



LOVE & REVOLUTION

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ARTICLES
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GAMES
&
REVOLUTION

A Publication of Love & Revolution Communist Organization

In recognition of International Working Women's Day, Love & Revolution presents this first issue of our ~~MAG~~azine. As we view the fight against patriarchy, white supremacy, and settler colonialism as paramount, we have chosen to focus on women's liberation in this edition. Women have been waging struggle since the inception of capitalism, and even before. Many of the world's fiercest revolutionaries have been women, because they know firsthand what is at stake. This is especially true of colonized and oppressed women globally.

It is time for communists to seriously commit to this fight, and to support the women who have been the spearhead of many campaigns against capitalist injustices. On this International Working Women's Day, we are seeing masses of people waking up to this cabal of pedophiles and rapists that are trying to desperately cling to power as their mask slips. Many of us already knew what we were facing, but didn't realize the depths of the depravity. We should never be surprised by the bottomless pit of capitalist immorality, narcissism, and greed. We must harness all of our collective power to destroy this enemy, and uplift the women leading this struggle. We must get ORGANIZED!



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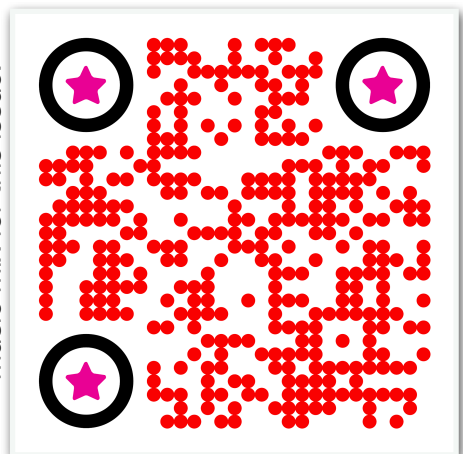


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THE WITCH AND CALIBAN MIX

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The following are excerpts from a 1996 interview conducted by David Yaffe. We wanted to share Assata's insights on the realities of life in Cuba from her perspective as a Revolutionary in light of her recent passing and the current acceleration of the genocidal blockade on Cuba under the u.s. regime:



FRFI: In some ways, though, the most dangerous thing you were doing was showing that people didn't have to tolerate the appalling conditions of US capitalism. It was possible to organise health care and so on outside of the system. And isn't that why they want to destroy Cuba as well? Cuba itself has shown that there is an alternative way, that people can organise their own situation.

Assata Shakur: That's a good analogy. For example, when I came to Cuba, I thought everybody was going to be walking around in fatigues! My image of Cuba was so shaped by what the media had projected and when I got here I saw all these people who were laid-back and there was nothing military about Cuba. It was incredible how brainwashed even someone politically committed to Cuba was.

The first thing you come into contact with in Cuba is the humanness of people and the thing that hits you hardest is all these open doors, in a big city, with millions of people. You'll never find an open door in New York or Chicago; everybody has a million locks on their doors and they are all shut. That openness, that peace, was something I've never known in any other place I've been. And that kind of commitment to human beings.

People here don't have a lot of material things but they have enough to live on and there are not these huge contrasts between huge \$30,000 a month apartments, on the one hand, and people eating garbage, on the other. Even in the Special Period we don't see the kind of poverty in Cuba

that we see in the United States. I've never seen people here sleeping in doorways and parks; I saw it every day in the United States. So, even if you don't have a lot of resources, it's how you distribute the resources that's important. Cuba is not perfect. Cuba is not fantasy-land, but it's a place where people are committed to making a better life for everybody, which is different to most of the rest of the world.

Most governments right now are committed to a more selfish agenda, making rich people richer, a more racist agenda, a more sexist agenda, Cuba is threatening to them because if one, two or three places exist and say 'Wait a minute, you can live another way', then people may say 'We have a choice'. I think that one of the things that happens in the United States and places like it is that people believe that this *is* the way life is. That everything *has* to be unequal. That everything *has* to be violent. That it has to be resolved in terms of the powerful having control. So when you live in a place like Cuba you see that things don't have to be like that; there *can* be another way.

FRFI: As a black woman you have suffered double oppression throughout your life. Would you like to say something about racism and about the oppression of women in the United States, and then any points you would like to make about Cuba.

Assata Shakur: My whole life in the United States was shaped by racism and sexism, so at a pretty young age I decided I had to struggle against them and to dedicate my life to the struggle against them. I still feel that

way. When I came to Cuba I didn't know what to expect. I had no idea. It was clear that a revolution was not a magic wand that you wave and all of a sudden everything is transformed. The first lesson I learned was that a revolution is a process, so I was not that shocked to find sexism had not totally disappeared in Cuba, nor had racism, but that although they had not totally disappeared, the revolution was totally committed to struggling against racism and sexism in all their forms. That was and continues to be very important to me. It would be pure fantasy to think that all the ills, such as racism, classism or sexism, could be dealt with in 30 years. But what is realistic is that it is much easier and much more possible to struggle against those ills in a country which is dedicated to social justice and to eliminating injustice.

The difference now between Cuba and the United States is like night and day. In the US you have all the major candidates running on a basically racist agenda. Everything is in code-words: 'We are against affirmative action' means 'We are against blacks and Puerto Ricans'; 'We are against immigration' means 'We don't want anybody to come into the United States unless they are white *and* have a university degree'. That is the acceptable kind of immigrant: all others are unacceptable unless they serve some kind of political purpose. The code-words are endless but they all mean racism, privilege and sexism.

FRFI: So you think that Cuba has a social system that eventually through struggle will wipe out racism and sexism?

Assata Shakur: Yes, I think so. You cannot wipe out racism or sexism unless you have some kind of system that guarantees basic

human rights, and food and shelter, and is humanistic. Because in a dog-eat-dog society, with a dog-eat-dog philosophy, you have a dog-eat-dog way that people interact and right now in the United States you have a system with a high level of technical sophistication, a high level of technology, of industrial capacity, and you have some very barbarian- thinking people. It's like cavemen with computers. The only way you can completely eradicate racism or sexism is to have a society which is very well-founded in social justice.

FRFI: You are an internationalist. You have said, 'Unless people who are oppressed internationally come together, we are going to be a long way from making any change'. Given the depth of racism in the major capitalist, imperialist powers, how can this be overcome?



Assata Shakur: First of all, workers in the developed capitalist countries have to be educated to realise that their lives, how they live and how well they live, can cease to depend on how well big corporations in those countries can suck people's blood in the Third World, and can depend instead on different worldwide priorities.

A worker in a developed capitalist country is subsidised by Third World workers. They have a higher standard of living, a higher ability to buy all the available junk: tape-recorders, sneakers, clothes, cars, etc. But they pay a very high price. For example, in the United States a worker can afford an expensive watch, but he can't wear it anywhere because the crime rate is so high. And most workers have to work so hard and so long, double time and overtime, Saturdays etc, just to

make ends meet.

Recreation is extraordinarily expensive there. Here in Cuba you can go almost any place for three to five pesos. In the United States that is unheard of. Here any young person can go to a concert on the Malecon and dance until dawn: in the United States you just can't do that: it's too dangerous or too expensive.

Human development is so expensive in the developed capitalist countries. You have to pay an enormous amount of money to play sport, go dancing, learn painting, whereas over here kids go to the Casa de Cultura and just sign up and play whatever they want to. That human development is available. If you want to be a sportsperson (and everyone knows that Cuba wins everything!) you can develop your abilities. This is one of the fundamental things you don't have in capitalist countries. There they study for years and years, take tests in subjects they

whose only interest is profit. that in a little while you are going to have to have your own business just to breathe, So, if you want a society where your child has education as a right, where the air and water are protected, where you can live freely, then you have to think of some kind of society that has a socialist point of view, that is dedicated to the social good of the majority of the people.

I've studied what happened in the Soviet Union, A lot of people thought, 'We've got rid of communism and we're going to have the same things they have in the US. We're going to have some tennis shoes and stuff'. But what they got is a mafiocracy, a mafia-led government, where the mafia control everything. The people are poorer than they ever were: they have lost all of the social guarantees. So, being

don't even like, to work for a company they don't even like, to do a job they don't like, so they can make money to send their kids to a school they don't like!

Workers in the developed capitalist countries don't even like being workers, so they don't even defend their own interests, Long live the Queen! What did the Queen ever do for them? I've never understood the fascination of the Queen and Lady Di. It's crazy, These people not only waste goodness knows how much of the world's resources, but they have common people defending their right to do so and buying papers to read about their million-dollar divorces! But I think that when people in the developed capitalist countries realise that it is in their interest to have a society based on justice, things will change,

Right now, even the water and the air are becoming so contaminated by big business,



brainwashed carries a very high price and workers have to work out which side they're on. If you don't have enough sense to be on your own side, then you are well and truly brainwashed. One of the real problems in capitalist countries is that people are so brainwashed they will believe anything. They believe soap operas are the truth. There is no group of human beings in the world as politically ignorant as those in the United States (although maybe England can compete). That is why they are so easily controllable by people who are working against their interests.

