

Build April 25 march on Washington to defend a woman's right to choose!

Printed below is an editorial that appeared in the March 29, 2004, issue of the *Militant* newspaper.

We urge you to join with other supporters of a woman's right to choose in building a massive turnout for the April 25 March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C.

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The purpose of the demonstration, its sponsors state, is "to ensure that all women have the right to choose to have or not to have children, with reproductive health options that are safe, affordable, and accessible." Tens of thousands of people from around the country will be converging on Washington to defend the fundamental rights women have gained over the last decades.

The march is sponsored by major women's rights organizations across the country. Dozens of other groups, from student organizations on university campuses to labor unions, have endorsed it, among them the United Food and Commercial Workers union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, and the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Members of these organizations and other supporters of a woman's right to choose are building the demonstration in cities and towns around the country. The door is wide open to get involved in the coalitions organizing participation. We urge you to participate in planning meetings in your area and to bring co-workers, fellow unionists, students, and others to them. Take stacks of leaflets to post up and distribute. Wear buttons and T-shirts publicizing the action. Take sign-up sheets to wherever others can be enlisted to build it. These materials are available from sponsoring organizations and from www.MarchforWomen.org. In many areas, builders of the action are seeking scholarships from the sponsors for those needing financial assistance to get to Washington.

A woman's right to choose abortion is a question of vital importance to working people. The key is the right of *women* to *choose*



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

More than 50,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., in April 1995 action defending a woman's right to choose. Today, supporters of women's rights around the country are working to ensure a massive turnout for the April 25 march on Washington.

whether or not they will bear children—the state, church, husband, father, judge, or social worker. Only with the right to control their own bodies can women exercise effective control over their lives and reassert their full human identity as productive, not only reproductive, beings. This is a precondition for full equality, affecting a woman's ability to get a job, and thereby gain the economic independence necessary for participation in union, political, and other aspects of social life. The increasing integration of women into the work force over the past decades has strengthened the working class, allowing millions to break out of the stultifying isolation of the home. And the 1973 Supreme Court decision decriminalizing abortion was an important stride along this road for women's rights and for all working people. These advances have made it harder for

employers to limit women to certain jobs, pay them lower wages than men, or convince them that they should stay in the kitchen and the hearth rather than enter the political and union arena.

That is why a woman's right to choose has come under sustained attack by federal and state administrations of both the Democratic and Republican parties ever since the 1973 ruling. Because of deep-going progressive changes in attitudes held by millions toward women's place in society, however, the ruling class has not been able to roll the clock back to the days before *Roe v. Wade*, when hundreds of women died every year in illegal or self-induced abortions. Instead, opponents of women's rights have probed to curtail that right and whittle away access to abortion. The most recent example is the federal law passed in November—still

facing a legal challenge—that, under the deliberately misleading name "Partial-Birth Abortion Act," will outlaw a specific medical procedure used to terminate late-term pregnancies. These restrictions are class-biased, limiting abortion access for working women in particular—from the ban on federal funding for abortion, to waiting periods and laws forcing young women to get parental consent before obtaining an abortion.

These attacks on the right to choose are part of a broader offensive by the U.S. rulers against gains won by working people over the decades. They go hand in hand with the elimination of Aid to Families with Dependent Children in 1996, current moves to undermine Medicare and Social Security, and other efforts to further shift the burden for the capitalist economic crisis onto the backs of working people.

The attacks on women's rights have met resistance. Planned Parenthood in Pittsburgh and five other cities successfully rejected an outrageous order by the U.S. Justice Department to turn over confidential medical records as part of enforcing the new antichoice law. Last December, 2,500 city workers in Cincinnati who are members of AFSCME beat back a city council attempt to eliminate their medical coverage for abortion procedures, which they had won in their union contract. And over the past decade, repeated mobilizations by women's rights supporters have pushed back violent efforts by rightists to shut down abortion clinics.

