

# **SEIZE THE TIME**

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## FROM THE STAFF OF SEIZE THE TIME

This issue represents a break in both content and format with previous issues. In the future we will emphasize political line struggle, propaganda and summation of practice much more. The new format will make it easier for us to do more thorough articles and organize each issue around a particular focus. We've eliminated the departments and most short articles because we realized these were either poor imitations of daily newspapers or attempts at mass work/agitation with the wrong audience.

We will continue to publish articles from other sources whenever we feel their content justifies their use.

However, we will try to present our views and reasons for including each article. We think these comments will aid line struggle and correct some of the liberalism and vagueness of *STT*'s own position in the past.

We look forward to receiving criticisms of this issue and other contributions. Contact *STT* with correspondence or requests for subscription information at:

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We have some back issues available. Please specify issue and quantity in your request. Donations to aid future work will be greatly appreciated.

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# STT Self-criticism of Black Liberation Article

## INTRODUCTION

In the last issue of STT, we presented the beginnings of our political line on the Black Liberation Struggle. Since that time, we have struggled over political line within the staff and with other comrades. We have received criticisms from comrades in the Black Liberation Movement (BLM), from the paper's staff and from many others in the revolutionary movement. The criticism/self-criticism focuses around our present understanding that the key link to building a revolutionary party is the development of a correct political line.

Before the advanced from the Black liberation movement can embrace the political line of a communist party, that party must have a thoroughly developed political line on the Black and other national questions. Comrades who narrowly focus on just the political line of the party building process are incorrect. Imperialism has created *three* great movements within the U.S. — the national struggles, the workers' movement and the women's movement. These three distinct movements *interpenetrate* and to some degree are interdependent. There are *two* major questions facing the revolutionary movement: party building and imperialism. Negating either of these two questions is incorrect. *Without developing a correct internationalist line on imperialism this present period of party building cannot succeed.*

In the meantime, Black cadre must take comrade George Jackson's advice to take responsibility for our struggle and keep on pushing. While we have an equal share of responsibility for developing the line on party building, we must also take special responsibility for developing a correct political line for the liberation of the Black nation. Because we are part of the BLM and understand its dynamics and history, we are well suited to shoulder this task. Our central task is to build a communist party, and as part of that process we feel it is correct to have organizations that focus much of their practice, propaganda and line development within one of the national movements. We support the formation of communist organizations that work within the BLM, as long as they do all that is possible to further the development of political line and formation of a communist party. Their key criteria for membership must be correct political line and common political work.

## CRITICISMS FROM THE BLM

One of the main criticisms that we have received from comrades within the movement concerns George Jackson's statement regarding the harmonious development of the three different aspects of revolutionary struggle (military, political and social). He said that these three areas must be developed *under the leadership of the political apparatus*. He also stated that in the early stages of a liberation struggle, the development of the political apparatus must be primary. The comrades wondered if our emphasis on the political apparatus meant that we were downplaying the need to develop military apparatus. No, as the Vietnamese point out, military work is an art. Lenin pointed out it is also a science. Like any other science or art, learning its laws and techniques takes time and cannot be put off until the day it is needed. We also agree with Jackson when he pointed out the need for the political apparatus to be able to defend itself at all levels of struggle.

What we do say is that politics must be in command. The party must command the gun. The primary emphasis must be put on developing the political apparatus, and the primary emphasis in developing the political apparatus is

developing a correct political line. Increasingly there has to be common development between political and military apparatuses. We must not think so much in terms of above or below ground or legal and illegal. Instead we must realize that any true liberation is illegal, and all of our organizational apparatuses must be clandestine. The separation of political and military organizations in Latin America is one of the main reasons those revolutionary movements have had such heavy defeats. Because of the separateness of the organizations, the political workers were vulnerable to the fascists while sufficient mass support could not be mobilized for the guerrillas. Often the political and military wings had different political lines that led to disunity at critical junctions. Instead, we must learn from the Vietnamese who brought the art of combining different forms of struggle to its highest level. Military art was combined with diplomatic and political work, insurrection was combined with protracted war, at all stages the masses were decisive and the Vietnamese Worker's Party led the NLF and the people's army. Learn from the Vietnamese!

A second area of criticism was in regards to the secondary priority of building a National United Front (NUF). The call for a National United Front is one of the main features of the BLA comrades' "Message to the Movement." In general we support the call to build a Black NUF, especially in the Black Belt South. As stated in the last issue, we believe that it is a task that comes *after* political line is forged and the party built. Some of our comrades believe that even still, we overemphasized the role of a United Front in this period. They pointed out that the African Liberation Support Committee was a very good example of an anti-imperialist, progressive united front. They also pointed out that without the guidance of a strong party, it was incapable of giving consistent leadership to the day-to-day struggles of people of African descent in the U.S. They pointed out that at this point, centralism is key and that only by forging a correct political line will we have the unity necessary to build a party. It was correctly pointed out that *until the party is built, building the mass movement is not the first priority.*

The third item that has been raised is our increasing emphasis on engaging in polemics with other forces. In the recent past we had come close to liquidating line struggle within the BLM. The main reason we came close to liquidating our work in the national movement is that we overemphasized *mass* work within the national movements. We concentrated on building intermediate and "advanced" mass organizations which had policies of "minimum" unity. Hand in hand with building these organizations, we downplayed our work with the Black cadre and cadre organizations throughout the U.S. At a time when leadership is lacking and centralism destroyed, the essence of doing work within the national movement must be forging correct political line for the BLM and the U.S. revolution, and uniting cadre and the advanced from the BLM around a correct political line. Instead, we were putting forth that building the mass movement was more important than building the Party and that practice was primary over theory in these times. These errors are common throughout the movement and must be combated. They lead to tailing the masses, bowing to spontaneity and blind localism. Cadres must *lead*, and we can only lead if we have correct analysis and political line.

We had also liquidated line struggle with other forces. These polemics are important for several reasons. Line struggle forces you to sharpen your own line as you struggle with other forces, and often you learn much from

other viewpoints. Furthermore, struggling with opportunists, revisionists and economist forces is important so that we can eradicate all reformist and racist political lines within the three great movements. The danger of revisionist lines cannot be overestimated. People like Angela Davis can no longer be allowed to get away with the madness they have spread among our people. Bourgeois social props such as Jesse Jackson and Roy Wilkins must be exposed and smashed.

We must also recognize as George Jackson and others have that for Black Liberation to succeed, we must unite the many to defeat the few. We recognize that there are real, deep divisions among the people, not only between Third World and white people but also between Third World peoples. These divisions have historical and material roots. Principled unity will only come through the struggle for political line and the testing of it in the fire of struggle. We must learn from Africa and Vietnam where deep tribal and national divisions interfered with the national liberation struggle but were overcome through the process of the struggle itself. In the U.S., white communists will have to place a greater emphasis on developing theory and anti-imperialist struggle among the white working class in order to win over white workers to a firm internationalist stand. Such a stand has been taken by white dock workers in the South who refuse to unload ships from sanctioned Rhodesia (the illegal government of Zimbabwe). Cadres in the BLM have the duties of developing and struggling around an overall political line, developing and struggling around a political line for the BLM, consolidating around a correct line, and advancing fusion in all three movements (the women's and workers' movements are also critical to the liberation of our entire people). *We all must set an example of internationalism by struggling over political line within and outside of our movement, and by both firmly upholding the principle of self-determination for the Native, Chicano and Black masses and struggling for the creation of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the only form of democratic state power for working and oppressed peoples.*

#### CRITICISMS FROM THE STAFF OF STT

The first criticism that came from the staff concerned the concept of a Black revolutionary party. There was a contradiction between our recognition that the most desirable way to build the communist party is by building it directly, and our recognition that the dynamics of national struggle within the U.S. are extremely fluid with secessionist struggles being a distinct possibility. We thought at the time that a Black communist organization would have to remain flexible enough to be either a leading force in building an international communist party within the U.S. or to lead a secessionist struggle in the Black Belt South. Studying history shows us that the formation of regional communist parties in the case of secessionist struggles is probably more correct. If secessionist struggle occurs in the South, a communist party made up of both Blacks and representatives from the white national minority would be the most likely formation to lead that struggle. Our view of a secessionist struggle in the Southwest is complicated by the fact that we currently think there are both Chicano and Native nations with the right to self-determination, secession and sovereignty.

If secession becomes the course of struggle in the U.S., then some type of democratic centralist domestic comintern made up of representatives from the regional communist parties may be the revolution's central authority for a time. While many communists might loath such a possibility or consider it extremely unlikely, we would like to make three points. One is that the national and class struggles within the U.S. are extremely fluid, fascist and revolutionary trends are contending within the white working class and a rising aspect among the op-

pressed nationalities is the desire for self-determination. Among Native Americans this has already crystallized into a mass movement struggling for sovereignty. As long as the situation is this complex and volatile, many things are possible. Secondly, there is much historical precedent for different regional communist parties existing in areas oppressed by one imperialist master, as long as they include all honest communists in that region. Regional communist parties developed in Indochina, even though that area was oppressed by the same imperialist master and at one time it had a single revolutionary organization. In Czarist Russia, there existed a fully recognized Polish Communist Party even though Poland was considered Russian territory by the government. Thirdly, Lenin stated that despite the wishes of some "communists", any revolutionary who does not support the right to self-determination of an oppressed nation *including the right to secession* is an agent of the bourgeoisie. Our practice shows that many such agents are running around masquerading as revolutionaries. We are striving towards the goal of building a fighting international communist party directly. But not to foresee secession as a real possibility and be able to give leadership to all forms of struggle that oppose imperialism and liberate working people is criminally negligent.

#### CRITICISM FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Some of our comrades claim that the major thrust of our article was bundist.\* It is true that in the last issue of the paper, our position was tainted by idealistic, even petite bourgeois thinking. The nationalism that it represented flowed from the antagonism of the deep divisions within the working class, combined with the romanticism that the mass rebellion stage of our national struggle generated. We have long recognized both that the forces of the BLM were sufficient to *destroy* U.S. imperialism, but that a revolutionary alliance would be necessary to *win liberation* for Black and all oppressed peoples. The influence of blind nationalism prevented us from understanding the desirability of directly building the highest form of revolutionary leadership—the non-revisionist communist party.

On the other hand, we feel that anyone who has a sound knowledge of U.S. history and imperialism must recognize the deep divisions within the working class. We would like to emphasize that the study of one's own country's history is fundamental to any correct analysis. Lenin repeatedly taught that the concrete analysis of concrete conditions was the soul of scientific socialism. We are not dividing the working class by stating that there are divisions within the class. Nor do we divide the working class by recognizing that presently the sharpest struggles are those of workers from the oppressed nationalities for demands of their nationality and their class.

Rather, we believe that understanding imperialism is the key to understanding the existence and resolution of contradictions within the U.S. working class. Revolutionary nationalists have long been accused of being "American exceptionalists." (American exceptionalism is the belief that certain aspects of scientific socialism apply everywhere except America). Actually, the people who deny the applicability of Marx', Engel's and Lenin's analysis of how superprofits were used by imperialists to buy off the entire British working class are the real exceptionalists. Imperialist superprofits have bought off parts of the

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\* The Bund was an organization of Jewish communists in the early 20th century that believed Jews everywhere should have their own CP. This position is the same in essence as those who claim that Black people will never be liberated until all Africans from Brazil to Egypt have a united party and fight for the freedom of the continent.



(Some notes on why native people should support the national liberation movements of the Third World)

*These notes were prepared [somewhat hurriedly] by the Native Study Group for this present occasion, wherein the Third World Peoples' Coalition has organized a public meeting to celebrate the 11th anniversary of the Palestinian revolution. We see the value of publishing, in pamphlet form, a better prepared paper of this nature. Readers are welcomed to criticize this paper and assist us in formulating an objective concept of the international context of our struggle for self-determination.* Jan 10, 1976

#### NATIVE PEOPLE ARE A PART OF THE THIRD WORLD

The extent to which we, as native people, are moved to indignation by the crimes historically perpetrated against the Palestinian people and other oppressed peoples of the Third World\* is the extent to which we have not been "successfully integrated" into a parasitic and oppressive culture. The extent to which we can be stirred by their heroic struggles to liberate their peoples, is the extent to which our history of resistance has not lost its continuity.

There can be no doubt that, historically, we have suffered a tremendous blow. In many areas natives were physically terminated for all time. There can be no doubt that cultural penetration has eroded our cohesion, probably more so than for any other oppressed people. There can be no doubt that many of our people have (permanently or temporarily) expatriated from our land bases and are presently integrated into the lowest stratum of the Canadian working class.

But in the midst of this, we as native people, have a history of colonization, are presently colonized, and cannot achieve development until we break out of the imperialist\*\* system. The present existence of struggle and repression give testimony to our condition. In recent years forms of mass, armed propaganda have been carried out in the internal colonies of Canada and the U.S. Massive reformism and conciliatory crumbs of co-optation have been unsuccessful in pacifying our people. There is rebellion and violence (often negatively, or inwardly, directed), a high incidence of imprisonment in the oppressor's jails and, also, much demoralization, alcoholism and suicide.

What is the difference between the oppressed peoples of the Third World as a whole and those of the internal colonies? The difference is not qualitative. That is, the internal colonies do not constitute an integral part of the imperialist nations. Of course, in accordance with the laws of imperialist nations, they do. But those laws only reflect

\* The oppressed nations of Asia, Africa, Latin America.

\*\* Imperialism, was described by Lenin as the last stage of capitalism, in which (by 1900) all the territory of the world was divided up into the imperialist empires, and banking and industrial capital had merged. Further re-division was to occur in the 1st and 2nd world wars. Since the 2nd world war, imperialism was to alter its colonialist character. Its new character is referred to as neo-colonialism, in which the former colonies have (sham) political independence but remain economically colonized by international finance capital. Under neo-colonialism the capital exclusivity of old-style colonialism is broken and the colonies are opened up for exploitation by all (foremost the U.S.) imperialist countries. Fundamental to the operation of neo-colonialism is the existence in the oppressed nations of a national ruling class subservient to the interests of the international ruling class of the imperialist nations. Co-terminous with the development of this system of indirect rule and the consequent intensification of exploitation in the oppressed nations, was the development in the imperialist nations of welfare statism and the consequent further consolidation of class collaboration.

the extent to which imperialist nations are able to maintain hegemony at any given time. For instance up until very recently the African nations of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea were not considered nations, but overseas provinces of Portugal. The masses of those oppressed nations then rose up and seized their independence, outside the context of Portuguese law. Moreover, privilege, derived from imperialist superprofits, has not been extended to the internal colonies. The standards of living for the Blacks in the south-east and in the ghettos of the U.S.; for the natives and Chicanos in the south-west and in the barrios and reservations of the same country; for the natives in the north and in the native communities of Canada testify to this. White supremacist exclusivity negates any chance of our people becoming a part of imperialist nations. The internal colonies are subject to forced underdevelopment and superexploitation. The privilege historically afforded to citizens of oppressor nations reaches the victims of internal colonialism, only, as forms of political subversion aimed at eroding their struggle for self-determination. The difference, then, between the oppressed peoples of the Third World as a whole and those of the internal colonies is a quantitative matter related to the existence of the internal colony amid the concentrated power of the imperialist State machinery and the white settler populace that was massively aborted from Europe. It is not a matter of different goals, but of different strategies for achieving those goals.

Due to the nature of the internal colony, our struggle must be sensitively attuned to the development of class contradiction in the imperialist nation in whose geopolitical boundary we reside. It follows too that our struggle must be sensitive to the other struggles in the Third World, as the success of these struggles constitutes the major external condition for the development of class and national contradiction in the privileged sector of imperialism. Hence the necessity exists in our struggle for a dual strategy. One aspect of our strategy must be internationalist—aimed at influencing the working class in the oppressor nation in a direction which facilitates our struggle for self-determination. The other aspect of our strategy must be nationalist—aimed at educating and mobilizing our people around internal contradictions.\*

#### ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CLASS FORCES IN IMPERIALISM

Firstly, we must say that the exploitative system of which we are a part is an international one in which there are two basically hostile classes—proletariat and bourgeoisie. Within the two opposed classes there are again sub-classes or types, which are also contradictory and, at times, antagonistic. While it is, in general, correct to say that the contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat is an irreconcilable contradiction which will inevitably lead to revolution and the establishment of socialism, it is incorrect to say that all types of proletariats are at all times revolutionary, or, that all types of bourgeoisies are at all times reactionary. Although all bourgeoisies are, by definition, owners of means of production and are thus strategically reactionary, we must note that in certain revolutions in modern history (e.g. the Chinese revolution) the

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\* The internal strategies, of the various sections of our people, to achieve self-determination are not the subject of this paper. Whether, in the reserves and villages, we can achieve self-determination as regional or local autonomy; whether, in the north, there exists the necessity to struggle for national self-determination, are questions we reserve for treatment elsewhere.

national and petty bourgeoisies of the oppressed nations have played a progressive, even revolutionary, role. Similarly, although all proletariats are, by definition, wage labourers and are thus strategically revolutionary, we must note again that in modern history the proletariats of the imperialist nations have been unsuccessful in bringing about socialism and have engaged rather consistently in counter-revolutionary wars which have strengthened the rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Historically, contradiction in the international proletariat finds its origin in the colonialist character of the capitalist mode of production. From the earliest stage of the development of capitalism, economic surplus (the lifeblood of all nations) has been drained from the colonies and invested in the development of the mother countries. The gold and silver, for instance, which provided the first impetus for the supercession of capitalism over other forms of production in different parts of the world, was obtained from the Americas. Native Indian people were worked to death in mines of South and Central America by the Spanish colonialists. Seven of every ten men, women and children who were forced into this early slavery died.\* In this way the population was rapidly depleted. Eventually slaves had to be imported from Africa and a system of "breeding" had to be organized to ensure the supply of slave labour. The historical result of this colonialism was the creation of a division of the world into oppressing and oppressed nations. It is this division and the consequent amassing of wealth on one side which formed the economic basis for the bourgeoisification of the sector of the international proletariat resident in the oppressing nations. This bourgeoisification became apparent in the last quarter of the 19th century when that section, out of accord with the development of the international proletariat (and out of accord with the Marxian predictive definition of proletariat), began to experience, along with the growth of modern industry, higher standards of living. The result was the growth of opportunism in the European labor movement and the (temporary) nullification of its revolutionary potential.

The modern labourer . . . instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the condition of existence of his own class. (K. Marx and F. Engels, 1848, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*)

. . . the English proletariat is becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bourgeois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat as well as a bourgeoisie. For a nation which exploits the whole world this is of course to a certain extent justifiable. (F. Engels, 1858, letter to K. Marx, emphasis in original)

. . . Participation in the domination of the world market was and is the economic basis of the political nullity of the English workers. (F. Engels, 1883, letter to Bebel)

. . . why does England's monopoly explain the (temporary) victory of opportunism in England? Because monopoly yields *superprofits*, i.e., a surplus of profits over and above the capitalist profits that are normal and customary all over the world. The capitalists can devote a part (and not a small one, at that) of these superprofits to bribe *their*

\* Of course this early form of pillage of the Third World was met by world resistance. In South America the most famous and successful Indian resistance was led by a Peruvian chief named Tupac Amaru. The Spanish colonialists then coined "tupamaros" as a disdainful term for native rebels. It is interesting to note also that slavery of Indians existed in Canada. The following excerpt is taken from **History of Canadian Wealth** by Gustavus Myers; "The right to hold Indians in slavery, and to sell them was decided by Judge Hocquart, May 29, 1733, and hired by him to Radisson. Judge Hocquart decided that this right existed by virtue of an ordinance of April 13, 1703."

own workers, to create something like an alliance . . . between the workers of the given nation and their capitalists *against* the other countries. (V.I. Lenin, 1916, *Imperialism and the Split in the Socialist Movement*, emphasis in original)

And these billions of superprofits serve as the economic basis upon which opportunism in the working class movement rests. (V.I. Lenin, 1920, report delivered at the Second Congress of the Communist International)

Before the post world war two period the inherent labour/capital contradiction in international capitalism had not fully matured. Until that time contradictions were such that the various imperialist bourgeoisies militarily opposed each other as, consequently, did "their" proletariats. At times, and in particular areas (in some nations of 19th century Europe) the labour/capital contradiction developed to a pre-revolutionary condition but was (temporarily) resolved in a non-revolutionary way. In the oppressed nations it had developed to intense antagonism (e.g. the Taiping Rebellion in China) but the subjective forces, in the form of a class conscious vanguard, were as yet undeveloped. Since the latter part of the 19th century, the conflict between the rich and poor (which Marx predicted would, in the oppressing nations be fatal to capitalism) has been transferred on to the international scene, thereby, setting the foundations for class struggle on a global scale.

Today this conflict, the labour/capital contradiction, is fully mature and is ushering in a period of revolutionary transformation. In terms of our analysis the principal contradiction in the world, which is presently exerting the major influence on all other contradictions, and determining world history, is that between the peasant/worker masses in the oppressed nations and the imperialist bourgeoisie. Its resolution, through revolutionary wars of national liberation, is creating liberated areas and advanced (socialist) forms of production in a world civilization hitherto characterized solely by exploitation.

It is important to note that revolutionary Marxist ideology, or scientific socialism, was born in Europe in the early 19th century. It was in that part of the world that, for a time, a socialist labour movement was growing. With the exception of Bolshevism, revolutionary ideology (for lack of struggles) experienced little further development in the imperialist nations. Even during the period of radicalism in Europe, Marxists were unable to correctly visualize the world revolutionary process. This was, in part, due to the fact that major changes and growth were still to occur in international capitalism, and, in part, to the subjective factor of national and social chauvinism which colored all aspects of culture in the imperialism nations, detracting from an objective, scientific view. Not until the victory of the Chinese revolution, and the development of the countryside encirclement of the city strategy, was the revolutionary potential of the masses of the rural proletariat (peasants) realized. Even today, many leftists in the imperialist nations dogmatically view the modern peasantry in terms of the European feudal peasantry analyzed by 19th century Marxists, i.e., that they are a petty bourgeois class. The conclusion they arrive at is that nations with large sections of peasantry cannot make a social revolution. They hold a cynical view of nationalism in the oppressed nations, even though it is only through revolutionary nationalism that the capitalist mode of production in the world is being replaced by the socialist mode of production. It is all too sadly the case that many leftists in the imperialist nations have been unable as yet to rid themselves of chauvinism, arrogance and imperialist notions of all kinds which have over the centuries become deeply ingrained in the consciousness of the members of imperialist nations.