FRFI: You were critical of socialism in the USSR. Cuba is trying to solve the problems the USSR never managed to solve and which contributed to its collapse. Do you think that Cuba is showing us a different way which has universal application?

Assata Shakur: Cuba is thinking and rethinking how to build socialism. Twenty years ago the Soviet Union was saying, 'This is the only way you should build socialism. This is the only way you should build a revolutionary movement. This is the only position you should have in terms of party-building and alliances and whatever.' People all over the world got caught up in that. It was unavoidable.

I think that everybody who is interested in social change and social justice today, whether they are in Cuba or Mozambique or Poland, wherever they are, they have to say: 'The phase we are in, in building socialism, in conceiving of socialism, is the infancy, the beginning of human beings coming together and saying we have to construct societies that are for the people, that are fully democratic, that offer full human rights'. The process of conceiving and building that society has to constantly grow. Because if you just have a narrow idea of what socialism is, you are going to build some terrible socialism.

I feel very hopeful and encouraged by Cuba's openness, Cuba's willingness to change and grow and create. If you build a house and don't put any paintings on the wall you have an ugly house. The same is true about building a society. It is important not just to have an education programme, but that it is creative education; it is not just important that young people gather together to have fun, but that they do it creatively. When human beings become divorced from their creativity and their inventiveness, they stagnate and die a little. A revolutionary process is the same; it has to be creative, dynamic and loving. When you feel good in a place, even if you don't have a lot of material wealth, you have a lot of spiritual and human wealth, and you are not as interested in trying to buy all those little trinkets and gadgets. The way we can conceive of building a socialist society has to be more on the human level, rather than on the material aspects. I'm not saying material aspects are not important but that when it comes to building socialism both are important and in order to build an enduring socialism you have to go way, way beneath the surface to the human psyche and the human heart.

Rest In Power - Assata Shakur July 16, 1947– September 25, 2025

Source:

www.davidvaffe.org.uk/cuba/144-david-vaffe-interview-with-assata-shakur-former-black-panther-in-exile-in-cuba-1996





GUILTY OF BEING WHITE:

A Critical Reinterpretation of the "White Knapsack"

"White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" is a highly influential 1989 article by Women's Studies professor Peggy McIntosh. Its contents have been widely used in classrooms and professional trainings to further conversations around how white privilege appears in peoples' daily lives. McIntosh believes that white privilege is an "elusive and fugitive subject," meaning that people (primarily whites) often do not recognize where white supremacy comes from and how it manifests interpersonally in the post-Civil Rights era.

The U.S. government, with its mouthpieces in corporate media and the online influencer sphere, tries to convince the working class that issues surrounding race are not as problematic as they once were; that we now live in a "post-racial" society. Therefore, the common conception is that racist outcomes are the result of individual bigoted

attitudes rather than inherent features of a system that continues to keep oppressed nations down as conditions keep worsening for all workers.

Financial crises like the 2008 recession and post-lockdown stagflation have disproportionately impacted these already marginalized workers. These economic problems have led to increased repression and mass de-funding of social programs, such as education, public health, housing, etc. Conversely, police and military budgets have inflated, departments are becoming increasingly militarized, and ICE is being deployed nationwide without accountability or effective organized resistance. The state and its apparatuses are pushing the white working class to identify with its own oppressors and normalize escalations of violence both domestically and abroad.

Given the increasingly dire situation outlined above, it is necessary to update and rework McIntosh's original piece to better reflect both these current conditions and the realities of racism as a system. There have been some attempts to take up the question McIntosh originally posed in 1989, "Having described white privilege, what will I do to end it?" However, these responses still lack a working class character and holistic analysis of systemic problems.

Before we address this, we need some useful definitions:

"White Supremacy is an historically based, institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations, and peoples of color by white peoples and nations of the European continent, for the purpose of maintaining and defending a system of wealth, power, and privilege." (Definition by the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop, San Francisco, CA)

White privilege, informed by the above definition, refers to the unearned advantages and benefits that white people experience in society simply because of their race. It highlights the systemic inequalities that favor white individuals over non-white individuals in various aspects of life, such as education, employment, and interactions with the legal system and law enforcement. W. E. B. Du Bois in his book *Black Reconstruction*, pointed to the "wages of whiteness" as an effective tool in policing and upholding a system of Apartheid in the U.S.

"It must be remembered that the white group of laborers, while they received a low wage, were compensated in part by a sort of public and psychological wage. They were given public deference in titles of courtesy because they were white. They were admitted freely with all classes of white people to public functions, public parks, and the best schools. The police were drawn from the ranks, and the courts, dependent upon their votes, treated them with such leniency as to encourage lawlessness. Their vote selected public officials, and while this had small effect upon the economic situation, it had great effect upon their personal treatment and the deference shown them..." -W. E. B. Du Bois



The following list corresponds with the original points of recognition from McIntosh's article, applied primarily (but not exclusively) in workplace and housing contexts. We've included alternative ideas to begin actively challenging whiteness for each point. We frame these as 'alternatives,' as we do not think these individual actions alone are solutions to white supremacy within the working class. However, they can serve as starting points for thinking about and taking real action in community organizations, which will be necessary preliminary steps for the widespread systemic change that is needed.

Problem: I do not have an obligation to form relationships with BIPOC people at work.

Alternative: Consider and ask how to support BIPOC workers. If in a union, advocate for BIPOC leadership where possible.

Problem: I do not have to consider anything aside from cost when finding housing, and the effects of my potential role in gentrification. **Alternative:** Research neighborhoods you plan to move into, including demographic, socioeconomic, and historical conditions. If you have enough money, don't just pick the cheapest option; consider the above factors.

Problem: Regardless of my neighbors, I can rely on status quo comfortability where I live. I do not have to think about potential grievances that may arise from my presence as a white person.

Alternative: Challenge yourself to meet neighbors, and form relationships and bonds beyond comfortability. This can build trust so that neighbors can help solve mutual problems and provide a seed to begin organizing your neighborhood.

Problem: I can assume that if I am surveilled in the workplace I will not be targeted as harshly as my BIPOC co-workers for workplace transgressions, real or perceived. I can otherwise stay quiet and keep my head down when BIPOC workers are targeted, and assume good faith on the part of management.

Alternative: If a BIPOC co-worker is facing retaliation from management, use your white privilege to speak out for them. As a white person, you are far less likely to face scrutiny in this situation.

Problem: I am generally not impacted by overrepresentation of whites in popular culture, media, entertainment, etc. **Alternative:** Locate and promote alternative media sources that focus on working class and BIPOC struggles.

Problem: I do not have to consider the impacts of settler-colonialism and imperialism. Nor do I have to think about how settler culture erases indigenous cultures (holidays, sports, entertainment, etc.). **Alternative:** Learn indigenous accounts of history from actual indigenous sources. Contact local indigenous peoples and go to their events to support them. This can be a way to build genuine connections and community on the path toward dismantling settler culture.

Problem: I don't have to fight to see myself or my family's culture, identity, or history represented in school curriculum. **Alternative:** Support campaigns of those who are challenging dominant ideas about settler history in schools. Educate yourself and your children on the real history of the settler colony of the U.S. to counter its false narratives.

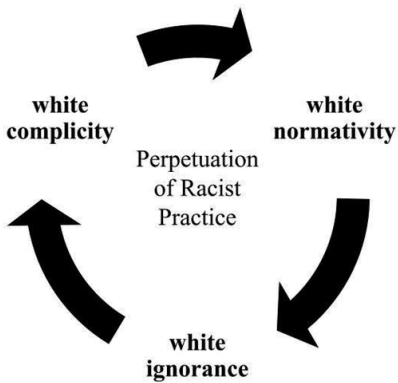
Problem: I can overlook contributions by revolutionary BIPOC authors and journalists that serve as counter-narratives to official academic and corporate media channels that are dominated by white people and white viewpoints. **Alternative:** Read accounts from people who have directly challenged white supremacy, i.e. figures like George Jackson, Kwame Nkrumah, Assata Shakur, etc. Find current primary sources that are independent of corporate media control.

Problem: I don't have to think about the ways in which white settler culture consumes and appropriates cultural products from BIPOC peoples (music, art, food, etc.). **Alternative:** Research the sources of cultural products and push back against appropriations and their supporting narratives.

Problem: I am not subjected to lectures on fiscal responsibilities, as a result of perceived financial difficulties, due to racial perceptions of money handling. **Alternative:** Push back against common tropes about BIPOC groups regarding financial literacy.

Problem: It is unlikely I will face police violence due to standing up for my children in racist circumstances; e.g., if my child is bullied or harassed. **Alternative:** Work to promote community mediation and reconciliation efforts that avoid traditional policing mechanisms.

Problem: I am less likely to be reprimanded or socially shunned at work based on how I present myself at work through speech, mannerisms, dress, etc. **Alternative:** Talk with other white workers to understand quota systems for hiring often obscure the actual hard work people put into getting where they are. Question how professional standards have been created by and serve a white supremacist system, i.e., how non-whites and women are discriminated against based on appearances rather than merit alone.



