

Socialist Women



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**THEY SAY GIVE BACK
WE SAY FIGHT BACK!**

About the cover

This drawing by artist and activist Tom Keough is in solidarity with the workers at the Stella D'Oro Biscuit Company in the Bronx, New York. These courageous workers, many of whom are Latina, refused to give in to company demands for drastic pay and benefit cuts. Their strike of nearly one year-- as members of Local 50 of the Bakery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International-- ended on July 7th when they won a court ruling against the company for unfair labor practices. In true global-capitalist fashion, the company's owner, a private investment firm in Greenwich, Connecticut, named Brynwood Partners, immediately announced the closing of the plant in early October. The workers will fight this, too.



About this issue

As socialists, we know that imperial might is directed within the borders of the imperial power, as well as without. As feminists, we know that women who are both workers outside the home and caregivers within the home and the community are hit particularly hard by the domestic consequences of capitalism.

The cruelty of U.S. imperialism and the greed of the global capitalist system work in concert to dominate and oppress working people, economically, politically, socially, and psychologically—here, as well as abroad. While “the war at home” is an ongoing assault, its intensity increases in times of severe economic dysfunction. The problems that imperialism and capitalism cause are especially acute right now, and enormously challenging. How can we, as socialist feminists, respond to them?

As you will see, the following articles and statements present different points of view, but the underlying message is the same: the connection between knowledge, goals, actions, and values is key to the revolutionary social change that is so desperately required.

Examples of the skills, strength, and sense of purpose necessary to make this connection and enable changes in consciousness and practice pervade these articles and statements. The ideas and experiences they contain urge us to withstand, resist, and transform the forces of imperialism and capitalism that try to defeat us. Together we can stop the war at home, and start the process of reaffirming our commitments; creating a just, equitable, and compassionate global society; and reviving our planet for the sake of all its inhabitants.

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Take to the Streets on Saturday, October 3rd!

Honor the memory of Rosie Jiménez: Demand the Repeal of the Hyde Amendment; Abortion Access for All Women!

On October 3, 1977, Rosie Jiménez, from McAllen, Texas-- a low-income 27 year old mother of a 5 year old daughter-- died from complications arising from an unsafe abortion. Due to the Hyde Amendment, banning the use of Medicaid funds for abortion, Ms. Jiménez was forced to choose between diverting money from her college education to the cost of a clinic abortion, and having a cheaper procedure. For the sake of a future as an educated, self-supporting single-

parent, she risked the more dangerous alternative. Rosie Jiménez was the first known victim of the Hyde Amendment. Her death came only weeks after this statute took effect, and days after the first anniversary of its initial passage.

The Hyde Amendment, named for its sponsor, Representative Henry Hyde (R-Ill), began wending its way through Congress in June 1976, as an amendment to the Health, Education, and Welfare budget. Intended to prevent federal funding for abortion, it was the first direct assault on the Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision. After political jockeying

between the Republicans and the Democrats, the bill was passed into law on September 30, 1976.

After court challenges to its constitutionality were rejected, the Hyde Amendment went into effect in August 1977. It was both a response to, and encouragement for, agitation by virulent anti-choice forces on the religious-right— such groups as Operation Rescue and Army of God.

According to the National Abortion Federation (NAF), since 1977 in the

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photo by Shira Golding

Call to Action

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United States and Canada, property crimes committed against abortion providers have included 41 bombings, 173 arsons, 91 attempted bombings or arsons, 619 bomb threats, 1630 incidents of trespassing, 1264 incidents of vandalism, and 100 attacks with butyric acid (“stink bombs”). Both verbal and physical harassment and intimidation were persistent occurrences at abortion clinics. Many of these criminal acts are still classified as “open”. When will violence against women be an urgent matter for elected officials and law enforcement agencies?



Since 1976, the Hyde Amendment has been inserted each year into the budget of HEW, now Health and Human Services (HHS), often without debate. In the 1980s, Congress passed into law measures that widened the prohibition on federal funding of abortions. These provisions continue to affect millions of women. Those targeted include: 1) federal employees and their dependents; 2) Native Americans; 3) Military personnel and their dependents; 4) federal prisoners; 5) low-income residents of the District of Columbia.

The current version of the Hyde Amendment allows for federally funded abortions under Medicaid only in cases of rape, incest, or if the woman’s life is in danger.

From 1992 to 2002, a coalition of organizations sponsored a day of protest on October 3rd in memory of Rosie Jiménez and to call for the repeal of the Hyde Amendment. Today, the issue of abortion access, especially for low-income women, is more critical than ever. According to the NAF, more than two-thirds of women must pay for their abortions themselves. Only 14% of abortions are paid for with a state’s public funds, and only 13% are covered by a woman’s private insurance at the time of her abortion.

