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Why Assata Shakur must be supported, and why such support is support of the Black Liberation Movement and does not stand above correct political analysis.

Comrade Assata will stand trial this year for the murder of a New Jersey Highway Patrolman and the wounding of another, as well as the murder of her comrade Zayd Malik Shakur. These charges grew out of the ambush of Assata, Zayd, and Sundiata Acoli on the New Jersey Turnpike over three years ago.

There are some people, (especially white "feminists") who feel that Assata should be supported because she is female, and therein a leader of the "radical feminist movement." These same people maintain that Lolita Lebron, the resolute Puerto Rican Nationalist, Susan Saxe, a revolutionary white woman, are all equally leaders in the feminist struggle. While this may be true of comrade Susan, and we cannot presume to speak for Sister Lolita, this view in respect to Sister Assata is totally an incorrect view. Indeed, we doubt the validity of such view in respect to Sister Lolita for obvious nationalistic reasons. This view is incorrect because it completely ignores the national question inherent in black peoples struggle for liberation. Such a view is in effect a typical racist reflection of the politics of some radical feminists. Once again, we are confronted with white peoples attempt to appropriate for themselves our struggle, pain, suffering, and sacrifice and claim them as their heritage.

Assata is indeed a woman, but she is a revolutionary Black nationalist woman committed to the liberation struggle of her people. There are countless black women who struggle today on all levels of the black liberation process. These sisters sacrifice daily because of their commitment to our peoples eventual liberation. Black women have a long tradition of struggle, sacrifice, and triumph. But what certain "radical feminists" fail to realize is that every people have the right to their own history, and that black revolutionary nationalism is the restoration of black people's right to their own history. When certain white feminists support Assata because she is female, they are in effect saying that black people must continue as an adjunct, and extensions of white American history and culture. For over 300 years, from the moment black Africans of diverse tribal origins were kidnapped into slavery and in the crucible of that slavery forged into a unique people, we functioned as economic extensions of Euro-American history. The social repercussions of this condition was finally broken during the civil rights phase of the black liberation process, when for the first time, revolutionary black nationalism arose out of the ashes and blood of Watts, Detroit, Harlem, and Cleveland.

White radical feminists should indeed support our sister Assata, but not because she is "female" but because they support our peoples right to determine their own destiny. Surely, these same "feminists" did not support the Vietnamese peoples struggle against U.S. imperialism merely because women were involved. Such an approach would be grand political absurdity, after all, who will save the Vietnamese babies and insure them a future, who will guard the right of the Vietnamese people to determine their own destiny and make their own history except the Vietnamese people themselves--ALL OF THEM. Comparatively, blackmen, blackwomen, blackchildren, male and female, are oppressed as a whole, as a people and not merely because half of them are female. To support Assata is not to support some bourgeois notion of radical feminism, but to support the revolutionary ideal of black national self-determination, the historical answer to racism in the U.S.

There are some white "leftists" who would support Assata because she is a revolutionary and opposed to the capitalist ruling classes and their flunkies in black face. These individuals and groups proceed from the premise that black peoples struggle is merely one of class and that the virulent racism of U.S. society can be effectively combated with some social democratic idela of white and black worker solidarity. White Workers and Black Workers Unite they scream - solidarity at all costs they rave, not understanding that they are screaming in the face of history and hundreds of years of domestic neo-colonialism and racism.

Assata is indeed a revolutionary, but she is a revolutionary because of her nationalism not despite it. While it is true that black people are subject to the limitations, contradictions, and antagonisms of this class society, and it is true the relationships of capital determine the economic position of black workers, it is incorrect to conclude that these are the sum total of black peoples relationship to a racist status quo.

Black Liberation by its own dialectic is revolutionary. There can be no black self-determination and national independence without a revolutionary change of power in the U.S. This should be obvious. But is it not equally as obvious that the black working class has a historical mission that the white working class does not have? Black workers have a nationalist destiny and obligation to black people, bestowed upon them by the historical experience of black people in the U.S. White workers have only the historical obligation of overthrowing their own class enemy and exploiter. The fact that both have a common class enemy does not mean both blacks and whites have the same historical mission. Therefore, to support Assata merely because she opposes the capitalist ruling classes is once more a concealment of the fact that black people are exploited as class and oppressed as a people. It is another variation of the same old theme, i.e. black people exist solely as the extension of white American history. This issue cannot be avoided: Support of Assata is support of our right to national self-determination and the struggle to acquire that right.

History has shown that within every colonizer nation the "left" wing within that nation had split over the question of just how to support the colonized in their struggle. The "left" in France was divided over support of the Algerian FLN and their use of revolutionary violence, earlier the same "left" had divided itself over the war in South-East Asia. The same contradiction plagued the "left" of Portugal during the height of the Liberation wars in Guinea Bissau, and Angola and Mozambique. The same contradiction plagued the "left" in England over its colonial possessions, and over the burning issue of Irish independence. It comes as no surprise then that the white "new Left" is splitting over the question on just how to relate to black people, the domestic neo-colony of North American Capitalism. The reason this phenomenon occurs within the colonizing state is simple: There exists little class, culture, and social difference between the left and the right. They both reinforce the existence of the other, both seek to invoke their own bourgeois notions as the solution to the national problem, albeit under different guises. Yet history has proven also that the oppressed themselves, their revolutionary leadership, are best qualified to define for themselves the nature and scope of their struggle for freedom.

To us it is clear, there can be no support of Assata that is above politics. Those who support this sister support our struggle for freedom as a people, those who withhold their support from her give sanction to the enemies of our struggle for freedom. We are engaged in a monumental social endeavor of historical proportions, namely, the re-establishment of black people upon the stage of their own history—the revolutionary transformation of an entire people. To do this we must engage in revolutionary struggle, revolutionary national war, revolutionary class war. There will surely come the time when the so called white "new left" will have to answer a very basic question: Will our struggle for liberation be allowed to slip into a race war or will the revolutionary organization of the white "left" be sophisticated enough to add the pressure of class war to the crash of our war for national liberation, or will as some nationalists believe it will be "them against us." Whatever the answer of the white left, we will fight regardless, for our people genocide has always been a distinct possibility.

Support of sister Assata Shakur is support of the black liberation movement. There can be no separation, nor will we allow any. Assata belongs to black people, and we oppose all attempts to confuse this very basic fact. Supporting her does not stand above politics, it is an example of ones politics in actual practice.

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