin Ice 2 years, MySpacer 1 year, born in Bitterroot, raised on Paradise Prairie. Farm boy, car thief, Naval Academy, expelled for dope, high society marriage, armed robbery, jail, escaping the cops, illegal loft dweller, ArtCrimes, rat attacks, overdose, overdose, overdose, celibate, remarried, expat... was born. am living. will die.

Revival

by Jane Crown

You chopped that old
Cherry tree down
You call it revival
As the men turn their backs,

Going home to mothers, daughters and
wives
Solid,
Unsuspecting and static.

Their ears deaf
To the sharpened blade of justice.
Your hands born of stain, lips bloodied
Stun her blossoming spring love-

This betrayal, the
Murderous approach-
You call it revival

But still- the spring will not come-

Sanctify the dirt there
Sweep it over with
Cherry blossomed lies.

Jane Crown is a 39-year-old freelance writer and widely published poet currently residing in San Antonio. Jane hosts a blog talk radio show where she interviews poets, novelists, and magazine editors/publishers. You may find a complete schedule of future shows and audio files of completed sessions at: <http://www.janecrown.com>

SOCIALIST PARTY

PROGRAMME

for

Woman's Suffrage Day

♦ ♦ ♦

Sunday, February 25th, 1912

at 8 P. M. at the

REPUBLIC THEATRE
42nd Street, West of Broadway

MUSIC:

MME. ALMA WEBSTER-POWELL

Speakers:

Alice Stone-Blackwell,
"The Emancipation of Woman"

May Wood-Simons,
"The Working Woman and Her Vote"

Dr. George Lunn (Mayor of Schenectady),
"The Woman in Her Politico-Economic Relation to Society"

Sol Fieldman, "Woman and Socialism"

Chairman: ROSE SCHNEIDERMAN

Prices, 10, 25 and 50 Cents

TICKETS ON SALE AT

Socialist Party Headquarters, 241 East 84th Street
Rand School, 112 East 19th Street
Call Office, 409 Pearl Street
Volkszeitung Office, 15 Spruce Street

Intercollegiate Socialist Society, 105 West 40th Street
National Suffrage Headquarters, 505 Fifth Avenue
Box Office, Republic Theatre, 42nd Street
and at all Party Branches

Courtesy of Vertical Flyer Collection, Tamiment Library, New York University

History

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The suffrage battle...forces people to take issue with ancient, deep-rooted prejudices and it therefore shakes up the masses...Let us step forward without hesitation to battle for women's suffrage. It serves to arouse the female proletariat to a class-conscious political life which is of the highest significance for the present and future of the proletariat and its war of liberation."

Russian-born anarchist activist, Emma Goldman, addressed woman's suffrage in her 1910 collection *Anarchism and Other Essays*. Uninterested in its reformist possibilities and unconvinced of its revolutionary potential, Goldman describes universal suffrage as a "modern fetish." She goes on to say that a majority of its supporters are not interested in suffrage as a source of freedom for women from "the awful toll she is made to pay to the Church, State, and the home," but rather in becoming, through suffrage, "a better Christian and homekeeper, a staunch citizen of the State." Rather than increasing woman's class-consciousness, "...suffrage is only a means of strengthening the omnipotence of the very gods that woman has served from time immemorial."

Countering the pragmatic argument for suffrage, Goldman asserts that "The history of the political activities of men proves that they have given him absolutely nothing that he could not have achieved in a more direct, less costly, and more lasting manner. As a matter of fact, every inch of ground he has gained has been through a constant fight, a ceaseless struggle for self-assertion, and not through suffrage. There is no reason whatever to assume that woman, in her climb to emancipation, has been, or will be, helped by the ballot... Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself."

Meanwhile, in pre-World War I England, Sylvia Pankhurst begins her evolutionary path from militant suffragist to international socialist feminist. To the woman's suffrage debate, Pankhurst brings a unique personal history, an incredible fighting spirit, and a deep commitment to grassroots organizing. While her mother, Emmeline, and her sister, Christabel (founders and main policy makers of

the influential Women's Social and Political Union), increasingly directed the English suffrage movement away from radical politics, Sylvia Pankhurst worked to integrate it into socialist feminist theory and practice.

In 1914, Pankhurst was expelled from the WSPU for her ties to the socialist movement. Soon thereafter, she founded *The Woman's Dreadnought*, the publication of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes. In the first issue (March 8, 1914), Pankhurst writes "...the chief duty of *The Dreadnought* will be to deal with the franchise question from the working woman's point of view, and to report the activities of the votes for women movement in East London. Nevertheless, the paper will not fail to review the whole field of the women's emancipation movement."

On the eve of World War I, as the war machines of Europe and the United States prepared to destroy the lives of millions, Pankhurst spoke for socialist feminist suffragists everywhere when she said, "The essential principle of the vote is that each one of us shall have a share of power to help himself or herself and us all. It is in direct opposition to the idea that some few, who are more favoured, shall help and reach and patronize the others. It is surely because we Suffragists believe in the principle that every individual and every class of individuals has a right to a share both in ruling and in serving and because we have learnt by long and bitter experience that every form of government but self-government is tyranny-- however kindly its intention-- that we are fighting for the Vote and not for the remedying of some of the many particular grievances from which women suffer."

In times of brutality and chaos-- in people's daily lives and on the battlefield, today and throughout the history of patriarchy and class society-- people have resisted and fought back. This is the legacy of such radical women of the last century as O'Hare, Malkiel, Zetkin, Goldman, and Pankhurst.

