



SEIZE THE TIME



Vol. 2 No. 4

April 1976

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SPECIAL WOMEN'S ISSUE



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THE BLACK VANGUARD PARTY:

A PROGRAM FOR BLACK LIBERATION, PART TWO

Over-simplification of the Black Liberation Struggle has led to numerous errors. As we have seen in the past three issues of "SST", the most consistent error within the Black Liberation Movement is of characterizing our struggle as either a purely racial struggle or as purely a class struggle. Clearly our oppression flows from both national(racial) and class exploitation. Some of the dangers of these errors were shown both in "Black Workers and National Liberation"(Part II) and "A Program for Black Liberation"(Vol. II, #2 and #3). The struggles of the past 15 years have shown us that the Black Liberation Struggle is one of great depth and complexity. Our struggle entails as much diversity as exists in the lives of our people.

More specifically, we have seen many serious Black organizations fail because of the following four critical errors:

1. Trying to do too many things and consequently doing none well and burning out cadre.
2. Focusing narrowly on one task and losing all flexibility.
3. Not understanding which force is the primary force for Black Liberation.
4. Not understanding which struggle, issue, etc. is the essential one at a particular time.

All of these errors flow from not having a scientific analysis of the Black Liberation Struggle. Key to understanding the Struggle is the analytical tool of dialectical and historical materialism. This tool is being applied through out the Black Liberation Movement. The Black Liberation Army among others has called on Black revolutionaries to utilize this tested tool. It is the analytical tool that has proved successful in the numerous national liberation struggles and socialist revolutions of this century. In analytically studying our struggle it is necessary for us to understand what the principal contradiction is within the United States, what the principal contradiction is for Black people, what the main strategic force is for Black people and what the central task is for Black revolutionaries.

This article will conclude the series of articles in Vol. II of "SST" on Black workers and the Black Liberation Struggle and a program for struggle. Based on the above considerations we will attempt to develop the ideological principles necessary to guide our struggle.

THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION

In trying to apply revolutionary science to our struggle, we must study and understand the theory of contradiction. This theory is the basis of the philosophical part of revolutionary science. It says that within any process or object there are two forces that struggle for dominance. In a complex process such as the Black liberation movement, there may be many contradictions(or forces struggling). There is the struggle(contradiction) between Black workers and the white ruling class, the contradiction between Black workers and white workers. There are contradictions between different segments of the Black liberation movement. In any process there is always one contradiction or struggle that is the key contradiction. By correctly identifying this contradiction, the task of analyzing a process(in our case, the Black liberation struggle) is amazingly easier and more accurate. This key, most important contradiction is called the principal contradiction.

Mao Tse-tung stated that, "There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of all other contradictions." Further, "Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved."

Since our struggle takes place within the context of U.S. society, we must grasp the principal contradiction within this country. However as a distinct colonized people we must also grasp the principal

contradiction for our people. In the era of imperialism the principal contradiction in the world is between imperialism and the colonized peoples of the world. When looking at the history of the U.S. one contradiction is easily identifiable as the one which has shaped the entire history of this country, and it is still the critical factor in this country. Throughout history, the imperialist forces(cultural, economic, political and military) of the U.S. have been struggling with their opposite, the colonized peoples of the world. In the U.S. one contradiction is easily identifiable as the one which has shaped the entire history of this country, and it is still the critical factor here. Throughout history, the imperialist forces(cultural, economic, political and military) of the U.S. have been struggling with their opposite, the colonized peoples of the U.S. This country's entire history is shaped at every turn by its relations with Blacks, Native Americans, Latino and Asian peoples. Within this contradiction the relationship between Blacks and imperialism has been the critical factor. Slave labor provided the economic super-profits necessary for capitalist expansion and the strengthening of U.S. imperialism. Black slavery provided the material base for the ideology of racism that has dominated ideological development within the U.S. for the past 300 years. During the Civil War, the greatest general strike in U.S. history(carried on by Black slaves),



numerous slave revolts, the thousands of heroic Black soldiers in the Union Army and the numerous attempts to form free Black states in the South, all bear out the fact that Blacks won the Civil War for Northern capitalists. Throughout history the super-exploitation of Black labor and necessary ideological(racist), cultural and social super-structure shaped and influenced all aspects of the development of this country. Other colonized peoples within the US, particularly Native Americans, similarly influenced the development of the vilest imperialist power in the history of the world. Combined, it cannot be disputed that the principal contradiction has been the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and the colonized peoples within its present territories.

The principal contradiction for Black people is also easily identifiable. Through out our history in this country our exploitation has been economic in motivation. As George Jackson stated we have done the work of the greatest slave state in history. However if the economic exploitation of our people was the principal contradiction facing our people, members of the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie would not suffer any exploitation different in degree from their white counterparts. Similarly and more importantly Black workers would occupy the same economic position as white workers. Yet, as many Black activists have clearly demonstrated, this is not the case. White high school dropouts earn more during their life than Black college graduates. The degree of oppression of Black workers and people is of a different nature than

their white counterparts. Unemployment, working conditions, living conditions, health care, the legal system and education all do not compare with what whites of similar economic "position" can expect. James Boggs has stated that the class structure of white society is based on the super exploitation of Blacks of all classes. Moreover, the relations between Blacks and whites are not those found commonly in a capitalist society but are more typical of the relations found between an imperialist society and a colonized society. The contradiction which influences the development of all others for Black people is the contradiction between the colonized Black people within the U.S. and U.S. imperialism. The contradiction between Black labor and capitalism and the class contradictions between different classes of Black people are serious contradictions that must be resolved in favor of the Black masses. However the principal contradiction is the contradiction that influences the development of all other contradictions. Accordingly, it is the one that must be first studied and grasped.

Once the principal contradiction is grasped, it is crucial that we determine the main strategic force for resolving this contradiction. Not understanding this question has caused nearly as much harm as not correctly understanding what the principal contradiction is. The early Panther Party for instance correctly grasped what the principal contradiction is within U.S. society and for Black people. Unfortunately not understanding what the main strategic force for resolving these contradictions led to the destruction of the party. Even when the main force is recognized, the main reserve(ally) is not recognized. These questions we will now attempt to clarify.

THE MAIN STRATEGIC FORCE AND THE MAIN STRATEGIC RESERVE

We have to determine what is the key force when we devise strategies to resolve contradictions in favor of the people. Within the context of the Black Liberation Movement there are many different economic classes. Classes are defined here in the scientific sense; that is in relation to production. There is a working class who sell their labor, a petty bourgeoisie who sell specialize skills and retail goods (small businessmen), a bourgeoisie who own the means of production(land, money, machinery) and buy labor, and other classes. Vague terms such as "middle class" are useless and often confusing. Each class at sometime has been thought to be the key class/sector to lead our people to freedom.

It is true that this group has led Black people to significant victories during this century. However this class has characteristic weaknesses that have always crippled our movement and prevented it from gaining freedom. From the time of Garvey and DuBois to that of Dr. King, there is a pattern of our movement moving into massive struggle and its leadership "all of a sudden" becoming very shaky. Under the prodding of Black workers, the Garvey movement began making real demands on U.S. imperialism. But increased repression from the state made Garvey decide to liquidate the struggle for day to day Black rights and begin making alliances with such reactionary forces as the KKK. Mass support dwindled to the point where his enemies were able to isolate and destroy him. Similarly as the Civil Rights Movement entered the middle 60's it became clear that Black workers and youth were dissatisfied with the token victories that had been won. The key turning point was the March on Washington. Grass roots organizers from throughout the U.S. had the sincere and realistic goal of having Black people shut down Washington D.C. Under pressure from the Black masses and the white bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeois leadership of the movement faced a grave crisis. Their decision to liquidate the struggle aspect of the March and sellout is famous. Although massive, the March became a shameful liberal picnic. After the March, the leadership of Malcolm X and other grassroots organizers became decisive, and the mass aspect of the Civil Rights Movement began

SELF-CRITICISM OF THE JUCHE CONFERENCE

"JUCHE MEANS HOLDING FAST TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SOLVING FOR ONESELF ALL THE PROBLEMS OF THE REVOLUTION AND CONSTRUCTION IN CONFORMITY WITH THE ACTUAL CONDITIONS AT HOME" --- KIM IL SUNG (DRK)

This is a summation and self criticism by the white staff of STT, of the JUCHE Conference, held in San Jose, California in December, 1975. The conference, attended by about 180 white revolutionaries, was two days long. It focused on three specific questions in the context of the white revolutionary movement... 1)National liberation/Internationalism, 2)Collectives/Mass organizing, and 3)Criticism/self criticism.

The central area of political struggle at the JUCHE Conference was national liberation/internationalism. The staff of STT and others, including some members of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, advanced the position put forward in the pages of STT for the past two years on the following points: One, the existence of imperialist relations and an oppressor nation within the US; two, the uneven impact of the crisis of imperialism in these conditions; three, the impact of these facts on the character of the white working class and the white left; and four, the implications of the above on our strategy for building unity at the mass and cadre levels between nationalities. We called for a single federated structure of national parties and a mostly white cadre organization as a step which could lead to still closer long range unity among communists. We called upon white activists to bring white workers to an explicitly anti-white supremacist stance as a precondition to an international mass alliance.

Opposing arguments came from some other PFOC members, and from independent individuals and study groups. Their arguments included that there is a single working class in the US, defined by the borders of the US state; that overall class struggle is primary over national forms of struggle; that the economic crisis reduced the material basis for contradictions within the "multinational" class; and that it is not correct, necessary, or possible to bring white workers to an anti-white supremacist stance. It was advanced that for whites to support the formation of national forms of organization among TW peoples was to violate the right of TW peoples to decide for themselves what forms of organization they need.

As stated above, PFOC came down on both sides of the question. At the time of the JUCHE Conference, PFOC had not taken an organizational position on this debate. The Weather Underground Organization appeared to be moving to the position in opposition to that advanced by STT, and national leadership in PFOC was advancing a line and pursuing a strategy also based on the latter arguments.

There were several areas where our presentations were unclear, such as: What is the aristocracy of labor in the US? Do all white workers have "relative privilege, or just some? Do we uphold autonomous cadre organization as an absolute principle in itself, as a strategic necessity for this period, or as a right oppressor nation communists must uphold?

One question which became central in the debate concerned the existence of an oppressor nation in the US which does not include oppressed nationalities, which is defined not by race relations but by political, economic, and cultural relations of imperialism. Opposing views included that the oppressor nation did not include the white working class, but only the ruling class; that there is no oppressor nation at all; or that this question has no real impact on the conditions or on our strategy.

The second and third areas of discussion were not so successful. The presentations on party building and mass organization evoked little struggle. People were not yet ready to move into this area. Time required that the Criticism/self criticism presentation be removed from the agenda, to allow space for criticism/self criticism.

STT was criticized for failure to deal with the oppression of women. The staff pointed out the publication of such a self-criticism a year earlier concerning ear-



ier issues of the paper, the addition of the section FROM THE SISTERS, the focus of the coming issue on womens' oppression, the agendizing of men's and womens' caucuses at the JUCHE Conference, and the panel presentation on organizing working class women in the Collectives/mass organizing panel.

The speaker on organizing women made it clear that she disagreed with STT's position on the need to build collectives, and on the necessity for autonomous development of national cadre organizations. This led to confusion about STT's position on the main thrust of her speech on women and organization. In this area as in some others at the conference, our ability to arrive at clarity in struggle was hampered by STT's failure to take a clear, consistent position. We'll talk about this more under the subject of political struggle.

The criticism was raised that STT did not deal with gay oppression in the paper, nor seem to attach much importance to it in the conference. STT white staff accepted the criticism and admitted that they had no clear position or unity on the central staff in this area. A commitment was made to correct this.

POLITICAL STRUGGLE: A SELF CRITICISM

The purpose of the conference was to promote political struggle. The main strength was that it did that, in the midst of a white left characterized by terrible liberalism in this regard. The main failings, and the main lessons to be learned by the white staff, were also in this area: how do we organize political struggle?

The practice of the white staff, and later of the conference coordinating committee was characterized by a non-struggle attitude, and an inability to effectively organize political struggle in the pre-conference planning committees, in the agenda and execution of the conference, and in the criticism/self-criticism at the end of the conference.

The preconference planning was characterized by a top down approach by the white staff and later the coordinating committee. Organizing committees were set up in each city, but in a bureaucratic centralist manner. The dialectic of this problem was very frustrating- the staff wanted other people to take responsibility, in fact they pleaded with them to do so; but they didn't know how to organize it. They wound up holding onto the reins, until other people made strong criticisms. The main reason for this problem was the absence of clear principles of unity.

The conference agenda did not permit enough discussion time. While the mens' workshop and the discussions of practice were very good, the amount of time for the workshops as a whole should have been shorter. Collectives/mass organizing and Criticism/self criticism presentations should have been left off the agenda.

The attitude of the white staff in response to criticism was too often defensive. The white staff felt insecure in the out front position they had assumed, and this was reflected in an unwillingness to do sincere self criticism.

On the other hand, the JUCHE Conference was an honest effort to organize political struggle. While it could have been done more effectively, the conference was able to define the main contradiction faced by the white left.

This experience teaches us four main things which we need to engage in political struggle: One, we need a clear, precise statement of where we stand- where we are clear and unclear. This provides a context

for the discussion of specifics. It allows us and our comrades to identify our basis of unity for criticism/self criticism and political struggle. Two, we need to clearly focus on a single main issue at a time. We can't accomplish everything at once. Even though there are many contradictions on the white left, we can only try to resolve one at a time. The question of party building in the context of mass organizing is central to forward progress- but we can't approach it without a basis of unity in regards to national liberation/internationalism (among other things). Three, we need to organize open and participatory forums for struggle, for give and take. Political struggle requires communication, not a one sided statement but an exchange of ideas and response. Fourth, and perhaps most important, we need to grasp firmly the tool of criticism/self criticism. Our weakness here is the key to our failings in organizing political struggle- and this is common to the whole white left. There are too many groups too certain of their own infallibility to engage in honest struggle. On the other hand there are too many activists and organizations that fail to take responsibility for their own politics.

SUMMATION

Through re-evaluating the structure of the conference we see that the choice and presentation of questions the white staff made represented and put us forward as a cadre organization.

The discussion areas put forth questions that are key in the formation or expansion of a cadre organization. The white staff did not plan the Juche conference to form or expand a cadre organization around our line. At present the white staff has no cadre organization. Therefore, the structure of the conference should have been one of more open and participatory type of struggle.

In placing ourselves, objectively, in the position of cadre leadership of a nonexistent organization, we downplayed the necessity of seeing party building as a central task.

The process of party building requires the development of scientific political line, practical implementation, and dissemination. Viewing party building as a central task would have meant for the conference more open struggle for clarification of political line and exchange of practice rather than discussing organizational forms.

Since the conference we have made several decisions in an effort to rectify serious errors on the part of the white staff: 1) we are in the process of developing principles of unity, 2) further we intend to use these principles of unity as a basis for joining primary collectives, 3) we are attempting to struggle over the relationships between the white and Third World staffs to make them more systematic and structured.

A LUTA CONTINUA!

white staff/seize the time

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue was written by the staff of STT and a women's study group (see "Who We Are" on page 8.) In order to clarify which group wrote which articles, below is a list:

Women's Study Group:

Who We Are, page 8; History of the Early Women's Movement, page 9; Women: the Family and the Revolution, page 10; Analysis of the Lesbian Movement, page 10; Historical and Economic Basis of Women's Oppression, page A; Party Building--Our Primary Task, page C; Strategy for Organizing, page 12, the Women's Movement Today, page 13.

STT Staff

The Black Colony (TW staff), page 2; A Self-Criticism of the Juche Conference (White staff), page 3; Third World Women (TW staff), page 5; Angola, Support the MPLA, page 15; Labor Organizing and Affirmative Action, page 16; CETA Organizing, page 16; Hard Times Conference, page 17.

Other

Women in Prison was donated by a women's prison project; Palestinian Women was donated by the Palestinian Support Committee.

to decline.

The wavering nature of the Black petty bourgeoisie is typical of its counterparts in Africa (read Cabral's Return to the Source) and throughout the world. Many of the finest leaders of a revolution or liberation struggle come from this class (Che, Cabral, Nkrumah, Ho, Mao, Lenin, DuBois, Dr. King). But the class as a whole is too indecisive for leadership. Caught between the risk of losing their bourgeois-granted relative privilege and a real longing to be part of their people's liberation struggle, they usually sell out, hold back or do nothing. When the struggle gets heavy they are usually the first to abandon it. Conversely they are usually the last ones to join a movement or struggle.

Another fatal error in relying on the petty bourgeoisie for political leadership is that like any other class they will fight for the demands of their own class. Petty bourgeois-led struggles typically are for integrated housing, the right to attend Harvard, Yale or UCLA and more positions in management. Mass oriented Black struggles make demands for decent low cost housing and health care, relevant, non-racist public schooling, safe workplaces and equal pay for workers. When the Black masses began to realize that civil rights leaders were no longer pushing demands that changed the quality of most people's lives, they began to search for new methods of struggle.

Two main criteria (not the only ones) for deciding which sector of our people constitutes the main force are:

1. Do the demands of this class qualitatively better the lives of the masses of our people?
 2. Is this class capable of waging unrelenting struggle til final victory?
- The Black petty bourgeoisie has fulfilled neither of these criteria.

BOURGEOISIE AND LUMPEN

At various times the Black bourgeoisie, through its lackeys (Jackson in Atlanta, Vernon Jordan, Roy Wilkins, etc.), has been represented as the only valid leadership of the Black Liberation Movement. Contrary to the belief of many white radicals there is a Black bourgeoisie. Concentrated in Atlanta and other southern cities, it is involved in insurance, banking and land. It owns almost no large production units (mining, manufacturing). Like any colonized bourgeoisie, it is much weaker and to some degree dependent on the imperialist bourgeoisie. They owe their existence to Rockefeller, Ford (Henry), etc. But its weakness does not mean it does not exist.

In most colonial situations there are two branches of the "native" bourgeoisie. One is the comprador bourgeoisie which is an enemy of the liberation movement. There is also what is called the "national bourgeoisie". The national bourgeoisie is the young and weak capitalist class that wants to fully develop. They want independence because it will free them from the direct competition of the much stronger imperialists. However they do not want liberation for the masses of people because they exploit the labor of the people just as any other capitalist class. This class will usually fight (to some small degree) for independence but will also fight to the death against a complete revolution.

However Black finance and bureaucratic capitalists (Bradley in L.A., etc. who derive their power from their position in government) have been long exposed. For sometime now the Black masses have known that this class does not represent their interests. The finance capitalists are completely against the BLM because it will mean cutting profits, their primary interest.

After the Civil Rights movement began to wind down, many Black activists identified street youth and the lumpen proletariat as the vanguard force for Black revolution. Stating that "they had nothing to lose but their chains", organizations such as the BPP and many activists based their work on street youth and lumpen. Under the leadership of the BPP and similar organizations, this sector of our people carried Black revolution to its greatest heights in recent times. The Civil Rights struggle now became a struggle for Human Rights. Under this leadership Black masses began to deal with self-determination and scientific socialism for the first time since the 30's. Armed struggle and revolutionary organization became issues that many Black people began to

study and implement seriously.

However over a period of three years (1969-1972), this movement was crushed. Externally vicious attacks by the police and its agents murdered many of its best leaders (Fred Hampton, Bunchy Carter, etc.). Internally street gang mentality, adventurism and other lumpen weaknesses were dissolving both organizations and the mass movement. Inside the BPP criticism/self-criticism and democratic centralism were destroyed.

We believe that the movement of street youth and lumpen, that was organizationally represented by the BPP and had its mass aspect in the urban rebellions, proved to the US that this sector of our people has a vast revolutionary potential. Harrassed and attacked daily on the streets and in the schools, this class has a profound disregard for the system which exploits them. Underemployed, underpaid, often on some form of welfare, this sector of our people is as oppressed as any sector of people in the U.S.

However, selecting this sector as the vanguard class led to many critical problems. First there is a definitional problem. Classically the "lumpen-proletariat" is defined as the pimps, pushers and racketeers that survive by exploiting the masses of our people - a "lower" or "illegal" bourgeoisie. While many of our people hustle to survive, there is a monumental difference between the worker who sell a few bags of weed to his partners, the welfare mother who sells food stamps and the "macks, superflies and rip-off artists" who destroy our youth and women and help the pigs make our lives miserable. By lumping the degenerate "superflies" with sisters and brothers who are unemployed and underemployed, we are making a big mistake. The under and unemployed sector of our people is large and sometimes the majority in bad times (and times are getting worse). This class, the reserve unemployed army (during an economic boom it is employed, during recessions and depressions it is unemployed), has vast revolutionary potential and has played a revolutionary role in our recent past. The true "lumpen-proletariat", those who make their living off of us, are relatively few of our people. This class is mainly hostile to the goals of Black liberation and has supplied the police force with many of its best informers. By confusing this class with the reserve unemployed army (who are essentially workers), we allow such bad traits in our ranks as lack of discipline, disrespect for women and opportunism.

Though the reserve unemployed army has much revolutionary potential, the 60's taught us that this class has one major weakness as a vanguard class. The basic power of this class is the power to destroy. In the 60's this power was sufficient to seriously disrupt the functioning of this country and win some reforms. The power to destroy was not sufficient to lead us to freedom. Our struggle in the 60's lacked three key elements:

1. The ability to involve the Black masses in the day to day struggle for freedom.
 2. The mass and cadre organizational forms necessary for revolution.
 3. The ability to seize power for Black people so that we can determine our own future and arrange it to benefit ourselves.
- Street youth, welfare mothers, etc. are a substantial part of our people. However



The Black Panther Party was the first attempt at a Black Revolutionary Socialist Party. We must learn from its heroic successes and its failures.

most of our people still work for a living - no matter how meager. A popular Black revolution must be built on that base. This was the base the Panthers failed to mobilize. By building their base on the "lumpen" the Panthers in many areas were unable to mobilize the vast masses of working Black people. The West Coast revisionist Panthers followed this trend even more by building their organization on the much more powerless petty bourgeoisie. The vanguard class, the main strategic force for Black revolution, must be the class that can fulfill these criteria:

1. Must be committed to struggle for freedom without vacillation.
2. Their demands speak to the needs of the masses of Black people.
3. Have the discipline and organizational experience to carry out the demands of a complex liberation struggle.
4. Have the power to break the back of U.S. imperialism and seize power for the Black masses.

History has proved that no one class can win a struggle alone. Further, in the beginning stages our revolution is at, no one class fulfills all these criteria well. However the class that fits these criteria best and is the main strategic force for Black liberation is the Black working class.

BLACK WORKERS: THE MAIN STRATEGIC FORCE

The Black working class has several qualities which make it the primary sector for consideration as the main strategic force. It also has one serious weakness. First, it is the largest class of Black people. Depending on the area, between 50 and 80% of our people work for a living. Consequently, any program built around the demands of the class would necessarily involve most of our people.

Secondly, Black workers are extremely concentrated in certain fields. As George Jackson states, "The principal reservoir of revolutionary potential in Amerika lies in wait inside the Black Colony. Its sheer numerical strength, its desperate historical relation to the violence of the productive system, and the fact of its present status in the creation of wealth force the the black stratum at the base of the whole class structure into the forefront of any revolutionary scheme. Thirty percent of all industrial workers are black. Close to 40 percent of all industrial support roles are filled by blacks. Blacks are still doing the work of the greatest slave state in history. The terms of our servitude are all that have altered." In addition Blacks are also heavily concentrated in the fields of transportation (urban bus lines and long-shoremen especially), health care and clerical work. This concentration at the point of production gives the Black working class tremendous potential power. Black labor built this country, and Labor could bring this country's ruling class to its knees. Black labor could fatally cripple such key industries as auto and steel. This Black worker power makes the Black working class the most powerful class within the Black Colony.

