

WLRN Edition 49: Women's Rights in the Green Party USA

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Transcribed by Jenna Di Quarto and Teja Kukar

:theme music - Real Voice by Thistle Pettersen:

:sauntering acoustic guitar fades in:

*"...But through the hallways of academia
And on the face of the moon...
The footprints of conquest
Haven't left us any room.
To say what we think, or...
To speak what we know...
To hear different voices
At least a sound from below..."*

Oh-oh oh oh oh oh...

:vocalizing fades out:

Danielle WHITAKER: Greetings, and welcome to the 49th edition podcast of Women's Liberation Radio News for this Thursday, May 7th, 2020.

:funky, synth-driven music starts:

This edition marks WLRN's four year anniversary working together as a collective of feminist media activists.

:cork pops, crowd of women cheering throughout:

:8bit audio, ala late 80s video games

plays triumphant ascending tune

"Radical!"

video game level up sound effects:

To mark this momentous occasion, we have changed the cover image on our Wordpress site and social media pages to welcome the fifth year of WLRN members working together to bring you the most current and relevant feminist news and analysis you've come to rely on. Thanks to our newest member, Kat Walker, for the lovely new cover image she designed.

:music fades out:

:soft arpeggiated piano starts, pulsing bass:

I'm Danielle Whitaker, WLRN resident blogger hailing from the state of Georgia where controversy has erupted over the Georgia Green Party signing on to the International Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights, put out by the Women's Human Rights Campaign. You can read about my take on the controversy in my blog post on our WLRN Wordpress site. This month's edition focuses on how the Georgia Green Party has responded to attacks by the lavender caucus and other Green Party members, as the news hit the internet that Georgia Greens are in favor of women's rights. We'll hear an excerpt of an interview Thistle did with Denise Traina, co-chair of the Georgia Green Party. We'll also hear excerpts of an interview with Elaine Mastramatteo, former Green Party member from Ohio who has run as a candidate for several political offices.

The team at WLRN produces a monthly radio broadcast to break the sound barrier women are blocked by under the status quo rule of men. This blocking of women's discourse we see in all sectors of society, be they conservative, liberal, mainstream, progressive, or radical. The thread that runs through all of American politics, except for separatist feminism, is male dominance and entitlement in all spheres. To start off today's edition, here's Dana Vitalosova, with women's news from around the globe, for this Thursday, May 7th, 2020.

:music fades out:

:xylophone plays root-third-fifth to indicate news segment, fades into typewriter - keys typing, bell, and register return:

:mellow lo-fi beat fades in:

Dana VITALOSOVA: As unemployment rates all around the world soar, and most countries in the world offer little or no financial help, many women see no other option than to sell their nudes online. OnlyFans, which is the world's biggest social media site through which women directly sell their DIY porn to individual people, has seen a 75% increase in signups in April. According to HuffPost, this means that 170,000 new users

register each day. As most prostituted people are female, we can assume that each day of the pandemic thousands of women are entering prostitution by selling their sexual content online. Many of these women may be under age, as BBC reported in its new video documentary. According to them, it's possible to trick the website's age recognition system. And, while the BBC in particular seems to recognize some of the dangers of online prostitution, other mainstream media in the English speaking world and beyond have celebrated the source of income. The Guardian, San Francisco Chronicle, HuffPost and others have praised the platform for giving women, and "marginalized folks", a source of income in these tough times.

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WLRN listener and volunteer, Siobhan Jess, sent us the following announcement: WorldWithoutExploitation.org is sponsoring a speaker series on sex trafficking and pornography during the month of May, called *Now & Next: Today's Issues; Tomorrow's Solutions*. Today at 1pm EST, a talk will take place titled, *Past and Present: The Historical Effects of the Sex Trade on Women and Girls of Color Today*, featuring Charice Hopkins. Later on this month, more talks will be presented, featuring Rebecca Bender, Gail Dines, and Becca Charleston. Visit WorldWithoutExploitation.org for more information.

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Malaysia's Ministry for Women, Family and Community Development issued controversial advice to women. It instructed them to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by "not nagging their husbands", as well as by dressing up nicely and applying makeup when working from home. The Ministry claimed such advice was aimed at "maintaining positive relationships among family members during the period they are working from home." This campaign, that took place on Instagram and Facebook, was swiftly met with outrage and ridicule, which led the Ministry to abandon it. Such a device wasn't the first sexist overstep by the Malaysian government during the Corona crisis. In March, it ordered families that only [the] "head of the household" should leave the house to purchase necessities.

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British Equalities Minister, Liz Truss, announced plans to ban gender confirmation surgery for minors. The website TalkRadio.co.uk reported the Minister saying, "I believe strongly that adults should have the freedom to lead their lives as they see fit.

But I think it's very important that while people are still developing their decision making capabilities, that we protect them from making those irreversible decisions." Gender confirmation surgery, or sex reassignment surgery, when performed on women, consists of surgically removing healthy breasts, ovaries, uteruses, fallopian tubes, in some cases of vaginas; And in phalloplasty, constructing fake penises and scrota. Currently in the UK, sex reassignment surgery for people younger than 18 is performed only with parental consent. Ms. Truss also stated that she plans to ensure the protection of single sex spaces. Also as the website WomenAreHuman.org informed, NHS England has begun a review of the use of puberty suppressants, and cross sex hormones.

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According to CNN, Sudan's government has criminalized the performing of female genital mutilation. Around 87% of the female population in Sudan have suffered FGM, making it one of the world's most affected nations. Under the amended law, offenders could be sentenced to three years in prison. However, a UNICEF representative stressed that, "The intention is not to criminalize parents. We need to exert more effort to raise awareness among the different groups, including midwives, health providers, parents, and youth about the amendment and promote acceptance of it." According to the BBC, there has been a global trend towards banning the practice. Despite these bans, however, UNICEF reported that in 29 countries in Africa and the Middle East, the practice is still being widely carried out.

