

**PRINCIPLES FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY MATRIARCHY SOCIETY
(M.O.T.H.E.R.S. = Matriarchal Organization and Tribes
of Honorable Eco-centric Revolutionary Socialists)**

proposed by Fred Ho, 2012

This manifesto for Matriarchy supersedes the original essay I presented in 2002 (published in *Wicked Theory, Naked Practice: A Fred Ho Reader*, The University of Minnesota Press, 2009, pp. 350-377): "Matriarchy: The First and Final Communism." The original presentation emphasized a woman-centric conception of matriarchy, politically asserted at the time as the most advanced strategy and modality for the liberation of women.

The concept and politics of Matriarchy has since evolved, rather than being woman-centric, it is more matri (mother)-centric, and as I shall argue and elaborate below, calling for a revolutionary elimination of gender as a social construction all together. Furthermore, the original presentation relied too heavily upon its argument for a matriarchy of the past, much of which is at best sketchy, and at worst, inaccurate. From the standpoint of cultural anthropology, most of human society until the rise of patriarchy (conjoined with the rise of class society and the state) was more accurately "matri-lineal" and "matri-focal", with considerably more gender equality, social power and status experienced by women.

The historical argument of past matriarchy, being the longest period of human society, and the overthrow of "mother-right" as the first and longest class struggle, were motivated by the political objective of ending patriarchy.

That objective remains paramount, yet the argument for matriarchy as the primary replacement for patriarchy, has shifted from the conception of matriarchy as women's supremacy, to a revolutionary conception of a new humanity in which hetero-normative patriarchy is completely done away as part of a grander social revolution to eliminate all social divisions created and reproduced by unequal class power, monopolization of the means of production and violence, the state and cultural-social hegemony.

Hence this essay represents an evolved viewpoint that asserts for a revolutionary matriarchal new humanity, not ipso facto centered on women, but on the productive and developmental role of "mothering."

What is matriarchy? Is it a super-feminism in which women rule over men? The term has a confusing meaning for mainstream-thinking folks who presume the following: "matri" (mothers) and "archy" (rule of or by), viz., "rule of mothers." This is true but "arche" or "archy" also means "consent to". In patriarchal society, the rule of the fathers was a consent enforced by male monopolization of the means of power, particularly in the use of violence. For a matriarchal socialist revolution, a process which undoes patriarchal rule and consent to such, a very different scenario unfolds when mothers control all the institutions of power, including the military—deciding when to go to war, for example. The protection of "father right" or the transfer of property rights and privileges to certain designated (commonly male) offspring would cease. Mother right would be the universal condition of nurturance and growth for all offspring. A matriarchal socialist revolution is a transition phase of human re-creation to which the reproduction of a new society would no longer protect the transfer of property and privileges only through the ascription by the father.

In essence, matriarchy is the complete elimination of gender hierarchy in terms of social power (power exercised by a certain class to oppress and exploit other classes).

A revolutionary matriarchy, I argue, asserts the following three principles:

1. THE ABOLITION OF GENDER AS A CONSTRUCTION OF POWER DISPARITY AND DIFFERENTIAL, AS WELL AS THE ELIMINATION OF ANY SOCIAL MEANING (eg., "masculine," "feminine," etc.).

With this principle is the elimination of hetero-normative patriarchy with its requisite and hegemonic condition of binary gender identity, replaced by a completely fluid and liberatory conception of personal identity, to which sexual preference and expression has no normative-enforced dominance. Gender becomes meaningless and irrelevant, and certainly has no assignment, much less inference of, social power differential or normative social meaning. Having an X or Y chromosome must not imply any social expectations or roles. With the elimination of one of the biggest divides of humanity—gender—the most fully and truly realized human liberation offers a plethora of personal expressivity, without stereotyping, social inequality or stigma.

How does gender get abolished in matriarchal revolutionary practice? The cession of all customs and expectations for masculine dominance must be

immediate and commonly accepted by all revolutionaries now! Displays of affection (for example, men kissing men) would not be chagrined as emasculative. Presumptions of male physical aggression and assertiveness, dress, appearance, and cultural codes and practices which signify and ascribe gender should be made irrelevant.