## THE MIDDLE-EAST CRISIS AND "NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT"

The ripening of contradictions and the growth of the struggle in the Middle-East, the main source of oil for imperialism, brought about an energy crisis in the imperialist nations. The oil cartels headed by the U.S. could see that, with the awakening of the Arab peoples, their days of superexploitation were numbered. From that time we could detect an alteration in their profit-making strategy. They re-directed their investments in oil exploration from the Middle-East (and from Venezuela & Angola which are also oil sources and which are also the scene of growing anti-imperialist struggle) to the imperialist nations. The rationale for this is that the growth of national liberation and social revolution in the Third World was creating an "unsafe political climate for investment." Thus, to maintain sources of raw materials it is necessary to find "safe" areas of investment. The focus for this re-direction is the "Canadian" north and, by and large, it has already been explored and decisions have been made on the division of the north amongst the various imperialist interests. The only impediment holding up a wholesale corporate invasion is the fact that the north is, and has been for tens of thousands of years, the legitimate domain of native people. It represents the only (or one of the only) vestige(s) of genuine national territory for native people, wherein they can realize the aspiration to which all peoples are rightfully entitled—nationhood. This being the case, a historical conflict is revitalized as imperialism encroaches on this "new frontier," "this storehouse of previously inaccessible wealth."

To influence this conflict so that it may be resolved in an "acceptable" way, big business and their lackey, the Canadian government, have invested heavily in our political movement since 1970. They have engineered the creation of a native elite (a captive, puppet leadership) throughout Canada for the purpose of opposing the native struggle for self-determination. Their main strategy now is to misinterpret and mislead it in such a fashion that it will stop half way and be satisfied with "cultural independence," or some other such "Fourth World" arrangement, in which native people and finance capital can co-exist for their "mutual benefit."

It is ridiculous, given the history of relationships between capital and the toiling masses of the Third World, to propose that there can be anything mutually beneficial about any arrangement with capital other than its exclusion from our midst. Capital exists only to make profit, and in order to do that it has to expropriate and exploit people. The present division of the world into horribly impoverished Third World nations and affluent imperialist nations testifies to this. Capital, over the centuries of its growth, has created, not development, but, underdevelopment for all peoples of the Third World including ourselves.

### PALESTINIANS AND NATIVE PEOPLE

"Northern development" as a repercussion of the anti-imperialist movement in the Middle-East finds an even more pointed parallel in the common cause of Palestinians and native people. In order to maintain hegemony over the Middle-East resources (and also the Suez Canal) imperialism established the puppet state of "Israel" in 1948. Presently, behind the Zionists\* who have expropriated the Palestinians, and behind the Canadian State officials who seek to achieve an "acceptable land settlement" in the north, is international finance capital and, in particular, the oil cartels headed by the U.S. The Palestinian people are aware of the immense size of this enemy and are still

determined to liberate their homeland. They are termed, in the big business media, terrorists and murderers. They have answered, look at the bloody history of Zionism and see who the real terrorists are. In 1948 the Zionists, bolstered by the wealth and power of imperialism, invaded Palestine and, in a genocidal campaign of extermination, expelled almost the entire people from their land. Today the Palestinian refugees are huddled in tents and "tin towns" on the periphery of "Israel." Big business and the Zionists record this as the "Israeli War of Independence." These are the very same sort of lies perpetrated against our own people who, using the tactics of the guerrilla, heroically resisted the overwhelming power of Europe. Our patriots were called blood-thirsty savages. The aggressors on the other hand were characterized as intrepid pioneers, courageous discoverers, bringers of civilization and christianity. We can see that they have not changed their style. Ignoring the basic aggression and despotism, they focus their denunciations on the consequent resistance. Even religion is maintained as a propagandistic weapon to disguise their aggression. In our case "zealous" christian missionaries provided the pretext. In the aggression on Palestine the Zionists bring forth the bible and say they are god's chosen people who have a holy mission. If god chooses people he is a racist, and if fulfilling a mission for him entails the annihilation of a people and the theft of their land, then he is a thief and a murderer. Of course, we know that those concepts are alien to the notion of anything worthy of the name of god. It is only that there is no rational justification for aggression, so they are forced to resort to religion and mysticism. The real pretext is the desire on the part of international finance capital to establish a military beachhead against the rising forces of revolution in the Middle-East and to maintain domination over Arab oil.

### PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM AND THE INTERNAL COLONIES

The oppressed masses of the Third World constitute the foundation which maintains the whole system of imperialism. As they make revolution they disrupt all other classes in the system. In the imperialist nations the welfare state privileges start to erode. Bourgeois proletariats become threatened with falling into the ranks of the revolutionary proletariats. In contradiction to their immediate material interests are their strategic political interests as proletarian classes. They are destined to seize power but, while colonial economic relations maintain, the potential still exists for them to collaborate with their strategic class enemy, the imperialist bourgeoisie.

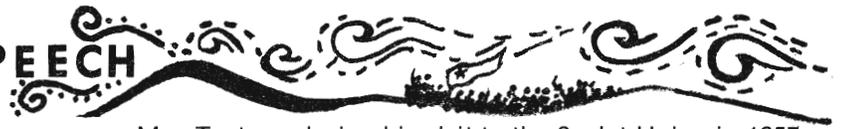
It is important for the internal colonies to be keenly aware, that the essentially non-antagonistic contradiction between the privileged and superexploited proletariats can under certain conditions become antagonistic. These conditions can be described as the underdevelopment of the subjective forces (ideological and organizational) of revolution in the imperialist nations at a time when the forces of revolution become the principal aspect of the world condition, i.e., the lack of proletarian internationalist\* leadership in the imperialist nations, when imperialism enters a general crisis. Without strong proletarian leadership the internationalization of the fascist and racist character of imperialism would pose a direct threat, not only to our struggle for self-determination, but also, to our

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\* "... proletarian internationalism demands, firstly, the subordination of the proletarian struggle in one country to the interests of the struggle on a world scale; and secondly, it calls for the ability and readiness on the part of the nations which are achieving victory over the bourgeoisie to make the greatest national sacrifices for the sake of overthrowing international capital." (V.I. Lenin, 1920, **Preliminary Draft of Theses on the National & Colonial Questions**)

\* Zionism is an expansionist and racist ideology and movement conceived by the Jewish bourgeoisie and motivated by their imperialist cohorts. Historically it has run counter to the interests of the Jewish people themselves.

# EAST WIND MAY DAY SPEECH



COMMENT BY SEIZE THE TIME

This is a political statement from comrades in the East Wind organization. We have much unity with this political statement. The comrades' analysis of the domestic and international aspects of imperialism, the role of Third World workers, the primacy and the method of building a genuine communist party and the key role of political line development, we agree with.

We have two major criticisms of our comrades' statement. We feel that their analysis is weak regarding women's oppression and movement. They correctly identify white supremacy as an ideological cornerstone of U.S. imperialism. They did not identify male supremacy as another cornerstone of U.S. imperialism. Although the comrades correctly see women's oppression as a class question, they do not show the connection between women's oppression in the U.S. and imperialism.

Secondly, we think their statement that unity in the multinational working class is rising needs clarifying. We agree that unity is rising in the working class. But we believe that this unity is rising primarily between *Third World* workers. For example, California's Proposition 14, in support of the farmworkers' right to unionize, had extremely strong and active Black support. In the past the farmworkers' struggle had been largely identified as a "Chicano issue."

However, we see two contending trends within the white working class. One is for fascism and the other is anti-capitalist. The white working class' support of fascist forces in Boston, of U.S. imperialism and their continued support of white supremacy all aid the consolidation of the fascist trend. The refusal of white dock workers to unload Rhodesian chrome, the increasing role of white women workers and efforts of white activists to merge their work with the white working class all go towards moving the white working class in the direction of anti-capitalist struggle. In our opinion both trends are rising; we cannot tell which is primary now. We believe the success or failure of white communists in fusing the communist movement with the white workers' movement will decide which trend prevails.

We welcome the East Wind statement. It represents an important emerging trend in the communist movement and national movements with which we closely identify. We believe that their statement sums up this trend well. So we published it, despite our tardiness.

A LUTA CONTINUA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Struggle,  
Comrades and Friends:

It is good to see everyone here. Tonight, we take great pride in participating in the celebration of International Workers' Day—a day borne out of the historic struggles of workers in this country, a day of solidarity with workers and oppressed peoples throughout the world.

We in East Wind wish to take this occasion as a Marxist-Leninist organization to reaffirm our commitment and determination to participate and contribute to the struggles of workers, oppressed nationalities and oppressed women for socialist revolution and national liberation. It is in this spirit that we will briefly share some of the main points in our developing perspectives on the international and national situation, the tasks of the working class within the United States and within the national struggles, and the importance of building a new Communist Party.

Our name, East Wind, is taken from a statement by

Mao Tsetung during his visit to the Soviet Union in 1957. Chairman Mao stated, and we quote, "I believe it is characteristic of the situation today that the East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism have become overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism."

Revolution is the main trend in the world today and it is the Third World countries that are the storm centers of the revolution, and inflicting the most powerful blows against imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism.

At the present time the whole world is characterized by great disorder and upheaval. The capitalist world is in the midst of a serious economic crisis and the fundamental contradictions of the world are sharpening. As revolution is developing, the contention for world hegemony between the two superpowers—the imperialist U.S. and the social-imperialist Soviet Union—is intensifying. The danger of world war is on the increase, as well as the threat of new imperialist wars—wars waged by imperialist countries to maintain or build their economic and political empires.

A growing militancy of the working class and oppressed nationalities has been the response to these attacks as evidenced by the recent nationwide wave of strikes, the great uprising of workers in New York Chinatown last year, and the support generated around the issues within our own communities, the issues of Resthaven, childcare, redevelopment, concentration camps, and campaigns against dictators Park and Marcos.

In viewing these past victories, we must consciously strive to learn from the strengths and weaknesses. Particularly we feel that there were a number of serious errors in the past, that were partly responsible for the degeneration and revisionism of the Communist Party USA.

Those errors are continuing to be made by many within the Marxist-Leninist movement today:

1) An inadequate grasp of the United States as an imperialist state that reaps super-profits from the labor and raw materials of America's economic empire in the Second and Third Worlds. U.S. imperialism has created not only a permanently bribed labor aristocracy, but also a broad upper stratum of workers who receive substantial material privileges from imperialism. A revolution in the U.S. can take place only through the forging of an unbreakable common revolutionary front with national liberation struggles around the world. Our international duty is active support, in deeds as well as in words, of all struggles which are objectively anti-imperialist. Proletarian internationalism must be a key link in "our own" strategy for proletarian revolution and national liberation in the United States. If we forget this, we will fall again into unbridled American opportunism and revisionism.

2) We must recognize the fundamental nature of the national question as a class question, and recognize that the contradiction of national oppression cannot be fully resolved without a proletarian revolution.

Especially in this bicentennial year, when the ruling class is attempting to raise the patriotic spirit of the American people through myths and fabrications of history, it is important to recall and propagandize how this country was in reality formed through the genocide of Native Americans; slave trade and slave labor; forced acquisition of Puerto Rico and the Southwest, and the labor of Asian and other immigrant workers. In understanding the roots of colonialism and national oppression in the formation of the U.S., we recognize the existence of an oppressed Black nation in the black belt South, an

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oppressed nation on the island of Puerto Rico, and we feel that evidence suggests the probable existence of nations amongst the Native Americans, and possibly the Chicanos in the Southwest.

3) Within the working class, as a result of class oppression and national oppression, material divisions exist which divide the class along the lines of nationality. Third World workers are usually in the lowest ranks of the working class; we lack such political rights as rights to unionization, and the right to bilingual-bicultural education. In addition, white workers are taught an ideology of white racism and white supremacy. Proletarian internationalism, the building of multinational unity must include the recognition of the rights of oppressed nations and colonies to political succession, and the rights of Asian Americans and other Third World oppressed nationalities to exist and develop as peoples with specific rights to insure a genuine voluntary unity and equality. While material divisions exist, we see a rising trend of multinational unity during the deepening crisis of the decline of U.S. imperialism. To deepen and broaden this emerging unity within the divided class, we must combat white chauvinism and narrow nationalism, with the major emphasis of the struggle against white chauvinism.

4) We must recognize the revolutionary character of the struggles against national oppression and imperialism that objectively weaken imperialism. These struggles should be fully supported, even in those instances when they are led by non-proletarian forces. We must also understand the leading role of Third World workers both in the class as well as national struggles.

5) The woman question is a class question and as such, can only be resolved through proletarian revolution. We feel that a correct line on the woman question must be developed in the process of forging a truly non-revisionist Communist Party.

Brothers and sisters, most of you have been with us in the struggle for a number of years during which the movement has gone through many changes. Briefly, we'd like to share how we came to the conclusion that the building of a new, anti-revisionist Communist Party, is the central task for the communist movement.

Our organization grew out of the Japanese American and Asian American national movement. In confronting the question of identity and the vast problems within our community, we began to perceive ourselves as part of a larger motion for social change.

In the early 1970's, we as part of the Asian American movement, embraced the politics of anti-imperialism, and rudimentary principles of Marxism, Leninism, Mao Tse-Tung Thought (MLM). We were influenced, at that time, by the then revolutionary Black Panther Party. It was the works of such Marxist writers as MaoTseTung, Che, Ho Chi Minh, and George Jackson that most deeply represented our innermost feelings and strivings. The theory of MLM was able to present a plan of action that dealt with the root and not just the symptoms of our problems. With our limited knowledge of MLM theory, the shared experiences of other movements and our own limited experience, we went about building self-help groups, serve-the-people programs, alternative institutions, and anti-imperialist activities. Most of our community work took place isolated from the broader movement. This weakness resulted in spontaneity and the lack of a concrete plan on how our work fit into the revolutionary process. Consequently, our work vacillated between an economism and reformism in our serve-the-people work, and a tendency towards adventurism in our anti-imperialist work (ie. Van Troi, Wounded Knee).

On the positive side, we have worked with others in the development of a broad section of activists who are dedicated to the struggle, and open to communism. We have also tried to carry out our internationalist duty in forthrightly and militantly supporting the struggles of Third World people abroad and in the U.S. as exemplified in the Vietnam offensive, Wounded Knee, Attica and Emperor of Japan's visit. Since our beginning we have been a small part of the powerful, anti-reformist revolutionary movement, firmly opposed to the revisionist currents of the CPUSA, Progressive Labor Party, and other organizations that were "left" in words, and totally rightist in their practice. Most importantly, we are critically evaluating our past, and incorporating those lessons with insights gained from our study of MLM, to heighten our understanding of making revolution in our own historical situation.

At one time (approximately 1968-1972) within the Japanese American community movement, the anti-imperialist revolutionary nationalists were leading the national struggle against the drug epidemic, in fighting for social services, in raising the issues of the concentration camps, and in struggling around the Vietnamese War, Japan's imperialism, and redevelopment. Given the intensified efforts by the ruling class to co-opt, isolate, divide and attack the different sectors of our national movement, we have seen the growth of reformism, both honest and dishonest. Now the leadership of much of the national struggle has objectively gone into the hands of the petty-bourgeoisie, both those who temporarily gave-up on the movement and revolution, and those who actively attack and undermine the movement and betray the interests of the masses. The Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP) and Pioneer Centers are two clear examples where we lost initiative and lost some of our closest friends and comrades to the petty-bourgeois reformist trend. The only way to wrest away the leadership of our people's struggle from the petty-bourgeoisie, and from the social props of our enemy, is to rely on the working class and the oppressed masses of our national communities. And the only way that we can move forward with correct orientation, strategy and tactics, is for our class and national struggles to be led by the party of the working class. This is the Marxist Leninist Party we are in the midst of forging; one that is made up of working people of all colors, armed with the most advanced theory of MLMTT, equipped with the attitude of learning from the masses, and capable of fearlessly wielding the weapon of learning and growing stronger through CRITICISM AND SELF CRITICISM.

This is the difficult road to which we've come in reaching the conclusion that party building is the central task of all communists and revolutionary-minded masses at this time. We've come to this extremely serious and important conclusion, rather late. This is largely due to our limitations as a small collective, with a narrow base of experience and work. But our conclusion from our limited experience is totally confirmed by the broader, proven experience of the international communist movement, that the party, as well as the united front, and people's army are the essential tools for making revolution anywhere.

The question of the necessity of a Communist Party cannot be done justice in this short speech. We will, however, attempt a brief summary of a MLM party.

Revolution is the violent overthrow of one class by another. Proletarian revolution is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the working class, and the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, through armed struggle. Revolution is not the work of a few but is a broad mass undertaking carried out over a protracted period, using all forms of struggle.

Revolution does not occur spontaneously, but occurs when both the objective conditions of a society's development and the subjective factors, which are the consciousness of the people willing to fight for revolution are brought together by a Communist Party with correct ideology, political line and organization.

Forces for the revolution do not develop spontaneously, people do not develop communist consciousness spontaneously. People develop the revolutionary ideology of MLM through a process of direct experience in political struggle and through conscious and sustained political education and organization.

Leadership of the revolutionary forces must be based upon the interests of the rising class — the proletariat.

The organizational form capable of acting as an advanced and vanguard detachment in the development and leadership of the revolutionary forces is the party based on the ideology of MLM. The party is the only form which can develop a unified ideological, political and organizational line, and is capable of organizing under the strictest security and in a most disciplined way.

It represents not only the correct organizational form for the U.S. revolution, but represents an historically proven, essential part in the making of revolution in this era of capitalism and imperialism. This can be clearly seen in the role of the communist parties of China, Albania and Vietnam.

We cannot go into a detailed discussion of how we see the party building process. Our understanding of the party building process requires a greater depth and clarity. Let us share with you, however, some key points of attention which we believe are important to keep in mind as we discuss this central task of party building.

Party building is a many sided process. It necessitates painstaking struggle and concrete work in the ideological realm, political realm, and organizational realm. Fundamental to all aspects of the party building process is *ideology*. Ideology of MLM is the *class stand* of the working class, the *viewpoint* of scientific socialism as the summarized experience of the international working class movement, and the *method* of dialectical and historical materialism.

Recognizing that ML ideology is fundamental, we believe that the *struggle over political line* will be the main arena in which the struggle over ideology, ideological line and organizational line will occur. This process of developing and struggling over correct ideological and political line *must link theory and practice*. The universal truth (MLM), the summarized experience of the international working class movement, must be integrated in the concrete reality and problems of the United States revolution. *Revolutionary mass practice* with workers and oppressed nationalities in the heat of class struggle is an indispensable link in the party building process. It is in this arena that ideological and political line can be developed and put to the test of class struggle. It is from this arena that the advanced of all nationalities will come forth to consciously and materially build the party as the advanced detachment of the working class. The Resthaven struggle is a good beginning. It is a partial example of concrete development of political line and winning over the advanced in the heat of class struggle.

Organizational line, the methods and style of work internal and external to the organization, *serves* both ideological and political line. While fundamentally and overall secondary to ideological and political line, the question of organizational practice and correct revolutionary style of work cannot be overlooked. The basis for errors and shortcomings in organizational line and practice, especially if they are persistent and systematic, lies in an erroneous ideological or political line — in incorrect ideology. It is an important question for our movement

today if we are to consciously fight the danger of sectarianism which has created divisiveness within the movement today (as well as within the working class), lowered our fighting capacity, and hampered the correct form of ideological and political struggle.

Developing out of the struggles within the Asian American national movement, mainly the Japanese American movement, our membership is based on unity of line although we are objectively national in form at this time. We are continuing to persevere in developing relationships with other organizations for purposes of a merger based on political line, that will lead to the liquidation of our small collective.

The East Wind organization joined with other fraternal organizations and independents in initiating this revolutionary celebration of May Day, as a significant link in our intensified work towards building the Party. Overall we are extremely gratified with how we, that is comrades and friends from all the organizations and circles, were able to turn this celebration into a righteous preparation and training ground for Party building. Our revolutionary optimism becomes even more firmly rooted by the fact that comrades from participating organizations and independents were able to struggle out differences in a sharp, productive manner. We feel that all of us have learned from that struggle, and are growing ever sharper in grasping the ideology of MLM, and the central task of building the new, anti-revisionist ML party here in the heart of the monster U.S. imperialist state. Our political trust and unity in action is built through the heat of ideological and class struggle. This May Day sets a good beginning for many of us who are relatively new to this whole inspiring process.

To conclude:

In order to build the working class leadership of the revolutionary national movement, and help build the multi-national proletariat as the principal force for socialist revolution and national liberation, it is imperative that we, as revolutionaries and communists, root ourselves within the working class, the lower-stratum of that class in particular. To lead the class and our allies, we need to deeply root ourselves and never allow ourselves to be dislodged from our class base. This will be a difficult process full of struggle. We recognize, however, that *it must be done!* If not, we will forever remain a small group of radicals with good intentions only.

Armed with correct ideological, political and organizational line with a Marxist-Leninist Party to guide us — Resolute in our determination to win over the working class and oppressed people to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought — With a correct method and style of work — We can only be victorious. History has shown there is no force that can stop us.

The East Wind *does* prevail over the West Wind. The road to victory is marked with twists and turns, and we must be constantly vigilant. In this era of worldwide socialist revolution, *our future is bright*.