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Last month, the South Korean government announced plans to tighten legislation connected to the rape of minors. These plans follow global outrage over the so called Nth room case, which saw hundreds of South Korean girls and women brutally sexually exploited through encrypted chat services. While investigations of the sex crime ring are ongoing, the South Korean public has protested against extremely lenient sentences for perpetrators. For example, this year prosecutors recommended the sentence of only three years and six months to a key Nth Room ringleader responsible for sexual exploitation of minors. Now, as a reaction to the massive protests, the country's government announced multiple measures. It plans to raise the age of consent from the current 13 to 16 years; Make the possession of child pornography a crime; Establish stricter punishment of blackmailing with sexual videos; And expand employment restrictions per sex offenders.

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According to feminist current, on April 2, New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo, approved the bill legalizing commercial gestational surrogacy, despite opposition from women's rights advocates and fellow lawmakers. In gestational surrogacy, an egg is removed from a woman and fertilized with the sperm of an intended father or anonymous donor. The fertilized egg is then transferred to another woman, who carries the resulting fetus term. The child will not be biologically related to the surrogate mother. According to the Center for bioethics and culture, "Recent studies have shown that surrogate pregnancies are different, and are high risk. Studies show that women pregnant with donor eggs have a more than three fold risk of developing pregnancy induced hypertension and preeclampsia." The procedure also carries health risks for the women who donate eggs. Despite surrogacy being a women's rights issue, the New York Governor framed it in the terms of gay rights. Writing for BuzzFeed, Andrew Cuomo declared, "By banning gestational surrogacy, we are saying to the LGBT community, and those who struggle with infertility, 'You can't have a child in your own state.'" The new statute permitting paid gestational surrogacy in New York, will take effect next year.

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Using the new Coronavirus quarantine as an excuse, employers in the Middle East trap domestic workers, who are predominantly women and very often migrants, in slave like conditions. Rothna Begum, a campaigner at Human Rights Watch, explained for The Independent, "The lockdowns, quarantines, and curfews essentially mean that domestic workers are trapped inside employers homes, forced to work longer hours disinfecting homes, and vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse." According to The Independent many domestic workers receive no pay, and some have even reported their employers denying them proper food, and not allowing them to open windows at home. Moreover, even if the women could escape, there is nowhere for them to go when government offices, embassies, airports, and potential safe houses are closed. Thus, according to human rights campaigners, there has been a 50% rise in the number of domestic workers making these first calls and the worrying spike in suicide attempts.

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More good news concerning gender ideology has come from Great Britain. The Daily Mail reported a u-turn on transgender policy in schools happening in more Warwickshire County. In 2018, the county council issued a 50 page, "trans inclusion

toolkit" that instructed 300 local schools how to deal with transgender issues, including the abolition of sex segregated spaces and activities, as well as instructions on what constitutes, "transphobic bullying". Among the most protested instructions were the directions to let male students use formerly female only spaces such as toilets, changing rooms, and bedrooms on school trips. The document also contains guidance potentially curtailing free speech. For example, the school officials and teachers were directed to consider these statements transphobic bullying: "Oh you can't be a lesbian, you're trans," "Are you sure this is what you want to do? It might just be a phase," and, "There are only two genders, because you're either born a boy or a girl, no in between." Now, after an outcry from parents, the Warwickshire council suspended the toolkit and placed it under review. A similar guidance, issued by Oxfordshire county council, is currently the subject of a high court challenge.

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That concludes WLRN's World News segment for Thursday, May 7th, 2020. I'm Dana Vitalosova. Share your news stories and tips with us by emailing WLRnewscontact@gmail.com and letting us know what's going on.

:Song interlude - Tell It Like It Is by Tracy Chapman:

:4 sparse, acoustic strums:

:hand drum comes in, guitar plays song's theme:

:bass and drum kit come in:

Say it say it say it

Tell it like it is

Say it say it say it

Tell it like it is

What breaks your heart

What keeps you awake

Awake at night?

What makes you want to break

Down and cry?

But say you'll never turn your back

Say you'll never harden to the world

Say you'll never try to still

The rhythms in your breast

Say you'll never look at the evil among us

And try to forget

Say you'll tell it like it is

:Bass and drum kit drop out for 4 bars

:hand drum and acoustic guitar plays theme:

:bass and drum kit come back in:

Say it say it say it

So everyone can hear

Say it say it say it

Tell it like it is

What breaks your heart

What keeps you awake

Awake at night?

How your anger and grief

Make you want to cry out

And tell it like it is

Say you'll never close your eyes

Or pretend that it's a rosy world

Say you'll never try to paint what is rotten

With a sugarcoat

Say you'll talk about the horrors you've seen

And the torment you know

And tell it like it is...

:Bass and drum kit drop out for 4 bars

:hand drum and acoustic guitar plays theme:

:songs fades out:

April NEAULT: That was Tracy Chapman with her song *Tell It Like It Is*.

:soft, simple piano chords in 2/2 time, hand and malletted tom drums eventually join; clock-like quality:

Next up, we'll hear excerpts of an interview Thistle did with the Denise Traina, Georgia Green Party officer who spoke with Thistle about her experiences in the Georgia Greens and how things are playing out since her state party signed on to the Declaration on Women's Sex Based Rights. WLRN, along with other feminist organizations you are familiar with like FIST, WoLF, and Standing For Women, have all signed on to the Declaration. You can sign on too. Visit WomensDeclaration.com to see the growing list of signatories and to sign. But for now, tune in to the following WLRN interview segment with Georgia Green Party co chair Denise Traina.