Thirdly, the Black working class has a strong history of organization. It has had organizations of its own, from the Colored National Labor Union of the 1800's to United Black Workers and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. In the past, it has participated very strongly in multinational radical labor organizations such as the Knights of Labor of the late 1800's and the Communist Party during the 1930's. The Black working class was the backbone, if not the leadership, of both the Carvey movement and the Civil Rights movement. Besides these organizations the Black working class has had a long history of participating in the labor unions of this country. This tradition of organization makes the Black working class the class most able to adopt to the procedures and discipline of revolutionary organizations at both the mass and cadre level.

Lastly, we must consider the consciousness of the Black working class. Most refuse to analyze the Black working class dialectically (looking at both the bad and the good), and state that either the Black working class is a completely revolutionary class or that the class is a purely reactionary class! Like anything else the Black working class has both its positive and negative points. As a class it is more progressive than many in the BLM would wish to admit. Even the most superficial analysis of its history shows that this class has

THIRD WORLD WOMEN

Triple jeopardy - that's the name of a Third World poor and working women's newspaper. It describes the situation most TW women find ourselves in. We are threatened as working and poor people in a capitalist society. We are threatened as TW nationalities in a racist, imperialist society. We are threatened as women in a sexist society.

Because of our triple oppression, TW women have been prominent in leading and supporting struggles and in joining organizations emphasizing the liberation of working people and of TW people from oppression. However, TW women have not participated in the independent women's liberation movement in significant numbers. This is because the politics of the women's movement have been dominated by white upper and middle class women, as it has many times in American history. Any Black woman who has studied her people's history must have some misgivings about the consistency of support that the women's rights movement has given Black Liberation. In 1869 white feminists opposed the 14th and 15th Amendments (equal rights for Black people) because they didn't give women the vote.

One of the clearest examples of how TW women's struggles differ from the women's movement demands is the issue of abortion on demand. This is put forth as an important part of a woman's right to control her own body. Yet for TW women the greater threat to that principle is forced sterilization. A forcibly sterilized woman can't have the freedom to decide if she wants a child or not ever again. Furthermore in this racist society, forced sterilization is more than a violation of an individual woman's rights. It is also an attack against her whole people. In Puerto Rico nearly 1/3 of child-bearing age women have been sterilized, mostly without their knowledge or under threats by welfare agencies and hospitals. At an Indian hospital in Oklahoma, 52 Native women were sterilized in just one month (July '74), financed by HEW. At Duke University County Hospital in North Carolina (which serves mainly unemployed Blacks), welfare women or unwed mothers who come to give birth are threatened in vicious ways to make them sign "consent forms" for sterilization. Either the doctor will hold the newborn by the feet over the floor and threaten to drop her/him unless the woman signs, or during a difficult labor, personnel will refuse to help the woman unless she signs (source: Triple Jeopardy News). In this context a TW woman may ask, "What does abortion on demand mean when the children I have are taken from me by the courts, when they are murdered in a thousand ways by this racist, dog-eat-dog society?"

Because of these differences, this article will deal specifically with the struggles of TW women. TW women have fought for the liberation of women. Most often our struggles have been in the context of enabling us to contribute even more to the liberation of our entire people, to the liberation of working people, to the ultimate end of all forms of hierarchy and oppression.

We will look at TW women's oppression and potential for revolution as TW people, as workers and as women in U.S. society. In Part II we will then look at the organizations and contributions of TW women to the struggle. Lastly we will look at the problems faced by TW women in the struggle and present some solutions and principles suggested by sisters to advance our liberation as TW people, workers and women.

NATIONAL LIBERATION

In the past ten years, two movements have formed the basis for revolutionary consciousness and organization within the U.S. One was support for the national liberation war of the Indochinese people. They have been victorious in expelling the U.S.-puppet regime. The other movement is the struggle for self-determination by TW peoples within the U.S. Our struggles are still in their infancy despite long histories of resistance.

We as TW women are an integral part of our people's struggles. We are mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, lovers and providers. Women who interpret liberation as individualism will object to these titles as being too family (male) oriented. However those who understand liberation in terms of collectivity will also understand that in the U.S., TW families have been systematically attacked and torn apart.



ELLEN MOVES CAMP, AN OGLALA SIOUX, EXPLAINS THE TAKEOVER AT AN INTERVIEW INSIDE WOUNDED KNEE (1973). credit: LNS

been deeply involved in Black liberation for the past one hundred years. In modern times despite the prevailing myths, the Black working class was one of the motive forces of the urban rebellions. Surveys show that the people who were rebelling in the streets were mostly workers. During the 60's Black workers fought to gain entrance in the racist trade unions and participated in all aspects of the Black liberation struggle.

Like all people raised in the US, the Black working class has strong negative traits of artificial consumerism (wanting what we don't need), individualism, egotism, sexism among men, etc. Unlike the reserve unemployed army, many Black workers have gained some material benefits. These meager benefits (TVs, stereos, decent cars, etc.) do make it harder to organize Black workers. Some definitely feel that they have something to lose by struggling for their rights. However history, including the 60's shows that the vast majority of Black workers can be won over to the liberation struggle. With close relatives in prison or strung out on drugs, economic conditions rapidly worsening and affirmative action hiring and training programs being thrown out the window in the name of "seniority": Black workers only need to be convinced that we will win our liberation struggle to become the awesome revolutionary force we really are. The Black working class is the main strategic force to re-

solve the contradiction between the oppressed Black colony and U.S. imperialism.

There has not been any revolution in history where the main revolutionary force has won without many allies. It should be obvious that as strong as the Black working class is, it alone cannot defeat the beast. From our above analysis, it is clear that the reserve unemployed army is the main ally of the Black working class in the Black liberation struggle. In addition there will be strong support from some elements of the petty bourgeoisie. Indirectly the peoples of other oppressed nationalities (Latino, Native American, Asian) are proving increasingly valuable allies in our common struggles for self-determination, socialism and liberation. In general, because of racism and relative privilege white workers tend to see themselves more as our enemies than our allies in common struggle against the ruling class.

THE CENTRAL TASK

We have identified both the principal contradiction and the main strategic force for resolving this contradiction. Now it is necessary to define the one central task that facilitates all our other tasks. We have all seen the spectacle of organization and individuals that burn themselves out by trying to do too many things. The usual result is that no single task is done well. This problem was one of the flaws that led to the disintegration of the

Both the government and U.S. capitalism in general see the TW family as a unit of social organization that passes on values and culture different and most often actively opposed to Puritanism, capitalism, competition, individualism and white supremacy.

This is not to deny that TW women are oppressed by certain aspects of traditional culture and by their people's reaction to colonization. We all know how TW men, faced with powerlessness on the job and in the streets, turn around and assert a misplaced sense of dominance over their wives and lovers.

Sisters are part of the problem too. In an effort not to act "like white women" we don't speak up and contribute our ideas and criticism. Sometimes we get so involved with religion and mysticism that we don't struggle for justice in the present.

But in general TW women have provided much support and leadership to their national struggles. Most politically active sisters have chosen to involve rather than separate ourselves from the organizations of our people's struggles. The great majority of TW women are concerned with the daily life of their families and with earning or hustling enough to survive. Activist sisters understand that in order to improve the lives of TW women as women, it is essential to end their oppression as TW people.

So much of the sexual and class oppression suffered by TW women is integrated with racial oppression. For instance, not only are most domestic workers women, they are 2/3 TW and the lowest paid of any occupation. In metropolitan areas, telephone operators are some of the worst paid, most abused clerical workers. They are mostly TW (ie. in New York, 95% Black and Latino). Their immediate supervisors are mostly white women. Meanwhile the phone union bureaucrats pay more attention to the desires of relatively well paid, less militant technicians (installers, lineworkers) - mostly white and recently a few TW men.

Another example is some of our men's chauvinism. The mistaken idea that some Black men hold of Black women "castrating" Black manhood is a colonized mentality fostered by slavery's forced breakup of families for breeding and sale, by Jim Crow's forced unemployment of Black men and by racist "entertainment" portraying the bossy Black mammy and her dumb, lazy and/or intimidated man/son. This is one example of how ending our oppression as TW people will go a long way toward solving the problems that arise between TW men and women.

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League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Different elements inside the League saw different priorities. Some saw the expansion of the League, first in Detroit and then throughout the country as the primary task. This group pushed projects such as taking over the Wayne State newspaper, producing "Finally Got the News" and organizing the Black Workers' Congress. The other group saw the central task as expanding and deepening the plant (factory) work. This group wanted to strengthen and commit more resources to the individual Revolutionary Union Movements (DRUM, ELRUM, UPRUM, etc.) The struggle over what should be the central task shattered the organization. If anything the Black Panther Party was even more confused on what its central task was. Some chapters pushed selling the newspaper, some aided political prisoners, others were building community coalitions, others survival programs and other self-defense work. This confusion led to a great unevenness in political work of the Party. In one city's subbranch the standard garb was traditional African clothes while another office in the same city had banned all African clothing. Stalin sums up, (we must), "locate at any given moment the particular link in the chain of processes which, if grasped, will enable us to keep hold of the whole chain and to prepare the conditions for achieving strategic success..."

The point here is to single out from all CONT. ON PAGE 14

ON THE JOB

TW women also occupy the bottom of the American working class. The American working class is not an integrated workforce. Rather it is highly stratified (like having higher and lower classes within the working class). Even on the same assemblyline or in the same office, the kind of jobs, the pay and treatment of TW people and women most often differs greatly from those of white people and men. TW women are the lowest paid, least secure workers (even though they have been working longer and in greater percentages than white women). TW women do the most dreary, least creative jobs in fields with the lowest growth and training opportunities. They dominate domestic labor (including institutional housekeeping), textiles (Farah, Levi-Strauss, Oneita), clerical work and harvesting and processing food. They are also heavily employed in electronics and other light assembly work.

TW women under these conditions are both presently and potentially some of the most militant, determined and conscious worker-activists. Their extreme concentration in specific industries and the worst type of jobs makes for intense struggles. The strikers at Farah garments shop fought for and won union recognition after 22 months of struggle and organizing a nationwide boycott educating the public about the triple oppression of the Chicana workers at Farah. Telephone workers show other people how the Phone Co. rips off both workers and customers. Hospital workers demand affordable, decent health care, an end to genocidal treatment of TW people by the medical empire as well as decent work conditions and wages. At the Oneita Knitting Mills, Black women led an alliance of Black and white women to win a 6 month strike, overcoming the biggest problem facing activists in the U.S. - white racism.



Oneita strikers celebrate their victory, July 1973—

We can not leave out the struggles of welfare mothers. Welfare was one of the rights won by the struggles of unemployed workers during the Great Depression of the '30's. The government and business has turned it around to be the lowest, most degrading form of wages a woman can earn for the job of raising the next generation.

Yet TW women workers can be hard to organize. Some reasons are standard ones that apply to all women workers in the U.S. These were noted as early as 1888 by a woman worker-organizer in the Knights of Labor, Leonora Barry: submissiveness, pessimism, those with better jobs not joining those with worse, and most important, the dream of getting a man who will make them a happy housewife in the home.

But there are other reasons that apply specifically to Third World women. Sometimes traditional culture, particularly for Asian and Latino sisters, reinforces submissiveness/non-involvement. Sometimes "nationalism" (bourgeois) is opposed to allying with white women and men even to gain much needed rights and reforms on the job. Most often the source of this brand of "nationalism" is TW agents in the pay of management. One blatant example involved a Black man who worked as a fundraiser (low level exec) for a University-med school complex. During a struggle for union recog-

A NUMBERS VIEW OF THIRD WORLD WORKING WOMEN

In general TW women are more likely to be working, more likely to be working wives and mothers and more likely to be in low wage occupations. These figures are U.S. Census Bureau/Labor Department figures. While they show a bad situation, the real one is worse because many TW women do not report they are working. They will lose welfare or social security pay or get turned into immigration police. Under these conditions, they receive few or no benefits and accept lower pay. Another problem with U.S. government figures is that they have been counting Latino women as white.

OVER ALL

49% of all 18-64 yr old women work.....60% of Black women these ages work
39% of married women work.....50% of Black married women work
35 million working women in U.S.....4.5 million TW working women (not counting Latino women) - 13% of total

WHITE WORKING WOMEN

37% have children under 5 yr old.....51% of Black working women have children under 5 yr old

1968 INCOME COMPARISON

For every \$100 the average white workingman earned; the average Black workingman earned \$68.60 - the average white workingwoman earned \$58.20 and the average Black workingwoman earned \$45.00. Every gap is widening, not equalizing. In 1969 half of all employed Black women had incomes of \$3,000 or less per year.

1969 UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (those who are actively seeking work or just lost jobs)

White men 1.9% White Women 3.4% Things are much worse now with a higher over all unemployment rate. Again, the gaps have widened with time, not closed.
Black men 3.7% Black Women 6.0%

CLERICAL

34.9% of all working women are clerical workers: typists, clerks of all kinds, receptionists, office machine operators, telephone operators, tellers, cashiers, stenographers, secretaries and bookkeepers, etc.

They are 36. % white, 20.7% Black, and 30.0% Latino.

A little less than 1/4 of all Third World working women are clerical workers.

SERVICE (fastest growing category of women workers and workers in general)

16.6% of all working women are service workers: food service, health attendants and nurses, laundry, beauty and hairdressers, housekeeping & cleaning (outside of homes), stewardesses, etc.

A little more than 1/4 of all TW working women are service workers.

FACTORY

13.9% of all working women are in factories: textile, garments, food processing, electronics and other light assembly.

16% of Black women workers are in factory jobs.

23.7% of Latino women workers are in factory jobs.

The textile/garment industry is the largest employer of Puerto Rican women in New York and Chinese women in San Francisco. Textile workers are the lowest paid industrial workers in the U.S. Levi-Strauss has 5 plants in New Mexico (Chicanas) and one in Georgia (Black women). Oneita is in South Carolina (85% women, 75% Black), and Farah is in El Paso, Texas (85% women, 98% Chicano).

DOMESTICS

Half of all workers in this job (and 97% of these workers are women) earn less than \$1,400 a year for working 50-52 hours each week. More than 2/3 of these workers are Third World. Half of all domestic workers live and work in the Southeast.

dition, he sent around a letter to all Black workers, mostly maintenance, hospital, switchboard and clerical workers, saying that unions were an enemy of Black people. The union was eventually voted in and has won several racial discrimination cases against the university.

Recently the struggles of TW people and women have met around Affirmative Action programs. One would think TW women workers, the worst off, would benefit both as women and as TW people. Management could fill two quotas with one body! But this has not been the case. Upper and middle class white women just entering the job market are counted as "discriminated minorities" and given jobs, training and advancement over TW men and especially TW women. This kind of tactic on the part of management can successfully turn TW women and men against (white) "women's rights", unless women organizers steadfastly and actively support TW people's demands.

WOMEN/SISTERS

The third part of our oppression is as women. Again we face all the abuses white women face as women. In recent years, since we've won a few victories in pride for our people's own kind of beauty, we've even been subjected to the false pedestal of sex "goddess" and ultrafemininity besides our usual role as exotic port of call by ad agencies and entertainment media. We don't have to look like white women anymore to worry about being impossibly perfect women. We can even buy black dolls for our girl children and black makeup for ourselves -- at three times the price.

The traditional forms of sexual oppression still go on too. Because of the interplay of racial and class oppression, the sexual oppression of TW women takes specific forms that most white women don't commonly face. All women are subjected to consumerism - buy this to make yourself and your home beautiful, that to please your husband and more to see your children grow up right. Yet for TW women, because they

are often much poorer than whites, they can not legally obtain these goods. Sometimes they can't even afford necessities. So they shoplift, write bad checks, try to ripoff welfare or turn to prostitution (and drugs - and get busted. The racism of police and courts adds greatly to this likelihood. Most of the women in jail are Third World, and most are there for these "crimes".

All women are also subjected to myths of glamor, becoming an actress, model or entertainer by being beautiful and developing your natural talent. Yet for TW women, this was one of the few ways out of the ghetto/barrio. The professionalism of a college degree cost too much, and anyway women, especially non-white women, were not supposed to be intellectual. Also, for both Black and Latino people, musicians and singers were special. They created and passed on cultures which otherwise would have been repressed out of existence. They sang and played mostly for their own people and helped them to endure another day.

But making it big as an entertainer is just like playing the numbers. Millions of women spend money they hardly have to buy the clothes, the look, and endure the greed and filth of club owners, promoters and agents, but only a few make it. Even those that did keep paying. The great Lady Day (Billie Holiday) made a monumental contribution to jazz and world art, yet saw her husband lynched and died of heroin. One of the founding Supremes reached the height of popular fame, yet died in her 30's of a heart attack, trying to support her two daughters and mother on welfare.

Yet being oppressed as TW women and being responsible for our families means that we can be organized not only around what reforms the capitalists are willing to make today, but also the whole nature of the society our children will grow up in the future. Some of the narrowness of the labor movement in limiting struggles to wages and working conditions, of the women's movement in focusing on women's rights and even of

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the more petty bourgeois part of the national movements in seeking merely equality can be overcome through the organization and struggles of TW women. We are concerned not just with the injustices committed against us (which are many), but also with the future of our people which lies in the hands of our children.



NATIVE FAMILY AT PARK RALLY SUPPORTING THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT (1974) **

PART II
ORGANIZATION AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF TW WOMEN
IN THE STRUGGLE

TW sisters have used many forms of organization to build that better world, reach other TW women and overcome the chauvinism of TW men. These forms have not been to the exclusion of national or class forms. Some are women's caucuses within community organizations like teatro Chicano and the Young Lords Party (early seventies) to deal specifically with male chauvinism and women's submissiveness and lack of study with in the organization. Women who have been in these groups say that care must be taken to make sure this does not end up becoming a gripe session, dividing rather than aiding TW men and women.

Other groups were committees or alliances set up by political organizations to organize women generally such as SNCC's Black Women's Liberation Committee which eventually became the TW Women's Alliance. Some groups put out regular information mainly on TW women's issues. Triple Jeopardy (published by the TW Women's Alliance) and Asian Women's Journal are examples. A union rank and file paper called W.A.G.E. (Women's Alliance to Gain Equality) is significantly TW and deals with some of the neglect and even hostility white male union bureaucrats and management have for TW working women. There are also education, childcare and health care groups that are all or mostly TW women. Sometimes these groups are consciously all women such as the San Francisco Asian Women's Health Collective was. This group dealt with the misinformation given to women about their bodies and the specific kind of oppression TW women face from hospitals, doctors and public health. Most often, however, this kind of group has been unconsciously mostly women because women in the general society have the main responsibility for educating and caring for younger children. The Black Panther school (late 60's till '71) was mainly the responsibility of Black women cadre, some of whom had been school teachers. But on the other hand, political education of the Party cadre was mainly in the hands of male cadre. This division reflected the split between "lower" (women school teachers) and "higher" (male college professors) education that exists in US society.

Lastly, welfare and certain union and rank and file groups are overwhelmingly women and TW - the Welfare Rights Organization, the California Homemakers' Association (domestic workers) and garment workers' locals. The struggles of these groups have been in the vanguard of working class and social welfare struggles because of the oppression, consistent militancy and connection to community/national struggles of TW poor and working women.

Third World women have also been the backbone of the detail, daily community and propaganda work of TW national organizations. Newspaper production and distribution staffs, the Breakfast for Children programs, community schools, daycare and free health clinics all depended greatly on the skills and dedication of TW women.

PROBLEMS IN THE STRUGGLE

Unfortunately our role in forming the underlying politics and strategy to guide the entire thrust of these organizations for liberation has been much smaller. The uneven division of community practice and political theory between men and women seriously harms the ability of both men and women to contribute towards the liberation of our peoples as a whole.

Sisters in a program often are not involved in the political process of choosing what the organization's overall goals, why a particular program is chosen to awaken people's consciousness and organize their ability to fight and how that program implements the overall goals. Often an organization will not educate or encourage sisters to put together their experience with the program, and the actions and attitudes of people involved to constructively criticize the success of that program in implementing revolutionary theory. If sisters do not understand the political purpose of a program deeply, they won't be able to see where the program is failing. It will just become a matter of doing something for people rather than with people to develop their understanding and abilities. Many of the Serve the People programs of the early 70's had these weaknesses. Instead of inspiring revolutionary consciousness and action, many of these programs became another volunteer social service charity (which is a "women's" role), programs became another volunteer social service charity (which is a "women's role").

Sisters have also tried to constructively criticize political line and programs. Too often the leadership of the organizations, many times men, will fail to take the sisters' criticisms seriously. On the other hand, many men in leadership have much criticism of sisters' practice and little understanding of the double burden of home and family and work. Not only does this isolate the leadership from the real effect of their ideas, it also has contributed to a number of sisters dropping out of organizations and even the movement itself. They perceive TW male revolutionaries as people who trip off the importance of their own ideas to the extent of clinging to false fantasies while putting the physical work (be at the center at 9am, answer the phones, etc.) and the blame for failure on others, mainly gullible women. This kind of impression is not limited to the women in organizations. Many ordinary TW people see revolutionaries as men who make speeches, lead demonstrations and wave around guns - not as people deeply concerned with the condition of their people, helping them to gain control over their own lives, considerate of their opinions and desires.

Uneven division of theory and practice can be found in any organization, small, large, men and women and all women's organizations. There are TW women who exhibit all the negative characteristics of arrogant leadership. However, this article focuses on what is usually the case. U.S. society assigns positions of superiority and inferiority to men and women. That ideology affects the work of TW organizations for liberation negatively and must be consciously corrected.

SOLUTIONS IN THE STRUGGLE

TW women must continue to organize and struggle on all fronts despite the problems. We want to end all forms of oppression. We must work within TW national movements united with TW men. Most of our people have been or are involved in some way in the struggle to end national oppression - racial discrimination, police and vigilante attacks, suppression of our culture and history, etc. National oppression intensifies and changes the form of our oppression as women and workers.

Yet at the same time, TW women activists should focus on organizing women in areas that especially concern women in this society - welfare, childcare, healthcare for women, etc. These groups, while having a while having a specific function, should be organized within the over-all structure of at least a community group and if possible, a national liberation organization (if none exists then TW women activists have just as much responsibility to build as men). That way neither becomes narrowly focused on just reforming the daily existence of women or such long range politics without practice that people can't relate to the organization. This is similar to having a group of people to deal specifically with putting out a newspaper or coordinating

prison work or running a health clinic within an organization. The role of men in these groups should be consciously decided by the organization and the people in the programs.

Lastly TW women activists should organize groups to protect and advance women within occupations and unions that are extremely sexist/sex typed. For instance, telephone operators, clerical workers, canner workers, textile workers, rank and file women in AFL-CIO unions, etc. These can take the form of caucuses like the Telephone Operator caucuses that have formed in many cities.



CHILDCARE DEMO BLOCKS BRIDGE IN NEW YORK (1973) credit: LNS

Organizational forms are only part of the solution. We must change the relationships between people and how people think as well. We have to overcome two kinds of obstacles in our work. One is internal - our own self-doubts and lack of political education. This is not to say that women are the source of these problems. U.S. society bombards us from birth with the ideology of women's guilt, submissiveness and inferiority. However, we are to blame if we recognize the problems yet don't attempt any solutions. The other obstacle is external - the mistaken ideas of TW men, their lack of participation in the "dirty" work of daily political duties, home and family, and the restrictions and lack of support they have for sisters trying to contribute in the struggle.