The April 25 march on Washington will draw thousands of working people, youth, and other partisans of women's rights who are determined to defend their hard-won gains. Many are seeking answers to questions on how to chart a road forward in this struggle. The Pathfinder titles featured in the centerspread ad inside—with prices reduced to \$1 or \$2 for all pamphlets and \$5 or \$10 for all books—are invaluable in providing the working-class perspective that is needed to address these questions. Campaigning to get these books into the hands of other workers, students, and farmers is an important part of building the April 25 demonstration and advancing longer-term struggles by working people.

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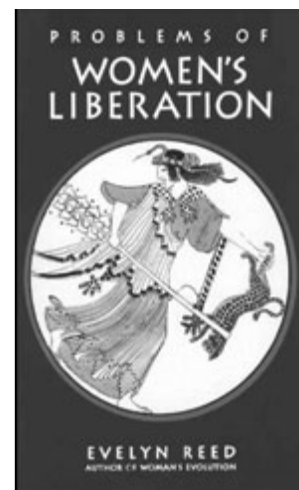
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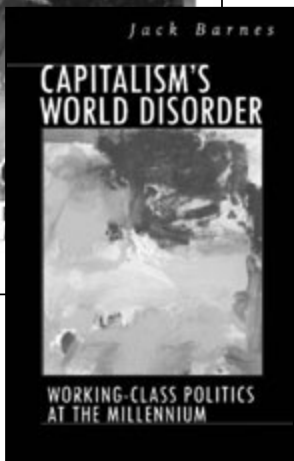
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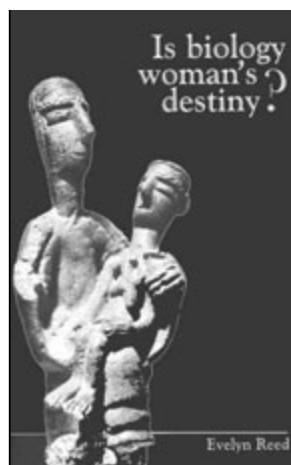
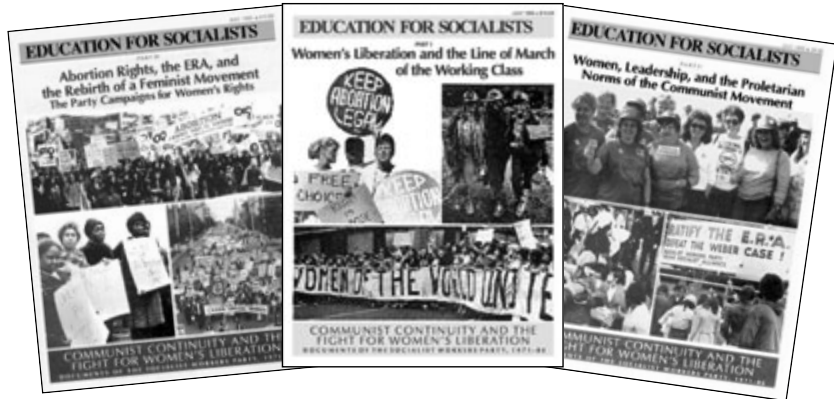
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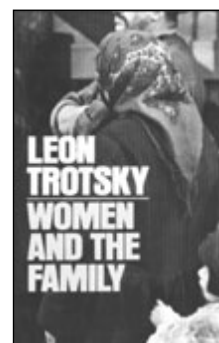
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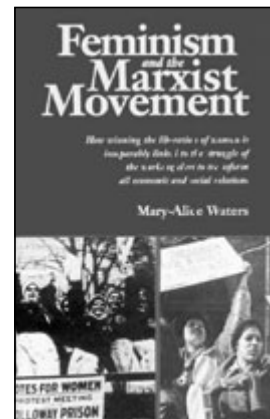
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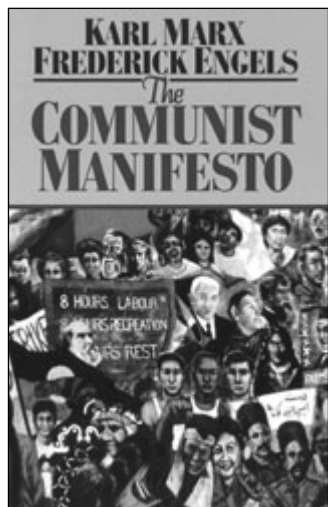