:music fades out:

Denise TRAINA: First of all, I live in Augusta, Georgia, so we're right there on the Savannah River. When I became interested was especially when Ralph Nader was running, and I thought, Oh my gosh, I finally have a candidate that I know and I admire, and I wanted to find out more about the Green Party because they were supporting Ralph, and that's when I became more more interested. So back in 2000, I was also so proud of the Green Party, um, with the whole issue with Gore and the Supreme Court

pushing - the Greens were this independent voice saying, 'push, push!' y'know; Count votes. Let's make this a fair and equitable process - democratic process. And I loved that they were standing up and doing that even though we weren't - y'know it wasn't our - wasn't necessarily that we had a dog in the fight but we did in terms of democracy and really promoting and being a part of a participatory democracy. It was just wonderful, just energizing to hear that there was a group of people who truly were working towards allowing more people to participate in this process. So, yes, I became active and I worked with different candidates in the courts - Mr. Nader when he came to Georgia and visited us - and I began to meet more people in the party, and through that, my understanding and commitment to the Green values. I became more active and was part of the Coordinating Council Committee; And on the national, soon after, I was involved in the peace caucus, Women's Caucus. It might have been a year or so later or something, that I went ahead and was doing work as a delegate on a national Green Party affairs also, which is very interesting and definitely a learning curve with that and all the conversations that happened on the national level. I felt like I was learning more about government on the national level, and that was helping me with the work I was doing on a local level anyway. So yeah, for me in 2000, it was about finding a party that I thought had values that that I shared and I could finally feel a part of something that I could learn more about, and be appreciated in my roles, so I was, y'know able to take on those roles. Later on I was also secretary of the party, and more recently, I think this is my second time actually, as serving as co chair. The other big thing for me about the Greens was the focus on diversity, accepting and embracing all kinds of folks who had felt left out of the conversation, and among those of course, one of the pillars of being feminism was really really interesting to me just because of my own experiences as a woman and, y'know, my desire to make it better for the next generations. Yeah, so I felt like I found a home.

Thistle PETTERSEN: Yeah. Wasn't Winona Laduke Ralph Nader's running mate, one of the years that he ran?

TRAINA: Yes -

PETTERSEN: She was strong.

TRAINA: What a wonderful lady. We had the pleasure of meeting her and hosting her in Atlanta at a homeless facility that was serving, oh my god, just all kinds of folks for a very long time. Of course, a facility that was underserved in terms of monies being invested in providing better, but there they were focused - so we met her down at that center in Atlanta and heard about the wonderful work that she'd been doing and her -

Yeah, I mean what kind of a candidate goes across the country, and spends time in homeless shelters, and basically conducts townhall meetings in that sort of environment? That blew my mind! I was so impressed with her. So, yeah.

PETTERSEN: Do you remember what year that was?

TRAINA: Yes.

PETTERSEN: I think it was 2004, Ralph Nader ran again in 2004.

TRAINA: And you know, 2004 for us in Georgia was a really - a fantastic time because we had candidates - that is actually probably our best year when we had candidates for 'Ag' department; We had Governor; We had a senatorial candidate; We had a number of folks that were running - I think it was Lieutenant Governor, Governor 'ag'.... But anyway, it was a very exciting time in Georgia. We had huge participation and y'know, we were active in every event. I don't know if you're familiar with how difficult it is for valid access in Georgia, but we were so excited back then because we had viable candidates, people who put their heart and soul into their campaigns. And we were at every event, including pride, which was a huge event for us in Atlanta, collecting signatures because to run in Georgia, generally most of the roles that you're running for you'd have to collect more than 40,000 signatures of registered voters, before we could even be on the ballot. So it was an energizing time to have people who were so passionate on the national level running as Greens, and that did trickle down and was kind of a spoke for us to get people really motivated so it was very exciting, very exciting. Yeah.

PETTERSEN: Yeah I remember that year that Winona Laduke ran, and it was very exciting on a national level, too. Is she still a member of the Green Party?

TRAINA: Yes, yes.

PETTERSEN: So, the Green Party is a third party in the United States and it's an international party, right? There're Green Party members in other countries as well...

TRAINA: Very very exciting in that, you know, when we talk about the importance of environmentalism - and I think people are coming to understand it so much more now - It was based on the principles of preservation of the Earth and kindness and care to the earth, and so there's some wonderful folks. I'm remembering this wonderful woman in Africa. I believe her name is - I might be saying incorrectly - but it's something like

Wathari Maathai [Wangari Maathai] who was an African woman who won the Peace Prize. She was a Green; Won the Peace Prize, and she did for planting trees across Africa. So y'know, yeah, it's an international party birthed from those origins. And I think now more than ever, has a place in our society where people are - And so I've worked more on that, in terms of Georgia, alongside our candidates who were talking about things like y'know, banning fracking as a dangerous procedure that they are doing in Georgia that kind of snuck into Georgia. We didn't realize it, / didn't realize it until a couple of years ago. And the first time I ever heard about fracking was at a Green convention, I believe it was in 2010 in Detroit, and some folks that were campaigning - a gal from New York was talking about this process, and I thought, What is she talking about? And she was talking about how New York almost could have had their waters contaminated had they not fought tooth and nail to prevent that fracturing process, "fracking" for short, from happening. And it was incredible. She was so knowledgeable and conveyed that message about something I knew nothing about. And I thought, y'know, this is what parties should be about is sharing information, disseminating it, and then, how do we put it in place?. How do we put the viable candidates that we know could push this legislation forward and make it happen? And that's what she was doing in New York, and as a result, truly motivating folks. It was a real grassroots effort, but they did it, they did it. They educated enough people on the dangers, the possibility of contaminating their groundwater - drinking water - for thousands of people, and they got that changed.