Clearly, the legal right to have an abortion has not guaranteed a woman access to abortion. This fact is underscored by the ban on the coverage of reproductive health services, including abortion, currently being proposed for a new Federal health care system. Such a provision would deny abortion access to even more millions of women.

We believe that reviving October 3rd as a National Day of Action for reproductive rights and abortion access is essential. Central to this effort is the formation of a radical grouping within the broader reproductive rights movement— one that will build on the energy and commitment expressed by people from across the U.S. at the massive April

2004 March for Women’s Lives in Washington D.C.

Those of us on the left need to be sure a radical voice for reproductive rights continues to be heard: a voice that places abortion access in the context of human rights, social and economic justice, and independent political action.

The record of the Democratic Party since the passage of the Hyde Amendment thirty-plus years ago shows that we cannot rely on these politicians to defend abortion rights or to repeal the Hyde Amendment. This has been made crystal clear by the fact that the current generation of Democrats, now led by President Barack Obama, are jumping on the “family values” bandwagon in characteristically opportunistic fashion— thus further diluting their commitment to abortion access.

So this October 3rd, speak out for Rosie Jiménez and all the other victims of the Hyde Amendment, and similar legislation at the state level.

Demand an end to restrictive state laws, to the wholly inadequate number of abortion facilities and providers, and to discrimination against young, low-income, and immigrant women, and women of color. Honor our allies-- like doctors David Gunn, George Patterson, John Britton, Barnett Slepian, and George Tiller; clinic employees Shannon Lowney and Lee Ann Nichols; and security personnel James Barrett and Robert Sanderson-- who risk, even sacrifice, their lives for abortion rights.

Join us in taking to the streets on October 3rd to demand abortion access for all women, and protection for abortion clinics and providers. Only our grassroots efforts will bring about the repeal of the Hyde Amendment, guarantee our right to reproductive freedom and health-care justice and equity, and stop all forms of violence against women.

***Women’s Commission of
the Socialist Party USA***

Revolutionary Ecology

by Judi Bari

FIGHT GLOBAL WARMING



I was a social justice activist for many years before I ever heard of Earth First! So it came as a surprise to me, when I joined Earth First! in the 1980's, to find that the radical environmental movement paid little attention to the social causes of ecological destruction. Similarly, the urban-based social justice movement seems to have a hard time admitting the importance of biological issues, often dismissing all but "environmental racism" as trivial. Yet in order to effectively respond to the crises of today, I believe we must merge these two issues.

Starting from the very reasonable, but unfortunately revolutionary, concept that social practices which threaten the continuation of life on Earth must be changed, we need a theory of revolutionary ecology that will encompass social and biological issues, class struggle, and a recognition of the role of global corporate capitalism in the oppression of peoples and the destruction of nature.

I believe we already have such a theory. It's called deep ecology, and it is the core belief of the radical environmental movement. The problem is that, in the early stages of this debate, deep ecology was falsely associated with such right wing notions as sealing the borders, applauding AIDS as a population control mechanism, and encouraging Ethiopians to starve. This sent the social ecologists justifiably scurrying to disassociate. And I believe it has muddied the waters of our movement's attempt to define itself behind a common philosophy.

Deep ecology, or biocentrism, is the belief that nature does not exist to serve humans. Rather, humans are

graphic by Tom Keough

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The Socialist Alternative

by Eric Chester

The economic slump, precipitated by the collapse of the housing market, has resulted in lay-offs on a massive scale and drastic cuts in basic services. This situation has led many to question capitalism as a system, and to seriously consider socialism as a viable alternative. What is capitalism, and how would a socialist society differ? This is an important question to consider as we confront the consequences of the current economic crisis.

In a capitalist society, workers are compelled to sell their ability to work for a price, the wage rate. The labor market is one of many markets where goods and services are bought and sold. A wealthy few own and control the means of production, while most of us own little or nothing beyond our ability to work.

Although we are frequently told that we live in a “free market” economy, this is ideological dogma rather than reality. Huge transnational corporations manipulate and restrict supply, while colluding in the setting of prices to reap monopoly profits. Furthermore, governments have been subsidizing private corporations for as long as the capitalist system has existed.

Capitalism is characterized by an individualistic ethic that emphasizes the acquisition of consumer goods and the accumulation of wealth. Each individual is supposed to compete with everyone else in a frenetic effort to buy as many expensive goods as possible. Those who succeed in this endless contest are praised for being more intelligent and more diligent. Those who fail to push ahead, or fall to the bottom, are condemned as lazy and stupid, their failures the inevitable result of their own inadequacies.

The prevailing wisdom holds that those who rise do so through their

own hard work, determination and skill. In reality, children of the affluent enter the labor market with huge advantages over the children of working class parents. From early childhood, they are groomed and pampered for the desirable, high-paying jobs. Furthermore, those who rise upward through the corporate hierarchy succeed, in fact, because they are more ruthless than others, more willing to bully those below them, and more willing to obsequiously grovel to their superiors. Capitalism rewards individuals who have the narrowest focus and the shortest time horizons.