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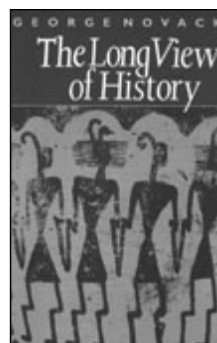
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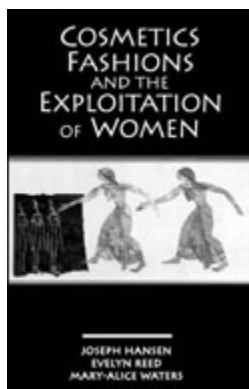
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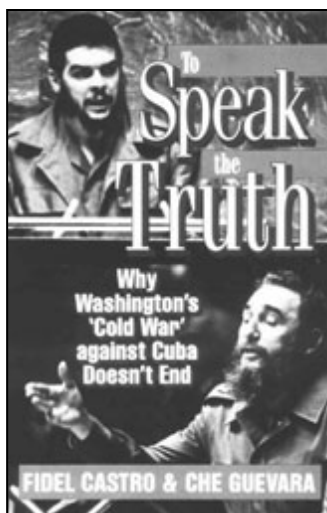
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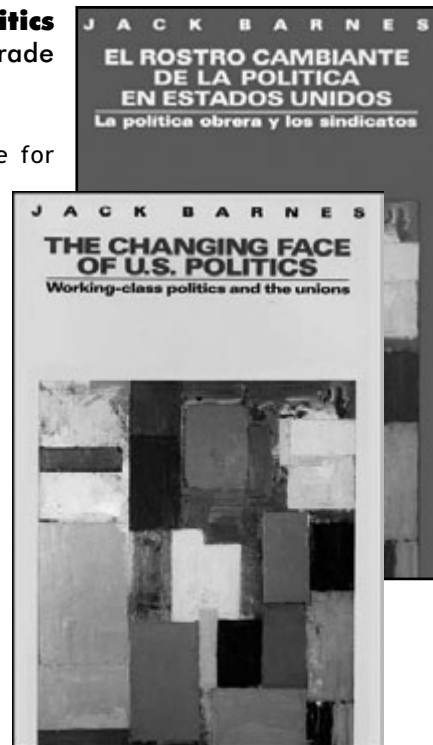


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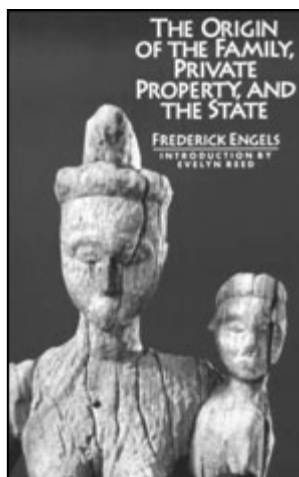


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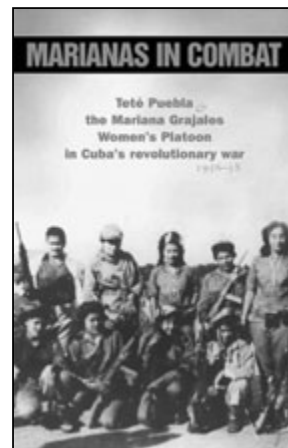
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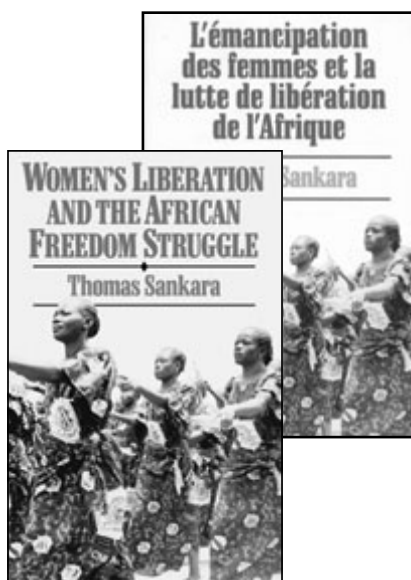


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