Problem: I don't have to think about racial and gendered dynamics when speaking about workplace issues. **Alternative:** Do not speak out of ignorance. Learn from others (BIPOC and women co-workers) and understand why you have the privilege to speak without these consequences.

Problem: When I overcome adversities in my life, people do not assume I accomplished this in spite of my assumed background. **Alternative:** Do not flatten experiences of BIPOC people, but still understand that not all individual experiences are the same. The white supremacist system does indeed view BIPOC people as inferior, no matter their background. Ensure you educate other white people on this issue.

Problem: Whiteness allows me to avoid taking responsibility for complicity in racist outcomes. **Alternative:** Take responsibility. Understand that you are complicit in white supremacy if you are not actively fighting the system of oppression.

Problem: I can remain ignorant of the vast majority of the world's exploitation that allows for the privileges that tend to favor whites. **Alternative:** Decouple from this system. Learn how imperialism functions to suppress the global working class and use your own resources for community, to destabilize this exploitative system.

Problem: I can perceive the US government to be representative of the 'diverse melting pot' that it presents itself to be, despite the reality that it is truly representative of wealthy elite interests. **Alternative:** Work toward educating other white people about this reality, and fight beyond a reformist mindset to actual sustainable systemic change.

Problem: I can work comfortably without questioning why management is comprised primarily of white people. **Alternative:** Use your privilege to call out racist dynamics in workplace management. Understand that your BIPOC co-workers are frequent targets of this racism and organize with them where possible. Fighting for better management practices isn't a solution, but it can be a first step to building relationships and community organizations to more effectively challenge the white supremacist corporate order.

Problem: I will likely experience less contact with cops and government agents based on my race. Additionally, I will be less likely to incur serious consequences from this contact (i.e. prison, serious injuries, or death) compared to a BIPOC person. **Alternative:** Join organizations to fight police repression and the prison-industrial complex. Also consider that protest and direct actions can potentially carry more serious penalties for BIPOC members of your organization.

Problem: I can engage with popular art and entertainment without understanding how it serves particular white supremacist and/or capitalist consumerist narratives that uphold racist dynamics. **Alternative:** Balance your time with studying and fighting against the racist system of capitalism by joining organizations. Critically engage with popular media to understand its potential role as capitalist-imperialist propaganda.

Problem: I don't have to question why most organizations I can join focus on individual solutions to large scale societal problems like racism. **Alternative:** Join organizations that focus on collective work to address these issues with concrete actions.

Problem: I can go to workplace DEI trainings without questioning how it perpetuates the idea that racism is only the product of individual biases instead of systemic conditions. **Alternative:** Utilize DEI trainings as opportunities to challenge other people to take things a step further; start talking about going beyond individual mindsets and solutions.

Problem: As a white worker I likely have more leisure time and accessibility to leisure than my BIPOC peers. This is a result of BIPOC and women workers on average being paid less for the same work, and having less access to well-paying jobs with benefits. **Alternative:** Use what extra time you have to organize, plan and join community events, etc.

Problem: I typically have my health concerns taken seriously by medical professionals, as opposed to oppressed communities whose health issues are often invalidated by (primarily white male) doctors. **Alternative:** Work with and promote community health care programs that provide universal access for people most impacted by the horrors of the healthcare system.

Problem: I don't have to face daily reminders of the white supremacist order that constantly promotes and instills a construct of inferiority based on my race. **Alternative:** Challenge yourself and the white people in your life to understand their lack of organization and consciousness is contributing to their complicity in the white supremacist system. Only through organization can we begin the process of destroying white supremacy.

Problem: A fight for mere representation (i.e. so-called culture wars) without challenging a system that ultimately serves white supremacy is insufficient for true liberation. **Alternative:** Fight for the actual overturning of this system rather than putting a band-aid on a gaping knife wound.

-eleanor

Recommended readings for further study:

- The White Blind Spot by Noel Ignatiev and Theodore W. Allen
- Settler-Colonialism by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
- Blood in My Eye by George Jackson
- The Abolition of White Democracy by Joel Olson
- Women, Race, and Class by Angela Davis
- Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat by J. Sakai
- The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon
- <https://collectiveliberation.org/a-trouble-makers-guide/>
- <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/fundamentals/core-concepts/system-of-white-supremacy-and-white-privilege>
- <https://helpfulprofessor.com/white-privilege-examples/>
- <https://www.vice.com/en/article/white-privilege-examples/>
- Original Article: <https://www.nationalseedproject.org/key-seed-texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>



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يوم المرأة العالمي

MARCH 8
INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

8 DE MARZO
DÍA INTERNACIONAL DE LA MUJER



Cruel But Not Unusual:

The Punishment of Women in U.S. Prisons: An Interview with Marilyn Buck and Laura Whitehorn

by Laura Whitehorn, Marilyn Buck and Susie Day

Excerpts reprinted from Monthly Review, vol. 53, no. 3 (2001)

After years of neglect, the issue of women in prison has begun to receive attention in this country. Media accounts of overcrowding, lengthening sentences, and horrendous medical care in women's prisons appear regularly. Amnesty International—long known for ignoring human rights abuses inside United States prisons and jails—issued a report, two days shy of International Women's Day 2001, documenting over 1,000 cases of sexual abuse of U.S. women prisoners by their jailers. However, we seldom hear from these women themselves. And we never hear from women incarcerated for their political actions.

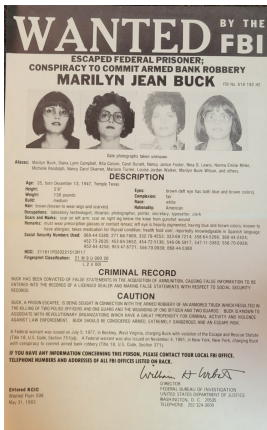
Here are the voices and observations of two women political prisoners. Laura Whitehorn, released in 1999, served over fourteen years behind bars for a series of property bombings, including one of the U.S. Capitol building, to protest police brutality and U.S. foreign policy (the "Resistance Conspiracy" case). Marilyn Buck, Laura's friend and codefendant, was also convicted for her alleged role in the 1979 prison escape of Assata Shakur, and a number of armored car expropriations in support of the Black Liberation Army. She is serving a total sentence of eighty years and remains in the Dublin California Federal Correctional Facility. (Her codefendants on that case include Dr. Mutulu Shakur and Sekou Odinga, both also incarcerated in federal prisons.)

While it was possible to talk to Laura at length about her time behind bars, Marilyn was able only to make four long-distance phone calls, each summarily cut off by the prison after fifteen minutes. After reading Marilyn's words—and having known and lived beside Marilyn for years in prison—Laura added to what Marilyn wasn't able to say, as well as expressing her own experience and recollections.



Marilyn Buck was released from prison July 15, 2010, less than a month before her death at age 62 from cancer. She passed on August 3, 2010.

Rest In Power



SD: You both were arrested and imprisoned in 1985. How have prison conditions around you changed over those years?

MB: They've become much more repressive, particularly since Ronald Reagan's presidency. Each year, there's been slippage. And certainly Clinton played a big role with the Anti-Terrorism Act, which further limited people's legal rights.

The balance of who is in prison has also changed. There's a much higher percentage of blacks and Latinos, and—at least in the Federal system—an enormous number of immigrants. Not just immigrants but foreign nationals, who've been arrested for incidents in crossing borders. People are detained for years without ever being given any kind of judicial decision.

LW: I think it's typical of Marilyn not to complain in an interview about her own conditions. When we look at the two million people now in the federal and state systems, the proportion of women in those numbers has gone way up. What that means to someone like Marilyn is tremendous overcrowding: you're living the rest of your life in a tiny cell that was built for one person and now houses three. It means you have no property, because there's no room. Little by little, they took away any clothing that was sent to you, and put down much more stringent requirements. It means that you have no desk. Marilyn Buck, like many prisoners who fight very hard to get an education, has to sit on a cot and write on her lap. The overcrowding means that people are treated like problems and like baggage.

The other thing is the federal conspiracy laws, which are particularly pernicious for women. In 1985, when people heard that I was facing thirty-three years, they were astounded. That seemed like so much time. In 1990, when I ended up with twenty-three years, people were less astounded, because the laws had changed and sentences were much longer. By then, my cellmate had a twenty-four-year sentence on a first offense. This was a drug conspiracy case where it was really her husband who had run this drug ring, and she was swept up in the indictment. Or there's our friend Danielle, who has a triple-life sentence for another drug conspiracy—her crime was basically refusing to testify against her husband. We found many more women with those kinds of sentences.

SD: How do you think these last fifteen years have affected you, personally?

MB: Imagine yourself in a relationship with an abuser who controls your every move, keeps you locked in the house. There's the ever-present threat of violence or further repression if you don't toe the line. I think that's a fairly good analogy of what happens. And imagine being there for fifteen years.

To be punished, to be absolutely controlled, whether it's about buttoning your shirt; how you have a scarf on your head; how long or how baggy your pants are—all of those things are under

scrutiny. It's hard to give a clinical picture of what they do, because how do you know, when you're the target, or the victim, what that does to you? But there's a difference between being a target and being a victim.