PETTERSEN: That's really inspiring. But the Green Party of today in the year 2020 is not the same Green Party, that it was in 2010. Can you talk a little bit about the fracturing inside of the Green Party recently because the Georgia Green Party decided to sign on to the Declaration for Women Sex Based Rights.

TRAINA: Sure, sure. Like I said, you know, we should be educating ourselves about every issue that comes up. We began looking at the issues surrounding women's rights partly because this proposal had come up regarding the Nordic model back in, I think it was '18 first when it came up - to the attention at the national level and the Greens, so we were talking about, y'know, What is that? And it was talking about protecting women in terms of prostitution and human trafficking, and those issues were very much of interest to all of us and especially because Atlanta is a hub for human trafficking. So we began to kind of delve in and look at that and that whole question of, y'know, sex workers, and prostitution and, y'know, what is that really and who's really hurt by these by these types of activities. So we embraced the Nordic model, okay, which said, we're going to punish the consumers, we're not going to punish the folks that are involved in being exploited. We're going to punish the folks who are putting down the money,

and consuming services. So we agreed about that and we talked about it and we were, y'know, educating ourselves and then that led us to some documents that were very pivotal I think in the history of women's rights more recently, in that, I think it was like in 1979 when women came together from about 140 different countries under the auspices of the United Nations and sat and and discussed, digested information shared the most recent research and came up with this document, The Declaration of Sex Based of Rights. So we looked at that document, and we looked at the whole thing, and we were looking at y'know, the influences on the things that were happening for women and for children. And, of course, you know internationally we're aware of how bad things are in other countries for women. They're a lot worse. There's rampant use of rape as a war tool. There's rampant exploitation and slave trading and slave labor. We have some of that to this degree here in this country but it's so easy to look at other countries and say, Oh yeah you know these terrible things are going on; But we were looking at this document in a more localized effort to see what sort of exploitation, or discrimination was going on in our own country. And so when you start to look at this document in that way and you say, Oh these - what's going on, we began to see that for some reason people were still not - I mean we still don't have parity in terms of economics for women in the workplace; We still don't have opportunities that we would hope for all women. And so we looked at this document, and it started to even point out some concerns about - in the areas of trans procedures, transitions for people who were children who were identified as having what they called a dysphoria, an identity with the gender - the opposite sex that they were born with. And looking at that, I'm - I work with children, I'm a licensed physical therapist with kids; I've been very well informed in terms of growth and development of children. And so some of the things that I was looking at were, how are we protecting? How are we protecting women? How are we protecting children? And I think as we saw these procedures that were happening and looking at what's the natural life process in terms of "growth and development" for us, you want to protect children's rights to go through those processes and to be nurtured and supported in whatever aspect of - perhaps there is, if there is any medical diagnosis, emotional or mental diagnosis, to be supportive and preserve the rights of those children. And so it was a little - it was unsettling to read the information about efforts that the - and I guess in terms of groups, the trans lobby were pushing for children to go through procedures such as puberty blockers, and then [be] given these cross hormones early on in their development, *prior* to going through puberty. So they were preventing them from going through a natural process. That just set up red flags to me. And so I began looking at more information and others in our group has as well, and in finding that really when you talk about best practices, we're seeing that, what we call watchful waiting was really more of what was recommended and total support of children and to

their parents, okay. I can only imagine what that would be like to have a child identifies the opposite sex. And, y'know, how do you do that nurturing and how do you - what do you provide for that child to help them be comfortable. But we have those services out there, we do have professionals, and everyone should be allotted that opportunity to have those services available to them. Going further the trans lobby has seemed to want to infringe on the rights of women, and instead of defining or agreeing that women are defined as female by certain distinct qualities, and some of those have to do with growth and development - having your period, being able to give birth to a child, going through menopause - those are distinct biological stages that we go through. And so, for some reason, there are folks that want to consider themselves in the same category as women and sort of erase those biological markers, as a difference.

PETTERSEN: Let me just interrupt and say how anti-environmentalist and anti-nature that seems to me, that stance. It's like a denial of nature and biological reality and if the Green Party is the environmentalist party, how can they be going along with that, y'know?

TRAINA: Right. I think there's a conflict for some people with an emotional reaction, and they want to be, perhaps - and this is why I hope [for] and I'm looking forward to more dialogue and more opportunity to engage with folks...because I think they have - I think they're mixing up acceptance and love for them with a need that they have to make a declaration of their own about who they are. And I think every group, and we are a distinct group as women, that we should have our ability to y'know, be respected for who we are, but you can't expect to be respected for something you're not. And so I think they're mixing up a message of - people accept folks that are transitioning. They are accepted in their other human rights documents that ensure that our friends that are transitioning or are already transitioned are entitled to human rights they're entitled to. So it's not like anybody is negating who they are, but I think - it sounds to me as if they're negating who women, biological women, are. And I think that after we would both be able to sit down and hear the points of view perhaps there's room to take away the aggressiveness and the attacks that happened to us when we simply signed on to an agreement, which we felt protected women and protected children, and it was misconstrued as some sort of a slight to, in particular the Latin - I mean the lavender caucus, which is made up of gay, lesbian, bisexual trans folks. There was no insult there. And so y'know, I think we would like to understand, or I would like to understand, why an insult was perceived.