Bathroom and toilet facilities would be gender-less. Individual-created clothing styles would replace the highly gender-ized dominance of the fashion industry. A far more expressive range of notions about beauty and personal freedom of sexual expression would be great encouraged.

2. THE RETURN TO THE PRODUCERS THE RIGHTFUL FRUITS OF THEIR LABOR. Patriarchy is the condition in which women bear 100% of the world's children, grow 70% of the world's food, do 60% of the world's work, earn 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property. this will be reversed and rectified with Matriarchy.

Thus, matriarchy is not the mirror of patriarchy, but its opposite. With matriarchal socialist revolution, the pervading pyramid of social power and inequality with the few at the top and the mass at the bottom, is inverted. This inversion is ipso facto matriarchy, the restoration and re-appropriation of social power and control over the product of labor, production, reproduction and development/invention-innovation to the producers, the central historical role of women and mothers.

It is no surprise that historically, continuing to present-day tribal peoples, that societies which are primarily subsistence-producing, instead of producing for exchange value (the market) with its inexorable drive for accumulation are matri-centric (matriarchal), with far more egalitarian relations between the sexes due to greater interdependency and reliance upon the central producing role of women in sustenance and sustainability.

Matriarchal socialist revolution is the ultimate re-distributive social justice: expropriating the expropriators and restoration to supremacy all who produce and who sustain society.

What would the transitional revolutionary matriarchal socialist program entail? First, the reformist notions of commodifying currently unpaid or under-paid "women's work" (such as housework), by providing payment for such at prevailing wages, simply expands the power of capital by creating new

service industries, such as house cleaning, nanny services, private tutoring of children, etc. The bourgeois family becomes more bourgeois as surplus value still becomes the objective to pay for wage payments to the overall maintenance and sustenance of the nuclear family. The nuclear family as privatized childrearing would be replaced by collectivized and extended family structures, including the enfranchisement of children and their active socialization at far younger ages than customary to modern capitalist societal practices and norms.

The elimination of the gender division of labor, among more thorough-going practices towards the complete elimination of gender as a whole, would require the valorization of all forms of labor, without any remunerative hierarchy. Tovey Halleck's farm displays a sign that states: "All are welcome to this Farm. Everyone must Work. No Exceptions, Including Children!"

3. THE RE-SOCIALIZATION OF MEN TO BECOME MOTHERS.

This concept is the most difficult for those who accept gender as a priori and inevitable.

The valorization of nurturance, education, healthcare, medicine, healing, artistry and craftsmanship, planting and harvesting, making clothes, all the things essential and central to society's healthy development will become central instead of marginal. Not only does society have to be biologically and sociologically reproduced, it has to be sustained and developed. The conception of development will be the opposite of its current understanding, often accepted as inevitable: the drive to dominate, to compete, to satisfy ego, to accumulate things, power, status, recognition, fame, etc. The values of strength and toughness are ascribed to and thereby associated with maleness, expected to be attributes of men and fathers, socially actualized in the roles of aggressor-warrior, dominating leader, competing to be chiefs, acquisitive for authority, etc.

Rather, there is no biological determination for strength or toughness. Often rites of passage for both sexes in a revolutionary matriarchy would promote the combined multiplicity of qualities, traits, skills and talents, instead of the specialization that is both function and by-product of the ubiquitous division of labor to class society, and ascriptions to men/fathers such qualities as deemed necessary and importance to their dominating roles.

Fathers would not be eliminated, but the role and meaning of the father would be re-socialized, first by eliminating any assumptions to rule, to lead, to dominate, to exercise authority, to be privileged and conferred special status. There would be no more patriarchal fathers!

With the elimination of gender roles, fathers and mothers would share and perform all the functions and roles needed to ensure the healthy development of offspring and their community. Needless to say, marriage, the nuclear family, monogamy would all be abolished as assumed normative arrangements, however, individuals would be free to make their own mutually satisfying arrangements, though the society or community as a whole would assume primary responsibility for well-being and development of everyone. Children would be therefore complete enfranchised, a condition guaranteed in the constitution of the Iroquois Confederacy, for example. They are as much a part of the society and community as adults and their interests deemed equal to everyone else.

The patriarchal role of fathers would be gone. The function and roles of mothering would become central and primary. Men and women will be free to make their own identities, their own personal arrangements, and children will be free even to chose from a much wider range of community members people they will regard as their siblings and parents. When all adults become aunts and uncles, then the concept of family applies to all. In indigenous societies, the clan was the family unit. Mother Earth becomes the mother to all life forms, and two-legged life forms, as her children, raise their two-legged offspring to love the Mother of all.

The difference in such seemingly "New Age" visions of a new human society with those of revolutionary socialism is that such culture and values cannot be reformed or well-intentioned into existence. Rather the systems of class rule and divisions must be eliminated through actual struggle, and in that process of struggle, new human relations and their consequent values and culture are engendered. Such a revolutionary struggle, if its goals and practices embody these principles of revolutionary matriarchy, will fight for, but not rely upon, the accumulation of reforms for the benefit of women and mothers. In other words, women's liberation is impossible under capitalist hetero-patriarchy. The contributions of feminism and the struggle for gay liberation have all been powerful forces to effect concessions and reforms, and have greatly contributed to making social change. However, these forces must become

consciously revolutionary in bringing about the utter destruction and elimination of all social divisions if human liberation is to become full realized, which will only be measured by the commitment to and actualization of the revolutionary principles of matriarchy.

Therefore we revolutionaries must unite around a revolutionary matriarchal socialism that organizationally embodies the following:

1. We are for matriarchy, the rule of mothers ("matri" = mothers; "archy" = rule) and by the majority of producers of all use-values. Therefore we seek to end patriarchy (class society in all of its forms and divisions), especially the capitalist system. We reject patriarchal socialism as well.
2. Our values are nurturance, independence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, compassion, generosity, and creativity.
3. We are fighters for a matriarchal future and believe that we should fight by any means necessary. We believe that necessity is the mother of invention! As well as "from each according to how they can fight, to each according to how much they can fight!" To end the male monopolization of violence, all women would be proficient martial artists (as they historically have been in exceptional cases, such as Yim Wing Chun, Bersilat, the military leadership of Xenobia, Nzinga, Nana ya Asantewa, etc.). Mothers would be the ultimate decision-makers as to both when to use violence (should be it necessary) and how it would be applied.
4. We are eco-centric, including all aspirations for common-ing (and the end to the enclosures in all manifestations), ludditism (opposing all technology that is harmful to the planet or to people); eco-socialist (rational planning of production, including zero growth, zero waste, etc.).
5. We are indigenous-centric and do not subscribe to the nation-state borders, but to communities that are freely associated and cooperatively self-sufficient.
6. We are future forward-oriented. Our deepest concern is for the future, a world of peace, health, creativity and ecological responsibility to reign supreme. This is a Love Supreme.
7. We do not subscribe to any social constructions of gender and believe all beings should freely create their identities and sexualities.
8. We seek to eliminate ego and to generate a "7 generations consciousness" in all of us, to consider our impact for seven generations in the future before we act.

9. We meet as often as necessary and in a way to best meet what needs to get done.
10. We accept anyone and everyone who wants to be a MOTHER, ie., to raise the new society free of patriarchy.

We share many of the responsibilities of revolutionary feminism: elevating women's leadership, women's self-defense, combating sexism, collective childcare, self-made identities and co-habitation arrangements, overcoming the gender division of labor, abolishing male monopolization of the means of violence and institutional power, etc. However, the goals of matriarchy are not "gender equality" but the abolition of gender, all divisions and all mechanisms for social hegemony. Equality between men and women will exist when gender ceases to exist as a construction of social meaning and power. Matriarchal revolutionary socialism is the transition towards a new humanity, an eco-centric subsistence-based existence of freely-associated producers, which will be the final matriarchy, or communism.