LW: The largest proportion of guards in federal women's prisons are men. That's who's in your living unit. That's who's looking through the window in your door when you might be using the bathroom or changing your clothes. There's the total loss of ability to defend your person.

For me, the hardest part was the pat-searches. In the federal system, it's legal for male guards to pat-search women prisoners. That means they stand behind you and run their hands all over your body. The point is not to locate contraband; it's to reduce you to a completely powerless person. If I had pushed a guard's hands away they would have sent me to the hole for assault. In fact, that did happen once. It reduces you to an object, not worthy of being defended. The message is, "your body is meaningless, why don't you want this man to put his hands all over you?" Very, very deeply damaging.

Marilyn talks about being "a target or a victim." She makes a distinction. That's really important because the struggle inside prison is to refuse to be victimized. Once you allow yourself to be a victim, you lose your ability to stand up and say, "I'm a person; I'm not a piece of garbage."

But over the years, when you have to put up with that again and again, you avoid situations because you just don't want to go through it. You have to exert an enormous amount of psychic energy to remove yourself from the situation, where this guy's running his hands over your body. You end up exhausted at the end of the day, and your nerves are shot. Your only life is resisting these situations.

SD: Is there a portrait of a typical woman prisoner you could draw?

MB: No, except in the broadest strokes. Typically, she's a woman of color. When she first comes to prison, she's twenty-three to twenty-four years old. Probably the median age of women here is thirty-five to thirty-six, which is much older than it used to be because women stay in prison much longer. Presently, in this particular institution, over 50 percent of the women are Latin American, a large percentage of that, Mexican. You could also say—and this is not news—a lot of the women here come from abusive relationships, whether parents or husbands.... If you look at the statistics, it says up to 80 percent.

LW: I would also say that a huge number of the women are mothers. It means that, on the outside, there are basically a lot of orphans. I consider the prison system today to be a form of genocide. Prison has been used against third-world populations inside the United States, in particular African-American and Latino populations. These women are very young when they come to prison. They have sentences that will go through their childbearing years. Their children are either farmed out to relatives, or they become wards of the state. It means that the women, who would form some sort of collective bond when there's a need for struggle, are gone from the community. And it means that their children may well go to prison themselves. Those of us who grew up with mothers have complaints that we didn't get enough love. What does it mean to have your mother in prison?

One thing that would strike me whenever people came in from the outside for something like an AIDS health fair—we fought very hard to have those fairs—is that these straight, middle-America types would be sweating bullets, they

were so scared. And they would be so expansive and warm when they left. They would say, "My picture of you all was so wrong. I pictured these killers with knives in their teeth, and I find you're just like my neighbors."

If you look at the number of women in prison, some of us are your neighbors. I don't care where you live. People who read Monthly Review: your neighbors are in prison, OK? I must have met thousands and thousands of women over almost fifteen years, and I would have to say that, of the women I met, there are probably ten or fifteen who, in a socialist society, would need to be in prison.

SD: Do women ever get "better" after they go to prison?

MB: Sometimes. I think there's the possibility of coming to terms with the fact that you were abused. Basically, you have two things happening. One is that you have this potential, because you're not running around, doing the things you had to do as a mother, a wife, a partner, or as someone who had to go to work. When that daily activity stops, then the potential exists to discover a sense of independence.

The other side is that we're in a situation where we're absolutely controlled. That sort of enhances another abusive relationship. It can limit your imagination and shut you down. So a lot of women become more creative here, in terms of arts and crafts, but it doesn't

necessarily open them to their potential as human beings.

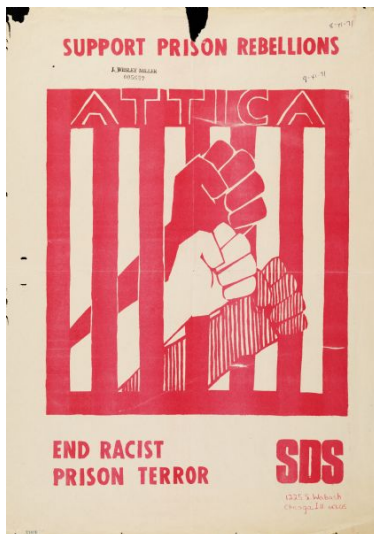
LW: Also, a lot of women who have been in abusive relationships get into lesbian relationships. And one of the things the chaplains do is preach against homosexuality, because they're terrified of it. I was once in a prison where there was a progressive chaplain who told other chaplains that for a lot of the women, these relationships were the first time

someone looked at them and saw beauty and not something to be used and abused. There were also some horrible lesbian relationships that were a recreation of the worst in straight relationships.

Can we talk about medical care? The women are getting older. A lot of women in prison are going through menopause. Many have gynecological problems. I had surgery when I was in prison. There you are: you're bleeding; you've had surgery a few hours before. You're

strip-searched, shackled, chained, and you have to walk back to a van. If you're lucky they'll have a wheelchair for you to take you back to your unit.

I now work at POZ magazine, and a woman in Danbury Prison wrote a column for the magazine. She has HIV and goes to the male gynecologist to be told that she needs surgery on her cervix. She says to him, "I have to be completely sedated for this operation." And he says, "No you don't." And she says, "Yes, I do. I have a history of sexual abuse and I have a



panic attack when I have to lie on my back with my legs spread open and chained in front of strangers.”

And he laughs at her. He tells her, “Well, then, we can’t do the surgery.” And she writes, “I hate my doctor. And that’s a problem. For me, but not for him.” That’s so profound. That relationship of being “cared for” by someone who sees you as their enemy is completely deleterious to your health.

I hope everyone who reads this article is familiar with the medical crisis in the California Women’s prison at Chowchilla “health care” there is left to the guards: they are trained as low level EMT’s and they do the first stage of triage, deciding whether a woman should be seen by a doctor or not. Seventeen women died in that prison last year alone and independent investigations concluded that medical incompetence or refusal of medical attention contributed to the deaths.

The other thing I saw so much in women was the further erosion of already-low self-esteem. What does it do to you to have to go stand in line and get a man’s attention and ask him for sanitary napkins and then be asked, “Didn’t you ask me for some yesterday?”

SD: How do you deal with the deaths of family and friends while you’re in prison?

MB: My mother died about six weeks ago. She became ill in September, so I went through a phase of real guilt that I wasn’t there. And real sorrow and real anger. I think I’ve looked at the guilt a little more. I just couldn’t be there. But the sorrow of not being able to hold my mother’s little bird hand by the time she was starving to death from the cancer...just breaks my heart. And there’s nothing I can do about it.

I could intellectualize it. I



could have been on a ship halfway around the world, and we got stuck in the trade winds and couldn’t get there in time. But I’m an extreme realist and understand who I am as a political prisoner. I knew that I would not be allowed to go to her bedside, nor to her funeral. That was just the reality. She died on a Sunday. And she was buried on my birthday. So it’s just all very hard.

I talked to my mother every week I could. And she came to visit me once a year. It was hard for her to get here. My mom was seventy-four She had to drive a long way and go through all the emotional turmoil that you can’t avoid when you see somebody you can’t do anything for. So I had to look at her anger, too.

In a certain way, I want to be able to lie on the floor and bang my heels and cry and scream, but that just hurts my heels... So what can I say? I’m having a hard time. I’m having a

very, very hard time. I...you know, it's grief. But it's grief under dire conditions. I'll always miss my mother.

LW: One of the hardest things about being in prison is losing somebody you love and being unable to be there with them while they're dying, or go to the memorial service afterwards. Being in prison through some of the worst years of the AIDS epidemic meant that I lost friends, both on the outside and the inside, very dear women who were among the best friends I've ever had in life.

My father died while I was in prison. I was very fortunate that there was a chaplain who allowed me to phone him twice while he was in the intensive care unit. It's just an emblem of how families are destroyed by prison—the fact that Marilyn was not permitted to go; that I was not permitted to go to my father's funeral; that there was no question of ever being permitted to go.

SD: What kinds of internal resources have you developed to deal with these years in prison?

MB: For me, the main thing is that I recognized, after the first five years of being imprisoned and on trial a lot, that one tends to build one's walls. Which means that you begin to censor yourself, so that they can't censor you.

I censored how I spoke to people, how I interacted. It goes in tandem with, "If I button my shirt the way they want, they won't attack me for not buttoning my shirt properly." In some ways, I found myself trying to be a "good girl," because then maybe they'd see I wasn't a "bad girl."

When I got a handle on what I was doing, I was horrified, because how can you be a women's liberationist and worry about being a good girl or a bad girl? What I believed in my gut was being turned inside out by my actual life. And it made me understand a lot more about how any woman—it doesn't matter who you are or what you think—can get in a relationship with another person—generally a man, but not always—who can become your abuser, your owner.