:Song interlude - Sleep to Dream by Fiona Apple:

:drum kit, what sounds like tympanies accentuate the initial downbeat:

:decay of drum rings:

*I tell you how I feel, but you don't care
I say tell me the truth, but you don't dare
You say love is a hell you cannot bear
And I say gimme mine back and then go there, for all I care*

:band kicks in, piano, bass, what sounds like a violin:

*I got my feet on the ground and I don't go to sleep to dream
You got your head in the clouds, You're not at all what you seem
This mind, this body, and this voice cannot be stifled
By your deviant ways
So don't forget what I told you
Don't come around, I got my own hell to raise*

:music quiets down again:

*I have never been so insulted in all my life
I could swallow the seas to wash down all this pride
First you run like a fool just to be at my side
And now you run like a fool, but you just run to hide
And I can't abide*

:band kicks back in:

*I got my feet on the ground and I don't go to sleep to dream
You got your head in the clouds, You're not at all what you seem
This mind, this body, and this voice cannot be stifled
By your deviant ways
So don't forget what I told you
Don't come around, I got my own hell to raise*

*Don't make it a big deal, don't be so sensitive
We're not playing a game anymore
You don't have to be so defensive*

:music quiets down again:

*Don't you plead me your case, don't bother to explain
Don't even show me your face, cause it's a crying shame
Just go back to the rock from under which you came
Take the sorrow you gave and all the stakes you claim
And don't forget the blame*

*I got my feet on the ground and I don't go to sleep to dream
You got your head in the clouds, You're not at all what you seem
This mind, this body, and this voice cannot be stifled
By your deviant ways
So don't forget what I told you
Don't come around, I got my own hell to raise*

*I got my feet on the ground and I don't go to sleep to dream
You got your head in the clouds, You're not at all what you seem
This mind, this body, and this voice cannot be stifled
By your deviant ways
So don't forget what I told you
Don't come around, I got my own hell to raise*

:band plays out, Apple vocalizes:

WHITAKER: That was "Sleep to Dream" by Fiona Apple. Now we turn to an interview Thistle did with Elaine Mastromatteo, former Green Party member and candidate from Ohio. Elaine left the Green Party because "There is neither room, nor support for reality based women in the Green Party. There is either full adherence to dogma, or nothing."

PETTERSEN: So, Elaine, you have been a member of the Green Party, but your history in politics goes back quite a while. What got you interested in party politics and can you tell us a little bit about what it's been like for you to, like run as a candidate and just be involved in American party politics.

Elaine MASTROMATTEO: Sure. Um, I'm old enough to have been alive in the 60s, and I witnessed the civil rights movement from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where my dad was

a liberal Christian pastor, so there was a lot of connection between him and the civil rights movement, the peace movement. And as you know that decade was quite volatile politically. And so I always, I think I was always an aware child of activism. I was encouraged to speak out against injustice, I was encouraged to advocate for those who could not speak for themselves. Um, my parents were always involved in environmental, social and community issues and they brought me up that way. So I felt like I have a political responsibility. Um, you know, as time went on, and my life progressed I didn't have time for politics until my kids were a little older, and actually the age of my children was somewhat relevant because I had a son coming up into draft age in the run up to the Iraq war. So I was very concerned, of course, being a peace activist as well. And I went to my city council and asked them to just write a resolution in support of peace and against war. Well, it didn't do that, but I started attending city council meetings in the little city that I lived in then, and that led me to try to run for office there. I was active in some other issues and things like that and I thought there was a little skullduggery going on and some behind the scenes things, and it's always better when citizens keep an eye on their leadership.

So I began doing that and I was encouraged to run for office as a council member and I did, and that was 2005. And I did not win. I came in fourth out of five people and the top three got the job. So that was very illuminating, though. It was a nonpartisan race, but there were a lot of party politics in it anyway, which I was unaware of, kind of this undercurrent. You know, you have local politics that are mostly supposed to be non-partisan. But that's not really the way it turns out. A lot of times, things shake out one on the other side, one on one side and one on the other side. Anyway, um, so I kind of realized that I didn't really want to be part of either of those parties. And I began looking for a party that had my values of peace and equal rights and social justice and that sort of thing and there was the Green Party. And it turned out to be a pretty good time because they had just managed to get ballot access, not by petition but by an order of the Secretary of State. I believe that's the right title - Jennifer Bruner - and she was a Democrat and she felt that third parties should have been allowed to have a shot. She wrote a directive that allowed, actually, four other small third parties to be active. The Green Party was really the one who made the most of that. Unfortunately the libertarians were sort of stymied by, again, some skullduggery with petitioning. And so the Greens, we had sort of a heyday there for a little while.

And I did run for Congress once, and did not get on the ballot because I was a new Green, new to the community. And I didn't have enough people to write-in, I was trying to write-in - getting a write-in position. So, I did not. And the next - after two years went by - the next election cycle for that office, I managed to petition

successfully. And I did get on the ballot, and I ran for congress in the 14th district which is seven counties in northeastern Ohio. I managed to do okay in that race, theoretically, I - here, I wrote it down, I'll read it to you. I managed to get 3.8% of the votes. 13,038 people voted for me. Then in 2014, I ran for the Ohio House, which I did okay again, 6% 16,000, or, I'm sorry, 1,667 people voted for me. And the next year in 2015, I ran for trustee, but that time I was pretty much just going through the motions I really didn't campaign. I didn't put signs up, I was just there on the ballot and I only got 146 votes to 799, which is interesting because it shows you that there are offices that you don't have to get very many people to vote for you to actually gain, but I have been active in my community. I do go to my trustees meetings, quite often and I have been appointed to the local zoning board. So I'm happy about that. It does give me an opportunity to try to take care of my community and to help people be good neighbors to each other. So that's pretty much my political career.

