

YSA, SWP (United States): 1959 to 1993 - A Socialist Woman's Experience

Friday 5 March 2021, by [WEISS Suzanne](#) (Date first published: 1 March 2021).

FROM ITS BEGINNINGS in the 1800s, modern socialism has embraced equality and liberation for women. The socialist movement has made a major contribution to political, cultural, and intellectual changes challenging women's second-class status. For many women, joining a socialist movement opened the road to developing their talents, achieving social influence, and contributing to social change.

Contents

- [1. Barriers to Women's Partici](#)
- [Women's Survival Before \(...\)](#)
- [Joining the Socialist Movement](#)
- [Women Facing Male Predominance](#)
- [3. Women in Party Controversie](#)
- [A Brash Initiative](#)
- [Women's Place in Society](#)
- [Women's Role in Human Evolutio](#)
- [3. A Transformative Feminist](#)
- [Evelyn Reed](#)
- [Women in the SWP Printshop](#)
- [Embrace of New Feminism](#)
- [The Impact of Broad Movements](#)
- [The SWP Bans Violence Against](#)
- [Lesbian and Gay Liberation](#)
- [5. The SWP Loses Its Way](#)
- [Patriarchal Dysfunction](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

At first, the socialist movement was almost entirely male. Beginning in the late 1800s, women socialists played an increasing role, including in leadership positions. Although few in number, their involvement ran far ahead of women's participation in mainstream political life.

1. Barriers to Women's Participation

During the early years of my socialist activity, the Second Wave of feminism brought large numbers of women into leadership positions in the socialist movement as in political life as a whole. Nonetheless, all socialist groups and their members carry, to varying degrees, the imprint of the sexist world in which they exist. Women in the socialist movement face continuing barriers, some specific to these groups.



Suzanne Weiss speaking at a demonstration in Toronto, 2019.

My text is a meditation on how this deformation affected me and the organizations of which I was a member, the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its youth movement, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), from 1959 to 1993.

The SWP grappled with the challenge of assuring a full and equal role for women in the party's theoretical and policy discussions as well as in its endeavors. The efforts of women members to dismantle barriers to their equal participation in the organization were unrelenting. Women in the SWP made great gains, some of which were later lost.

The account that follows is based on my personal experiences and therefore has unavoidable limitations. I cannot reproduce the perspectives of women of color, women whose experiences took place in geographical or social contexts different from mine, women who supported one of the oppositional currents in the party, women whose contact with the party was more fleeting than mine, women who came from different religious and social backgrounds than mine, women who wanted to or had already raised children.

This text is inspired by Abigail Bakan's article, "Marxism, Feminism, and Epistemological Dissonance." [1] Bakan's basic thesis is that socialist organizations, although programmatically committed to women's liberation, typically harbor a political culture that obstructs full and equal participation by their women members.

In my experience, this is still true in many socialist groups today. My text provides a case study based on my experience; I strove to meet this challenge head on.

When I encountered the SWP in 1959, it had about 300 active members in fourteen local branches. Battered by repression and blacklisting in the McCarthy years of the 1950s, the party remained deeply influenced by labor struggles, the African-American freedom movement, the existence of the Soviet Union, and worldwide uprisings against colonialism.

The SWP held to its roots in classic Marxist literature. Its members were steeped in the works of Marx, Engels, and the leaders of the Russian Revolution. It campaigned for racial equality, democracy, international solidarity, and women's equality and right to choose in family planning, which the SWP identified as integral to the goal of socialism. Even in the 1950s, a low point for women's rights advocacy, the SWP championed what later became known as women's liberation.

Women's Survival Before "Me Too"

Activism is not sustained by program alone. Political culture is also decisive, and here influences from the surrounding sexist world can cause great harm. For me, that started with the threat to my personal safety as a woman.

As a young woman, I faced dangers not then discussed in Marxist literature nor in any texts that I saw on women's rights. Like each and every woman, I coped with the inescapable threat of sexual assault and harassment.

For women, this danger is omnipresent. It was a constant hazard of my younger years. The need for safety from sexual attack shaped decisions on where I lived and with whom, where I worked, and whether I felt able to speak and act freely. All told, I underwent more than a dozen specific sexual assaults, threatened or attempted. I suspect that this count is not unusual.

As I approached my teen years, my adoptive mother spoke about a case of wife-beating within a family with which we were acquainted. I was startled because these friends, like my adoptive family, were sympathizers of the pro-Moscow Communist Party. My mother counseled that "just because they are Communists doesn't mean they practice communism in their homes."

Nor did my mother propose to intervene. U.S. law had made wife-beating illegal a few decades previously, but police did not enforce the law except, possibly, in cases of permanent injury or death. It was generally thought at that time that wife-beating was a private matter between husband and wife.

I encountered this same attitude after I joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1959 at the age of 18. Physical assault by a male party member was not only a violation of socialist morality; it was an immense barrier to a woman's participation in the party's activity.

This was brought home to me at a socialist educational encampment a couple of years later, which I attended with an intimate male friend. In our dormitory room one evening, he flew into a rage. He bellowed and whacked me, with furniture and props flying around. This took place behind a closed door, but the uproar was heard outside the room, and the assault left visible bruises on my face. Yet the next day, my socialist friends averted their eyes and showed no concern.

After another such episode three years later, in which I was slammed and knocked around, a male comrade, seeing the bruises on my face, threatened to retaliate in kind against "whoever did this to you."

Leading figures in the SWP learned of this incident and proposed to take action — but only if I gave consent. I felt that my attacker was greatly pained by having been the cause of the unpleasantness. I had now left him and did not want to wound him further. Still, my party comrades' more vigorous response revealed a change in outlook, reflecting the inspiration of the now ascending feminist movement.

My case may well have helped push the SWP, a few years later, to take action on violence in the party against women, as described later in my text.

Recent gains of the feminist movement have demonstrated that violence against women permeates society, bearing down most harshly on racialized women. In Canada, where I live, Indigenous activists obtained a comprehensive and authoritative National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls. [\[2\]](#)

The Indigenous people of Canada have particularly made us aware of the pervasive misogynist crimes against women. The entire female gender suffers, but the heaviest burden is borne by women of color.

Mapping out a SWP campaign in 1968.

Joining the Socialist Movement

When I joined the Young Socialist Alliance in Los Angeles in 1959, I faced a different barrier to women's involvement. The local YSA was a small group, largely male in composition. It was a problematic milieu for a young woman seeking to be heard.