So once I could begin to see that, I tried to find ways to tear down my walls, to protect myself less. It's always a

risk, because when you open a door, you don't know what's going to come in, or what's going to go out. And everyone is needy in prison. When you're a prisoner, you're needy. It's emotionally, psychologically devastating. But I felt like, if I didn't take that risk, that I was going to smother the essence of who I was.

What I do is that I write. I write poems. Over the years I've moved from being a rhetorical, frozen writer to try to put out more of who I am, and how I feel...I think that ultimately, if we want human liberation, we have to be able to be honest with ourselves and other people about our desires, our resentments, as we say these days, our "issues."

So I look to that as a little flame before my face. I can't say I'm there. But I can at least keep that in my mind.

LW: I think the hardest thing to maintain over the years, for me, was my sense of outrage. After a while, your heart hurts so continually, you begin to build a sort of padding around it. For example, one of the hardest things for me in prison was at the end of the visiting period, when you see children being led away from their mothers and they don't understand, especially the little ones are just screaming and crying. I got to a point where I would try to leave my visits early because I couldn't stand that any more.

I really started to disrespect myself for that. I felt like, the mother's going through it, how do you get the right to remove yourself from it? I think from that, I understood something of why people don't want to know about prisons, because it's too hard; there's something so painful about seeing a woman being removed from her baby. A woman who gives birth in most U.S. prisons gets somewhere between eight and twenty-four hours before she is taken back to the prison and separated from the infant.

When people say, "God, how did you survive prison?" I think the way I did it was by touching the lives and being touched by the lives of women around me. I mean, I was in prison with women who had been raped repeatedly by a stepfather when they were between seven and eleven, who had to go through pat-searches every day, through shakedowns where some man comes in your cell and paws through your underwear. They would call home and find out that their daughter, who was thirteen, was again being abused by that same stepfather, who was back in the picture. They had to deal with the most intense levels of abuse, and yet were able to stand up through it, were able to survive.

I learned early on how people can communicate with each other on a really deep level without having to give up their own personal strength. I learned how to get emotional sustenance from the women around me and how to try to give some to them. That's the main thing I learned from prison. And it was easy for me because I knew I had a release date. For someone like Marilyn, or our friend Danielle, finding the strength to survive is an enormous job.

SD: What reactions do you get as a political person from other prisoners?

MB: Most people don't know my politics specifically. As I get older and tired, and more beaten down by being in prison, I'm not out there as much with the population. I don't go to the dining room very much. I'm too tired to do that. So less and less, people know me.

But some people do understand my politics. You know, one woman who's twenty-two years old just left. A young black woman, we talked sometimes, and I have been supportive and critical of her in a couple of situations. When she left, she said, "Thank you. You helped me a lot."

So, to me, what your politics are in the abstract don't mean a damn; it's how you practice them. For myself as a white woman, I ask, how do you treat people; how do people receive you as a human being? Are people abstractions to you, in terms of racism? Or do you treat people as real equals, even given all the issues of privilege? Because they exist in prison, too.

Sometimes I'm treated differently by the administration. I know that my mail gets opened. That's not true of everyone else. So I end up getting envelopes without any contents. Every time you say anything about it, it's "Oh, it must be the post office."

LW: Marilyn's right that people knew us as political prisoners by how we dealt with people and situations every day. I remember feeling that the main impact I'd had was when I would intervene when a guard was picking on a woman, or help somebody get her privileges back when they'd been taken away unjustly. More than if I gave them a lecture on the history of something.

But Marilyn's also way too modest. When we were in prison together, all the other women knew she represented the politics of struggles for justice, human rights, liberation. Women would always approach her for help in understanding not only incidents on the news, world affairs, but also incidents of racism and hostility among different nationalities in the prison population. She may tire of talking about it, but I know for a fact she never tires of acting on all of it, treating people with respect, making peace in difficult situations, basically doing the right thing no matter how tired she is, how long she's had to do it.

One thing that changed while I was in prison is that there were many more women political prisoners. It was a shock to the prison system itself because they were terrified of us.

The government created a control unit. They tested it out on two of the Puerto Rican women, Lucy Rodriguez and Haydee Beltran. Then they put Alejandrina Torres and Silvia Baraldini and Susan Rosenberg in an underground unit at the Federal Correctional Institution at Lexington. It was actually a basement unit and they were supposed to be there for the rest of their sentences, which were fifty-eight and forty-three and thirty-five years. It was a big mistake because it got international attention. It was one of the first times Amnesty International got involved in the conditions of incarceration in the United States. Part of it was that they were terrified we would revolutionize the rest of the prison population.



A few years after that unit was closed down, I was in Lexington and working in the landscape crew, mowing grass, and my boss was a guard who had been assigned to that basement unit. She told me that they had been told not to speak to the prisoners there because they would brainwash them. I thought it was hysterical. I said, "You'll see after we've worked together, whether I brainwash you."

About three months later, that guard asked me, "Who's that guy who's the biggest mass murderer ever?" And I said, "George Bush." Then we got into a discussion about who is a mass-murderer—someone who kills five people or a president who—? And she says, "You know, you're making a lot of sense, Whitehorn. Uh-oh. I am being brainwashed."

SD: Some people say that political prisoners get more recognition and support than social prisoners. What's your reaction to that?

MB: There's a misconception that political prisoners always get so much support. There are some who were in prison for years before they got any support at all, except for a few people they'd worked with in the world. We could look at Mandela. All these people worked to free Mandela. What was done about all the other [African National Congress] prisoners? Probably ninety-nine out of one hundred political prisoners didn't join the struggle to become famous.

Also political prisoners tend not to get parole. Particularly men political prisoners, they're in isolation for years and years. There's a lot of things we don't get that sometimes other prisoners do get.

LW: If you want to understand prisons, you have to understand both political and social prisoners. They're two sides of a program of repression. One is, you terrify communities and tell them the law is all-powerful and people will lose their freedom for many, many years if they transgress. The other is, you give huge sentences to anyone who says, "There are such egregious social injustices that we have to go up against the government." You lock those people up for long periods of time, and that will prevent the rise of a new generation of leaders or activists. If you leave out one side of that equation, you'll never understand what prisons are. You'll think they're just about making money, which is ridiculous.

Having said that, I think the current building of a mass movement about the prison industrial complex began with political prisoners. There is absolutely no division between supporting political prisoners and fighting for an end to the prison system. Angela Davis has been instrumental in it. Who's she? She's an ex-political prisoner. The people who have organized a lot of young activists in that movement are political prisoners or ex-political prisoners.

Every single political prisoner did prison work before they went to prison. We were the people who supported the Attica brothers; we were the people who were in the Midnight Special Collective back in the early '70s in New York, which was a prison support collective. We're not the ones who don't think social prisoners are important.

And political prisoners often need extra support. Marilyn Buck has an eighty-year sentence and she has never been accused of actually hurting a single person. Or Teddy Jah Heath, who just died in prison. He had been convicted of a kidnapping, where a big-time drug-dealer was put in a car, driven around, talked to, and let out. No injury; no nothing. Jah did twenty-seven years in prison. After twenty-five years, he went to the parole board and was rejected. Two years later, he died in prison of colon cancer. Because his act was a political act. It was done in line with the programs of the Black Liberation Army, growing out of the Black Panther Party, to stop the drug trade in the black communities.

SD: Marilyn, what do you need from people on the outside?

MB: What I need from people is what we all need: to seize our human liberation as much as possible as women, as lesbians, as heterosexuals. To support the right of human beings to have their own nations, their own liberation, and their own justice. If we stopped police brutality; if black women and men were treated like equal human beings, that would make me feel really, really good, because I would be less dehumanized as a white person in this society. I would not be objectified as the oppressor.

I would like us to be more creative; to be the artists that we all are. I don't want to see child prostitution. That to me is oppression in the concrete; people having to sell their children to stay alive. Or watching their children in the clutches of the police. Or a woman standing on her feet as a waitress for ten hours a day when her veins are breaking and still not be able to pay the rent and be there for her children.

I was thinking about this the other day—I think about the vision I had when I was a nineteen-year-old of justice and human rights and women’s equality. It was a wonderful vision. I think how it got implemented—how we became rigid and rhetorical within that—took away from that vision. But without a vision, you can’t go forward.

SD: Laura, now that you’re out of prison, what do you want to do?

LW: I don’t ever want to forget. That would be like putting calluses over my heart. It would be forgetting the people I owe something to. I guess the hardest thing for me about getting out was leaving so many people behind. I’ve been working in release efforts. We filed papers for clemency with Clinton for all the federal political prisoners. I try to do work for HIV+ prisoners through my job at POZ magazine. And when people ask me, “How can I support your friends who are left behind?” that makes me feel whole.

It’s made me sad that I’ve tried to interest different groups of women in supporting young women in prison on these ridiculous [drug] conspiracy cases. The “girlfriend crimes,” like Kemba Smith. There are hundreds of Kemba Smiths in the federal system. And I have been singularly unsuccessful in interesting any organized women’s groups to fight for those women.



One thing that makes prisons so criminal is that they damage people over time. I’m very damaged, and I had tons of support. I did prison work for years before I was arrested, so I knew what to expect. Nothing could really catch me off guard. Yet I find I have places in me that I don’t know how to go to, that are so filled with pain.

