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a talk on

# SEXUAL POLITICS



given by

**GWEN  
PATTON**

on march 9, 1971  
at the Control, Conflict, Change Seminar

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SEXUAL POLITICS

A Speech by Gwen Patton

Gwen Patton is head of The National Association of Black Students, headquartered in Washington, D.C. She is a former member of SNCC, and an organizer of the National Black Anti-War, Anti-Draft movement.

The subject of her speech was Sexual Politics, by Kate Millett, (Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York, 1970)

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This speech was delivered to the attending members of Control, Conflict and Change, on Tuesday, March 9, 1971, at Central Methodist Church, Detroit, Michigan.

Sexual Politics, was the fourth in a series of six books examined by Control, Conflict and Change, a contemporary education program sponsored by the Black Star Book Store and the Ad Hoc Action Group, Inc.

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I'm kind of nervous. Being out on the East Coast for so long and going through some madness of black nationalism, I haven't talked to white people, let alone white people and black people in the same room for the last two years. It's a good feeling to see that people who might not have reached a revolutionary stage, but who are approaching a revolutionary consciousness, are willing to sit down together and have some kind of a sensible discussion. I hope we don't get into any arguments later on, any screaming, so that the meeting becomes a total melee.

My lecture is going to be in two parts. The first is on Kate Millett's book, Sexual Politics, which I hope you've all read. Secondly, my lecture deals with some of my experiences and some of my ideas based on theory and practice--some that I think would be best for the women's movement in this country.

I don't want to knock Kate Millett's book. I think that there should be a struggle to have this book taught on the college campus, particularly the chapter on Freud. She does a very good analysis on that. Even though her politics in the rest of the book is disgusting, that particular chapter is very important. Either we take it out and give her credit and pay her some money or we maintain the book and explain it correctly.

I think that first we have to look at Kate Millett. It's very important for us to understand the background of people. Always look to the authors, where they're coming from, what is their class background, and the like. I don't think Kate Millett is an enemy to the women's struggle at all. It's just that people who are radical, people who are moving, people who are studying should try very desperately to get her into a correct woman's group, or a correct revolutionary collective, so she won't be pulled in by ABC, CBS, and the capitalists. I think she's in a very tenable position. She's in the middle, and I don't think she's made a decision because she hasn't approached any revolutionary groups in this country. She's been on the Mike Douglas program, she's been on that "Tonight Show" and so forth. We understand how capitalism can co-opt you and get you to become an enemy of the people, and not become part of the working people who are developing a proletarian consciousness. I think there should be efforts made by all women, but I would prefer integrated revolutionary collectives to pull her in, so that she will have some sort of discipline. She claims that she objects to being called a heroine or hero or whatever you want to call her, but she has no discipline at all. She's a free agent in this society, running around talking supposedly revolutionary politics, and she's not being correct or disciplined. I think we shall have to pull her in.

It's obvious to everybody that she's an English major, and she's totally incorrect to think that Norman Mailer and the rest of those guys are "universal men". She fails to mention that men, too, are socialized in this society, and that they act, not because of some biological thing, not because of some inherent thing, but they act through historical socialization. If we're going to accept her thesis about male supremacy, then all the men should get on one side of the room and all the women should get on the other side of the room and let's kill off each other, and then we can let capitalism prevail and kill off the children.

I find the major contradiction in Kate's book expressed on page 63. She says, "So deeply imbedded is patriarchy that the character structure it creates in both sexes is perhaps even more a habit of mind and a way of life than a political system." Then on page 177, she says, "Patriarchy could, as indeed it did, remain in force as a thoroughly efficient political system." Now if you can remember what I said, in the beginning of the book she says that the patriarchy is not a political system. Towards the middle of the book she says that the patriarchy is a political system, and that kind of contradiction permeates throughout the book. She does not yet know whether or not a patriarchy is political or whether it is a social or cultural phenomenon. I would maintain that it is political. Love, in any instance, is political. Any type of relationship with human beings, be they male and female, or female and female, is a political situation, if you're in a capitalistic society. That is the basis of her book and why it is so incorrect all the way through, in terms of politics. That's a very key point in terms of our discussion, because if we can't see the major contradiction in a book, or if we read it without having a political theory or a political perspective, then we're reading only for the sake of reading. That doesn't make any sense.

Now I'd also like to question why she chose Genet as a contrast to Mailer. Not that there's anything wrong with Genet, but one ought to have chosen a revolutionary person who has engaged in revolutionary struggle, who has physically been in the leadership of that revolutionary struggle, as well as someone who is a literary writer. For instance, Franz Fanon fits this description. Why not use Fanon's writings as a contrast to Norman Mailer? I think she had something else in mind and I think that this was a bit confusing.

She confuses us on the development of patriarchy over the matriarchy. Granted, there are two kinds of systems and if you read the book you will understand that under the matriarchy extension of the family was on the maternal line and the maternal gene. You will see that because society was close to nature, because society at that point was agricultural, women had a tendency to have some type of control in the family as well as the child rearing, because they did the planning. The tendency of that arrangement was that it became more of a communalistic type, more of a socialistic type of

society. I think that what can happen is that women will take that kind of thread and then say, "Look, if we're in leadership, if we have the power, we'll be less aggressive than you, we'll be more humane than you are and so forth and so on." I would maintain that if we had 5,000 years or 1971 years (or whatever everyone uses in terms of historical numbers or years), if we were under a female-dominated capitalistic system, even though it were a crude system, by 19 000 years, we too would be just as powerful, just as aggressive as our male counterparts. That kind of capitalistic system breeds contempt for other people, breeds individualism, breeds exploitation, because a person is hung up on getting all the material wealth in the world just for his own personal use. That's the kind of psychology that will permeate, whether the men are in power or whether the women are in power, that kind of thing will still exist. I think that there might be a tendency (which, in terms of female separatist groups, I'm going to talk about as being incorrect) for people to think that women are more humane than men. Some separatist groups would like to say that.