In fact, I found it hard to get a word in edgewise. I would make a suggestion and get ignored — and then that same suggestion would be made a few minutes later by one of the guys and welcomed as great new insight.

I could only deduce that I wasn't heard because I was a woman and young. In addition, the guys held forth ad infinitum. Today it's called "mansplaining." I was indignant, but this situation, as I was well aware, only reflected the "male" character of society as a whole.

In U.S. political life the president at the time, Eisenhower, had only one token woman among 22 cabinet members. After that ended in 1960, it was almost two decades before another woman held a cabinet-level post.

I stuck around the YSA because its global view of politics spoke to my heart and explained the world. In addition, the YSA was for equal rights for women. Looking back, I now recognize those views as an inheritance from the feminism of the early Communist International, from Alexandra Kollontai, Inessa Armand, Nadezhda Krupskaya, Clara Zetkin, and their generation of women leaders.

Kollontai had challenged the tyranny of the patriarchal family and defended woman's control of her body including with respect to choice on abortion and family planning.

Great gains for women's equality were won in the early Soviet republic, many of which were later reversed under Stalin's rule. I also learned of Antoinette Konikow, a leading founder of the SWP, who was a pioneer of the US birth control movement.

I was introduced to what Bakan terms the "classic texts of the Marxist canon." [3] Our YSA group studied Engels' book *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which explains that for most of human existence, women had been equals of men and in some ways had played a leading role.

Women's subjugation came with the rise of private property and the state — the burden of class oppression. Only with the advent of the socialist revolution would women finally begin to be recognized as equal partners.

Curiously, we paid no attention to a crucial point in Engels' work: what he had to say about violence against women. In class-divided society, Engels says, "... [The wife] is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights."

Thanks to Sharon Smith's book *Women and Socialism*, for highlighting this passage, whose importance became clear to me only much later, as we entered the "me too" era. [\[4\]](#)

I also learned in the Los Angeles Young Socialist discussion circle about the roots of racism and its connection with fascism, and the subjugation of women under fascism.

The role of women in capitalist society changes, I discovered, according to the demands of the economy. During World War I and II, the male workforce decreased and employers were compelled to enlist women in industrial jobs.

Women got out of the prison of the house and proved their mettle; they joined unions and took part in battles for workers' rights; they maintained the country's economy.

After the war, however, women were pushed out of industries back into the home. Newspapers, radio, films, and later television — all claimed that this was where women belonged. I rejected all that.

Women Facing Male Predominance

Even so, as the only woman in my Young Socialist discussion circle, I felt like a stranger, an imposter. The males in the organization agreed with me in opposing the fact that women were treated as of less value than men in our society, and that, as socialists, we strive for equality of opportunity and respect. But by and large, their understanding was intellectual, discussed but not translated into action.

They didn't know, and I didn't know either, how to include women and make them feel welcome and appreciated for their potential and for what they could contribute.

Although among the youngest YSA members, I was a committed activist, and wanted to join the affiliated party organization, the SWP. Attending a number of their weekly public educational forums, I was attracted to its members' seriousness, experience and knowledge, especially in the trade union movement.

Still in my teens, unschooled and naïve, I was new to socialist politics. Both male and female members were courteous, but they did not engage with me and seemed dismissive. The party did not pass out membership application forms; activists joined the party only on invitation. And I was not asked to join the SWP.

So I forced the issue. I requested membership, an almost unheard-of initiative. I was then summoned before a special subcommittee for a searching discussion. I had no industrial working-class experience — certainly a mark against me. I felt unsure, insecure, and somewhat insulted but did not let them dissuade me, and I was voted in.

Many years later, George Novack, a party leader and friend, admitted that when he knew me as

young woman, he had not considered that I could be genuinely interested in the party's politics. I was glad to hear him say he had learned better.

I reflected on how, when I came on the scene, the SWP comrades were focusing their attention on a couple of young men of no outstanding intelligence or experience, obviously judging them by another measure.

In 1959, the men and women in the SWP were well versed in Marxism and had much experience in the labor movement. But it was primarily the men who spoke in branch discussions.

The SWP program stood on the history and experiences of the socialist Internationals and labor and socialist organizations in the United States. And on the issue of women's rights, it stood on the program of the early Communist International, which went further than that of the friends of the Soviet Union of my youth. The SWP integrated women's emancipation into the goal of socialism, which would unite men and women on an equal basis in organizing society.

However, I doubted the motives of some male party members who acted, I thought, in a questionable manner. For example, as a new young recruit, I expected to be inundated with political discussions. After all, that's why I was in the group. But male comrades assumed that as a "girl" I was fair game. Their brash come-ons were belittling and disruptive. This behavior contradicted their professions of support for equality in the political arena.

Yes, there is a place for socializing, flirting, and parties, but many of their come-ons were intrusive and out of place. Their posture and actions towards me and other women reflected society's patriarchy and male privilege. I searched for a way to raise this point.

3. Women in Party Controversies

Women in the SWP, while a minority in the party, were relatively more numerous than they were in mainstream political life. They had helped keep the organization going on a daily basis since the U.S. Trotskyist movement's inception in 1928, leading the subscription campaigns, fund drives and organizational campaigns, and they did a lot of administrative work. They made a great organizational contribution — that was evident.

Most of the women were tough, experienced, and strong-willed. Yes, they tended to do "women's tasks." However, they were socialists not as "wives" but as independent fighters.

These women were well educated in Marxism, opinionated, and integrated in trade union work. Yet branch discussions reflected the social repression of women. Few women spoke in branch debates, and when they did their comments were brief, but with distinctive viewpoints.

Listening attentively, I could make out three different areas of concern to women:

- Women's place in the socialist movement.
- Women's place in society.
- Women's historical evolution.

These discussions, which lasted many years, were conducted mostly informally, in occasional statements in branch meetings, and — in one case — in a voluminous written debate in the SWP newspaper and a mimeographed internal discussion bulletin.

Such exchanges showed that women were not peripheral to the party, but at the center of its intellectual life. The issue of women's place in the socialist movement, however, was not addressed frankly and honestly until the party felt the impact of the women's liberation struggles of the 1960s-70s.

When I joined the SWP, women were scarce in party governing bodies. There was a celebrated exception: Grace Carlson, who had been elected to both the National Committee (responsible for long-range policy) and the Political Committee (the day-to-day leadership).