To overcome the internal obstacles, every organization has to set up education programs to encourage the development of sisters. They will also serve to teach brothers about the contributions of TW women and the importance of what sisters do now. Study should also include the development and role of the family and marriage in human society. Too often study programs in the past have totally ignored these institutions even though they are the most important ones influencing the status of women in different kinds of societies. Study of course is not enough. The only way to overcome self-doubts is to participate in leadership, forming theories and making constructive criticism/self-criticism, and encouraging other sisters to do the same.

Part of changing the way men act and think is encouraging them to help women with their family and housework. This is important in changing the way the next generation of men and women act towards each other and in freeing women to be more active politically. A woman loaded with responsibility for children, housework and a regular job is less willing to become politically active. This doesn't mean men and women must do half the work each. It depends on the household. But often if men become aware of how their personal habits and schedule affect the menial work women do, they can change things dramatically with a relatively small effort (errands, putting things away properly, etc.). This awareness also applies to the detail work of an organization.

Men in leadership have a special responsibility to listen and implement the ideas and criticisms of women, in the organization, in the programs and in the community. They serve as examples to all men (and women) in the organization, programs and community. Men in leadership should also participate in the physical work of the organization and at least visit its programs and be acquainted with the people involved.

To sum up, TW women activists place first importance on the struggles of their people as a whole but must be vigilant against mistaken ideas and actions of both men and women that prevent women from contributing fully to the liberation of their peoples - not one half or the other, but the whole.

WHO WE ARE

The women who wrote the majority of articles in this paper came together to struggle out a position and to clarify differences on the liberation of women and our strategic importance in the revolutionary process. We live and work in the San Francisco Bay Area. We have been or are involved in child care work (some as mothers), clerical work, education, different areas of the women's movement, the anti-imperialist movement, the civil rights movement and the labor movement. We came to the group with different levels of political development and with different backgrounds. All the women in the group were white, and therefore saw our audience primarily as other white women. There was not unity on all the politics represented in STT; we were unified by the need to develop a scientific analysis of women's oppression and liberation. After three months, we developed principles of unity as points we wanted to make to the readers, more than as criteria to judge the political line represented in all the articles. We are self-critical about that process. Had we defined the political unity of the group in the beginning, political struggle during our three months of study would have been sharpened. As it was, differences didn't surface until the end and we didn't have the time to clarify those differences. However, women in the group who were involved in common political work outside the group found that the political struggle that did take place was helpful in clarifying their differences.

PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

1. The enemy is imperialism; monopoly capitalism. The primary contradiction is between oppressor and oppressed nations.
2. Under Imperialism, the leading force in class struggle is Third World peoples struggle inside and outside the US.

3. White supremacy is the major division in the working class. Its material basis is a system of relative privileges. This needs to be a major priority in our work.
4. Male supremacy also divides the working class. Its material basis is relative privilege of men (male supremacy). Imperialism oppresses women both through the ripoff of our unpaid labor in reproducing and maintaining labor power and through our super-exploitation at the workplace. A strong movement for women's liberation is an essential part of the revolutionary movement in this country.
5. The oppression of lesbian women is based on the need to contain women in a traditional role to maintain male supremacy. The struggle against the oppression of lesbians is therefore integral to the struggle for women's liberation.
6. White working class women are the weak link in the chains of privilege which have bound white workers to the bourgeoisie in this country. Because of our economic and social position, we can lead advanced and middle white workers to be on the side of anti-imperialism.
7. A white working class women's movement has the potential to lead the struggle against white supremacy and male supremacy. While the struggle against male supremacy can unite women of all classes against imperialism, the women's movement must root itself in the working class to build strength and to make possible the goal of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
8. We need a communist party, and we need mass organizations. We disagree on how these needs interact; on which is primary in this period.

WHY THESE PRINCIPLES?

In studying the history of the women's movement in the U.S., we saw that the turning point toward economism came with the racist

stand taken by many white women after the Civil War. In studying the demands raised by the current women's movement, we came up against such contradictions as white women struggling for birth control with Third World and poor white women suffering forced sterilization. Discussions on the family pointed out the historical differences between white and TW families. Our study of the present women's movement pointed out weaknesses in our understanding of national oppression.

We came to the beginnings of a class analysis that helped clarify the strategic importance of white working class women: in that we are women, we are oppressed by imperialism. In that we are white, we benefit from imperialism relative to and because of the oppression of TW people. Which is the rising aspect of that benefit/oppression contradiction? Our conclusion was that (a) the primary contradiction is between oppressed and oppressor nations and this contradiction leads to inequality in the working class (b) the leading force in class struggle is the liberation movements of TW people (c) the white women's movement must fall on the side of the oppressed, rather than the oppressor peoples--they are our true allies. Further, we concluded that white women must take a firm stand against white supremacy in order to forge that alliance and as a partial basis for struggling against male supremacy.

Male supremacy and white supremacy have some of the same ideological foundation: the right of the strong to control and exploit the weak. We have a basis for struggling against white supremacy as well as male supremacy. We are on the bottom of the white working class; of all the white working people we have the least to lose. Our struggle against male supremacy can lead us to an understanding of imperialism. We see that our interests in

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WOMEN IN PRISON



On an average daily basis there are 1.5 million people locked up in the United States. This does not take into account millions more in mental "hospitals," nor those on probation or parole.

There are literally thousands of women in jails and prisons in the State of California under the aegis of the California Department of Corrections. The California Institute for Women (CIW) holds approximately 750 women; another 200 are at California Rehabilitation Center (CRC), and Sybil Brand, the Los Angeles County Jail, will hold as many as 1,000 women at a time. These women share many things in common: poverty, sexual and racial oppression, and now the pain of separation from their families and communities.

The Women's Prison

CIW is located in Frontera, about 50 miles east of Los Angeles. It is surrounded by cattle ranches, flat land, and hot and smoggy weather. CIW is the liberal dream of a "rehabilitative" institution. The cells are called cottages, inmates are called residents or "girls", and guards are called correctional officers. One will find a swimming pool, guards and inmates dressed in street clothes, and small red brick buildings which are supposed to look like and are called residence halls.

CIW is the largest state prison for women in the nation. Approximately 27% are imprisoned for "narcotics". About 17% are imprisoned under the category of "Forgery and checks". This includes the act of writing a check on insufficient funds in your own account. This is an act that people with money pay a bank charge for

and poor people go to prison for when they have no or little resources. Approximately 19% of the women in CIW are in for "homicide". Of this 19%, most women are convicted of second degree murder and kill someone in their family, often a husband or lover, sometimes a child. These women tend to be older than the average prisoner and generally they used a household item as a weapon. They often report their motive to be a spontaneous response to long periods of abuse.

Ethnic categories (as determined by the State) are broken down as follows: "White" -- 56.7%, "White, Mexican Descent" -- 9.6%, "Black" -- 30.9%, and "Other" -- 2.8%. The liberal explanation given for the high percentage of ethnic minorities in prison is the acknowledgement that they are forced into the lower sectors of the economy. However, there is no evidence that ethnic minorities commit a greater number of crimes than poor whites. The evidence shows, rather, that like U.S. society in general, the Criminal Justice System consistently discriminates against ethnic minorities. Third World people are more likely to be stopped on the streets, arrested, arraigned, prosecuted, found guilty, convicted and sentenced to an institution.

Inside the Walls

What happens in CIW has not gone unnoticed and the women incarcerated there have been supported. At Christmas time there was a spontaneous riot in which 300 women participated. They set fires and broke windows. There are reports that the reason for the outbreak was that their visits with families had been cancelled. Fifteen of those women were put into solitary lock up and accused of being the leaders of that riot, even though all of the women agreed that there were no real leaders. This is a typical move by prison authorities to bypass the real issues, and divide the prison population by putting the blame on a few.

Lately there have been a number of restrictions placed on outside groups gaining access to the prison -- these groups had positive and constructive communication with the inmates. During the administration of Virginia Carlson the prison was opened up to more outside groups, but since she left two years ago, there has been much tighter

control of outsiders coming in. As a result, it is next to impossible for outsiders to get in, and scheduled events have been cancelled.

There are other actions being taken against the women which need immediate protest. There has recently been instituted an Alternative Program Unit (APU) which, according to the administration, is supposed to "provide more structure, control, and special program attention for those residents, who have difficulty adjusting to the general rules, guidelines, and expectations of CIW. The program will be designed primarily to accommodate residents who represent a threat to the safety security, and good order of the Institution, if left in the general population." This program plans to identify women considered to be disruptive (i.e., overtly or covertly disciplinary problems, refusing to report for work assignment, escape risks, negative influence on cottage residents, etc.)



The plans for implementation are: "The resident behavior is to be evaluated by the Cottage Team. If the Team decides that the resident in question needs to be housed in APU, the Correctional Counselor I, is to get approval from the Program Administrator, and move the resident to APU immediately." The repressive intentions of this unit speak for themselves.

The reality of life in APU is that half of the time women do not receive their meals (the other half of that time the meals are cold); male staff show absolutely no respect for the women inmates; women are even harassed by the staff when taking shower; visitation is limited to one hour per week, and family and friends are harassed during the process; the women can only shop once a week; they are not allowed any phone calls; they are allowed three sets of clothing, three pairs of pants and only soft-soled shoes, and there are no religious services.

THESE WOMEN NEED OUR SUPPORT

WHO WE ARE

cont. from pg 8

community issues (health, child care, education, housing, all traditionally "women's issues") and Affirmative Action on the job are allied with the interests of TW people.

However history shows that the existence of an objective basis for unity doesn't necessarily lead to an anti-racist white women's movement. On the contrary, the white women's movement has, for the most part, maintained the position of white women over TW people while struggling against male supremacy.

That is partly because of the white blind spot that comes from the relative privilege of white people. It is partly because of a strong petit bourgeois tendency in the women's movement.

The women's movement has the potential to become a working class women's movement. Revolutionary women are locating themselves in all different areas of working class life. Working class women who used to view "women's lib" as a threat are organizing women's caucuses in labor unions and forming women's organizations in their communities. Much of this activity has been around health care and child care.

We have enormous tasks ahead of us--we must contend for political leadership of a working class women's movement, which, in turn, is capable of giving leadership to the struggles of all white workers.

This issue of the paper represents our efforts to help us move in that direction. Three months is a very short time to struggle out a line theoretically, much less test it in practice. Toward the end of our discussions it became clear that there were some strong differences in the group. Since our purpose as a group was to put out a paper and not to build an on-going organization, we felt that it was correct that we let the differences stand and try to represent both sides in the paper. This is done in the two articles on strategy and part-building. We hope that we have, at least, raised some of the correct questions and have, at best, begun to answer them. We also hope that our sisters will take this effort as seriously as we did and will respond to it and criticize the articles in the paper. We eagerly look forward to that response, both to help us come to a correct political analysis and to build ties between ourselves and other women.



"The revolutionary war is a war of the masses. It can only be waged by mobilizing the masses and relying on them."

Mao Tsetung

THE CENTRAL TASK: PRINCIPLES OF UNITY

This insert is a continuation of

The Black Vanguard Party: A Program for Liberation (Part 2)

We must have ideological clarity and unity if we are to build a revolutionary Black vanguard party. Consequently we are presenting a short outline of the ideological principles necessary for unity. We present this short outline in the spirit of unity-criticism-unity and invite comrades to study, discuss and criticize them so that we all can move our ideological understanding forward.

1. Self-determination for Black and all colonized peoples.

Black people within the U.S. were brought over as slaves and have been laboring for U.S. imperialism ever since. The relations between the state and our people are the same as those between an imperialist and a colony. We provide an extra market for the imperialists to dump surplus junk material (food that is too rotten to sell in white stores is shipped to our communities for

sale at higher prices). Our labor is super exploited, and contradictions between the ruling class and white workers are exported to our community. The economic conditions of all non-ruling class people is worsening, but the relative gap between white and black workers is widening. In addition Black people have often struggled for secession in the South both during the Civil War and Reconstruction. These efforts were smashed by the imperialist armed forces (the Union army). Today self-determination is still fought for by the Black masses. In the South there have been successful efforts to seize control of local communities and regions. The Republic of New Africa has been holding successful plebiscites in Mississippi. Efforts for community control in the North are a different form of the same struggle. Consequently we do not only believe that Black people are a colonized people, but that in the South we form a nation. Consequently we believe that our struggle is an anti-colonial struggle with

the right to self-determination and secession. Our national homeland is in the South, and Black people outside the South have the right to participate in the development of the national homeland or struggle for regional and local autonomy where they are. The issue of secession of the national homeland is an issue for the Black masses to decide. Malcolm pointed out that land is key to any national struggle. In addition, both Puerto Ricans and Native Americans have the right of self-determination and secession. We have not studied the struggle of other colonized peoples enough to take a position.

2. Our struggle is also a struggle for socialism.

The majority of Black people work for a living or are trying to. All of our people suffer from the effects of racism. Socialism is the only system that puts political power and the wealth of the land into the hands of working people. Socialism is also the only system that eliminates the material base (the power to affect us) of racism. As Malcolm said you can't have capitalism without racism, and every successful national liberation struggle has instituted some form of socialism for its people. Since most of our people are workers and not peasants, we must struggle directly for socialism within whatever context we choose. Since in any class society there is the dictatorship of one class over another (we live under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie), the correct form of socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this form working and poor people hold power in their hands and the former oppressor is prevented by this power from ever returning to power.

3. Scientific Socialism is our Ideology.

Every national liberation struggle throughout the world has successfully applied revolutionary science to its own particular struggle. The tool of dialectical and historical materialism is one of the fiercest weapons in the revolutionary's arsenal. It is the only analytical tool expressly designed in the interest of the oppressed masses. The fact that it was ori-

ginated in Europe should not hinder us in the least, and we should be grateful that it did not hinder such Third World comrades as Mao, Ho, Kim Il Sung, Che, Nkrumah, Cabral and George Jackson. We must embrace this tool, study it conscientiously and apply it creatively to our own unique struggle. The two fundamental tenets of this science are that in analyzing any situation, we must start from the concrete analysis of concrete conditions and that it is right to rebel. Both tenets fit well into the philosophical orientation of the Black Liberation Struggle.

4. The Masses are decisive in Revolution: Build the Black United Front.

History has repeatedly proven that the power of the masses is the force that breaks the back of the ruling class and imperialists. Liberation has never been won by small groups of conspirators isolated from the masses. Further, our own struggle and the struggles of our comrades throughout the world show that wisdom comes from the masses of people. Activists have been forced to change because the people clearly realized that civil rights struggle was too limited. Every successful revolutionary party has had to learn the art of learning from the people. Conversely it has been proven that unless the masses are involved in the day to day activity of revolution, liberation will not be gained. In the USSR the soviets (councils of workers, soldiers and peasants) were the vehicle that involved the masses in revolution. However in every national liberation struggle in Africa and Asia, the national united front involved all segments of the masses struggling to gain liberation and became the basis of the government of the people. At the mass level our primary task must be to build the national united front.

5. The five elements of Liberation.

Mao Tse-tung states that the three elements necessary to a successful liberation struggle are a people's army and a national united front, both led by a revolutionary vanguard party. This is no less true within the U.S. History and every successful revolutionary leader emphasize that the oppressor class can only be overthrown by

force. George Jackson also shows us that if revolutionaries are not prepared with some level of counter-violence at every stage, they will be eliminated. Finally, Mao says that history proves armed struggle to be the highest stage of political struggle during a liberation struggle. Not to adopt this stance is to abandon the people to the wolves of imperialism. Violence is common in everyday Black life. We must convince the masses of Black people that they can protect their own lives and their programs. Black people will not support a liberation struggle unless they believe it will be successful. If we cannot defend ourselves and meet and attack the violence of the reactionaries, Black people know we will not be successful. We must realize that our liberation struggle is in its infancy. The key need at this point in time is organized leadership. Without this our struggle will remain isolated, confused and spontaneous. Our second priority is building the national united front. Only by involving the masses in the day to day struggle for liberation and learning the need for revolution through their own experience can we lay the groundwork for success. Our third priority is building the military arm of our struggle. When we outline our priorities we, unlike many others, do not mean that we should neglect any of the above areas of work. All three elements are sciences that have to be studied, refined and implemented. Otherwise we are in danger of either isolating ourselves from the masses or of not being prepared for violent attacks from reactionaries. Also we do not make artificial distinctions from legal and illegal work. Armed preparation is not "illegal" while party work is "legal". The experience of the Panthers should teach us that all liberation is illegal. There are legal forms of work that can be accomplished in each of the three areas. Undoubtedly someone could find illegal work to accomplish in the same three areas. The key word is clandestine. If we are to be successful our apparatus and organizations cannot be completely open for hostile scrutiny and must be prepared to defend them from attack.

6. Women hold up half the sky.

Every successful liberation struggle has fully incorporated women in all phases of

work: military, diplomacy, cadre and party building and leadership. Given that Black women constitute over half of our population it is key that comrades grasp this point. Women constitute over half our resources. Black women workers are the most oppressed workers within the U.S., and our women must suffer the added abuses of rape, forced sterilization and the welfare system. Since the 50's the main genocidal attacks on our people have come through our women. We must fight both against the vicious attacks by the imperialist on our women and the sexist attitudes that Black men have learned within this society. In Mozambique and Guine-Bissau, FRELIMO and the PAIGC, encouraged the formation of women's organizations within the national liberation front to struggle for the rights of women and correct ideas among men. We should encourage the same organizations in our front. Josina Machel of FRELIMO, Madame Binh of Vietnam, Chiang of China, and Harriet Tubman all prove the correctness of Kwame Nkrumah's statement, "The degree of a country's revolutionary awareness may be measured by the political maturity of its women."

7. Internationalism within the U.S. and organizational forms.

We recognize that the destruction of US imperialism will only be accomplished by a coordinated effort of all oppressed people within the US. Ideally one organization (a communist party) could lead this struggle. However this flies in the face of material conditions, history and the present dynamics of struggle. Concretely white revolutionaries and their organizations are still riddled by opportunism, lack of discipline and racism. On organizational level, white revolutionaries have proved unable to overcome their shortcomings. This is shown in practice by the increasingly fascist and racist movement of white workers. This further move to the right is confirmed by our own experience in the workplace, Boston, and the strong support for Jackson, Carter and Wallace. The material basis for a revolutionary communist party does not presently exist. Further, history has shown us that every time Black people have liquidated our own organizational structures, our national rights have been abandoned. Ho Chi Minh once said that the Vietnamese could not

wait for the French to get it together before they initiated their liberation struggle. This is in essence our attitude. The demands of Black Liberation confront us now. We cannot wait to move our struggle forward. On the other hand we see the need to cooperate with other revolutionaries, particularly Third World comrades, where it furthers the tactical and strategic goals of national liberation, socialism and the destruction of US imperialism. We recognize both our responsibility to provide leadership by example and through struggle to the entire revolutionary movement and for close (where possible) organizational coordination. In this period we see the building of strong socialist organizations among the different peoples as being primary. If trust can be built up, we should be able to build councils of coordination, a domestic comintern (where nationalist parties would meet on equal terms and make decisions in a democratic centralist way concerning strategy,) and possibly eventually a communist party. However we would note that our struggle is very possibly one for secession, that white workers have not abandoned either racism or their fascist tendencies. Consequently in the first two steps, Black people would (must) retain their organizational independence. We may never reach the level of a communist party. Two of the main keys are the success that white revolutionaries have in organizing the white masses for revolution and the attitude of Blacks, Native Americans and Latinos have toward secession.

8. Revolution is the main trend in the world today.

We recognize that the Black liberation struggle is an integral part of the world struggle against imperialism. We stand in firm solidarity with the peoples of the world in our joint struggles for freedom. Comrades throughout Africa, Vietnam, China and Chile give us inspiration and renewed determination for us to wage our struggle within the belly of the beast. We recognize two forms of imperialism; the imperialism of the U.S. and its lackeys, and the social imperialism of the USSR. We believe that U.S. imperialism is the main enemy in the world today; it oppresses more people than any other form. But soviet social imperial-

ism is the main danger in the world today because it has not been thoroughly exposed and is the hungry, stronger imperialist power. Malcolm X recognized in the early 60's that capitalism had been restored within the Soviet Union. In addition the USSR has had a history of subverting liberation movements within Africa (check out Zimbabwe and the Middle East) and aiding reactionary forces on the continent. Racism and sexism are rampant inside the USSR. The contention between the Soviet Union and U.S. for control of the world has led to a very dangerous arms race that has heightened the danger of world war. The Chinese slogan of "War will give rise to revolution, or revolution will prevent war," is fundamentally correct. Revolution is still the main trend in the world today. When analyzing the world situation we must remain dialectical and realize that unlike many we cannot have uncritical support for any country, party or individual. This is not the revolutionary method of analysis of thought as taught by Mao and other comrades. For example China has been a great rear base for revolution after revolution in Africa and Asia (Vietnam, Mozambique, Tanzania, etc.), but its policy for whatever reasons is incorrect concerning Angola and Chile. Recognizing that South Africa is the main obstacle to revolution in Africa, not the USSR in this specific instance, we must as Black revolutionaries support the People's Republic of Angola while at the same time calling for superpowers out of Angola. On the international level we must put forward the BIA's proposal of building principled support for the Black liberation movement. This country has often provided a refuge for political fugitives from the liberation struggles of Africa. It is well past time that we seriously dealt with the progressive governments of Africa and secured for us a secure political haven. Every other liberation struggle has secured this right. This issue should be key when dealing with the progressive governments of the world. As with all liberation struggles we should rely on our own efforts for freedom, but the international situation and international support for the Black liberation struggle are key issues that should be studied carefully and put into practice.

HISTORY OF THE EARLY WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The early women's movement was organized around a broad spectrum of demands, most of which reflected the middle-class bias of the movement, and the moralistic approach of the women involved. The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 passed 11 resolutions including religious freedom, equality in marriage, the right to testify, to own property, equal education, equal guardianship of children, and the right to vote. For the thousands of immigrant women who entered the work force in the early 1840's, these demands meant little. They had no property or leisure to attend school. Even the resolutions that dealt with labor; equal pay for equal work, the right to any job they were qualified for, and the right to control her own wages applied primarily to educated, professional women.

In spite of the class bias of the early women's movement, it was tremendously important. Allied with the abolition movement, it challenged the bourgeois ideas that were the foundation of society. Women were, in many ways, the property of their husbands, and did not have any of the rights that the Seneca Falls Convention called for.

After 1848 many feminists were active in abolition. Among abolitionists they found male support for their cause. At the same time, leaders of the abolition movement supported women's rights because the women brought energy and strength to their cause.

Black Abolitionists and Women's Rights

Some of the strongest advocates of women's rights were Black abolitionists. Leaders such as Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman pushed Black Societies to pass resolutions supporting women's rights. Most active Black women were involved in abolition rather than women's rights struggles because abolition meant survival, whereas women's rights meant political equality. Black women who supported those rights did so primarily because 1) they wanted the right to attend and speak at anti-slavery meetings and 2) they desired their full share of political rights.

It was a Black woman, Maria W. Stewart who was the first native born American woman to speak in public. She did so on the issue of slavery. In 1851, Sojourner Truth saved a women's rights convention from being taken over by antagonistic male hecklers. The middle-class white women, timid about speaking in public, were unable to answer the arguments that they were unfit for equal rights. Sojourner got up and attacked the charge that women were weak with her famous speech. "Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could lead me - and ain't I a woman?"