In reading about all the nonsense that the patriarchy has done (particularly on the white civilization, if you want to call it "civilization") I was getting very paranoid and was wondering whether or not I was becoming very racist. You know, I was wondering if this was just the phenomena of white men, even though I knew that forms of capitalism were existing in African or in black societies, although on a very low level. I wanted to know if this thing was part of a tendency. Did it have a relationship with industrialization; did it have a relationship to cybernation? I think it does, and I wanted to find out exactly how that came into play in terms of black people. I got a book which I would recommend (and there's also a suggested reading list that's coming out) and everybody should read it, in terms of trying to understand the Negro or the black family, historically. I would like to read to you from Pat Robinson, who is a black chick from New York, who does anthropological research. Because racism will not permit her to get grants to visit countries and study them like Margaret Mead does, she has to do research in the library. She does research on the matriarcal society existing in Africa and how the patriarchy got turned over into patriarchy. One of the leading reasons was that the men were out of the household, very much like in European societies, and they were hunters, and they had control of the biggest weapons, or the weapons for killing animals. They had those kinds of tools to do their hunting. As the agricultural society became more advanced and people went out to hunt, they developed more tools. Weeb they developed more tools, the men had control of those tools, and as men got control of those tools they began to develop feelings of supremacy because they could be brutal.

As this type of industrialization was developing in African societies (I'm not advocating that we return to some type of hippie culture where people would walk

from California to Detroit) men began to relate to each other and to start building cities. As they started building cities, very much like they do in New York, they relate to those kinds of buildings. I think Kate Millett talks about that, but not very much. As they started building these buildings and developing these cities, they started building societies. These were all men societies, which might be called tribes, or tribal types of arrangements. Today you might call them lodges, or if you're on a college campus, a fraternity. You will notice that a reaction to the fraternity was the sorority, as if that female group was going to resolve that conflict. These African societies "for men only," used women as symbols such as the moon-god, the fertility symbol and the like. As that industrialization was being more and more developed, male supremacy started to exist in very high levels in African society. Polygamy came about and women were really relegated to an inferior position. I think that's the very key to our understanding. Kate Millett doesn't deal with black or third world people in any type of context and I think that's very bad.

As we take this opportunity as black people and white people study together, we have the opportunity to all become revolutionaries in the struggle against capitalism. You need to understand this opportunity and wage that kind of practical struggle among people who might have nationalistic tendencies. As an example, I can only refer to China, which indeed has the best revolution going at this point. You might have read the following quote from Chairman Mao: a man in China is usually subjugated to the domination of three systems of authority: (1) the state system, what we call the government here - political authority, ranging from the national provincial, and county governments, down to that of the townships; (2) the clan system, ranging from the central ancestral temple and its branch temples down to the head of the household; and (3) the supernatural system, that which we call metaphysics, ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods, to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world. As far as women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority, they're also dominated by the men, by the authority of the husband. These four authorities-- political, clan, religious and masculine--are the embodiment of the whole feudal patriarchal system and ideology. They are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants. How the peasants have overthrown the political authority of the landlord has been described. The political authority of the landlord has been the backbone of all other systems of authority, and we would talk about that. With overturned clan-authority, the religious authority and authority of the husband began to totter. As to the authority of the husband, this has always been weaker among the poor peasants. (Pick up on this, please.) Out of economic necessity, their womenfolk had to do more manual labor than the women of the richer classes, and therefore, they had more say and greater power in decisions on family matters. With the increasing bankruptcy of the rural economy in recent years, the basis for men's domination has already

been weakened. With the rise of the peasant movement the women in many places have now begun to organize rural women's associations. The opportunity has come to them to lift up their heads and the authority of the husband is getting shakier every day. In a word, the whole ideology of the feudal patriarchal system is tottering with the growth of the peasant's power. As for the clan system, the abolition of superstition and the inequality between men and women will follow as a natural consequence of victory in the political and economic struggle! Now we shall move.

The point that I'm trying to make is that it's not only a white phenomena, but it's a problem in all races which have had some stage of male authority. Therefore, it is indeed a universal problem that we must wage struggle against. We must operate very correctly and within the framework.

Getting back to Kate Millett, her book is indeed an apologist for the capitalistic system. She would have you believe that women can be free under capitalism, and that's totally incorrect. Women will never be free under capitalism. It's against the interests of capitalism. That's why capitalists supply the myth of the pseudo-paternal dominance. So Millett is trying to put down socialism. Indeed, she talks about women becoming capitalists; she says that women can fight for equal rights which means that they could be equal capitalist like everybody else. That would be a calamity if that should happen. Secondly, she says that a family structure is required in the subordination of women. That's not true because it's not the family structure that's necessary in the subordination of women in the black family. In fact, it's quite the contrary. There are instances time and time again of attempts to break up the black family. I would believe there might be attempts in the future to break up the white family in this country, too. That's just not true. That's totally incorrect.

Engels believed that individual sex love and the rights of sexual life were beyond the province of the state. But Millett tries (I use the term "red bait" to mean exactly the opposite) to put down revolutionary writers time and time again. First she builds Engels up and then she puts him down. For instance, she says that Engels did not foresee, even though he was a realist and a revolutionary, all of the problems. That is very true, but she couches that phrase in such a negative tone, that you feel that it's not necessary for you to pursue and read some of Engels' works, particularly his work on the family.

However, she does a fantastic job on Freud. A fantastic job! It's beautiful. I think everybody should try to read that section particularly white women and black women so that we can have an understanding in terms of maintaining this communication. The communication between black women and white women is indeed bad. (I think Millett's analysis of Freud clearly describes the