Countries want independence, nations want liberation, people everywhere want revolution!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD  
UNITE  
BUILD THE NEW ANTIREVISIONIST COMMUNIST  
PARTY  
SOLIDARITY WITH THE VICTORIOUS VIETNAMESE  
PEOPLE ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THEIR  
LIBERATION  
LONG LIVE PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM  
CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY



# WEATHER SELF-CRITICISM

Comrades,

This is an essential addition and correction to the October 1st self-criticism of the Weather Underground Organization.

In our self-criticism we exposed the white and male supremacist political line and activity of the WUO during the past two years to push forward the struggle for revolutionary anti-imperialism. Further we say, "Based on this unity the leadership, structure and goals of the WUO has been changed."

This was a misleading and incomplete analysis of the situation. In fact, a part of the former membership of the WUO, concentrated in, though not restricted to, New York City has failed to disband the manipulative apparatus founded on opportunist politics.

These opportunist elements stated agreement with our revolutionary criticism of the WUO up to the point where real change was called for. At this point they parted company with revolutionary anti-imperialism.

The opportunists were driven to this end by a desire to maintain individual power.

The opposition of these opportunists to the application of the politics of our self-criticism has caused a split. When we signed the Self-Criticism, it was wrong to sign it as the WUO, thus implying that there is still one unified organization. We should have signed ourselves the Revolutionary Committee of the WUO, defined on the side of the split that takes its stand in the best revolutionary anti-imperialist tradition of the WUO.

To those who have supported us and worked in solidarity with us, we want to say that the only way to judge which side of this split particular cadre are on must be based on political line and practice day by day, and not on past associations. The name of the WUO must not be a cover for people to get by with shoddy work and unprincipled struggle. Remember that Lenin said "When dealing with opportunists, listen to their words but watch their hands."

Signed,  
Revolutionary Committee of the WUO  
October 12, 1976                      Venceremos!

## INTRODUCTION

In June 1976 the WUO published the article "Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism vs. Opportunism: A Self-Criticism," but this was not real self-criticism. This article reflected directly, both in its title and content, a two-line struggle within the WUO, and showed that opportunism still dominated. This reality made true self-criticism of the WUO's errors impossible.

The membership of the WUO rejected this article as a basis of political unity; at the same time severe and correct criticisms were made of it by progressive and revolutionary people throughout the US. Despite all this the central committee of the WUO refused to accept further criticism and adopted a stance of "business as usual."

This position made it clear that the central committee was no longer able to lead politically. In the period of no leadership a number of forces and coalitions emerged within the WUO that opposed the central committee, but which based themselves in the same erroneous political concepts of the central committee.

In the political struggle to criticize these wrong notions another force developed and organized itself within the WUO. This force bases itself on the political line of revolutionary anti-imperialism of the book *Prairie Fire*, and the further developments of these politics made by the *Prairie Fire* Organizing Committee in its own struggle against opportunism.

The political struggle to define the content, material and social roots, and the consequences of our errors has developed unity within the organization that revolutionary anti-imperialism, as formulated in *Prairie Fire*, is the correct line and strategy for revolution in the US oppressor nation; and, that for two years the political line of the WUO has been opposed to these politics; that it has been an opportunist line, characterized by a white and male chauvinist political content.

Based on this unity the leadership, structure and goals of the WUO has been changed.

Throughout the course of the internal political struggle our main goal has been to release a self-criticism that is as full and correct as possible; one that strengthens the struggle to undo the damage caused by our wrong line in the past two years.

This self-criticism is to the national liberation movements and communist organizations in the oppressed nations; to the women's movement; and to the anti-imperialist movement in the US oppressor nation. Most especially it is for those revolutionaries who adopted the wrong line of the WUO and carried it into practice. We hope this statement provides a political basis to understand and overturn errors in your political work, to make appropriate self-criticism, and to deepen criticism of our line and its consequences.

This political struggle against opportunism, in the WUO and the entire left movement in the US oppressor nation, is taking place in the midst of a world-wide counter-offensive by US imperialism against revolutionary movements. US imperialism's counter-offensive, a response to defeat in Angola, has intensified struggle on all fronts; especially in the Middle-East, Argentina, Chile, Africa. It is the context necessary to understand Kissinger's neo-colonial moves in Southern Africa.

The struggle against opportunism in the oppressor nation revolutionary movement is part and parcel of developing our own revolutionary offensive against US imperialism. Events in the world and this country only make this struggle more immediate and important.

We hope that this statement, and this organization, will aid, and be a part of the growth of our movement into one that strikes real blows and scores revolutionary victories against US imperialism.

Venceremos,  
Weather Underground Organization, October 1, 1976

For two years the WUO has pursued the wrong direction — our strategy and organizing has been based on a white and male chauvinist political line. We have completely abandoned the anti-imperialist politics of *Prairie Fire*, the correct politics that guided the organization from 1969 to '74. The errors of the WUO were not limited to a few areas of work, rather they have dominated every aspect of our politics and have created a complete reversal of direction.

The WUO's history of anti-imperialist struggle and the writing of *Prairie Fire* are real strengths that have led many people to respect it as a leading force in the anti-imperialist movement. But, this history does not create any immunity from the very same forces — white and male supremacy — that have turned previous revolutionary organizations into opportunist and revisionist organizations.

The force of white and male chauvinism, operating in society and in all of us, was not effectively opposed because of

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anarchistic, anti-political, and anti-ideological tendencies that existed throughout the organization. These tendencies are rooted in our history, in the history of the New Left; in the reaction against revisionism and inaction of the CP. Anarchism has also manifested itself within the organization through spontaneous concepts of strategy for revolution; and in concepts of organization and leadership that were not collective and not founded on political struggle.

White and male chauvinism merged with New Left spontaneity and led to an economist, populist program of struggle. This strategy was justified with a phoney Marxism that ignored the changes brought about by the development of imperialism.

Our errors are the *classic* errors of revolutionary organizations in oppressor nations, particularly the US. They are rooted in a four-hundred year history and tradition of empire-building and imperialist expansion; and grow directly out of the fact that the rulers have been able to involve the whole population of the oppressor nation, including the working class, in its crimes.

Oppression of nations is firmly rooted in the development of US imperialism, in the rip-off of land from Native Americans and genocide against them; in the enslavement of Black Africans; in the seizure of half of Mexico; etc. and etc. Implicit in the Louisiana Purchase and so on is the essence of imperial ideology: that the world belongs to white people, to be divided up as they see fit.

From the beginning the US colonialist bourgeoisie organized support for manifest destiny, for slavery, for the Indian wars by passing on a share of the plunder to white people, and by granting to them privileges and status denied to the oppressed people. These were the rights of the overseer: protection for the white trades unionists against competition from freed Black labor; the right to own land while it was denied to free Blacks; access to training and education while it was a crime for Black people to learn to read; the possibility of freedom after seven years, while Black slaves were owned for life; . . . The modern day expressions are not really different; they exist as privileged access to higher paying jobs, better working conditions, better housing, schools, etc. But privilege is more than the bribe; it is the bribe plus a culture of self-justification, social approval and status. White supremacy is the rock upon which US capitalism and imperialism have been erected.

The combination of modern capitalism based in industry in the North and the capitalized slave colony in the South expanded West, and finally crossed the oceans, seizing territory for the investment of surplus capital, insuring supplies of raw materials, and markets for its junk. Imperialism arrives a historical stage on the North American continent. Bolstered by super-profit derived from the exploitation of the whole world US imperialism vastly expanded the extent and breadth of bribery of the oppressor nation people. All the social institutions are adapted to the goal of material gain and power of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

White and male supremacy are built into every social structure and institution: churches, schools, the press, literature and art. All social concepts and behavior are developed in the adequate fashion to insure imperialist rule, and justify and mobilize for imperialism. Most especially white and male supremacy are built into the state, written into law and enforced through the police, courts, prisons, probation, and parole departments.

White and male supremacy are rooted in the material base of imperialism, permeate all social institutions, and dominate the ideology of the oppressor nation. White and male chauvinism are reproduced continually, day-by-day, minute-by-minute; they are reflections of the primary and essential social relations of production under imperialism.

A revolutionary line and strategy for the oppressor nation can only be formed in the context of a constant struggle against the forces of white and male chauvinism and arrogance. The WUO grew out of this struggle, carried on within the New Left against organizations (CP, PL, RU) which claimed to be revolutionary, but opposed the struggle of Black people for liberation, opposed the struggle of Vietnam against US imperialism, and opposed the women's movement. The WUO developed in 1969 the basic strategic principle of building an organization and movement to lend concrete assistance to the national liberation movements in their struggle against US imperialism.

Following the chaining and gagging of Bobby Seale at the Chicago Seven trial, and the assassination of Fred Hampton the WUO decided to create an underground capable of developing and sustaining armed struggle to respond to the crimes of imperialism.

From 1970-74 we developed this basic strategy, and our actions guided by a principled political line, were an important contribution to the whole anti-imperialist movement in the oppressor nation.

Yet, throughout this period there was a continual two-line struggle between opportunism and anti-imperialism. The most significant right opportunist politics in this period was that of *New Morning*. It put forward the existence of a youth nation, that would become revolutionary and become the basis of revolutionary struggle in the US. This document completely liquidated the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations, and extolled "dope" at a time when a main strategy of imperialism against the Black nation was the importation of heroin into Black communities. The *New Morning* line completely opposed the political basis for the organization's existence, and its actions. All of this was pointed out by the *New York 21* in a criticism, but the organization never responded. The failure of the WUO to engage in political struggle with Third World revolutionaries is a measure of the national chauvinism and arrogance that has existed within the organization.

*Prairie Fire* was written in opposition to the line of *New Morning* and to overcome the de-mobilization caused by its opportunist line. *Prairie Fire* once again laid a correct political basis for the organization to exist and act. It clearly analyzes the leading role of the national liberation movements in the world proletarian revolution and in this country. It begins an historical analysis of the forces which have prevented revolution in the oppressor nation, and the means and necessity to oppose the forces of national and male chauvinism in the development of revolution in the oppressor nation. *Prairie Fire* began to correct the WUO's incorrect line on women, for the first time. On the whole, it was an important step toward the formulation of an anti-imperialist line and strategy for the oppressor nation, and a useful contribution to the struggle against opportunism within the US Left.

At the same time opportunism, white and male chauvinism, is clearly expressed in *Prairie Fire*. The *Go to the People* section shows this tendency most clearly. It puts forward a totally spontaneous and economist concept of organizing, completely abandoning the political principles that predominate in the book.

The *Go to the People* section clearly summarizes the anarchist, spontaneous and opportunist tendency that has existed in the organization since the beginning. It was between these two tendencies that struggle broke out and which led to the defeat of anti-imperialism within the WUO. By the time *Prairie Fire* was printed in July of 1974 this struggle had been completed within the leadership, and an opportunist, economist direction firmly set.

For two years the WUO has used *Prairie Fire* and the real strengths of its history to cover the abandonment of the movements of national liberation (especially the Black liberation movement) and the women's movement. Because the WUO has been respected and trusted the effect of its line and organizing has been to mis-lead, dis-organize and destroy anti-

imperialist organization nationally.

The WUO abandoned the strategy of building an organization and movement in the oppressor nation to give concrete support to the national liberation movements and replaced it with a populist strategy of "uniting the multi-national working class." (See *Our Class Stand*). This strategy opposed the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations, and subsumed the Black liberation movement into the struggle of the whole class. For example, in the article *Break the Chains* prisons are described as tools of capitalist oppression, *not* forces of national and colonial oppression.

In *Our Class Stand* the entire system of white supremacy through which imperialism oppresses nations is reduced to a problem of bad ideas among white workers. The material basis and structure of bribery, privilege, political and social status granted to the whole population of the oppressor nation is liquidated and along with it the material basis for the liquidation of the national question within the oppressor nation left. This led directly to the abandonment of the struggle against opportunism: in fact the leadership became convinced that the main danger within the left was "left sectarianism."

The WUO liquidated all struggle in support of national liberation. The WUO has not done an action in support of Black people since June of 1974. In Boston we said that the issue was racism, not national liberation for the Black nation. We did nothing to support the Black Liberation Army in this period when they were struggling within the prisons and the courts.

The WUO has not done a single thing to support the struggle of undocumented workers. In the article *Imperialism = Hunger* we do not say among the suggestions of things to do: support the demands of undocumented workers. Mexicanos are forced by imperialisms domination of the Mexican economy to emigrate to the US in search of employment and decent wages, but then are murdered at the border and brutally hunted down in the fashion of the "search and destroy" missions used in Vietnam. The only project group for this work within the WUO was dis-banded.

In the period since Wounded Knee the Native American movement has suffered extreme repression by the imperialist state, and has still dealt it some revolutionary blows. The WUO has done nothing to support this movement beyond sporadic propaganda.

In the action in support of the Ponce strike in Puerto Rico we don't raise the demand "Independence for Puerto Rico". We try to organize support on the basis of the anti-worker, strike-breaking tactics being used there; not because it is our duty to fight for the liberation of nations oppressed by the us imperialism! In the follow-up article we reduced ourselves to asking readers to send money to the Ponce strike fund.

Support for the right of self-determination is a fundamental principle for revolutionaries of oppressor nations; in abandoning the national liberation movements we adopted a stance of socialism in words, but imperialism and chauvinism in deeds.

Within the US oppressor nation (and throughout the imperialist system) male supremacy operates as a system to maintain the private servitude and super-exploitation of women and to maintain their social domination. The bourgeois nuclear family is the cornerstone of this system, a form which maintains the subservience of women to men, individualizes child rearing and domestic work and maintains women as a ready reserve army of labor to be called on and super-exploited according to unequal development of different sectors of the imperialist economy, and the incidence of war which drains the labor pool of male workers.

This system grants to all men (including workers) real privileges (very similar to those all white people hold in relation to oppressed peoples): the ability to dominate women and a sense of superiority, more educational opportunities, better jobs and wages, access to positions of power within the system, and protection from prosecution for rape and wife beating. Male supremacy manifest itself in every social institution and in a dominant ideology of male chauvinism (sexism). Male chauvinism is socialized into all men and is continually reinforced by society. The system of male supremacy is the material and social basis of opposition by "revolutionaries" to the revolutionary struggle of women for liberation. Male supremacy is a foundation of the whole system of imperialism, key to imperialist exploitation and domination.

Racism and sexism operate in close connection within US imperialism. White are given license to rape and assault women of oppressed nations; black men are lynched and castrated. But when imperialism uses the white woman to fortify the oppression of nations by participation in white perogatives it does do in such a way that her own degradation and oppression are driven home all the more.

The WUO has never previously developed a correct analysis of the material basis of male supremacy. Without this understanding it has been impossible for the WUO to develop a correct line on the struggle of women for liberation. One form of the wrong line has been to see sexism as a problem of bad ideas among men, again stripping ideology from its material and social basis. The most reactionary form of the line that expressed in the *The Womens Question is a Class Question* and in *Women Workers*: the line that reduces the special oppression of women to their superexploitation as members of the waged work force. This eliminates the *basis* of this superexploitation — women's servitude in the oppressor nation in order to gain their support.

In the name of responding to "weaknesses" on the working class we abandoned the strongest part of our analysis of the working class, simply that it, like every class in the oppressor nation, has to be analysed on the basis of how imperialist expansion and empire has effected it. This involves more than mechanical recitation of Marx's *Capital*, it means discovering the forces that have prevented revolution in the oppressor nation, and finding those sectors of the working class where opposition is national and male chauvinism and arrogance have and are developing. Class analysis in the oppressor nation must take as its basis the growth of capitalism into a world system of exploitation and oppression — imperialism. On this basis we can determine the advanced sectors of the working class in the oppressor nation, within which an anti-imperialist communist party can develop, and a revolutionary mass movement can be built.

White and male chauvinist politics led to the liquidation of military and clandestine struggle, which has been a major strength and contribution of the WUO to the whole anti-imperialist movement. The revolutionary basis for engaging in armed struggle in the oppressor nation is the recognition of the leadership of the national liberation movements in attacking and defeating imperialism. A proletarian internationalist view of the socialist revolution involves developing all forms of struggle necessary to support the most advanced, not waiting for the most backward. The existence of bourgeois democracy in the oppressor nation can not be an excuse for failing to respond to the fascism and genocide used against the oppressed nations.

Abandoning revolutionary anti-imperialism was the political basis for a denigration of the anti-imperialist left, and cadres; the reduction, in our view, of the anti-imperialist left to dupes, suitable and necessary only to carry our line to the people. Our spontaneous attitude towards mass work, and our opposition to ideological struggle within the left was arrogant and manipulative. It was the reflection of a hegemonic view of party-building; an attitude that we alone build the Party, that we were the only people capable of developing theory and strategy for revolution. We continually rejected principled

criticisms of our wrong line and engaged in personal attacks, character assassination, etc. against those who continued to make revolutionary criticisms of our line and strategy.

The very same course was followed by the school in its practical work in the left. We attempted to dominate organizations, rather than leading thru education and persuasion, and open political struggle based on unity-struggle-unity. Our activity in the left has been disastrous and destructive, it has caused a tremendous set-back to the development of revolution in the oppressor nation by destroying revolutionary anti-imperialist organizations, and cadres; isolating those we couldn't destroy; and be legitimizing and strengthening white and male chauvinist politics in the movement. We abandoned our revolutionary duty to support the national liberation movements and the fight for the liberation of women and led others to adopt the same stance.

In *Osawotomie* we attacked OL, RU, the CPUSA; but internally the leadership adopted the stance of conciliation, and desiring unity with the opportunists and revisionists. This attitude shows that the organization was not pursuing the goal of revolution, but rather the goal of replacing these sects as the main "left" opposition in the bourgeois labor movement. The concrete result of the wrong line and strategy of the school was to cover the left flank of Meany and Woodcock, et al.

The WUO's white and male chauvinist path would lead the great revolutionary advances made in the oppressor nation during the '60s, the movement and its leaders into reformism and class collaboration.

The struggle within the WUO to overturn its opportunist line has produced many changes. The hegemonic relation to the Left; the chauvinist response to criticism from national liberation movements, communist organizations, and revolutionaries in the oppressed nations; and rejection of the importance of the women's movement isolated us from political struggle and suppressed criticism of the wrong line. Overturning all these things has been essential to the development and resolution of political struggle in the WUO. The criticisms made of us by all these forces have played an important role in this process. The political struggle against opportunism has been of special importance to us.

The existence of forces within the PFOC that have stood by the politics of *Prairie Fire*, and continued to develop them has been decisive to the struggle for a revolutionary line within the WUO. We have grown and learned much from the documents produced by revolutionaries in the PFOC. We feel that the revolutionary anti-imperialist line expressed in the March report of the PFOC National Committee, and subsequent documents, especially the Draft Program, is a correct and leading line for revolutionaries in the oppressor nation. We wish to express profound gratitude to the comrades who have struggled for these politics, and who have consistently criticized the wrong line of the WUO in a correct and principled manner.

This whole process has driven home the lesson of the wrongness of the elitist, bureaucratic concepts of leadership and organization previously held by the WUO. We intend to develop our organization and its practice as a part of the whole anti-imperialist/communist movement; a part subordinate to the interests of the whole movement.

Because of this attitude we feel the most important task of anti-imperialist communists in the oppressor nation is the development of unity around a correct political line and strategy; and the formation of organizations that embody these politics and carry them into struggle with US imperialism, and opportunists. In the long run our goal is the formation of a Leninist combat Party.

What underlies this goal is the need to create a militant proletarian internationalist force that supports the national liberation movements through *all* forms of struggle. Support for the struggle of women for liberation is essential to this strategy. This is the only path to the destruction of US imperialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the construction of socialism in the US.

Revolutionary struggle in the US will take many forms, peaceful and violent; legal and illegal; open and secret. When revolution succeeds it will be because all these forms of struggle, including armed struggle, have been developed by the participation of millions of people. Armed struggle is not the main form of struggle in this period, yet to successfully lead our own people in socialist revolution we must struggle to understand and develop armed struggle alongside all our other movements. We are committed to maintain and develop the experience and history of the WUO in armed struggle, and to communicate important lessons.

We intend to participate in the political and revolutionary struggle necessary to create political and organizational unity. For us self-criticism/criticism is the most important form of struggle within the revolutionary movement. "Tell no lies, claim no easy victories" — Amilcar Cabral.



Weather Underground Organization

#### COMMENT BY THIRD WORLD STAFF / STT ON WUO STATEMENT

The staff of *STT* welcomes the current struggle within WUO and the self-criticism which came from that struggle. We were very disturbed by the "unite and fight" line that gradually took hold of *Osawotomie*.

The message contains a very good section on women's oppression and movement. It isn't just a token statement about how women are part of the revolutionary struggle. It went into depth on the role of male supremacy in upholding imperialism and of white working women in the oppressor nation.

We were also glad to see a re-affirmation of the oppressor/oppressed nations thesis as an understanding of the *internal* implications of imperialism. However, we would caution that the struggle against revisionist, economist and opportunist politics be extended to include the downplaying of social imperialism. We don't ask this because China says so. We ask it because the major source of revisionism, economism, etc., the reason why we don't have a real CPUSA now is the failure of the old CPUSA and the transformation of the USSR into an imperialist power. The struggle to re-affirm the implications of the U.S. being imperialist and not merely capitalist must not be allowed to cover a line that ignores the implications of Soviet Social imperialism within the U.S. For example, coalitions which extend to including the CPUSA and its satellites in the trade union and national movements inevitably reduce the struggle for revolution to a demonstration for jobs, wages and democratic rights, under the bourgeoisie. PFOC's Hard Times Conference is an excellent example of that subversion.

Further, we would like to see WUO clearly state that party-building is the central task *now*. The organization did not hold this position before because its former leadership thought they were *the* party. They did not have the political basis to be the true party, and WUO's self-criticism correctly exposes this error. But the other side of this error we have also seen too often among white anti-imperialist communists. That is making party-building such a "long-range goal" that the tactics of building white cadre organization displace the strategy of building a M-L party. This error becomes the basis for a very liberal relationship with TW communists including backing away from strong political line struggle/unity on the national question, etc. and even breaking relationships with TW communists in order to work with other white activists at a lower level of unity. This particularly is dangerous because it tends to organize white people as a *nationality*, which in the context of this society is reactionary. There is no better time to say "A Luta Continua" than now.

