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A forecast of woman's destiny

By Mildred Hamilton

For our first million years, the world was a matriarchy and women were the organizers and leaders of social life.

The last 8,000 years, however, were a gradual decline into degradation, domination and dependency.

These fighting words are from Evelyn Reed, who wrinkles her button nose in a grin and anticipates, "I'll get some clobberings, but that doesn't bother me."

The New York-based scholar describes herself as "a feminist, an anthropologist, a Marxist — a triple threat according to some men." She has devoted the past 25 years to gathering information to refute the male school of anthropology.

Now as part of the International Women's Year, she offers the fruits of a quarter of a century of her life with the book, "Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family." "The official publication day by Pathfinder Press will be March 8, which is International Women's Day," said Ms. Reed.

"I thought I might be suppressed or ruled out because I am going against the last 100 years of male-dominated anthropology. But six years ago the fem-

inist movement started and suddenly it is a new ball game. Women are interested, they are excited, especially the college students. The book is in its second printing before publication."

And Ms. Reed is a popular speaker on the campus circuit. She made an Examiner stop after a rousing Mills College reception Monday and a San Francisco State appearance Tuesday and before her 7:30 p.m. Friday open forum date at Booth Auditorium, Boalt Hall, UC Berkeley.

Extracts from her massive work and her lectures have appeared earlier as "Problems of Women's Liberation," "Is Biology Woman's Destiny?" and "Answer to The Naked Ape." They are widely used in the growing women's studies programs and she lectures at colleges throughout the world.

"Women are responding to this destruction of myths of biological inferiority. In early days women were the biologically advantaged sex in the creation of society and the curbing of the anti-social impulses of the animal world," she said.

"When we look to the record, we see that society began with the maternal clan, the nonsexual economic union of sisters and brothers in a horde governed by mothers."

MARXIST
Anthropologist
Evelyn Reed wants women to look back to their million years as leaders.

Examiner photo by John Gorman

Ms. Reed points to reported prehistoric women's control of food supplies, their development of food-related industries and with the discovery of fire, the expansion of its uses in women's labor activities.

Textile industries, work as architect and engineer in designing and building granaries, homes, towns swell the list she compiles.

"Women were the first farmers and industrialists;

the first scientists, doctors, nurses; the first teachers, artists, linguists and historians. The households they managed were the first factories, laboratories, clinics, schools and social centers. Far from being drudgery, woman's work was supremely creative; it created nothing less than the human species."

Her evolutionary concept of the one million years required to "humanize and socialize people" conflicts

with what she calls the establishment cross-cultural theories. "But the early societies were egalitarian without oppression or discrimination with women in very central positions."

Her early studies at the University of Iowa stimulated her curiosity. When she couldn't find answers to her questions, she moved to Europe, to the Royal Anthropological Institute Library. "I found all my questions centered around

'We'll pay a price but total equality is ahead'

the question of women's roles" and she was hooked into a research future.

Ms. Reed worked through the transformation of the matriarchy to the patriarchy to the patriarchy of today.

"The transition was complex and sad, not a collusion of men and women, not a sex war, but the condition of men as the patriarchy gave way to the patriarchy — the victory of the father's right over the mother's brother's right in the development of private property."

She sees the progressive side of today's father family but also says "humanity had to pay a heavy price for this progress. Still, I do not advocate a return to the matriarchy. We must move forward and I see the next stage in our long-range development as socialism."

Her definition of socialism, which she says does not exist in any state today, involves "total equality, elimination of profiteering, discrimination and oppression. That's ahead of us. We'll pay a price but we'll get there."

When? She grins, "I have no crystal ball but when women know and appreciate their past it will help them — and men — seek better futures for all people."



WOMAN TODAY

When Women Were the Bosses

By **JOAN McKINNEY**
Tribune Staff Writer

Women, far from being the inferior sex historically, occupied a preeminent position in society for close to a million years.

So argues Evelyn Reed, writer, socialist and feminist, whose provocative anthropological study, "Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family," will be published by Pathfinder Press on International Women's Day, March 8.

Actually the book, which has occupied 25 years of Ms. Reed's life, is already out and in its second printing, so great is the demand for a work which may lay claim to being the first exposition of what she calls "women's secret history."

The author has been in the Bay Area this week, lecturing at universities and colleges (Mills, San Jose State, San Francisco State and, at 7:30 this evening in Booth Auditorium of Boalt Law School at U.C.) and, she told us during a morning visit to The Tribune, meeting with excited response from women—and strong resistance from smaller numbers of men who attend the lectures.

This does not surprise Ms. Reed, who has been bucking the system for years, both politically and in the field of anthropology, which she first entered in 1950, after deciding that she could not "buy" the theories of male anthropologists or of Sigmund Freud.

She went to London to the Royal Anthropological Institute and there, she said, found "enough evidence" to substantiate her hunch about the origins of primitive taboos. "I began to see," she added, "that I was opening up one door after another, revealing to me the first million years of humankind in which women were the leading sex in a matriarchal clan society."

She settled down to research the subject more fully and about ten years ago, began to write the book which, she believes, will raise the hackles of anti-evolutionists in particular and men in general.

Why did anthropologists depart from the evolutionary theory? Evelyn Reed grinned. "Partly ignorance, partly design," she said succinctly. "The further

back you go in history, the more you conflict with two pet prejudices of modern society. The first is that our kind of society, full of inequalities, has always existed. That is not true. The savage society, which lasted a million years (as compared with a few thousand for the primitive and patriarchal societies) was a communal, egalitarian society.

"The second is that women have always been the inferior sex, made so by biology. I say no, that this has only been so since the start of patriarchal society, some 6,000 years ago. For nearly a million years they occupied a central position."

Admitting that "I am going to have a few people dislike me for a while," the feisty Ms. Reed, frankly in her 60's, declares that "women now have to take hold of anthropology and their own history. Men are either too timid or regard it as



Tribune photo by KEITH DENNISON

Evelyn Reed states the case for women's equality in anthropological study

too 'speculative' to carry it all the way through."

Besides, she added, they don't like it at all when you tell them that, historically speaking, the "father family" was a very late arrival. They'd still like to believe in the male-dominated animal society, which is not borne out in fact. The maternal clan system, Ms. Reed demonstrates, "was the bridge" between the apes and humanity.

"Men have always insisted on the Neanderthal-type hero who drags a woman by her hair into the cave, which seems to indicate that women need protection," she scoffed, noting that in primitive societies men couldn't even order their mothers or sisters since they didn't associate birth with the sex act, they never knew who their fathers were.

The rise of male dominance and decline of female power came, she argues, with the introduction of private property, when society had progressed to the agricultural, stock raising period

"It was progressive, but it brought about certain social convulsions," Ms. Reed said. The matriarchy was too limited, and had to go, but with the progress came exploitation of people, including women.

In those days, she said, people didn't have any choice about what kind of society they should have. "They were pushed into it."

"We are the only ones, in our age, who are going to make social changes with a good deal of consciousness. People are beginning to understand that the old system won't work any more. We are going to have to find a better, more humane and rational one."

Not until that happens, she believes, will women achieve true equality once more.

In the interim, she hopes that her book will stimulate them to "get into anthropology, return to the evolutionary theory and really write books. I have only touched on things—it is up to young people to write the books that will provide the answers. We are now in orbit again."