

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

Page 2

NEWS & LETTERS

Frontline Feminisms, war and revolution

by Laurie Cashdan

I had the great fortune to attend the conference on "Frontline Feminisms: Women, War & Resistance," held at the University of California-Riverside, Jan. 16-18. The organizers worked hard to create an international dialogue among scholars and activists, drawing speakers from the Balkans and the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, South and East Asia, Europe and the U.S., including Chicana activists from southern California.

This internationalism quickly transformed into a discussion of urgent problems. For instance, Ngwarsungu Chiwengo, from Zaire's Shaba province, and Fatima Ibrahim from the Sudan, discussed "ignored war [s]" of monumental proportions and implications ongoing in Central and East Africa. Chiwengo argued that U.S. interests in Zaire's diamond and mineral wealth and its strategic political position, bordering Rwanda and Burundi, have influenced U.S. media coverage. She described ethnic cleansing in Zaire and U.S. strategies to intervene in choosing a successor for Mobutu Sese Seko.

Speakers raised challenging questions about feminism, nationalism and liberation, three terms which have too often met in drastic collision in the last decade. Vesna Kesic, from Zagreb, Croatia, put the problem powerfully in a roundtable called, "Feminism and Nationalism: Can They Be Coupled?" "Freedom is not an abstract term," she insisted. "Which kind of freedom will always mat-

Woman as Reason

ter." Kesic sharply critiqued the reactionary nationalism or patriotism which continues to drive Croatia even after the war is officially over. She distinguished this patriotic nationalism from struggles for national freedom, of which she approves, but argued that women's liberation needs to be within—not external to—these freedom movements.

If Kesic's complex historic questions about the Balkan, seemed to frame the conference, Angela Davis's keynote talk posed little new direction. She asked why the "cascading conservatism" circling the globe has been met by so much despair in the U.S.—and even nostalgia for the distant sixties. Unfortunately, Davis's solution was limited to an analysis of how global capitalism underlies such phenomena as the booming prison industrial complex. One could hardly argue with her views on skyrocketing incarceration rates. However, it was discouraging to hear Davis herself romanticize earlier revolutionary movements from Cuba to Vietnam as models for a revived revolutionary transnationalism.

Angela Davis's uncritical attitude concerning socialism contrasted with talks by less prominent speakers. Sondra Hale, speaking about women in the 30-year-long Eritrean liberation movement against Ethiopia, described herself as an independent Marxist and made it clear that socialist feminists cannot afford to paper over serious issues about Marxism. Hale described the support Ethiopia received from Russia before 1989. The Eritrean liberation movement—also Marxist but independent from Russia and Cuba—remained isolated, including from the international women's movement, despite complex issues Eritrean women have raised about gender in a post-revolutionary society.

Elahe Amani, an Iranian who spoke in the feminism and nationalism roundtable, also showed the danger of avoiding rethinking about Marxism by radical feminists. Amani lambasted not only the Islamic fundamentalists but the Iranian Marxist parties for their negative reactions after the revolution to International Women's Day demonstrations in 1979. Had the Left recognized the significance of women's protests against Khomeini's edict

Queer politics workshop

Riverside, Cal.—A spontaneous workshop entitled "Lesbianism, Queer Politics, and Revolution" sprouted



Vesna Kesic, Croatia, speaking at Frontline Feminisms workshop on Feminism and Nationalism. At left are Elahe Amani, Iran, and Sherna Gluck, U.S., and at right is Fatima Ibrahim, Sudan.

mandating *hijab*, she argued, they might have saved the revolutionary struggle so many died for instead of giving the upper hand to fundamentalism.

Kesic's question of "what kind of freedom," as Hale and Amani posed it, linked the liberation of women to the problematic of "what happens after the revolution"—a theme throughout the conference. At one session, "From the Mississippi Delta to South Central Los Angeles," panelists addressed important issues faced by Black women activists in the post-Civil Rights era. Ida Leachman from Memphis' "Local 282 Furniture Workers union described how the incompletion of the Civil Rights Movement has left workers facing restructured and revived anti-union attacks by employers and municipalities in Mississippi and West Tennessee.

Georgiana Williams, founder of the L.A. 4+ Committee after her son Damien's arrest at Florence and Normandy during the L.A. rebellion, described her exodus from Mississippi and her assumption—until the 1992 uprising and her subsequent fight with the penal system—that freedom had already been won. Other panelists connected this discussion to Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya's concept of "revolution-in-permanence"—an idea she elaborated from Marx's works.

This concept re-emerged implicitly at a workshop on Mexico and Central America. The intercommunication between Central American women about their different experiences has led Zapatista women to insist that the post-revolutionary society they are striving for must include women's liberation. This was not on the agenda for either Cuba's or El Salvador's guerrilla movements, panelist Julia Shayne argued. She briefly described the feminist movement blossoming in El Salvador since the peace accords, led by women frustrated by years of having women's issues ignored. At one of the final sessions, titled "What Happens to Feminist Agendas After the Revolution?", Norma Chinchilla, speaking on Nicaragua, brought these questions about Central America back to Marxism itself.

That these questions about national liberation, women's liberation and Marxist thought kept surfacing shows that feminists searching for a radical international perspective cannot avoid confronting them. If the international dialogue at the Frontline Feminisms conference marked a beginning of such a discussion, I look forward to its further development.

Disney sweatshop pro

Oakland, Cal.—Workers, mostly Latina and Asian women, at Rubber Stampede, a small company making rubber toys and stamps for corporations like Disney, walked out Nov. 13 after owner Sam Katzen reneged on a promise to meet over sweatshop conditions. Katzen had made illegal promises to persuade workers to vote down union recognition. After 170 out of 250 workers signed union cards, it was voted down by 13 votes.

Sis

Hebron—two of the Pa described their home, forcin body searche searches, all room. No we undress.

We expres quite amaz these things been 15 child lis in their h close to them big room, I h neck and pla brace her. A placed it on t

The ice br all sorts of t searched for and we ate t tried to dissi we made the came over to

This was, work done b to document by Bat Shal Security" (w this was a po cy?)—and th who lodged fr

Pris

Oakland California C women's stat prisoners in which charg women pris

We heard medical atten tion and v Medically Tr guards with one woman M cer. When th out she had s

Even basic selves, or bat oners them who volun taking her lu ry. She is th the others. S peer counse hair you hav her own shir give you a sh

The medic other prisom all the time f We get haras ity women h manity impr

New Yo dren pickete ganized by t ney Haiti Ju week of actio Workers i sweatshop co hour produc

Survey shows Alford bond support strong

► Three-fourths of likely voters said they would back such a measure even though it would mean taxes would rise.

By Mark Acosta
The Press-Enterprise

RIVERSIDE
A telephone survey suggests that voters in the Alford Unified School District would be willing to approve a \$57 million bond to renovate campuses and help relieve crowding.

A survey last weekend of 400 likely voters showed that 76 percent would vote yes on such a measure, a consultant told the Alford school board Thursday night. The approval rating, based on knowledge that the measure would raise taxes \$57 a year on an average home, would be enough to win at the ballot box, trustees were told.

"I think it's a good shot with a well-run and well-organized campaign," said Gene Bregman, who runs the San Francisco-based Gene Bregman & Associates marketing research firm.

Please see **BOND, B-8**

MORE LOCAL

Two-sport standout: Riverside North High's Julia Gray always wanted to be like her athletic brothers, one a track star and one a basketball standout. But she has excelled in both, going one up on Ron and Leon Gray. **Sports, C-6**

A woman's call against discrimination Conference at UCR draws more than 400

By Felix Sanchez
The Press-Enterprise

RIVERSIDE
Women have to overcome a defeatist belief that their battles against sexism and discrimination are being lost, noted civil rights activist Angela Davis told a women's conference Thursday.

Speaking to more than 400 people at UC Riverside, most of them women and many from activist organizations around the world, Davis in particular chided American women for this attitude of resignation. "How dare we succumb to defeatism. How dare we allow frustration and disappointments to disillusion us when women all over the world are resisting" oppression, sexism and, in some cases, atrocities, said Davis, a University of California, Santa Cruz, professor.

Davis, one of the 1960s' highest-profile
Please see **WOMEN, B-8**



Tracy Lee Silveria / The Press-Enterprise
Civil rights leader Angela Davis speaks to Barbara Green and others after her speech at a conference on women Thursday at UCR.

WESTCOE REALTORS
Top Sales Professionals for December '96
CLARK & LANA HAPEMAN
Outstanding Sales Achievements
SUSAN RAY
LOUJANNE LUDWIG
BARRIE FISHER
ADDY WALKER
WALT & LYN DOCKSTADER
DONNA SEBASTIAN
WHIT STUART
VENO NATHRAJ
WALLY DRAKE
SCOTT HOOKS
CHRISTI RAINEY
ART & CAROL NORMAN
GREG AUTREY
Quality People Who Share The Dream Of Real Estate Excellence
WESTCOE REALTORS 784-2500

CABLE TV
Affordable Rates/Great Service
See our ad in the Riverside local section.
Charter Communications

ST. THOMAS BASEBALL SIGN UPS
Field Snack Bar • Sat. 1/18 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Ages 5-15 Boys-Girls
Last Day • Bring Birth Cert. & Milt-
Corner of Magnolia & Jackson, Rv. • 788-0164

DIRTY MINI BLINDS?
\$5.00 EA.
CANYON CREST WINDOW CLEANING
785-0610

BUILDING CONTRACTORS
Losing Your Lender? Bank Changing Hands?
DE ANZA NATIONAL BANK
(909) 360-8058
RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, MINI TRACTS, SPECS., FIXED + FLOATING RATES

FOODS FOR PETS
(FORMERLY ELLIOTT'S PET EMPORIUM)
LG. FEEDER FISH • 10 FOR \$1.00
SM FEEDER FISH • 20 FOR \$1.00
6203 MAGNOLIA AVE. • 222-2137
Between Jurupa & Merrill Across from Center Lumber

RIVERSIDE PLAZA
SIDEWALK SALE
FRIDAY & SATURDAY
HARRIS' AND A VARIETY OF STORES
RIVERSIDE PLAZA
683-1030

Need a trim? Find a lawn-care professional in the
'Who Does It' Directory
of Home Services published daily in
The Press-Enterprise Classifieds

CLOSINGS

M.L. King Jr. Day, Monday



Government offices: All federal, state, county, city, Jurupa and Rubidoux Community Services District offices will be closed Monday.

Mail delivery: No delivery Monday; service resumes Tuesday.

Financial institutions: Most banks and savings and loans will be closed Monday.

Stores: Most major stores and supermarkets will be open normal hours Monday.

Public transportation: Metrolink and Riverside Transit Agency buses will run on a normal schedule Monday.

Libraries: Libraries will be closed.

Schools and colleges: Riverside, Alvard and Jurupa district schools will be closed. RCC, UCR, Loma Linda University, California Baptist College, La Sierra University and Cal State San Bernardino will be closed.

Garbage pickup: City of Riverside will have Monday pickups on Tuesday and Tuesday pickups on Wednesday, with the rest of the week as normal. NEWCO, Mark's/Tri-Co. Disposal, BFI, Western Waste Industries will have normal service. County landfills will be open Monday.

Police arrest pair in grocer's slaying

The Press-Enterprise

HIGHLAND
Police arrested two men Thursday night in connection with the Nov. 23 shooting death of a Highland market owner.
Kyung Lim, 44, was shot and killed during a robbery attempt at the Jolly Boys Market at 7697 Sterling Ave.
Police arrested...

Continued from B-1
political activists, was the keynote speaker during Thursday's opening session of the Frontline Feminisms: Women & War Resistance conference.

The three-day event has attracted dozens of feminists and women's rights activists from Ireland, Iran, Croatia, Israel and elsewhere around the world.

Davis cited atrocities against women in Bosnia and South Africa who she said are fighting to guarantee a society free of gender discrimination. This prompted visiting activists in the audience to cite their own causes, including oppression of women in Iran, struggles in the Chiapas region of Mexico, and the Zapatistas political problems there, too.

"There are struggles around the world... How dare we in California think of resigning ourselves to the inevitability of Gov. Wilson, a Ward Connerly and a Newt Gingrich," Davis said to applause.

Connerly, a University of California regent, led successful action to have affirmative action banned within the UC system in student admissions and hiring. And he was instrumental in getting the anti-affirmative action measure, Prop. 209, passed last year.

This week's event is a perfect forum, "a rare opportunity," Davis said, to "harness the energy of this conference and to link our struggles across borders and oceans to form transnational linkages necessary to confront violence and war."

share stories about oppression in their homeland, and demonstrate what organized resistance and grassroots organization can do.

"We are here to inform women of what is happening in Iran. You don't hear much news of what is going on in Iran. There are large numbers of women being arrested in the streets," said Sarvi Chitsaz, of the National Council of Resistance of Iran.

"In spite of these things happening, there is a resistance by women, both in exile and in Iran," Chitsaz said.

One conference session, "Gender, Law and Police Violence: United States, Former Yugoslavia, Ireland, Iran," detailed those actions. Nasrin Saifi, president of the Association of Iranian Women in Northern California, described public floggings of women as being commonplace, and told of massive arrests of women because their faces were improperly veiled.

During the same session, Nancy Rhodes, a Syracuse University researcher, said women increasingly are being victimized in U.S. prisons, with sexual assaults of female prisoners growing.