# STT'S SELF-CRITICISM OF THE WOMEN'S ISSUE

The last issue of *STT*, which focused on the oppression of women, particularly women of the oppressor nation, put forward an analysis which needs much discussion, criticism, and development. The overall political thesis that was developed argues that the oppression of white women, coupled with class exploitation provides a material "weak link" in the chains of relative privilege that exist in the white working class. As such, we concluded that this material basis provides tools for white working class women to understand imperialism, and to reject relative privilege "benefits," and provide leadership for the whole white working class in building international solidarity with Third World workers inside the US. This political analysis is an advance in the development of political line concerning the oppression and liberation of women.

There are, however, shortcomings in our analysis that need to be presented. To expand on our original thesis, and in the spirit of criticism-self criticism, *STT* offers a self criticism of the contents of the women's issue.

## MATERIAL BASIS ANALYSIS (weak Link theory)

Our assertion that "white working class women have the basis for uniting with Third World people" (see *STT* Vol. II, No. 2) is more than a sloppy error. We did not deal with the white women's movement as a social movement within the oppressor nation. Seeing the white women's movement as a social movement within the oppressor nation would have led us to see our task as struggling to build an international alliance based on support for self-determination and rejection of relative privilege by leading the whole white working class. This is our task not because we are women, but because we are part of the oppressor nation. The primary task of the white women's movement is defined by 1) nationality 2) class and 3) sex.

Another place that this error weakens our analysis is in the lack of analysis defining relations of imperialism. Putting the white women's movement where it belongs (as a social movement within the oppressor nation) rather than where we put it (in an undefined area consisting of a movement of relatively privileged people who are oppressed themselves), clarifies that we are discussing the relations of imperialism (between oppressor and oppressed nations) and the subsequent tasks dictated by those relations. As a result, the task developed for the white women's movement was limited to the struggle against white supremacy, leaving out support for national liberation struggles. This is a dangerously incorrect position. This position kept us from explaining the relationship of national liberation to the liberation of women. It also meant limiting the struggle to one of organizing white women around the need to fight racism so that we can unite with TW people, (which we know is an opportunist position), *instead* of pushing forward, organizing, and winning white working class women and men to an analysis of imperialism that defines white supremacy as an institutionalization necessary for the perpetration of the dominance of one nation over many, that outlines male supremacy as an essential secondary pillar of imperialism, and that recognizes that neither are in the class interests of white working people and must be rejected.

We can say that national liberation struggles are the leading edge of class struggle, and that supporting these struggles is in the long range interests of the white working class, and struggle to win support on that basis. But are national liberation struggles leading the fight for the liberation of women? Is that the sole basis from which white working class women support these struggles, or is

the relationship less clear—do white working class women support national liberation struggles as a sister struggle against imperialism? Again, placing the white women's movement within the oppressor nation provides an answer—the overall leadership for the struggle against imperialism will not come from the oppressor nation. The overall leadership will come from the oppressed TW workers, and the white women's movement must resolutely support and take leadership from these struggles if it is to take an anti-imperialist stance.

No one that we know of has put forth a clear analysis of the white women's movement as a movement within the oppressor nation. *STT* is still on the level of defining the questions and summing up discussions.

## HISTORY OF THE EARLY WHITE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The historical article begins with a statement acknowledging the "middle class bias" of the early white women's movement. Yet, such an understanding is not applied consistently throughout the issue. Further, the article does not apply the development of white women under imperialism to the early white women's movement (i.e. that the early white women's movement characteristics were a result of the position of white women in the early stages of consolidating imperialism).

What does a "middle class bias" mean? It means fighting for the rights of women from *within* the context of imperialism rather than for the liberation of women from one of the fundamental forms of oppression supporting class society. Whenever social and economic struggle sharpens, a "middle class bias" means supporting the "rights" of a relatively small number of women and continuing the oppression of the great majority of women (and men). In the US, this has meant limiting women's rights to mostly white bourgeois, or petit bourgeois women with a corresponding lack of support from TW and working people (particularly the women) for the feminist movement.

This article fails to apply a consistent class analysis to the history of this period. This failure allowed the article to put the feminist (suffrage) movement and the abolitionist movement on the same footing (according to the article, equally opportunist), seeing themselves only in terms of mutual aid. Yet, the abolitionist movement had the support of almost every Black worker and many Northern white workers (e.g., Boston riots against US marshalls returning runaway slaves).

The abolitionist movement *did* however, contain two factions; one which represented the interests of Black people and other working people, and one which propagated the concerns and wishes of the bourgeoisie—mostly white men.

The bourgeois faction advocated abolition on the grounds of saving capitalism and Christian morality. Its arguments were similar to bourgeois feminists' moralistic "save western civilization" appeals to get women the vote.

The other faction (the leading one), advocated abolition on the grounds that enslaving a people for profit essentially enslaves all labor. They called for armed slave revolts against slave states and advocated the establishment of "free states" and also supported the white women's movement on the basis of ending *all* forms of oppression.

Similar views inside the feminist movement were rare because of the differences in class character of this movement, i.e., no significant connections with working immigrant women existed.

## LESBIAN ARTICLE

The article, "Analysis of the Lesbian Movement," puts forward that lesbian women are oppressed "because of the need to contain women in a traditional role to maintain male supremacy." Therefore "masculinity and femininity" must be defined and controlled as part of a sexual hierarchy which ensures the exploitation of women.

Such an analysis should lead honest revolutionaries to understand that gay people must have democratic rights, as well as support in building a social movement which struggles for these rights.

*STT* would agree with the preceding analysis. However, we disagree with many of the conclusions advanced in the article. The article reasons that lesbianism "challenges male supremacy and the bourgeois state." We disagree. Lesbianism, as an individual action, does not in and of itself challenge male supremacy or the state. However, a social movement for the democratic rights of gay people can challenge the state if it attacks the very structures from which their oppression is based. However, these structures flow from the material basis of women's oppression (unwaged labor in the home as producers and reproducers of the work force and superexploitation at the workplace). Hierarchical sex roles are defined through male supremacist criteria because of the ruling class's economic need to maintain and perpetuate women in an oppressed role.

We also do not agree with the position that lesbians prove that women do not have to be dependent on either men or the state. First, an anti-male stance has no place in the struggles of Third World and white peoples against imperialism. Independence has a different meaning to us. For example, the call for self-determination and national independence for oppressed nations means *collective* freedom of entire peoples from an oppressive socio-economic system that depends on our exploitation for its existence.

Nor are we calling for an end to an industrialized, socialized mode of production which makes people interdependent. The state is at this time, a *necessary* part of this organization, and will be for a long historical period. The question is *who controls* the process and therefore the state. If it is in the hands of working people, we think that the oppression of women has a better chance of being eliminated through working within this state—the dictatorship of the proletariat—than through any other means. Meanwhile, our goal under imperialism as TW people, as working people, as women, is to *seize* the state, not merely be independent of it. We will never be independent of a state, until we have built a communist society, and then there will be no state.

Ideology and culture correspond to the economic relations of society. If we want to affect revolution over ideology we have to do it both by attacking the class structures and the corresponding ideologies that maintain these oppressive economic relationships.

## LIQUIDATION OF THE WOMAN QUESTION

In several places the issue makes reference to a "working class women's movement." Our analysis of imperialism led us rightly to see white working class women as a strategic link—a weak link—in the chains of relative privilege. Further, we analyzed that white working class women have the potential to lead the white working class in an international alliance with Third World people within the US. We concluded our reasoning with a call to build a "strong working class women's movement."

Because the oppression of women cuts across class lines, the movement that emerges from this oppression is a social movement, and as such is not a working class movement. The call to build a working class movement is an incorrect one. Our error stemmed from confusing

Marxist-Leninist leadership from cadre women (character) with the actual composition of the white women's movement. Marxist-Leninist women face the task of contending for leadership of the white women's movement—not liquidating the cross-class nature of women's oppression. A call for a "working class women's movement" is a liquidation of the woman question because it turns the cross class nature and the resultant weaknesses of this nature of the white women's movement into a matter to be solved solely by composition and by the destruction of a movement by and about the oppression of women.

## PARTY BUILDING

In general, the issue was both weak on this question, in that it wasn't mentioned when it should have been, and incorrect, such as in the article "Party Building—Our Primary Task," *STT* Vol. II, No. 2.

For example, there is no specific mention as to how building a white women's movement is related to party building. The call for an autonomous women's movement is a correct one, but what connects it to the rest of the class and the anti-imperialist movement as a whole is a communist party. More pointedly, which is primary—building the women's movement or party building? Or are the two in contradiction? If the position is taken that building a women's movement is the task of the day for white Marxist-Leninist women (which the last issue did take), doesn't this amount to a spontaneous-exceptionalist line? Or can women really gain power over our lives without a Marxist-Leninist party?

*STT's* skeletal position is that party building is primary for white Marxist-Leninist women, and at this stage it is not our primary task to undertake the building of a mass women's movement.

The article "Party Building—Our Primary Task," makes the mistake of only talking about a merger of communist theory with advanced workers. *STT* disagrees. Our analysis of imperialism dictates that we must talk of a fusion among three movements—national, class, and women's movements.

According to the article, a process for party building would look like this:

1. need to create a workers' communism that includes a tested strategy for revolutionaries and political line that can address the problems posed in the struggle.
2. need to win advanced workers to communism.
3. need to build political unity and clarity on the left, and unity among Third World and white revolutionaries.

*STT's* position differs from this list of priorities in the following ways:

1. that the list of priorities the article advocates is backward. That the first main task is to recognize that political line is the key link in this stage of party building and that this means struggling for correct political line with the aim of building common practice around propaganda.
2. that there are three movements with which Marxist-Leninism must be fused—national, class, and women's.

SELF-CRITICISM OF *STT* STAFFS

*STT* is critical of the way in which we viewed the woman's question as a "white women's thing," and therefore did not see it as an important area of political struggle to take place among the staffs. In practice, the way this showed up was that when the Third World staff went on a leave of absence, the women of the white staff decided it was time to do a women's issue.

This separation led, in part, to the issue not struggling over the relation of Third World and white women. Resultant from this separation was a lack of much needed Third World leadership. An example of this can be seen in a discussion around homosexuality from a Third World

# • IMPERIALISM & WHITE WOMEN'S OPPRESSION •

The role of white women in the U.S. revolutionary movement is a result of our location as an oppressed group in an oppressor nation. We are part of the white oppressor nation in the U.S., and as such, we benefit from the privileges of white supremacy, i.e., national oppression. But because we are women, we suffer the oppression of male supremacy. Further, we live in a capitalist society, and those of us in the working class suffer from class exploitation. This statement is an effort to clarify the interrelation of class, national and sexual structures as they define the revolutionary potential of white women in the U.S. today.

This is the age of imperialism; the *primary aspect of the fundamental capitalist contradiction* between socialized production and private appropriation *is the contradiction between the struggles for national liberation and imperialism*. The fundamental economic characteristics of this era are monopoly, finance capitalism and the export of capital. The most important *political* form of struggle in this period is between oppressor and oppressed nations. Oppressor nations hold the economic power of monopoly and finance capital and, by exporting that capital to less-developed economies, they take economic, political, and military control over whole peoples, the oppressed nations. To understand the role of white women in the U.S., it is critical to understand that we are part of an oppressor nation, and that the primary aspect of the revolution in the US is the national liberation struggles led by the workers of the oppressed nations (Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Native American) within the borders of the US.

National oppression benefits the members of the oppressor nation. It is more comfortable to be white than Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American, Filipino, etc. This is true for women as well as men and for the working class as well as the bourgeoisie. It is easier to be a white welfare mother in the US than a black welfare mother. We must understand and accept this as a scientific statement, not a moral one.

Although every member of the oppressor nation benefits to some extent from national oppression, the oppressor nation is divided by two major internal contradictions and forms of social struggle. (The oppressed nations also have internal contradictions, but this is not the focus of this paper.)

First, the oppressor nation is divided into classes, a ruling class that exploits the labor of the working class. Even though every member of the oppressor nation gains something from national oppression, the ruling class gains much, much more. National oppression is a source of *profits* to the ruling class, and to exist as a class they must have profits. For the working class in the oppressor nation, national oppression brings relative benefits and privileges that make class exploitation a little easier to bear—job security, legal protections, social status, less dreadful schools and health care. However, relative privilege does not change our basic problem, our class exploitation. So while the ruling class is and must be committed to national oppression, the oppressor nation working class can renounce those puny privileges if we can see that what we stand to gain is state power itself, an end to class exploitation. The relative privileges soften class exploitation, but do not and cannot erase it; class struggle continues in the white oppressor nation.

The white oppressor nation in the US is also divided by male supremacy, by the relative privilege of men compared to women. Male supremacy is the historical twin of class society; they arose together, and class society has used the oppression of women to reinforce class exploitation. In contemporary US imperialist society, male supremacy is second only to national oppression as a source of super profits and power for the ruling class and

as an obstacle to class unity and the seizure of class power by the international working class. Male supremacy is exercised both to appropriate women's unwaged labor in the home and to superexploit our waged labor in the capitalist workplace.\* The institutions of male supremacy pervade every aspect of life, conferring relative privileges on men of all classes.

So, in the US today we have the overriding reality of national oppression and the reality within each nation of class exploitation and male supremacy. Because this is an international imperialist state, the ruling class of the oppressor nation is also the ruling class of the oppressed nations; and because male supremacy is an institution of imperialism, the oppression of women of all the nations is also of greatest benefit to the ruling class of the oppressor nation. While the working class is divided into nations and sexes, the ruling class is overwhelmingly made up of white men. What makes it possible for the ruling class to maintain the totality of oppression and class exploitation is the acceptance by the white working class of the relative privilege of national oppression. For example, poor whites in the slave South helped police the slaves and so helped maintain the system that exploited them too.

The white women's movement in the US is a social movement in the oppressor nation. It cuts across classes, which both strengthens and weakens its political focus. It includes women who hold relative privilege because of their petit bourgeois class position and oppressor nation membership, but who nonetheless are oppressed by male supremacy and are struggling against it. Without revolutionary political analysis and leadership this struggle can remain at the level of bourgeois feminism, trying to gain a level of privilege for white women that is equal to that of white men instead of attacking the whole structure of relative privilege. This tendency weakens the women's movement. But the most progressive forces in this movement are women who came out of the anti-war and civil-rights struggles of the 1960's, who are developing an understanding of imperialism as an internal as well as external system of oppression and relative privilege and are trying to wage the struggle against male supremacy as one front in the struggle against imperialism.

White working class women experience both class exploitation and male supremacy, and our slender stock of white relative privilege is depleted (though not exhausted) by our oppression at home and exploitation and oppression at work. Further, new material conditions of white working class women have brought us out of our homes and into wage labor and confrontation with the state, with dramatic changes in our strategic location.

The massive entry of white women into the waged labor force has occurred since World War II, a thirty year period in which the two fastest growing sources of employment have been finance and the state. As new entrants to the labor force, white women have been concentrated in these new industries. These same industries have also been an important source of new jobs for Third World workers, both women and men, who have been drawn into these sectors as part of the process of super-exploitation of an increasingly defensive imperialism. (Third World workers have also gained access to jobs in these sectors through militant struggle when postwar economic changes abolished many of the oppressive jobs in domestic, agricultural and heavy industrial labor to which they had been consigned.)

These new industries of finance and government are an intersection of the historical paths of white women workers and Third World workers, mostly, but not exclusively, women. To some extent this intersection provides a basis

for unity among white women and Third World people because of shared locations and work experiences. At the same time, these two groups have different histories and the workings of the system of relative privilege dole out different futures. These new industries are designed to reinforce the system of relative privilege; but there are also aspects of the new industries that can be used to attack relative privilege.

Within the hierarchy of labor in finance and government, men are clearly privileged relative to women, but white women are also privileged relative to Third World women. (The position of Third World men is complex; a few are granted male privilege, but all are subjected to national oppression.) White women are the social workers who oppress the eligibility workers and clerks as well as the recipients of social services. White women are promoted over Third World women in the complex grades that characterize the organization of labor in both these industries. White women gain favor by becoming snitches for the supervisor. Even within the framework of shared oppression on the job, relative privilege continues to operate; many white women workers still believe it is possible to be promoted out of class exploitation and oppression as women. These new industries are consciously designed to foster competition among workers and the pursuit of relative privilege. Workers are isolated; a multitude of meaningless petty graduations of pay and status are designed to keep them apart; docility is rewarded. The ruling class learned bitter lessons in the struggles of the 30's; the new industries are self-consciously designed to prevent the growth of class consciousness.

Nonetheless, we can also see in the new industries the possibility for a very important new source of anti-imperialist consciousness among white working class women. Since white women wage workers are part of the working class, our relative benefit from white supremacy is not great. And since we are also the victims of male supremacy, we have very little to gain from the workings of imperialism. If communists can help to build anti-imperialist consciousness among white women wage workers, we will have a weapon to fight against the national chauvinism and racism of white workers. White working class women can lead that struggle in the white working class guided by Marxist-Leninist politics under the leadership of self-conscious communists.

The second major change in the strategic location of white women is our increasing face-to-face confrontation with the state as a result of the growing strains on the white working class family since World War II. One aspect of this strain comes from white women's entry into waged labor; the living standard of the white working class nuclear family is now maintained by the income of two wage workers. Another aspect is the increase in the number of white working class women who now depend directly on the state for income to raise their children. Welfare mothers confront the state directly; and white mothers, like Third World mothers, are forced not only into that dependence but also into the most oppressive and exploitative kind of low-wage work to supplement the welfare grants. Like undocumented workers, women who are breaking the state's rules to get enough money to make ends meet for their families are in marginal labor without even the meager protections that documented workers can struggle to get. Whether white working class women are waged workers, dependent on the state, or unwaged workers depending on the income of a husband, we still confront the state's control over our children, in child care centers, public schools, health clinics, testing programs, juvenile court. We confront the state's medical policies that deny us abortion but promote sterilization, that refuse preventive care for ourselves and our children. We participate in so-called job training programs that direct

us into low-wage dead-end employment. We are subject to court rulings about our fitness to take care of our children (especially if we break the sexual or political rules.)

These confrontations with the state are very complex and do not automatically provide anti-imperialist consciousness. They do, however, offer every-day examples of the power of male supremacy and the substantial erosion of relative privilege for white working class women especially those without a man. With self-conscious communist leadership the struggles of white working class women against the imperialist state can be a leading force for the fusion of Marxism-Leninism with the white working class.

What are the strategic implications of this analysis for white communists in the period of party building? Our present task is to study Marxism-Leninism and apply it to our concrete conditions, to build political line that can unify the Marxist-Leninist forces in the national, women's and labor movements.

This beginning analysis of the role of white women is an effort to build a line that shows the inter-relation of the forces of national liberation in the oppressed nations and of the liberation of women in the oppressor nation to the class struggle of the international working class against US imperialism. We need to make this analysis concrete so that we understand the specific interplay of the forces of national oppression, male supremacy and class exploitation in the structure of relative privilege. To get more concrete will require both theoretical and practical work to test this line. We need to know more about the structure of the finance and state sectors, how white privilege and male privilege reinforce and contradict each other, what forms of struggle offer the greatest opportunities to unite the advanced elements in the three key movements against imperialism and to gain support from the middle elements in these movements. We need to develop a strategic understanding of the role of white women that overcomes the class and national chauvinism of bourgeois feminism and the theoretical weakness of the anti-imperialist movement. To accomplish these tasks, white communists must take seriously the leading role of communist women around this line.

*EDITOR'S NOTE:* Through discussion and criticism it has become apparent that several areas are missing from our "weak link" analysis. The absence of these areas tends to undercut our basic analysis. Those areas are:

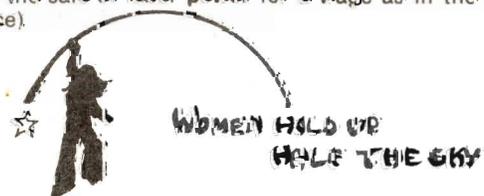
1. Most of the article centers around analyzing women's exploitation at the workplace. Lacking is analysis of the women's role in the reproduction and maintenance of the labor force, the family, and the role white working class women play in transmitting bourgeois ideology.

2. Flowing from this, is lack of analysis outlining the superstructural aspects of women's oppression (impact of male chauvinism on women's lives and minds).

3. Absent also is an analysis that defines the white women's movement as a social movement inside the oppressor nation that has definite ties with and receives much leadership from women of oppressed nations (women of Viet Nam, Faraf, Paris strike, and Triple Jeopardy are some examples).

We invite our readers to criticize this article and take up the struggle to correct these and other weaknesses.

\* (Women's labor in the home is paid, but through paternalistic forms; the actual payment for women's home labor is not a result of the sale of labor power for a wage as in the capitalist workplace).



# ★ THE POLITICAL LINE OF SEIZE THE TIME ★

This is an article on party building. But it is not an article on how to build a party organization. Rather it is an article attempting to apply scientific socialist methods to the necessities of an American revolution. We will focus on developing political line, the over-all strategy to guide revolution based on a detailed analysis of social contradictions, movements and their relationships to each other. In the course of the article, it will become clear that we are in fact implementing an approach to party-building.

Many people can agree that party building is extremely important. We need the party's political line and organization to lead and develop the mass struggles of oppressed peoples into a force that can seize and reshape the political and social relations of society to conform with a socialized economic base, thus benefiting the vast majority of humanity. It is the party that integrates communists with the mass movements (fusion). It is the party that welds all aspects of mass organizing (prisons, childcare, TW communities, workplace, the military, etc.) into a total movement for revolution.

Yet, to date all recent efforts to build party organization have not been successful. We can not ignore this. Why have so many different organizations failed? It cannot be just that people have made mistakes in the process. In general revolutionaries here have not had a sense of how party building fits into the development of revolution. The reason why no party exists is twofold.

First, revolutionaries have had mostly incorrect ideas on how a party is formed. They have in general not applied dialectical materialism to this process. Like any other complex process, party building has several qualitatively different stages marked by changing contradictions and changing primary tasks (key link). \* Understanding how party building proceeds from stage to stage is part of the subjective factor of consciousness.

Furthermore, U.S. revolutionaries have not done a thorough criticism of the errors of the CPUSA that led to its demise as the party of the working and oppressed masses. The major source of these errors is the effect of imperialism on the communist movement. The emergence of revisionism in the CPUSA was directly linked to the rise of U.S. imperialism in the world, and the liquidation of struggle against U.S. imperialism during WWII led to the liquidation of the Party's leadership of proletarian revolution. In essence, the liquidation of the struggle against imperialism led to the CPUSA's abandonment of a working class stand and M-L ideology. Likewise, the error of economism in the U.S. is directly linked to white supremacist ideology, which is based on the relative privilege of certain sectors of the working class. The super-profits of imperialism makes relative privilege possible.

The absence of a clear understanding of the party-building process has also allowed opportunism to flourish. This has been demonstrated by:

1. Liquidation of political line in an effort to win over the largest number of people possible, to build organization (October League).
2. Recruitment of working class people (or sending cadre into factory jobs), not on the basis of class stand, but rather just because they are workers (Revolutionary Union, Communist Labor Party).
3. Liquidation of political line and areas of practice to avoid repression (Oakland BPP).
4. Tailing the mass movement in propaganda, political line and even agitation and mass organization work (Communist Party USA, October League).

The struggle to expose and defeat opportunism in all its forms will be part of developing correct political line and building the party.

The criticism of the CPUSA and rectification of these errors must therefore serve as the *political* foundation of a new, correct CPUSA. We feel these are exciting and critical times because significant breakthroughs are in fact being made as demonstrated by:

- the formulation of oppressor/oppressed nations existing within the U.S. as a theory of imperialism
- the publication of *Prairie Fire* as the beginning of a major political line struggle among white communists.
- the current repudiation/rectification movement within a number of organizations in regards to economism/opportunism, the liquidation of national and women's questions and the analysis of imperialism.

The second factor in the failure of party building efforts is the objective factor of social conditions, including the experience of revolutionaries. Revolutionaries have not reached the point in the process where the actual organization of a correct party is possible. Certain tasks must be completed in order to begin party organization on a firm *political* basis. These tasks can be briefly summarized as grasping scientific socialism as our guiding ideology and developing political line. The two factors of objective and subjective conditions are interdependent because:

1. a certain level of development in social conditions and the practice of revolutionaries has been necessary to develop a conscious theory of party building, and
2. theory must in the future direct the development of revolutionary social practice in order to form the party.

## THE DIALECTICS BETWEEN PARTY BUILDING AND MASS MOVEMENT

To go on, the leadership of every revolution guided by scientific socialism, starting from very early, summed up their movement in terms of stages, clearly delineating each stage by the history of struggle before it, the consciousness and activity of mass struggles, political and economic conditions, the state of organized revolutionaries and therefore, *the principal task of revolutionaries during each stage*. Criticisms have been made of "stage" theories because they have been applied very mechanically and undialectically. True, but the method itself is not incorrect. Also, those who misapply stage theory often ignore that every correct analysis was based on the principle that the masses are the makers of history. Lenin applied it to revolutionary movement by noting that whenever the revolutionary movement floundered, it wasn't because the masses were backward or faint-hearted; it was because revolutionaries failed to grasp the question then being posed by the mass movement.

\* We use the term "period" in relationship to the "central task" of communists during that phase of a complex process. We see "stages" as their "key links" unfolding within a period and its central task. The term "key link" comes from Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*; "to 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."

Beginning with the understanding of "from the masses, to the masses," American revolutionaries also must make the analysis of dividing the revolutionary movement into stages of development. This approach emphasizes the use of dialectics, something that has been badly needed. Each stage is separated from the previous one by a change in either the relative importance of major contradictions and/or the relative strength of social forces (their dominance/subordination or rising/declining direction). *Of course, there are no absolute cut-off dates — stages do interpenetrate.* Also, in any real society, contradictions and forces are very complex. Talking about the stages of revolutionary movement focuses on the major contradictions and generalizes actual conditions to allow us to gain an over-all view of them. In addition, revolutionaries "in the field" must be able to grasp the many particular contradictions of their own work and see them in the framework of society's major ones. The foundation of this dialectical analysis would be a thorough knowledge of American history, current events and a critical summary of revolutionary practice.

Despite the lack of such an over-all analysis and strategy, revolutionaries in the U.S. have been more or less able to respond to the demands of the spontaneous mass movement of the past (cultural identity and pride, self-determination and armed self-defense of communities, the women's, anti-war and students' movements, etc.). But, we have not been able to build a communist party (the BPP for example was really a mass organization). Some of the difficulties in the past were because many activists were not convinced of the need for a party and/or its *central* role in organizing revolutionary mass movement beyond its initial upsurge and retreat.

The problem more recently has been one of "putting organization in command." Many people joined "party formations" because they felt party organization was necessary to formulating even the beginnings of correct revolutionary analysis and strategy. Developing political line on national questions, women's movement, trade union work, fascism, political economy, etc. was to be put off until *after* an organization was formed. Brief principles of unity were generally the only political document accepted before joining these organizations. However, people then found that disagreements over political line caused the breakup of these organizations or that the antagonism and form of numerous splits made line struggle inconsistent and unclear at best, fatal at worst and certainly proved "the party" has not arrived.

Other arguments over party building centered around whether revolutionaries should link up nation-wide and then proceed to build local practice among the masses or that they should build strong local organizations based on immersion in mass work that then would link up into a nation-wide party.

The people advocating building a nation-wide party from the start were in fact correct about the party's form. However, they in general did not grasp the essence of the question — putting politics in command and seeing how "localism" downplayed the role of scientific socialist theory and methods and opened the way for economism and reformism. Localism focused on working with the "advanced" in a single workplace or community, placing an emphasis on location rather than consciousness. More often than not, this did not represent the advanced of the entire mass movement. Localism also focused on demands that could be won in a workplace, union local, etc. This meant demands were diluted to win over intermediate, even backward elements. These errors are the beginning of economism and reformism.

Localism has prevailed, partly by default. No nation-wide general political organization was formed. Therefore many activists have immersed themselves in local work when the primitive cadre organizations they belonged to split up over this and other questions of political line.

Most of the local "pre-party formations" either disbanded or quickly turned reformist/economist. Political disagreements could not be resolved in a scientific manner since the role of theory and the education of activists in Marxism-Leninism were downplayed. In a society ruled by the bourgeoisie, without revolutionary science to help us resolve contradictions, the "natural" outcome is some form of bourgeois thinking. Local programmatic approaches to party building became attempts to "build socialism" within alternative institutions (free clinics, food conspiracies, child care coops, serve-the-people programs), or within the trade union movement (intermediate workers' groups, which if one studies the early union movement, are not new, either in their form or the attempt to build socialism through them). Furthermore, heavy external repression/co-optation by the state intensified all these internal contradictions, often to the point of organizational breakup.

Some people in these organizations quickly realized the need for study, propaganda (as opposed to agitation) and the *crucial* need for the political clarity and strategic coordination a true party represents. In short, "localism" was a lesson that some revolutionaries learned from and others still have not.

How do we put politics in command of party-building? It's a complex process even in its simplest "textbook" form. In the heartland of U.S. imperialism it's even more difficult since that means revisionism and white supremacy (bourgeois ideology) are rampant both within the working classes and the revolutionary movement. So the *conscious* application of dialectical methods to the process of party building itself, and relating that to the unfolding dialectics of revolutionary mass movement in the U.S. are absolutely necessary.

Organization will soon become the most important task of party building, but only after a firm political basis for the organization is established. This is what the struggle for political line is about. Part of political line is *how* the party will be built.

Our view is that the struggle for a communist party can be divided into four stages:

1. Realization that revolution is a necessity, the creation of dedicated revolutionaries through their political experiences (it is right to rebel)
2. The struggle for correct ideology (scientific socialism — the ideology of the working masses)
3. The struggle for political line (the application of scientific socialism to this society in particular, the present stage)
4. The struggle for organization (actual formation of the party).

After the party is formed, it is faced with two major periods; first the struggle for leadership of the mass movement to overthrow U.S. imperialism and seize state power and second, the struggle to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist government.

Each stage of party building has a specific relationship to the mass movement. The consciousness of both the masses and revolutionaries develop from lower to higher levels in a dialectical relationship, similar to that between practice and theory. The masses do form the foundation of the struggle for the party, in that at each stage the mass movement poses questions that conscious revolutionaries must resolve and in so doing, build the party.

In the U.S., the '60's were a period of revolutionary upsurge. Rebellion against intolerable conditions was recognized by

oppressed as a right and a necessity. Many people became conscious revolutionaries. The mass movement took up struggles for self-determination, against imperialist wars, armed self-defense, national identity and cultural resistance, the liberation of women and control of unions. Revolutionaries rejected the CPUSA and its reformism. Yet in doing so, many also dismissed M-L ideology. Different forms of cultural and revolutionary nationalism/anti-imperialism/utopian socialism were adopted instead.

Some current analyses reject this period of the revolutionary/communist movement, characterizing it as "eclectic" (meaning its philosophy and theory were taken from many sources other than "genuine M-L-MT"). True, in rejecting the CPUSA, many did attribute too much to various petite bourgeois or bourgeois political writers, statesmen, economists, etc. (Nkrumah, Garvey, Fanon for example). However, many of these works are valuable if their class limitations are kept in mind (as Lenin used works by petite bourgeois economists of his day). Historical, literary and economic works relating to neo-colonialism, racism and American society are especially valuable. Furthermore, many people were also studying contributions to scientific socialism made *since* Lenin and other than Mao (notably from Ho, Giap, Cabral, Che, Kim Il Sung and George Jackson). These works both enrich M-L theory and prove its fundamental correctness. Certainly the greatest tribute we could give in memory of Marx, Lenin and now Mao tse Tung is to *add* to scientific socialism and insure it remains a *living science*.

But more important, labeling this period as eclectic is to see it in essence as negative. We disagree strongly and see this period as essentially positive. The main aspect of this time was that large numbers of activists dedicated themselves to the revolution of oppressed and working people. Given this, their own social experiences and eagerness to study would and did lead them to embrace M-L-MT.

In the flush of mass rebellion, most non-M-L revolutionaries saw revolution as a relatively simple and immediate process. Instead, the state recovered from its initial shock and began attacking the revolutionary movement with repression and ideological subversion. These attacks stressed the need for some form of continuous organization and especially for correct ideology. Since ideology is political philosophy — whose side you're on and your ultimate vision of society — the unity of revolutionaries quickly divided. One side adopted various forms of bourgeois ideology (cultural nationalism of US organization, the poverty program pimp). The other side based its ideology on working people and after struggle and study, re-discovered scientific socialism.

Meanwhile, the U.S. mass movement at its height consciously took its place as part of the world-wide struggle against imperialism. Chairman Mao wrote "In Support of the Afro-American People in Their Struggle Against Violent Repression" (1968), and graffiti in the streets drew the parallel between U.S. "police action" in Vietnam and police action in Watts. This was immensely important because U.S. revolutionaries in recognizing the solidarity of these struggles, began drawing lessons from them and seriously started studying scientific socialism. An example of this relationship was the popularization of the "Red Book," *Quotations of Chairman Mao* by the Black Panther Party.

But the 70's have marked the retreat of the mass movement due to the repression of the state, the betrayal of bourgeois/petite bourgeois elements and the immaturity of revolutionaries. The immaturity of revolutionaries has been demonstrated by mechanical and often opportunist application of supposedly M-L methods (for example, criticism/self-criticism, democratic centralism and organizational forms), the lack of study of scientific socialism and especially of U.S. history and current events, and the vagueness of political struggle leading to the alienation of mass support and of less developed cadre within organizations. The struggle for ideology within the revolutionary movement did continue despite these difficulties. Some important breakthroughs were made such as the ALSC Conference of 1974 and the BIA statement of 1975.

This period of retreat in the mass movement is not negative if revolutionaries respond correctly. A period of difficult struggle is exactly what is needed to cure the immaturity of revolutionaries. It teaches us patience and the necessity of *applying* the method of scientific socialism to *this* society. The masses are not merely waiting in the wings. They demand a winning strategy for revolution before they take the streets again. They recognize that ideology is not enough when all kinds of people call themselves Marxist-Leninist yet don't agree on basics such as the role of Black Liberation, women's liberation, etc. in the revolution for socialism. The struggle for political line in this period of the mass movement's retreat resolves this lack of a guiding strategy, lays the beginning political foundation of the party's organizational unity and provides the revolution with cadre matured in difficulty, truly dedicated to the people and thoroughly trained in scientific socialist methods.

It is impossible to anticipate the specifics of party organization and the stages of the next period (rebuilding the mass movement to seize power under the leadership of the party) without developed political line. However, two major developments are certain given the nature of class society and struggle. First, as the newborn party begins to assume leadership of the re-emerging mass movement, the state and its ruling class will respond with a ferocity matching and surpassing any repression of revolutionaries and the mass movement we have experienced yet. Forms of organization and activity that are now tolerated will be attacked as the threat of revolution grows. But, second, if revolutionaries are successful in meeting the demands of political line and party organization, the party and therefore the mass movement will survive despite this all-out attack, despite any losses and temporary setbacks. Just the survival of the party in the face of everything the ruling class can muster will become a great political victory in itself. It will prove to all concerned that the bourgeoisie of the U.S. is in essence a paper tiger, just as the survival of the Vietnamese liberation struggle under the leadership of the Vietnamese Workers' Party in the face of all the military might of U.S. imperialism proved that U.S. imperialism is a paper tiger and eventually led to its defeat and the victory of the Vietnamese people.



## OUR DEVELOPING LINE

We have been putting forward that political line is the key link in party building. In the following pages, we will outline our political line. This line is in its formative stages, and we invite comrades to engage in sharp struggle around all of its aspects.

We believe that any political line must be based on analyzing concrete conditions and using scientific socialism to understand a situation and guide our work. Fundamental to this analysis is the understanding and application of the theory of contradiction. The theory of contradiction sharpens our understanding of the world, the contending forces within any process and the relationship between those forces. Central to understanding this theory is the critical role of the Principal and Fundamental contradictions within any process. These two contradictions are basic to the formulation of any political line.

### PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE U.S.

In any process where two or more contradictions are present, there is always a contradiction which is primary. This contradiction is the sharpest and leading contradiction in that process. In any given period or stage there is one contradiction whose "existence and development determines or influences the existence and development of the other contradictions." At different stages this contradiction can change. Mao states that in a capitalist country the principal contradiction is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In a semi-colonial country such as China of the thirties, the conditions were complex and what the principal contradiction was changed with the different stages (the period of the anti-Japanese United Front, the period of the Civil War, etc.). In the U.S., a capitalist country which is imperialist and has colonized peoples within its borders, the contradictions are very complex, and the principal contradiction shifts depending on the stage.

The staff of SST upholds that **THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE UNITED STATES IS THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE BOURGEOISIE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM AND WORKERS FROM THE OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES.** \* We reject as simplistic the formulation that the principal contradiction is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. We also reject the formulation that the principal contradiction is between the oppressed nationalities and the bourgeoisie.

We believe that both these formulations were correct in other periods. During the sixties and early seventies, we believe that the oppressed nationalities formulation of principal contradiction was correct. Entire peoples rose up against U.S. imperialism. For example, the Black Liberation Movement had the active participation of students, professionals, the lumpen proletariat in addition to Black workers. Indeed, the movement was a national movement which cut across class lines. During that period the sharpest contradiction, the leading edge of class struggle, was encompassed in the contradiction between the oppressed nationalities and U.S. imperialism.

This is no longer true. We are no longer in a period of general offensive but one of general retreat. Most former allies of Black workers within the national movement have either become faint-hearted (such as many students, professionals and other elements of the Black petite bourgeoisie) or have decided to look after their own self-interest (this is true of the lumpen and elements of the high petite and low national bourgeoisie). TW workers (employed, un- and underemployed) are carrying the burden of the national struggle.

On the other hand, workers from the oppressed nationalities are also carrying the burden of the class struggle. Our practice and the history of the past several years shows that fusion between the revolutionary and workers' movements is most advanced with workers from the oppressed nationalities. The struggles led by the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the farmworkers, Farah and Jung Sai workers and many others have been the leading edge of class struggles. In the mines, auto and steel factories, fields and on the docks, Third World workers have also taken the lead in international working class struggles. Class struggle within the national movement has also intensified, as shown by the lack of support for "poverty program pimps" by the great majority of TW people. Ideologically, scientific socialism has prevailed over cultural nationalism for the leadership of the national movements, another sign of intensified class struggle.

We believe that the principal contradiction as the most intense form of class struggle does not *presently* include white workers as a whole, because of the relationship of white workers to U.S. imperialism and the failure of the CPUSA after the thirties. (This is not to ignore the existence of advanced white activists and communists or their crucial role in winning revolution.) White workers are part of the oppressor nation of U.S. imperialism, based on the European colonization of America. Therefore, their nationalism (primarily manifest as white supremacy) supports U.S. imperialism and is always reactionary in contrast to TW peoples. U.S. imperialism has consciously set aside a small portion of its superprofits to blur the class division between itself and white workers. This material base in the form of relative privilege over oppressed nationalities, supports the ideology of white supremacy and has created a secondary contradiction between white workers and oppressed nationalities.

Similarly, imperialism has integrated the oppression of women into its system of exploitation, profit and relative privilege. Under these conditions, the ideology of male supremacy interacts with the ideology of white supremacy. So while the principal contradiction does not include white workers, white women workers are the weak link in the chain of relative privilege. If revolutionaries can turn this other secondary contradiction fostered by imperialism into a force against imperialism, we will have taken giant steps towards combatting the whole system of bourgeois ideology among white workers. Until then, male supremacy is another secondary contradiction that exists between working peoples.

We believe that *all* revolutionaries must work to resolve these secondary contradictions and intensify class struggle. We can't do it by sweeping contradictions under the rug as many have tried to do. During the 30's the *principal* contradiction was between the U.S. bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But the CPUSA failed in its leadership of the working class (partly by downplaying the role of national struggles) and the U.S. ruling class consolidated its position as the leading imperialist state of the world (1940's and 50's). The rebirth of a true communist party in the U.S. will once again sharpen the fundamental class contradiction. It can only do so by defeating white/male supremacist ideology, greatly increasing fusion with white workers and giving coordinated leadership to TW *peoples'* struggles.

The struggles of Native Americans against U.S. imperialism bears special comment. Historically the source of their oppression by the U.S. bourgeoisie has not primarily been labor exploitation, either wage or slave. It has been the bourgeoisie's attack on Native American land sovereignty and its consequences — genocide, imperialist war, broken treaties, reservations, etc. Therefore their struggles are primarily for national liberation based on the question of sovereignty over traditional native lands. This does not neatly fit into the formulation of principal contradiction equals *workers* from oppressed nationalities against U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie. However, that doesn't negate the fact that native struggles for sovereignty are one of the sharpest struggles against U.S. imperialism.

STT's analysis does not *create* the divisions that exist within the working class, but rather flows from an understanding of which struggles are the sharpest and are in fact leading the working class as a whole in its war against capital in its most reactionary form of imperialism. We believe our analysis flows from the heart of scientific socialism — the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

#### PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION IN THE WORLD TODAY

This is the era of imperialism. We believe the principal contradiction is between imperialism and oppressed nations. National liberation struggle against imperialism is the leading form of class struggle in the world. Certainly the U.S. is an imperialist power. We believe that the Soviet Union also is now an imperialism power on the basis of its economic domination, military intervention and political subversion of other peoples' national struggles and states.

We do not think it is correct to make one imperialist power the *main* enemy of oppressed people *throughout the world*, although one may be primary in a *particular* area. The dominance of U.S. imperialism in the late 40's and 50's was actually an unusual period in the era of imperialism. Usually two or more imperialist powers are contending and colluding throughout the world, fighting border wars here and making "treaties" between them and dividing up oppressed nations there. As Lenin said, "An essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several Great Powers in the striving for hegemony."

We believe that the CPUSA's liquidation of the struggle against U.S. imperialism in favor of the struggle against Nazi imperialism during WWII is an excellent example of what happens when one imperialism is made primary over another by revolutionaries. Yes, U.S. imperialism is the main enemy of oppressed people within the U.S. now, but contention and collusion between imperialist powers throughout the world also includes *within* the U.S. This is clearest within the revolutionary movement. American revisionism neatly dovetails with Soviet social imperialism.

The implications of this formulation of principal contradiction in the world today have only been briefly outlined here. They must be drawn out and struggled over by all U.S. revolutionaries. STT will present articles devoted to this struggle in the future.

#### FUNDAMENTAL CONTRADICTION WITHIN THE U.S.

Chairman Mao instructs that "The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process." The staff agrees that the fundamental contradiction of capitalist society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. In terms of class relationships this contradiction is expressed as the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The staff has unity that a fundamental contradiction of U.S. society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. We realize that capitalist relations are at the root of U.S. imperialist society. The slave trade, genocidal campaigns against Native Americans, the conquest of the Southwest and the importation of Asian peasants were all done to strengthen and expand capitalism. We have not reached unity on whether or not there is more than one fundamental contradiction within the U.S. Some believe that in a situation as complex as the U.S. there may be more than one fundamental contradiction. The contradiction between oppressed nations and U.S. imperialism (for example Native Americans and Puerto Rico) and the contradiction between women and their oppression in class society (which predates capitalism) may also be fundamental contradictions. While none of these three contradictions will disappear until the process is completed (with the destruction of imperialism/capitalism and the working class seizure of state power), some of us feel that there can be only one fundamental contradiction in any process. We are studying this question further and engaging in polemics both internal and external to the staff.