For all their individual differences on the suffrage question, these women were united in their intellectual and tactical daring, and in their commitment to equality and democratic processes. To follow their example is to act upon our rights, joyously and tenaciously, and to keep our vision of human

liberation clear and strong. If our votes this November 4th affirm independent political action and support our socialist feminist principles and platform, they can only further the collective good, and stand as a rousing tribute to our radical foremothers.

Susan Dorazio is the convener of the Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA and long-time child care worker and activist. She currently resides in Washington State.



Suffragist, socialist, Sylvia Pankhurst

Graphic Artists

Tom Keough draws cartoons to educate, agitate, and organize to help fight some of the problems of working people. Tom has recently been doing art for the IWW, 1199/SEIU, and other groups.

Ari Moore is a queer vegan treehugging idealist living, working and learning in Brooklyn with her partner Shira. You can view her work and find out more about her various projects at shirari.com.

Amber Santos has been living in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil since 2002. She works with art, communication, and education. She participates in several of the social movements including the Women's Movement, The Community Liberation Movement, The Communication as a Human Right Movement and the Hip Hop Movement. She is one of the founders of Rosas Urbanas Crew, a hip hop sisterhood that empowers women and girls to believe in themselves, express themselves, and tell their stories.

California

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local elected office gives recognition to individuals who are often hardworking and well-meaning. Sometimes they can get limited improvements in their local schools or services for needy people in their communities. But as our system seeks greater profits the general trend is to starve local governments. Only a massive organization of working class people fighting for socialism can turn that tide.

I think that participation in elections is essential to organizing, particularly in this country where most people are disengaged from civic life. We need to encourage people to participate, even if it is just to cast a vote. But we need to give them something to vote for instead of the two capitalist parties. Ultimately, our goal is for people to become mobilized into a democratic, participatory socialist system which they join together to run, not just vote for.

In 1996 I was the Peace and Freedom Party candidate for President of the United States. (I state the full title because many people asked "president of what?" My union sisters and brothers were disappointed

that it wasn't president of our local.) Because I had not intended to run for the office, but was drafted by my party after a deadlocked convention, my campaign consisted of little more than a handful of television and radio interviews on PBS or cable stations.

But how often do we get to talk about socialism on the air, particularly in direct contrast to the Democrats and Republicans?

A few years later, I received inquiries about whether I was going to run again. I was particularly pleased to hear from a young woman in Virginia who said that she and her friends were now old enough to vote, and wanted a socialist woman to vote for. Even though we might feel insignificant, we may be feeding future activism with possibilities.

This year I am the Peace and Freedom candidate for California State Senate in a district which includes Oakland, Berkeley and part of Richmond. I am excited about the potential of the campaign to build alliances, especially around the issues of schools and the environment, and at the same time offer a broad critique of capitalism, its policies and its politicians.

The Democrat in this overwhelmingly Democratic district is one of the most liberal, but somehow she

never recognizes the demand of the Oakland Educational Association to fund the schools by taxing the Port of Oakland and major corporations which have their headquarters there.

She is also part of a state government which boasts about its environmental policy, but is so far long on goals but short on proposals for action. The centerpiece of their plan is "cap and trade" -- controlling greenhouse gas pollution with the same market system that has been its major cause. Meanwhile, the Chevron refinery in Richmond continues to spew out toxic emissions, and resists all efforts by the City of Richmond to tax its profits for desperately needed public services.

I don't expect to win this election, but I hope that we can take a step forward by connecting with some ongoing movements, fighting the capitalist class and exposing their politicians, and educating people about socialism.

Marsha Feinland has served as state party chair for the Peace and Freedom Party, and has frequently been a candidate for public office. She has also worked extensively in the field of early childhood care and education and was a long time building representative in the Alameda Education Association. She lives in the Bay Area of California.

Free and Fair Elections

The Socialist Party stands for political activity independent of the two major corporate parties. We view electoral activity as an important component of the struggle for fundamental social change. Participation as socialists in local, state, and national elections is a valuable way to clarify our position on a wide range of issues, of broadly disseminating our principles and programs, and of asserting and reaffirming our commitment to the democratic process. We believe that capitalism is fundamentally incompatible with democracy and that true democracy can only be achieved with society's transformation to socialism.

1. We support the public financing of candidates for public office as long as this funding extends to the candidates of alternative political parties.

2. We call for strict limits on the use of personal funds in elections, either for one's own campaign or for that of another candidate.

3. We oppose representation based on anything other than population.

4. We support the introduction of proportional representation at every level of government.

5. We call for uniform ballot access laws for all states that give all political parties a chance to have their candidates on the ballot.

6. We call for the closing of the loophole sanctioned by the Supreme Court that allows candidates to spend an unlimited sum of their personal wealth on their own campaigns.

7. We call for the elimination of the Electoral College and support instant run-off voting of all elected officials.

8. We stand opposed to the disenfranchising of any U.S. citizen by the federal, state, or local government.

9. We demand greater access to media for all political parties and free, equal access to all forms of mass media for all candidates

10. We call for full representation for the U.S. territories of Guam and Puerto Rico, all Native American reservations, and the District of Columbia.

11. We call for the restoration of the right to vote for all citizens incarcerated in jails and prisons

12. We call for a mandatory paper trail of all votes to allow for recounts and verification