Originally, some white women at that convention had asked the president not to allow her to speak because they didn't want their cause to be associated with "abolition and niggers". The racist attitude of those women was typical of non-abolitionist women in the movement. Even among abolitionist women there was little understanding of or attention paid to slave women, as women. There was a tendency to equate the status of white women with that of a slave.

The lack of understanding of the difference in their oppression showed the inability of the white abolition and women's movements to deal with racist ideology. While the two movements supported each other for almost a quarter of a century, the alliance was based almost totally on mutual aid. They had no sense of struggling against a common enemy. When expediency called for it, they did not hesitate to sell each other out.

After the Civil War, feminism split into two camps; the American Women's Suffrage Association (AWSA) which was concerned almost entirely with the ballot, and the Nat'l Woman's Suffrage Assoc. (NWSA) which worked for far-reaching institutional changes for women.

The split occurred over the question of support for the 14th and 15th amendments. The bulk of the women who joined NWSA, which was led by Susan Anthony and Eliz. Stanton, campaigned against the amendments because they did not include women. In fact, the 14th amendment introduced the word "male" into the constitution.

The campaign those women waged against the amendments became increasingly white supremacist, arguing for the vote for

white women to insure a white American born majority at the polls. It was, in part, that white supremacist attitude that caused the Equal Rights Assoc. to fall apart in 1869, ending the alliance between the abolition and women's movements.

14th and 15th Amendments

During the Civil War, female reformers threw their energies into the war effort, bringing a halt to the women's movement. The National Women's Loyal League, including Stanton, Anthony and Lucy Stone in the leadership, collected 400,000 signatures in support of the 13th (abolition) amendment and passed a resolution calling for equal rights for women and Blacks. The feminists, having struggled hard for emancipation expected to be rewarded for their labor by being included in suffrage legislation. But the 14th Amendment, proposed in 1866, was explicitly limited to male citizens.



From a poster about the ways in which women aided the Union army.

Feminists were horrified by the blatant ignoring of their rights. Black Abolitionists and their allies urged the feminists to support the Amendment because it had the possibility of ending the intense repression directed against former slaves. Republican Party bureaucrats urged the feminists to support it to keep the party together. There were signs of a split in the north and the Party wanted the southern Black vote to insure their majority in Congress. They saw no advantage for themselves in white women getting the vote. To them, women's suffrage was merely a controversial, radical issue which angered their conservative male members.

The 15th Amendment outlawed racial discrimination at the polls. Stanton summed up their position against that amendment: "...are you willing to have the colored man enfranchised before the women; I say no; I would not trust him with my rights; degraded, oppressed himself; he would be more despotic with the governing power than ever our Saxon rulers are...If women are still to be represented by men, then I say let only the highest type of manhood stand at the helm of State."

Narrowing the Vision

There were white women who understood the amendments represented survival to Blacks, especially in the South, and they campaigned for them. Among them was Lucy Stone, one of the founders of the AWSA.

The fact that the women who formed the AWSA had correctly allied themselves with former slaves did not mean they were politically more conscious. On the contrary, many were just as racist as the NWSA women but were easily "bullied" into putting their cause second because they did not believe women should be treated equally in anything but the vote. They supported suffrage in large part because of women's moral uprightness and the need for reform.

While the NWSA emphasized the inalienable rights of females as individuals, the struggle for women's suffrage, in opposition to the 14th and 15th amendments, had forced the radical feminists to soften their position on social and sexual freedom in order to gain allies. The political climate, in pre-Civil War days favorable to their cause, turned increasingly hostile. Faced with this hostility, the NWSA narrowed its focus more and more to suffrage and in 1890 merged with AWSA, there being little difference between the two by that point.

The Women's Movement and Labor

In 1920, women finally won the vote. But by that time, the campaign had become so narrow that the victory all but ended the women's movement. To win the vote, leaders pushed for the lowest political unity that white, middle-class women could unite around (meaning unity that did not challenge their privileged position.) Naturally, their class interests conflicted with those of the thousands of poor, largely immigrant women who made up the bulk of the female work force.

At the turn of the century one of the arguments the suffragists used most effectively was that women's primary duty was to the health of her children and to the cleanliness of her home. To do her duty effectively, she needed the vote. The fulfillment of her responsibilities depended on sanitation policies, housing standards, etc. Thus they countered the allegation that suffragists sought to destroy the home.

That women's duty was to cleanliness of the home was the same argument employers used to oppress women workers. Women did not belong in the workforce - therefore it was alright to pay them \$3.50 a week for 12 hours of work a day. Where the early women's movement had at least challenged the sexist ideas that led to the oppression of women workers, suffragists at the turn of the century supported those ideas.

In 1903, the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) was established by a coalition of settlement house workers and labor officials "to assist in the organization of Women workers into trade unions." In its early years, the WTUL honestly attempted to follow the lead of working women.

But the WTUL was not exempt from the forces around them. The League was split between the reformers who sought legislation and encouraged rich sympathizers to join the League, and the unionists, who felt emphasis should be placed on organizing the workers into unions. The unionists saw that the influence of the socialites (the wives of the bosses) in the League would compromise them politically.

History proved them to be correct. The reformists position won out; the League turned increasingly toward legislative reform and the spiritual uplifting of factory workers. Their membership fell and by 1930 WTUL's budget was less than \$10,000 and they had no full time organizers.

Conclusion

From the beginning of the women's movement, the majority of female social reformers were white, middle-class women. Their position gave them the leisure to work for change, it also blinded them to the true forces of change. They understood that they were oppressed but didn't connect that oppression with the class structure of their society or understand that their liberation lay in its destruction. Rather, they fought for the right to take part in the existing society. Having no clear idea of who their enemy was, they had no concept of who their allies were.

In studying the errors of the early women's movement we must keep in mind that they come from the material forces that gave rise to it, not from character flaws in the women involved. They went as far as that period of history allowed. They supported abolition because it was morally right, and later, because the abolitionists supported them. But there is no evidence that the white suffragists saw any real connection between the liberation of Black people and themselves.

Their class bias kept them from seeing the strengths that the thousands of working women could have brought to the women's movement. Their privileged position depended on the oppression of working women as well as slaves so they made little attempt to include working women in their demands. When they did support workers' struggles it was usually to teach the ignorant masses their "superior" moral values.

Today's women's movement, coming out of present material conditions has the basis to (but no guarantee that it will) overcome the racism and class bias of our early sisters. While understanding the different conditions we are working in, we can still draw lessons from them and struggle against making the same deadly errors.

WOMEN: the family & revolution

For many women the following descriptions of family life are accurate.

A woman with two children struggles daily to attend job training while maintaining her household. Most likely her day starts somewhere around 6-6:30am. She gets out of bed, wakes the children and gets them dressed, then she gets ready. If breakfast is provided elsewhere then this task is foregone. Changes of clothes, bottles, books, and children, are all gathered up and hustled to the car.

Everyone in the family may have separate destinations. By midmorning each family member has been into their own day for several hours.

5-6pm finds the family coming back together. Dinner, baths, household chores, tension and bedtime make short work of a family's time spent together. This takes place five days a week. Some days are better; others worse.

The weekend brings hope of a break in the chaos, yet is often filled with catching up on household duties and the children. After a hard week a mother is lucky if she has some spare time to relax.

The way the family is supposed to be and the reality of the family are actually quite different. We are constantly confronted through the mass media with a picture of the ideal family. It is a nice white family with a beautiful suburban house and a petit bourgeois morality which serves to justify these ideals, and tries to convince us that eventually things always work out.

Another picture might look something like this: a woman with three children, her only skills are housekeeping and child raising. She faces the same chores, the same problems the same four walls, the children, and possibly a man day in and day out.

She wonders alot why she feels depressed, unmotivated and tired. More and more she realizes that she's in a tiny box - isolated from the "real" world where the

"important" things happen. Society doesn't value her unwaged labor. She is invisible and forced to live inside herself.

Capitalism and the Family

The family under capitalism is an individual economic unit whose functions performed by women have included maintenance, reproduction, and socialization of future generations, of the workforce. It has also served as a buffer against the outside pressures of society.

The family has also been an institution to control the sexuality of individuals. One of the primary functions of the family is reproduction, thus male/female relationships have been the backbone of the family structure. By institutionalizing this structure for both the family and personal relationships, gay women and men have been socially excused from having children, being parents, and from the model family unit.



Those that argue that the family as it presently exists is a "great proletarian institution" have only to look at Boston for examples of the reactionary character the family can exhibit in the white working class.

SEIZE THE TIME P 10
Rallied to defend their homes and children against "niggers", white working class families have stoned Black children in an effort to keep them out of white (working class) schools. Third World people have been forcibly kept out of white (working class) neighborhoods to protect whites' homes (private property.)

Women's Unwaged Labor

Another aspect of the monogamous structure of the family has been the privileges that men have enjoyed at the expense of women's oppression. Traditionally, "all housework is women's work", a woman's place is in the home taking care of the children (the average father spends 37.7 minutes daily with his children). The man is the boss, if he says jump, you jump. His wife is the object that he orders around at will often unconsciously and often in response to frustrations built-up on the job.

As imperialism has developed several changes have occurred in the family. First the family as an economic unit performs most of the functions that it did under capitalism, but it has become under imperialism a consumption unit as well. Rather than producing our own goods, we are forced to buy these things. This consumption role of the family is integral to imperialist economy. Yet the chain food restaurants and 25 different types of anti-perspirants that exist right along side of people who don't have enough food, all testify to the waste and chaos of imperialism.

The family as a primary center of socialization is changing also. Public education, day care centers, and television are all exerting an influence over the development of our children's values at earlier and earlier ages. Although the family still exerts quite a bit of control over children, it doesn't compare with 30 years ago.

The family unit is finding it harder and harder to act as a buffer against outside pressures. As the hard times get worse and as more women question their lives, the family is affected. Relationships become intolerable and divorce rates soar. Families with two parents are not the rule anymore, in some communities they are the exception.

continued on pg 11

analysis on

the Lesbian Movement

We feel it is our responsibility to understand all aspects of the women's movement so that we can know what forces we have to fight with. This article is an analysis of some aspects of the position of our sisters who are lesbians. We are straight women and thus there are severe limitations on our writing this article - most of our ideas come from readings and talking with friends and comrades who are lesbians rather than from our own lives or political work with the gay movement. Because of our position we are unable to write about the personal oppression of being a lesbian and this limits the depth of the article. But a theoretical analysis of lesbianism is crucial for understanding the position that society places lesbians in and this article is our contribution to that task.

The Material Basis of Lesbians' Oppression.

We think that there is a material basis for the oppression of lesbians. The history of the oppression of gay people is based on the need of the ruling classes to control people and property.

"As people began to develop technology and to accumulate surpluses, it became necessary to establish clear lines of male inheritance. Reproduction thus came to be institutionalized with the development of private property, the first class relationships, and the institution of marriage. Thus, formalized relationships developed not out of the necessity of insuring reproduction (which was being taken care of well enough) but out of the need to control it and to control people and their relations to the means of production. These institutions served to curb people's expressions of sexuality by penalizing reproduction outside of marriage which would threaten the transmission of property and property relationships."

Homosexual relationships are a rebuttal to the historically oppressive ideology of sexuality being based on reproduction and the institutionalization of marriage. Lesbianism challenges the "natural" sexual division of labor which is the ideology behind the appropriation of women's invisible labor in the nuclear family. Lesbians are proving that women do not have to be dependent on either a man or the state and are breaking down stereotypical sex roles. Because lesbians are challenging these props that allow the bourgeoisie to secure profits through the exploitation of both waged and unwaged women workers, it is in the interests of the bourgeoisie to oppress lesbians.

In contemporary society repressing gay people is part of the systematic divisions created by the bourgeoisie to maintain super profits. Employers and landlords use this division in the same way as the lack of a "green card" or white skin is the basis for low wages and increased exploitation at work and in the community.

Confrontation With The State.

The superexploitation of gay women means she becomes proletarianized and through this process acquires the possibility of a new world outlook. The repression that the state dishes out to lesbians enables them to see the capitalist system for what it is and provides the basis for understanding why there are roles and institutions to maintain control over the masses. They come into confrontation with the state and through struggles such as fighting the state for worker control of gay V.D. clinics they have the possibility of developing a mass gay anti-imperialist movement.

Culture.
The reshaping of our lives involves more than destroying society. It involves creating a new vision of ourselves as beautiful. Imperialism oppresses the culture of colonized countries, and inside the belly of the beast

we know we have to nourish the people's culture. Women's culture is important to women's power and lesbians are forefront in the struggle to create a new understanding of women to challenge on every level the behaviour and self-conception of emotional and psychological dependence and self hatred we have been taught and are teaching us to be strong in and outside ourselves.

Lesbians contribute to the women's movement important new role models for strength and independence. They are often in the lead in getting skills and knowledge men have controlled. Because they have rejected men's definitions and standards of women and therefore having no stake in men's approval or in oppressive subservient behaviour they are more committed to fighting sexism and sex role behaviour. As women we need to develop our leadership skills, and lesbians are pushing us forward in this way.

As part of the revolutionary process in this country, we need a cultural revolution around sexism and heterosexism. We have to all struggle against bourgeois notions of attraction and develop politics as a basis for relating to each other. Many feminists have found a new sexuality with other women through their political work with them.

Struggles Within The Left.

In addition to racism and sexism, anti-homosexuality is part of the false consciousness that divides the working class. Unfortunately this has not been struggled with by many people who consider themselves communists, either in their political work or amongst themselves. It is necessary to draw a clear line between the people, gay or straight, and the ruling class. Communists have reacted negatively to lesbians and gay men for two main reasons. One is the subjective reaction of having to face one's own sexual identity and prejudices when confronted with a choice. The other reaction has been based on seeing gay struggl-

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Women; the Family and Revolution

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Lesbian women are demanding that they be allowed the right to raise their children without state interference. Children go through crisis after crisis because of material conditions because the ideology that they learn in schools is not the same as what they experience on the streets and at home.

Children live in a society that does not value its future generations as human beings in their own right. In fact, the actual care and nurture of children is seen as an individual responsibility, not a community one. The state is only interested in making sure that children learn the right rules so they will be able to fit properly into their class position.

The Family and Revolution

The family as an individual economic unit is a waste of full productive potential. The hours each family must spend washing dishes, shopping and preparing food, and the need for each woman in the family to repeat these tasks over and over while her neighbor is doing the same thing, is an unnecessary duplication of labor. Each family instead of being a social grouping of primary relationships is a domestic work unit. These domestic workshops are not recognized as part of the labor force, although it is only through the extraction of women's unwaged labor in maintaining and reproducing the workforce that surplus value is created by waged working men.

It is this very fact that women's labor is channeled into the home and ripped off that makes the family's present character exploitive for women and not the fact that the family is a source of primary relationships and attachments.

Many of us have questioned the family, the personal relationships inside it and it's relations to women's oppression. Some state that the family as a structure must be abolished in order to end women's oppression. We would argue against this. Instead, we would put forward that it is the economic function of the family as an individual work unit which we must reform. Because women's unwaged labor has been institutionalized in the family it, and

not the internal relationships of family members, forms the basis for women's oppression. The family as a potential source of strength, learning, and love is very necessary and desirable.



Engels wrote that "As soon as the means of production pass into common ownership, the individual family will cease to be the economic unit of society. The domestic economy will be converted into a social matter as well as the care and education of children."

This change will directly affect the degree of women's oppression. As the hours of domestic labor diminish, women would be free to actively participate in the socialized workforce to a greater extent than we do now. For those of us caught in the "second shift" between work and home we will be freed from the double work load and exploitive conditions we face in the workplace. When this happens, the division of labor according to sex will lose its material basis. This will greatly advance our road to liberation.

Correspondingly, changes inside the family will occur. Collectivizing the way labor power is maintained will allow the creative and emotional characteristics of family life to become the primary reason for their existence. Comraderie and spiritual growth will be the family's functions. This also means that changed relationships between children and adults will necessarily take place. But biological ties between parents and their offspring will

continue and the change in the family under socialism will give these ties a more human content.

Children, like old people are valued little by capitalism. Too young to produce surplus value by their labor, they are contained and "educated" until they are able to do so. School, television, racist and sexist ideology all cooperate to stunt the development of creativity, self-awareness, and human values in our children. The years when an individual most needs to build a sense of cooperation, trust, and respect for themselves and others become the times filled with the most pain.

The problem in children's development does not lie in the shortcomings of their adult models. The problem comes from a society that de-emphasizes human values.

The creation of revolutionary values and culture is vital for our movement. Children and their growth is a collective responsibility. Their development is our future. The ability of our movement to develop these values lies in seeing children and families as an exciting and collective element to our movement.

The character of family life is not revolutionary in and of itself. It is for this reason and others that it must be viewed as an important aspect of our revolutionary work. The initiation of struggles around such areas as education, day care, social services and medical care as well as the development of the role of children and the family in the revolutionary movement are necessary.

Collective solutions to the difficulties are the solution- not less children. Community controlled day care and struggles for meaningful education for all children are some demands people can and are being mobilized around.

By integrating the family into revolutionary work, the movement to build a society with values based on fulfilling the needs of oppressed people and not profits will flourish. Here our revolutionary concepts will take hold and flower amongst the future generations-- the builders of socialism.



An Analysis on the Lesbian Movement continued from pg 10
es as bourgeois and not part of revolutionary anti-imperialist struggles. Because lesbianism is in contradiction to much of bourgeois ideology and its institutions, and because of the proletarianization of many lesbians, when working class politics and leadership are developed its revolutionary character will gain force. To some extent working class leadership does exist and there have been more confrontations about class bias in the lesbian movement than in the women's movement as a whole.

Tendencies in the Gay Movement that Need to be Struggled Against.

Lesbianism in itself is not a revolutionary strategy. There must be communist leadership for the gay movement to develop its perspective. It is important for lesbians to view their oppression as coming from the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and to develop a scientific und-

erstanding and strategy. Too often lesbian activists are separatists and do not support Cuba and other socialist countries which have anti-gay laws. This is both not recognizing the conditions and consciousness of other countries, thus being a form of cultural chauvinism, but is also placing sexual oppression as primary over class struggle, leading to isolation. While the oppression of being gay may be primary in a person's life it is important to objectively see that separatism as a strategy is counter-productive and that this oppression can only be ended by a total restructuring of society, and that is why a scientific socialist approach to gay struggles is necessary.

As straight women we must begin to understand what we need to change in ourselves to prevent the contradictions between us and our sisters who identify as lesbians from continuing to be antagonistic. The bourgeois ideology of

HARD TIMES Continued from page 17

leadership at the conference, and this leadership and the issues it raised were seriously dealt with. We believe that all honest conference participants learned much about the problems of coalition work and particularly the problem of racism. On Sunday, the conference participants dealt with a high level of political struggle and perhaps reached a high enough level of unity to continue in the future.

The success of criticism/self-criticism at all levels, the proposals the National Board puts forward for dealing with the errors of the conference, and clarification of the National Action Proposal will determine the future success of the Hard Times Movement. We believe that conference participants should struggle hard for correct political line over the next few months in order to win the movement away from the racists and the rightist. If this struggle within the Hard Times Movement is won, then the movement can become a vehicle of the masses to combat the Hard Times and give the Hard Times back to the ruling class.

heterosexual biases and a lack of women identity are part of the unacceptable anti-gay oppression by communists.

Conclusion.

There is a whole other realm to understanding society than a formal theoretical class analysis. Communists have to understand the concrete forms our struggle needs to take in our lives such as our sexuality and personal politics in order to appeal to the masses of people and we need to show leadership in these struggles. We need to support our sisters who in the very definition of themselves confront the bourgeois ideology which upholds the division of labor which oppresses all women. All forces are interdependent, and we need to develop a strategy that defines and connects all revolutionary forces.

STRATEGY FOR REVOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Imperialism means the oppression of nations whereby the monopoly capitalist class of the imperialist country super-exploits the labor of Third World peoples. The State, which is the special repressive force of this class, uses its military and economic power to maintain this oppression. We need to understand the relationship of the white working class within the US to this system of US international exploitation in order to develop a strategy and to smash it.

Slavery and the creation of the Black colony in the US was the institutionalization of imperialism in the US and laid the basis for white supremacy. This division in the working class was and still is absolutely necessary to the ruling class in its need to realise the superprofits extracted from the Third World by creating a market for those goods. After the second world war the State expanded the role of the white working class as such a market largely through the housing policies it developed which forced white workers to live in the suburbs and buy their own homes through the tightly controlled system of credit. Relative privilege meant higher wages with which to but the increased amount of commodities necessary in the new, lifeless communities in the suburbs.

The consumer economy is the key to understanding the role of the white working class in imperialism. The consumer economy devalued domestic labor in the home, and families were weighed down by debts; this forced women into the labor market where they were drawn into the growing clerical, State and service sectors as cheap labor.

As imperialism destroyed the natural economies of Third World countries this gave rise to national liberation struggles that we now see as the leading force of class struggle today. The victories of these struggles began to cut away at the superprofits of US capital which meant increased military spending in an attempt to defend US capital overseas, and increasing exploitation of the white working class.

This increased exploitation took the form of employing large numbers of women to do the work that, because of the development of technology, no longer required highly skilled workers. The degradation of labor throws many white men out of their jobs; it also generally separates working people from the knowledge of the production process. This knowledge or skill is incorporated into the machines which are controlled by a small section of white men who occupy managerial positions and whose interests, along with those of the trade union bureaucrats, become more and more closely identified with those of the ruling class.

There are two ways that the high unemployment of the working class is hidden. The State greatly expanded higher education to provide the skilled workers needed by imperialism, but in its decline it no longer has a place for them; the schools become swollen with young people, mostly white, who cannot find jobs. The other way the State has hidden unemployment has been by drafting young men to fight in its imperialist wars.

Imperialism has meant the expansion of the State; it grows militarily to protect its interests overseas, and subsidises industry while at the same time acting as a huge market for it. It created jobs on the one hand while expanding social services; it attempts to provide education for the labor force and now unemployment, welfare, health programs and so on to maintain this labor force and prop up the failing system of imperialism. However, as superprofits get cut away the State becomes less and less able to hide the job crisis or provide the services needed by the working class.

We see then two sectors as being strategic to organize in the white working class. These are working women and the unemployed. The State's increasing inability to support these two sectors and their desperate need to survive throws them into the forefront of the white working class in the struggle against imperialism.

WORKING WOMEN

The organization of working women becomes of primary strategic importance because their working two jobs, their location in the waged labor force, and how these first two reasons link them with Third World women. They are located strategically as the weakest link in the chain of relative privilege.

The growth of clerical work that started with the development of monopoly capitalism continues to become a crucial part of its workings. Paper work employs as many people as production. 70% of clerical work is done by women. The other major area that employs women is the service sector with 12 million women employees.

Working women's desperate need for social services confronts head-on the sexual division of labor and they become vanguard in seeing the need to socialise "women's work" or domestic labor. They also see that doing this means a total reorganization of labor generally and that the drive for profit prevents it. Their double oppression, at home and at the workplace, leads them to be the spearhead in the movement to fight imperialist organization of labor that forces them into this role.

Thus it becomes crucial to organize childcare as by doing this we are challenging the sexual division of labor (particularly when the degradation of labor means the unemployment of men and how they begin working in childcare centers) freeing women to fight in the community and the workplace. At this stage, childcare in the community is the key to organizing working class women.