#### THE CENTRAL TASK IS PARTY BUILDING: AROUND THIS TASK ALL OTHER TASKS UNFOLD

Our analysis states that there are basically two periods in a revolutionary struggle — one *before* the revolutionary party is formed and one *after*. In the first period the central task is building the party, the chief form of practice is propaganda and the twin guiding tactics are uniting revolutionaries and winning over the advanced to scientific socialism. In the second period the main tasks are consolidating the fusion between the revolutionary party and the mass movement, building the mass movement and preparing the masses and the party for the seizure of state power. We are in the first period now.

We disagree with those who end their analysis with just the definition of periods. Within each period there are many stages. In the first stage, a rupture was made with the dangerous sellout politics of the CPUSA, when the "little red book" was introduced by the BPP, when armed struggle, the right to self-determination and anti-imperialism all became mass questions. In this stage the struggle for scientific socialist ideology was the key link for the struggle to build a revolutionary party. In the present stage many different organizations and individuals from many movements have adopted scientific socialism as their ideology, but there is wide disagreement on most issues and questions confronting the cadres and masses. In this stage the struggle to formulate a generally correct guiding political line is the key link to building a party. When this line is formulated, the advanced are won over to it and communists are united around it, we will have entered the next stage when the key link is actually building the organization of the party. When the task of building the organization of the revolutionary party reaches its conclusion (this is the stage that the Bolshevik Party was in when Lenin wrote *What Is To Be Done*), we will have entered the next period which is marked by the active striving of the masses and the party for state

power. It is important to have a sound understanding of periods and stages because it is a very necessary part of formulating our tasks, priorities and tactics.

In this period the central task is to build a communist party. But this doesn't mean that our *only* task is party building. The Chinese view is that, "In any given place, there cannot be a number of central tasks at the same time. At any one time there can be only one central task supplemented by other tasks of a second or third order of importance." We agree. For example, in work with youth, our central task presently is developing and testing political line, uniting communists involved in this area of practice and winning over advanced youth activists through our propaganda. Though secondary, we still are also interested in combatting the drug epidemic and resisting police attacks against youth.

The struggle to develop a correct political line is the key task in building a party, but this does not mean to us that all cadre must be involved in organizing and participating in forums. Revolution is a science which demands a division of labor in areas such as military and cultural work. We believe that specialization based on political line struggle/unity and collective organization is generally correct. We also recognize the tendency for bureaucratic work methods and "small area" mentality to pop up. It must be firmly combatted by those involved.

More strategically, we believe that developing political line, testing it, refining it and steeling the cadres is not a quick process. At this time we believe that it is both correct and desirable that revolutionaries develop organizations which are based on both general unity around political line and the struggle to develop a correct line on party building, and on specific focus of their practice and propaganda on a particular mass movement.

In polemics we have had with other organization it has not been surprising that the most advanced political lines concerning various nationalities have come from organizations that have arisen out of those national movements. We believe that it is incorrect to form organizations whose main criteria is race, but we do believe it is correct to form organizations which come out of and to some extent focus much of their work within that movement. The process of fusing the revolutionary movement with the three great movements (workers', national and women's) is an ever deepening process. However we would point out that concretely this process is least advanced between white communists and white workers. White communists should join circles whose propaganda is directed towards developing political line among communists, especially on the role of white workers and women, and at winning advanced white workers and women to communism.

The central task is building a communist party, the key link is political line, and the chief form of practice is propaganda work. These points must be firmly upheld. Those who engage in specialized fields of work or organizations with a specific focus must all participate directly in the process of party building and enter into polemics around political line. This is every cadre's responsibility. In addition, there are secondary tasks that must be done and skills that must be learned. When the party is formed we don't want to have to go back and learn how to perform certain basic tasks. Chairman Mao said, "Learn to play the piano. In playing the piano all ten fingers are in motion; it won't do to move some fingers only and no others. But if all ten fingers press down at once, there is no melody. To produce good music, the ten fingers should move rhythmically and in coordination. A Party committee should keep a firm grasp on its central task and at the same time, around the central task, it should unfold the work in other fields."

#### POLITICAL LINE IS THE KEY LINK IN THIS PERIOD

When talking about the development of political line we must first clarify our definition of line. Political line is not just a "ten point program" or a "principles of unity." Ten point programs are important in that they represent a minimum program to unify the masses for struggle and the seizure of power. But a short program does not represent a unifying philosophy to guide the actions of cadres. Principles of unity are a step in the right direction, but represent only the individual threads of a political line. Routinely, different organizations' principles of unity contain positions on the women's question, national question, the international situation, etc. However, these threads do not outline the relationships between the different questions, relative priorities, what our line means for our work, how we move from one stage to the next, etc. Political line is the fabric which weaves together a summation of practice, history, method and theory to guide our work. The struggle to develop political line is an extremely serious one that takes much hard work. Inter-relating questions, such as the Black, Native American, and other national questions, the women's movement, fascism and the two superpowers, into one coherent process is difficult but necessary. To do so we must understand both the content of what we are trying to formulate and its process.

Opportunists of all shades seek to "simplify" and subvert this process by downplaying the importance of the struggle for correct political line. OL wants everyone to join their organizations over some vague "principles of unity." "After we unite, the guiding line will be formulated." We all have joined various organizations that put out some vague "principles" yet had no guiding line. In the line struggle that followed, discipline became atrocious, splits and factions multiplied and morale slipped. All of these are the results of unprincipled unity (unity that is not based on a struggled-out political line).

Other organizations confine political line struggle merely to "party building." These organizations downplay struggle over the national question, women's question, etc. "Everything must relate to Partybuilding!" Agreed, but we would not join a party that had an inadequate or wrong line on the Black nation, women's oppression, revisionism or fascism. That would be liberalism of the worst sort. It is critical to have a fully developed political line on the process, strategy and tactics of building the party. But we must also have developed political lines on the other critical questions of the day. The answer to many of these questions will determine the way the party is organized in the next stage of party building. Otherwise we would be building just another new refined version of the old organizations, and it would quickly split itself to death or fade slowly away due to its inability to win over advanced activists.

The analysis that political line is key in this stage must also lead us to the conclusion that temporarily theory is primary over practice. We understand that this is a reversal of the normal relationship of practice being primary over theory. We must remember that we have just come through a stage of intense practice. What many of us now see, and should have recognized earlier, is that our theory is weak, summation of our practice inadequate, and understanding of political line low. In a period such as this, theory (our summation of practice and history combined with the summed-up experience of the international revolutionary movement) must be primary, because without a qualitative leap in our theoretical understanding, our practice and mass movements cannot move forward.

What is the role of practice at this point? Some say that practice must be limited to propaganda work. Unquestionably, propaganda is the chief form of activity in this stage. Through propaganda we can facilitate struggle around political line, get the line out to advanced activists in the three great mass movements, and provide a vehicle to critically sum up our practice. *Presently no other form of work is more important.* However, other forms of practice still have their place. Practice is necessary to test our line and refine it in the fires of the three movements. Practice is necessary to steel our cadres for the tasks ahead. While actual contact is not needed with every advanced worker, we must be involved in the struggles they are involved in to spread our propaganda and line among the advance and win them over. Our primary emphasis is not on building mass campaigns at this time. To do so in the absence of a party is bound to lead to tailism or defeat. However we can't simply walk away from struggles. Defining the particular form this relationship takes in practical situations is not an easy task. Much discussion and struggle needs to take place. Even still, we firmly believe that just as all other tasks must unfold around our central task of party building, all other practice at this stage must unfold around the chief form of practice—propaganda. To eliminate practice from the relationship between theory and practice is to negate dialectics and become closet “revolutionaries.” To de-emphasize the leading role of theory and to belittle the role of propaganda is to bow to spontaneity and consign oneself to tailing behind the backward elements of the masses. Theory without practice is empty madness, and practice without theory is blind madness.

Who do we aim our propaganda at? At the advanced and scientific socialists. M-L cadres are the experienced core, who lend strength and the experience of practice to the party. These are the experienced fighters who have found their way through many difficult times and can be counted on to find their way through the difficult times ahead. The advanced are the best mass leaders of the three great mass movements, who study on their own, seek answers to the questions that the mass movements are putting forward and see the need for some form of party organization. They bring vitality to the cadre organization and put the party in contact with the masses.

We need both the experience of the cadres and the vitality of the advanced to develop political line. If we try to unify the cadres without a correct political line, the result will be sham unity that will disintegrate and yield disastrous results. Nor will we be able to win the advanced over without sharp struggle around political line. They have had their fill of opportunists who subvert struggle under the guise of “correct” ideology yet have a totally bankrupt line. Only by uniting the cadres that have been produced by the three great movements around political line and by winning over the advanced of those movements to the line, will we bring the revolutionary and mass movements ever closer (fusion).

#### REVISIONISM AND POLITICAL LINE STRUGGLE

The content of a political line determines the method of struggle we use; that is whether we treat it as an antagonistic or non-antagonistic contradiction. When struggling among comrades, contradictions are non-antagonistic. When struggling against revisionism, bourgeois lines that masquerade as “revolutionary,” the contradictions are antagonistic. What is the difference and how do we deal with the two different types of contradictions? Chairman Mao teaches us that the correct way to deal with contradictions among the people is through the process of unity/struggle/unity. We attempt to persuade and win over comrades to a correct line through discussion, study and testing of political line. Struggle among comrades must also be very sharp in order to reach a firm unity.

Our method of dealing with antagonistic political differences is completely different. Revisionist lines are essentially bourgeois lines. The danger of revisionist lines can be seen plainly in the effect of the thoroughly bankrupt “CP”USA's line. The CPUSA condemns violence by all oppressed people who defend themselves and/or fight for their liberation. They try to liquidate all struggle around the national question by claiming that “all god's children are happy, and we don't have to worry about them any more.” They support the UFW's reactionary policy on workers without papers. In San Jose, California they disrupted performances by a workers' propaganda theater group about a workers' struggle in South America by trying to eliminate all references to armed struggle, by starting fights and by applauding the revisionist Chilean CP which convinced Allende not to give the masses guns and thus left them open to the counter-revolutionary terror of the right-wing generals. It is these dogs who stated that the nationalism of Malcolm X was the same as the nationalism of the KKK. Last but not least, these same dogs back to the hilt their masters, the bandits of the Soviet Union whose crime record is worse than that of the homegrown fools (CPUSA).

The masters set up Lumumba, betrayed and ran out on the masses of Chile and Portugal, have armed the prime fool of Africa, Idi Amin, are setting up colonies throughout the world and generally trying to take the title of main troublemaker away from the U.S. Yet we welcomed Angela Davis into our ranks even though she is the lackey of these revisionists. In the future we cannot tolerate revisionists within our movement. Their reformist (and hence bourgeois) strategies eat at the heart of our fire and drive. Since their line is bourgeois, they cannot be counted as being among the people. The political contradictions with all revisionists are antagonistic, and those lines must always be eliminated.

#### OPPORTUNISM AND THE STRUGGLE AROUND POLITICAL LINE

Using a correct method is essential to developing a correct political line. There are two very popular methods of developing political line which are poisoning and subverting our struggle for correct line. One method is to develop political line without summing up practice, refusing to recognize, *repudiate and rectify* past errors. This method downplays the role of polemics (the conscious struggle over political line) and tends to seek unity with the lowest common denominator. This line sees two line struggle within an organization to be the exception rather than the rule.

*This view of two line struggle is extremely incorrect and dangerous. Struggle around political line is the lifeblood of the development of correct line.* By struggling over political line, we sharpen and unveil differences, and improve understanding of our own line. By struggling over political line, the opportunists who pretend to agree but subvert the work at every turn are exposed. By understanding the law of motion, we know that unity proceeds from a lower to a higher level. Line struggle allows us to struggle over differences and deepen our unity with comrades. Dialectics and history teaches us that only through struggle do we make any progress. This is no truer than in the struggle for political line.

Criticism/self-criticism is shined-on by opportunists who negate the struggle around line. Many organizations will change their line on an important question (such as the national question) without ever explaining if errors were made in the past, what were the roots of those errors and how did they recognize them. This method allows many organizations to switch their

line any time they feel they are losing support for their backward line. These organizations and their supporters call for everyone to unite with them without ever trying to find out if there are any fundamental political differences that would prevent unity. "Let's unite, we can develop line later." For example, October League will put forth different "principles of unity" for the same political prisoner defense committee in different areas of the country. In some areas, merely organizing to free that individual is their stated principle. They have even fought against the inclusion of any other principles. Faced with the militancy of national liberation consciousness in the South, the OL will say they support self-determination as a principle in doing defense work of Black political prisoners. But in reality they attack it at every turn.

For all these reasons we consider the conscious struggle around political line to be of the utmost importance. We must never forget that there are always two lines, two roads in opposition to each other, the bourgeois and the revolutionary. Struggle between these two lines is always present. Both internal and external to an organization, two line struggle is the rule and not the exception. Unity is only real when based on active struggle. We know that many comrades, especially those who have come out of the national movements, have a deep suspicion of polemics. This is due largely to the mechanical and often opportunist way they have been waged in the past. Forums in which a political line is laid out and followed by a lot of hurraing are not the most effective way to engage in line struggle. One problem with public forums is that the security against other leftists is tight, but any agent or provocateur can walk in and disrupt the proceedings. Usually during this process little line struggle takes place, and the advanced who came leave with more suspicion than ever of so-called communist organizations. We have found direct polemics among organizations with similar lines aimed at unveiling differences, small group discussions (especially with study circles), written polemics and invitation-only forums much more useful alternatives. Open and semi-open forums can expose the advanced to some of the key line struggles and expose bankrupt lines. But any organization which *relies* on forums to identify and win over the advanced is making a serious mistake.

The second incorrect method of line struggle is not understanding dialectics. It too leads to serious errors when engaging in political line struggle. One such mistake is made by those who seem to see only "shades of differences" between themselves and forces they view as comradely. With forces they do not consider comradely, they see and struggle around "contradictions." In both cases these political differences are contradictions and represent two line struggle. Dialectics demand that line struggle and contradictions always exist in political struggle. Calling it by a different name does not move our understanding forward, and may in fact contribute to subduing line struggle between non-antagonistic forces.

At one time our staff also had the habit of consigning all forces we disagreed with to any significant degree into the revisionist camp. We have repudiated this incorrect line and recognize that it is not dialectical, negates the struggle for political line, and is in fact hegemonic (the view that you are the only legitimate M-L organization and therefore have no need to struggle within the rest of the communist movement). We found that we had taken the easy road out and had lost opportunities to struggle around line with many forces that had similar but not identical lines. After much polemics, we have observed that we have *much* to learn from other organizations, and in return we have much to offer.

The struggle around political line has not yet reached a point where anyone can say with authority that "this is *the* correct line, all else is sham." This error is as dangerous as the error of August Twenty-ninth Movement (ATM) comrades when they *declare* that two line struggle within an organization is the exception and not the rule. The struggle for political line is key and critical during this stage. We must be ever vigilant against errors both in the method and the content of this struggle.

#### POLITICAL LINE DOES NOT END WITH PARTY BUILDING: SKETCH OF OUR DEVELOPING LINE IN OTHER AREAS

We stated in the previous section of this paper that we do not believe that our responsibility to develop political line ends with our position on party building. There are many other critical questions on subjects such as fascism, the state, the international situation and the two superpowers, armed struggle, the trade union movement, the three great movements and many others. These issues are complex, but we cannot see how any responsible communist can ignore them. We would have a hard time joining a party that did not have a line on fascism within the U.S. On the other hand, we must make priorities among these questions. STT has spent so much time on party building because we feel it is a critical question *now*. However we believe that there is another burning issue within the movement around which clear lines of demarcation must be drawn. This is the question of imperialism. As Lenin outlined at the beginning of this century, we live in the era of imperialism and understanding its internal and external consequences is fundamental to the correct development of political line.

#### IMPERIALISM, THE WORLD AND THE U.S. MOVEMENT

We are just beginning to study the international situation in depth. Our preliminary analysis tells us that there are two major imperialist powers—the U.S. and the Soviet Union. They contend for power and control of the world just as Lenin describes in his classic work, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Both imperialisms are equally corrupt, and neither has any redeeming value. We are familiar with the corruptness and villainy of U.S. imperialism. Our lives as Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, women and workers are marked by the crimes of imperialism. Yet it is past time to realize that since the Vietnamese victory, the Soviet Union matches the U.S. crime for crime. Some of the Soviet Union's crimes were described in the previous section on revisionism. What must be studied and understood is that capitalism has been restored in the USSR and that it has imperialist relations with a number of countries. Its policy of "international division of labor" is a cover for the imperialist policy of requiring different countries to produce only certain products in order to support the Soviet economy. Cuba produces the sugar, another country the railway cars and at one point Egypt produced the cotton. For instance, "Czechoslovakia used to provide the Soviet Union with most and even all its annual export of trunk-line electric locomotives and trolley buses. Today, as demanded by Semyonov (the Russian ambassador to Czechoslovakia), the enterprises producing these two items will have to switch to other 'new items' to meet the Soviet Union's changed needs" (Peking Review). At one point Semyonov publicly stated that "[the Czechs] make a better study of the Soviet market needs, and the prospect of the development of the Soviet economy." He also showed dissatisfaction with the "varieties of goods produced and supplied (to the Soviet Union) by Czechoslovakia." One need only remember the '68 invasion to realize that the Russians are as fully prepared to back up their "desires" as the U.S. India's dependence on the USSR has reached

monumental proportions. The Soviet press boasts that they control 80% of the machine building industry, 60% of the electric equipment, 35% of the oil processing and 38% of steel. Indian journalists commented on Soviet "aid" by saying that, "She maintains a monopoly of the work of design and supply of machinery and spare parts for the enterprises set up with her help," and "Indians had very little to do with the planning of the projects."

Inside the Soviet Union capitalism has been restored. Unemployment and therefore crime are rising, despite lipservice to the socialist goal of productive labor at decent wages for all. The government has increased penalties for firearms possession and has been trying to buy sophisticated police and criminology equipment from the U.S. Racism, sexism, national chauvinism and oppression are again common and encouraged by the ruling class (the new techno/bureaucratic capitalists). Profits are the key to success, and material incentives are the rule. Soviet economists are pushing for increasing "semi-private" enterprises (dentists, repair shops, photographers, etc.) because it will "encourage economic growth." The farm cooperative system has become so corrupt that private land plots, 5% of the land, produce about 20% of the annual output. There has been a full restoration of bourgeois luxury and decadence. A golf course is being built by a U.S. firm for the enjoyment of the new Tsars. Watergate style corruption has taken hold. Using state money to build villas and gaining bonuses by falsifying output are common. Malcolm X in the early sixties warned us against the Soviet Union because it had become infected by "dollarism." He said that Russia's dollarism was the reason why Mao and Khrushchev couldn't get along. The restoration of capitalism within the Soviet Union should be carefully studied by all comrades.

Like all young imperialist powers, the Soviet Union is trying to throw its weight around in order to gain new colonies. This contention for world hegemony is becoming fiercer and makes the Soviet Union the main danger for starting a new world war. However the most dangerous aspect of the Soviet Union isn't that of starting a new world war. The Vietnamese have proved that belligerent super-powers can be defeated by a united people led by a fighting communist party. The most dangerous aspect of the Soviet Union to national liberation struggle is not its military might but its bourgeois ideology veiled in socialist words and its past history of revolution. The philosophy of detente and "peaceful transition to socialism" has done more to sabotage revolution in Chile, Portugal, Zimbabwe and the Middle East than all the guns, money and puppet troops of the U.S. This philosophy masquerading under the disguise of socialism disarms the people by deluding them into believing that there is a road to freedom that does not involve violent struggle against those who have oppressed the people for centuries. The ruling classes of the world have and will never give up power peacefully. Power and the state apparatus must be seized from them. This truth was formulated by Lenin and confirmed by revolutionary struggles in Mozambique, Vietnam and China. In addition, just as a former slave can become the best overseer, the formerly socialist Soviet Union is more adept at manipulating the internal contradictions of revolutionary movements than the U.S.

We must learn from the revolutionary African movements and countries in analyzing the international situation. President Nyerere of Tanzania stated in a recent interview, "There are two superpowers contending for world domination — the Soviet Union and the U.S. China is a Third World country just like Tanzania." In formulating positions on the international situation we must uphold our responsibility as scientific socialists to take a revolutionary, non-revisionist, independent stand. Comrades from ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) state, "No people in the world have a monopoly on truth." In the world we can sum up our position by saying, "the future is bright, the road torturous. Revolution is still the main trend in the world today!"

#### THE DOMESTIC CONSEQUENCES OF IMPERIALISM: DEVELOPING POLITICAL LINE FOR THE THREE MOVEMENTS

A sound political line must have an analysis of important domestic questions. The question of imperialism is vital in understanding the contradictions within the U.S. Too many left forces treat the question of imperialism as if it is only an international phenomenon, without internal consequences. This error leads to incorrect views that typically liquidate the national and women's questions, and turn the fight for self-determination into merely a battle against racism. Forces that do not recognize/understand the internal consequences of imperialism view the U.S. as a "pure" capitalist country in which the principal contradiction can be simply reduced to be between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. They forget that two of the classic imperialist states of this century — turn of the century Russia and the present U.S.A. — both have been accurately described as "the prisonhouse of nations." Present are not only the classic capitalist contradictions but also the internal contradictions of imperialism. UNTIL WE GENERATE A CORRECT UNDERSTANDING OF IMPERIALISM, WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WIN OVER THE ADVANCED, ADVANCE FUSION, OR BUILD A COMMUNIST PARTY THAT REPRESENTS THE BEST ELEMENTS FROM THE THREE MOVEMENTS.

Our analysis is based on the recognition that U.S. imperialism has provided the necessary conditions for the formation of oppressed nations. Native Americans and Blacks, Puerto Rico and Hawaii are oppressed nations, and we are leaning towards the view that Chicanos are also. The oppressed nations and internal colonies are sources of cheap labor and represent huge reserves of labor for periods of economic boom. Over-priced, inferior products are dumped on their captive markets. Finance capital has ready outlets for surplus capital investment, which further exploits the oppressed nations and internal colonies. Last but not least, the class contradictions of the oppressor nation are readily exported alongside goods and capital.

In a period of imperialist crisis such as now, the internal colonies and nations play a more important role. The U.S. imperialist system has been based on the super-exploitation of oppressed nations and colonies internal and external to the U.S. This super-exploitation of oppressed nations and peoples provides the material base for relative privilege and white supremacist ideology among workers from the oppressor nation. As the national liberation struggles of Africa and Asia become more successful, and Third World countries fight for economic independence, super-profits extracted from abroad are greatly reduced. In addition, the economic and political crisis is greatly heightened by the immense cost of losing counter-revolutionary wars. Instead of cutting profits, the ruling class increases its exploitation of working and poor people within the U.S. Real income has been rapidly declining for all working and poor people. It has dropped to 1% below 1968 income.

However, the gap between the income of white and Third World working and poor people have been widening at an even faster rate. The median income of Black families was \$7,800 in 1975, only 58% of the white family median income of \$13,350. The ratio was 61% in 1966. The unemployment gap is also widening. The social services cutbacks affect Third World families and individuals the most. For example, manpower training funds have flowed out of the inner cities into suburban areas.

In the past, the bourgeois ideology of white supremacy has prevented workers of the oppressor nation from supporting the right of internal and external nations to self-determination and national liberation. In fact, significant sectors of the white working class have at times actively combated national liberation struggles at home and abroad.

It is important for communists to determine what the rising trend is among workers of the oppressor nation. Most comrades agree that the two line struggle between the bourgeois road (fascism) and the revolutionary road (proletarian revolution) is at unprecedented heights among white workers. This two line struggle is being intensified by the imperialist crisis. Many comrades feel that revolution is the rising trend among white workers. Our practice everywhere, and the role of white workers in Boston, Louisville and other places shows that both fascism and revolution are rising trends, but the trend for fascism seems presently stronger. The use of super-profits gained from super-exploitation to buy off significant sectors of the working class of the oppressor nation has been recognized by all honest revolutionaries since Marx. This tactic has reached its highest form within the U.S.

White women workers (un- and underemployed included) are clearly the weakest link in the chain of relative privilege within the oppressor nation. Their exploitation approaches that of the oppressed nationalities. Economically they play a similar role of cheap labor and an immense labor reserve, besides performing "women's work", the reproduction and production of the family. While not suffering the triple jeopardy of Third World women, their oppression and exploitation is also strengthened by the ideological reinforcement of male supremacy. Within the oppressor nation, women workers are often the leading edge of the revolutionary movement and the firmest allies of oppressed nationalities. The allied strength of white women's and Third World women's struggles makes the women's movement one of the three great movements that will combine to topple imperialism.

Understanding the internal consequences of imperialism is key to understanding contradictions within the U.S. Fusion is the integration of revolutionary ideology and leadership with the mass movements. Before state power can be seized, fusion must take place, and the revolutionary party must have been built. Part of the process of party building involves fusion. As more and more advanced are recruited into the ranks of the party, the leaders of the mass movement become party builders. Most communists talk about fusion just taking place between the communist and workers' movements. In our view, this is an incomplete formulation that ignores the internal aspects of imperialism. There are three pillars of imperialism — the fundamental exploitation of the working class, the super-exploitation of oppressed nationalities and the oppression of women. The masses have created three great struggles; the international workers' and women's movements and the energetic movements of the oppressed nationalities. For the revolutionary movement to successfully build a communist party, fusion must take place with *all three* movements.

We are studying and struggling over three other important issues related to the crisis of imperialism. One is fascism. One of the questions we are asking is to what extent do Dimitrioff's and George Jackson's analyses contradict or agree? Since we generally stand on Jackson's analysis (see Vol I, No. 2), to what extent do the contradictions within the bourgeoisie affect that analysis? What are the rising tendencies within the bourgeoisie?

The second issue is that of the trade union movement. We have comrades active in this movement. Their practice has been very mixed, with both some extremely good and bad work. The need to expose and attack the trade union bureaucrats is clear. One unresolved question is, what role do the national contradictions and white/male supremacy within the worker's movement play in our work? Another is, what does "building the united front from below" mean for work within a union? This is a line which we uphold in the other two movements. It essentially says that instead of concentrating in this period on building massive coalitions, with the petite bourgeoisie, the reformers, revisionists and opportunists, we should concentrate on building grass root based movements and then, from a position of strength, enter into coalitions with other elements on a case-by-case basis. Further, what does the question of fascism mean to the trade union movement?

The third issue is if we should build mass movements against war by the super-powers and fascism. This is the line of ATM, MLOC (Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee) and WVO (Worker's Viewpoint). We believe that building the communist party is primary now, but even when one has been built, we should be building a movement to fight *for revolution* instead of against war and fascism. We agree with the Chinese view, "Revolution will prevent war, or war will give rise to revolution." We choose to prepare and organize for revolution as the surest guard against war and fascism.

#### REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE, PROPAGANDA AND SEIZE THE TIME

We have already stated that propaganda is the chief form of practice in this period. This is true regardless of any specialization of work. Cultural workers, childcare and youth workers, factory and community organizers, and others must all make propaganda an integral part of their work. Since propaganda tries to win people over to a way of thinking, it must necessarily be more in depth than agitation (which persuades people to a course of action). The analytical nature of propaganda makes print generally the most suitable mass media. Yet, good propaganda need not be restricted to print forms. Film, theater, tapes, etc. can all play important roles.

Propaganda is a vital tool in spreading line and furthering struggle. As such, it should be clearly aimed at the advanced or scientific socialists. Practice is the sole criteria of truth regarding the political line that we develop in this stage. Circles and organizations should concentrate their practice on developing propaganda. As political line is struggled over and unity reached, this unity should be tested by developing joint propaganda. Our view is that *joint propaganda work should be the first and chief form of joint work in this stage.*

As more and more are won over and united around a correct political line, organizational forms will grow from a lower to a higher level. This development of organization is a good thing and should be encouraged. However, we would remind comrades that serious errors were made when comrades rushed to join "party centers" such as CL, RU and now OL. All of these centers have thoroughly bankrupt lines incapable of doing anything but harm to the masses and the movement. In doing joint propaganda work and increasing the level of organization, we must firmly grasp that line is key.

STT is a propaganda tool that identifies itself with the growing trend of communist forces that are in the process of forging a correct line on party building and imperialism. We unite with those who see political line as being the key link to the central task of building a party (correct method) *and* recognize the leading role of workers of the oppressed nationalities in the three great movements against imperialism.

We recognize that in repudiating our main past error (not seeing political line as being key link), we have to outline a program for rectification. One aspect of our rectification campaign is to deepen struggle over political line in the national movements. Our own mass work within these movements has had right tendencies. While doing excellent agitational work, we liquidated the development of political line. Localism was one form this error took. Concentrating on building "progressive" nationalist mass organizations and emphasizing ideology as key were others. By bowing to spontaneity we did not maintain contacts with advanced and scientific socialists in several national movements. We are in the midst of trying to clean up some of our mistakes in this area. One key tactic will be developing joint propaganda efforts with other comrades within the national movements.

For the paper, complete rectification means developing STT into a journal that puts out a line, facilitates struggle over line and sums up practice that tests line. While we are not a cadre organization, the staff deeply feels the responsibility to carry out the task of line struggle.

Several form changes in STT reflect the rectification campaign. The journal format and typesetting will hopefully make it easier to read and get into. The articles will *all* be selected with an eye toward the development of line — especially in the areas of party-building and imperialism. Graphics will be more aimed at some question of line rather than being just agitational or a space-filler. We hope to participate in joint propaganda efforts outside the scope of this journal. While many of these changes seem to be merely changes in form, we think they reflect changes in essence and repudiation of an incorrect line.

Politically one of the main ways we will rectify our work is to seriously wield the weapon of criticism and self-criticism at all levels of the staff. When we revived use of this powerful weapon, opportunists were exposed in our leadership and wrong ideas and methods exposed and swept away.

At the same time, we will be much more conscientious in having thorough discussions in the staff regarding the major articles and the political line they put forth. These three articles on political line are the results of a major collective effort spanning months of work. Polemics (political line debate) with other organizations will become a set task of the staff as a whole. Petite-bourgeois elitism, a hegemonic view of the movement and upholding organization as key link led us to de-emphasize polemics and cut us off from many potential friends within both the communist and mass movements. Some former "comrades" even consciously sabotaged polemics that were being set up. By bowing to spontaneity, we came close to liquidating our role in developing communist theory, political line and program applicable to the particularities of struggle in the U.S. Rectification means in part *politically* determining the content of each issue so that we can advance the struggle for political line and eventually aid the development of the party program. We are beginning to understand that the distribution and financing of our journal are *political* tasks to be taken as seriously as any other. These are a few of the political rectifications that we will begin to undertake.

## CONCLUSION

Comrades! We have just begun the process of criticism/self-criticism, repudiation and rectification. We call on all comrades to criticize our line to help us overcome our errors and move on. We have just begun to outline our developing political line. Much more will be coming in future issues of STT. Until then, "the sooner begun, the sooner done!"

DEVELOP AND STRUGGLE FOR CORRECT POLITICAL LINE

STUDY IMPERIALISM

A LUTA CONTINUA

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## POLITICAL SUMMATION OF PRACTICE THAT LED TO STT'S POSITION ON PARTY BUILDING

The central staff of STT is making an analysis of our strengths and weaknesses in an effort to solve problems which have been interfering with our work.

A source of STT's strengths is the political basis of unity on which the paper began its work. In 1974 STT began with the recognition that:

- the mass movements were in a period of retreat;
- revolutionaries lacked sufficient theory and organization to lead the mass movements out of that retreat into revolutionary war for state power;
- revisionism, opportunism and economism were rampant in the revolutionary movement, particularly in regards to questions of national liberation and armed struggle within the U.S.;
- there was therefore a need for an *Iskra* type journal aimed at revolutionaries and advanced activists in order to combat revisionism, etc. and develop theory for a revolution in America and STT was to be a nation-wide propaganda organ.

From this basis STT was able to make significant contributions in the formulation of oppressor/oppressed nations within and outside the U.S. and its implications for political questions such as fascism, the oppression of women and party building. Organizationally STT provided a means of consistent common work and struggle between Third World and white M-L's linked to each staff's work within oppressed and oppressor nations. Ideologically STT advanced the acceptance and study of scientific socialism, particularly among Third World revolutionary nationalists.

However as we began to organize people around producing, distributing and using STT, we lost sight of some of the political tasks we had set in the beginning. While developing organization, we did not continue developing the political basis of unity. Related to that, we started including more agitation and more articles on the **mechanics** of mass organizing. Yet our audience was supposed to be experienced M-L's and advanced activists, people who have been organizing others for years. What we really needed was articles developing the **strategy** of revolutionary movement. It was as if we had gotten in a car with a friend who was driving and, instead of figuring out how to get to our destination, we were telling our friend how to drive.

Tension developed between our undeveloped basis of political unity and all the organizational work we were doing. The staffs' primary area of unity was the analysis of imperialism that STT was advancing. But we were not deepening our political clarity/struggle/unity on many other important questions such as Soviet social imperialism, party-building and women's oppression. Nor did we relate these questions to our analysis of imperialism. We approached developing an analysis of the women's question from a very mechanical perspective. We said to ourselves, "Well, we've had an issue for these people and that movement. So now we need one for women." As problems began to crop up in the content of the women's issue and the method used to develop that content, the weakness of the staff's political unity was exposed.

It also exposed the lack of political struggle within the central staff. This was reflected in the failure of the central staff to struggle collectively over the political content of articles and the future direction of STT as a journal and as organized groups of TW and white revolutionaries relating to each other and their respective movements. Instead we showed a continued tendency to approach the work mechanistically.

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cally, putting details and form before political line and content. What this meant in our practice was an inability to grasp the basis for principled work among TW and white M-L and how it is coordinated. When politics are shoved aside, and structures and details become primary, an acute case of liberalism is the byproduct. It also allows opportunist elements to wreck havoc.

The central staff began a rectification program shortly after the last issue was published. Political discussions and struggle led us to the recognition that a firmer basis of political unity was imperative for the principled functioning of STT. We began our discussions by studying and trying to develop a political analysis of the world situation, conditions of the U.S. and a position on the tasks of revolutionaries. We had hoped this could serve as principles of unity. We intended to use these principles for editorial policies and membership on the staffs. During the discussions we understood the inappropriateness of the Principles of Unity approach. Instead, we began forming the tenets of a political statement for STT.

Through these discussions political differences surfaced in the central staff in the following areas:

1. Political line is the key link in the development of a M-L party. It will remain the key link until there is a party program. The other position maintained that the development of organizational structures of cadre organization is the primary aspect of party building at this time.

2. Concerning our tasks — one line held that we sharpen political analysis and use it as a yardstick to evaluate who the advanced, middle and backward forces within the left are. On the basis of this initial analysis we would participate in political discussions with advanced forces to sharpen unity and unveil differences. Using the political unity as a foundation we would strive toward common practice in propaganda work. The opposing opinion argued that the correct approach to the development of political line is the formation of small workteams on each front of practice, each of which would be overseen and connected to a primary organization. In other words, "The synthesis of organization and ideology is political line."

3. On mass work and its relation to party building — One side stated the relationship between mass work and party building in three points: a) in this period mass work is not done in the main to recruit or win strategic battles but rather done primarily to test our line and develop strategies and methods to win advanced activists to scientific socialism, b) to use this practice as a foundation in struggling with other revolutionaries around questions of line, strategy and implementation, and c) steeling ourselves to become class conscious leaders.

The opposite position saw mass and intermediate work as steppingstones to building the party. As a result, emphasis was placed on strong local organizations, and proposed that communists and activists link up through advanced mass organizational form to be built directly.

At this time STT would like to refer its readers to our position on party building in the article, **The Developing Political Line of STT**, on page 20, which also contains a self-criticism by the Third World staff. STT needs to do a much more thorough self-criticism. Due to reasons of space, timing & continuing struggle and development, this will be presented in the next issue.

## ★ PALESTINIANS AND NATIVE PEOPLE

physical existence. We have seen in our own past and in the contemporary practice of imperialism that the system is capable of generating atrocities which forever remain blots on civilization and humanity.

It is true that objective conditions for revolution do not exist in this part of the system at this time. But with the advent of a general crisis in imperialism the objective conditions can be said to exist everywhere. Even at this point, when large liberated base areas exist and many other areas are being contested, it is necessary that a certain level of subjective development occur in the privileged sector. Indeed the question of leadership has already been forced upon us by the bourgeoisie.

Already we can see indications of a reactionary, anti-liberation mobilization in the imperialist nations, including Canada. The spearhead of this mobilization is the world Zionist movement backed by big business. In Vancouver big business press (*The Sun* and *The Province*) has been calling upon the forces of reaction to oppose the forthcoming U.N. Habitat Conference because of the participation of the PLO. The city government here (and also, earlier on, the federal government) has taken a stand against the PLO as a "terrorist organization." Mercenaries and volunteers are being recruited from all over Europe and North America to fight against the national liberation movements in the Third World. A vast counter-insurgency network is being built up in North America composed of CIA, FBI, RCMP and elements of the military. All these developments form part of a counter-revolution being organized by the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Therefore the strategic internationalist tasks of the internal colonies are to oppose class collaboration with proletarian internationalism, actively oppose "domestic" reaction in its racist, Zionist and fascist forms and, struggle against chauvinism and opportunism in the privileged left. In keeping with this we say

LONG LIVE THE SPIRIT OF NORMAN BETHUNE!

DEATH TO ZIONISM!

LONG LIVE THE PALESTINIAN REVOLUTION!

## ★ COMMENT BY SEIZE THE TIME

This is a statement from a Native American study group that is applying scientific socialism to the particularities of the Native national struggles in North America. The analysis they have developed concerning internal colonies,

white supremacy and the modern aristocracy of labor, the meaning of internationalism for revolutionaries from the internal colonies and oppressor nation, and the effects of Zionism throughout the world and in North America is remarkably similar to our own.

We have a difference with the article. We believe that Soviet Social imperialism must be exposed whenever imperialism is being discussed in the international context. Given the subversive effects of "detente" on national liberation struggles, the role of social imperialism cannot be passed over.

We urge comrades to study this document carefully. We believe that understanding imperialism is one of the two great theoretical tasks (the other is understanding party building) facing the communist and mass movements. Only by understanding the consequences of imperialism within the U.S. will greater fusion be achieved between these movements. These comrades are making important contributions to the development of political line in North America. They prove again the importance of the national liberation movements in developing revolutionary theory for North America.

## ★ STT SELF-CRITICISM OF WOMEN'S ISSUE

perspective. Historically, homosexuality for TW people has often been a phenomenon introduced and/or encouraged by imperialism to weaken the social and cultural institutions of TW people, and to create antagonisms among TW people. For example, much homosexuality in the Black colony and in Indochina is and was part of the prostitution and drug trade. Other conditions under which homosexuality is more common for TW people are prisons and segregated workplaces (e.g. male Chinese and Filipino workers were contracted to work here long years without their families, or women, because white employers didn't want to introduce a "yellow horde" to America — enforced birth control).

While homosexuality has not been used in this way among white people, a beginning discussion of the aspects of this question point out the need for discussion and leadership from Third World revolutionaries.

In conclusion, while much was learned and accomplished in STT's women's issue, much work and analysis still remains to be done. With this in mind, STT would like to refer our readers to "Imperialism & White Women's Oppression" on page 15.

## NATIONAL CHICANO FORUM: ¿DE DONDE VIENE LA UNIDAD?

The National Chicano Forum, held in Salt Lake City, Utah, (May 28-30th) was an attempt at critically analyzing the ideology and forms of organization which have dominated the Chicano movement in the recent past and present.

The Forum was organized by individuals and representatives of various student and community organizations in Utah. The steering committee did not apparently represent any one political line, and saw itself in the role of initiating this discussion among Chicano activists and revolutionaries.

The following is our analysis of the most important points raised at the Forum. We also have several criticisms of the Forum.

The most prominent analysis put forward at the Forum was that what is taking place in the Chicano movement is a struggle between bourgeois nationalism, (cultural nationalism), and the science of Marxism-Leninism. We have seen this struggle take place most markedly around whether organizations should be national in form, international in content, or, international in form, national in content. An example of the latter type of organization is El Partido de la Raza Unida which claims to be an anti-imperialist, scientific organization, but is objectively bourgeois nationalist due to its ideology of "Chicano Power" won through reform within the capitalist system. An example of national in form, international in content, are the many anti-imperialist organizations which have had, and continue to play a major role in building national consciousness, and which have also militantly supported the struggles of other oppressed peoples, such as El Centro Cultural de la Raza in Seattle. Chicano activists from this Centro marched for 5 long, hard months with the Trail of Self Determination for Indian Nations. Also, many Chicano activists have emerged who are now playing a leading role in the development of political line in the national and communist movement. As a result of the work to develop political line, many organizations which were in the past strictly national in form, are now international in form as well as content.

Ideologically, these efforts to study and apply Marxism-Leninism are most certainly an advance for Chicano activists, for only a class analysis correctly identifies the world system of imperialism as the cause of both our class and national oppression.

There was general acknowledgement that cultural nationalism has, in the past, played a progressive role in the development of our national struggle because it moved us to unearth our history which had long been buried by racism, and it set afire a fierce pride in being Chicano. This identity and dignity are absolutely necessary for both identifying our role in class society, and the particular contradictions which confront us as Chicanos. Cultural nationalism ignited many struggles demanding, for example, bilingual education, Raza studies programs, community services which met the particular needs of Raza, community self-defense, (the Brown Berets), and brought forth a blossoming cultural movement of teatro, murals, poetry, music and dance who spoke of our militant history of struggle, the collective heroism and beauty of our Raza.

But as "one divides into two" in its process of development, the cultural nationalism could move forward to revolutionary nationalism and class consciousness, or tumble backwards to become bourgeois nationalism. Bourgeois nationalism no conocia quien era el mero chingon (didn't recognize who as the main man), and who our friends were. It fell short of pointing out our principal enemy and did not fully grasp the duality of our oppression—that we are oppressed both as Chicanos and as workers. The understanding of this duality is the basis

of revolutionary nationalism.

One of the ways in which bourgeois nationalism as an ideology proved to be an obstacle to the development of the class content of the Chicano national struggle, was that it often led us to believe that we had achieved a victory if we got a brown face elected into some "important" position in the government, community, campus, etc. We would ignore his class aspirations, and would be blind to the puppet strings attached to the coyote's back.

As a result of this blindness we were often led to politely request a few crumbs from the plate of the patron (boss).

Community socialism is another tendency which fell short of identifying our target. The political struggles to build community socialism are in many ways, expressions of bourgeois nationalist ideology for it holds the building of Chicano community autonomy as the primary task of our struggle, by the peaceful transfer of power through legal means into the hands of Chicanos. The inherent weakness of this concept is that little is done to do away with the cause of the problem—only the reforms are seen, not revolution. In Crystal, Texas, though El Partido de la Raza Unida virtually controls the city government, the people can still be laid off from the cannery there.

Total liberation demands total destruction of the system of exploitation that stole our land, forced us into terrible working conditions in the fields, factories, railroads and mines of the U.S., laid us off then put us on welfare to be humiliated further. It is clear that bourgeois nationalism offers little as an ideology which will shape the revolutionary potential of el Pueblo Chicano (the Chicano people).

In conclusion, the NCF was a positive effort to sum up the history of the Chicano mass movement ideologically and organizationally, and was a historical event in that activists from several states had an opportunity to meet and talk with each other.