PETTERSEN: Can we talk about why you left the Green Party?

MASTROMATTEO: Sure. I had been somewhat dissatisfied about the way things were proceeding anyway. It seems like...the Green Party's supposed to be an organization in which the electorate, the members of the electorate that vote for the Green Party, those are supposed to be the people in charge. And it turned out to be very top-down instead. We're supposed to be decentralized, yet it seemed like a central authority was dictating what we would need to accept. The last couple of proposals that came down the wire were very, up and down. They were...we were unable to discuss, we were unable to add or amend, and it just seemed like it was a done deal before it came to the states. We could just, you know, we could say yes or no, but we couldn't do anything to change the fundamental wording of anything. So I was upset about that. But then, um, you know, it seemed like...the hardest thing about being an officer in the Green Party in the state of Ohio was trying to get my fellow members to resist endorsing Democrats and to try to build an individual Green candidate base, instead of saying 'well this guy over here is good enough, he's a Democrat and he's black', or he's a whatever ethnic or identity politics person they wanted to plug in. Because he was a Democrat, this appealed to them sometimes, that there were minorities that they wanted to highlight.

And this seems to be what happened in the Green Party, that rather than going for this big body of people, they started focusing on representing minorities. And - which is wonderful. I have absolutely no problem with that. However, the Green Party's mostly made up of non-minorities. Okay. And somehow, a portion of people got in who seemed to hate white people. And this is, I'm trying to be honest with you and this is

tough to talk about, because as a white person I was somewhat offended at being told that white supremacy was the main problem in the Green Party. And I thought, well, you know I'm white. I've been working really hard and I've been working with all these great white people, and black people - but there weren't many. And it seemed okay to just attack everybody who wasn't going along with this identity politics directive. That, I think, hurt us in a lot of ways because I felt like it was important to appeal to mainstream voters who were not only disgruntled Democrats, and therefore, often minorities, but it's also important to appeal to disgruntled Republicans who were white. Okay, that's just the politics of this country. I don't mean to be racist but that's pretty much how it shakes down. The white people are in the Republican Party and the minorities are in the Democrats. And what we saw was no disgruntled Republicans were coming into the Green Party but there were many disgruntled Democrats who seemed to be very angry at the way things were. And I don't blame them.

I'm angry too, but I got a little upset that it was being taken out, kind of, on me and some of the other stalwart Green Party members who held the party together for years. And don't get me wrong, there are plenty of minority people who did that as well. But this sort of seems like the first fissure, the first crack in our unity. That we were attacking each other over identity politics. And that I understand that probably wasn't their objective, but at the same time, what happened was a lot of white people left. A lot of people were purged purposely. And I kind of feel like I was part of that. It seemed like young Bernie supporters came into the party. A lot of minorities came into the party, and they wanted to change it. And they did. They changed it by making it very clear that my views were not welcome there.

PETTERSEN: Right, now, when did- so, there was an influx of people that came into the Green Party. What year was that, that they really were pushing identity politics?

MASTROMATTEO: I would say that the year that it really came to a head for me was 2018. Yeah, 2018 was the governor's race, and we had a candidate, a female candidate who was really struggling, and I felt that she just really didn't get any support from the party. And, unfortunately, I had the experience of going to a rally and here was our candidate saying that she wanted to create a feminist utopia. Well, on the PowerPoint behind her, a large fluorescent green sign declared that transwomen are women. So I was very confused about what message we were sending. How do we create a feminist utopia by letting men dictate what women are? I questioned that, mostly on social media. And that was where I was pretty much called a TERF, asked to shut up and, you know, pretty much, keep my opinions to myself, and I'll tell you what, in preparation for this interview I went back to one or two things that I'd saved. Unfortunately I wasn't

good at screenshots and I didn't know how to do that. I wish I had. But it was painful to read over that stuff.

It was me against everybody else. I was trying to base my answers and my logic in reality and biology. And the idea - the fact that you can't change sex. Yet, I was being shouted down by mostly men. Lots of these people were new to the party and did not know me and had no idea, or either they didn't know or didn't care that I had contributed, and pretty much put a lot of my whole life into it. I felt like that was kind of uncalled for. I felt like it was rude, and I really just became very outspoken about it, and that they couldn't take it. So they removed me from my admin position and that was a unanimous decision from the entire social media committee, men and women, and unfortunately the women in the Green Party have not been supportive of this position. I think they've all been shouted down or, like, I don't know what makes a woman want to believe that men are women.

PETTERSEN: In Ohio, but I mean, look at what's happening in Georgia with the Georgia State Green Party. There are women in that party who agree with your position that woman is a biological reality and category. Can you talk about what the Georgia State Green Party is facing right now, from your vantage point as a former Green Party member? What's going on between the Lavender Caucus and the Georgia State Green Party and how is it going to impact, or potentially impact, the entire party?

MASTROMATTEO: Well, okay, let me back up just a little bit and say that as a Green Party candidate, I received very very little support from the party. Mostly this was just me and my husband. He was my treasurer. I was the candidate. Every time we went out it was just us. There were a couple times when, at a, you know, rally that was close to my Youngstown neighbors, that a couple of them came up and gave me support. A few people did donate. I had one large donor that helped. But the fact of the matter is, regardless of the fact that it appears that the Green Party has a national presence. They really are very small. I don't know about your state but I would say that at the top leadership of my state there are less than 20 people who are routinely active. I don't know how the Georgia Green Party is, but I suspect that the people who are agitating in the Lavender Caucus are very few. In fact, there may only be one or two, who are very strident, who are talking over the rest, who are taking charge because they can, because this is a very small party and anyone who comes into it and looks like they're going to be able to do the work is put to work whether they're capable of it or not. So we have a lot of people who are really not good at the jobs that they do, they're not

suited for it. They don't have either the talent, the resources, or the knowledge to do things like fundraising, to do things like candidate recruitment, you have people who get up here and they look like they're the identity politics person that they want.