Childcare is the key to organizing women

Working women play a critical role in combatting white supremacy, the major division in the working class. This is because of the way white women have been drawn into the labor force in such huge numbers in the last twenty years has dumped on them the same double workload that Third World women have carried for centuries. White and Third World women now have a basis to build a concrete and practical unity that did not exist prior to this time; the quality of their superexploitation at the workplace and their crying need for social services due to male supremacy which has prevented the socialization of domestic labor, unites them in the fight against capital. It is through this strategic unity that we can attack the racism of the white working class. However, while we understand and work for this unity we must not let it obscure the real material differences that exist between white and Third World women. Rather, we must strengthen our unity and solidarity by supporting the special struggles of Third World women.

THE UNEMPLOYED

The strategic quality of unemployed people is that in working collectively we can have control over our labor and collectively appropriate the fruits of that labor. Survival becomes a strategy for living. The whole organization of labor is breaking down and confronting imperialism. The process of replacing men with machines without the new fields of investment that creates additional jobs means a tremendous growth of the unemployed. In addition, the fact that there are no jobs for people coming out of the greatly expanded school system leaves a great many young, educated and

unemployed people.

Without the money to afford the kinds of commodities that the bourgeois ideology taught them was the road to happiness but with the expectations that their education fostered, they are key in that they are ready to find new solutions and ways to live. Their location in the economy enables them to see through commodity fetishism. Unemployed people have come together spontaneously, with time on their hands as their most valuable resource, to find collective solutions to their needs. The People's Food System is an example of this.

ALTERNATIVE INSTITUTIONS

We must find collective solutions to the problems of food, housing, healthcare, childcare, education, energy, transportation and culture. Working collectively means having control over knowledge. It directly challenges the way monopoly capitalism has self-consciously broken work down into its separate parts through the introduction of machinery, how it has institutionalised the specialization of work and the resulting creation of a group of managers outside the working class who take control of knowledge through the "science" of scientific management.

Working collectively means making decisions around what you produce and how you produce it. In health for example, it means deciding which areas of health are primary to work in, what kind of education to promote or which treatment to use; it means opening a dialogue with the community to find out what people's needs are. It means recognizing that different sectors of the population have different health care needs and making decisions around that.

Through collective practice people begin to create solutions that make clear how imperialism oppresses us in its inability to serve our needs. For instance, we learn how preventative medicine needs more emphasis than cure.

The international basis of imperialism becomes clear too through this practice. E.g., people working in community food stores begin to understand and address the contradictions of stocking cheap bananas to serve the people on the one hand, while on the other learning that the reason they are so cheap is due to the superexploitation of labor in the distorted mono-crop economies of the Third World. We must unite with anti-imperialist groups to develop propaganda around these issues and to support national liberation struggles in our community work.

We see then how alternative institutions teach us concretely about imperialism at the same time as giving us a way to find new, alternative ways to live. By sharing the details of our daily lives we begin to understand that what we considered to be our personal problems are our experience of an oppressive system.

The breakup of the community by the forces of consumerism and advertising is slowly replaced by a revolutionary culture. A new revolutionary culture links us with the revolutionary culture of our history and of liberation struggles around the world. This is the culture of collectivity which teaches us the process of criticism-self criticism so that we can forge our collective strength and struggle against individualism. Above all it is about creating a new way to work together and learning to struggle to support each other. We have to learn to live collectively and create new families that can survive the crisis and win the hard struggle for liberation by linking our needs and resources to develop quality survival commodities and services in our communities while fighting against the degradation of life within the belly of the monster.

LINKING THE WORKPLACE WITH COMMUNITY STRUGGLES

Our strategy for socialist revolution in the US is to organize the strategic sectors of the working class to provide bases from which to build a people's army to seize control of the means of production, which means seizing state power.

Organizing for revolution in the workplace has encountered two main obstacles: a) Economism with its ultimate expression as reactionary trade unions that collude with monopoly capital to police the labor force and, b) Ultra-leftism where progressive struggles are entered into before there is enough broad based support to win and thus they are easily smashed. We need therefore to go to the community where the contradictions of working mothers and the un-

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HISTORICAL AND ECONOMIC BASIS OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION



CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT AND THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

Although the oppression of women predates capitalism, capitalist development has drastically changed its forms. Today, imperialism exploits women through both our unwaged labor in the home and our superexploitation in the work force. Women's unwaged labor in the home reproduces and maintains the labor force, materially as well as ideologically. Women are also primary consumers of the goods and services produced by the system. At the same time, huge numbers of women have been drawn into the labor force. We work in the worst-paid and least skilled jobs, which is justified on the ideological grounds that woman's place is in the home and that our work force participation is marginal. This is a myth and a falsehood. The growth of corporations and the state have led to new areas of work which have become sexually segregated, especially clerical and service work. Women are super-exploited in the work place precisely because of the dual economic function we fulfill in working a double shift.

The Dollmaker, a novel by Harriette Arnow, illustrates sharply the changes in women's oppression brought by capitalism. Gertie Nevels, the dollmaker, is a Kentucky mountain woman in the 1940's who, along with her children, supplies most of her family's needs by working the land, raising vegetables, chickens, hogs, making their clothing, and carving tools and utensils. The Nevels are removed from a wage and money economy. Gertie's husband, Clovis, does odd jobs as a mechanic and hauler, but hates the mountains and is fascinated by the city. When Clovis receives a notice for a draft physical and leaves, Gertie uses her lifetime store of secret savings to buy a small farm so that the family will no longer have to work shares. Just as she completes this transaction, she finally hears from Clovis, who has been rejected by the draft, but has gotten a job at high wages in the defense industry in Detroit. Community pressure forces Gertie and the children to give up their farm and join Clovis in Detroit. There, they live in crackerbox housing, hastily built for defense workers. Clovis, proud of his high wages, buys store food, fashionable clothing, a stove, refrigerator, and radio. Gertie not only does not want these consumer goods, but she does not know how to use them. She comes home from the grocery store time after time with rancid meat; she knows how to birth, nurse, grow, slaughter, and cure a hog, but not how to buy meat. Clovis cannot understand why Gertie is not grateful for the new riches that he is providing.

Overnight, Gertie is changed from a producer

of goods for her family to a consumer of those goods, dependent on her husband's wages. She no longer plays a central productive role for her family. Not only is Gertie unable to deal with her increasing uselessness and dependency, but the entire family goes through severe shocks. The children are unable to "adjust" to the city; one runs away and another is killed by a train. Gertie and Clovis grow further apart. Gertie has worked on carving a head of Christ for years; she finally gives up this last creative use of her energy. What happens to Gertie in the course of a few months is the same thing that has happened to women more slowly over the past two hundred years. The development of capitalism, dispossession from the land, industrialization, and forced urbanization changed women from producers of sustenance for our families to consumers of goods, bought mainly with our husbands' wages. Women changed from producers to consumers and were made more dependent on men.

The Nevel's life in Kentucky is similar to the majority of white people in colonial North America. On the farm there was an age and sex division of labor. Men worked in the fields, and with livestock, while women grew gardens, raised poultry, took care of the dairy, spun, wove, and made clothes, in addition to caring for the house and the children. Children learned sex roles early by actually engaging in work. Fathers were thus responsible for part of the socialization of their sons. In the towns, families engaged in a variety of trades and crafts. Women and children took part in the work, and widows frequently succeeded their husbands as shop heads. Although women had an inferior status to men, they were respected for their crucial role in making a living. Colonial white women had some civil and political rights, such as the right to vote, which they lost after the revolutionary period.

On the farm, work was life. Industrialization separated the two. Rather than producing their means of subsistence, families began to rely on wages earned by fathers and older children to consume the goods and services necessary for survival. Family members no longer worked as a collective unit. Home and workplace were separated. As money came to be the measure of all things, the work that women did in the home was increasingly socially degraded.

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, young women and children were the principal industrial work force. Young New England farm women, not urgently needed by the family subsistence unity, moved to mill towns to work in textile production. They were not only a

cheap labor force for the mill owners, but they were not a drain on agricultural development in a labor-scarce society. These young women usually worked for several years prior to marriage, when they returned to the farms.

Farmers' daughters were soon replaced by an even cheaper source of labor: immigrants. The huge numbers of Irish immigrants who began to come to the U.S. in the late 1830's became the new industrial work force. During the rest of the century they were succeeded by waves of immigrants from Germany, and, finally, from eastern and southern Europe, providing a constantly growing, cheap, unskilled labor force. Native-born white North Americans had access to the cheap and fertile lands of the constantly moving frontier. Immigrants rarely had the means to buy the land or the tools necessary for farming. They were forced to settle in eastern and mid-western cities and to work at whatever jobs were available. The labor of immigrant women, men, and children supplied most industrial needs.

Although bitterly exploited themselves, the European immigrants soon found that North-American racism could be turned to their own short-term advantage. Each wave of immigration drove black workers out of the skilled or semi-skilled jobs they had, and between 1881--1900, over 50 strikes occurred in which white workers protested the employment of blacks.

The situation of black women under slavery differed from the patterns that characterized the white working class. As slaves, black women and men suffered equally in the exploitation of their labor and through racial oppression. But black women also reproduced the slave labor force and served as sexual objects for their white owners. In raising their children, black women also developed the resistance of the slave community, by teaching them how to do the least work possible, how to keep from punishment and how to survive and rebel. After the abolition of slavery, while many black women continued to do agricultural labor, many others got jobs as domestics or factory operatives. Since the late 19th century, a higher proportion of black than white women have been in the labor force out of economic necessity. When black men were unable to obtain jobs, black women supported their families through the lowest paid and worst jobs.

All women were affected by the process of industrialization. Machines and unskilled labor produced more cheaply and efficiently the goods which women had formerly made at home, such as textiles, clothing, and processed and preserved foods. City families had no access to the space or tools necessary to produce these goods. Most women slowly ceased being producers and became consumers. Their work in the home, rearing children and caring for the family's needs, became invisible because it was subordinate to the new means of life--wages.

At the same time, a class and race-biased ideology of the true woman was developing. The purity, piety, and domesticity of lily-white womanhood was used as a rationale for slavery and lynching, as well as for the exploitation of white women as servants and factory operatives. The ideal of the woman of leisure, perched on a pedestal, was held up as a model for all, but was only attainable by women whose families had enough wealth to release them from productive work.

Beginning with the abolitionist movement of the 1830's, white petit bourgeois women began to organize around women's rights. This movement, which culminated with the winning of suffrage in 1920, was a movement for bourgeois democratic rights: the right to education, to own property, to divorce, and finally the right to vote. The needs of working class women on the job, such as better wages and working conditions, were addressed by some social continued on p.8

HISTORICAL BASIS cont.

reformers in the early 20th century, and some protective legislation was passed. In general, however, the women's rights movement did not speak to the most pressing needs of poor, Third World, and working women.

As wage laborers, women were rarely organized into trade unions. Successful unions existed mostly in the skilled trades dominated by native-born white men. These men made few attempts to organize the predominately immigrant and black unskilled female work force. Unskilled men workers, who were struggling to found unions for themselves also feared the competition of cheaper women workers. Women began to organize in the 1830's, but it was not until the 20th century that powerful unions developed in any industry with a large concentration of women.

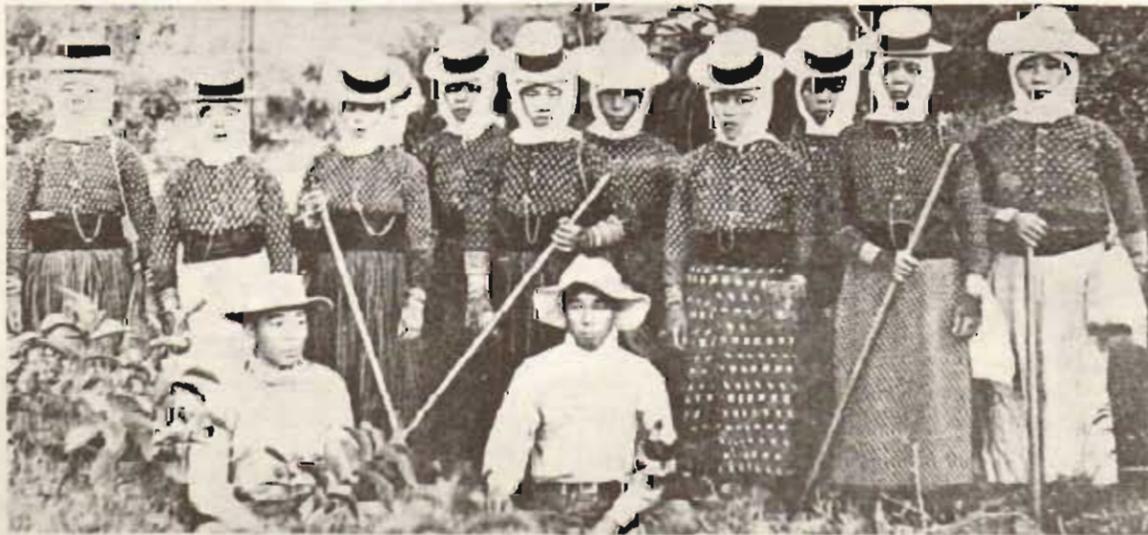
Family At Table—An Italian woman with tears running down her cheek said: "All the family work the whole week for so little we almost starve. All the week stick the pins in the cards, but more curses than pins go in the cards."



THE RISE OF IMPERIALISM

After the decisive victory of the Northern capitalists in the Civil War, the 1870's was a decade of tremendous monopolization. The ranks of the white working class swelled as millions of family farmers and small businessmen were driven out of business by the monopolies. These new city dwellers competed for jobs against the immigrants and the blacks. They could not grow their own food or chop their own firewood; they had been pushed into the orbit of the capitalist market. Even the home labor of preserving food and making clothes became an industry. The hours of unpaid labor of women in the home using crude household tools was devalued by the efficiency of the cannery and the sweatshop. The home producer became as obsolete as the master weaver or the blacksmith; technological unemployment became a household reality.

During the 1880's and 90's, the U.S. economy took on the classic features of imperialism, complete with the economic penetration and military occupation of Third World nations, whose workers, raw materials, and markets were subordinated to the needs of the rising imperialist power. Domestically, the period between 1890 and World War I defined the basic pattern of employment of the U.S. labor force, which persists to this day with only minor changes.



Japanese Women Sugar Plantation Laborers, Hawaii, 1918

Agricultural employment declined, while manufacturing employment remained steady--most new jobs were in finance, transportation, retail sales, public utilities, and services. A new domestic labor force had to be found that could be exploited more easily than the existing white male working class, whose increasing militance and organization presented a definite threat to "business prosperity." To move Third World people and white working class women into the gap, imperialism updated and solidified systems of white and male supremacy that offered material benefits to white working class men if they would side with the exploiters and not the most oppressed. Although these systems of white and male privilege weakened the working class in its struggle against capital, they did offer real payoffs to whites and men in the short run.

White men held the better-paid factory jobs, and became the foremen, supervisors, and managers in industry, finance, and the government bureaucracy. Depending on the region of the country, Black men or Asians or Mexicans were hired for the dirtiest and most dangerous industrial work or as unskilled day laborers and farmworkers or as service workers such as janitors and orderlies. White women from the just-proletarianized petit-bourgeoisie and the upper sections of the working class were allowed into the growing semi-professions that grew out of the state's gesture toward organizing the human services that women wage workers could no longer do at home--teaching, nursing, social work. Black and other TW women were servants of the white professionals, as cleaning women in their homes, or as aides and paraprofessionals on the job. TW women also worked in the most exploited manufacturing jobs--textiles, garments, food processing. Working class white women filled the rapidly increasing clerical and sales jobs. Badly paid and increasingly organized to resemble assembly-line labor, these jobs were glamorized by the white male supremacist image of the All-American (i.e. white) office girl with her J. C. Penny wardrobe and her Colgate smile. As Third World women flooded into the clerical paper factories, the image wears increasingly thin: during the last 20 years the clerical sector has been the fastest-growing employer of Black women.

THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN WOMEN'S WAGED AND UNWAGED LABOR

At the beginning of this century, most women were exploited primarily through the rip-off of our unwaged labor in the home reproducing and maintaining the workforce. Only about a fifth of white women (mostly young, single, immigrants or the daughters of immigrants) and a third of Black women worked for wages; less than 5% of married white women also worked outside the home. All of this was changed by maturing imperialism.

After World War II, the U.S. became the leading force in the world capitalist economy. This position of power rested on three pillars: (1) investment outside the U.S. and war production inside the U.S. to reinforce it; (2) government spending on highways and education in the U.S.; and (3) the creation of



In July 1973, 700 textile workers, most of them women, won their six month strike against Oneita Knitting Mills in South Carolina. In addition to

a consumer economy resting on the consumption of "consumer durables." To ward off the spectre of another disastrous post-war depression, the ruling class steered toward the creation of a consumer economy by promoting the construction of suburban single-family homes rather than apartments or public housing. The lay-out of the new suburbs ensured that every family would need to buy its own home, cars, and a set of major appliances. The domestic economy was imperialized to create new markets and new investment outlets that could keep the rate of profit up.

For the ruling class, this strategy was very profitable; for white working class women, it turned the world upside down. The household was now completely transformed into a unit of consumption. To help the family purchase the expensive new necessities and pay off the mortgage, more and more wives and mothers were drawn into wage labor.

Today more than half of all women 18 to 65 years old work for wages; more than 40% of married women living with their husbands also have paid jobs. More than 40% of women with school age children are in the wage labor force, four times the 1940 figure.

The family structures that make sense when women work full-time in the home cannot endure when women work two jobs. Almost 40% of marriages end in divorce; a fifth of U.S. families are headed by a woman (more than double the 1940 figure.)

White working class women are the weak link in the chain of privilege that bind the white working class to the bourgeoisie. Subject to male supremacy as well as to class exploitation, we get relatively little of the benefits of being white. At work or at the welfare office, we find ourselves on the bottom of the heap, close to Black and other Third World women and men. These conditions give the material basis for a political alliance between white working class women and the leading struggles of Third World peoples.

If we live with a white working class man, he sees the cost of male supremacy every payday. If he sees that male supremacy costs the family more than he gains as a relatively privileged worker, he has the real basis to join the fight against inequalities in the class and the imperialist system.

Imperialism has made use of the historical oppression of women to maintain its profits and power. By pulling us into wage labor for the imperialists we have been brought into the arena of the struggles for national liberation and against class exploitation. Whether we fight our fellow workers for crumbs of privilege from the imperialist table or work to build an alliance against imperialist domination is a question of political leadership. Communists should see our task as providing leadership in the struggle to build a revolutionary alliance between white workers and the oppressed Third World people.

PARTY BUILDING - OUR PRIMARY TASK

Party-Building is Our Primary Task

Under the blows of the oppressed nations and the workers, imperialism is sickening to death before our eyes. Yet we know that socialist revolution is not inevitable. In the advanced capitalist countries, including the USA, even the fiercest waves of class struggle have been channelled into reformism. As we analyze world history, we see that it requires a truly revolutionary communist party to organize the working class for the seizure of state power and the establishment of a workers' state.

So in an age of revolution, party-building is an immediate task. It is all the more urgent because at present the imperialists seem to be pushing their crisis onto the backs of the workers and the oppressed nationalities* in this country. Within the next few years we can expect a mass upsurge of resistance like the 30's or 60's. Will the conscious elements be prepared to lead this mass explosion? Will we have consolidated the essential elements of strategy and political line in a communist organization that can direct spontaneous resistance toward revolution?

As Marxist-Leninists, we see party-building as our primary task. All our work must be subordinated to this task, and we must understand how every effort fits into a concrete plan for party-building. Does our work advance the process of building toward the party? This is the final test.

Party-building is both an urgent and a protracted task. We disagree with those groups which think that the forces are now prepared to establish a new communist party. The merger between communist theory and the advanced workers, the necessary condition for the formation of the party, will take years to accomplish. But it is high time to specify the nature of the party we are building.

Nature of the Party

By studying revolutionary theory, our movement has some clarity about the general nature of the Marxist-Leninist party. The party is the highest form of organization of the proletariat, bringing together the most advanced fighters in the class around the most developed revolutionary theory; it is a party whose purpose is to organize the class for socialist revolution, so it is a party that leads not only politically but also militarily, an organization that is capable of carrying out both open and secret work and of exercising military discipline around its political line. Its line must be anti-revisionist, its organization democratic centralist, and its national composition subject to self-determination.

Anti-revisionism

Once we understand that the state is always the instrument for the forcible domination of one class by another, we understand that there can be no peaceful road to socialism, there can be no lasting revolution without the arming of the workers and the suppression of the newly defeated bourgeoisie. The lessons of Marx and Lenin were written in workers' blood in Chile: to get to a classless society, we must go through a period of the dictatorship of the working class, the domination of the vast majority of people over the exploiting few.

An anti-revisionist party's line acknowledges that monopoly capitalism reorganizes the world into a system of oppressed and oppressor nations. The party must recognize the leading role of Third World struggles within and without the borders of the United States, and organize white workers to uphold the right to secession for the oppressed nations in-

side this country. A real communist party never softens its support for national liberation struggles, never gives in to the opportunistic desire to appeal to the more privileged sectors of the workers.

Finally, a truly communist party in this country must hold and implement the line that the revolution in the United States is a one-stage revolution for the direct establishment of socialism, which means that masses of people must be educated to understand and want revolution. We reject the revisionist practice of economist anti-monopoly reformism for the masses, political training only for the handful of advanced workers who are individually chosen for situations where they can develop politically. Our leadership of mass struggles must put forth propaganda and forms of struggle that confront the question of power, advancing the workers' awareness of our historic role--to become a new ruling class that will reorganize society for the benefit of the working people of the world.

We must reject the long tradition of populist and economist trade union organizing in this country with its emphasis on narrow self-interest issues. Self-interest organizing only leads white workers to rise to the poison bait that the ruling class has dangled before us throughout U.S. history. The bait is a system of relative benefits--better jobs, housing, schools, etc.--that are offered white workers if we side with the white ruling class against Third World people. The poison is the divisions inside the working class that dooms all the workers to continued wage slavery.

Democratic centralism

The party will be democratic centralist, not bureaucratic centralist like most of the present would-be party groups on the North American left. Rank and file party members must develop rigorously as the theoretical and practical leadership of the class, trained in critical thinking by an inner Party life of vigorous debate on all the questions before the movement. Unless party members at all levels are armed with revolutionary theory, there is the danger that the party will not find and correct its errors, or that a bureaucracy will entrench itself and try to become a new ruling minority after the revolution.

Self-Determination

Our revolutionary vanguard organization will reflect the history and composition of the USA as an imperialist state with several oppressed nationalities within its borders. Oppressor nation communists support the self-determination of organizational forms by the revolutionary leadership of oppressed nations. For now, the leadership of each nationality may best develop in autonomous communist organizations. Joint practice and ideological struggle between Third World and predominantly white organizations should be a very high priority, leading to the closest organizational ties that can be achieved.

As white communists our task is to organize white workers to refuse the poison bait of privilege and join Third World workers in the struggle for socialism. As white communist women, our special role is to organize white working class women to reject the divisions of male supremacy as well as white supremacy.

A communist organization wins the title of "vanguard party" only after years of actually leading the workers' struggle in a revolutionary direction. Even though the RU, CLP, etc., may try, a Marxist-Leninist organization does not become the vanguard party by self-proclamation.