Capitalism attempts to suppress dissent by pitting segments of the working class against each other, according to gender, ethnicity, color, religion, etc. Women and minority groups are told in countless ways that they don't count, that they are inferior to the dominant group, that they are incapable of holding positions of responsibility, and that they must accept their subordinate status or confront the consequences.

Ethnic and gender stratification also serves to compound the enormous gap in wealth and income between workers and capitalists. The globalized integration of the market economy has led to an even wider chasm between rich and poor. As corporations outsource their productive capacity, unions representing workers in the private sector have been crushed, in part because of the timidity and political opportunism of the leadership. Wages and working conditions plummet as workers lose any leverage in their ability to confront the immense power of huge corporations.

This process of polarization takes place on a global scale as well as within the industrialized countries. The gap between developed and developing countries further widens as subsistence agriculture is devas-

tated by competition from factory farms. Tens of millions of peasants are uprooted from their small holdings and pushed into squalid slums on the outskirts of cities.

For the vast majority of people, capitalism is a failed system. Its inherent dynamic is instability and crisis. The only hope for a better future is its rapid transformation into a democratic socialist society. This will not occur as the result of small, incremental changes, a tinkering with the existing system, but rather as a result of a fundamental revolution that will profoundly alter our lives on a myriad of levels.

Socialism begins with the need for all of us to work together for the common good. By working cooperatively we can overcome the many problems that confront us. Furthermore, a rapid increase in the output of goods and services should not be set as a primary goal. We need to look at the long-run implications of production in determining our present actions. Our quality of life depends far more on maintaining a healthy planet than it does on how swiftly our production of goods and services grows.

Socialism is not the nationalization of the vital sectors of the economy. Even within a capitalist system, certain industries are usually held in the public sector, and yet a rigid hierarchy remains in operation. Socialism looks toward the socialization of production, with factories, mines and offices controlled by the workers in that workplace. Socialism seeks to abolish hierarchies of every sort, especially those at the point of production. Furthermore, a socialist society will be truly democratic, involving everyone in actively participating in decision-making, going far beyond passively voting in occasional elections.

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Vegan Cookies and Social Change

by Ari Moore

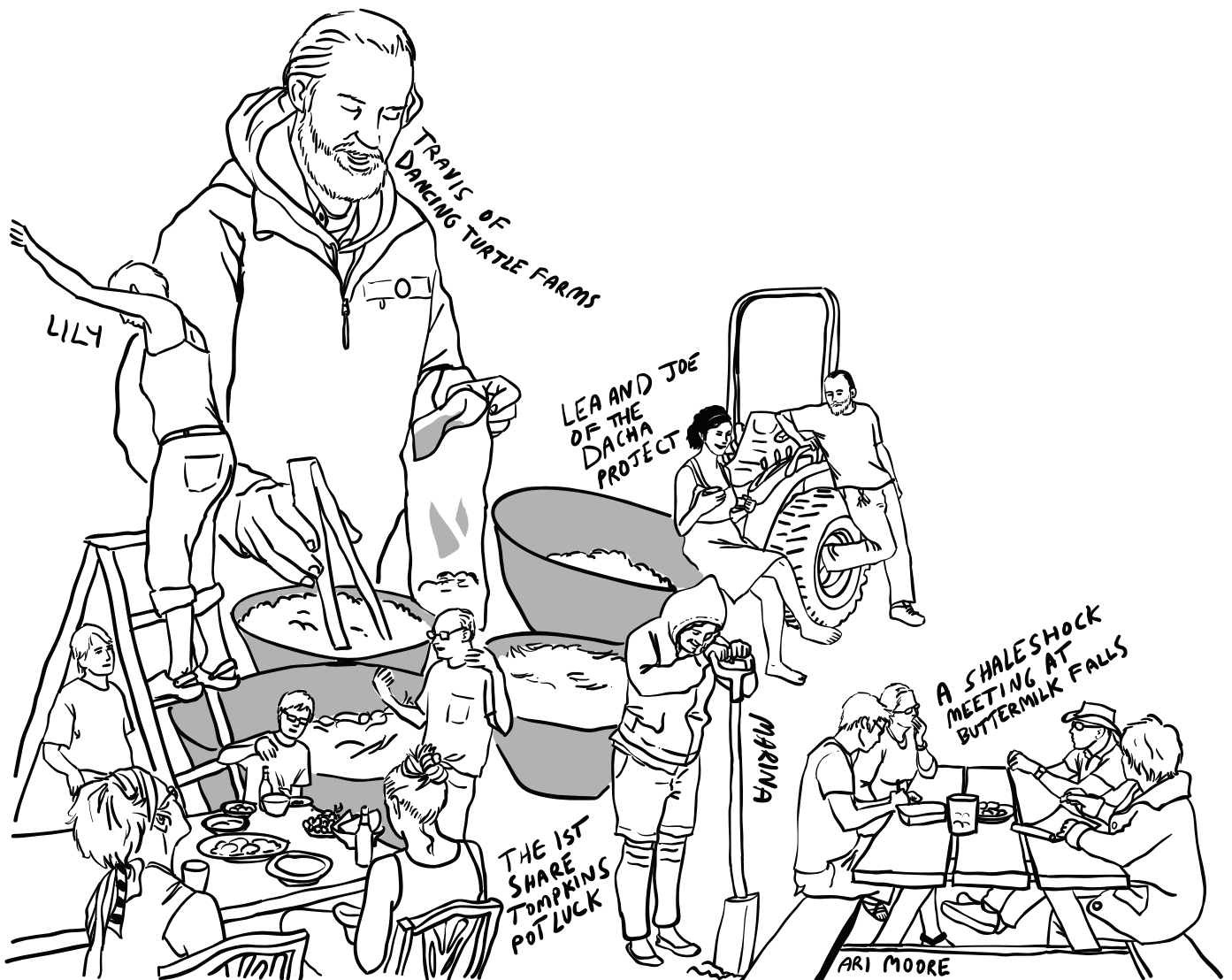
"You've got to find community in the people around you." Someone said that in a short film made by one of my new friends here in Ithaca, New York. There is such truth in those words, but it took my partner and me (and our three adopted cats) uprooting our lives in Brooklyn and moving all the way upstate to Ithaca to figure it out. We might have found community in NYC, had we looked a little harder, built relationships more carefully, braved those long subway rides to other boroughs more frequently. But after six years of moving

from expensive apartment to slightly less expensive apartment in increasingly economically oppressed neighborhoods, we were ready for greener pastures, so here we are. Changing our place changed our minds and our hearts, too. We arrived in Tompkins County looking for community, so that's what we've found, and it's welcomed us with open arms.

My partner, Shira Golding, and I are artist/activists. We're participating in the formation of a fledgling mutual aid network called Share Tompkins, which maps local resources and trade networks, and organizes swap-meets

(facilitated bartering meetups), really really free markets (meetups where everyone gives away goods and services), and potlucks. We are working to support local energy independence and protect our natural environment from the dangers of natural gas drilling with a citizens' action coalition called Shaleshock. We also work with Ithaca Freeskool to provide free, radical, peer-to-peer education and skillshares - in our school, everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner.

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Know Yourself! Female Empowerment Inside and Out

by Irene Elmerot

In these days of crisis in the world, when many jobs and savings are being lost, a lot of people are starting to think about how to change their own habits, not only because of their personal financial situation, but also because of the effect of their individual choices on their communities and on the planet. In hard times like these, practical attention can and should be given to what it would mean to have a global society where production is for use and not for profit, and where basic needs are met in socially responsible as well as economical and personally satisfying ways.

An example of this for women is in the area of contraceptives and menstrual products, which are overpriced by large corporations and are often bad for the environment. For many years, an alternative to tampons and panty liners has been sponges (natural or synthetic), but I know that when I tried them several years ago I wasn't really happy with them.

The surprising thing is that so many women still don't know even now that there is a good alternative, or how to get it. Most women have only seen the ads for the usual menstrual products (containing BLUE menstrual fluid, as if all of us were noblewomen in a fantasy novel, or what?).

Instead, I'm happy to say that there is the menstrual cup (or "m-cup"), which can easily be purchased in such places as bookshops, clothes stores, and of course your everyday health store. You buy one (or perhaps two, if you'd like to have one at your partner's place, or wherever), use it, wash it with boiling water and

a bit of soap, and reuse it for ages. One package, not a new one every month, one single thing, no need to buy a new one unless you lose it... dreadful for the capitalist companies that want us to buy new things all the time!

Now to the subject of contraceptives. When I've surfed the internet and checked-out topics like "pregnancy and parenthood", I've noticed that there are still so many questions about "how can I get/not get pregnant?" or "Could I be pregnant now?" when all it takes is a very small amount of knowledge about your own body. Of course, the girls are not to blame. It's good that they are seeking knowledge. But why doesn't every woman know how her monthly cycle works and why don't we tell the kids?

This information is obviously important in cases of having sex when pregnancy is not wanted, but in the case of actually wanting to conceive? Not even then do all women know how and when they are actually as fertile as they can be. Sure, we're all different, and our cycles vary a lot, but by at an early age (well, somewhere in your teens) learning to look at that white/yellow/opaque fluid that comes out every day, and then measuring your morning temperature (known as the Basal Body Temperature), makes it rather easy to know yourself and your cycle - whether you want to get pregnant, or not.

There are even websites that can help you record your cycle, so that it's easier to know when to do what with someone of the other sex. And the best thing is that all these things are free (except a good thermometer, but you can use that for checking a

fever, too) and won't support the pharmaceutical industry.

I've taken hormones as contraceptives for years, and not until I changed from pills to a small hormone-filled rod in my arm could I really tell the effect that the pills had on me. With the hormones in the pills—different from the ones in the rod-- I could feel sad for no obvious reason, I got strange mood swings for at least half a year, and completely lost my period, which is of course handy, but not very natural. So now I've dropped all hormones, and I rely solely on learning more about my own body: noting, checking, and remembering.

Of course, the progress of contraceptives is really great; and for women who definitely don't want to become pregnant, the reliability of the birth control pill or the intrauterine device (IUD) may be the deciding factor. But everyone should know about alternatives that won't even cost that much, and that will make you more aware of yourself. It's a fascinating thing, our body!

As I said earlier, all our personal choices have social and political content. In the case of health care practices, the exploration of alternatives assumes that basic needs are being met and high-quality services are available to all women. Unfortunately, this is not the situation in most parts of the world.

Therefore, we need to continue to demand every woman's right to choose whether or not to have children, including the right to abortion at any stage of pregnancy; educational and job-training opportunities, leading to good jobs that pay well

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From a painting by Tom Keough

Socialist Party 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.

Vegan Cookies

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All of this work is intended to meet our needs and the needs of our community in increasingly equitable ways that don't require dependence on global capitalism, that instead enrich and support the resiliency of our local economy and culture. Encouragingly, the work we're doing is only a very small part of a vibrant local activist scene. Here in this small(er) town, every effort has real visibility, and a tangible impact, and action begets action.

So as we work hard on these projects, all around us other folks are offering their own skills and knowledge and energy in their own ways – we have our own local currency, Ithaca Hours, and our own alternative to health insurance, the Ithaca Health Alliance.

Folks can share cars by joining Ithaca Carshare, or earn a bike by making one with RIBs (Recycle Ithaca's Bicycles). There's Silent City Distro, increasing access to local independent media with a zine library and distribution center. IthaCan is a web-based social network bringing home food preservation skills to the masses; Ithaca Underground organizes all-ages punk and hardcore shows and provides venues for local artists to display their work. This kind of community action is very motivating and nurturing – there's a place for everyone to help our community to thrive, and as our community thrives, it supports us all.

The means are the ends

So how is all of this contributing to radical social change? That's our goal, really – peace and love for everybody. Enough with this war shit. Global capitalism is a failed system. Shira and I even take social justice a step farther and apply it to our relationships with other species and the planet – our shared home needs our love, and we can't build a culture of peace when our bodies are “living

graves of murdered beasts,” to quote George Bernard Shaw.

What we want is to build a new world in the cracks of the old, a world that has a place for everyone, a world that serves people and not profit. We're aiming for nothing less than world peace – it's good to set your sights high, right? With an end goal like that, we're constantly pushing ourselves to find more ethical and effective (and enjoyable) strategies to get us there.

What we've found is that the means are the ends. If we want to live in a peaceful, just world, we have only to look around us at the seeds of peace and justice we can already find, and nurture them, and that effort makes the world more peaceful and more just.

Practicing radical solidarity

The concept of massive social change, and some forms of resistance to systems of oppression, can be very frightening to people; folks want to cling to the status quo for the safety and predictability it provides. I have a problem with capitalism, and railed against it for some time, before figuring out that I find many more allies and make much more progress if I instead support the development of transformative alternatives to capitalism. Positive, community-building work that meets people's needs in direct ways is something people want to support, to join in on, to help succeed.

This approach acknowledges the autonomy and value of every individual. Rather than treating ourselves like cogs in some revolutionary machine, or worse, enemies in an ideological battle, we can remember that each of us truly matters, in all of our diversity. Oppression isn't a contest – we can't compare and say one struggle is more important than another. And oppressions are interlinked and sometimes invisible – our identities are complex and multifaceted. Drawing dogmatic lines in the sand divides us and sets us in competition with each other. Instead, we can find commonalities in our strug-

gles, and cooperate to find solutions that benefit us all. Openness, humility, and a willingness to listen deeply and speak lovingly will help us to understand and learn from each other so we can work together more effectively. If we can view others as our family, and seek to make our enemies our friends, we'll find support in places we never anticipated.

Many paths to the same goal

Of course, all of this is just what is working for us right now, in our community, at this time in our lives, given our unique skills and interests and abilities. No one form of activism can serve all activists – there are countless strategies and tactics available in the social change toolbox.

Over time, our projects and our ideas will continue to evolve as we and our community continue to grow and change. With our sights set on the far-off goal of peace, our paths can vary, meander, intersect. We've got a long way to go, but I believe we can get there. I've got faith in humankind. We're capable of great compassion and great wisdom. We only need to believe in ourselves and try to fulfill our potential, and we'll be on our way.

For more information

Links to all projects mentioned in this article are available at share-tompkins.wordpress.com/resources.

Ari Moore lives with her partner Shira and three adopted cats, Sid, Zora, and Snow, in Ithaca, New York. She makes art, works for social change, studies history, and enjoys making good vegan food and hiking in forests. She provides creative and consulting services to activists and non-profits, and considers her computer to be a part of her brain. Ari agrees with Jimi Hendrix that “when the power of love overcomes the love for power, the world will know peace.” More info: shirari.com.

Illustration by Ari Moore, based on photographs by Shira Golding. You can reuse / share / remix it non-commercially with attribution, under a license similar to this one.

A Woman's Struggle is Never Done

by Pam Currie

Jessie Stephen was a feminist, a socialist, a trade unionist and an activist for over half a century, from her teens until she died in 1979. Yet her name is all but forgotten, 'hidden from history' - buried by an education system and a labour movement where men's accomplishments and contributions are celebrated while women's are all too often forgotten. Unusually, though, Jessie wrote down her achievements. She wrote an autobiography, never published - and she was interviewed in April 1975 in the feminist magazine, *Spare Rib*.

Born in Edinburgh in 1893, but raised in Fife and Glasgow, as her father moved his growing family in search of work as a tailor, Jessie won a scholarship to stay on at school and train as a pupil teacher - one of the most prestigious options to which a working class girl of her day could aspire.

Her father lost his job while she was training, however, and as the eldest of 10, she was forced to leave school and enter domestic service. Conditions for servants were appalling, with girls expected to work from 6 am till 10 pm, with little time off. Isolated and exploited, the girls in the worst situation were those from orphanages and other institutions who were in a state of virtual slavery, working for board and lodging alone, with destitution and the workhouse their only other option.

Jessie was not content with this life, and in her first job used what her trade unionist father had taught her - to hold out for a wage 6 shillings a month above the 'going rate' for her age. Jessie was just 16 years old when she began to organise other maids in the Scottish Domestic Workers Federation, despite having only one afternoon and evening per

week in which to write to and visit other workers. Letters from discontented domestic workers began to appear in the pages of the Glasgow Herald, and Jessie moved to a 'daily' job that allowed her more time to organise.

The Federation held a packed founding meeting in Glasgow; at the end of the meeting, there was a unanimous vote to join the union, and over 100 signed up. The meeting attracted considerable press coverage and word spread across the country.

The main demands of the union were a minimum wage for domestic workers and a minimum of two free hours in their 16 hour working day - along with the demand that employers be banned from interfering with the dress or appearances of their maids on their days off - a bitterly resented form of control.

A further meeting after initial concessions were won called simply for the "right to be treated as decent and ordinary human beings." The union had a relatively small membership, and the main barrier Jessie faced was that she was unable to travel far while working as a domestic servant herself; she resolved this by taking only temporary placements, feeling that it was "worth the sacrifice of a week's wages ... to get some satisfaction from our efforts." The union affiliated with the Glasgow Trades Council, and Jessie continued this work up to the outbreak of war.

By this time Jessie - still a teenager, and already active in the Independent Labour Party (ILP) - had also joined the Women's Social and Political Union (WPSU), the main 'militant' suffrage organisation. As a suffragette, Jessie took part indirect action:

"To my young mind those were exciting times and one of my assignments was the destruction of the contents of a postal pillar box ... Dressed in my maid's uniform I walked out from my place of employment down to the corner of the street where the pillar box stood, dropped in the acid container, walked away again and reached home without interruption. This operation was carried out all over the city and all at the same time, with the result that hundreds of packages were destroyed that evening and not one member of the WPSU was caught."

When her militancy made employment in Glasgow difficult, Jessie moved to London but returned at the start of WW1, and like many thousands of other young women, left domestic service to take up jobs previously reserved for men. Unlike the leadership of the WPSU, Jessie was opposed to the war, but she recognised the change in consciousness of the young women released from the drudgery of domestic service, a role to which most never returned. Jessie met Sylvia Pankhurst at a war-time workers' suffrage meeting in Glasgow, and shortly moved back to London to pursue her socialist, anti war and pro-suffrage organising in the East End. This was often difficult work, under suspicion from the state and, on occasion, under threat of physical attack from political opponents.

Jessie had been an ILP member from the age of 16 and when the opportunity arose to become an organiser in the Bermondsey district, she took it, working alongside other former suffragettes to organ-

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END THE WAR?



graphic by Tom Keough

Socialist Women

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The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Socialist Party USA, the SP Women's Commission, or the staff of Socialist Women.

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Stop the War at Home!

Stop the attacks on immigrant workers, on the unemployed, on students, on working people swindled by the banks, on women facing all the consequences of human service budget cuts, on veterans of U.S. wars and occupations. Enough!

We demand an end to the policies and practices of the U.S. government that ignore our right, and deny us our ability, to survive.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, and Mexico who are casualties of U.S. and U.S.-funded wars of conquest and occupation (including the so-called "war on drugs").

We, the Women's Commission of the Socialist Party USA, call for...

U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! No war on Iran; no military aid to Israel

Immediate redirection of at least 50% of the military budget to national healthcare, social services, mass transit, and low-cost housing

Uncompromising defense of minority rights, women's rights, workers' rights, and immigrant rights

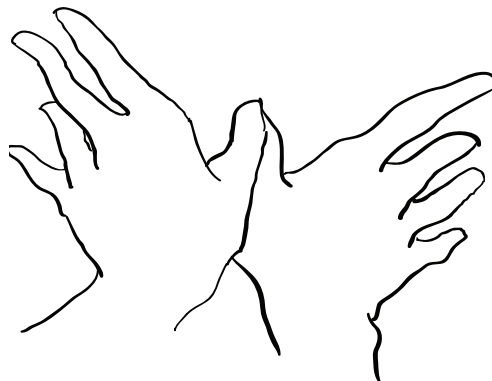
Full-funding for high-quality public education from Pre-Kindergarten on up

Steeplly graduated state and federal income taxes and an array of luxury taxes; tax the rich!

Independent political action: Dump the Democrats!

Capitalism's time is up. It is our right and our duty to create a different economic system—one that is of, by, and for the working people of all nations. Join the movement for a global democratic socialist society.

MAKE PEACE



Revolutionary Ecology

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part of nature, one species among many. All species have a right to exist for their own sake, regardless of their usefulness to humans. And biodiversity is a value in itself, essential for the flourishing of both human and nonhuman life. In the context of today's industrial society, biocentrism is profoundly revolutionary, challenging the system to its core.

The capitalist system is in direct conflict with the natural laws of biocentrism. Capitalism, first of all, is based on the principle of private property-- of certain humans owning the earth for the purpose of exploiting it for profit. At an earlier stage, capitalists even believed they could own other humans. But just as slavery has been discredited in the mores of today's dominant world view, so do the principles of biocentrism dis-

credit the concept that humans can own the earth.

The fact that deep ecology is a revolutionary philosophy is one of the reasons Earth First! was targeted for disruption and annihilation by the FBI. The fact that we did not recognize it as revolutionary is one of the reasons we were so unprepared for the magnitude of the attack. If we are to continue, Earth First! and the entire ecology movement must adjust their tactics to the profound changes that are needed to bring society into balance with nature.

One way that we can do this is to broaden our focus. Of course, sacred places must be preserved, and it is entirely appropriate for an ecology movement to center on protecting irreplaceable wilderness areas. But to define our movement as being concerned with "wilderness only," as Earth First! did in the 1980's, is self-defeating. You cannot seriously address the destruction of wilder-

ness without addressing the society that is destroying it. It's about time for the ecology movement (and I'm not just talking about Earth First! here) to stop considering itself as separate from the social justice movement. The same power that manifests itself as resource extraction in the countryside manifests itself as racism, classism, and human exploitation in the city. The ecology movement must recognize that we are just one front in a long, proud, history of resistance.

A revolutionary ecology movement must also organize among poor and working people. With the exception of the toxics movement and the native land rights movement most U.S. environmentalists are white and privileged. This group is too invested in the system to pose it much of a threat. A revolutionary ideology in the hands of privileged people can indeed bring about some disruption. **See Revolutionary Ecology on page 15**



Photo by Shira Golding

Scottish Suffragist

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ise women workers, and helping to win victories on pay and conditions throughout the area. After the war, Jessie remained in London and was elected to the Board of Guardians, where she fought for improved conditions in the local workhouse, including an end to the segregation of “unmarried mothers.”

Jessie never returned to live in Scotland after WW1, continuing instead her organising work in London. She was one of the first women to stand for election, for the ILP in Portsmouth in 1923, addressing dozens of meetings, including thousands of men at the dockyard gates.

Despite the ridicule of the press, she doubled the vote of the previous Labour candidate in 1918. Jessie's efforts helped to build the largest ILP branch in the area, yet she noted wryly that as the sole female candidate, she had been placed in an unfavourable constituency, the least likely to return an ILPer to Parliament. She stood for parliament for the last time in 1931, in Kidderminster, but this election followed the betrayal of Ramsay MacDonald and other Labour MPs, and she wrote bitterly of their betrayal and the impact it had on the ILP.

During the 1920s Jessie was also involved in the Workers' Birth Control Movement, providing information at meetings and in pamphlets to women desperate for knowledge. Jessie even found herself explaining the then primitive methods of birth control to her own mother, then 42, and helped her friend, a magazine columnist, to write to hundreds of women across the UK and Ireland who requested their help.

Jessie's strong links to the trade union movement remained constant throughout her life; during World War 2 she became a Labour

Councillor and the first female organiser for the National Union of Clerks, although she was later marginalised and ultimately driven out by the misogyny of other organisers. Jessie remained a feminist and a socialist to the end - when she was interviewed in 1975 at the age of 81 she had only recently stood down as President of Bristol Trades Council, but her autobiography tells of her disappointment and disillusionment with the sexism of the socialist and labour movement:

“The working class movement has for many years given lip-service to the principle of equality between men and women but my experience has given lie to these pretensions.”

Pam Currie is the national secretary of the Scottish Socialist Party, and one of two Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered spokespersons for the SSP. She is also a lecturer at Stow College in Glasgow, where she teaches women's studies. This article first appeared in the February 29, 2008, issue of the Scottish Socialist Voice, and is printed here with permission.



Socialist Alternative

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A society based on cooperation can only be successful when each individual believes that her or his contribution is valued and appreciated. This can only occur when everyone shares equally in the distribution of what is being produced.

Socialism can only be created through a revolutionary process involving mass actions, strikes, demonstrations, workplace occupations, and socialist consciousness and culture. A successful revolution is only the beginning. A socialist society will have to implement a variety of measures aimed at repairing the lasting damage caused by capitalism. For instance, significant resources will need to be directed to restoring the environmental balance. At the same time, the huge waste of resources spent on the military will be diverted to economic aid to the developing countries. Affirmative action programs will be required to transcend the impact of bigotry and sexism. Men and women will need to create new interpersonal relations based on total gender equality.

Although there can be no blueprint for a future society, we know that democratic socialism will look very different than our current system. Many of the specifics will be discovered as future events unfold. Furthermore, a socialist society is dynamic, constantly changing, and thus it cannot be simply mapped.

Sadly, the current crisis of capitalism is bound to intensify the hardships borne by working people. At the same time, however, it provides an opportunity for us to renew our determination to build a global movement to create the socialist alternative.

Eric Chester is the author of four books including True Mission: The Labor Party Question in the United States. He is the convener of the Socialist Party's international commission and a member of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Revolutionary Ecology Empowerment

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tion and change in the system. But a revolutionary ideology in the hands of working people can bring that system to a halt. For it is the working people who have their hands on the machinery. And only by stopping the machinery of destruction can we ever hope to stop this madness.

How can it be that we have neighborhood movements focused on the disposal of toxic wastes, for example, but we don't have a workers' movement to stop the production of toxics? It is only when the factory workers refuse to make the stuff, it is only when the loggers refuse to cut the ancient trees, that we can ever hope for real and lasting change. This system cannot be stopped by force. It is violent and ruthless beyond the capacity of any people's resistance movement. The only way I can imagine stopping it is through massive non-cooperation.

So let's keep blocking those bulldozers and hugging those trees. And let's focus our campaigns on the global corporations that are really at fault. But we have to begin placing our actions in a larger context—the context of revolutionary ecology.

Judi Bari (1949-1997) was an environmentalist, labor leader, feminist, and long-time Earth First! strategist and activist. She was the principal organizer of Earth First! campaigns against logging in the ancient redwood forests of Northern California in the 1980's and 90's. She also organized efforts through the Industrial Workers of the World to build connections between timber workers and environmentalists.

In 1990 she was seriously injured when a pipe bomb exploded in the car she was in with fellow Earth First! activist, Darryl Cherney. Her lawsuit against the FBI and Oakland police for false arrest became a rallying point for radical

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and have benefits—so that deciding to have a child is really an option; a full-range of family planning services, and pre- and post-natal care; paid leave for new parents, until the baby is at least a year old; and high-quality group care for young children.

A final word about measuring your morning Basal Body Temperature:

Use a good thermometer, one that shows at least two decimals. When we start ovulating, and are getting fertile, the BBT rises a little (0.4 to 0.8 degrees Fahrenheit, usually), and keeps around that temperature until menstruation starts. The cervical fluid also changes, getting more transparent (like egg whites). Usually you feel stronger and more energetic when ovulation is happening. The body temperature is up until the egg has wandered without being impregnated by sperm, and

then the egg, together with blood and other stuff, gets discarded (what we call the menstrual flow).

Usually a woman is fertile for only a couple of days of her cycle, BUT sperm survives in us for up to 48, even 72, hours. So, for about a week before ovulation, and until the day after, one might become pregnant.

There are actually women who ovulate very close to their menstruation, so make sure you combine the BBT method with some other kind of contraceptive until you are certain of your own cycle. During the fertile part of your cycle, the best thing is a condom or femidom, unless one of you is allergic to the material they're made of. Or well, of course, the absolutely best thing is a nice Latin word: cunnilingus. No risk of getting babies from that!

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activists. This article is an excerpt of one that first appeared in the Groundhog Day 1995 edition of Alarm, a journal of revolutionary ecology.

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