Rhodes said another example of women being victimized and stigmatized can be found by studying how society tells women they can avoid rape by altering their behavior and staying away from circumstances that could lead to rape.

The focus should instead be on severely punishing rapists and sexual predators and not blaming women, Rhodes said.

The conference continues at UC Riverside through Saturday.

INJURED?

- Automobile/Motorcycle Accidents
- Personal Injury Claims
- Slip/Trip/Fall Injuries
- Dog Bites
- Bus/Plane/Train Accidents
- Product Injuries
- Serious Injury
- Back/Neck Injuries
- Death Claims
- Construction Accidents
- Knee Injuries
- Machinery Injuries
- Insurance Disputes/Bad Faith



Vol board

on Joint Uni-board of edu-empt for at absent, the members did vote on any of applied for a en-member

the board p.m. to try member. en to the

ted when mayor of resigned Dec. 3. eb. 6 to ber.

t R. Fi-on could 0,000. the ap-et.ult, ank A. s, Mar-rlie

Info 867 Web Tick 5 Lift (6-12) Ski Fo Bl High sho High be cond ends If it a da night avail High Mon Friday Sum at S



Guest speaker Marina Patricia of Chiapas, Mexico, shares some of her experiences with the audience during "Frontline Feminisms: Women, War and Resistance," a program at Beyond Baroque in Venice on Sunday. The program was devoted to the role of women and feminism in militarized zones around the world. Participants included women from Mexico, Vietnam, Guatemala, the Sudan, Croatia, Israel and Northern Ireland.

BRUCE HAZELTON/
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

WOMEN'S WAR CRY

Feminists meet in Venice to discuss fight for peace

WOMEN'S WAR CRY

Feminists meet in Venice to discuss fight for peace

By Kim Irwin
STAFF WRITER

In the strife-torn state of Chiapas in southern Mexico, it was Indian women who first joined hands and stood shoulder-to-shoulder to face down government soldiers.

In the former Yugoslavia, again it was women who first organized to promote peace in that war-torn region.

The role of women — and feminism — in militarized zones was the subject of a panel discussion Sunday at Beyond Baroque in Venice. The discussion capped a three-day "Women & War" workshop at the University of California, Riverside that drew female activists from as far away as Mexico, Vietnam, Guatemala, the Sudan, Croatia, Israel and Northern Ireland.

"It was an inspiring conference," said Kate Hartford, a participant from the University of Massachusetts in Boston who also attended the discussion in Venice. "We were able to trade experiences and ideas."

Sunday's event at Beyond Baroque, "Frontline Feminisms: Women, War & Resistance," featured speakers from Chiapas, Croatia and Israel and included a screening of "Camp Arirang," a film by Grace Yoon-Kyung Lee and Diana Lee about U.S. bases and prostitution in South Korea.

Through an interpreter Marina Patricia, director of a human rights center in Chiapas, shared her experiences.

They faced the military

The military presence in Chiapas, Patricia said, has resulted in increased prostitution and alcoholism in her state. Generally characterized as submissive, Chiapas' indigenous women joined together to protest the military, at one point numbering 5,000 at a rally that scared local merchants enough they closed their businesses.

"The sectors of economy and power in this region were very afraid," Patricia said. "They said, 'What are these women going to do to us?' It's important to note that the people who first faced these soldiers were not the men, but the women."

"The most active peace activists in the former Yugoslavia were women. This is beyond any doubt."

— VESNA KESIC,
founder of anti-war organization in Croatia

Vesna Kesic, who started an anti-war organization in Zagreb, Croatia, spoke about the difficulty communicating with other feminist groups when the war had downed telephone lines, bombs had destroyed most of the roads and the trains had stopped running.

After much work, what emerged was a coalition of already formed feminist and women's groups that united to try and bring about peace.

"The most active peace activists in the

former Yugoslavia were women," she said. "This is beyond any doubt."

With communication nearly impossible, the task of uniting for peace seemed impossible, Kesic said. They persevered, however, and finally were able to meet in 1995 for a three-day conference in Medulin, Istria.

Exchange of experiences

"The aim was for feminists and activists to exchange experiences, to free frozen feelings toward one another and to restore women's political dialogue," Kesic said. "We found that women's dialogue starts from personal stories and arrives to the political level, it starts from tears and laughter, from childhood stories, and returns to our own experiences of war, genocide, home, land and nation."

Fred Dewey, director of Beyond Baroque, set up the panel discussion because he thought it "was important that the West side hear these stories."