The Process of Party Building

The struggle for revolution merges communist theory with the practical struggles of the workers and oppressed nationalities. The Leninist theory of organization

says we do this by winning advanced workers to communism. The process has three key parts:

First we need to create a workers' communism, a body of theory that includes a) a tested strategy for revolution in this country. A strategy is an analysis of what forces should unite around what program in what general sequence to build a force that can establish a workers state. Strategy comes from our class analysis: who are the leading forces, the intermediate forces, the vacillating forces, and who is the enemy? What are the aspirations and demands of each friendly force and how can they be combined? What are the contradictions within and among the forces and how can they be resolved? Our theory must also include b) political lines that have shown in practice that they can address the problems posed in the struggle and lead the movement toward revolution. By political line we mean answers to particular questions like: "What are the correct slogans for a working class women's movement?" "Should we uphold the right of secession for the Mexicano people?"

Second, we need to win advanced workers to this communism. Advanced workers are the most politically progressive people who emerge in struggles, who have earned the respect of co-workers and actually exercise leadership. An advanced worker is not just the person who responds fastest to left propaganda.

Communists win the respect of advanced workers through our participation in real struggles. We must contend for political leadership of spontaneous struggles, seeking to demonstrate that our theory can solve the problems as they arise. Based on the political agreement and trust built up with advanced workers, we can then consolidate into higher organizational forms. Recruiting advanced workers will change the class base of the white left, still disproportionately young people with some college education, many of us having come through the civil rights and anti-war and women's movements of the 60's.

Third, we need to build political unity and clarity on the left, always attempting to isolate chauvinist and revisionist lines. We need unity between white and Third World communist organizations and among white organizations and individuals, winning anti-imperialists, feminists and independent socialists to the party-building process.

To summarize our views on party-building, we quote Le Duan: "A wise political line is the pre-condition for the existence of good cadres and good organizational work."

Continued on page D



*Since our group did not study the national question, we use the word nationality in a purposefully vague way, not to imply a position about which oppressed groups are nations and which are national minorities.

PARTY BUILDING cont.

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Contending Lines on Party-Building

To sharpen the debate on party-building, we contrast our views with other positions. One debate concerns the relation between theory and practice in the process of party-building. There is both a "left" and a right error on this question. The "left" dogmatic position puts theory primary but severs it from practice. This tendency holds that it is wrong for communists to contend for leadership of mass struggles before we have a party, because without a party mass work will inevitably degenerate into reformism. But Marxism-Leninism is not a static body of answers that can be learned from books and intra-left debates; it is precisely the science of applying theory to the analysis of concrete conditions. The "left" dogmatists are unable to say how they will identify and draw in advanced workers, except by conversations at the workplace. This line of "develop Marxist-Leninists first, mass work later," often put forward by revolutionaries who have stayed in graduate school too long, holds back both theoretical work and mass practice.

The right error also severs theory from practice but puts practice primary. This line is put forward by advocates of mass intermediate socialist organizations (miso's) like the Northern California Alliance in San Francisco. Their tailist analysis says we need a mass movement for socialism first, and then a communist party. To build this mass movement, they call for socialist organizations that are united around little more than a common

desire for socialism. To preserve tactical unity the question of the party is deferred and organizational debate on Marxism-Leninism and the long-range questions of strategy are ruled off the table.

We insist that theory and practice can advance only in a close dialectical relationship. Correct theory can only be worked out through constant testing in practice; but theory is primary until the present task of party-building, developing strategy and political line--has been significantly advanced.

A second area of debate concerns how we work to unify the working class in this country. What are the contending lines on how to unite the working class across the national, racial, sexual, and other divisions that splinter it?

The right opportunist error on this question denies the long and bitter history of divisions inside the US working class, and fails to see the systems of relative privilege that provide the material basis for white and male supremacy. The program that flows from this analysis emphasizes only those issues which preserve inequality for Third World people and white women. For instance, a right opportunist program would call for percentage rather than across-the-board raises, would soft-pedal issues like Affirmative Action, an end to imperialist wars, and self-determination for oppressed peoples--all issues that directly challenge the inequalities inside the class.

The "left" error is much less of a danger because it has been discredited for years. This position flows from the incorrect analysis that the entire white working class has been bought off by

imperialist super-profits, emphasizes white guilt politics and calls for acts of individual renunciation by white working class people. White workers are left with the role of cheerleaders for Third World struggles.

Our position is that equality within the working class is the essential condition for a unified struggle against the imperialists. Every struggle must both take up issues of the whole proletariat against the ruling class, and must also directly attack the systems of white and male supremacy that deal out unequal hands to Third World and white women workers. To attack the inequalities in the class, our program must emphasize the demands of the most oppressed. For example, the demand of "jobs or income now" is in the interest of the whole class. In our opinion, however, no jobs campaign would be correct unless it spoke directly to the ways unemployment comes down hardest on Third World people and on white working class women. So a jobs program would include such demands as ending deportations of undocumented workers, blocking daycare cutbacks that force mothers out of the waged workforce and daycare workers into the unemployment lines. A united struggle against the imperialists, certainly; but only on the basis of full equality.

Parts of this article were influenced by the party-building perspective put forward by the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee, Box 11768, Phila., Pa. 19101. Also see articles on Internationalism and Collectives and Mass Organizing in back issues of STT.



READING LIST



For further reading on some of the topics covered in this issue we suggest the materials below.

WOMEN

A. History and Political Economy

- *Edith Hoshino Altbach, From Feminism to Liberation, pbk. Includes several important articles: Mary Jo Buhle, "Women and the Socialist Party, 1901-14," Juliet Mitchell, "Women, the Longest Revolution," Margaret Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation."
- *Braverman, Harry, Labor and Monopoly Capital, Monthly Review Press. Important theory on the proletarianization of office work.
- *William Chafe, The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Role, 1920-70. Oxford Press, pbk. Liberal perspective, but good information
- *Maria Rosa Dalla Costa, The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community, Falling Wall Press. pbk. Although we don't agree with all of it, this was one of the first serious analyses of women's unwaged work in the home.
- *Marlene Dixon, article in Canadian Dimension, June 1975. M-L perspective on the women's movement.
- *Alison Edwards, "Rape, Racism, and the White Women's Movement," pamphlet from Sojourner Truth Organization, PO Box 8493, Chicago, ILL. 60680. Best piece yet on program for the white women's movement.
- *Mickey Ellinger, "We Can't Go Home Again: Working Women and the Family in the Age of Imperialism," excellent pamphlet available from STT.
- *Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle, Atheneum pbk. Liberal, but good basic history.
- *Alice Kraditor, Up from the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism, Quadrangle pbk. Liberal perspective.
- *Lavender Papers No. 2, "Lesbianism and Socialism," NY Women's School.



- *Lori Halmbold, et al, "Loom, Broom, and Womb," to be published soon. Write STT for info.
- *Modern Times Bookstore, "Women and their work, an annotated bibliography," 17th St. and Sanchez, SF.
- *NACLA, two special women's issues. for info write 2490 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA.
- *Sheila Rowbotham, Women, Resistance, and Revolution: A History of Women and Revolution in the Modern World, Random, pbk. Also Woman's Consciousness, Man's World, Penguin, pbk.
- *Mickey Rowntree, "More on the Political Economy of Women's Liberation," a critique of Benston. United Front Press.

B. Focus on Third World Women

- *Battle Acts, Special Issue by and about TW women. YAWF Women, 46 W. 21st St, NY 10010.
- *The Black Scholar, Special Issue on the Black Woman, Vol. 6, No. 6, PO Box 908, Sausalito, CA 94965. Includes Angela Davis on "The Black Woman in the Community of Slaves."
- *Toni Cade, ed. The Black Woman: An Anthology, NAL pbk.
- *Gerda Lerner, Black Women in White America, a Documentary History, Vintage pbk.
- *TW Women's Alliance, Triple Jeopardy, journal from 26 W 20th St., 3rd Floor, NY 10011.
- C. Women's Literature
- *Harriet Arnow, The Dollmaker, Avon pbk.
- *Rita Mae Brown, Rubyfruit Jungle, Daughters Inc.
- *Toni Cade, Gorilla, My Love
- *Tillie Olson, Tell Me a Riddle, Yonnonido, Dell, pbks.
- *Marge Piercy, Small Changes, Fawcett.
- *Agnes Smedley, Daughter of Earth, Feminist Pr.
- D. Women in Prison
- *Kathryn Burkhardt, Women in Prison
- *Jessica Mitford, Kind and Usual Punishment
- *Univ. Cal, Berk. School of Criminology, Crime and Social Justice
- *Eric Wright, Politics of Punishment

Black struggles in the US, a beginning list

- *Robert and Pam Allen, Reluctant Reformers: Racism and Social Reform Movements in the US Doubleday Anchor, pbk.
- *Harold Baron, The Demand for Black Labor: History and Political Economy of Racism, NEFP, 60 Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143
- *Lerone Bennett, The Shaping of Black America
- *W.E.B. DuBois, Black Reconstruction in America, Atheneum, pbk.
- *Sojourner Truth Organization, White Supremacy: A Collection, PO Box 8493, Chicago, Ill, 60680, pamphlet, 75¢.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT TODAY

The 1960's saw a tremendous upsurge in women's consciousness and the development of a women's movement which catalyzed incredible changes in women's perceptions of themselves, their relationships with others, and to society as a whole. The energies unleashed by this movement were directed in many different ways with varying political perspectives. In this article we would like to explore the different forces of the women's movement as it exists today.

Bourgeois Feminism

For many women the capitalist system remains viable. It is a system to which they are bound by aspiration. Comprised primarily of women who are professionals, wives of middle management, etc., bourgeois feminism attacks sexist ideology, seeing it as the main enemy; as just a faulty aspect of a "workable system".

The system's structures generally work to their advantage, but the ideology of sexism presents an obstacle to advancement within the system, and is a constant source of moral outrage. Institutional sexism is perceived to be rooted in ideas.

In attacking sexism from this perspective, the bourgeois feminist movement can go no further than reformism. In fact, sexist ideas have been challenged by their struggles, but with ideas as the enemy reforms become goals, in and of themselves.

Those reforms generally reflect the interests of white, educated, "upper-middle class" women. The ERA campaign, much of the abortion movement, in electoral politics, etc.; bourgeois feminists have sought paper solutions to a form of oppression which their class bias prevents them from understanding.

Bourgeois feminists have viewed the oppression of Third World people in much the same ways that they view their own oppression. As opportunities denied, and a moral outrage, rather than as wealth, culture, and lives stolen and destroyed, and as an integral function of US Imperialism.

Roots of the Women's Movement

The upsurge of women's consciousness which gave rise to the women's movement can be linked directly to the struggles of the 1960's; the Civil Rights Movement, the free speech movement, and the anti-war movement. The resurging open rebellion of Third World people within the US made the oppressive and destructive nature of Imperialism very visible to white students.

Struggles around racism and discrimination developed across the country, and student support for the Civil Rights Movement developed organizational forms. These organizations provided an essential education, and spurred the reshaping of progressive forces within the white left. As Third World national forms of organization developed, the focus of the white left shifted from the Civil Rights Movement to the free speech movement and the Vietnam War.



Women's march on the Pentagon, 4/10/71

The Women's Liberation Movement

The treatment which women were receiving from men on the left; their exploitation as sexual objects and their assign-



ment to menial tasks rather than leadership positions began to be seen as more than just a simple division of labor. Women began to realize that they were being put into these roles because of male supremacist ideas of "women's natural inferiority." Women turned more and more to each other in an attempt to understand their oppression.

One of the first forms to develop in an attempt to deal with sexism was the consciousness raising group. These groups were originally developed by women who had studied the "speak bitterness" sessions of China, a tactic developed by the Chinese Communist Party to encourage peasants to voice their experiences of brutality and oppression at the hands of the landlord class. This enabled many peasants to get in touch with their rage, lose their fear of their historic oppressors, and greatly moved the revolutionary process forward. The consciousness raising groups served a similar purpose in the women's liberation movement. Thousands of women came to understand that the pain and humiliation they faced was not unique, but rather was the result of a system which institutionalized male supremacy.

The response of the male left to this growing women's movement was one of contempt. Women were laughed at, ridiculed and ignored. This treatment became unbearable, and many women left mixed organizations to form autonomous women's organizations. The autonomous women's movement developed new forms of organization, some of which we will look at in the following sections.

Women's Culture

As women became more aware of the dominance of the male supremacist point of view that pervades "culture" in our society, they saw the need to develop cultural forms that would speak to women's needs as well as celebrate her strength and resistance. This movement has created many breakthroughs in poetry, music, films and art depicting the joyous side of women's experiences as well as the daily oppression which she must endure. Much of the theme in women's culture is devoted to celebrating the new strength which women have found in learning to love one another.

Women artists, for the most part, work in collective fashion and try to break down the elitist separation between audience and "star" which occurs in mainstream culture. Because of the tight control which monopolistic firms hold over "culture" in our society, these new art forms have not had wide distribution. Women's culture is too threatening to the male supremacist underpinnings of the multi-million dollar music, film, and art industry.

Women's Right to Self Defense

As the women's movement grew and as more and more women began to redefine themselves, the right of women to defend themselves against attack from men emerged as an important concept. Women organized anti-rape groups, self defense classes, and political defense committees in support of women under attack by the law for exercising this right. Their work has done a great deal to bring a better understanding of the most vicious aspects of sexism, and a more sympathetic attitude amongst the people toward rape victims.

Third world and working class women have had to develop independence and determination simply in order to survive, but for most of the white women's movement, the passive and docile female has always been upheld as the "ideal" of society. White women's rebellion against this image was greatly strengthened by the examples of our Third World sisters.

The primary struggles that have developed around women's right to self defense have involved Third World women. Many white women have become involved in the mobilization of support for such women as Inez Garcia, Joanne Little, Yvonne Wanrow and, more recently, Cheryl Todd and Desi X Woods, on trial in rural Georgia for defending themselves against a rapist. These struggles have enabled many white women to understand more deeply the extent to which racism, as well as sexism, pervades our system of "justice".

The Lesbian Movement

As the women's movement developed a deeper understanding of the oppression of women, many women became totally "women identified", choosing to devote every aspect of themselves to women. Because the article on Lesbian Oppression deals with the Lesbian Movement more extensively, we will not attempt to do so here.



New York, June 30, 1974

International Women's Day Gay Pride March

Alternative Institutions

Women's growing understanding of the institutionalized nature of sexism led to building alternative or counter institutions. These institutions provide services which meet the survival needs of many women. Health collectives, birth centers, referral and counseling programs, legal aid projects and child care centers all grew as women sought to provide collective solutions to their own needs. They provide women with a sense of control over their own lives, and an alternative to the hierarchical forms which exist in all of the institutions of capitalist society.

Unfortunately, one of the main drawbacks of alternative institutions tends to be the utopianism of the people forming them. It is sometimes felt that women's needs can be met successfully outside the system if we all "boycott" the system and build our own. There is little understanding of the fact that the imperialist system pervades every aspect of women's lives, especially the lives of Third World and working class women, and must be overthrown in order to create humane institutions which meet the needs of all women. However, alternative institutions can be strategic when they involve and serve a community of oppressed people, are linked to a concrete strategy, and tied with a conscious group of revolutionaries.

Socialist Feminism

The first major theoretical work on socialist feminism, "Socialist Feminism, a Strategy for the Women's Movement" (Hyde Park, Chicago Women's Lib'n Union) called for the development of "mass socialist feminist organizations" which would prepare the ground for the development of one national socialist feminist organization.

Socialist feminist unions were conceived of as an "intermediate strategy" -- a strategy for consolidating the political development and energies which the women's movement had unleashed.

THE VANGUARD PARTY

CONT. FROM PAGE 5

tasks confronting the party the particular immediate task, the fulfilment of which constitutes the central point, and the accomplishment of which ensures the successful of the other immediate tasks."

What is this task? We can see in our local areas, listening to the censored news and talking to comrades throughout the country that the Black Liberation Movement continues to struggle everywhere. Struggles against police brutality, against job discrimination, against racism in education and for community control occur daily. Our struggle is as rich now as it was during the turbulent 60's. However there is a qualitative difference between our struggle now and then. Struggles reach a certain point and then fade away, are defeated or are taken over by opportunists. They are usually local in scope instead of national and are often isolated and uncoordinated from each other. This isolation means that the same mistakes are being made over and over, and that news of successful techniques and important lessons are not shared. Further, the isolation and localism of the struggle means that the news of victories elsewhere cannot boost our morale as it did during the last decade. Finally, localism means that the enemy can concentrate a vastly superior force on our weaker forces because his network is not just local.

Obviously we must find a way to coordinate our forces and breakthrough the enemy imposed isolation. For a time organizations such as the BPP, SNCC and the Black Workers' Congress were able to provide leadership and coordinate our struggle. Many Black revolutionaries recognize that our central task is to build the organization that can provide the necessary leadership and coordination. This fact is not widely disputed among Black revolutionaries. However there are disputes about what type of organization to build. Our comrades in the BLA call for the building of a Black United Front. Many call for the building of a Black Pan-Africanist Party and other see our central task as building a multinational communist party. We believe that all of the above proposals speak to some aspect of Black people's oppression and we understand where they are coming from. However we believe that the correct central task for Black revolutionaries is the building of a Black Revolutionary Party whose ideology is scientific socialism.

Let's examine the above proposals carefully. We have many areas of unity with the BLA's "Message to the Black Liberation Movement." However our major area of disagreement is around their call for the building of a national united front. United fronts are mass revolutionary organizations, drawn from all revolutionary classes, pulled together in one coordinated anti-imperialist front. Workers', women's, youth, student and other organizations comprise the front. The people's revolutionary army is also an integral and indispensable part of the front. We do not disagree with the building of the Black United Front. In fact we consider it the number one priority on the mass level. However since it is a mass front of all classes, many reactionary tendencies will be present in the front, especially in the early stages of a liberation struggle. What is needed is a thoroughly committed, disciplined, experienced revolutionary core to build and give leadership to the mass struggle and build the United Front. In every country where there was a profusion of different classes, both a revolutionary party and a national united front were necessary. For this large, complex country we believe that the Vietnamese model of a strong socialist party leading the national united front (which must truly involve the entire people), and the peoples liberation army is correct. Both our Vietnamese and Chinese comrades repeatedly state that of these three areas, the revolutionary party must be built first. As George Jackson states, "The psychological effect of our secret army, the real destructive effect it can have; and increasingly pervasive underground press with new emphasis on a 'mass style'; the popularization of the revolutionary culture and then the elevating of it; both under the direction of an ultra-aggressive political party-- these three, with no element missing, connected to the realistic issues form the

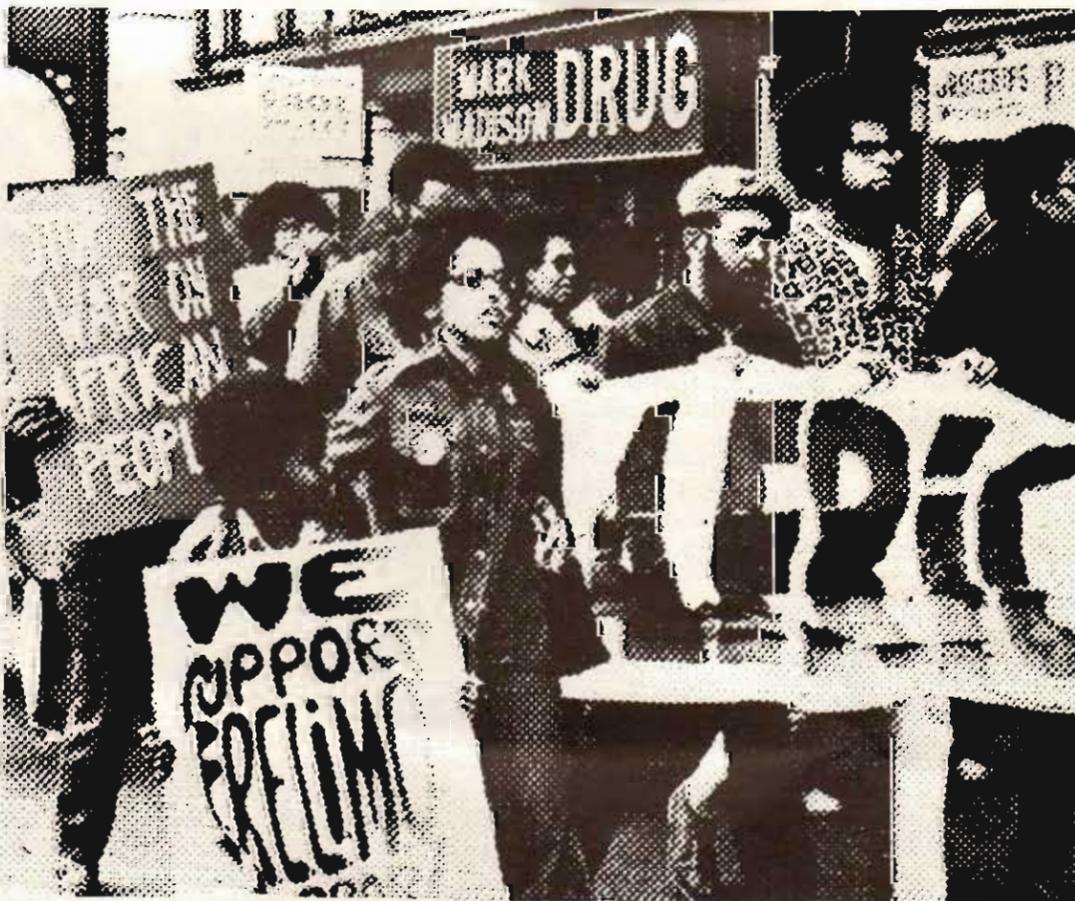
basis of our only hope. There will be educating, no consciousness, no revolutionary culture, no forward movement, without these three elements working with the harmony of a healthy organism... To sum up, the existence of a political vanguard precedes the existence of any of the other elements of a truly revolutionary culture." (Emphasis added.)

The question now becomes what type of revolutionary party we should build. Some comrades believe that we should build a revolutionary Pan-Africanist Party, and others a multinational communist party. As Lenin states the essence of revolutionary science "is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions." The first type of comrades believe that we should build a party based on self-determination, and coordination of the struggle of African people throughout the world. We believe that our organization should be Black. Black revolutionaries from Malcolm X to George Jackson talk about the need for us to self-reliant and to take responsibility for our own struggle. In addition, our struggle is an anti-colonial one against imperialism, and any revolutionary party must be prepared to lead our people in secession if the people so choose. Yet, we must be realistic when devising strategy for revolution. The struggle of African people throughout the world for land, socialism and liberation is an integral part of the world front against imperialism. Because of our heritage, we have a special responsibility to learn from and support these struggles. We have gained much encouragement from the struggles of our African comrades throughout the world. However if we look at our struggle in a hardheaded way, we will see that materially our closest allies are not the sisters and brothers thousands of miles away but our Third World brothers and sisters who share the same oppression that we do. We must have a Pan-Africanist perspective when we analyze the world but we must also realize that the defeat of U.S. imperialism from within will do more to liberate the African continent and the Caribbean than any other single factor. In addition many comrades who call for a revolutionary Pan-Africanist Party reject scientific socialism. We must emphasize as George Jackson and our comrades in the Black Liberation

organizational experience, discipline, commitment to criticism/self-criticism and the absence of racism and national chauvinism do not exist in sufficient degree among the white left at this time to provide a basis for a multinational communist organization. Our practice with dedicated Third World comrades convinces us that the rising trend is the building of anti-imperialist national movements within the U.S. At this early stage of revolution within the U.S. the dynamics of revolution are still very unclear. Blacks, Native Americans and Puerto Ricans are all building anti-colonial national liberation movements. These movements all need socialist organizations to provide leadership. History has taught us that when there is not a Black socialist organization to lead our struggle, the national question is liquidated (eliminated) and the right to self-determination for Black people is sold down the river. Many of us feel that in the future a multinational communist party would be the ideal organizational form for revolution; articles on councils of coordination and a domestic communist international (comintern, vol. I #5) hint at how we feel one might be built. However we all feel that the material basis for such a party does not presently exist among either the white left or masses. In addition, the Third World national movements primary organizational need at this time is for socialist leadership based on national forms of organization. We can only point to recent history which shows that when such forms of organization exist (the BPP is the leading example), both the national movements and the revolution as a whole are qualitatively advanced. When organizations such as this exist we have the most advanced and widest multinational unity based firmly on the principle of self-determination.

Our central task is the building of a Black vanguard fighting party whose ideology is scientific socialism. To help clarify this task we will briefly discuss the nature of such a party. We will attack four questions:

1. When is a vanguard party needed?
2. What are its tasks?
3. What are the traits of a vanguard party?
4. Who belongs, and how is recruiting done?



Army have repeatedly said that every successful liberation struggle in the world since the early 1900's has adopted scientific socialism as its ideology. The analytical tool of dialectical and historical materialism is one of the greatest weapons in the arsenal of revolutionaries. We and our party must embrace this tool.

Finally there are the comrades that see the building of a multinational communist party as being our primary task. Again we do not believe that this stand is based upon the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Extensive practice with white revolutionaries has convinced us that the

Grace and James Boggs deal with these subjects extensively in their pamphlet, "The Awesome Responsibility of Revolutionary Leadership".

When is a vanguard Party needed? It is needed when the contradictions within the society have reached a point where only revolution will free an oppressed people. It is needed when the scope of a movement becomes so vast that spontaneity and wide mass organizations are no longer sufficient for coordination and leadership. In the

PALESTINIAN WOMEN

The participation of women in the struggle for the National Liberation of Palestine has a long history. They stood with Palestinian men in resisting the British Mandate in 1920. In 1929, a convocation of a 300 member women's conference in Jerusalem was called to demand the repeal of the Balfour Declaration and the termination of the Zionist immigration. The conference gave birth to the Palestine Arab's Womens Union, which chose as one of its primary tasks the care of the children of political prisoners and of those who had died in the struggle. During the rebellion and strike of 1936, women smuggled guns to the guerilla forces, as well as participating in public strikes and demonstrations "Sahrat Al-Ughuwan" (The Daisy) was formed in Jagga in 1948. This organization of women carried food, guns, and ammunition to the rebels, as well as digging trenches, erecting barricades and taking responsibility for the medical services. During the 1967 War, organized units of women militia were involved in military activity equal to men.

After the war of 1967 and in the wake of the eviction of more than a million Palestinians from their homes, Palestinian women found themselves, in most cases for the first time in need of employment in order for their families to survive. As more refugees

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) has recently won a civil war in Angola. Their war against the National Liberation Front of Angola (FLNA), the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), South African regulars and Euro/U.S. mercenaries. Soviet advisors and Cuban regulars fought on the side of the MPLA. This war was an exceedingly vicious one that caused the deaths of more Angolan people than the entire liberation war against the Portuguese government. For a time this war deeply divided Africa, and much of the progressive forces of the world. Now, much of the world recognizes and supports the People's Republic of Angola. Within the U.S. the left is still split on the question of whether or not to support the MPLA and the People's Republic. There are essentially two positions:

1. Support the MPLA because:

a. The USSR is a socialist country and is helping to advance world revolution through its intervention in Angola.

b. The USSR is an imperialist power but the MPLA is the best hope of the Angolan people presently.

2. Do not support the MPLA because:

a. The USSR is an imperialist power and the MPLA is probably its puppet.

b. The MPLA is a communist movement and so are its allies and communist ideology is bad for Africa.

Since our ideology is Scientific Socialism, we must reject the last position (2b) out of hand. Nkrumah, Cabral, FRELIMO, ZANU etc. are all socialist individuals and movements. In analyzing Angola we must analyze from the viewpoint of what position is in the interests of the masses of people. The Angolan masses are the ones who have suffered over the past several months of superpower inspired civil war.

All three movements claimed to best represent the Angolan people. All claimed decisive roles in the liberation war that was begun by the MPLA. In fact only UNITA and MPLA fought the Portuguese. The MPLA bore the brunt of the fighting during the liberation war. The FLNA was founded by Roberto Holden, brother-in-law to Mobutu, president of Zaire and murderer of Congo patriot Patrice Lumumba. Both Holden and his brother-in-law have been on the CIA payroll for years. The FLNA has received many millions of dollars from the CIA over the past several years. It is rabidly anti-communist and has only fought the socialist, people's oriented MPLA. Savimbi, the head of UNITA, left the FLNA denouncing Holden as a CIA tool. The OAU withdrew all support for the FLNA in 1968. UNITA's ideological stance is all things to all people. When appealing to western powers they take a militantly anti-communist line. When talking to U.S. leftists they become fervent Maoists. In reality Savimbi has ties to both the rightwing elements in Portugal and the CIA.

After the liberation war against the

were created, women led the way in the forming of organizations to ensure survival. They included, The Arab Child Welfare House, The Arab Women's Association, The Arab Women's Union of Lebanon, The Red Crescent Society and the Association for the Support of Wounded Militants.

During the period of 1948 to 1967, Palestinian women in occupied Palestine, like other non-Jews were not allowed to form any kind of independent political organizations. Most joined the Israeli Communist Party, and during this period played a prominent role in the clandestine organization Al-Ard. Palestinian women joined the ranks of the pan-Arab political parties, including Baath and the Arab Nationalist movement. Their efforts were directed toward the broader Arab National Liberation struggle against colonialism and imperialism as well as for Arab unity, as a step to the liberation of Palestine.

In 1967, with the defeat of the regular Arab armies, a drastic change took place. Hope for the liberation of Palestine shifted to the Palestinian commando organizations. Simultaneously, Palestinian women became active in the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation.

On the social plane, the General Union of Palestinian Women, formed in 1965, is the most active. Affiliated with the PLO, the GUPW contributes effectively to the development and raising of women's consciousness to better

ANGOLA: SUPPORT THE MPLA

Portuguese, a national unity government was formed between the three movements. At this point the Soviet Union greatly increased the supply and quality of weapons to the MPLA, and the civil war started. The USSR supplied extremely sophisticated weapons such as tanks, helicopters and rocket launchers which had never been supplied to liberation force during the war against the Portuguese. South Africa invaded on the side of the FLNA and UNITA. Cuban troops intervened on the side of the MPLA, and the civil war reached full scale. Eventually the MPLA and Cuban forces defeated both UNITA and FLNA. The mercenary South African troops fled to just short of their border. The MPLA consolidated state power in the People's Republic of Angola.

First we must understand who is the main enemy of the Angolan and African masses and what is the main danger to the Angolan people. The main enemy of the African people, the power that oppresses most African people is U.S. imperialism and its racist allies, the governments of Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Azania (South Africa). South Africa, a neo-imperialist power like U.S. clients Israel, Chile, Brazil and Iran, is the main obstacle to the liberation of the remainder of South Africa. In so much as the existence of the apartheid regime of South Africa threatens the existence of every liberation movement and progressive government in southern Africa and is developing nuclear weapons, it is the main danger to the people of Africa.

Recognizing that the government of South Africa is the main danger to the African masses we cannot support any liberation movement that cooperates with them. Consequently we cannot support either UNITA or the FLNA. From the beginning the FLNA has been one of the most reactionary forces on the continent. However many felt that UNITA was a progressive organization which was non-aligned and deserved support. The African Liberation Support Committee even withdrew support for the MPLA and gave support to UNITA. However Savimbi's past associations with western interests and the FLNA appear shaky. Whatever UNITA's background, its alliance with the FLNA and South Africa wrecked all possibility of a national unity government. As Samora Machel of Mozambique stated, there can be no unity with traitors.

The remaining question is whether we should support the MPLA and the People's Republic of Angola. Just because we do not support the other two movements does not mean that we give our support to the MPLA automatically. The main issue of whether to support the MPLA lies around their relationship with the USSR. Some believe that the USSR is a socialist country and their relation with the MPLA should be welcomed. Others believe that the Soviet Union is an imperialist country which is up to no good wherever it is in the world. We believe that in the world, the Soviet Union is the

WORLD REVOLUTION



enable them to participate in all areas of social, political and economic life. In addition to its educational work, the GUPW places special emphasis on military activity, having started its first women's military training camp in Syria in late 1969. Training camps for female militia units include women from the age of 6 to over 50.

Women have created mass popular social organizations for the provision of material support for the revolution, providing support for the families of those who have been killed or captured and to develop and preserve the rich Palestinian folkloric heritage.

The practice and experience of the Women of Palestine, shows us what is true of the women's movement in all oppressed nations: it is directly tied to and develops out of the overall struggle for the National Liberation of their peoples.

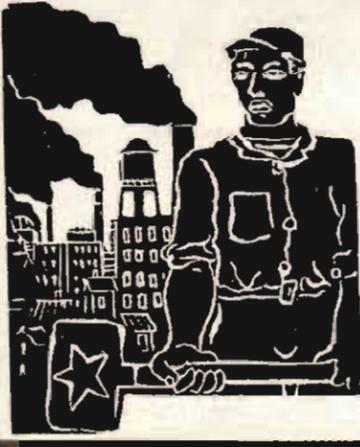
main danger today. They are a young, strong (as compared to the declining power of the U.S.) expanding power. They are particularly dangerous because they hide under the sheep skin of socialism. Capitalism has been fully restored inside the USSR. Its economy has become the most militarized in the world. Along with the U.S. the Soviet Union makes 60% of all the arms sales in the world. Like any other capitalist power the USSR must become an imperialist power. Its economy is expanding rapidly as the Soviet Union is building military bases throughout the world to protect its interests. It dictates such items as what price a potential colony may sell its crop to the Soviet Union (this happened with Egypt's cotton crop) and broke the Arab oil boycott. Part of the USSR's retreat to capitalism is the liquidation of class struggle within the USSR and abroad. Its policy of not relying on the armed might of the people led directly to the overthrow of progressive governments of Portugal and Chile where the main forces were Moscow dominated Communist Parties. In addition the USSR has proved that it is no friend of the African people. It refused to help Tanzania build the Tanzam railway (China did), it has aided reactionary governments in Africa while subverting the revolutionary forces of ZANU in Zimbabwe. It is also building military bases in East Africa.

Because of the nature of the USSR, many groups within the U.S. refuse to support the MPLA. We believe that this is an incorrect stance. First of all the MPLA has continually stated that it is an independent movement that will allow no foreign military bases on its soil. Anti-revisionist revolutionary forces such as ZANU and FRELIMO in Africa and North Korea in Asia recognize the People's Republic of Angola. China is the only progressive government in the world that does not support the MPLA. It is clear that the best hope for the people of Angola presently lies with the MPLA. The MPLA will provide a secure western flank for the struggle of African liberation movements against the apartheid regimes of southern Africa. Instead of artificially isolating the MPLA and thus driving them into the arms of the Soviets (Julius Nyerere already has said that the best way to insure that the PRA becomes a Soviet colony is to isolate them from support), we should support the people of Angola in their struggle against all forms of imperialism. We should most strongly condemn the USSR's policy of stirring up troubles between liberation groups and subversion throughout Africa. But we must also reject the Chinese policy of not relying on the Angolan people to guard themselves from imperialist dogs of all stripes and in effect, trying to isolate the Angolan people from the support they need to fight imperialism.

We must support the People's Republic of Angola and fight all imperialist attempts to turn Angola back into a colony!

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CLASS STRUGGLE



LABOR ORGANIZING and Affirmative Action

With this economic crisis affirmative action versus seniority has become an explosive issue in the workplace. Competition among workers has intensified as promotions are choked off and layoffs increase. The recent small gains in employment by women and third world people are swiftly melting away. Those white men in the lower paying jobs feel that their own future is hopeless and too often blame the TW and women workers.

In many instances dedicated workplace activists have fought against racist program and personnel cutbacks. In response, sly bosses and managers say gleefully, "OK, you tell us. Do we lay off the white male workers with twenty years seniority or the newly hired Black (Latino, women) youth from the inner city?" The resulting bitter struggle between the different sectors of workers much amuses the bosses. At one GM plant on the west coast, one set of "radicals" is

filing suit to maintain affirmative action in layoffs while another group is on the other side fighting to maintain seniority in layoffs.

We have had some practice in this area recently in several places, and would like to share some general concepts:

1. Identify demands that unite rather than divide. Usually the majority of workers in lower paying jobs and with low seniority are women and/or third world, but there are also some white men. Institutionalized racism and sexism affects the whole group, such as no training programs or departmental seniority lists. Demand no layoffs; demand training programs open to everyone.

2. The principle of seniority cannot be abandoned. Many TW workers and white women have gained seniority, though in the worst jobs. The use of seniority is a victory won by workers after long years of hard struggle. The principle is important in providing job security and taking arbitrary power away from management. In one union, the demand was made to promote women and non-whites to jobs deficient in those groups on the basis of seniority.

3. Focus the blame on management, and make them pay the price. Though white workers and men have received preferential treatment, the guilty parties are the employers, the government, and the corrupted union bureaucrats.

4. We cannot sacrifice the gains of the late 60's and early 70's. This must be an uncompromisable position. We must always struggle primarily around the demands of the most oppressed, and organize workers under less intense attack to do the same.

5. Third world women must be seen as doubly penalized. White women and TW men as well as white men have too often disregarded these sisters. We should demand that in setting affirmative action goals and priorities these workers be placed in a special category, that their status not be disguised by merging them with another group, and that a commitment be made to

achieve and maintain equal employment for them.

6. Older workers too are systematically discriminated against in employment. They have perhaps the hardest time getting trained for new jobs as they open yet there are usually no affirmative action provisions to help them. Because of their experience they are valuable participants in the workplace struggle if we pay attention to their special demands.

Realistically, the only way to build a militant mass movement to fight against layoffs and cutbacks is to isolate and expose the racist and sexist backward elements in union leadership and among the rank and file. Our experience is that TW leadership is key and non-racist white support and leadership is necessary to insure success. The factors missing are usually respect for third world leadership and non-racist white leadership. If we don't start fighting this battle in a non-liberal way we might well be faced with the prospect of many more Bostons, and a repeat of the working class race riots of the early twentieth century.

Even where there is no serious threat of layoff this issue can tear a union or a workplace apart. If handled correctly, it can unite a significant percentage of white men with women, older workers, and TW workers in demands that explicitly reject white and male supremacy. Threats of layoffs must be rejected, and met with a radical criticism and radical alternative. Socialized industry, a government guarantee of decent work for all at union wages, and redirecting the economy-- as the crisis hits home more and more workers are ready to demand these things, if the organizers can provide the strategy to unite and the tools to act.

STT / A LUTA CONTINUA!



CETA Organizing

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is a federal program supposedly intended to provide jobs for unemployed workers and training for the disadvantaged. The 800,000 workers hired under CETA are at the center of the crisis of the urban poor, the crisis of unemployment, the crisis of public sector cutbacks and layoffs, and the crisis of US imperialism as it collapses on the backs of US workers. CETA workers are a vital link to bridge the false separation that today exists between labor and community organizing. They are among the most oppressed public sector workers - and the public sector is exploding with rank and file activism.

In many cities across the US CETA workers are organizing themselves - usually against the union bureaucrats as well as against the employers. They are fighting for union representation, for equal pay and rights with other workers doing similar work, and against layoffs. Community organizations such as unions, health centers, co-ops, tenants' unions, etc are organizing to demand CETA positions. CETA workers are organizing recipients of public services to fight cutbacks in childcare, education, etc. Unemployed workers are organizing to demand CETA jobs. More and more attention is being focused on the national arena, where final decisions will be made late this year on the status of jobs programs through September, 1977. A National Ceta Organizing Committee was formed Jan. 31, 1976, at the National Hard Times Conference by CETA and unemployed groups from New York, San Francisco, Oakland, and San Jose. A national communications network is quickly growing, coordinated from the two coasts.

CETA is first and foremost a sham. To make it into a "WPA for the 70s" would be to turn it into its opposite. The money is now being used mainly by local governments to supplement their own tight budgets. CETA workers are used in place

of regular civil service workers. Increasingly, the Ford Administration, private industry, and unions such as the UAW are directing funds to private industry - providing another bonanza for this sector. In the public sector, CETA workers are often placed in the same status as extra help workers. In all areas, CETA workers are often placed in a lower status through a phoney 'work experience' or trainee designation, denied union representation and equal pay. This is nothing but union busting, pure and simple. Both of these practices are violations of the CETA law. Furthermore, when non-CETA workers are laid off, Department of Labor regs direct that they bump CETA co-workers into unemployment and assume the CETA jobs themselves. New York CETA organizers are pursuing a suit against this regulation. In summation, CETA does not provide more jobs or new services - as a rule it is a cover for a real attack on the pay, benefits, rights, union power, and unity of the workforce.

CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN CETA WORKERS AND NON-CETA CO-WORKERS

Non-CETA workers feel threatened already by layoffs; when a CETA worker fills a vacancy they had hoped to promote into, or scabs on a strike because the union fails to organize and represent them, then some real antagonisms surface. Because the CETA workforce has more than twice as many oppressed nationality workers - non white workers - as the rest of the workforce, and in some cities more women than men, these tendencies are linked to white and male supremacist attitudes and championed by the backward elements in the union.

The task of the organizer is to unite the more progressive elements to win over the majority, to defeat these backward ideas. There are fundamentally common interests between CETA workers and their co-workers - but the basis for organizing unity between CETA workers and related non-CETA workers is mainly anti-sexism and internationalism. Practice has shown that the majority can be organized to this stance - including very significant numbers of higher paid workers, "professional" workers, and white men in general.

THE ADDRESSES FOR THE NATIONAL CETA ORGANIZING COMMITTEE ARE C/O:

-CETA WORKERS' ACTION COMMITTEE
BOX 231, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK, 11224
-CETA STEWARD COUNCIL
715 N 1st St., San Jose Ca 95112

TASKS FACING CETA ORGANIZERS

Final decisions about the future of CETA and federal employment programs in general will be made in late fall of this year - just before the November elections - at a time when massive demonstrations are anticipated. We have the time and the basis of make the abstract demand for jobs into a living force by that time, to focus on the inadequacies of the CETA program, to build very strategic working class alliances of diverse groups with similar interests, and to lay the foundations for a nation wide caucus of both CETA and other public sector workers. We must begin now. Some necessary steps are:

- 1) Build local and regional CETA organizations around action, that ties local problems into a broad focus on a new full public employment program. Local organizers should pay attention to CETA workers in the public sector, the private non-profit service sector, in private industry, to unemployed workers, and also to community organizations which can be organized to demand CETA jobs. All organizers should make efforts to break out of a narrow, small area mentality, to adopt the overall perspectives and build the broad alliances needed to produce a truly powerful mass movement.
- 2) Link up CETA organizations in different regions. Build the National CETA Organizing Committee with common demands, co-ordinated timetables for action, etc.
- 3) Focus on issues that build solidarity between nationalities - such as defense of the immigrant worker. The prospects for success in this campaign will not be good unless white organizers take responsibility for the consolidation of a truly internationalist force inside the white working class.

STT/ And the struggle continues!

HARD TIMES CONFERENCE



BEHIND THE LINES



A Hard Times National Conference was held in Chicago during the end of January. The call came from Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC) a white anti-imperialist organization with its roots in the anti-war and women's movements. The purpose of the conference was to bring together mass activists from throughout the U.S. to discuss programs and tactics to combat the bourgeoisie imposed hard times.

It was organized by a Hard Times National Board, composed of PFOC cadre, representatives from national Third World organizations such as CASA (General Brotherhood of Workers), Puerto Rican Socialist Party, AIM, Republic of New Africa and local groups such as United Black Workers. Communist organizations such as the Independent Federation of Marxist-Leninists were also represented. The board put forward three demands for the conference. 1) Jobs or Income for All, at a living wage, under safe conditions, without discrimination in hiring, with free child care on demand and equal pay for equal work. 2) Stop Picking Our Pockets, Roll back and freeze prices, put a moratorium on debts for the unemployed. 3) Adequate Social Services for Our Communities, Stop the cutbacks, respect our right to good health care, daycare, schools, clean neighborhoods, and adequate welfare.

The conference was supported by a large number of mass groups including welfare, tenant and labor union caucuses. In addition many Third World organizations supported the conference.

HARD TIMES BILL OF RIGHTS

Prior to the conference, a committee of the National Board issued a Hard Times Bill of Rights. This document was to set the political tone for the meeting and delineate which areas the workshops were to cover. Many activists and organizations who had been working to build the conference saw this document as a step backwards. It failed to see the economic crisis as an imperialist crisis that was not temporary and to expose corrupt trade union bureaucrats as absolutely necessary crime partners of the bourgeoisie. It did not see the state as a ruling class tool designed to intensify the Hard Times for poor and working people. The most serious errors of this document were its racism and sexism. The fact that the crisis hits Third World people and working women hardest was not brought out. Although it mentioned the struggles of handicapped people, it did not have sections that dealt with the struggles of oppressed nationalities or women. Nowhere was the demand for self-determination of oppressed internal colonies raised. Local Hard Times Committees and Third World people raised these objections to the national board in an extremely serious way. They were told that the sections on women and oppressed nationalities would be rewritten before the conference.

Between seventeen and twenty-two hundred people came to the conference. Most of these were poor and working class mass activists. Over five hundred people participated in the labor workshops alone. Latinos were fairly well represented at the conference (due to the efforts of CASA and the PSP), but Blacks and Asians were seriously underrepresented. The lack of Black participation was particularly disturbing as the meeting was held within a short distance of two of the largest Black concentrations within the U.S., the South and West sides of Chicago, which have long histories of militant, grassroots struggle. Despite the lack of numbers there were representatives of a fair number of Third World organizations. However, the character of the conference could be described as mostly a white mass activist orientation.

PROBLEMS OF THE CONFERENCE

The delegates faced logistical problems which hampered the functioning of the conference. Important speakers were left at the airport waiting for hours.

Workshops were poorly organized. In many cases workshop leaders were also National Board members who were overburdened with



additional meetings. Otherwise excellent leadership was impaired by being tired. The discussion of the Bill of Rights all day Saturday stood in the way of talking about problems of practice and of drawing general lessons that would be useful in forming campaigns to fight hard times. It was not until Sunday that workshops were able to deal with racism or with the broader question of how concretely to connect the class and national questions.

Security was also a problem. Whether it was in the plenary sessions, workshops or caucus meetings, disruptions were serious. The disrupters fell into two main groups. One seemed to be conscious agents whose comments were designed to destroy principled political struggle. Many of this group were probably police agents. The second group belong to trotskyite organizations. Their refusal to recognize the progressive content of nationalist consciousness, whether in Vietnam or China or within the U.S. seriously disrupted the conference. When a woman was doing food service organizing in the Southwest requested guidance on how to connect national and class considerations, Trots told her that the only course was instant revolution. It would seem that the conference leaders would have learned the lessons of the last few years, would have banned Trots on both ideological and practical grounds, and would have made serious efforts to contain the other disrupters.