And this is why I keep, you know, referring to identity politics because I do believe this transgender ideology is part of identity politics. And this is something that the Democratic side of our political spectrum has really been pushing. You have to believe. And that's all you need to do. This is a thing that people have to understand. It's new science, you must not question it. And that's just completely false. As you know, as I think we agree, biology is something you just don't get to argue with. It doesn't care what you think. Biology is - sexual orientation is one thing, but biology and sex chromosomes, that's different. Anybody can have a sexual identity, you can make it up, okay, but we both we all only have two sexes, we have male and female. You can have differences of sexual development but that doesn't mean you're a third sex, you can like various types of sex with very different types of people, but that doesn't change your sex. That merely indicates your sexual orientation. So my position was that thoughts do not change reality. Your feelings are not going to change your chromosomal makeup. And I try to come at it from a scientific perspective, from a logical perspective. And then lastly, and this is probably the least important in a lot of ways, from a human perspective, where you want to sit there and you go 'Is it really okay for men to sit here and tell women who they are and to tell them that what we experience is womanhood is something that can be opted into'.

:Sudden low end hit, slight reverb, precedes quick, clean electric guitar strum, with whole note keyboard chords behind - gives the sensation of building:

From across the femisphere...

...to women worldwide

- Worldwide -

:morse code fades in/out:

To women worldwide...

Radical feminist media...

...to break the sound barrier

:glass shatters

Break the sound barrier

:women chanting:

Break the sound barrier

:"Let Women Speak! Let Women Speak! Let Women Speak!":

- Break the sound barrier -

- Radical feminist media to break the sound barrier -

:Music finally resolves, bass and drums enter, uptempo, major key signature, theme repeating in each bar:

This is your

Your

Your

Your

Grassroots community radio station

- YOUR radio station -

Grassroots...

- This is your grassroots, community radio station -

:all voices:

- Women's Liberation Radio News -

:music fades out:

Sekhmet SHEOWL: The Lavender Greens' response to the Declaration of Women's Sex-Based Rights should make it obvious to America that the transgender agenda is in fact a misogynistic crusade against women's rights. Read the full declaration for yourself and you'll find a comprehensive, straightforward list of concerns and articles focused on combating male violence against females, promoting female access to athletic opportunities, protecting females' right to peaceably assemble and access single sex spaces, and preventing the medicalization of children's gender nonconformity, among other things. Nowhere in this declaration are people who call themselves transgender smeared, threatened, or ridiculed, nor is it suggested they should be denied the same access to employment, housing, civil rights, and basic medical care the rest of the population deserves. In fact, transgender-identifying individuals are minimally mentioned in the declaration, and even then only in the context of addressing how their demands violate women's pre-established sex-based rights to single sex spaces. Once again the transgender activists haven't actually explained how women's rights threaten self-identified transgender people. They haven't explained why women having the right to get together in female-only spaces, or having their biological capacity for reproduction acknowledged, or having their own prisons and shelters and sports teams is a violation of trans-identified people's civil and

human rights. And they're never going to explain it, because women's sex-based rights do not stop trans-identified people from accessing employment, housing, food, water and medical care. Women's sex-based rights simply remind the transgender cult that femininity is not womanhood, and that men who perform femininity are not women.

A man who calls himself Margaret Elizabeth, co-chair of the Lavender Caucus, released a brief video statement on YouTube meant to update interested parties on the feud between the caucus and the Georgia Greens. This man with his shaved head and heavy makeup in unnatural colors, is the perfect example of how ridiculous and how transparent trans activists, particularly male trans activists are when they pretend they're the vulnerable ones fighting for justice in the American political scene. Without ever once addressing the actual points made in the Declaration of Women's Sex-Based rights, he claims that the caucus's only goal is queer liberation. What that means, why it conflicts with women's sex-based rights, and how actual gay men and lesbians are included in said liberation, we will never know, because this man and his fellow caucus members aren't going to explain. This refusal to actually explain why women's sex-based rights and protections threaten men who want to walk around wearing makeup and feminine clothing, this falling back on vague rhetoric about fighting so-called transphobia and promoting trans rights is consistently how trans activists respond to women who espouse even the most basic feminist positions. The Lavender Caucus doesn't want a discussion with the Georgia Greens, just an apology and submission to the trans activists' will. Because their problem isn't some mysterious threat to men and women in drag lurking in the Declaration of Women's Sex-Based Rights. Their problem is women having rights and protections at all. Their problem is female and lesbian boundaries that shut out men in any way, shape, or form. Their problem is feminism itself. Feminists' real problem with electoral politics in the US and elsewhere are men and male identified women dominating parties and therefore controlling legislation. The Lavender Caucus and National Green Party's response to the Georgia Greens are just the latest example of men attempting to exert their control over whatever party they belong to and use their power to prevent women from maintaining the bare minimum legal recognition and protection. Electoral politics continues to be heavily male dominated everywhere, with female politicians composing a minority of US Congress, along with state and local governments. We can't even say much about the women who do make it into political offices; they're virtually all male loyalists, and only willing to advocate for women and girls to a point.