She maintained close contact with the party's most influential leaders: V.R. Dunne, Farrell Dobbs, and James P. Cannon (the party's founder). Carlson had won her spurs as the only woman among the members imprisoned by the government in 1941 under the thought-control Smith Act. She was sent to Alderson Federal Penitentiary for Women for 16 months.

Women were prominent in assuring the survival of the organization at the time of imprisonment of Carlson and the party's core leadership. [5] Carlson's role in the party is honored by an article in Cannon's Notebook of an Agitator. A newly published biography, *The Fierce Life of Grace Holmes Carlson*, throws more light on her life. [6]

The SWP routinely ran women members for public office, then a rare occurrence in the political system. Myra Tanner Weiss (no relation), a prominent SWP leader, was nominated in the 1950s for mayor of Los Angeles and the U.S. vice-presidency (twice) and also served on the leading policy-making committees.

Another woman of note was Evelyn Reed, who wrote on feminism and anthropology for SWP publications. Rose Karsner, the lifelong partner of Cannon, although politically wise and greatly respected was, I thought, insufficiently valued as an independent thinker and did not win election to the National Committee. This was true of other wives who were pioneer members such as Karolyn Kerry and Reba Hansen.

There were a wide range of talented women in the SWP who were not only well-versed and knowledgeable on a variety of political and historical issues but also talented public speakers who sought to play leadership roles.

Among them were Frances James, respected for her knowledge of Africans' insurgency and its parallel in the U.S. Black rights movement; and Jean Tussey, branch organizer and later a leader in the Fair Play for Cuba work.

Joyce Cowley (Maupin) had led several strikes, one of which was over a woman shop steward being fired because she wouldn't go to bed with a petty union official. [7] She also ran as SWP candidate for mayor of New York. Among her works is an article first published in the spring 1955 issue of *Fourth International*, "Pioneers of Women's Liberation," which documents how the women's suffrage movement overlapped and interrelated with the movement to abolish slavery. It was republished as pamphlet by Merit Publishers in 1969. [8]

Among the party's more prominent members, I also recall Hedda Garza, Jeanne Morgan, and Clara Kaye. I did not have any close friends among these comrades, perhaps because they were so much older and not in my branch, but I learned about their contributions.

I do not recall any formal discussion of women's leadership in the SWP, but there was awareness of and respect for their role; the issue of recognizing their contribution tended to come up, even if in guarded and subtle ways.

Bakan suggests that the very richness of the socialist heritage can be stultifying. She warns against those who cling to “historical memory ... with a sense of longing and a desire for repetition... with a desire to see moment of an idealized history repeated in the future.” [9]

Yet I felt no sense of “rote” or faith in repetition in either the SWP or its cadre of women members. Both were pressing forward into an uncharted future, modifying ideas on the go, and in this process the party’s course was altered by its embrace of the new feminist radicalization.

A Brash Initiative

During a few months’ stay in New York in 1961, I spent time helping out in the YSA national office. I won a chance to display my organizational skills when I was assigned to be sole organizer of the national conference that was to take place in that city.

Here was my opportunity! As the event organizer, I wrote a circular letter to all its branches, in which I noted that in the previous national conference the exchange of sexual partners seemed to overshadow that of political ideas.

Young male members were coming on to women in an obtrusive way that made it hard to keep one’s mind on the discussion. They don’t see our ideas, I thought, just our boobs and butt. Males seemed concerned mainly with their little heads. Does a woman have opinions, or is she just sexual prey?

My letter impudently suggested that in the upcoming conference we focus on the politics. I was not opposed to sexual liaisons, I wrote, but felt that the chase should be reserved for social occasions. The conference had political goals that deserved our serious attention.

I tried to make my point tactfully, but it got across, and the letter created a stir. There were some hostile responses. My letter was quoted in an SWP internal document and I was ridiculed for making a prudish comment.

But I won support from in an unexpected quarter. Tom Kerry, a senior leader with long trade-union experience, who was known as gruff and sharp-tongued, wrote in defense of what I had said in my notorious letter. In the end, most members seemed to feel I had a point.

Women’s Place in Society

The second level of discussion concerned what it meant to be a woman in a male-chauvinist society.

When I joined the SWP, a discussion that had taken place back in 1954 was still reverberating. It was generally called the “cosmetics debate.” The written discussion had been carried on in the letters column of the SWP’s newspaper, *The Militant*, and then in a thick and mimeographed discussion bulletin. The controversy echoed in informal discussions through the years that followed.

The exchange had been initiated unexpectedly when the *Militant* ran a column by Jack Bustelo, pen name of prominent party leader Joseph Hansen, titled “Sagging Cosmetic Lines Try a Face Lift.” [10] Bustelo light-heartedly discussed how big business takes advantage of women’s second-class status in society and their resulting social insecurities to sell cosmetics for high profits.

He contended that prevailing notions of “beauty” are rooted in capitalist exploitation, the oppression of women, and racism. Women haven’t always used cosmetics, he wrote, and a socialist society

would create new standards of beauty.

Bustelo's article caused a great kerfuffle and prompted some women members, including several seldom-heard voices, to passionately challenge his thesis. Among those responding were Marjorie McGowan, Jeanne Morgan and — in his defense — Evelyn Reed. [\[11\]](#)

What might seem to be a big fuss over a minor matter actually concerned deeper issues. Marjorie McGowan, for instance, found the article "both offensive and presumptuous," full of patronizing assertions by a "self-appointed judge of what constitutes female strivings."

McGowan gave cogent reasons why women wear cosmetics out of necessity and adorn themselves to be attractive to secure a job, retain one, advance in the company or industry, and compete for adequate pay. In addition, she noted that women are made more insecure as they age and their youthful looks dissipate. McGowan argued that these issues would also be present in a socialist society.

On the other hand, Evelyn Reed responded that "[t]he class struggle is a movement of opposition not adaptation, and this holds true not only of the [male] workers in the plants, but of the women as well, both workers and housewives." [\[12\]](#)

To a great degree, Reed stated, men and women have accepted and adapted to the ideas pressed on us by the ruling capitalists. No one, including those in radical organizations that strive to change society, can escape pressures that demean and exclude women. Reed explained that we must counter this pressure as best we can through ideological struggle.

Not everyone in the SWP concurred with her analysis. It was argued that most women in society, whether workers or owners, rich or poor, view their needs similarly in the realm of sexual beauty because we have a common identity as women. There is nothing wrong with cosmetics, Bustelo's critics contended, and it is natural for women to adorn the body.