But the Forum also revealed many serious errors on the part of the advanced elements within the national movement. The most outstanding of these errors was the downplaying of political line. There was virtually no discussion around the urgent questions being posed by the mass movement. For example, do Chicanos constitute a nation in the U.S., with full rights to self determination? Do Chicanos have a historical homeland in the Southwest? Or are we objectively all Mexicanos, and our liberation struggle is to reunite all the Mexican people—whether in the U.S. or Mexico—under one flag of a socialist Mexico? What is our relationship to other liberation struggles—particularly that of Native American sisters and brothers with whom we share a similar history of conquest, colonization and genocide? What is our relationship to the proletariat of the oppressor nation and to the struggles against women's oppression? How do we consistently and correctly give the national struggle revolutionary working class leadership?

There are many more "burning questions" which were swept under the table. There was no discussion of what is political line, how the process of developing political line relates to mass struggles, and how the struggle to forge correct political line moves us forward to the next stage of revolution, building party organization. Mass were talked about solely in the context of what kinds of organizations existed and what they were doing, rather than examining how they relate to where the process of developing political line is at. The 'how do we get there'—our strategy and tactics—do not arise spontaneously from the mass movement, but are the result of thorough study, testing the theory in practice, struggles to repudiate and eliminate incorrect politics, and the return to practice to further develop line.

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### STT SELF-CRITICISM OF BLM ARTICLE



working class of all nationalities in the U.S. — especially in the skilled trades and crafts. Due to the racism present in this society, those skilled trades and other upper level proletarian jobs are dominated by male workers from the oppressor (white) nation. Similarly, upper division office jobs (secretaries vs. clerks and typists) are dominated by women from the oppressor nation. This caste structure of jobs is part of the material base for divisions within the working class. Furthermore, the progressive nature of the national struggles is historically based on centuries of resistance to imperialism and internal colonialization. To liquidate the struggles of peoples from the oppressed nationalities or to ignore the material base for the divisions within the proletariat is to stand history, scientific socialism and reality on its head.

We call on all comrades to carefully study the history and theory of imperialism in all its forms, in order to develop the political line that will correctly guide our work. That political line and hard work by communists will form the basis of internationalist unity within the U.S. The road ahead is torturous, but the future is bright!

Other comrades have been struggling with us around the concepts of "Black Belt Nation," and "the nation is everywhere." The first question involves our acceptance of the traditional boundaries of the Black Belt. We pointed out that while we accept the early Comintern analysis (which was developed mostly by the Negro Organization of the U.S.A.),<sup>\*</sup> a decisive factor in our analysis is the consistency of high level struggles for self-determination and secession in the South. From the time of the civil war to the present there have been many attempts by Blacks in the South to establish Black homelands. During the civil war, Black states with standing armies and governments were set up in the South. Some of these sent troops to fight against the Confederate Army. The Union Army forcefully broke up these states and disarmed their armies even though the Confederate Army was not disarmed. Today these struggles continue both in the form of RNA's open attempt to liberate KUSH (an area of Mississippi that is majority Black) and the mass struggles of Blacks to take over county governments in many states.

We believe that there are two decisive factors in establishing a national homeland (we also recognize the validity of Stalin's other criteria for the establishment of nationhood). Land and consciousness are crucial. As everyone from Stalin to Malcolm X has pointed out, national liberation struggles are fought over the control of land. This commonsense notion is accurately expressed in RNA's slogan of "Free the Land." Secondly, people may have a common territory, economy and culture (Stalin's other criteria), but if they do not have a common consciousness, national liberation struggle is not possible. We recognize that every Black person in the U.S. is a member of the Black nation which has the right to self-determination. What we mean by this is that all of us have the right to fight for the direct liberation of our national homeland or to stay where we are and fight for socialist revolution. We also recognize that we are colonized throughout the U.S. Harlem, Watts, Fillmore and Hough all have the socioeconomic-military relationship of colonial territories to the oppressor nation-state. However, as nationalists have recognized for some time, the concrete manifestation of our nationhood and our national liberation struggle lies in the Black Belt South which has the economic, military, demographic and historical elements to make a struggle for state power feasible.

Some comrades suggested that in the next few decades, the eastern seaboard (from Virginia up through Wil-

mington, Philly, Newark and New York) will become majority Black both in the cities and rural areas. They asked that therefore, wouldn't these areas become a logical extension of the Black Belt Nation? Our reply is maybe. Even though this area may become demographically Black, it could only become part of a national homeland if the people in that region consciously decided to take up the struggle for secession. Except for the Tidewater region of Virginia, we do not have the evidence that consciousness for secession yet exists. It certainly could develop (just as it would have to further develop in the deep south). Still, there is not the same foundation of a history of struggle for land as there is in the deep south, or in the Southwest for Native Americans and Chicanos, in Puerto Rico and throughout the Native homelands of North America. We believe that such a history is an important prerequisite for a successful struggle for secession. We also would like to re-emphasize that our attention to this topic does *not* mean that we are convinced that revolution in the U.S. will be shaped by many different secession struggles.

### CONCLUSION

The criticisms we have received on the last BLM article were very helpful in sharpening our understanding, exposing our errors and heightening the struggle to develop political line. As this process continues we will publish more articles on the BLM. We will also begin publishing critical summaries of our practice within the BLM, based on political line struggle. The only test of line is in practice. We have much testing ahead of us. In the meantime, study imperialism, study history, sum up practice and develop the line necessary to liberate our people and all oppressed peoples.

A LUTA CONTINUA  
BUILD THE PARTY!

### NATIONAL CHICANO FORUM



This downplaying of political line struggle amounts to tailing the mass movement, and points out the relative immaturity of our national struggle. This behavior on the part of "M-L" organizations (OL, SWP, CPUSA) is particularly atrocious for they — in a clearly opportunistic manner — waited to see which way the discussions were going and laid out nice speeches aimed at the intermediate elements at the Forum, rather than raising their political positions around the various questions the advanced raised. Magically, numerous political lines appeared in the published resolutions even though we had not struggled around the positions in the workshops. The OL and SWP skirted the national question knowing they would receive little support for a position that essentially liquidates the national aspect of Chicano struggles. CASA was also guilty of this downplaying of political struggle. Although it sees itself as a working class, cadre organization, it certainly was not upfront in presenting and defending its line on Chicanos, (although they distributed propaganda there), which states that there is "no new Chicano nationality," and that Chicanismo is merely a step towards the de-colonization of the Mexican people in the U.S. Perhaps the fact that the vast majority of the participants considered themselves Chicano (and were proud of it) had something to do with their liberalism.

There was also talk of reuniting the Chicano movement: the Steering committee even went so far as to idealistically hope for a "plan of action." Unity is the product of honest and thorough struggle around ideology and political line — not whether you are from El Valle or East Los Angeles or whether you work in a bilingual education program.

We eagerly look forward to another National Chicano Forum, but a forum which facilitates struggle and development of "el como llegamos allí" (how to we get there), the struggle and the development of political line for Chicano liberation.

HASTA LA VICTORIA SIEMPRE

<sup>\*</sup> Comintern is short for the Communist International (1919-1935). Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, its member parties and organizations made important contributions to the national-colonial question and imperialism.

## 2ND INTERNATIONAL TREATY COUNCIL

In 1974 the American Indian Movement (AIM) organized the First International Treaty Council (ITC) Meeting on the Sisseton Reservation, South Dakota. In June 1976, a second meeting of the ITC was held in Greenwood, South Dakota. Its purpose was twofold and yet one — to discuss the progress of the defense of treaty rights and to give strength to the continued existence of Indian culture.

The Sundance ceremony of the North American Plains People was outlawed some 80 years ago. Its above ground practice has been revived in recent times and Greenwood was chosen as a place to initiate this year's celebration of the Sundance. For four days and four nights prior to the ITC happenings, the spiritual leadership of the Sioux people practiced the Sundance, a major ceremony among Plains people, in which unity is strongly emphasized. Among the Plains Indians, the Sundance represents a time of Power from which comes progress. For this reason, the Sundance is as much a sign of revolution as a sign of continued resistance.

The ITC represents a centuries old legal/political battle between the nations of Indigenous America and the invader/colonialist nations of western Europe and its imperialist offspring weaned in the Western Hemisphere.

An aspect of the colonization of Indigenous People was that of "treaty making." As early as the 15th century, European colonialists utilized this legal/political form in order to compromise with the resistance waged by Indians. As the colonization efforts increased, so did the strength of its bargaining position. It reached a point where colonization did not have to bargain any more for its survival. Despite the growing strength of colonization, intense resistance still necessitated the utilization of "treaty making." These legal/political agreements between sovereign people became weapons to insure a lessening of resistance and legalized the rise of oppression. Treaties were made between Indian peoples and a) European nations, b) European colonies and c) colonies-turned-nations (U.S., Canada, Brazil). The Louisiana Purchase, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo are examples of treaties made by the latter three groups among themselves in which the sovereignty of Indian peoples was conveniently ignored.

Among the Indian Nations a treaty represents a *binding* promise between sovereign people. The fact that colonization and its offspring U.S. imperialism have yet to honor a single treaty in no way invalidates their legal/political value. These and all other promises will be kept. We can be certain of this outcome for two reasons. The first is that Indian people will not quit, and the second is that the other "offspring" of colonization — the proletariat — will meet its debts in its victory over Imperialism.

The ITC represents the old legal/political struggle in its modern U.S. version. Indian Nations who were able to demand more favorable compromises from colonization have maintained their treaty struggles during all of the military, economic and political force that has been mounted against them. They are a powerful example to all Indian people. Among them stand the Iroquois Confederation, the Seminole Nation, the Navajo people. Of primary importance to ITC is the Sioux Nation and its Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 which, on the one hand, is meant to profit colonization by lessening resistance and annexing territory, but on the other hand illustrates the military advantage of the Sioux resistance and insures the basis of their sovereignty over major portions of Wyoming, North and South Dakota and Nebraska. The continuous betrayal of this treaty and the increasing oppression accompanying that betrayal have forced the Sioux Nation into fractions of its homeland. Further, Imperialism finds it increasingly

more important to continue that fractionalization as victorious national struggles abroad cut down its access to raw materials.

ITC and AIM elected to focus their efforts on the essence of the Sioux struggle. Basing its tactics on a strategy for legal/political recognition of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868, it was decided that this case would be put before the international community as others like the Iroquois had done. In 1974, the conditions for such tactics were highly favorable since throughout the world colonized people were utilizing similar tactics as well as other forms of resistance. The Sioux also were in a period of this flow of resistance. Wounded Knee II in 1973 had placed their struggle and the entire Indian struggle before the world community, drawing support from many levels. The establishing of ITC must therefore be understood in the context of this period. The first ITC meeting drew an estimated 4,000 persons. This number and the variety of the participants were again reflective of the times. Many backward elements attended, caught up in the fad of "being Indian." Sincere, awakening persons also attended. They were caught up in the flood of consciousness that the revolutionary period created. The least represented were conscious revolutionaries, despite the fact that they did most to organize the gathering. This element was represented by the AIM following, Wounded Knee veterans, Survival and the leadership of militant Indian struggles throughout the country. It was this committed element that accomplished the tasks of planning tactics for treaty struggle and insured the organizing of the second gathering. The major tactics developed included a) lobbying the UN for sympathizers, b) applying for a legal status within the UN bureaucracy and c) getting a hearing before the UN Committee on Racism and De-colonization.

By 1976 some good work had been done based on these tactics. Inside the UN, sympathizers from among the Non-aligned nations and a couple of western European nations had committed themselves to support both the membership status and the Committee hearing. On top of this growing support, sponsorship was found for a World Conference of Indigenous People to be held in 1977. The bulk of this work had been accomplished through the efforts of a small staff office in New York at the UN Plaza.

Meanwhile, the character of the Indian struggle had experienced the ebb that prevailed throughout the world revolutionary movement (with the notable exception of African Liberation which is very likely the beginnings of a new world upsurge). The second ITC meeting reflected this most clearly in its numbers — 400 — and even more so in the *lack* of varied participation. The backward were nowhere to be seen, at least, not in their careerist form. The "unconscious" were nearly as lacking. They assuredly were being exposed to reality closer to home by those who had been raised to consciousness by the Movement. The "lumpen" element was certainly not around either since this second gathering was nothing like a "conference" where you attend meetings to cover yourself and then party and "get over" the rest of the time.

This second gathering was for serious folks. Its character was dominated by the Traditional People, the ones who recognize the importance of maintaining the continuous existence of Indigena — Indian-ness. The Sundance prior to the ITC meeting strengthened this spiritual (national) dominance. A secondary aspect, yet not less in importance, was the revolutionary consciousness in attendance. These were represented by the many who had travelled far, who had come to show support and gain more clarity about the path of Indian Struggle. Among

these were non-Sioux Indians, such as the contingent from the Trail of Self-determination, who were close certainly to the spiritual force yet looking for political guidance or adding their political force to the gathering. Also present were non-Indian supporters looking to discipline themselves under the example of Indian leadership. Some special participants should be acknowledged because they express the internationalist aspect of this struggle and were invited specifically to give the meeting an international character (the "international" in ITC refers primarily to Indigenous Nations of the Western Hemisphere). Representatives of Zimbabwe, Puerto Rico, Chicanos y Mexicanos, Europe and the Indigenous people of Australia (not to be referred to as "aborigines") spoke to the nature of Imperialism and to the inherent unity among all anti-Imperialist, national liberation struggles. The greeting and solidarity brought to Indian people from these peoples were most enthusiastically received.

For all the richness of the gathering, it remained poor in interaction among the individual participants. A major reason for this was the political atmosphere in which the meeting was held. Greenwood, South Dakota is located on the Yankton Sioux Reservation. While hundreds of miles from Pine Ridge and Rosebud, it is none the less in the same Indian Country, occupied by the same imperialist forces. The immediate area has been the scene recently of some political action in its own right. A local pork processing plant (Wagner, S.D.) was taken over in 1975 by Yankton activists supported and aided by AIM. This activity created reaction among the police and paranoia among the local citizenry. Controversy was kept alive by the increasing militancy of the Yankton as well as an abortive attempt at a second pork plant occupation in 1976. Disclaimers by the Yankton leadership and AIM for this second takeover attempt brought forth a shooting incident in which John Thomas and Russell Means were seriously wounded.

Careful preparation was done by AIM, ITC and the Yankton for the gathering. Most of the preparation had concentrated on assuring local people and the military that we were not coming to Greenwood to start a war over John and Russell's shootings. Despite the assurances and "treaties" enabling us some creature comforts like water and outhouses, the area appeared to be a war zone lacking only a war to make it complete. Every motel within a 20-mile radius served as bivouac for a variety of local, state and federal police. On main roads one could count on seeing at least one car carrying armed, khaki personnel. Although not obvious, one could hear the sputtering of helicopters over the music of the drum during pow-wows.

As a background to all of this, June was a time of increased anti-bicentennial activity throughout the U.S. In Indian Country it took the form of the Trial for Self-Determination and the Victory Celebration of the Greasy Grass (Little Big Horn — Custer's Last Stand) as well as other less public activities. Arch-American patriots had little reason to look favorably upon our gathering, and we were very much aware that in a war we would get little sympathy. Fortunately we held our gathering in peace and never had to deal with the terrible logistical disadvantages of our position. However, the point is that under such conditions, it was difficult to talk freely with new acquaintances.

This cannot excuse the weakness of the hosts of the gathering, however. They provided the minimal necessities under which to meet but failed to maximize the content of the gathering. There resulted a trend of spontaneity in the entire proceeding which led to participants having to wait for guest speakers, workshops and new arrivals. Workshop leaders fell victim to spontaneity also. They seemed unprepared and allowed rambling with no purpose.

Responsibility for the agenda seemed erratic and lacked

to space for suggestion and criticism if, in fact, any of us had thought to give such input. Too much leadership for too many things fell upon Russell presumably because he is a recognized leader but possibly also because he lacked support from collective leadership. Reluctance to spoil or interfere in the "Indian-ness" of the gathering kept many of us from offering suggestions. Lack of knowledge about the specifics of the Fort Laramie Treaty and the present treaty struggle cut short the workshops on future tactics.

More specific criticism could be added, but the point is better made in summarizing. While much could have been accomplished to tighten up the meeting through simple mechanical processes, the major weakness would have to be seen in the lack of relating the activities of the meeting to its purpose in forwarding the treaty struggle and placing that struggle in the context of National Liberation.

For those of us who traveled hundreds or thousands of miles in search of clarity, we know that we returned stronger. We do not know, however, if we returned with any more clarity. We have yet to do the kind of talk and political struggle that needs to be done.

The second purpose of the gathering was the Sundance. It is significant that the struggle of Indian people is thoroughly integrated with the survival of the traditional culture. It is just as important to remember that a crucial aspect of the process of colonization is the systematic attempt to destroy and alienate the culture of the colonized. In order to understand the persistence of the struggle, we must recognize the importance of culture. There is much that makes a people a People. A people's land is most important, but a people's culture is the most difficult to kill. For Indians, culture is the memory of their land. So long as Indian culture persists, that connection between Indians and their land exists as a reality just as it is reality that Indians still retain factions of their homelands. Indians, their land and culture, are inseparable. Colonization has struggled against this reality with all of its might and it has not been able to break the unity of the Indian, the land and their culture.

The Sundance is a part of this reality. It was banned long ago as were many other Indian religious and cultural activities. The ban on culture was not simply enforced because such activity was offensive to the "God" of colonization. The ban was enforced because the Sundance like any other cultural activity was recognized as an act of rebellion. But suppression has neither killed the Sundance, nor for that matter the essence of Indian culture which it represents. It has been kept alive awaiting the call to take its rightful place in the struggle.

The modern Indian movement has made that call. No Indian activity, in recent times, of political significance has been without spiritual guidance. No Indian organization of political significance makes a move without spiritual consultation. This spiritualism is the heart of Indian culture. Its importance is recognized and respected by Indian and non-Indian revolutionaries alike and judging by the political repression of spiritual leaders like Crow Dog, it still causes fear in the hearts of the forces of colonization.

The fact that neither resistance nor culture has been defeated by all the forces of imperialism is of great importance to us. Indian and non-Indian alike must recognize the character of resistance in order to recognize its potential for revolution. For anyone, but especially revolutionaries to dismiss the Treaty Struggle as reformist or the Sundance as metaphysical is to totally misinterpret the Question of Indian People. Indian Nations want liberation. Their centuries-old struggle against colonization is proof of that desire. Their nature is resistance and their right to sovereignty.

**SOVEREIGNTY FOR THE INDIGENOUS NATIONS  
OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE!**



The sun dance is a ceremony held in honor of our parents the Creators; Mother Earth and Father Sun. The ceremony is usually held in Wahtaybuhgangeezis (leaves turn color moon, in English, August).

Even though some of us may be at war with each other it is a time when all the Nations come together in unity, peace and harmony out of respect for our Mother the Earth. It is also a time for many other ceremonies. The young women are preparing to enter the adult stage of womanhood, the young men prepare for adult manhood through the sun dance preparations; names are given, marriages are performed, give-aways are held.

There is much work to be done. The arbor and sweat lodges need building, food needs to be prepared. Women are in command of domestic duties while men help consistently with fire-building, cooking, cleaning, water-hauling, etc. Men are in control of construction, and the women help with gathering, chopping wood, assembling, etc. The children are cared for by all, they belong to the people.

The young men who participate in the ceremony for the first time must start preparing for it long before it takes place. They must be taught by the Medicine through the Medicine Man, what the Medicine is. This may take a whole winter, sometimes not so long. The men must sweat many times to clean their bodies and purify their minds. This is done each night up to the time of the Piercing. Before the Piercing, the men, young and old, dance from the time Father Sun first looks over the horizon to see his children until he sinks far into the night. They dance all day without eating, sometimes as long as fourteen days. This is the time of endurance.

The time of endurance is for our Mother — she is consistently impregnated and giving birth to Life. The four-leggeds, the winged, the insects, the plants and all of Life (her children) have a purpose in the course of Nature. All except man. We are without purpose. We take from the animal and give nothing in return. We take from the plant and give nothing in return. We take from the land. We take, take. And we must do so with respect. We must explain to all why we need of its use. . . to live, and we should never take more than we need for survival because we are without purpose. We must respect our Mother for we are the weakest creatures in all of creation. We take to live, and return to the womb of our Mother.

All the days of endurance the people come and go. Some dance under the arbor (symbol of the Hoop of Life). Some just watch, praying silently. Throughout, the People, women and men, come forth to give skin in sacrifice. The skin is taken from the upper right arm. On the final day, all are present. It is time to give thanks to our Father. Without Father Sun our Mother would never bring forth Life. The strength of our Father demands respect. He reveals the secrets of future generations and gives strength to our Brothers to endure the pain of our Mother, and all women. The Piercing is done by the Medicine Men as is the taking of skin. A thin bone about three inches long (Eagle claw was used many winters ago) is pierced thru the fleshy area above the breast. It is then connected, by a long piece of sinew, to a cottonwood tree (symbol of the Tree of Life), which is situated in the center of the arbor. The rope must be pulled taut so the bone (claw) can break through the skin. The pain is a small sacrifice to our Creators. We have borne the pain with our Brothers and it is the end. The feeling shared is like that of a cleansing or that of a mother five minutes after the birth of her child; a bright clear day after a bleak storm. It is time to feast.

When our sun dance ceremony was banned throughout North America, it was a tactic used not only to keep us from practicing our Native religion but to keep us apart from the National unity that was also shared. For eighty years we were forced to hold our Sacred Sun Dance in secret. Now, with the support of the American Indian Movement, we are able to once again practice our religion more openly and with pride, not to mention the doors to cultural and traditional teachings that have been opened to us and our children through the work of the movement.

This is one heart, one mind that has spoken here. Every heart feels different. Every mind sees a different angle: every sun dance is different. The purpose and the importance remains the same as when our Grandparents held the ceremony, and their Grandparents . . . All My Relations.