Especially late, in the middle of the night, when I think about some of my friends, these young women who are doing life sentences. They didn’t kill anyone. They didn’t hurt anybody. They gave a fucking message to someone, or maybe they didn’t turn their husband in, and they knew he had killed someone. They’re doing life, and they have very little chance of getting out. There’s a pain in me that I don’t know how to deal with.

You know, it’s very difficult to carry on relationships with people on the outside while you’re in prison. Your friends shield you from things because either they think you don’t want to hear about the great dinner they had the night before, or you’re going to think their problems are trivial because, after all, they’re not in prison. It damages your ability to have human

relationships. And I have to say that the people I've seen who carry on friendships with prisoners are few and far between, and I honor them.

So I need to continue to struggle for prisoners and to win their release. And to say, it's extremely important for people on the outside to understand what prisons are and who's in prison and to visit them. To bring that kind of humanity into the prisons—but most of all, to bring those prisoners out, back into the communities.

Grassroots groups such as the California Coalition for Women Prisoners and publications such as Sojourner, The Fire Inside, Out of Time, Prison Focus, and Fortune News are fighting for and giving voice to women prisoners. The Jericho Movement is a national organization dedicated to supporting political prisoners; the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement (1195 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11216) also works to support and free political prisoners.



"Poetry is the lifeblood of rebellion, revolution, and the raising of consciousness."

- Alice Walker

Prison Poetry for the People

By Marilyn Buck

words

poised on poets' lips

burst into declarations

denunciations and dreams

sun-tinged space shakes

defies confinement



Dream Fragments

By Marilyn Buck

I don't remember my dreams

fragments swirl and disappear

I'm mired in nightmares

the national security state

keeps files on the imagination

dreams go underground

seek subterranean beds

water beneath iron-

streaked stone

November 2002

"Blood Is Thicker"

By Eleanor

The oil runs thick

Crude and bloodied

A mass cut off

And drowned within

The blood runs thick

Splattering the earth

On rainforest leaves

And pooling in the bluest of seas

Oil and blood

Strike in the night



Stained with Blood

By Walidah Imarisha

for Palestine, always

What action
is too extreme
in the face of genocide?
Keffiyahs and watermelons and flags and tones of voice
debated
while thousands of children
torn apart.
You think blocking a ship carrying death
is too extreme?
You think chaining yourself
to the gates of war
is a little too far?
You think picking up
a stick
a rock
a gun
with hands still stained
with the blood of all you love
is unjustified?

Your silence
equivocating
both-sides-ism
reeks
of
death.

If you won't live
on the right side of history,
If you refuse to act
as the collective cry
of millions echoes -
there can't be
any
humanity
left in you.

You have
become granite.
Stone spreading
throughout your system.
You are no longer
heart and blood and bone and breath.

You are a rock.

And a rock has no input
in human affairs.
A rock does not have a say
in how people
resist.
A rock
doesn't get to have
an opinion
a vote
a voice

So be a silent lump
when the question
of tactics
come up.

Just sit there
on the couch,
rock,
and at the very least
say
nothing
about how Palestine
chooses to save
its children.

It should be
easy
for you -
it's what you do
every day
anyway.

Lifeflood Lifeflood Lifeflood Lifeflood Lifeflood

What The World Owes

By Walidah Imarisha

I fall silent when I think of you
Words ripped from tongue
Breath punched from lung

What words can be given
to those who have risen from wreckage
Even as your agony knows no bounds you rise
How can mere
human arms
reach so far
protecting the living
collecting the dead

You
who make paths through rubble
so others may follow
You
who take nothing
and make khubz to feed all

You
who use the
brief pause from
bombs devouring
to harvest olive trees
You
who think first of the
ancient
rivers to seas
of the sacred communal
of vows
unbroken for millennia

What words can be given
When you asked for
witness
When you deserve
warrior

A baby pulled

From a collapsed house buried in her home/
tomb
Rescue workers
men with haunted brows
and plaster-choked lungs
crowd around
She does not
cry
Like so many others
she does not
cry
Held breath of loss
Then
her eyes
blinking
hands
grasping
legs kicking

Each of the men
light up like supernovae
They
delicately
pass her around
Each needs to touch her
to prove she is real
They
wipe debris
from her newborn face
They
place a tender kiss
on her forehead
a blessing

You are more human
than flesh
has a right to be

Your resistance
threads across the globe
You lace
together
all struggles
into one immense tapestry

We individual threads
 watch
 Reading
 the embroidery
 we become part
 of your
 creation

Under your feet
 rubble
 Under our feet
 the path to liberation
 You have woven
 for us
 of us

Each of you living poetry
 Please
 live on our lips
 Please
 make a home of our hearts
 Please
 haunt our dreams
 Please
 scream your names
 so they will echo
 so we will hear your voices
 f o r e v e r

And when
 olive trees
 are free again

And when
 Rightful/righteous keys
 fit into rusted locks

And when
 your skin feels expansive
 like the sky
 I hope you will honor us
 By
 letting us help
 plant each name
 each voice
 each loss
 each love

We will
 help you
 water
 them
 with
 tears

Walidah Imarisha is an educator, writer, public scholar and spoken word artist.

She has co-edited two anthologies, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories From Social Justice Movements* and *Another World is Possible*. Imarisha's nonfiction book *Angels with Dirty Faces: Three Stories of Crime, Prison, and Redemption* won a 2017 Oregon Book Award. She is also the author of the poetry collection *Scars/Stars*, and in 2015, she received a Tiptree Fellowship for her science fiction writing.

Read more about her and her work at www.walidah.com



photo by
 Pete Shaw

PERMUTATIONS

By Eleanor

There has been nothing but persistent rage bait. Pearl clutching. It has to end.

Liberalism has skinned life raw. Reduced the daily massacres, starvation, torture, imprisonment and all of the worst capitalism has to offer to background noise. Play another feelgood tune amy.

They re-arrange reality. They call cuts to bourgeois imperialist press jobs by the bourgeoisie a “bloodbath.” Increasingly irrelevant, genocide denying and supporting all from the same filthy source.

Palestinian journalists being targeted. Alone. In groups. In crowds. No words for them. They’re written out. Murdered multiple times, divergent realities. To be killed and to be erased.

A pit of wallow, A pit of pestilence, birthed the Liberal virus. eurocentric white supremacy coded in a false humanism. Say the “right” words. Never understanding

Capitalism, such as it is, its twin, its replicant. It needs blood. Yours, mine, theirs. In the end it doesn’t matter. Death the necessary result. Someone always has to die. A horror unlike any movie. Reality is far worse.

I don’t need interludes, self ingratiating interviews, grating misreads and revision of reality. I need these radlibs to alter their course or get out of the way. They are only helping themselves.

A reality is by no means permanent. Let’s celebrate the pigs who brought you imperialist propaganda all these years being “slaughtered” by a dose of reality. We’re all expendable to the ruling class scum who inhabit this world. They, in reality are draining us of life.

Break through this wall of decaying, lifeless, spineless, heartless cowardice.

Extinction. Or else replacement. It has to end.

It has to also begin. Humanity can only survive through change. Massive change. Socialism is the path to a world where understanding becomes primary. Not secondary to anything. Life worth living.

**SHUT THE
FUCK UP
LIBERAL**



Walking Around in Circles: A Critique of Worker's World Party



By the end of our membership in the Portland branch of Worker's World Party (WWP), we became increasingly alienated and frustrated with what we viewed as detrimental strategic and tactical errors. We had come to realize that, much like PSL which came from it, WWP was centered almost entirely around aimless mobilizations in the form of demonstrations and rallies that ultimately (and unsuccessfully in WWP's case) served to bring new members into the rank-and-file and distribute the almighty paper. We viewed this process as antithetical to the scientific approach necessitated by Marxism. These demos constitute 'short organizing,' meaning that they are merely agitational without the presence of deeper organizing, wherein communists educate and build community. While demos can be a beneficial tactic in service of this larger strategy, WWP was clearly not implementing this line. Lacking demands, goals, outcomes, and deeper organizing, these protests are merely performative and reformist.

We believed that if WWP was truly committed to its revolutionary political line, it was imperative that they address this destructive tendency. When we brought these concerns to WWP's leadership in New York, we were met with further disappointment. Not only was the Party well aware of the tendency, they believed it was *practice* for "the revolution." It was at that moment we realized that WWP was not serious in its approach, and that they would not be

receptive to our
further
criticisms.

**WORKERS
WORLD
PARTY**

Clearly,
demonstrations
and the Worker's
World
paper
constituted
the extent of
the Party's

political action. WWP and many similar parties have unequivocally been unable to advance beyond this stage of struggle. WWP's limited membership expends valuable time-energy (that is, labor-power, intellectual capacities, rest, etc.) on these tactics that could otherwise be used to strengthen both short and deep organizing strategies. Thus, the tactical objective of WWP's leadership is to organize demos to meet other leftists, to then organize further demonstrations, without analyzing or developing an overarching strategy to help build a mass movement. Without planning or achieving material outcomes for oppressed peoples, these demos are simply idealist mechanisms for self-gratification and pitiful justifications for the Party's continued existence. There was no internal analysis of the purpose of protests, and what could be learned from mass social ruptures.

During the final Portland demo that we helped plan and mobilize for, we articulated the concerning patterns present in WWP's tactics and structure (or lack thereof). WWP lacks comprehensive security protocols that places young and inexperienced rank-and-file at risk of exposure to state repression, fascist violence, and doxxing. Security culture should include training members to defend against physical attacks, in addition to training around preventing digital state surveillance.

WWP has also failed to adapt to the internet, and thus has not maintained a streamlined social media management process. Structurally, there was a generational gap that hindered building an effective online presence. Internal disputes made discussing such critiques and potential follow-through messy and sluggish at best, and nearly impossible at worst. When leadership fails to follow a bottom-up approach, it is failing its rank-and-file. When they stand in the way of making necessary changes and adapting tactics to new situations, they are materially rejecting scientific socialist principles, even while purporting to use them.

WWP are continuing to operate as though the New Communist movement is alive and strong. Like many traditional ML parties, WWP has fundamentally failed to adapt to the neoliberal capitalist state, particularly how effective the capitalist class has become at managing protests. Even large-scale uprisings are contained by

both violent and concessionary state mechanisms. Prior to the 1970s, with the threat of the Soviet Union, global anti-imperialist forces, a powerful labor movement, and the heightened consciousness of domestically oppressed peoples, such mass demonstrations could at times genuinely achieve substantial reformist results (though this should never be the ultimate goal of communists). However, the neoliberal project has since then kneecapped such organizing capabilities. Production has become increasingly diffuse and globalized. Increased financialization has destroyed third spaces, meaning that protests generally possess a smaller, less disruptive capacity. These developments render even the most violent and insurgent protests ineffective because the property damage, boycotts, strikes, and road seizures are contained by an increasingly consolidated capitalist class. They own the media that frames the demo, the city politicians, the prisons the protestors are sent to, and the insurance companies that pay off the damages—and then some. This creative destruction can often benefit capital as it seeks new avenues of investment.



Collectively, these factors have instilled a lingering crisis wherein genuine deep organizing is necessary. This necessitates a shift in strategy away from the traditional vanguard party-building tendency that continues to have a stranglehold on the rotting corpse of the old New Left. It is idealist to assume that older organizing methods can still be as effective under changing material conditions. Even if WWP or some other "vanguard" led a mass movement in these demos, the state has developed tactics to make these actions less effective than fifty years ago.

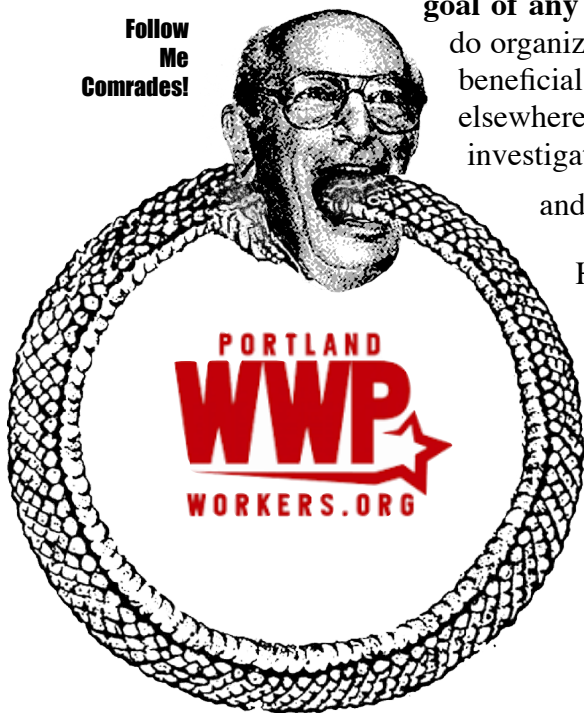
WWP continues to center the same tactics of endless tailing without resulting quantitative or qualitative increases in membership. The risks to rank-and-file and the constant hemorrhaging of members does not outweigh any potential benefits; we have seen this firsthand. As such, it is understandable why WWP and many leftist orgs have such high turnover rates.

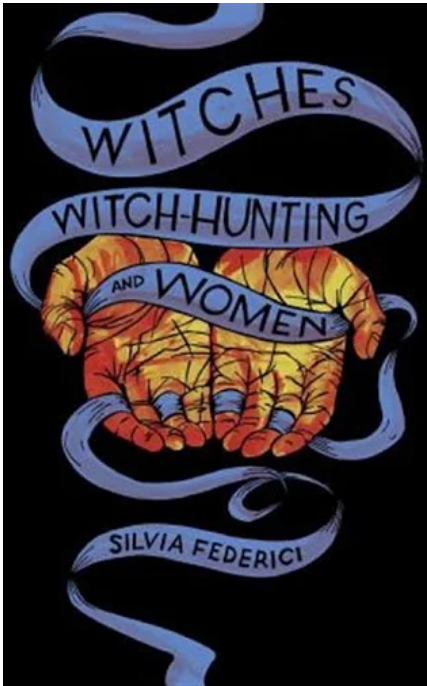
We made specific demands to WWP leadership that went unheard. We share them now as a model for ideas that may help those who wish to take on the struggle against the stagnation of WWP, and the left in general.

Demonstrations cannot and should never be the primary goal of any communist organization.

When communists do organize demos, they must have some sort of tangible beneficial goal. If they do not, we must shift our efforts elsewhere. This requires communists to engage in social investigation, concrete analysis of current conditions, and to diversify agitational and organizing tactics.

History has demonstrated that the white labor aristocracy is generally less conscious than colonized and super-exploited people. So, when communists do work with non-Marxists, it should be with people and groups that already have a profound understanding of and opposition to capitalist-imperialist colonialism, patriarchy, and white supremacy.





Witch Way Forward: a

review of *Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women* by Silvia Federici

The history of witch hunts isn't just about religious hysteria or superstition, after reading Silvia Federici's "Witches, Witch-Hunting, and Women". It is and can be used as a tool for understanding how the capitalist class has always used violence against women for power and profits.

We are often taught that capitalism brought "progress" to the world. Federici tears that lie apart. She shows us that the transition to capitalism was actually a violent counter-revolution against the working class. The ruling class, being the landlords and the rising bourgeoisie, needed to break the power of the peasantry to establish their new economic order.

Federici connects the witch hunts to "primitive accumulation"—the process where the rich stole the common land from the people (the enclosures) and forced them to become wage laborers or beggars. The witch hunts peaked exactly when the price of food was rising and the people were being kicked off their land. The women targeted were often those resisting this theft including the poor, the elderly, and those fighting to keep the communal way of life alive.

For Marxists, it is crucial to understand that capitalism doesn't just exploit the worker in the factory; it exploits the reproduction of life itself. Federici argues that the capitalist class needed a massive supply of workers to exploit. To get that, they had to take control of women's bodies.

The witch hunt was a calculated assault to strip women of their knowledge, their economic independence, and their social power. By demonizing women as "witches," the state and the church terrified the female population into submission, confining them to unpaid domestic labor to produce the next generation of workers. This violence also served to divide the working class, teaching men to fear women and view them as servants instead of leaders of the revolution.

This book is a weapon. It proves that violence against women is not accidental; it is a structural necessity for capitalism. Federici teaches us that we cannot fight for women's liberation without fighting the capitalist system that requires their subjugation.

Reviewed by Eleanor 2026

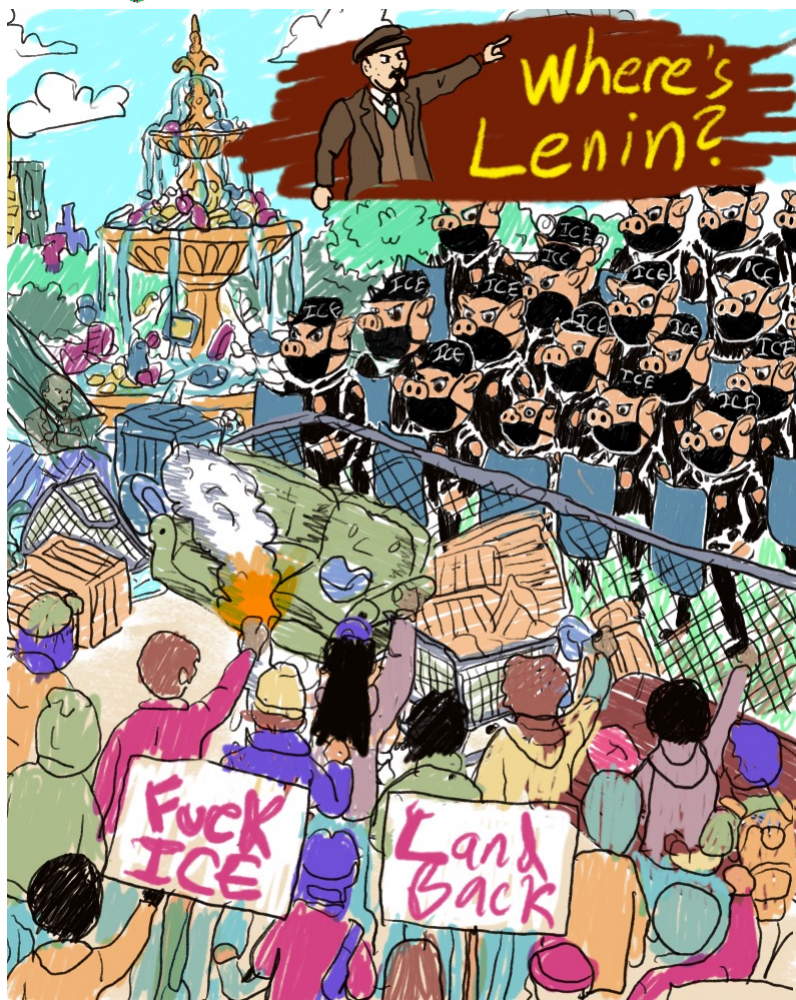
"Read through the lens of queer political economy, the denial of trans people's rights to parenthood, family life, marriage, their exclusion from employment, state benefits and access to healthcare - essentially the denial of full citizenship to trans people - is rooted in the same structures and relations that simultaneously rely on and devalue (cis) women's identities, bodies, and work. The requirement that trans people be sterilised as a condition for legal recognition within some jurisdictions is not, in this sense, so much a parallel to state-sponsored efforts to control women's reproduction and fertility as it is part of the same disciplinary project. This is central to understanding the political economic foundations of trans and other forms of gender oppression is at least four ways: first, it shows that the violent sanctions experienced by trans people for transgressing gender norms are intimately connected to the modalities of gender-based violence that women experience under capitalism; second, it reveals how gender-based violence, again including anti-trans violence, works systematically to police and uphold particular relations between (cis) men and women, notably the gender division of labour; third, it indicates that trans oppression is intrinsic rather than extrinsic to the exploitative logics of the global capitalist economy; and finally, most simply, it reveals that the exclusion of trans women from the category woman (and trans people in general from concepts of personhood) has political economic roots."

Excerpt from: Towards a trans-inclusive critical international political economy?
Or why trans oppression matters for understanding capitalism and social reproduction by Ellie Gore. Published in 2024. Source: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/03098168241232371>



L & R

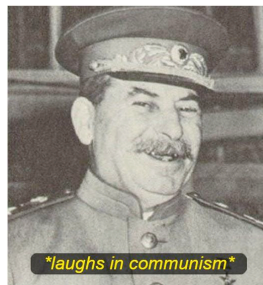
FUN PAGES



COMMIES GOT JOKES!

1. Why do they call it the American Dream?
2. What is the problem with communists?
3. What's the problem with capitalists?
4. What's the problem with communist jokes?

WHEN YOU'RE RUSSIAN TO THE BATHROOM THERE'S NO TIME FOR STALIN.



1. Because you have to be asleep to believe it
2. They have no class
3. You have to give me \$10

C M A R X I S M S T A T E X A
 L B O U R G E O I S I E L R L
 A L I E N A T I M O W P E E I
 S C O M M U N I A I R K N V E
 S B O L S H E V T T O D I O N
 S W E R T Y U I E A N F N L A
 T Y U L E N I N R L G G I U T
 R D I A L E C T I C A L S T I
 U I O P A S D F A A L H M I O
 G C A P I T A L L P S J B O N
 G J K L Z X C V I I O K V N A
 L S O C I A L I S M C L C A S
 E N M Q W E R T M A I Z X C D
 E P R O L E T A R I A T Q W F
 R E N G E L S D F G L H J K L

Words to Find:

1. ALIENATION
2. BOURGEOISIE
3. CAPITAL
4. CLASS STRUGGLE
5. DIALECTICAL
6. MATERIALISM
7. ENGELS
8. LENINISM
9. MARXISM
10. PROLETARIAT
11. REVOLUTION
12. SOCIALISM
13. STATE



(gawks in dialectics)

WHAT KIND OF FEMINIST ARE YOU?

Where do you think patriarchy comes from?

- A: reduced access to civil rights
- B: class hierarchies, paternal family relations, and divisions of labor
- C: essential or biological characteristics
- D: i never thought about it

Pick your drink of choice

- A: Starbucks
- B: Sparkling Water
- C: Raw Milk
- D: Matcha

Favorite weekend activity

- A: Brunch
- B: Organizing your community
- C: Belittle immigrants and homeless people
- D: Arguing on Reddit

Thoughts on U.S. wars

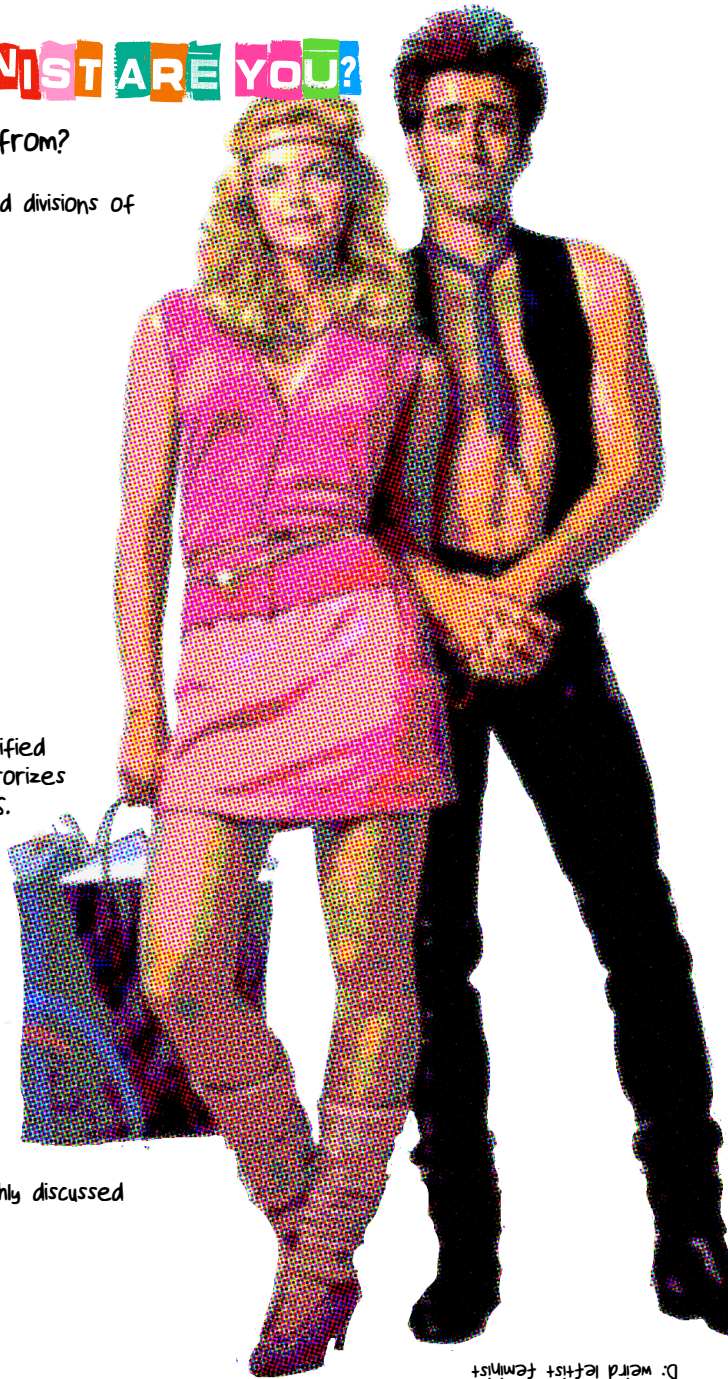
- A: The past wars were bad but this one is justified
- B: The U.S. is the imperialist aggressor and terrorizes the world for its individual economic gain. The U.S. soldiers carry out these atrocities just like the IDF or Nazis.
- C: God Bless America
- D: The wars are wrong but the other countries are bad too. The U.S. soldiers are poor and misguided.

Whats your red flag

- A: I still think elections work Go AOC
- B: I am naive about the lack of leftists that have read feminist theory.
- C: I hate people
- D: I think communist feminist ideas were thoroughly discussed by Marx and Engels

How do we end gender oppression

- A: reform and suffrage
- B: revolution and economic transformation
- C: better conformity to patriarchy
- D: we'll address it after the revolution



Answer key:
A: liberal feminist
B: Marxist/communist feminist
C: far right feminist
D: weird leftist feminist



HELP OUR BASED
COMRADE MAKE
IT TO THE
REVOLUTION!
TAKE HEED!
MANY A BORING
AND UNPRINCIPLED
HOT MESSES ARE
A FOOT!



OH NO! you've run into a liberal trying to preserve settler white supremacist capitalist hetero-patriarchy!





BORN IN FLAMES