Bustelo's supporters replied that the cosmetics industry abused women's insecurities to extremes to feed capitalism's drive to make profits and objectify women as sex objects. The debate was wrapped up by Evelyn Reed:

"In short, first the capitalist system degrades and oppresses the great mass of women. Then it exploits the discontents and fears in women to stroke the fires of unlimited sales and profits. Our task, therefore, is to expose both the capitalist system as the source of these evils and its massive propaganda machine that tells gullible women that the road to a successful life and love is through the purchase of things." [\[13\]](#)

The cosmetics discussion took on new life with the rise of the movement for women's equal rights in the sixties. Contributions to the debate were eventually published by Pathfinder in book form in 1986 under the title *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*.

Evelyn Reed wrote an accompanying essay, and within it, she assesses the political debate in a scientific examination on the roots of women's oppression.

When I encountered this discussion, back in 1960, I agreed with Evelyn Reed's defense of Bustelo's arguments but somewhat sympathized with the women who had voiced criticisms. I resented disparagement of makeup, which, as a young person, I rarely employed but saw as useful for the reasons outlined by McGowan.

I granted that youthful appearance made a difference on how women are treated. I was also

influenced by the barrage of media images of women in two-inch spiked heels, polished faces and perfect hair styles, as well as Hollywood images of women air-brushed to perfection, all of which begged us to emulate their example through media intimidating propaganda.

But in those years of Jim Crow segregation, only white women were recognized in this context. The Black population was not considered in the media contest for profits. And although only young white women were featured in commercial advertisements, women in general were nonexistent as broadcasters or in the professions. I was strongly for resisting women's confinement in stereotyped social roles.

During the years that followed, the "resistance" that Reed advocated became generalized. With the rise of a mass feminist movement, imposed beauty standards were widely questioned or rejected. Working women largely abandoned stiletto heels; many shifted where possible from skirts to slacks; use of make-up in public was no longer compulsory.

This trend infuriated the male bigots, who slandered all feminists as "bra-burners," but the movement was unstoppable.

Women's Role in Human Evolution

The third area of discussion of women in the SWP concerned their role in early society, the period that we SWP members referred to as "the matriarchy." It was Evelyn Reed who opened up this discussion with a lengthy article in the SWP's quarterly magazine, published a few months before Bustelo's column, called "The Myth of Women's Inferiority." [\[14\]](#)

Drawing on Engels' discussion in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Reed contended that women's subjugation began only with the establishment of class society. The enormously longer preceding epoch had been characterized by women's leadership: "It was women who pulled humanity forward and out of the animal kingdom," she wrote; "First steps are decisive."

Reed's viewpoint was contested by several SWP members. Self-educated, Reed had no links with Western academic anthropology, where such matriarchal analysis had no support at the time and has little today.

This separateness from academic debate characterized the entire SWP and revolutionary Marxist ideological debate as a whole in that period. Members who joined before 1960, while widely read and articulate, had rarely seen the inside of a university. By the 1960s, however, most new recruits had some college or university training. Then in the late 1960s, with the decline of anti-Communist hysteria, did it become possible at last for young Marxists — including some women — to contemplate academic careers.

Meanwhile, with the rise of Second-Wave Feminism in the 1960s, Reed's ideas won wider attention. It is thus significant that Bakan's "Epistemological Dissonance" cites, in another context, relevant writings on women's role in indigenous societies that echo the central theme of Evelyn Reed's thesis.

Bakan highlights "lessons from indigenous, Third World, or anti-racist feminists that have direct bearing on socialist politics," including with regard to women and men's equal positions of social respect in Indigenous societies. [\[15\]](#)

She quotes Joyce Green's edited collection, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*: "[A]boriginal women claim that aboriginal cultures do not have a history of unequal gender relations; in fact...

Aboriginal women occupied positions of authority, autonomy and high status in their communities.” [16]

3. A Transformative Feminist Radicalization

Soon after I read the “cosmetics” bulletin, the party’s convictions on women’s emancipation were reinforced by powerful new feminist stirrings in society as a whole. Two books in particular made an impact.

Two years after I joined the SWP, I learned of a monumental study of women’s oppression, *The Second Sex*, by the celebrated French socialist and existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir. An English translation running to 705 pages was published in 1961.

The review by Hedda Garza, “Still a Man’s World,” was published in the SWP journal the following year. Garza strongly recommended the book, which identified capitalism as the barrier to women’s equality. [17]

The Second Sex was not an easy read; Garza noted the difficulty of its existentialist terminology. Still, as a manifesto of socialist feminism, it was a breakthrough — a harbinger of a shift in the thinking of women in their masses that began the following year.

Two years later, excited discussions were taking place among my Los Angeles friends of a much-heralded new book, *The Feminine Mystique*, by Betty Friedan.

Friedan’s book confirmed what I already knew and what was commonly agreed in the SWP: existing society confined women into a narrow, limited, soul-destroying social role in society. Even so, the book had a big impact on SWP women and certainly on me. I touted it widely to my friends outside of the SWP and the YSA. [18]

Friedan, who came from a Communist Party environment, wrote for a privileged, middle-class, white readership, and regarded women’s oppression from that point of view. She didn’t talk about how the feminine mystique was related to segregation against Blacks and immigrants, or about laws violating women’s reproductive rights, issues so important to my generation.

But what counted for me was that Friedan’s confirmation that my teenage conflicts, including an experience in juvenile detention, reflected not some personal weirdness but immense pressure bearing down on women in their millions right across the society.

During the next few years, I witnessed a rapid increase in discussion of and interest in women’s equality across society and in the party. The term “women’s liberation” began to catch on.

Evelyn Reed

A year after Friedan’s book appeared, I read a review of it by Evelyn Reed that told me more about the link of the feminine mystique and right-wing ideology. [19] The postwar program of pushing women back in the home, Reed explained, was the very one that Hitler promoted in the 1930s with his stress on the “three K’s: Kinder, Küche, Kirche” (children, cooking, church).

Reed called on us to honor the progressive middle-class women in North America who “led an inspiring ‘feminist’ struggle for women’s rights during the previous two centuries. Out of those

battles, they won the right to higher education, participation in production, professional careers, independent ownership of property and the vote.”

The history of pioneer fighters for women’s rights had been falsified, Reed said. “Fighters for women’s rights were portrayed as ‘embittered sex-starved spinsters’ incapable of fulfilling their ‘femininity’ as wives and mothers.” These had been inspired and “spirited women” who had the “unforgivable traits” of “enjoying their participation in the struggle for social change,” Reed wrote.

What Friedan identified as the “feminine mystique” had set a “pattern of behavior and aspiration” for working-class housewives, Reed explained. Working women were convinced after World War Two that they could have a better life as full-time housekeepers and mothers. But now Friedan’s book was feeding into a new rise of feminism affecting all women in society, not just the middle class.

In portraying the history of women’s rights struggles, Reed helped us to think of ourselves as feminists as well as socialists — or better, as socialist feminists. This broke down an incorrect stigma against the term “feminist” found in our inherited Marxist tradition.

During the subsequent decade, a significant number of young people, many of them students, joined the YSA and the SWP. They had courageously bucked the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and fought for the freedom to speak their mind.

The women among them were strong feminists, and they won sympathy from most of the male activists. Above all, these young people were attracted to the YSA and SWP for our defense of the Cuban revolution, and subsequently through our work in the movement to end the U.S. war in Vietnam.

Women made up a much larger proportion of these new recruits than they did among older members. The young women members did not accept a gendered division of labor; they were in the forefront of party’s participation in radical struggles. They took the organizations by storm and began to change them profoundly.

First and foremost, they attracted more young women into the party, which accelerated the transformation. Among other things, the young women insisted that more women, especially those seen with substantial leadership assignments such as Karolyn Kerry, Bea Hansen and Evelyn Reed, be recognized and integrated into the National Committee.

The young women led a change in the SWP’s commitment to women’s rights: words were now translated into action. It was an amazing transformation, embraced with joy by the veteran women members — and accomplished in such a very short period of time!

The new young women members were also leaders in the activist women’s liberation movement, especially NOW (National Organization for Women, CLUW (Coalition of Labor Union Women), and WONAAC (Women’s National Abortion Action Coalition).

This feminist generation within the SWP began to open up for discussion issues that had previously been raised among party members only in small private discussion, such as sexual assault, abortion, and freedom in sexual relations.

For a portrayal of how the feminist upsurge became a mass movement, see Nancy Rosenstock and Ruthann Miller, “How the Women’s Strike for Equality Relunched the Struggle for Women’s Liberation in the US.” [\[20\]](#)

The feminist radicalization also inspired many working-class women to seek jobs in “non-traditional”

lines of work, that is in higher-paying fields previously largely closed to them: in law, medicine, and other professions, and also in industrial jobs with equal pay. I took part personally in the latter effort, first in the party's New York printshop and later in oil refineries in Louisiana and Virginia.

Women in the SWP Printshop

I spent the mid-1960s in Chicago, where I now had no problem speaking up in branch discussions with my own ideas and sentiments. I garnered a reputation as a party stalwart.

Meanwhile, the party embraced the spirit of affirmative action, that is, encouragement for selection of women and racialized members for leadership assignments.

As a result, I was chosen in 1965 to assist in launching a party's national print shop, located in New York, as the only woman in a four-person team. It soon grew substantially. I had substantial responsibilities until my departure. My inclusion was regarded as a high honor but, if truth be told, the preponderance of attitudes in the print shop was quite male oriented.

Although I had leadership responsibilities in the shop, I was sometimes the butt of ridicule. For instance, I had written an article for the YSA newspaper in 1960. Some years later, it was discovered by happenstance by young co-workers who were doing some research.

The director of the shop challenged me: "Did you really write that article?" He suggested in front of everyone that in fact it had been written by my partner of the time. His point seemed to be that my partner was well educated while I was not — a curious approach in a workers' organization.

I assured him that I wrote the article but admitted that my partner had helped with editing. It was a moment of discomfort and shame. (For more on my print shop years and my seven-year stint in the rail, chemical, and petroleum industries, see my book *Holocaust to Resistance*, chapters 17 and 19-20.) [\[21\]](#)

At that time, the director of the shop was under pressure from the momentum of young women's leadership in the SWP to adjust his attitude. It had been difficult to recruit new blood, men or women, into the shop, perhaps because it was viewed as an oppressive and male-dominated area of work.

He emphasized to the young men in the print shop, who in my opinion were actually more in tune than he was with the changing face of the SWP, that we needed to integrate women in the workforce.

Insisting on the need to show the rest of the party that the print shop was in step with women's rights, the director announced he was launching a search for a woman to help operate the large new web press. Having no success, he decided on me as a last resort.

My new assignment in the print shop became a point of pride for the party because I was the first woman operator of a web press in New York State. I led an investigating committee into how other left-wing print shops were organized and discovered they integrated women only as cleaners but not in the operation of the shop.

The four-unit web press was a gigantic machine, some 60 feet long, requiring a team of four operators. We made do with two. It was built for big men; I was a little squirt of five feet. For me, it was really hell, simply crazy.

I was the butt of much banter, which would not have been tolerated elsewhere in the SWP. When I suffered mishaps, I did not get support. I stuck it out. But the entire experience left a bitter taste, and I began to look for an alternative. After seven years in the print shop, I took my leave in 1972. Women's Strike for Equality, August 26, 1970 NYC.

Embrace of New Feminism

In the early 1970s, the U.S. SWP stood out among socialist organizations for its full embrace of the spirit of the mass feminist upsurge that sought to unite all women in the liberation struggle. The party bubbled with discussion led by young members, such as Dianne Feeley, Pat Grogan, Cindy Jaquith, Linda Jenness, Susan Lamont, Carolyn Lund, Andrea Morell, Nancy Rosenstock, Betsey Stone, Mary-Alice Waters, Judy White, Matilde Zimmerman, and many more.



These women courageously pushed themselves to the fore, with the SWP's encouragement, and that made all the difference. Women's increasing leadership role helped the party exemplify women's equal rights and opportunity and work for those goals within women's organizations. We joined women working for equal treatment in unions, civil society, media, and governmental bodies.

The impact of feminist radicalization prompted the SWP to flesh out its assessment of women's status under capitalism as an "oppressed sex," a concept far from universally accepted among Marxist currents. Evelyn Reed commented:

"Despite the hypocritical homage paid to womankind as the 'sacred mother' and devoted homemaker, the worth of women sank to its lowest point under capitalism.... Only three justifications for their existence remain under this system: as breeders, as household janitors, and as buyers of consumer goods for the family."

Ending this oppression will require "a worldwide struggle for socialism by the working masses, female and male alike, together with every other section of the oppressed," Reed stated. But "women have to lead and organize their own independent struggle for emancipation." [22]

Women in the Black Liberation movement made us aware that they were not well represented in the mainstream women's movement. Some Black women felt alienated by middle-class feminists' stress on women's right to work outside the home. This was hardly the problem faced by Black women.

A very high proportion worked outside the home already, simply due to poverty. On the job, they routinely faced starvation wages, lack of childcare facilities, and both sexist and racist harassment, and racist barriers to promotion. [23]

Similarly, while all women were subject to unwanted pregnancies and the dangers of clandestine abortions, Black women also suffered most from widespread compulsory sterilization.

In addition, Black women, who had been routinely raped by their slave masters throughout slavery

years, continued to face this treatment afterwards, as domestic labor, by male employers — a fact not widely acknowledged in dialogue about reproductive justice. The SWP sought to engage with these issues, embracing the approach that we now call “intersectionality.” (See 1971 SWP resolution, “Toward a Mass Feminist Movement”) It also published a series of pamphlets by Black and Hispanic women authors such as Nan Bailey, Pamela Newton, Willie Mae Reed, Olga Rodriguez, Mirta Vidal, Maxine Williams and others.

In 1963, the SWP had confirmed its longstanding position for Black self-determination, affirming that our goal in the USA was to help carry out a “combined revolution,” comprising a struggle of working people against class exploitation and also the freedom struggle of African-Americans.

The women’s movement was deeply influenced by the resurgent African-American struggle for “Freedom Now,” which preceded it by about a decade. The term “women’s liberation” was itself inspired by demands for “Black liberation.” In fact, women were leaders in the fight for civil rights, the anti-war movement, and civil liberties campaigns. I could see that women, as an oppressed sex, were seeking liberation for themselves and for all other victims of oppression.

Previously, Marxists had described women as “doubly-exploited;” of course, for women of color that meant triple exploitation. We stood by that definition but heightened the emphasis on women’s oppression. Women, like Blacks, have allies whose help is essential to women’s victories.

The SWP, learning from the social movements in the 1970s-80s, emphasized that women in the struggle, whether for Black rights, Chicana or Puerto Rican demands, were also part and parcel of the struggle for socialism. These women were fighting for women’s rights in general, but particularly for recognition of their rights as women in their own communities.

Through all this upheaval, members remained under the pressure of sexism in the surrounding society. By the late 1970s, right-wing opposition to women’s rights was on the march, blocking ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and carrying out mounting and often violent harassment against women seeking to exercise their right to choice on abortion as well as against the health professionals who assisted them.

Within the party, women now had much higher status and greater scope — although, in my experience, these gains were uneven from one branch to another.

The Impact of Broad Movements

The SWP was reshaped by the rise of a Black movement for social justice, the anti-Vietnam war movement, a mass feminist movement, the mass movement for gay rights, and the international struggle for national self-determination. The party strove to exemplify the political ideas of these movements and translate them into action. The members did this to the best of their abilities.

The SWP led its work in the social movements — whether against the Vietnam war, for Black liberation, against the witch hunts, for civil liberties, in the labor movement, and in the women’s liberation movement — seeking solidarity and united actions to educate and gain victories for the working class as a whole. Our participation was crucial in pointing the road forward with slogans — whether it was “Out Now,” “Bring the Troops Home,” “Our Bodies, Our Lives,” “Pro-Choice,” “Freedom Now!” and “Self-Determination for Blacks.”

We built the Women’s National Abortion Action Coalition with other women around a reproductive-rights agenda that called for repealing all legal barriers to abortion and contraception while ending

forced sterilization. The first women's liberation teach-ins were led in San Francisco by a team including Dianne Feeley, author of *Why Women Need the Equal Rights Amendment* published by Pathfinder in 1973.

We encouraged sister organizations in the Fourth International, a world organization of revolutionary socialist parties, to build international days of action around the right to abortion expressed through impressive actions in many countries. We were the only socialist group that participated in NOW and encouraged the development of Black and Latina caucuses in that organization to bring issues of concern to women of color.

We were also among the few socialists who campaigned for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and organized not only in the women's movement but also in unions on this issue. We covered the women's movement and its debates in *The Militant* and the party's magazine *International Socialist Review*, and, as well, published many books and pamphlets on this topic. [The SWP's magazine at the time is not related to the ISR published more recently under the auspices of the International Socialist Organization — ed.]

We understood, however, that the SWP could not escape the deep prejudices of a racist and patriarchal society. We regarded women's issues from the point of view not only of the working class but also of oppressed women in society as a whole, stressing that misogyny, super-exploitation, and oppression of women bear down most fiercely on women of color, immigrants, economically deprived and working women, but to an extent they affect women as a whole.

Issues of discrimination and equal opportunity were taken up within the party itself, opening doors for women to develop and display leadership capacities. This was also the case for racialized members. These policies were driven through by a large and growing body of assertive women members. A culture of debate on women's oppression and related issues came to embrace the entire organization.

The SWP Bans Violence Against Women

In 1971, the party declared it would not tolerate violence against women, whatever the circumstances. This was interpreted to encompass domestic conflicts, whether by wife-beating, other forms of direct violence, or intimidation as in throwing furniture and objects at a partner. The rule barred violence between men as well.

We stressed that violence against women is part and parcel of oppression by the sexist ideology derived from the capitalist society. The party codified its opposition to violence by men against women, including wife-beating, in the 1971 SWP resolution, "Toward a Mass Feminist Movement;" in 1977 the SWP reinforced its position: "Violence against Women Is Incompatible with Party Membership.") [24]

How strictly was this non-violence policy enforced? No reports were given, but I know of two cases of expulsions of male members for intimidating conduct, both of whom made political contributions seen as important to the party. However, interviewing female friends who had been in the SWP, I learned of a few violations that were not acted on.

That was also true in my own case. Many years after the period described here, I experienced an instance of attempted sexual assault by a fellow SWP member — the only such incident in my 33 years in the party.

I repelled the attacker and made no report to the party. I felt I had taught the guy a lesson and he was unlikely to try anything like that again. So even though the socialist organizations had a policy of no violence, it was not so easy to enforce. We needed a “Me Too” movement — but that was many years in coming.

Nonetheless, the no-violence code in the party had an impact. The young women leaders who pressed for it were reflecting a new understanding in society as a whole. That is what made this norm effective, although to a limited degree.

We needed to change our attitudes to one another both in the realm of society as a whole and in political and social movements for change. We wanted to display an attitude of respect and appreciation for one another as human beings, and especially as people striving for a socialist world of love and mutual respect.

But physical safety was only a precondition for a woman’s socialist activism. We also had to cope with continuing distortions within the party created by the pressure of surrounding male-chauvinist society.

Down with the Patriarchy!

During these years, Evelyn Reed was encouraged to speak, write and educate on a wider scale. Her manuscript *Women’s Evolution*, presenting her interpretation of women’s role in the origins of humanity, was finally published in book form. [25] I helped organize a tour in which Reed presented her ideas on dozens of universities across the country.

The SWP did not formally adopt Reed’s approach to anthropological theory, instead leaving the question open as an area of discussion. In 1978, the party published an extensive critique of Reed’s views by Stephanie Coontz, then a prominent party member and former leader of the national anti-Vietnam-war movement, alongside a full response by Reed (see “Two Views of Women’s Evolution” in *The Militant*, February 3, 1978.)

The party did argue for the goal of overthrowing the patriarchy, the system of male supremacy established during the consolidation of private property and class exploitation. Capitalism profits from women’s subordination but does not create it.

The SWP proposed socialist revolution as the requirement for women’s freedom, but fully overcoming patriarchy — and racism — will require continued efforts in post-capitalist society. We will have to overcome patriarchy even as socialism is being constructed.

The SWP regarded itself as a leading component of the coming revolution, in alliance with the Blacks, unions, and other social mass movements. The party integrated women’s liberation into its strategy for revolution with concept of women as an oppressed sex taking part in a combined revolution with oppressed nationalities (African-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans) and the working class. [26]

Lesbian and Gay Liberation

One aspect of the feminist radicalization had particular resonance for me: the advocacy of human rights and respect for lesbians — that is, for same-sex relationships among women.

In my youth, the broader issue of what we now call LGBTQ rights was entangled with that of McCarthyite repression against suspected Reds. Communism and homosexual relations were treated

as related forms of deviltry.

I had encountered anti-Queer extremism as a teenager, when I spent time in a correctional institution in part because my adopted parents suspected me of lesbian involvement. They insisted that homosexuality is “sick and decadent” and “borders on criminality.” [27]

After my release from jail in 1958, now living in Los Angeles, I became acquainted with “homosexuals” in Hollywood who explained that the McCarthy witch hunt, although somewhat abated, had not ceased to pursue the LGBTQ community, forcing it into covert existence. U.S. laws banning homosexual relations were not fully repealed until the 1990s.

When I joined the SWP, its members had a variety of personal opinions on same-sex relationships. I heard SWP members reject talk of homosexual “perversion” or “illness,” and accept same-sex relations, and I learned that the Russian revolution had abolished anti-gay legislation. Yet there was fear in the party of contact with gays, which was thought likely to attract government harassment and victimization.

Between 1962 and 1970, the leaderships of the YSA and SWP sought to exclude open homosexuals from their ranks. There were also worries in the party apparatus that “hippy” styles would alienate American working-class recruits to the socialist organizations.

After 1970, the party welcomed queers to membership and advocated gay and lesbian rights. It published a pamphlet on the question, *Gay Liberation: A Socialist Perspective*, by Kipp Dawson. [28] The party stopped short, however, of establishing LGBTQ rights as a work area and preserved a conservative stance toward demonstrative cultural displays by its members, whether LGBTQ or not. For writings of critics of the SWP position, see footnote. [29]

5. The SWP Loses Its Way

By 1975 the SWP had about 1500 active members, of whom 40% were women. Toward the end of the decade, the organization began to pull back from its participation in feminist struggles.

Rightist capitalist forces had gained new strength and were driving back the trade unions, Blacks, and women’s resistance. The SWP now resolved that the vast majority of its members would seek unionized industrial jobs. In the process, it turned away from united work in broad movements, from whom we had learned so much, and from which we gained our numbers and diversity.

To a certain degree, the party adapted to the inevitable: Black and women’s movements were no longer so massive and were more class divided. But the “turn to industry,” as we called it, was extreme, misconstrued, and narrow in focus.

We entered the industrial work force as a body, with a limited vision and a focus on selling *The Militant* and books, and recruiting individual workmates. On the whole, we seldom intervened in social campaigns in the unions, which in any case in the 1980s were in retreat — we called it a “rout.”

At the same time the democracy of the organization, of which we had been so proud, was deeply compromised. The party’s commitment to feminist goals remained on a programmatic level but was no longer connected to living engagement.

To be sure, the onset of neoliberalism in the 1980s created a more challenging political environment,

but still, other far-left currents survived and even grew, while the SWP ultimately plummeted to only 5% of its former membership. During this process, women in the party lost ground in terms of their leadership role and integration into feminist advocacy.

In my opinion, this development was speeded by aspects of a political culture, experienced by a wide spectrum of socialist currents, that reinforces patriarchal leadership and obstruct women's involvement and leadership. And here Bakan's discussion, based on her experiences, in a different political current functioning in a different country, is quite suggestive.

Patriarchal Dysfunction

The SWP in decline was now no longer led by a collective team of leaders. Its democratic complexion drained away; it obeyed the directives of a leadership exemplifying in Bakan's words, a "certain type of masculinized personality idealized as a model of stature and authority in activist left circles."

Drawing on a study by Lara Coleman and Serena Bassi, [30] Bakan describes an activist group shaped by "a certain type of masculine performance" by a "Man with Analysis" who projected:

"'Black and white' (sic) reasoning about objective matters, with little room for self-doubt in claims to knowledge, or for reason to be coloured by emotion. Argument was constructed as competition, where one analysis could only be credibly challenged if an alternative Man with Analysis entered the ring. The authors identify how the hegemonic masculinity of the Man with Analysis led to exclusions of other forms of knowledge, including among those with experience in the [field of work], women, and men with alternative masculinities who did not want to compete with the alpha males."

Bakan couples this sketch with a portrait of another type of "masculine performance," that of "Communist Urgent Man," a leader who is perennially impatient:

"This persona often displays little interest in collective process development, where questions or challenges that are not universally obvious could be addressed. Certain discussions are seen to risk wasting precious time, distracting from the task considered by Communist Urgent Man to be particularly pressing. In fact, those who do not share the same singular priority, or affective sense of immediacy in the task, are considered as potentially obstructionist." [31]

Bakan's amusing sketches bear an uncanny resemblance to the mode of leadership that predominated as the SWP fell into decline. The party also came to display an extreme form of small-group socialist sectarianism: denunciation of rival radical currents as reactionaries in service of the class enemy.

Over many years, the SWP world socialist vision withered and the party ceased seeking new opportunities, interventions, and activities in the women's and Black struggles. Waiting for a fantasized workers' radicalization, members were imprisoned in a shrinking strait-jacket. In the process, many of the party's feminist gains in previous decades were lost.

The SWP experience lends support to Bakan's suggestion that this type of small-group socialist meltdown may be caused, in part, by uncritical acceptance of patriarchal modes of political leadership.

To counter such dangers, lopsided reliance on theory and analysis in decision-making needs to be balanced by weighing lived experience in social struggles — the field in which women activists tend to predominate.

In reviewing my experience in the SWP and surveying the socialist organizations of today, I agree with Bakan's basic thesis, that today "socialist organizations typically harbour a political culture that obstructs full and equal participation by their women members."

Conclusion

The challenge of women's liberation remains a troubled issue for many socialist groups today, and they often lag behind the spirit of women's radicalism in social movements today. Despite all the progress of recent decades, in my experience, many women continue to be alienated regarding participation in Marxist organizations.

It could be that the political program, affirming the goal of women's liberation, is undercut by the reality of practice, that is, day-to-day political culture. Women, generally, are still slow to intervene in discussions concentrated on Marxist theory and strategy. Yet in some mass movements for social change, women play an equal role among the organizers and spokespersons or — today — even predominate.

Conversations on Marxist strategy and tactics tend to repel women and other disadvantaged social layers when they are not linked to the experience and wisdom gained in social and political movements.

This deficiency is being rectified through the social movements of today, which typically comprehend and combine ambitious goals with bold initiative. We see evidence of this today in the hundreds of thousands who have come out in demonstrations for women's rights, African American and Indigenous freedom, and against racist police brutality.

Such resistance strikes blows against the underlying source of women's oppression, which is capitalism. As the struggle for our rights has shown, women's oppression will be abolished not by women alone but by alliance with every section of the exploited and oppressed, including males who seek to eradicate patriarchy and capitalism, the system that shackles and imprisons us all.

Young women fighters for social justice stand courageously on the shoulders of prior achievements of freedom struggles. They will forge new leaderships that are inclusive regarding gender, race, and nationality.

Suzanne Weiss

P.S.

- "A Socialist Woman's Experience". Against the Current No. 211, March/April 2021:
<https://againstthecurrent.org/atc211/memoir-of-life-in-the-u-s-swp-a-socialist-womans-experience/>

Footnotes

- [1] Abigail Bakan, "Marxism, Feminism, and Epistemological Dissonance," *Socialist Studies/Études socialistes*, vol. 8, no. 2, Autumn 2012, 62-84.

[2] <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca>

[3] Bakan, op. cit., 61.

[4] For Engels quote, see Marxists Internet Archive in Frederick Engels, *Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Chapter 2, Section 3 ("The Pairing Family"); see also Sharon Smith, *Women and Socialism: Class, Race, and Capital*, Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015, 25-54.

[5] Kathleen A. Brown and Elizabeth Faue, "Social Bonds, Sexual Politics, and Political Community on the U.S. Left, 1920s-1940s," *Left History*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2000), 9-45.

[6] James P. Cannon, *Notebook of an Agitator*, New York: Pathfinder, 2001, 395-98; Donna T. Haverty-Stacke, *The Fierce Life of Grace Holmes Carlson: Catholic, Socialist, Feminist*, New York: NYU Press, 2020.

[7] See Barry Boone, "Joyce Maupin, 1921-1998," in *Against the Current*, no. 79, March-April 1998. Thanks to Alan Wald for this reference.

[8] Joyce Cowley, *Fourth International*, vol. 15, no. 2, 45-56 (Spring 1955), republished as "Pioneers of Women's Emancipation" by Merit, 1969

[9] Bakan, op. cit., 67.

[10] *The Militant*, July 26, 1954.

[11] The fullest collection of materials from the "cosmetics debate" is found in Joseph Hansen, et al., *Cosmetics, Fashions and the Exploitation of Women*, New York: Pathfinder, 1986. The original 70-page mimeographed SWP bulletin is available in Marxists Internet Archive. Articles by McGowan, Morgan, and Bustelo are found in Paul Le Blanc and Bryan Palmer, ed., *US Trotskyism 1928-1965, Part III: Resurgence*, Leiden: Brill, 2019.

[12] Hansen, op. cit., 91.

[13] Evelyn Reed, *Problems of Women's Liberation*, New York: Pathfinder, 1969, 117.

[14] Le Blanc and Palmer, *US Trotskyism*, 43-64; also online in *International Socialist Review* (ISR), Spring 1964.

[15] Bakan, op. cit., 66.

[16] Bakan, op. cit., 73.

[17] Le Blanc and Palmer, *US Trotskyism*, 180-2; ISR, Spring 1962.

[18] On the background to *The Feminine Mystique*, see Daniel Horowitz, *The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism*, Amhurst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998, and Stephanie Coontz, *A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s*, New York: Basic Books, 2011.

[19] Evelyn Reed, "The Feminine Mystique," ISR, Winter 1964.

[20] See Jacobin Magazine, November 2020, available on ESSF (article 57029), [United States : How the Strike for Equality Relunched the Struggle for Women's Liberation in the US](#).

[21] Suzanne Berliner Weiss, *Holocaust to Resistance: My Journey*, Halifax & Winnipeg: Fernwood, 2019.

[22] Evelyn Reed, "Caste, Class, or Oppressed Sex," in *ISR*, vol. 31, no. 3, September 1970.

[23] See Maxine Williams, "Feminism and Socialism: Why Women's Liberation is Important to Black Women," *The Militant*, July 3, 1970, 40-7.

[24] Linda Jenness, "Violence against Women Is Incompatible with Party Membership," in *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation*, New York: Pathfinder, 1992, vol. 2, 45-6.

[25] Evelyn Reed, *Women's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975.

[26] See Reed, *Problems of Women's Liberation*, 102.

[27] Weiss, *op. cit.*, 61-89.

[28] Kipp Dawson, *Gay Liberation: A Socialist Perspective*, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975.

[29] See Christopher Phelps, "The Closet in the Party: The Young Socialist Alliance, the Socialist Workers Party, and Homosexuality, 1962-1970," in *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, vol. 10, no. 4, 11-38 and *The Socialist Workers Party vs. Gay Liberation*, by David Thorstad.

[30] Coleman, Lara Montesinos and Serena A. Bassi, "Deconstructing Militant Manhood: Masculinities in the Disciplining of (Anti-) Globalization Politics," *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2011), 221-22.

[31] Bakan, *op. cit.*, 69-70.