male-supremist nonsense which permeates such television shows as "Julia" or those soap operas that you look at every day. I hope nobody in this room looks at that nonsense. It's a strong Freudian philosophy that's being projected through that kind of media. And what happens is that people are able to become part of that by living vicariously that kind of situation.) I'm just going to be a little hard here in terms of understanding the black man - white woman thing. Their life style is so bad that they can get hooked up with the brother, with the black man. I don't think it's necessarily done out of a devious motive, although it could be. I mean there could be all kinds of reasons. Like I said before, no movement and no organization has the right to brokerage anybody's relationship - only if that relationship becomes very ineffective for that revolutionary collective. I will talk about this in the other half of my speech. But, the way it comes off is the breaking down of communications between the white woman and the black woman. The black woman has been forced into a position where she is indeed oppressed, indeed exploited. The most cruel form of oppression surrounds getting a job, becoming a bread winner. The black woman becomes an Amazon woman, becomes very cold, becomes very calculating and plotting in order to maintain her own survival. That operates on her mentality and the way she moves. Then when the cat comes home and he wants his woman to operate within a Freudian kind of framework, and he begins to pounce on her because he feels women should be masochistic and all of that nonsense, and he feels that women should take this and women should take that, then, indeed, she, as a worker, gives him a struggle. Gives him a struggle! That just fucks with his whole male thing. What happens is that he tries to find an alternative to that because he too is messed up in the mind. He too has been physiologically ripped by this society and is not able to make a correct analysis; he finds an alternative, and that alternative might be a white woman. If the white woman doesn't have any politics, and if she takes on ~~that~~ masochistic thing, she takes on getting beat and she takes on carrying on that household drudgery. It puts the black woman and the white woman even further apart; and at the same time, by her marrying this cat or living with this cat, she's elevated to some kind of revolutionary position, but her politics is not together, and we have to really struggle with her.

Women, black women and white women, will have to struggle. The white woman ought to also have liberation within the black setting, if that is her case. I'm not just trying to say that to flagellate anybody, for it is very real. It's very, very real, and we have to understand that.

Now Freud's whole thing about the penis hangup is just fantastic; and a joke comes to me that my mother told me. This is real. I was about twelve years old I guess and we had a real thing going. She told me about four jokes that I remember, but this joke is about the little boy and the little girl who are taking a bath in the bathtub. The little girl says, "What's that?" and the little boy says, "That's a leg and you got one too." So she says, "What's that?" and he says "That's an arm and you got one too." Then she says, "Well, what's that?"

and he says, "Don't touch that, you already broke yours." You can understand that I'm sure my mother didn't know anything about Freud, never picked up the book, never heard of the cat, didn't give a damn about him, but that kind of thing was socialized. She socialized it into me as well. If I had kids and I didn't have any politics, I might socialize that into my daughter. I'm just saying how that goes.

Another thing comes to mind too, in terms of relationships between men and women. You're jumping rope, and you say:

Peter, Peter, pumpkin-eater  
Had a wife and couldn't keep her.  
So, he put her in a pumpkin shell  
And there he kept her very well.

Which says that if she gets out of line, put her either on a pedestal or put her in somebody's jail, which is a household drudgery kind of thing. Women say that over and over again, socializing that kind of madness in their minds. We have to begin to write some new nursery rhymes for children.

I want to get through with Kate Millett's book as soon as I can. Now, the main problem with Kate Millett's book (which will become a banner for a lot of women's groups that will not have correct politics) is that she feels that if sexism is resolved, all other things will come into place. That's wrong. There's nothing wrong with having an equalitarian society; in fact, that's utopia and that is indeed what we should be struggling for--that all people are equal. But, all people equal under a capitalistic system? Just think about it; don't even apply dialectics to it. If you understand theory, just think about what happens if everybody is going to be equal under a capitalistic system. We will kill each other through competition. We are almost approaching that now on an unequal basis. So she has to get another kind of framework in terms of the struggle.

And about chivalry; we all understand that chivalry was only a reformist thing in order to maintain woman in a subordinate position. Be nice to her, flatter her, and we can keep her oppressed. However, there is such a thing as just being human. You know, if you are a liberated person, and you have got an arm full of packages, so nobody opens up the door. That's reactionary. That's what can happen to a woman's liberation group. Because it is indeed in nature==until they come up with some more politics, a cultural revolution, a female cultural revolution--it has the same kinds of limitations that any other cultural revolution will have. If the women's movement does not deal with the economics and the politics of a society but only deals with the status of a woman, it can become counter-revolutionary - be it black, white, integrated or otherwise--that can be its limitation. If you're struggling for just a particular group of people and not struggling for people as a whole, then you will have a tendency to become regressive, and some people might even say fascist.

You see, we have to understand that the movement, the struggle on a spiral level as well as a struggle for the physical needs - food, clothing, shelter--for all human beings. We also have to struggle for love, the need to be

recognized, the need to be needed, the need for some kind of function. Those two struggles have to operate at the same time, and we call that the spiral concept. And those of us who are indeed oppressed, especially black women who are doubly and triply oppressed, have to watch out for the tendency to become reactionary. By that I mean we have to watch out for the tendency to become female chauvinists. Why should we want to take on that kind of power and extol that kind of power to the other half of the population? So, we should have a very good understanding of what our struggle is.

I'm going to move right on in to the separatist's thing. Millett talks about separatism and spheres of influence. I once did a thing on Victorian philosophy and the black family and how Moynihan was the architect for black power--in terms of creating chaos because of the relationship between black power and male supremacy. If we are going to say that spheres of influence, that is, men in one group and women in another group, is incorrect, then how are we going to say that it is correct within a revolutionary situation? It cannot be correct even though the content of what is being discussed in those separate groups might be different. The idea of having separate groups with no type of inter-communication is only an extension of the patriarch. I don't care how radical your rap might be inside that group, it doesn't say anything. It's impossible to resolve a contradiction if the other half of that contradiction is not present. I just don't see how women in a group by themselves are going to be able to resolve male chauvinism. I do think the heaviest burden of solving male supremacy on a day to day basis is left on the woman. She can not do that talking to another woman. The solution will have to come through practice. It is not right that a woman will go to bed with a cat and then come back the next morning claiming he is the male supremacist because he seduced her. She is going to have to, by and large, be the principal person in that struggle. It might be a little difficult for a brother to give up those false notions, so she is going to have to be in that struggle--in terms of the direction of that struggle. That's about all I have to say about Kate Millett's book. I'm not going to put it down, I'm not going to say it's all bad or good, I think it should be read in its entirety. It gives some good historical insight.

When the women's movement started in this country about 1830, which is indeed one which should have been started, they abandoned their struggle to fight for abolition. That showed that there is some type of paternalism, in a way, because the struggle for freedom from oppression should be waged simultaneously. After the Civil War and during the period of reconstruction, again women were struggling for their own rights in the United States--white women.. They abandoned their struggle to fight. As Kate Millett points out, it was the Negro's hour, so they abandoned their struggle to help Negroes get the right to vote which meant that even us black women were not Negroes. That abandonment, in terms of black women and white women, has a consistent history. It did in 1820, it did in 1865, and here we are again in 1970; and if there is going to be another abandonment, then don't get mad if black women don't even want to speak to you. We know that

there is a big rift as it is and we understand the nature of racism. I hope we understand the nature of racism. If we don't have an understanding of racism today, I don't know what to say. So, as these white sister revolutionary women struggle they must always maintain their perspective. Because black women are doubly oppressed, white women must seek them out, not in a paternalistic way, but seek counsel, help them in terms of giving direction. In fact, black women must become the vanguard because they understand the nature of oppression better since they have been under it longer. That has to be done, and if that is not done, we are just doing another middle class rap thing and that's going to cause regression for the next 30 years--just like it happened with women getting the vote in 1920. It took them until 1970 to move again. We understand our own history in terms of women in this country. We should relate to that, dialectically relate to that, in order to avoid those same mistakes. Only capitalists say history repeats itself. Revolutionaries say contradictions are constant and they change. Only capitalists talk about that, not revolutionary forces. Nothing is the same, nothing stays stagnant; things move, they either move forward or backward. We have that choice so we should take that into mind; then we can talk about something in particular.

The women's movement today is just going to have to repudiate its class background. It's going to have to do that, and at the same time repudiate its skin privilege. Now there is nothing wrong with struggling for abortion. It's very legitimate, extremely legitimate. Women should have the right to control their bodies. That might be a serious problem with black folks because our morality is a little bit different and we have a history about how that morality has developed. The struggle should not be about abortions, that's a bourgeois struggle. You might get a victory; the Man, the government, the capitalist state, might pass a law. They did it in New York and they might do it everywhere. What will happen is that everybody will be in a frenzy thinking they have a victory because that is precisely the way they want you to think. People who run around talking about day care centers can afford to send their kids to private schools; the kids probably go to the best schools anyway and live in the suburbs. Now we need to talk about workers, black and white women, going out there to the factories at 5 o'clock in the morning. I am going to relate a story which my sister-in-law told me yesterday. They go out there at 5 o'clock in the morning, they don't have any baby sitters--the baby sitters that they do have cost \$25 a head. They can't wait till their kids go to school so they can get somebody to take care of their kids at school. We should be talking about pre-education. Why does education start at five years old, why can't education start at three? Kids are toilet trained at three, why can't day care centers become a logical demand for women workers, or any workers? We can talk about the check-off list as a problem, or we can talk about the conditions in the factories as a problem, or we can talk about the working women with children as a problem. And that obligation should be absorbed by that corporation or that company better known as the ruling class of the state. These should be the kind of demands that we should be struggling for. Not some pseudo-

bourgeois struggle.

I'd like to get into a discussion about how to organize around defeat. We need to talk about it with people in this group who don't have that serious problem. But women workers on maternity leave, for instance, get one \$625.00. After the first six months of their pregnancy the company is not even liable for the remaining three months. They can't work because they are afraid the machines might fall on them or they might slip down or some freak accident might occur. If they have an accident at seven, eight or nine months pregnant, the company is not liable. So, the woman quits work to maintain her own health; the company gives her one check for \$625.00, and then demands that she comes back to work six weeks after the baby is born or she can lose her job. Now, that is a legitimate struggle; and we start struggling under the banner of day care centers, with a revolutionary theory involved in order to pull in all of these women. Then we can really talk about making some fundamental changes in society; otherwise we aren't doing anything but wasting time. We will get frustrated.

Talking in terms of the women's movement as a separatist organization; people should learn from other people's struggle. If the women cannot learn from the mistakes of the black struggle, then I think we are very fair in saying that they are racist. You know struggles take on certain types of characteristics. We have learned that we cannot wage the struggle by ourselves in the United States of America. We have learned that there are limitations to that and white women, who are at this point the largest majority in those groups, should be able to learn from those kinds of mistakes. When we speak of the vanguard of the struggle, like a women's vanguard for revolutionary struggle--and I don't even want to get into dialectics about that because there is none--we ask who is going to be the vanguard. People argue that the lesbian group should be the vanguard, that the homosexual group should be the vanguard, or that the prostitute on this hand should be the vanguard because she is exploited. Women must learn to integrate themselves into the working force, and they will be the vanguard for any kind of struggle--workers, men and women, and in some instances, children. Really, there is no such thing as a female vanguard and we need to get that notion out of our heads. We really need to get that out. We must realize the struggle should be simultaneous, in terms of integrating women; that we are all surplus labor. Women are surplus labor just like black folks as a nation. You see, we should question that idea of surplus labor. We should come together and cut across those class lines, repudiate those class lines and be a part of the working force that will wage struggle in this country, and ultimately, perhaps first, in the world. We need to understand that very, very clearly.

There are two lines that are being advocated by women's groups in terms of exposing male supremacy. You have to expose male supremacy, true enough, but one line

is being marred by false theory and that is where all the confusion lies. The line is that many women who have had a bad interpersonal relationship with a mate and they have a tendency to generalize that into an organization, a society level. That is totally incorrect, and even with the men, whose relationship with their women has been so bad, they move into a reactionary position and then have a tendency to generalize all women's groups or all women's forces. It is working both ways. It is working to the benefit of the capitalists; they like this. They indeed like this kind of argument going on between the sexes. That is why they've maintained it for so long. So, we have to get rid of the people who talk about male chauvinism and use false theory. That theory has to be corrected. That means that people in this room, if you're serious about any kind of fundamental change in this country or in the world, are going to have to start doing some revolutionary reading. There is a book list that I've tried to put together.

If you want to talk about that homosexual discussion, we can do that. I'll just give you my views on that; don't think that anybody has the right to brokerage anyone's sexual habits. But that's not necessarily the problem. If a person is a homosexual because he or she hates his or her mother or because he or she hates the other parent, then I think we have to deal with that problem, that question, and talk about why it is that this society makes it so people really hate their own parents --not that this person gets sexual gratification through some form or with a like partner. See, nowhere that I've read or maybe you've read have people been told how they are supposed to get sexual gratification. We're just told that we copulate in order to reproduce. Then some people try to elaborate on that and say that we can also get some type of satisfaction from it. You see, I don't think that we a right to legislate people's sexual appetites. I think that if sexual activity stems from some type of a hatred or something like that, then we have the right to try to deal with that or seek scientific help that can resolve that problem, and not try to ostracize that person--kick him out--because they are people. They are part of that revolutionary struggle because they have been oppressed. In fact, when white people really realize how oppressed they really are and how brainwashed they really are, we might be about business a little sooner. But that's just my idea on the whole question.

Now I don't have a wrap-up nor do I want to end up in a great big sounding speech. I just want to say that we have to get correct political theory. We have to understand the nature of the state; and we have to understand the nature of capitalism; we have to understand the nature of imperialism, deal with it, create struggles. Even though some of our struggles might be bourgeois revolutionary struggles, we must understand that they are bourgeois struggles, understand that they are bourgeois reforms, not ends in themselves, only a means to an ultimate goal. We must all understand this in order to begin to wage serious struggle in a revolutionary

fashion. I have charts here that deal with the developing revolutionary cadres. It's very good to come out to a hall and listen to one speaker and query the speaker and so forth, but I don't know if you learn that much. I don't know how much you can learn in a setting like this. When we talk about developing revolutionary cadres we talk of three levels--the mini-level, midi-level and the maxi-level. The mini-level deals with the one-to-one personal relationship with somebody or a small group; the midi-level is an organizational level, an organization that has defined itself and has taken revolutionary practice and theory as its guideline. The maxi-level is the whole society, and how we deal with that. What happens is that on many levels, people with many problems, particularly related to male supremacy, try to take that into the midi-level and they create chaos. Some even try to extend it to the maxi-level. Then what you have to have is what I call some form of discipline (but I understand that someone told me that if I use the word 'discipline', people might think that we mean beating children). What I mean by discipline is 'framework', 'development'--you develop that mini-relationship to a revolutionary theory and a revolutionary study. You develop it evenly with your organization through practice and through political development--equally between both sexes. You develop it on the mass or on the maxi-level in terms of movements and propaganda, and there are other categories.

I've seen what happens if you don't follow revolutionary perspective. (I left Inkster in 1960 and I've been involved in the struggle full-time for the last eleven years every day of my life, constantly--24 hours--and I've been in a whole lot of organizations.) If the discipline is not there, if you don't use the proper levers, if you don't have competence, if you don't have an actualization of individual freedom in order to make that organization get a better perspective, you have the kind of pathology that is very destructive. That kind of pathology on the mini-level is personal failure, suicide, nervous breakdown, flagellation (you see it in society every day). On the organization level, we see organizations disintegrating year in and year out because they don't have the correct political framework correct political theory. There's not enough discussion, there's no administration. Those organizations collapse; they break off into splinter groups and they develop renegade forces. In the society they move back and submit to oppression and tyranny. If we've got that in our minds now, and if we are talking about a real strong movement, then we don't have to call it revolutionary. In order for a movement for fundamental change in the society, people have to have guidelines. You just can't come out to meetings every week or so and feel that you have that revolutionary spirit and then go back and wait until next week. People have to be constantly engaged in struggle. I think that's far more important (not saying that the female thing isn't important) than anything. That whole composition of the problem, looking at it in a total perspective, is far more important than people sitting around and talking about how much they hate the other sex. I don't think anything fruitful can come from that.

## QUESTIONS TO THE SPEAKER FROM THE MEMBERS

NOTE: Before I attempt to answer any questions it must be clear that I will be applying dialectics with a materialist basis and analysis. For those who are seeking revolution and those who are seeking reform within a capitalist society the answers will be radically different. The major principled contradiction that is facing the world today is imperialism. Male chauvinism is indeed a contradiction, but it is manifested in an imperialist society. The equality of the sexes can only be maintained in a socialist society which is free of exploitation and oppression, a society that is free of exploitation and oppression, a society that is committed to constant change and constant resolving of contradictions.

### 1. WHAT STRATEGY WOULD YOU SUGGEST TO BRING TOGETHER THE SPLINTER LIB MOVEMENTS?

At this time when women are attempting to rehash their experiences, find some sense, if any, in the roles which have been ascribed to them by the capitalist society, redefine themselves, etc., I think it would be unwise to pull the groups together. When women groups can agree on the principle contradiction of the world-- imperialism-- then we can talk about a united front. Meanwhile, women's groups should continue the path of pointing up the contradictions of a patriarchal society.

### 2. WOULD ORGANIZING INTO UNIONS BE USEFUL?

Workers, men and women, have a responsibility to struggle for democratic rights within a capitalist society. To struggle around and get into unions are concrete programs, but should be looked upon as means for workers to ultimately control factories, plants, schools, etc. We call this type of political activity, if successful, a bourgeoisie revolution. However, women should not settle with just getting into unions, but should struggle inside the union with all workers for democratic rights.

### 3. HOW DO WE MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF THEIR OWN OPPRESSION?

Very, very difficult. The pamphlet on "Control, Conflict, and Change" should help somewhat. The ways the system oppressed people should constantly be pointed up through rallies, demonstrations, protests, etc.,

### 4. ELABORATE ON ECONOMIC COMPETITION, DIVISIVENESS BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN.

Economic competition is somewhat unreal since



capitalism is controlled by monopolies. However, the monopolies can play women off against men, blacks against whites, poor against middle class by creating a subtle oppressive society, then offering low wages for survival.

5. DEFINE FEMALE CHAUVINISM. IS THIS A SIGNIFICANT BLOCKADE TO SEXUAL EQUALITY?

Female chauvinism will always occur when women refuse to give a scientific analysis of their exploitation. Female chauvinism is synonymous with male chauvinism, the difference being the opposite sex will be in power. Unless correct dialectics with a material base is offered then we will have more reactionaries. We will have separate groups in isolation and indeed an extension of the patriarch: women in spheres and men in their own spheres. I cannot accept that women are more human than men since they have been forced into subordinate roles. Women cannot guarantee liberation just because they are women. (My reference is that reactionary cultural nationalists will always develop if scientific analysis is not given to the national question of black people in America.)

Sexual equality under what kind of a system? Under socialism (communism) there is human equality. Under capitalism there must be exploitation--women, blacks, youth, poor, etc. If there is no exploitation, then there is equality.

6. DO WOMEN NEED WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS? HOW DO THEY KEEP FROM BEING SEPARATISTS?

All groups need support groups. If the cause is worthy and the action can point up contradictions of exploitation and oppression, then they should be supported (coalitions). To keep groups from being separatist is to constantly ask the women to read about other women, particularly women in revolutionary societies. Through their heightened consciousness women will see the need to develop revolutionaries which are human.

7. IS THERE A NEED TO ORGANIZE AND POLITICIZE WOMEN FIRST, AND THEN TO REACH OUT TO MEN?

To accept this question means that women in general are inferior to men. It is a male chauvinist question.

8. HOW CAN WE BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN AND BLACK AND WHITE MEN WHO HAVE SUFFICIENT POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS TO RECOGNIZE REPRESSIONS UNDER THIS SYSTEM?

People are moving towards this direction. However white people will have to repudiate racism through practice (not in a liberal fashion) and respect, understand, and accept black workers as the vanguard.

9. BLACK WOMEN ARE NOT FULFILLING THE "PROPER IMAGE" (MY QUOTATION MARKS) FOR THE BLACK MAN, SO HE GOES TO A WHITE SUBMISSIVE FEMALE. IF THE WHITE WOMAN UNDERSTANDS THIS, SHOULD SHE REJECT OR REFORM THE MAN, OR ALIGN HERSELF WITH THE BLACK WOMAN?

Misunderstood my statement. Black women do not have the leisure nor are primarily in that class to accept the role described by Freud (thank goodness) like white women. The white woman should reject her Freudian image of womanhood, develop a proletarian consciousness, and she will be a natural ally to progressive black women. To maintain her Freudian concepts in practice and align herself with a brother who is a chauvinist is a dangerous proposition. It is a bad case on all sides, but because of racism this arrangement can have the most negative consequences.

10. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BLACK MORALITY IS DIFFERENT THAN WHITE MORALITY?

Perhaps I should have used the term culture which includes morality. Then again, I could be very wrong because I was comparing poor and working class black women who are struggling with their liberal, racist behavior and attitudes. However, we must keep in mind that a culture will determine a morality. If the culture is one of hate and violence it will breed wars. I am glad you brought the question up because I would like to do some research about women of the same class.

11. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER IN THE 20'S.

Black and white women did not work together just as they are not working together today. The women, black and white can work with men, black and white, as sisters and brothers when they become comrades through theory and practice.

12. HOW CAN I AS A WHITE MIDDLE CLASS WOMAN RELATE TO THE STRUGGLE OF WORKING CLASS MEN AND WOMEN? I SEE THE SAME PATERNALISTIC PROBLEMS IN TRYING TO HELP BLACK STRUGGLES.

Very good observation. You cannot relate to the working class until you develop a proletarian consciousness, unless you are willing to live with a working class dictatorship, that industry and production should be controlled by the workers. In fact, you should be a worker! In a revolutionary society there will be no classes; therefore, no group, racial or class, to exploit. Everybody will have to work. Can you dig giving up time that has no purpose to do work? Can you dig giving up trying to find nursery schools to put your children in to organize and work in day care centers?

13. HOW DO YOU DEFINE "POLITICAL" IN YOUR STATEMENT THAT ALL RELATIONSHIPS ARE POLITICAL?

As long as we live in a capitalist society or the capitalist societies exist all events are political. If I should die tomorrow my death will be a political death because of the racial and class exploitation. If women could understand, and they will, that women liberation is a class struggle that will have clearer goals. Women make lower

wages as a class which means they are surplus labor with cheaper wages, thereby creating even more surplus value.

14. WOULD THE FEMINIST MOVEMENT SUPPORT THE COMMUNAL FAMILY RELATIONSHIP AS OPPOSED TO PRESENT DAY "LAWFUL" RELATIONSHIPS?

Yes, a true revolutionary movement, not necessarily a feminist movement.

15. IS IT NECESSARY OR EVEN POSSIBLE TO HAVE A NUCLEAR FAMILY IN A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIETY?

If a nuclear family means "every man is the king of his castle", NO. If you are talking about a woman and a man with immediate offspring living in one dwelling which is a revolutionary household, YES. Scientific analysis will show that people like privacy at some point for thought, quiet, and solitude and these real feelings will be very important in a revolutionary society and will be given real considerations for programs in lieu of this in a capitalist society when there is sound pollution or that you have to be rich to have a bucolic retreat, or exploited to build a den in your home, etc.

16. IF A NUCLEAR FAMILY IS NOT, WHAT FORM OF FAMILY UNIT IS APPROPRIATE TO REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE?

See the above. If people wish to live together in a revolutionary collective, they should by all means do so within a revolutionary framework.

17. HOW WOULD YOU PROPOSE WE HANDLE THE PROBLEM OF JUST TAXATION?

No surtax for imperialist wars. No phone tax for the AT&T monopoly. Corporate tax per capital. Guaranteed income which is livable. Negative income tax. Support or defeat bond issues, etc.

18. PLEASE EXPAND ON MOYNIHAN BEING ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF BLACK POWER.

Daniel Moynihan was partly responsible for dividing black men and women. And the correct thing for the oppressor to do was to create havoc and discord among the colonized, particularly in internal and family relationships. Black men and women were a unifying force that would march side by side, drawing strength from each other in order to combat racism. Moynihan stopped that force and black men began to look upon their women as a strange breed who was against them and trying to make them weak.

Moynihan was instilling the Victorian philosophy, which has always existed in the black family. Because the philosophy prevails it has caused many problems and contradictions. The women can work as annies, cooks or maids and their pride and/or femininity will not be in jeopardy. However, black men cannot be janitors or porters for fear of losing pride and a large dose of masculinity...according to Victorian philosophy women are the rapiers of black menhood.

BLACK POWER! Moynihan introduced and made black people aware of "castration" Black Power will move to correct the situation. Moynihan's report was very successful because it invisibly became the guideline under the guise of black power for the black family and for male and female re-

relationships in general.

It is true that Black Power shook many black men and for the Movement this was a necessary and vitalizing force. Black men could respond positively toward Black Power and could assert their leadership qualities which included unfortunately an airing of their egos and strengthening of their masculinity. Black Women will now take the back position, and in so doing Moynihan was justified in his observations. Women do have definite, subordinate roles and to deviate is an infamous assault to manhood. Black Power brothers rejected honkies, but followed the precepts of Moynihan and Freud, and some sisters are in the same bag. (Written in 1967)

19. HOW DO THE CHURCHES FIT INTO THE STRUGGLE?

Only as support financial groups as long as capitalism exists. Churches can give money under a 501-C4 status which is tax exempt and can be used for political activity. Churches must understand that they must provide human motivation for a decent society, provide spiritual morality. It should not be a dogma to make people submit to tyranny and oppression.

20. WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF A WORKING WOMAN GOING TO WORK AT 5:00 A.M.?

My sister-in-law relates to 5:00 a.m. for the morning shift of Ford Motor Company. She is pregnant. A very natural state for a woman. However, Ford pays insurances for employees up to 6 months pregnancy. Given that it is necessary to work after the 6 months and she becomes ill or loses the baby because of working conditions, Ford is not accountable or responsible. She will only receive one months pay after 6 months if she lays off. Ford expects her to be back at the plant 6 weeks after the baby is born, but Ford does not offer day care centers for the employees. Deal with the contradictions as you see them.

21. HOW DO YOU REALLY DEFINE EQUALITY OF THE SEXES?

I don't. All people should be human and should be able to develop for the betterment of nature and mankind.

22. ELABORATE ON ORGANIZING AROUND DEFEATS?

Bourgeoisie revolutions. Reform tactics or struggles around democratic rights which will lead to revolution--a communist society.

23. IF MILLETT'S BOOK IS POORLY WRITTEN, WHY WAS IT LISTED FOR STUDY? WOULD ANY OTHER BOOK HAVE COVERED THE FEMINIST POINT OF VIEW BETTER?

Millett's book is not necessarily poorly written, indeed, it is scholarly, but in some instances analyses are lacking and in others totally incorrect. If you remember from my presentation I suggested that all women should read her analysis of Freudian psychology. She treats the subject exceptionally well. (See reading list)

24. ELABORATE ON COLLECTIVES MAKING INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS THEIR BUSINESS WHEN THAT RELATIONSHIP BECOMES COUNTERPRODUCTIVE OR OBSTRUCTS WORK THAT IS BEING OR SHOULD BE DONE.

No collective has the right to brokerage a private relationship. However, the collective has the right to criticize and impose discipline on any member if his/her theory and practice are not up to par. Within the collective there are marriages which may have internal conflicts, the partners do not have the right to ask the collective (the external contradiction force) to resolve their problems (the internal contradiction force) unless there is a direct relationship to practice for the collective. And then this must relate to practice and not to "you have to give up your husband to belong to our collective."

25. PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR NEGATIVE USE OF THE TERM ANARCHY?

Laissez faire at its logical extension. The capitalists are also anarchist. There is nothing scientific about anarchy and can easily be coopted by imperialist forces. Anarchy is also a reaction to repressive government and was not necessarily a revolutionary analysis of what must be done to rid ourselves of oppressive and repressive governments and laws. Anarchy is free enterprise and damn the others at its height.

26. DO YOU THINK ECOLOGY PEOPLE CAN BE POLITICIZED AND THEIR MOVEMENT ALIGNED WITH REVOLUTIONARY FORCES?

Yes. They must first understand that capitalism as a system is why there is air pollution, water pollution, cyclomates, etc. The theory of maximization of profits and damn society and the people is the root of capitalism. From the above, anarchy can breed pollution, also. When the ecology people understand that the principle contradiction is imperialism (capitalism) and are willing to struggle against it, they are part of the revolutionary forces.

27. WHAT IS THE CORRECT LINE?

The principle contradiction in the world is imperialism. We can evidence that with the Vietnamese war, the struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, etc. It is the struggle against the few people in the world (Mellons, Rockefellers, Fords, etc.) who control everything while the masses are starving, being oppressed, exploited. We must develop a proletarian consciousness whereby the people will rise up and overthrow the ruling class and create a new society. This is not romantic: witness Cuba, China, Korea, Guinea, Tanzania, Chile, other places. Of course, contradictions will always occur which means that there will always be a resolving of the contradictions and not a status quo society. This does not mean upheaval, but a society that is committed to change and to insure the people a better life with respect to nature.

28. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM?

Ecology. I hope some of the above can help with this answer. I must say here that people will have to begin to study revolutionary theory. Feel free to write to NABS\* for information and to be a part of our study group through the mail. In reference to socialism--anything should be better than capitalism. We have enough historical evidence to prove that capitalism only benefits a few while the masses either have to fight wars for the ruling class or submit to the ruling class oppression.

29. IN WHAT CONTEXT DO YOU USE THE TERM DIALECTICS? ITS MEANING?

Dialectics with a material basis. All knowledge is direct. All things must be perceived through matter. (In other words, the opposite of metaphysics--we are controlled by outside forces which cause people to be what they are. People are destined to be in the shape they are in.) Dialectics is the method by which we examine reality, accepting that there is a contradiction of opposites (workers are the opposites of the ruling class) and that there must be a continuous resolution (revolutions).

Again, I wish to stress that people begin to study revolutionary theory.

30. HOW RELEVANT IS MARXIST ANALYSIS TO PRESENT DAY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS? MARX DIRECTED HIMSELF TO 19TH CENTURY INDUSTRIALISM AND MAY BE OUT OF DATE FOR OUR NEEDS.

Incorrect. Marx and Engels are guides for revolutionary thinking. Not only do they lay foundations (philosophically and economically) but they are also historical materialists. Agreed that Marx did not foresee 20th Century industrialization such as the creation of the Pentagon, which may have already absorbed the maintenance of imperialism or that advertising can create a class of goods, but this does not mean that we must put Marx down or even criticize negatively the value of his contribution for making a revolutionary society. I would suggest that you read the Fundamental Problems of Marxism by Plekannov.

31. WHY CAN'T WE ACHIEVE CULTURAL CHANGES REGARDING SEXUAL EQUALITY IN A CAPITALIST SYSTEM? WHAT IS CONTRADICTORY ABOUT THAT?

Because the capitalists will coopt it and put it on the market to make profit. Witness what they have done with the cultural changes of the black community. Most of our cultural awareness has been cheapened and marketed. When a system is based on profit which determines a class then nothing has meaning. When we can achieve what you ask we will be moving in a revolutionary society.

32. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN IN TERMS OF RULING CLASS POWER?

None. Perhaps this will get at the basis of what I am trying to emphasize. That it makes no difference whether men or women are in power as long as it is a capitalist society. To prove that point we played a game "star-power" with women controlling the highest chips and the men having the least amount of chips. The women (who were supposedly radical) wanted to maintain their power in terms of chips and make decisions for the other groups. Capitalists only maintain chauvinism because it makes it easier and it develops another class to exploit. In the final analysis, the capitalists will absorb its dissidents as long as they maintain a capitalist system. Witness black capitalism. Again, I wish to stress that imperialism is the major contradiction.

33. HOW DO YOU BUILD UNITY AMONG THE DIVIDED LEFT?

I do not know. This question will have to be raised with many people on the left.

34. PLEASE DESCRIBE IN GREATER DETAIL THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF A REVOLUTIONARY COLLECTIVE.

Write to NABS because we now have it on casset tapes for those who are interested in developing a revolutionary collective. The first thing: You are committed to overthrow the capitalist system by any means necessary. That you fully understand that the major contradiction is the imperialist government and that there are secondary contradictions like male chauvinism which will have to be struggled against as well. The collective spends initially much of its time to revolutionary theory. Many people who want to go into collectives have had extended practice through the civil rights struggle and now they are able to put the pieces together with some type of analysis in lieu of just striking out (which is legitimate in some sense). There is no division of labor, but a distribution of labor. Each person or couple has privacy as a right. All activity is toward developing a proletarian consciousness upon its membership, community, and the people that the collective comes in contact with. The essential thing is that the collective must become a political cadre before doing community work. This is important because historically people have gone into the field with no direction and no program only to create frustration and a repressive situation for the community. This is incorrect. The collective must be revolutionary administratively if the collective is communicating with other political groups. Efficiency is a priority. Cleanliness is another priority. There is an order to work and timetables to meet. People must be honest to themselves as well as with others, dedicated to the struggle, responsibility to duties, and have humility to take and give criticism as a comrade.

There is loads and loads of fun, especially when there are children in the collective and you can see them grow into revolutionaries and begin to study theory. NABS is planning such a program for two weeks this summer for children ages 10 to 14.

## Developing a Revolutionary Collective

	1 to 1-50 mini	Organizations Midi	Society MAXI
Development	revolutionary study and theory.	total and equal integration of sexes in organization correct political line.	legitimate mass struggles around female oppression and exploitation. communications
Inventions (techniques)	testing, small group discussions and polemics.	organizational political development, revolutionary programs and dialectics.	revolutionary propaganda and mass movement.
Diagnosis	self-actualization, freedom of mind	functional organization with direction. Administration Efficiency	creation of Revolutionary society. Reform/improve existing society.
Levers (tools) competence	face to face contact - political educational interpersonal skills	organizational discipline, guidelines	mass movement force
Pathology (anticipated if above is not followed)	impersonal separatists, Isolated by choice.	disorganized, incorrect politics. Anarchy	cooptation, recession and set-back of struggle. no communications
Suicide	personal failure, nervous breakdown, renegade.	renegade revisionists splinter groups.	submission to tyranny and oppression.

### Discipline for Collective ( Georgia Organizing Committee )

1. Honesty - with self and others.
2. Dedication - commitment to struggle and correct mass line.
3. Responsibility - duties, seek help from co-workers.
4. Humility - ability to take and give criticism as a human (revolutionary).

comments and analysis done by:  
 National Association of Black students (NABS)  
 Georgia Organizing Committee (IBWC)



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compiled by Gwen Patton

### BACKGROUND

1. FEMININE MYSTIQUE, Friedman.  
Establishment oriented; very good in terms of breaking down myths around women.
2. SEXUAL POLITICS, Millett.  
Same as above, especially chapter on Freud.
3. THE NEGRO FAMILY, Moynihan.  
A weapon used to destroy the movement in the late 60's; distorted Black Power to include and to develop "male supremacy" among black men.
4. ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH, Pat Robinson.  
African family developments and building cities.
5. ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES, Margaret Mead  
Studying family groups and patterns, particularly families who are not in an industrial society.
6. ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, Engels.  
Development of the patriarch class and property.

### SOCIAL DYNAMICS

1. HARRIET TUBMAN, biography.  
The life of a black revolutionary in the underground railroad.
2. BLACK WOMEN, Toni Cade.  
Essays (literary to political).
3. HOWARD STRETT  
The dynamics of life styles for a prostitute and a dope addict.
4. THE STREET  
The dynamics of a working woman with one child trying desperately to break out of her economic bind.
5. FLAGELLATE  
Middle-class black couple in Europe struggling with their class consciousness.
6. WOMEN'S LIBERATION, Stambler.  
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### DIALECTICS

1. RED DETACHMENT, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA  
The political and military development of young women (12 to 18 years of age) for their integration into the People's Army.
2. VIETNAM STUDIES, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (WOMEN)  
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Lack of development and full participation of women in the French "revolution" aided the necessary defeat of Napoleon.

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FILMS (Women in struggles against imperialism).

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