POLITICAL STRUGGLE

These logistical problems could have been tolerated if a spirit of nonracist political struggle had existed at the conference. Unfortunately the right errors that existed in the Bill of Rights were carried over into the conference. Just as the struggles of women were tokenly recognized in the Bill of Rights, women were not given space in the conference schedule to deal with their struggles, resulting in the formation of a women's caucus. On the first night, the otherwise excellent Tribunal section did not focus on the oppression of women. Lack of the analysis of the state as a tool of class oppression caused the conference to not take up the issue of repression and political prisoners as a whole. As often happens in the Left, white activists tended to ignore the question of political prisoners, despite the call by Third World speaker after speaker demanding that the issue be dealt with. Similarly the conference did not deal with repressive legislation like the Rodino Bill or SB 1 (despite the fact that SB 1 would outlaw everything from strikes, dissent, freedom of speech and conferences such as this one). Generally the issue of fascism was not dealt with seriously despite speeches from Pedro Granto of the PSP and Vernon Bellecourt of AIM which spoke to the growing fascist base among workers.

Another serious political error was the liquidation of any struggle concerning Soviet Social imperialism or modern revisionism. Organizations such as Worker's World, CASA and PSP were strongly pushing the incorrect line of the Soviet Union as a socialist country and uncritical support of the Soviet's role in Angola. (See Angolan

article). At the same time they ignored Soviet support of the Lon Nol regime in Cambodia and the economic colonialism that the Soviet Union is establishing throughout the African continent.

BLACK CAUCUS

By far the most serious error was the racism that was present in the conference, particularly regarding the Black Liberation struggle. While there was space provided within the schedule to deal with Native American, Puerto Rican and Chicano struggles, there was absolutely no space provided to deal with the Black Liberation Struggle. At every point the key role of Black leadership, in labor, education, health care, tenant and community struggles was ignored. The lack of Black participation was a clear sign of the lack of serious effort to involve Black organizations in the organizing process and the serious divisions in many local areas between Black and white Hard Times leadership. An example of the tone was the failure to address the need to defend Third World communities from racist, fascist attacks—an issue which is often primary in the communities of all oppressed nationalities. In short, the conference had what was come to be called a "white perspective" — it had a white national chauvinist perspective.

In response, Black delegates to the conference formed a Black caucus that struggled over what correct political line to take in response to the conference. The caucus was handicapped by the lack of participation of Black National Board members who were attempting to deal with racism of the National Board at the same time. After much political struggle, the Caucus presented three resolutions to the conference: 1) A call to support a Black Workers Conference. 2) A call on the Hard Times Conference to support the struggle for independence in the Cash District of Mississippi as led by the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Africa. 3) A criticism of the Hard Times Bill of Rights lack of attention to the racism of U.S. imperialism and a call for the inclusion of "the right of self-determination for Black People, the right to constitute ourselves as a separate people to control our own lives and destiny. Only when this right is won can there be developed a lasting unity of Black and White, and only upon the uncompromising recognition of this right can a present unity in struggle be constituted."

FUTURE OF THE HARD TIMES MOVEMENT

The future of the Hard Times movement rests with how effectively the local committees and the National Board can eliminate right errors, racism and opportunism, and initiate criticism and self-criticism. In particular, revolutionaries, communists and their organizations must study what role they should play in united front and coalition work. PFOC's position to liquidate its role as an organization in the conference was an extremely serious error. It created a partial vacuum among the white activists at the conference and helped rightist elements to successfully put racist and sexist proposals forward. It was in itself an organizational position not to organize. Since the conference was in a sense an expression of PFOC's basic strategy, we hope that the events of the conference have helped PFOC do a criticism of that strategy.

Despite the several errors of the conference, there is grounds for unity and implementation of the action proposals. The majority of the delegates came to the conference for the sole purpose of developing serious strategies to combat the Hard Times. At the same time it was a qualitative step forward for the left in that it was the first time that concrete issues were attacked in a way that may effect the working and poor masses of the U.S. The conference organizers should be congratulated for bringing together as diverse and representative a combination of white activist, grass roots and Third World organizations to struggle together. Third World activists provided the strongest



Malcolm X addressing Harlem rally in June 1963. Spread of his nationalist ideas was significant factor in civil rights victories of 1960s.

early 70's many felt that the African Liberation Support Committee would be able to eventually provide coordinated anti-imperialist leadership to the Black Liberation Movement. It soon became clear that ALSC had too many diverse ideological influences and was too clumsy organizationally to provide that leadership. At this point our struggle needs a tightly disciplined ideologically unified core to provide leadership. As the Boggesses state, "Today black revolutionaries are confronted with a contradiction very similar to that faced by Lenin when he first began to lay the foundations of the vanguard party. Ever since 1964 the black masses in every Northern city have been either in or on the verge of spontaneous eruption. Every year millions of black people, and particularly Black youth, are made ready for anything by the worsening conditions in every black community, the obvious inability of white power to cope with the critical social problems of an advancing technology, the mushrooming of white counter-revolutionary groupings and the growing division among whites and with the ruling class.

Which course to pursue to overcome the crisis? As in Lenin's day (and in his own words), 'the movement has already produced enormous numbers of people...who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism....At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders...no talented organizer capable of organizing extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would give employment to all forces...'(WHAT IS TO BE DONE?) The scope of spontaneous activity among the black masses has been growing far beyond the capacity of the black movement to provide revolutionary political leadership."

How is such a party built? "...that a revolutionary party can only be built by a) unceasing ideological struggle, b) strict discipline, c) organized activity of every member, and d) merciless self-criticism." The last point is extremely important and often ignored. While trying to build a new society for Black people we must ruthlessly purge ourselves of the bad tendencies and political ideas that we all have inherited from being raised in a decadent bourgeois, racist and sexist society. Only through conscientious criticism and self-criticism can we repudiate our harmful traits and build an ever strengthening and correct political line.

Tasks

A vanguard revolutionary party has essentially three tasks. One, it must be able to give leadership to all segments of the movement including the people's army and the national united front. The party is the cement of the revolution that keeps all segments and activities coordinated and in phase. The party is the organizational manifestation of Mao's slogan, "politics in

command." We have all seen the confusion, isolation and weaknesses of our movement when this leadership is not present.

Secondly the party must be able to train its successors to its leadership. There are many casualties in a liberation movement. The Panthers have vividly shown us what happens to an organization which has not conscientiously trained its lower and middle range leadership to take over if the top level leadership becomes incapable of leading. The organization shatters and the leadership of the movement disintegrates. Many organizations recognize this need abstractly but fail to train their membership for leadership until it is too late.

Lastly a revolutionary vanguard party must be prepared to seize power. The main differences in fighting for revolution and fighting for reforms is that in revolution you fight for the seizure of power. This flows from an understanding that only by fighting for power are people placed in a position to decide for themselves how to order and better their lives. This is an especially critical task for a Black vanguard party to grasp because of the real possibility that our people might choose secession.

Characteristics

The traits of a revolutionary vanguard party have been often discussed. We will briefly discuss them here. First as Mao and the Vietnamese often say, "the political line of the party is most important." If the party is not ideologically correct, it has no chance of success. Secondly, the party must have its roots deep among the people. As every revolutionary from Lenin to Cabral has commented that if you isolate yourself from the masses, you set yourself up for destruction and more importantly are completely incapable of determining political line and providing leadership. As Mao says, the correctness of a political line is determined primarily through its acceptance by the masses and its effectiveness. Thirdly the party must have freedom of discussion, and iron discipline in practice. These are accomplished by having thoroughly committed members who are well tested in the struggles of Black people. Internally the methods of criticism/self-criticism and democratic centralism are the mechanisms for accomplishing discipline through discussion. Democratic centralism states that at all times the minority is subordinate to the majority, lower bodies to higher bodies and the organization to the central committee. This allows majority rule and centralized leadership. Practically this works by having the fullest and most relentless ideological struggle before decisions are made. Then when the decision is made, a completely unified front is put into action. Decisions are binding on all members. This type of discipline is only possible through free will. The only way in which individuals will submit themselves to this discipline is by full commitment to

the ideological line of the party and allowing the freest possible ideological struggle before a decision is reached. This feature of a vanguard party is its strongest feature. When it is eliminated or subverted the organization will either revert to a liberal ineffective organization, degenerate into a small ineffective dictatorial organization or shatter. In any case it loses its role as the leadership of our movement.

Membership

Lastly we have to deal with the membership of the vanguard party. We have made it clear that the success and effectiveness of the vanguard party rests on the capability and discipline of its membership. It has been repeatedly said that militants within the party must be committed veterans of the Black liberation movement who have been tested in struggle, they must be completely committed to the political line of the party, and they must be committed to unceasing struggle with themselves and each other. Otherwise the necessary discipline (voluntary unity of will) would not be present. The Boggesses elaborate on this point, "The fact is that, ever since the emergence of the Black Power stage in 1966, serious political differences over the meaning of Black power have been inevitable. Because these differences have not been clarified politically, they have tended to appear personal, and the movement has declined accordingly....What the black movement has not understood is that the clarification of political differences through ideological struggle by no means implies there should be disunity of action....The creation or encouragement of a United Front or Fronts to implement this unity in action and the development of the proper relations between the revolutionary party and the United Front are critical to the success of any revolution. But the first step in creating correct relations is a clear distinction between the purposes and organization of the vanguard party and the purposes and organization of the United Front.

'We must first divide and then unite' Lenin kept saying. 'Better, fewer but better'. A revolutionary party cannot be built on the quicksand of ideological confusion... It is better to start a vanguard party from scratch with the serious few who are committed to the perspective of making the revolution that is necessary to meet the needs of the deepest layers of the Black community than with many assorted persons who are all going in different directions and who are therefore bound to split at the moment of crisis, just when the need is for maximum organizational strength and unity. This does not mean that those who cannot or will not accept the ideology and discipline of the vanguard party cannot play a role in the movement or in concrete struggles for liberation that will culminate in the taking of power. But their place is in the various organizations of mass struggle, not the vanguard party."

We present these viewpoints in the spirit of unity-criticism-unity. Let us come together on the basis of firm ideological unity and criticism/self-criticism. It is the historical obligation of our generation of Black people to finally come together so that we can build a better life for ourselves and children. As the comrades in the Black Liberation Army say, "The sooner begun, the sooner done"!

A Luta Continua
BUILD THE BLACK REVOLUTIONARY PARTY!



Please see insert for **The Central Task:**

Principles of Unity,

the conclusion of this article

STRATEGY Continued from page 12
employed can begin to be resolved through building mass bases.

Community childcare organisations become the basis whereby we bring working women together through fighting for their right to childcare, consciousness raising groups and concrete mutual aid projects to see the commonness of their oppression and begin to find ways to fight against it. Once their primary problems of childcare and housework begin to be resolved, workplace demands become more central in their lives. They then have the support of their community organizations led by Communists (and later the support of the people's army) when they organize at the workplace. In linking the two struggles they have the basis to fight beyond narrow economist demands to revolutionary demands around concretely seizing the means of production in order to serve the people.

Of the different sectors in the economy, service sectors are strategic because of the way their work "serving the people" directly contradicts the way they are organized for profits.

In the workplace we must organize around working conditions and the quality of goods or services produced. This links up with the way community institutions serve the people. We can see how this works using health as an example. As our community health care services grow, as more and more people become involved in our mass health education programs, preventative health screening programs and so on, we begin to see how we need to have control over highly developed medical equipment and services only available in hospitals. We see how we have to unite with hospital workers to fight for community control of hospitals. On the other hand, in their struggles around better staffing and patient care hospital workers must unite with community health organizations as we understand how the issues of staffing and patient care can only be spoken to by a radical reorganization of the way health care is delivered.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

We need to build a communist party of practical revolutionaries. We must follow the lead of the Vietnamese Workers Party

that sees the mass organizations such as the farmers, women and youth associations as being the bridge that links the Party with the masses of people. Concretely this means that it is the mass organizations that draw in the advanced masses and "backbone" elements and the most active, dedicated and selfless of these people become cadre of the party and lead the work of the mass organizations. The task of the communist party is to unify the struggles of the mass organizations and through a theoretical understanding of imperialism develop a concrete strategy to lead the masses to revolution. However, it is only through practice that we can 1) accumulate the data necessary to develop a strategy and 2) implement this strategy. This happens largely through the work of cadre within mass organization; they provide revolutionary leadership by being immersed in the struggles of the masses.

We must find ways to bring the cadre together who are presently developing in mass organizations to unite our struggles and together take our understanding to a higher level, develop a strategy and take on the task of building a party that has its roots in the masses. We must look to mass organizations in order to build the communist party for it is here that revolutionaries are, and where they are already being thrown into leadership positions and developing a firm working class anti-imperialist line.

It is communists who must lead the struggle to unite the community and workplace and who must make tactical decisions as to how our mass organizations attack the State. We must lead the defense of our community organizations when they are threatened by the State, as they will be, and eventually lead the armed support of the workplace struggles. It is in this movement that the embryo of a peoples army can develop.

As our practice grows, so will our leadership. It is important to begin to form cadre groups that cross different areas of practice. We also need to recognize different levels of leadership within those groups and develop leadership groups that maintain strong ties with their original collectives to begin to form a democratic centralist organization.

The Women's Movement Today

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Socialist feminists committed themselves to working with and among women for an end to the oppression of women, and see the struggle for socialism as central to that.

In the summer of 1975 a national socialist feminist conference was held to try to further solidify socialist feminism as a strategy. It was there put forward as "the strategy for revolution."

The socialist feminist unions have involved many women in trying to develop analysis and strategy. They have struggled to build a class analysis of women's oppression, and to develop a revolutionary form of women's organization. This struggle has also played an essential role in pushing the left to deal with the oppression of women, in practice and in theory. As an overall strategy, however, socialist feminism is not adequate, nor are some of its basic presumptions correct.

The socialist feminist women's unions have tried to organize "mass socialist feminist organizations". In a period when there is no socialist base among the working class, this mass socialist form of organization is incorrect. In practice it has led to a superficial level of political unity which has furthered the lack of political clarity and perpetuated much isolation in practice.

In principles of unity and in political work the socialist feminist unions have tried to address the needs of Third World women, and they have generally stated support for Third World people's struggles within the US. However, their focus and their base remains among white women of "middle-class" backgrounds. Membership is dwindling, and concrete direction is lacking.

Many socialist feminists acknowledge these weaknesses. "We have not been very successful in reaching a broad base of women outside of the Union. People who do not define themselves as leftists or who do not identify with the left have

not really been reached by our efforts. This includes Third World communists as well as some feminists." "The problem of who we reach is connected to what we want these people to do. We have never been particularly clear on this." (Berkeley Oakland Women's Union, West Coast Soc/fem Conf.)

A strategy must provide an analysis of what stage of revolution we are in, what the primary area of struggle for this period must be, and what role each of the forces must play. We need an overall understanding of our forces, as well as of principle areas of strength and weakness.

Largely due to the countless times that the left has used the concepts of "primary and secondary contradictions" against the women's movement and as a means of negating the importance of women's struggles, there has been a strong tendency for socialist feminists to view all contradictions as equal. Socialist feminist strategy, therefore, has been unable to define any more than a broad general concept; that of building "the basis for a mass revolutionary socialist feminist organization that can seriously threaten the capitalist structure." (Ibid)

CONCLUSION

The women's movement has made far reaching changes in the lives of all women. Its challenge to male supremacy has had a sharp impact on bourgeois society, and on the left. It has radicalized and transformed the lives of thousands of women, many of whom are now committed to organizing for the liberation of all women. However, this movement has reached a turning point in its development. Organizationally it does not seem to be growing, and it is not any closer to organizing working class women. It is important for women to organize around women's demands as anti-imperialist and class demands as well.

Criticism of the Strategy for Revolution article — from SEIZE THE TIME

The staff is self-critical of the process through which this article came to be printed in the paper. We did not put politics firmly in command from the beginning. When we issued a general invitation for women to work on the issue, we did not define a basis of political unity for the group. When the group got together the staff women working in it did not push for the group to develop principles of unity. We worked under the assumption that most of the women had basic political unity with Seize the Time because they said that they did. Had we tried to define that agreement in the beginning, our study together could have been more focused on the areas of disagreement.

We disagree with the following positions in the article: that imperialism exists only outside the US borders; that the divisions in the working class and unemployment come principally out of the use of machinery, that economism and ultra-leftism are a problem only in the workplace and come out of the conditions of employment rather than political line; that collectivity is developed primarily through alternative institutions; and that the primary aspect of the relationship between Third World and white working class women is their common economic need. This position ignores, for example, the way in which white women are being used to undermine affirmative action programs for Third World people.

While we agree that women and marginally unemployed people (although we don't include in this their analysis of unemployed petit-bourgeois students), are leading forces in the white working class, the transition in the article from that position to those forces leading the seizure of state power ignores the leading role of Third World workers. We strongly disagree with the article's position on party building, particularly because it substitutes immersion in mass struggle for developing political line.

We agree with the need to organize around childcare, to fight for social services which meet people's needs (food, healthcare, etc.) and the need to organize in the community as well as the workplace. We also agree that unity between recipients and workers in those services is key to organizing in that area.

The "Strategy" article is the only article in this paper which deals with a program for organizing women. The criticisms we have of it need to be developed in a future article with an opposing position on program. We understand that the political unity in the women's study group was not such that we could have done such an article. The women on the staff hope to continue to work with some of the women from the group and will try to develop that article for the next issue.

Finally, we, particularly the staff women who worked in the group, want to commend our sisters who worked on this issue, who taught us and learned from us. We feel that, overall, this issue and the women who worked on it have helped to set us on the correct path in developing a position on the liberation of women.

Even though the women's movement has consisted largely of women from petit-bourgeois backgrounds, the recognition of the systemic oppression of women under capitalism has led many women to reject that system. In doing so, these women have also rejected the class position of the petit bourgeoisie. The women's movement has provided a vehicle for many women to develop a more proletarian class outlook.

At this point it is essential that we clarify the weaknesses which have led to our inability to base our movement among the masses of working class women. We need to develop a clear understanding of the questions before us in order to develop strategy and organization. These are especially important steps in the building of a party. Without the vision of communism and the leadership of communist women to move women forward, the movement will probably remain at its present impasse.

The Black Latin & the Mexican Indian

When I grew up on New York streets
And fought my way thru knee deep garbage
My Mama sewed stars on Amerikkkan flags
At the Brooklyn Navy Yard
Like all the other Mamas
And I was lonely

When you grew up in California fields
And listened to the fat greasy patrones
Call your Papa a Wetback Greuser
Your Mama worked in the packing houses
Worked for pennies—so that white ladies could
wear silk stockings
Paid for with your daily hunger
Were you lonely too?

While you grew callouses on your hands
I grew a callous on my heart
And, somewhere, we lost what little laughter
we'd known
And the loneliness grew

While you picked tomatoes
I picked pockets

And we both learned how to lie and steal and
fight
Some call it survival
I call it loneliness

But, one day the smog lifted
The city and the country smiled at each other
And so did we
The Mariachi met the Mambo
And so did we
And like the frozen snow in Spring
We melted
And like the warm winds of Summer
We were gentle
And no matter how the rain falls
And if time stops dead in its track tomorrow
I will praise the Gods for your existence
I will dance to your rhythms
Even as the sun grows cold
And I'm not lonely anymore

Avoteja

A Work of Artifice

The bonsai tree
in the attractive pot
could have grown eighty feet tall
on the side of a mountain
till split by lightning.
But a gardener
carefully pruned it.
It is nine inches high.
Every day as he
whittles back the branches
the gardener croons.
It is your nature
to be small and cozy,
domestic and weak;
how lucky, little tree,
to have a pot to grow in.
With living creatures
one must begin very early
to dwarf their growth:
the bound feet,
the crippled brain,
the hair in curlers,
the hands you
love to touch.

Marge Piercy

Unlearning to Not Speak

Blizzards of paper
in slow motion
sift through her.
In nightmares she suddenly recalls
a class she signed up for
but forgot to attend.
Now it is too late.
Now it is time for finals:
losers will be shot.
Phrases of men who lectured her
drift and rustle in piles:
Why don't you speak up?
Why are you shouting?
You have the wrong answer,
wrong line, wrong face.
They tell her she is womb-man,
bobymachine, mirror image, toy,
earth mother and penis-poor,
a dish of synthetic strawberry icecream
rapidly melting.
She grunts to a hulk.
She must learn again to speak
starting with I
starting with We
starting as the infant does
with her own true hunger
and pleasure
and rage.

Marge Piercy

A History of Lesbianism

How they came into the world,
the women-loving-women
came in three by three
and four by four
the women-loving-women
came in ten by ten
and ten by ten again
until there were more
than you could count

they took care of each other
the best they knew how
and of each other's children,
if they had any.

How they lived in the world,
the women-loving-women
learned as much as they were allowed
and walked and wore their clothes
the way they liked
whenever they could. They did whatever
they knew to be happy or free
and worked and worked and worked.
The women-loving-women
in America were called dykes
and some liked it
and some did not.

they made love to each other
the best they knew how
and for the best reasons.

How they went out of the world,
the women-loving-women
went out one by one
having withstood greater and lesser
trials, and much hatred
from other people, they went out
one by one, each having tried
in her own way to overthrow
the rule of men over women,
they tried it one by one
and hundred by hundred,
until each came in her own way
to the end of her life
and died.

The subject of lesbianism
is very ordinary; it's the question
of male domination that makes everybody
naggy.

Judy Grahn

from Letter to a Sister Underground

Our smiles and glances,
the ways we walk, sit, laugh, the games we
must play
with men and even oh my Ancient Mother
God the games
we must play among ourselves—these are the
ways we pass
unnoticed, by the Conquerors.
They're always watching,
invisibly electrified in our brains,
to be certain we imitate our rage against
each other
and not explode it against them;
the times we rip and tear at the twin
for what we have intricately defended in
ourselves;
the mimicry of male hierarchy, male ego,
male possessiveness: leader/follower,
doer/thinker, bitch/lemme
yes also when we finally learn to love each
other physically.
rules to survive a death-in-life until
that kind of life becomes worthless enough
to risk losing even precious it.

Our subterranean grapewine, which men, like
fools, call gossip,
has always been efficient.
Our sabotage has ranged from witches'
research
into herbal poisons to secretaries' spilling
coffee on the plug
to housewives' passive resistance
in front of their snip open screens
to housemaids' accidentally breaking china
to mothers' teaching their children to love
them
a little bit better than their fathers.
And more.

Robin Morgan

Mountain Moving Day

The mountain moving day is coming
I say so yet others doubt it
Only a while the mountain sleeps
In the past all mountains moved in fire
Yet you may not believe it
O man this alone believe
All sleeping women now awake and move
All sleeping women now awake and move

Yosano Akiko, 1911

We look forward to receiving feedback and
criticisms of this issue. Contact STT with
comments or requests for subscription
information at:

★ SEIZE THE TIME ★
PO BOX 4064
Mtn. View, CA 94040

from Monster Poem

Oh mother, I am tired and sick.
One sister, new to this pain called feminist
consciousness
for want of a scream to name it, asked me last
week
"But how do you stop from going crazy?" . . .
And I will speak less and less and less to you
and more and more in crazy gibberish you
cannot understand:
witches' incantations, poetry, old women's
mutterings,
schizophrenic code, accents, keening, firebombs,
poison, knives, bullets, and whatever else
will invent this freedom. . . .
May we go mad together, my sisters,
May our labor agony in bringing forth this
revolution
be the death of all pain.
May we comprehend that we cannot be stopped.
May I learn how to survive until my part is
finished.
May I realize that I
am a
monster. I am
a
monster.
I am a monster.
And I am proud.

Robin Morgan