The Democratic Party has made it clear they're siding with transgenderism in a predictable move consistent with our two party system's habit of simply boiling down every political issue to blue versus red. The Republicans may denounce transgenderism

generally speaking, but they do it for their own heterosexist, misogynistic, and anti-homosexual reasons. In both parties it's clear who's calling the shots: the men. If gender identity and the corresponding erosion of sex-based rights and protections for women have the complete support of men in the Democratic Party, the women won't object. Both because they must selfishly look out for their own reelection, and because they don't want to attract the kind of male anger, harassment, and rejection that gender abolitionist women have been experiencing online and in person over the last several years. We must also acknowledge that female politicians arrive to their offices with the male values, internalized sexism and misogyny and anti-homosexual prejudice they harbor throughout their lives beforehand. They're no different than all the other women in society who follow men's lead. And we can't expect these female politicians to raise their consciousness in a feminist direction once they're embroiled in the dirty world of male electoral politics. I don't know if it's realistic or useful to suggest that radical and lesbian feminist women attempt to become politicians themselves, or to form a party that might be recognized in some official way. The powerful men who control the electoral politics would never recognize a radical feminist or even women's-only party with gender abolitionist views on US ballots, or in Congress. The Green Party itself hardly has much pull on the national front, and it is a well established third party. Rather than start a new party just for liberal women who reject gender identity dogma, it would be much easier for some of those women to run for office as Democrats, though their odds of winning now, should they openly defy the trans cult, aren't that great. The Georgia Green Party choosing to adopt the Declaration of Women's Sex-Based Rights is a bold, important move in the American political landscape, even if it won't get much press compared to whatever goes on with Democrats and Republicans.

We have women to thank and respect among the Georgia Greens who have set an example for other female politicians in this country, present and future. That we as women even have to consider creating a new party for the sole reason of asserting biological sex as real and the basis of female oppression, is insane. These facts were universally acknowledged and accepted a mere 10 years ago. Now they're considered radical, when they couldn't be further from it. The truth is that everybody knows the difference between males and females, including the liberals who pretend the difference no longer exists, or is determined solely by individual identity. Very few adults genuinely believe that changing your appearance or your name or your pronouns literally changes your biological sex. So when we argue over that ridiculous idea we're ultimately wasting our time and energy, because we can't convince our political opponents of something they already know is true deep down. The real issue is what fuels the concept of gender identity in the first place: the heterosexual

anti-woman, anti-homosexual worldview of how men and women should be different and unequal. The problem did not begin with transgenderism but with gender itself, which is rooted in heterosexuality and misogyny. We can isolate transgenderism from its roots and eliminate it. We must deal with the misogyny, the heterosexual dynamics, and the anti-homosexual prejudice that has been rampant in the human species for thousands of years. Only when female politicians show up to office with that agenda will we have any hope of making real progress as a sex. Only then will this feud over women's rights and gender identity come to an end.

:simple kick/snare starts in, followed by bass melody, and eventually additional light percussion indicating outros:

WHITAKER: That concludes WLRN's 49th edition podcast on women's rights in the Green Party USA. Thank you to our guests this month, Denise Traina and Elaine Mastromatteo for their time and insights on the situation unfolding within the Green Party USA. And thank you, dear listener, for tuning in to another edition podcast of Women's Liberation Radio News. After four years of breaking the sound barrier, it is still our pleasure to bring you women's news that major media doesn't cover, and to be a platform for women worldwide. This is Danielle Whittaker, signing off in solidarity.

VITALOSOVA: WLRN is always looking for new volunteers to conduct interviews, write blog posts, transcribe podcasts, post to our Facebook and other social media pages, and do other tasks to keep us moving forward as a collective of media activist women. If you are interested in joining our team, log on to our WordPress site, and click on the volunteer tab. I'm Dana Vitalosova. Thanks for listening.

PETTERSEN: And I am Thistle Petterson. Tune in next month when we will focus our program on the social impacts of the pandemic on women. Our handcrafted podcasts always come out the first Thursday of the month, so look for it on Thursday, June 4. If you'd like to receive our newsletter that notifies you when each podcast, music show, and interview are released, please sign up for our newsletter on WLRN's WordPress site. Stay strong in the struggle, and thanks for listening.

NEAULT: If you like what you're hearing, and would like to donate to the cause of feminist community radio, please visit our WordPress site and click on the donate button. Check out our merch tab to get a nice gift in exchange for your donation as well. Thanks for your support as we enter our fifth year as your radical feminist grassroots community radio station. This is April Neault. Stay strong in the struggle.

SHEOWL: And I'm Sekhmet She-Owl signing off on another edition of WLRN's monthly handcrafted podcast. You can find us on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and SoundCloud in addition to our WordPress site. Big thanks to WLRN volunteer Gen Z for managing our Instagram page and doing a rad job standing up for women and girls on that platform. Head over to WLRnews4women - that's the number four - on Instagram and show your support. Stay safe and as always, thanks for listening,

Jenna DIQUARTO: And this is Jenna Di Quarto, WLRN's sound producer and engineer. The extended interviews with our guests, Denise Traina, co chair of the Georgia Green Party, and with Elaine Mastromatteo, former Green Party member and candidate, will both be available on our YouTube channel and linked to our WordPress site. Special thanks to WLRN member April Neault for stepping up to this work. Our monthly podcasts are always crafted with tender loving care, and in solidarity with women worldwide. Thanks for four fantastic years, sisters. We would love to hear from you so please comment, like, and share widely.

:music ends with loud snare hit and big reverb decay:

:theme music - Michigan (Gender Hurts) by Thistle Pettersen:

:driving acoustic guitar fades in:

:vocal harmonies:

"...But how will we find our way out of this?

What is the antidote for the patriarchal kiss?

How will we find what needs to be shown?

And then after that

Where is home?

Tell me

Where is my home

'Cuz gender hurts

It's harmful..."

:lyrics fade out: