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COVER PICTURE: The Uprising of the 20,000, New York City, 1909

Several weeks after thousands of young garment workers won a hard-fought strike, many of them joined a demonstration on New York's Lower East Side. Joined by women active in the suffrage movement, immigrant working women raised demands for better living and working conditions, an end to child labor, and the right to vote. The date was March 8, 1909. Two years later, March 8 was declared "International Women's Day" at an international socialist conference held in Europe.

Since that time, IWD has been celebrated in socialist countries around the world honoring the contributions of women made in the struggle against exploitation and for freedom. In the U.S., IWD was revived in the 60's as part of the growing consciousness against women's oppression and for women's liberation. This was part of the overall social movements led by Black and Third World people in the Civil Rights movement and in the movements for solidarity with the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people.

photo credit: What Have Women Done? by the San Francisco Women's History Group

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BREAKTHROUGH

an introduction

This is the first issue of a new revolutionary publication: BREAKTHROUGH, the political Journal of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee. As we worked on this issue, we have been re-learning an old lesson: revolution moves through many ups and downs as it progresses. This is not just an observation. It owes something to our own trials and errors in struggle. Victory does not drop from the skies. Battles and campaigns must be fought out and won and lost.

Painful experiences have been teaching us that communist political leadership and revolutionary organization does make a decisive difference in whether we move along or merely flounder. A revolutionary communist party armed with Marxist-Leninist theory and a strategically sound political line is indispensable in making revolution. Such a party must also accumulate experience in applying its theory and politics. Political line unites theory with US history in order to combine revolutionary practice with mass struggles now taking place. Without these essential pre-conditions the gap between the potential for social revolution and our unreadiness to carry it through will continue — especially for revolutionaries of the oppressor nation who have the special responsibility to strengthen the role of the white left.

World revolution is on its way to final victory. We are in an era of victorious struggles and wars for national liberation. It is also the era of socialist revolution. By carrying revolution through thoroughly and completely, we will ultimately arrive at a communist society. This requires hard struggle and a long, long time. It takes so long because the overthrow of capitalism/imperialism begins the much longer process of the total elimination of all exploitative and oppressive relationships among human beings.

Without such a positive world view, neither leaders or class can have confidence in victory

that is solidly based in a scientific analysis. Our political movements often lose sight of this larger view and seize instead upon partial or fragmentary aspects. We still find it necessary to struggle with people who look upon great strategic causes and victories (such as those of the Vietnamese people) in a narrow and superficial way. Great struggles still to be waged and won in this country (as well as abroad) are often under-rated as not so important, or, sometimes, as impossible to carry through. Such views fail to take account of the world-wide crisis of empire. It is impermissible for revolutionaries to approach the immediate social and economic problems of the US from such a purely domestic, national chauvinist point of view.

In addition there are many individuals and groups that aspire to revolutionary leadership, who create confusion on questions of political line and organization and on the relations of vanguard and mass and on the role and methods of leadership. The primacy of anti-imperialist politics and of the strategic necessity to fight white and male supremacy get muddled and liquidated. Confusion abounds on the forms of struggle: about the relations between legal and illegal, open and clandestine, above and underground and about other forms of mass struggle with the role of armed struggle in its various forms. All these express contradictions which must be dealt with and resolved by political struggle based on revolutionary line and analyzing concrete circumstances.

Leadership is distinct from mass, it must be advanced, communist, Marxist-Leninist. And this too calls for a party, politically armed with theory, analysis, strategy; a party well organized and possessing cadre able to advance the revolution in practical struggles. At the same time, leadership must be united and merged with class and mass struggle, neither separate from the mass by running way ahead nor by

—*BREAKTHROUGH*—

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INSIDE:

Provisional Political Statement
(includes major section on women's
oppression and liberation)
and writings by
--Native American Warriors
--Assata Shakur

POLITICAL JOURNAL of PFOC

lagging behind passively in the dust. It must not be totally identified with either the average or with the most backward levels. A vanguard pushes on, moves the front ahead, but has to carry the decisive mass with it. To do otherwise invites disaster.

Resolving these contradictions can only be based on applying revolutionary anti-imperialism generally and to every single aspect of class and mass activity. This process cannot be skipped. The US Communist Party and the US Revolutionary Communist Party argue that we must enter economic and other struggles at the level of the masses and then afterward offer people propaganda and talk about socialism and revolution. This divorces practice from revolutionary theory and strategy. This displays great contempt for workers and other people; reforms are put forth as bait. People are lied to. Cadre are turned into missionaries seeking converts, physically among the masses but equipped with opportunist politics that can only end in revulsion, alienation and failure.

Communists must approach the struggles for survival (reforms) in a revolutionary way so as to learn themselves and to be able to teach others. The lesson of the struggle to survive (in a mass collective sense) is that reforms and 'getting by' solve exactly nothing that is worth while or long lasting. Making revolution is necessary. Making reform the central issue always comes in the end to counter-revolution.

Under its previous leaders, the Prairie Fire Organizing Committee issued slogans that were very like those of the CP and RCP. (BUILD THE CLASS STRUGGLE, and so on.) The class struggle can be led in either opportunist or revolutionary ways. If there is no revolutionary content, anyone can use political line and slogans to suit their own taste. This is rank opportunism. Revolutionary ideas cannot be propagated by hiding them. This we learned in Jan. 1975 at the Chicago Hard Times Conference. PFOC put forward opportunist and economist and white and male supremacist politics with disastrous results. We have spent the last year working to undo the damage and build on a revolutionary politics. (Our national rectification campaign. See the article: **The Meaning of Chicago** in this issue for analysis and our criticism/self-criticism.)

After fierce struggles, PFOC has arrived at its present revolutionary politics and practice. These facts are known to friends, but not widely for these politics have been heavily boycotted by the regular and the left media, or reported indirectly and falsely. This political fight is not

our internal monopoly — the issues and revolutionary principles at stake are vital to the left, to revolution and therefore to everyone. People are the makers of history. This is why we fight to carry our part of the struggle beyond ourselves and into the world. We have no right to be passive; we have to expose false and fake communism — whether it comes in old or new disguise.

The Weather Underground Organization is one major group that has been pushing a bourgeois line of opportunism and betrayal. WUO has been able to conceal this fact for the last year or two because it hid behind its formerly revolutionary reputation. We of PFOC now realize that the WUO has never actually organized around the politics of the book *Prairie Fire*. Instead WUO worked hard to overthrow and bury the revolutionary contents of this same book which it issued as its own political statement. We, PFOC, who first organized through distributing and studying *Prairie Fire*, now remain the only organization actively propagating and building on the revolutionary parts of the book.

We have published a lengthier criticism of the political line of *Osawatimie* (a journal published by WUO in 1975 and '76) and of a WUO article titled "Politics in Command." This article of criticism is titled, "In Defense of the Book *Prairie Fire*."

THE SPLIT AT THE NATIONAL PFOC CONFERENCE IN NOV. 1976

Our Nov. 1976 national conference (NC) continued to struggle against opportunism. We struggled there over whether PFOC would continue to follow the course of rectification, upholding revolutionary anti-imperialist politics as supported by the Bay Area PFOC and which had been unanimously confirmed at a national leadership meeting held in June 1976. The alternative would have been that PFOC would have reverted to opportunism by adopting the opposing politics and leadership advocated by leaders and delegates from the New York chapter. (Plus one delegate and one observer from Chicago—a chapter which dissolved itself a few months before the NC). The issue which led to the split between PFOC and the NY chapter was the debate on the material basis and structure of women's oppression and the strategy of women's liberation from US imperialism/capitalism as a system. We differed as to how women's struggles relate to the struggle against national oppression and white supremacy and for national liberation. We also

differed in our strategy for building a revolutionary communist party.

Once the debate sharpened on women's struggles and role, it raised the issue of PFOC's entire politics and leadership. The question became whether PFOC would continue to uphold the revolutionary politics and leadership of our national rectification campaign or whether we would once more succumb to opportunist line and leadership.

It is significant that political struggle at our NC revolved around women's oppression and liberation. Prior to the NC there had not been such sharp struggle over the politics of women's liberation within PFOC. This was due to male supremacist, liquidationist attitudes of the former national leadership of the organization. This leadership refused to support, and prevented others from supporting, either national or women's struggles against oppression and for liberation. This mis-leadership reflected the overall male supremacy of the white left, which has deliberately ignored and suppressed this struggle. In our present political statement, PFOC re-commits itself to an anti-imperialist line on women's issues. We are convinced that these politics will help all of us to make important breakthroughs—to root the analysis of women's struggles in our understanding of imperialism as a system.

Both national oppression and white supremacy and women's oppression and male supremacy are integral parts of the same imperialist system. In analyzing women's oppression and developing a strategy for women's liberation within the oppressor nation, we must base our analysis on an understanding of the principle contradiction of imperialism, which is the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations. It is critical for us to grasp firmly the meaning of this division for women within the oppressor nation, particularly how white supremacy shapes the experience of white women. Any tendency to separate the analysis of women's oppression and male supremacy from an analysis of the imperialist system as an integrated whole (as the NY position did) inevitably leads to an opportunist strategy for women's liberation. A correct understanding of the basis and structure of women's oppression is a necessary requirement for building a communist party within the oppressor nation.

We see our stand at the NC as crucial to all areas of revolutionary politics and therefore to our ability to help build communist politics and organization. It is a setback that we didn't

reach national unity for those politics at NC. But we are not defeated nor disheartened. We are determined to go on building and rebuilding. The publication of *Breakthrough*, our new journal is one evidence. And this is the main way we will define our politics and answer those who oppose them. We will go on to further develop and fight for our positions both in this Journal and in our practice.

BREAKTHROUGH: Vol. 1, #1

The main content of #1 is our Provisional Political statement which we have been debating and shaping for more than six months. We think it will be a contribution to moving ahead. We anticipate that the section on women's oppression which has been struggled out by PFOC women and approved by all of us will be especially important. This and some other parts will be published later in pamphlet form.

We have consciously avoided the practice of many white based groups which attempt to define other peoples strategies and struggles for them. That is a very white supremacist and chauvinist practice. We tried hard to learn from our own history and from the history of the women's movement, from revolutionary history world-wide and also from the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American and Mexican history and leaders from whom we can learn much about the nature of this system and about our own particular historical weaknesses and how to combat them in our practice. We believe that overcoming this negative part of our history is the first step toward consolidating the anti-imperialist politics and action which is the prime responsibility of communists of an oppressor nation.

We know that we haven't covered everything we should have in either the Political Statement or the Journal as a whole. Other things will turn out to be unclear or wrong. Being still closer to the beginning than to the end, we still call our statement a Provisional Political Statement. It is open for debate and improvement. Still we intend to fight for its essential content and basic line. We feel that we have succeeded in making some important initial breakthroughs and departures from old opportunist patterns. In our Journal and other future publications we will also try hard to deepen and fill in gaps and correct wrong things. We invite criticism and contributions to this end and ask help in fighting opportunism and wrong politics wherever these threaten to obstruct moving on toward our revolutionary goals.

*Women
in the civil-
ian self-defense
units of Viet Nam.
By concentrated rifle
fire these units shot
down US planes diving on
their villages in strafing attacks.*



PROVISIONAL POLITICAL STATEMENT

OF THE

PRAIRIE FIRE

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

OVERVIEW

We are living in times of massive revolutionary upheaval. Capitalism/imperialism is wracked by its own contradictions. Wars of liberation and socialist revolution, after centuries of struggle and many defeats, are moving on towards complete elimination of all systems of oppression and exploitation.

However long it takes, people will achieve the first truly humane society, one without classes. No longer will people be oppressed by exploiting minorities of any kind. Holding power over others by deception and by force and violence; by genocide and military rule of one nation by another will become impossible and unthinkable.

Such is our aim, our goal and our vision of the future which will come about because liberated nations and peoples and the working classes of all countries will have it so.

Meanwhile, there is the raging crisis of imperialism and all its disasters for the peoples to deal with. We, especially those of us who are part of the dominant oppressor nation of the United States, the largest and most aggressive empire known to history, must carefully and scientifically analyze and digest all the facts and all the circumstances that we have to deal with in order to carry out our own strategic part in ongoing world revolution. We begin with a reminder of the world context.

I. THE WORLD CRISIS OF IMPERIALISM

There is a world wide fight to the finish between imperialism (with U.S. imperialism as its main prop) and the overwhelming majority of the world's population. Within this overall struggle there are separate levels of conflict

and contradiction.

Imperialism is challenged by the peoples and nations that it oppresses and feeds upon as well as by the newly independent countries and the smaller capitalist countries that it seeks to exploit by the methods of neo-colonialism. In this conflict, empire uses both direct and indirect methods; armed force and conquest, economic controls, manipulation, puppets, cultural assault, etc. The liberation forces resist; they make peoples war and social revolution.

Imperialism is also directly confronted by the countries of the socialist world. Here, empire also uses two tactics: the arms race, war and cold war, but also it offers collaboration, deals, detente, 'aid.' Socialist countries respond by building up their own strength, by uniting with progressive and revolutionary forces, classes and nations, by taking advantage of differences among the capitalists themselves.

There are important conflicts among the capitalist empires: between the U.S., West Germany, Britain, France, Japan, etc. who collaborate against the people and against revolution, but who also quarrel with each other over hegemony, power and the division of the spoils.

Finally, there is the revolutionary class struggle of the working classes which oppose the capitalist classes in the imperial homelands and other capitalist countries. The working class historically leads the struggles of other progressive forces also and it is the leading class in power in the socialist countries ('dictatorship of the proletariat') and in the most revolutionary of the national liberation struggles.

All these contradictions combine to produce the present chaos and crisis of empire. But the primary focus of the struggle now is that of the vanguard forces of oppressed peoples and national liberation laying siege to empire with the U.S. empire as prime target. This is the key to our strategy in the crisis of empire. Like all other profound historical changes, all these struggles proceed unevenly with victory and defeats, with advance and set-back, but the overall movement is increasingly forward.

The crisis of empire, especially in the U.S., penetrates all realms and areas of our lives: political, economic, military, cultural, educational, foreign affairs and diplomacy, government (Watergate — elections, etc.) credibility, financial crisis of the cities, welfare, the family, 'racial conflict,' prisons, courts, laws, police, age, youth. . . . Everywhere there is rot and decay at one hand and rising questioning and rebellion on the other.

To analyze these conditions politically and work out a revolutionary line and strategy we need a historical perspective. Our tool for this is Marxism-Leninism, the tested science of world revolution. What we aim at is a scientific understanding of U.S. class and national history and contradictions in the light of the world context and the laws of historical science. This is not an intellectual exercise, but a necessary step to insure a strategy and politics that moves toward revolution. Only this will enable us to correct our mistakes — a process we are now engaged in. We are still working hard to better understand the nature and consequence of the opportunist, white supremacist and male supremacist errors which we of PFOC recently made as an organization. This process of criticism and change (rectification) is basic to scientific political analysis and struggle. It is very much a part of this, our provisional political statement.

II. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CRISIS OF EMPIRE

Historically, the roots of the present world crisis of imperialism lie in the need for empire to expand indefinitely in contrast to the limited area available for expansion. As Lenin said, by the early 1900's the earth had already been divided up among the competing imperial powers. Due to the uneven strength of the contenders, there had to be a re-division which could only be accomplished by force; hence World War I.

But World War I also brought revolution of the Russian and other peoples of the old Czarist empire. The Bolshevik Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (communist) led the

working class and the people beyond bourgeois revolution to socialist revolution and the birth of a rival system — socialism, working class and peoples power. This in turn sharpened the class and national contradictions throughout the world. The vast mass of people in the colonies also began to rebel and to make revolution.

As masses moved world-wide, they moved towards an alliance with and support of the socialist revolution in Russia and then toward the adoption of its essential content as their own goals. Lenin and Stalin hailed this as the process that would decide the ultimate victory for socialism on a world scale. They saw that victory in old Russia and its empire plus the decisive millions of China, India, S.E. Asia, the Middle East in revolutionary action would decide the course of history even though the capitalists had succeeded in defeating the post war socialist revolutions in Western Europe for the time being.

Once set in motion, the global tide of national liberation and peoples and socialist revolution continued, sweeping to every continent, over every ocean, to every corner of the earth. But there also followed the events of World War II, the Cold War and the bid of U.S. empire for world hegemony through a world-wide counter-revolutionary crusade, eventually backed by atomic threats of world-wide genocide.

The U.S.S.R. was the central strategic force of the World War II victory over German-led fascist imperialism. The U.S.S.R. paid a very high price: a devastated country and a decimated people. In this situation, the Khrushchov revisionist clique took advantage of the existing weaknesses within the Communist Party to seize control of the Soviet Party and the Soviet state. Step by step it moved down the same capitulationist path that had been 'pioneered' in the U.S. by Earl Browder. This led to grave reverses in the revolutionary course of most Communist Parties of the capitalist world, especially in Europe and in Central and South America and the Caribbean where opportunist forces were already at work. Before long, the Khrushchov group was challenged by revolutionary China.

The consequences were profound. Though there was a revolution in China, in Korea, Cuba and Vietnam and in Eastern and Middle Europe, there was also revisionism in command in most of Europe and in the U.S.S.R. as well as in most of the western hemisphere. This meant the substitution of "peaceful transition" in place of armed struggle, peaceful co-existence instead of revolutionary solidarity, peaceful competition in place of revolutionary class struggle. Also the substitution of the 'state of

the whole people' for the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the 'party of the whole people' for the party of the working class. All this meant the liquidation of Lenin's revolutionary analysis. That is, no more struggle against the bourgeois enemy either within society as a whole or within the working class and its party and state. Thus Revisionism in practice is class collaboration and abandonment of socialist revolution.

Events developed further. China and other revolutionary forces combated revisionism; the U.S.S.R. withdrew its economic, military and diplomatic support from China; the revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces carried on the struggle against the old empires headed by the U.S. in spite of added difficulties caused by the treachery of the revisionists.

Internally, the Chinese followed a different course than had the U.S.S.R. China's course was one of continued internal class struggle against the re-emergence of privileged classes under socialism. However, as China more and more came to regard the U.S.S.R. as the main enemy on a world scale as well as to its own revolution and people, it began to counter U.S.S.R. accommodation and maneuver by its own counter-maneuvers.

Utilizing contradictions between competing powers is a legitimate defensive strategy for socialist countries and national liberation forces. However, it is wrong in theory and in practice, for a socialist country to base its foreign policy upon these contradictions instead of upon the international solidarity of all revolutionary forces.

Our own main responsibility is to deal with U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of our own and most of the world's peoples. We must expose and oppose U.S. expansionist jingoism, and their puppets and give major support to all oppressed nations and struggles for self determination. It is wrong to judge Cuba or Angola negatively because of their acceptance of Soviet aid; the issue is not aid. Revisionism undermines revolutionary struggle including revolutionary solidarity.

THE SOVIET UNION

The new socialist state in the USSR faced invasion and encirclement by western imperialism, the failure of revolution in the West, the decimation of its population and productive capacity by civil war and the first World War. Despite these obstacles, and under the leadership of first Lenin and then Stalin, the Soviet party and people established and struggled to consolidate state power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, abolished private ownership of the means of production and built up the country's productive capacity. In the early

years of the Comintern, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) fought opportunism in the world communist movement and supported the rising struggles for national liberation. The USSR was the central strategic force of the WWII victory over German led fascist imperialism.

The United States, unlike the USSR, had not been a battleground and had in fact come out of WWII more rich and powerful. It saw the last half of the 20th century as its opportunity to seize world hegemony. Hence it adopted the strategy of the Cold War: a design to rescue European capitalism and empire under the control of the U.S.

The danger to the world's first socialist state was not only from the encirclement and machinations of imperialism and its agents and the remnants of the old bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who filled out the depleted ranks of the new state's bureaucracy after the war. As Marx and Lenin both pointed out, without conscious struggle and planning to restrict their operation, small agricultural production, commodity circulation, wage differentials, bourgeois right, and the exploitative division of labor inherited from feudalism and capitalism (i.e. contradictions between mental/manual labor, agriculture/industry, men/women, oppressor/oppressed nations) all lead to the creation of new privileged strata and the conditions for capitalist exploitation and ideology to regenerate. Only conscious struggle of the masses to change these underlying conditions, led by the proletarian party and the dictatorship of the proletariat can push forward the transition from socialism to communism, the revolutionary class struggle to abolish classes.

Stalin and the CPSU, by following a developmental strategy (the theory of the productive forces) that stresses building up the instruments of production (factories, technology, etc.) rather than transforming the relations of production, allowed the material base for the creation of ruling strata of managers, technicians, military personnel, and party bureaucrats to develop. At the same time, their declaration in 1936 of the abolition of classes in the USSR was a grave error that disarmed the Soviet party and people's ability to wage conscious struggle against these developing forces.

There was a qualitative difference between Stalin and Khrushchov: Stalin was attempting to lead the masses of Soviet people in the transition to communism. However, Stalin made serious errors in failing to grasp and lead the class struggle during the period of socialism. These errors laid the basis for Khrushchov and his revisionist clique, representing the developing privileged strata to successfully

seize control of the Soviet party and state on Stalin's death. The attack on Stalinist excesses in 1956 was used to cover the abandonment of the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. The "party of the whole people" and the "state of the whole people" were substituted for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolutionary party of the working class, and continuing class struggle against the regenera-

to regain control of the party and the state.

These revisions of Lenin's conclusions about the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Party, and the state, opened wider the road for the developing new bourgeoisie within the party and state; the changes in the Soviet economy soon reflected their motion. Central planning was downplayed; profit became the key economic indicator replacing the political

The dictatorship of the proletariat

is necessary to guarantee

the people's "collective mastery of society"

as the Vietnamese call it.

tion of capitalism.

Even after the revolutionary seizure of state power, the bourgeoisie, both former members of the exploiting classes and newly engendered bourgeois elements, will keep on trying to regain power. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary to keep them in check, to guarantee the people's "collective mastery of society" as the Vietnamese call it. Just as the transition from socialism to communism is like no other transition in history since it is a transition from class to classless society, so the dictatorship of the proletariat is a new form of the state. For the first time the state, under the leadership of the proletarian party, defends the interests of the majority of the people against the new and old exploiting classes.

Marx and Lenin clearly laid out that the dictatorship of the proletariat must cover the whole period of transition, of continued class struggle from capitalism thru socialism to communism. Its end result, communism, is not the "state of the whole people" but rather a stateless, classless society. In the period of transition, the state is not a neutral institution, it is always an instrument of class rule; if it is not clearly in the hands of the proletariat the way is more open for bourgeois elements attempting

direction necessary for meeting the people's material needs and developing socialism; one-man management became strengthened rather than collective forms like the revolutionary committees developed in China; managers became virtually free to buy and sell instruments of production and hire and fire workers at will. Eastern Europe came under the economic hegemony of the USSR expressed in the Council on Mutual Economic Assistance and the 'international socialist division of labor.'

Revisionism is not a policy. It is a politics and practice which has a material base in the society and party that puts it forward. Through our rectification, we in PFOC have understood that, in the US, revisionism and right opportunism in practice become class collaboration and the abandonment of the revolutionary struggle for socialism. This course represents the interests of the bourgeoisie in the revolutionary movement. Revisionism in command within a party in state power is the bourgeoisie in control. It is the seizure of power by forces whose interests no longer lie in carrying the socialist revolution through the complete abolition of the exploitative divisions of labor to communism. They do not want to carry out proletarian internationalism, but rather to consolidate wealth, privilege, and political

power of a reconstituted ruling class over the masses of workers, women, and oppressed nationalities.

PFOC holds that the consolidation of revisionism in the leadership of the CPSU means that antagonistic class relations exist within Soviet society and are intensifying, and that bourgeois interests and class forces rather than the masses of Soviet working people are in control of the party, the state, and the economy. We believe that the Soviet Union has neither a revolutionary communist party nor a socialist state and society.

An historical context for Khrushchov's revisions help expose their magnitude: on the one hand there was the rising tide of revolution and national liberation in China, Korea, Viet Nam, Cuba and Algeria. US imperialism was responding with CIA-inspired coups and military invasions as part of a general counter-revolutionary crusade. Khrushchov played on the great destruction of WWII and the war-weariness of the Soviet people in putting forth a revisionist international line. Peaceful co-existence as a general line of foreign policy replaced revolutionary solidarity and proletarian internationalism; peaceful transition was substituted for the necessity for armed struggle to smash the bourgeois state in capitalist and neo-colonial countries; and peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism replaced the necessity for revolutionary class struggle.

The consequences were profound. The opportunist and revisionist forces which existed in most communist parties of the capitalist world were encouraged and promoted by the CPSU (where they were in leadership). Revolutionary forces were opposed and driven from leadership. Revisionism in the USSR led to a conflict between the Soviet party and state (now controlled by the revisionist Khrushchov group) and revolutionary China.

The Communist Party of China (CPC), in the 1960's led in upholding the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. In a series of polemics and world conferences, the Chinese exposed and refuted Khrushchov's and then Brezhnev's revisionist offensive. They were supported in this attack on opportunism by the Communist parties of Albania, Viet Nam, and Korea. The USSR withdrew its economic, military and diplomatic support from China and attempted to drum China and Albania out of the world communist movement. The revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements carried on the struggle against the old empires headed by the US in spite of the added difficulties caused by the treachery of revisionists.

Internally the Chinese learned from the Soviet experience. Mao Tsetung reasserted Marx and

Lenin's position on the continued existence of class struggle throughout the whole transitional period of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. China's course, as exemplified in the Cultural Revolution, has been one of continued internal class struggle against the re-emergence of privileged classes under socialism. Chairman Mao said, "You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist party—those in power taking the capitalist road." Revolutionaries in the CCP opposed the revisionist and opportunist line of the theory of the productive forces in waging a two line struggle which rallied the masses of the people against the bourgeoisie. On Oct. 5, 1966, Chairman Mao called on the people to "Bombard the headquarters," which turned the struggle against the capitalist-roaders within the Party bureaucracy and leadership.

Although socialist countries like Viet Nam, Cuba, and national liberation movements like the MPLA and PLO have put Soviet aid to progressive use in opposing US imperialism, it is wrong to see aid to national liberation as the defining characteristic of Soviet foreign policy. In its relations with capitalist countries the USSR supports the most revisionist parties, carries on extensive trade and capital investment in Western Europe, and US capital is invested in the Soviet economy. In relation to the struggle of the developing countries for sovereignty and control over their resources the USSR supports neither the struggle for Panamanian sovereignty over the Canal, the 200-mile fishing limit, nor the call of the non-aligned nations for a new economic order for the world.

Soviet emphasis on the "non-capitalist road of development" without putting forth the need for smashing the bourgeois state apparatus, leads to the bulk of its aid going to the state capitalist sector of countries like India, Syria, Afghanistan, and Iran, where it gets special economic privileges and investment opportunities, in return. The national economies of Mongolia and the Eastern European countries have been distorted to meet the needs of the Soviet Union, with the force of the Red Army always available to enforce Soviet hegemony.

The USSR's aid to national liberation is contradictory. The CPSU supported the Lon Nol regime to the bitter end. Its refusal to give genuine support to the Palestinian movement during the recent Syrian invasion of Lebanon amounts to collusion with US imperialism's plans to destroy the Palestinian national liberation struggle. A political line that stresses peace and not national liberation and denies revolutionary class struggle can never build a real anti-imperialist solidarity movement. Such a line leads instead to the opportunists of the French

CP failing to support the struggle of the Algerian nation for self-determination, the Syrian CP failing to oppose the invasion of Lebanon, or an anti-Viet Nam war strategy that calls for peace, and not victory to the NLF.

We believe that with a consolidated bourgeois political line and organization in power, capitalist restoration is now an established fact in the Soviet Union. The revisionist international line and practice and the oppression and exploitation of other nations carried on by the USSR have a material base in its internal character and direction. Therefore in looking at the whole of Soviet practice, we must conclude that the primary aspect of Soviet international line is not proletarian internationalism, rather it is one of a hegemonic, superpower. The USSR is social-imperialist in Lenin's sense of socialism in words, right opportunism, class collaboration, and great power hegemonism in deeds; and also in the special sense that social-imperialism in power puts its own great power interest and profitability ahead of international solidarity in its relations with other nations.

However, we do not agree with the Chinese Communist Party and other parties and organizations who use the term "soviet social-imperialism" to mean state monopoly capitalism of the fascist type, which has developed to a stage of active exploitation of all oppressed nations identical in form and in economic and political impact with US imperialism. Our study does not lead us to conclude either that the Soviet Union has a fully restored capitalist/imperialist character identical with that of Nazi Germany or that its political/economic impact in all parts of the world exceed the domination of US imperialism.

As an organization we are committed to deepening our understanding of the process and the consequences of the transformation of a developing socialist country into a society where the reinstitution of class rule, of capitalism and imperialism, takes place as the result of the development process. We need to understand more exactly the relative strength of the secondary aspect of continuing revolutionary forces in the Soviet Union: How much does the ideology of Lenin and revolution persist? How much has it been falsified and destroyed? What is the level of revolutionary consciousness of the Soviet working class, women and nationalities? Can the course of capitalist restoration be reversed short of a new proletarian revolution?

We do not think at this time that the restoration of capitalism has fully wiped out the gains (changes/developments) of 40 years of revolution. Thus capitalist laws of motion must be applied differently to the particular political, social, and economic dynamics of Soviet society. Forms of the state, economy, etc., will be

different than in the US and we must deepen our understanding of these new forms and the degree of their development.

Soviet power in Eastern Europe, parts of SE Asia, and the whole Mediterranean area has grown and regionally surpasses that of the U.S. Since the US takes great hegemonic and strategic interest in this area we must take responsibility for combatting the increased danger of regional war, atomic war and WWII. The revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces in this area must be firmly supported.

Imperialism is the main source of war in this century. Since WWII, US imperialism has been the main instigator of war. Because of uneven development this will not necessarily remain so in the future. The US and USSR are actively contending for world hegemony. Depending on the particulars of a given situation, either country could precipitate local and possibly world war.

The other side of contention is detente: a strategy of the two superpowers to temporarily maximize collusion and minimize violent contention while they redivide the world and maneuver for strategic advantage; at the same time disarming the world's people about the growing danger of war as well as the necessity to fight imperialism, whatever its source.

CHINA

In 1969, the Communist Party of China (CPC) listed its view of the four major contradictions in the world, the first being the contradiction between oppressed nations on the one hand and imperialism and social-imperialism on the other. Today, the CPC puts forward "Soviet social-imperialism as the Third World's most dangerous enemy." This leads to the strategy of a United Front against two superpowers with the main blow to be struck at the Soviet Union. We disagree with Chinese international line, and the policies that flow from this analysis. The Chinese evaluate Third World countries and movements mainly on the basis of their relationship to the Soviet Union. This leads in practice to placing opposition to Soviet policies and actions ahead of the interests of oppressed nations and peoples; withholding full support for movements in regions where US imperialism remains the main enemy.

Because China is a major revolutionary force in the world with a long history of principled support for national liberation, this position is a serious departure from their revolutionary role.

In Angola, the Chinese defined Soviet social-imperialism as the main danger, not US imperialism and South Africa's invasion of

Angola. China withdrew support from the MPLA and called the Cuban volunteers who joined in solidarity to resist South African invasion "mercenaries." Refusal to support the MPLA weakened the struggle, not only against Western imperialism but also against revisionism and Soviet hegemonism in the Third World. It weakened China and weakened the struggle for national liberation and socialism.

This emphasis on the Soviet Union as the main danger everywhere leads the Chinese to distort reality and disarms people about the danger and viciousness of US imperialism. Cuba under attack by US imperialism is defined by China as a threat to the security of the Western Hemisphere. China withholds material and political aid to revolutionary movements in Latin America because of their ties with Cuba, therefore abandoning support for movements which are digging the grave of US imperialism in Latin America. To see the attacks on the Palestinians in Lebanon as due solely to the contention and collusion between the Soviet Union and the US leads China to continue aid to the PLO yet not condemn the Syrian invasion, to disregard the role of Israel, and to ignore the general shift of Middle Eastern regimes towards closer ties with and penetration by US imperialism.

In recent years China has put main emphasis on the struggle of the developing countries for safeguarding and consolidating independence, sovereignty and control of their resources. This is a leading struggle in the fight against imperialism. However, if support for this struggle is not accompanied by firm support for national liberation movements which are leading in the battle against imperialism, it leads to liquidation of support for national liberation. It leads to not relying on national liberation movements to lead their own struggles against imperialism, defeat revisionism in their own ranks and struggle against Soviet hegemonism.

China has praised the Shah of Iran for massively arming Iran in order to secure its defenses against the Soviet Union. In fact, Iran and the Soviet Union have a thriving trade relationship. Furthermore the billions in arms the Shah bought from the US have been used to invade and oppose Oman and the PFLO and to set up a brutal, repressive regime internally with over 40,000 political prisoners. Iran in general is following the lines of the Nixon doctrine and plays the role of US imperialism's gendarme in the Persian Gulf.

We do not agree with China that the world situation today is essentially identical to that of the WWII United Front of socialist and capital-

ist countries against German and Japanese fascism. The victories and tremendous growth of national liberation since WWII are decisive in the world today. The danger of war increases, but revolution remains the main trend in the world today.

The Chinese strategy of utilizing contradictions between competing powers as a principal basis for their international line has led in practice to collaboration with US imperialism, puppet dictators, and the imperialist countries themselves. China has called for the preservation and strengthening of imperialist military blocs. In Europe, NATO is seen as a bulwark against social-imperialism, and China opposed any reduction of NATO armed forces. In Asia, China has supported US and Japan's military alliance, the rearming of Japan, and the maintenance of US bases in the Philippines.

Just as with the Soviet Union, the opportunism of the Chinese international line and policies are based in class contradictions in the Chinese Communist Party and society, and are a result of internal class struggle going on within the Chinese party and among the people. We do not have at this time a concrete scientific understanding of the sources of the current errors, but we see examination of the history of the Chinese Communist Party since the Cultural Revolution as an urgent necessity of the Communist movements. These criticisms of China's international line do not at this point outweigh our overall positive estimate of revolutionary contributions and thrust of the Chinese Communist Party and people. We continue to stand in active solidarity with revolutionary China against anyone who attempts aggression against China.

WHERE WE STAND

The growth of national struggles and social revolution against US imperialism, internally and externally, has been and continues to be the leading force in the world revolution since WWII. In most parts of the world, US imperialism is still the main enemy of revolutionary people and the main backer of counter revolution.

In most areas of Asia, Africa and South and Central America, US imperialism remains the main force propping up the fascist dictatorships that represent the last ditch efforts to stave off national liberation and socialist revolution. US multinational corporations reap profits from investment and trade never before equalled in world history: profits made at the expense of the life, labor and resources of people of oppressed nations. The offensive of the Syrian state and right wing Christians in Lebanon, Black September in Jordan, and Sadat's settle-

One of the many demonstrations of Chicano resistance to the Vietnam War. "In opposing the war we learned about our enemy. It isn't just the gringo or the police, we saw, but a whole system of imperialism. . . . The struggles of our barrios is the struggle of this whole world." Quote from 450 Anos del Pueblo Chicano in pictures by: the Chicano Communications Center.



Seattle, Washington, 1971

photo credit: Elmer Allen

ment with Israel are all parts of its overall design, facilitated by Soviet collusion, to liquidate the struggle of the Palestinian people and carry on "oil business as usual" in the Middle East. US imperialism is the chieftain of the forces of western imperialism which support the white supremacist regimes in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), Namibia (S.W. Africa) and Azania (South Africa).

Although US imperialism is exposed somewhat at home and to a much greater degree around the world, the pressures of empire keep it at its bloody work. Especially as communists of the oppressor nation, we must strike our heaviest blows against US imperialism.

The threat of the USSR to the world revolution is rising, both because of its rhetoric of socialism which hides its great power chauvinism and exploitation and because of its emphasis on building up its military capacity. In the long run it could possibly become the

world's strongest imperialist power. In places like India where it props up the fascist Indira Ghandi regime, the main blow must be directed at Soviet imperialism.

Even within the rising contradiction between the US and USSR, the struggle for national liberation and socialism, and the struggles of the developing countries for sovereignty and control of resources are the main trend in the world and the main force against imperialism. It's true that the power of social-imperialism is growing. However it is a clear possibility that the forces of revolution will not only defeat US imperialism but will also prevent social-imperialism from achieving a comparable level of power.

The fighters of national liberation and socialist revolution have rejected revisionist theories of the peaceful end of imperialism by resorting to the necessary force of their weapons. The Black Liberation movement and the Vietnam-

ese struggle led the way in the 60's for the rejection of the peaceful transition theories put forward for the US by the revisionists of the old left. These struggles hold the promise of reversing the revisionism that has betrayed the Soviet revolution and others.

We support the right of national liberation movements and independent revolutionary states to take aid from whatever sources they deem appropriate and to direct the course of their own struggles. Any other position violates the right of nations to self determination.

Our international line is conditioned by our location within the oppressor nation. We are an organization which is struggling to defeat the special content of opportunism in the US oppressor nation which bows to white and male supremacy. The struggle to defeat all aspects of revisionism is key to party building and to revolutionary class struggle here in the US. It is necessary to expose the Soviet Union as the headquarters of revisionism on a world scale.

As oppressor nation communists, our responsibility is to win the white working class to support of national liberation. Only in the context of thorough going internationalist solidarity with the liberation movements of revolutionary peoples and nations can we engage in principled struggle with them around questions on which we differ. We will not lessen our support for movements fighting US imperialism because of disagreements about their foreign policy.

As communists we are responsible to struggle for our politics in a principled way. We will struggle politically, with people and organizations with whom we work, about our views on the world situation and meaning of these contradictions which confront the world revolutionary movement.

III. CRISIS IN THE US IS LOCKED INTO THE WORLD CRISIS

The US has managed to take some advantage from the Soviet-China split, by hanging on in Taiwan, maneuvering in the Cuban 'missile crisis' etc. It has not managed to gain the hegemony that it so desperately strives for. The US has failed to control all of Korea, it has not been able to smash Cuba or enforce its control in Africa and it has become weaker in controlling South America.

In Vietnam, the US attempted to recoup its earlier major setbacks in China and Korea. The US attempt to replace the French colonizers in Indo-China had several objectives: to exploit the mineral and agricultural riches of Indo-

China and the labor power of its peoples; to establish a military threat against China from the South; to turn the South China Sea into an American Lake, secure the Philippines, control Borneo, Malaysia and Indonesia; to project US power toward the Indian Ocean and to approach the Middle East via the Arabian Sea. Before the end its aims became more defensive: not to lose the war and thus to prevent a great revolutionary and anti-imperialist victory.

The heroic struggle and fighting anti-imperialist and revolutionary unity of the Indo-Chinese peoples with the Vietnamese in the lead defeated all the expansionist, colonizing, and hegemonic plans of the US. The liberation war of the Vietnamese, the Kampuchians (Cambodians) and the Laotians became the focal point of all anti-imperialist and peoples revolutionary struggles world-wide. US imperialism and its counter-revolutionary allies and supporters were also confronted by anti-war, national liberation, and class struggles on the home front.

US and world imperialism suffered major defeats of great world significance when the US was compelled to withdraw its military forces from Vietnam and proved unable to sustain its puppet, Nguyen Van Thieu. Empire was defeated and forced to retreat by the superior strength and fighting capacity of the Vietnamese peoples' revolution and world-wide progressive and revolutionary forces. The decline of empire was exposed before the whole world. Ho Chi Minh, beloved leader of the Vietnamese and Indo-Chinese revolution became one of the immortal figures of world history.

Within the US itself, social crisis developed with the civil rights and Black Power movements; this then spread to young people and white students with the creation of the new left and the anti-war movement. There was emulation of, and learning from, the anti-imperialist and socialist revolutions of China, Korea, Cuba, the Congo, Vietnam, and Algeria; the repudiation of revisionism and reformism within the US; the rise of revolutionary anti-imperialism; the popularization of the thought of Mao Tsetung by the Black Panther Party and others. There were important advances in the level of struggle against white and male supremacy. Women's liberation struggle grew in spite of very stubborn resistance from within the male dominated left. There was also a turn away from pacifism and gradualism; a turn toward struggle in the streets and the communities, of confrontation with the institutions of the state, of recognition of the necessity of

armed struggle and organized legal and illegal forms of resistance. As Malcolm X said after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, "The chickens are coming home to roost."

All these historic changes in the US movement are facts and remain so in spite of sneers coming from liberals and from dogmatic 'new communist' sects. The new left certainly has had its anarchist and individualist weaknesses. It also tended to be imitative and reactive and to be anti-theoretical along with many other defects. However, most of the old left critics of such things are not trying to improve matters; they only want to cover their own faint-hearted and corrupt opportunism, which provoked such

nam war. There have been support actions for Black, Mexicano, and Chicano farm and garment workers. Some workers begin to realize that there is no solution in being homeguards and soldiers for the bosses of empire.

These beginning struggles have been stronger among women workers and the young and the unorganized. Another, but mixed part of the crisis has been what is called the cultural rebellion of young people. Although there are also many reactionary aspects — the use of hard drugs, sexism, etc. — the rejection of bourgeois mass culture is a necessary part of the 'crisis of credibility' spreading among all ages and reaching in various forms to all sections of

"The chickens are coming home to roost"

— Malcolm X

reactions in the first place.

Nevertheless the heritage of the movements of the 60's and early 70's is overwhelmingly one of recovery of the revolutionary spirit and anti-imperialism content which is the real essence of genuine Marxism-Leninism. This is so precisely because they challenged and exposed the fact that the working class and once revolutionary movements of the US had become enmeshed in the controls and privileges of empire. It is quite obvious, for example, that the AFL-CIO is more and more a direct tool of the capitalists within the labor movement. That movement is now staffed and run mainly by college trained staff and by lawyers and by former workers from the 'aristocracy of labor' levels. It is necessary to expose these reactionaries, not to unite with them.

Black people, Mexicanos and Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Asians, and women remain the last hired, first fired, worst paid, most sweated, least protected as to health, etc. There is no real effort put into organizing the unorganized. Instead there has been sabotage, as in the case of the farm workers organizing struggles.

Ruling class agencies have invested much energy in organizing white workers along racist, craft and reactionary lines for fascist type action as in Boston, New York, Detroit, Louisville. Contrary to this, some important working class resistance has taken place: many took part in the movement to oppose the Viet-

society.

IV THE NATURE OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM.

An important part of our analysis is a general outline of the history of capitalism and its growth into imperialism; specifically how this took shape in the US.

Capitalism became the dominant world system because it proved to be superior to both feudalism and slavery as a productive system, better able to organize society on a wider and more freely competitive basis (the 'democratic rights' of capitalist society are nothing but the social expression of the economic basis of capitalist economy — the free circulation and exchange of commodities in the market place.) The **Communist Manifesto** of Marx and Engels outlines the features of this historical process.

However, this 'free exchange' now also includes the labor power of the workers as a commodity — a commodity that is the source of the value of all other commodities, which are produced by labor and only by labor.

Since labor is the only source of value, it is also the source of profit, rent, interest, taxes. (These are all forms of surplus value, the extraction of which is the motive force of capitalist production). The capitalist is nothing but capital personified. It is capital which commands labor — for labor power comes to market stripped of all means of production or means of living, else it would not come.

Thus it is that the 'freedom of labor' is noth-

ing but wage slavery in disguise. The compulsory labor of the serf on the land or of the slave owned by the master is replaced by workers driven by necessity to sell themselves by the day and hour, by the week and month, 'voluntarily.'

The circumstances of capitalist competition are such that the advantages go to the largest capital with the most resources and ability to ruin competitors by more efficient technology, speed-up, etc. In the end this leads to monopoly, to combination, to trusts and control over governments (the state).

Monopoly in turn produces modern imperialism — the rule of finance capital, the super-national corporations, the export of capital, the division of the whole world among the great and small empires and (the most characteristic feature of all) the division between oppressor and oppressed nations. All this makes world and local war and revolution inevitable. Thus imperialism transforms the class struggle. Socialist revolution and the world crisis of empire adds a new and greater revolutionary significance to national liberation struggles. This creates new and complex problems for revolution in the oppressor nation.

In the earlier years of rising capitalism, national struggles were part of the anti-feudal, bourgeois democratic revolutions. The rising capitalists led in forming nations in the course of struggle against the feudal aristocracy. They needed to consolidate markets and control state power over definite territory and break up the restrictions of feudalism to make way for trade, business and manufacture. It was this process and its results which Stalin analyzed in 1913 when the criteria were developed for defining the oppressed nations within the multi-national empires of Europe, mainly Russia and Austria-Hungary. ("A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture." — Stalin)

At that time it was the position of Lenin and his supporters that communists of those empires would support the right of self-determination for the captive nations as a matter of principle. But any actual struggle for liberation leading to separation would have to be judged as to whether secession would advance the revolutionary struggle for socialism and the unity of the proletariat of both nations. Communists would not help to form new bourgeois-led nations or work to re-unite dispersed ones. The emphasis was on advancing working class revolution in each nation and country and on breaking down national barriers between workers. The main international slogan was still that of Marx and Engels, "Workers of all

countries, unite."

At the beginning of World War I, the Second International betrayed the working class movement and supported imperialist war. Lenin analyzed all these events: war and peace, socialist revolution, imperialism as the final stage of capitalism. He defined revisionism, social imperialism, and the right of nations to self-determination.

With WW I and the successful socialist revolution of 1917, leadership of national revolution passes more and more to the working class and its party (communist). Imperialist control and domination severely limits the capacity and willingness of the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations to struggle against imperialism and for the liberation of the oppressed peoples. Development of neo-colonialism, (imperial rule via a captive class of puppets) makes it clear that national liberation will fall short without socialist revolution and working class leadership. National liberation becomes the road to proletarian power and socialism in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

From such events, Lenin and Stalin concluded that in the era of imperialism and socialist revolution, national liberation is no longer part of the bourgeois democratic (capitalist) revolution but has now become part of the international socialist (proletarian) revolution. This analysis has been deepened and made the strategic guide of third world revolution by Mao, Ho, Le Duan, Kim Il Sung, Cabral and other communist leaders. The essence of this analysis and strategy is that liberation struggles of oppressed nations and peoples, when organized and led in a revolutionary way, now contribute to the defeat of imperialism and national liberation becomes a road to international socialism.

In addition, the modern empires in their push for expansion and in their rivalries, break up pre-capitalist social formations and revise national boundaries. This not only breaks up old state lines, it forces new combinations of resistance. In these new conditions communists must also promote and support revolutionary nation-forming in the course of organizing wars of liberation. (As in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, where nations were forged in the struggle from tribes which had formerly had different languages and separate economies in different regions.)

Solidarity with national liberation struggles by the revolutionaries and militant workers of the oppressor nation is the only possible way to combine the national liberation movement of oppressed people with working class struggles in the oppressor capitalist countries. These are



"Even more than the class struggle in the capitalist countries, . . . the liberation struggle of the colonial peoples is the essential characteristic, and we would say the prime motive force, of the advance of history in our times."

AMILCAR CABRAL
assassinated, 1973

*Leader of the African
Party of Independence of
Guinea and the Cape
Verde Islands [PAIGC].*

two different forms of class struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie; two different expressions of the fundamental contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation under capitalism. Now the test of revolutionary politics and strategy is Lenin's anti-imperialist slogan, "Workers and Oppressed Peoples, Unite." This perspective must guide our work in relation to the national question and national liberation movements within the US and abroad.

The other side of the contradiction of oppressor and oppressed nations is the impact of the expansion of empire upon working class struggle in the homelands of empire. This will be examined in part V, **Toward a Class View of US History**. Here we want to take special notice of the fact that capitalism generally moves in a similar pattern in other social and political areas as it does in the matter of nations. It moves from a certain progressive role in its pre-monopoly state to more and more reaction as imperialism comes to dominate every aspect of the system.

Capitalism moves politically from promoting 'democratic rights and freedom' (true, these are mainly for capitalists and selected supporters) against feudal controls to where it

eventually imposes its own social and police controls over its own challengers, the colonized masses and working class revolutionaries. Armies, police, prisons, executioners, laws, courts, puppets and stooges, schools, language, culture, media are all employed for this purpose. All institutions are structured and mobilized into a total complex that culminates in fascist rule that is characteristic in colonies, but can also be employed in case of need in the home country.

A decisive social and economic institution of capitalism is the patriarchal and nuclear family. The first division of labor between women and men came before class society and was based on women's role in reproduction and production centered in the home, or nearby. By caring for children and in domestic production and agriculture, women's central role in reproduction was recognized in the institution of mother-right which defined descent and inheritance through the mother. Men's labor role developed as gatherers and hunters of food away from home and their social status was not at the expense of women.

The capacity to produce surplus beyond immediate survival needs created the basis for

private accumulation and private property. Inheritance assumed a new importance. Men could not assure the continuity of their surplus product or property under the mother-right. To control inheritance, men overthrew mother-right and replaced it with patrilineal descent and the patriarchal and eventually monogamous family as the only means of assuring paternity. From the first, women's oppression was rooted in male need to control women's reproductive function to insure special class interests, i.e. the continuity of male-controlled property over generations.

Further institutionalization of women's oppression, sexual restrictions, virginity, monogamy, fidelity and chastity for women only were all rooted in the need to insure paternity and tie women's sexuality to their reproductive function as a means of class exploitation. Male legal authority over women as well as all forms of ideological domination grew up to maintain and legitimate women's powerless position. Women's position as mainly reproducers and socializers of children was fixed. While these male supremacist institutions determined the position of women in all classes of society and gave privileges to men of all classes, they primarily served the interest of the propertied, ruling class as they do today.

Before capitalism, women's central role was in the family. Under feudalism the patriarchal family became the basic unity of individual peasant farming. Women did agricultural work and produced goods for domestic use in the household. But with capitalism came commodity production and the sale of labor power as a commodity; a division came about between the home and the labor market. Labor power was now defined in terms of its sale in the labor market. Labor within the home became invisible, without cash value, i.e. no exchange value, and was discounted even more because it brought no direct profit to the capitalists.

V TOWARD A CLASS VIEW OF US HISTORY

In presenting this outline of our class view of the main features of US history, we wish to state our stand as precisely as possible: we are aware of the important revolutionary struggles and accomplishments of the working class and people of the majority oppressor nation of this country as well as those of the nations and peoples who are oppressed by the US empire both inside and outside the present boundaries of the US.

Many are the left and radical writers who have written of this, the positive side. But the negative lessons such as those noted by Lenin in his *Letter to American Workers* (Aug. 20,

1918) are mostly forgotten and buried:

"The American people who set the world an example in waging a revolutionary war against feudal slavery (civil war — ed.) now find themselves in the latest, capitalist stage of wage-slavery to a handful of multi-millionaires, and find themselves playing the role of hired thugs who, for the benefit of wealthy scoundrels, throttled the Philippines in 1898 on the pretext of 'liberating them,' and are throttling the Russian Socialist Republic in 1918 on the pretext of 'protecting it' from Germans."

Also, in a July 26 report on the national and colonial questions to the Second Congress of the Communist International (1920), Lenin wrote:

"First, what is the cardinal idea underlying our theses? It is the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations. Unlike the Second International and bourgeois democracy, we emphasize the distinction . . . The characteristic feature of imperialism consists in the whole world, as we now see, being divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colonial wealth and powerful armed forces . . ."

Since it is now over 50 years later, there are now also socialist countries and independent Third World nations. However US and other empires still fit this description. These facts make it our special duty to analyze the negative impact of empire, and its historical roots, upon our own social and class history. This is the only way we can discover how to move on toward revolution and victory. We value highly the works of Marxist-Leninist leaders and historians of other countries and of the oppressed nations within the US. However, our aim here is to apply lessons of history to our own particular responsibilities for change.

Our European Background

Revolutionary class struggle is the locomotive of history. It is the foundation and main source of the forward motion of human society. At this stage of history the mission of the working class is to overthrow capitalism and build a socialist society, to advance onward to communism, finally ending all systems based on the exploitation and oppression of human beings by the ruling class. Historically, opportunists and revisionists worship the world mission of the working class but never fight to realize it through revolutionary struggle and action.

Socialist revolution did not succeed first in the advanced industrial nations of Europe and America, as expected by the founders of scientific socialism, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Due to the nature of modern imperialism, the socialist revolution succeeded first in predominantly peasant Russia. Lenin called this 'breaking the chain at its weakest link.'

Expanding empires developed the technology and material wealth of the oppressor nations at the expense of the oppressed nations. This led the working classes of the industrially advanced capitalist countries — especially those of nations controlling great empires — to become involved in the expanding enterprises of empire. Many workers came to accept a share in the advantages derived from the super-exploitation of oppressed nations and neo-colonies. This soon produced an aristocracy of labor which controlled the working class movements on behalf of the capitalist rulers. This ruling class method of containing class struggle was all the more effective because there are relative privileges, economic and social, institutionalized in wage and income differentials and built into the total structure of society (the state, laws, courts, prisons, the family, schools, media, church, political parties, armed forces, etc.) to enforce the relative advantages of all members of the dominant oppressor nation. In the United States, the special forms of this oppression are US arrogance and white supremacy and chauvinism and male supremacy and sexual chauvinism.

Not only the working class, but also the revolutionary movements of the imperial countries have been corrupted by this process — which is the material and social basis of social democracy and revisionism, reformism and social imperialism. This corruption is especially marked in the US from the time of its origins in the exploitation of Black slave labor and in the genocide and land piracy inflicted upon Native American nations. White supremacy and national chauvinism are the main prop of US capitalism.

The second main form of controlling the working class and popular movements in the US is the special oppression of women and the institution of male supremacy. Other forms are discrimination by age, especially of the young and the "over-aged," and by skill, education, and organizational levels.

The material basis of these social structures is "competition between the laborers" (**Communist Manifesto**—Marx & Engels), not only within the class, but extended by imperialism to competition with and conquest of entire nations, as analyzed by Lenin in his work **Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism**.

White and male chauvinist and sexist ideology and culture are shaped by and based upon that material foundation of competition and privilege that has been built up over hundreds and thousands of years. Ideology and culture in turn re-enforce all the institutions of capitalism/imperialism. This is a necessary prop for the power of the ruling class — without its institutional and mass base all the force and violence of the ruling class state power is unable to withstand the forces of social revolution.

Trade unions are an elementary class response through which workers try to overcome competition by a degree of unity. Lenin's analysis of the basic laws of imperialism demonstrated, and history has proved, that unions are not enough. Revolutionary political parties and armies are required. With the growing crisis of empire, the vanguard role in social revolution has passed step by step to the working class and communist movements and parties of the colonial and oppressed nations, on a world scale.

MARXISM-LENINISM: SCIENCE OF MAKING REVOLUTION

In the pre-monopoly stage of capitalism, Marx and Engels armed the working class with revolutionary theory and consciousness — they produced works like **Capital** and the **Communist Manifesto**. Revolutionary events like the Paris Commune were led by a working class that began to play a revolutionary role in its own behalf, independently of the bourgeoisie. There was a struggle to unite the working class across national lines by forming the First International. There was a struggle between Marxists and anarchists over politics and strategy. Class struggle centered in Europe and North America.

Class struggle and the struggle for socialism created mass movements and social-democratic parties which, however, gradually became dominated by opportunist and revisionist leaders. World War I exposed the bankruptcy of social-democracy and its growth into social imperialism and confirmed Lenin's analysis of imperialism. Marxism-Leninism became the scientific socialism of the imperialist stage of capitalism and became the guiding theory and basis of the strategy which led to the victory of the socialist revolution in the old Tsarist Empire of the Russians, and to the creation of the 3rd Communist International.

Critical points in revolutionary history, World War I to World War II:

1. A revolutionary party of a new type was organized; the RSDLP (Bolshevik-communist) party.

2. World War I and armed struggle. Revolutionary defeatism (working for the defeat of one's 'own' country in an imperialist war). Slogan: **Turn the imperialist war into a civil war.**

3. Alliance of working class and the peasantry.

4. Soviet dual power — advance from bourgeois to socialist revolution, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat — Soviet power.

5. Defeat of the revolution in Germany and western Europe — rise of the vast colonial masses — support to the Soviets by international working class. Socialism confined to one country.

6. The emergence of the world crisis of capitalism: two world systems.

7. Step by step change from the vanguard role of proletariat of the modern industrial countries to that of anti-imperialist wars of colonial and oppressed nations for liberation and social revolution.

8. The rise of fascism and the tactic of the united front against fascism.

World War II brought the 2nd stage of the

tarly in China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, etc., revolution becomes the main tendency in the world, imperialists headed by the US go into decline, world crisis grows in all major areas.

SOME CONCLUSIONS FROM U.S. HISTORY

The civilization and culture as well as the enormous wealth and productivity of modern capitalist imperialism is situated mainly in Europe and in the settler colonies which Europe has scattered throughout Asia, Africa, Oceania, Australia, and the Americas. All this wealth and affluence is derived from its origin in the seizure of land and resources and in the genocide and enslavement of millions of human beings of the colonies and oppressed nations. In the Caribbean (where the plantation system began and where the average working life of a slave was 7 years) the crime of land piracy was accompanied by the working to death and total extermination of the Native Americans who lived there. In the British colonies of North America, which later became the continental base of the United States, total extermination was avoided only by the fierce resistance of the

Anti-imperialism, national and socialist revolution has spread like wildfire among the Asian, African, and South American masses.

world crisis of capitalism/imperialism. (Victory of the Chinese Revolution, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Albania; peoples' democracies in Eastern Europe, wars of liberation in Africa, South and Central America. Black and Third World leaders: Mao, Kim, Ho, Fidel, Che, Lumumba, and Malcolm in the US.)

1. Anti-imperialism, national and socialist revolution has spread like wildfire among the Asian, African, and South American masses. The main force and focus of world contradictions: National revolutions are now part of world proletarian revolution.

2. After Stalin's death, revisionism openly came to power in the USSR; the world communist movement was split; China and Mao lead in opposing revisionism.

3. The cold war. By means of WW II, the US expands its power, bids for hegemony of world capitalism and world domination; leads in world-wide counter-revolution.

4. Atomic warfare is introduced at end of war by the US in Japan.

5. After WW II, the defeat of the US mili-

Native Americans and their possession at the time of a larger base from which to fight.

The consequences of imperialism are the central question of US class history from the start. Opportunists, who need cover for their economism and reformism, often accuse revolutionary internationalists of rejecting class analysis and strategy. To refute this and show the real meaning of the charges of dogmatism and 'left sectarianism' that have been made against anti-imperialist politics, it is necessary to summarize some conclusions from our own history.

In North America, British colonization worked out to such advantage that 13 settler colonies revolted against their original sponsors and set up in business on their own. The Declaration of Independence is among other things a notice: 'under new management.' It contains a listing of all the failings and sharp practices of the former overlords combined with praise of the human rights and equality which can be anticipated from a new nation based upon bourgeois right instead of feudal and

monarchical privilege. No mention is made of the economic and social dependence of the colonies upon plantation slave labor and the commercial traffic in slaves and the sale of slave-produced commercial crops: sugar-rum, indigo, rice, tobacco, cotton, jute.

The Native Americans whose land and resources the settlers seized are denounced as merciless savages for resisting the plunderers. If as the declaration so grandly affirms, all men are created equal, they have certainly not remained so.

Among the settlers themselves, some were rich landowners and merchants; most were indentured servants, poor farmers, transported convicts and religious dissenters. In earlier colonial days, poor whites and Black slaves often joined together in resistance and revolt. The response of the colonial aristocracy and slave-owners was desperate repression followed by legislation making slavery permanent by descent and race for Blacks, but limited to term service and not inheritable for whites. The former practice of allowing freedom by conversion to Christianity was outlawed.

In this way, white privilege and white supremacy were institutionalized in the British colonies and converted into the prime social control of the United States to be. With the extension of a degree of white supremacy to even the poorest class of whites—the term-indentured servants—the material foundation of the ideology and culture of white chauvinism was built into the social foundation of that most democratic republic—the United States of America. At the same time nothing whatever was done to relieve the special oppression of women. In fact, white women who bore Black children were subjected to extension of their terms of service and these children became slaves.

With the war of independence and creation of the federal union, class struggle within the white settler population increased. This was expressed in the anti-federalist movement including rebellions and riots and repudiation of several state constitutions. It resulted in inclusion of the Bill of Rights in the US Constitution. Many slaves won freedom after the war of independence because G. Washington was finally forced to recruit them for his army in order to defeat the British forces.

But the land-owners, merchants and slave-owners remained in control of the new republic by their arms, their wealth and their compromises. The new republic was two-faced from the start: democratic and free for the powerful, oppressive and genocidal, crushing and ruinous for slaves and Indians especially and for the

poor and women in general.

With the growth of capitalism also came ever-expanding conquest of lands and peoples (imperialism). The particular features of women's oppression also came to be determined by whether women were part of a conquering or conquered people. In the US, a country founded and built upon the conquest of lands and peoples, this differentiation assumed enormous proportions. Although women of European descent who came to this country in the 17th and 18th centuries as bond servants were miserably exploited, they were able to earn their way to freedom. Black African women kidnapped from their country were held in permanent slavery as were their children. Large numbers of white women obtained benefits from land ownership through their husbands. Their children were "free" laborers and also derived privileges from being white.

Nevertheless, white women were subject to severe exploitation. In the 18th and 19th centuries, white women were the majority of the new industrial work force, especially in the textile factories. They were super-exploited and subject to inhuman conditions. This was an important source of early capitalist accumulation. Upper and middle class white women were subject to other forms of oppression. They were denied property, legal, political, and educational rights. The reality of all these forms of oppression was the basis for women's leading role in the social movements of the 19th century. But the sharp difference between the situations of white women and Black women in the 18th and 19th centuries is clear.

It was also the labor of Black women and men as slaves that provided the basis for much of the early capitalist accumulation in this country and around the world. It was combined in the US with the land and labor stolen from Native Americans, Mexicans, and later externally from Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. Black women as reproducers of a slave labor force were bought and sold according to their "breeding" capacity. Black slave families were deliberately torn apart to break down their resistance to slavery. Black women were raped and sexually assaulted as a form of terrorist counter-insurgency. In resistance to all these forms of oppression, Black women played a leading role in the struggle of the slave community. In the slave quarters outside the watchful eye of the overseer, and in the master's house where slave women often held positions of trust, they led in sabotage, insurgency and the beginning of Black women's leadership in the fight of their people against oppression in this country.

HARRIET TUBMAN, c. 1822-1913

Born a slave in Maryland.

Escaped to the North in 1849.

Worked as a cook and laundress to finance and carry out fifteen missions to the South to conduct other slaves North on the "Underground Railroad."

Planned with John Brown the raid on Harper's Ferry.

Spy and scout for the Union forces.

Confederacy offered "10,000 for her capture."

Was refused a full pension because she was a Black woman.

Called "Moses" and "General Tubman" by Black people.



Slavery was actually declining when the invention of the cotton gin and the world boom in cotton textiles gave it new life. Plantation cotton culture exhausted the soil rapidly. It was expand or die for the slave economy which included not only the plantations of the South but also the textile mills of the North (many in England, too) and those who jobbed in food and tools and animals for the plantations; the shipping and the necessary transportation involved were also important.

The expansion of the slave economy to the West and the Southwest encountered obstacles. There was the existence of Northern Mexico: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California. In the North there was the combination of homesteaders, capitalist agriculture and processing, and the manufacture and sale of consumer goods based upon the internal market which clashed with the interest of those tied directly to slavery. Another obstacle was the presence and resistance of Native Americans living in the Middle West.

The first obstruction was met by the "rebellion" of Texas and its absorption by the US, followed by war with Mexico and grabbing the Southwest and California. The next obstacle was met by determined efforts of the South and its Northern allies to control the Federal government and guarantee the future by seeing to it that new states be admitted to the union as slave states. This came to be called the "irrepressible conflict." On the surface it was never about slavery as such, but about expansion of the slavery-based part of the capitalist economy versus the expansion of that part which was based more upon "free" land (seized from Native Americans and Mexico), "free" labor, and free capital. The North was ultimately stronger. Not only was it more productive, in the last resort it had the grudging support of free labor and the energetic assistance of the Black slaves.

The fight against slavery as such was engendered and sustained first of all by the slaves themselves as the only class with a clear and conscious motivation for the fierce and long and costly struggle.

The "free" workers of the North and South were held back and degraded by being part of a slave-based economy and a slave-owning nation. Yet their special privilege and superior social status as whites, miserable though it might be, when combined with dreams of future free land and glorious continental expansion to the West, worked to retard proletarian class and revolutionary consciousness and organization, although there were some small beginnings. As a result, the working class entered the Civil War not as a consciously revolu-

tionary class acting in unity with rebelling slaves, but as partly reluctant allies of a capitalist class which was consciously preparing conditions for its own further and more rapid expansion.

There was within the dominant white nation a whole organized force of largely middle-class based women, intellectuals, farmers, etc. who supported the initiative of free Blacks and escaped slaves like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman and went on to create both the abolitionists and also the women's movements. From Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Grimke sisters to Garrison and John Brown they fought valiantly.

Through the efforts of slaves and many white allies, South and North, the Civil War and Reconstruction became the high point of principled and massive revolutionary class struggle of US history to date. Nevertheless, the expanding capitalists of the North—now very consciously become empire builders—joined forces with the defeated slave-owners to carry out counter-revolution in the South by terror, demagoguery, and maneuver. The leadership (populist) of the white allies of the freed Blacks now deserted. Black leaders were whipped and lynched and some were bought over.

The way was then open for capitalist exploitation of the entire continental US. The color line which had been perilously threatened in the South by Reconstruction was restored stronger than ever and driven through the entire country—against Mexicans, Native Americans and Asians as well as Blacks. This period was especially marked by genocidal wars against Native Americans and by the heroic resistance of the Indian nations. The US made and broke treaties, whichever suited it best. The US seized Indian land and resources and confined Native Americans to reservation concentration camps by starvation and by force.

Mexican small land-holders were robbed of their land and turned into farm and ranch hands and railroad and mine laborers. Chinese were also imported as railroad and mine and lumber camp laborers.

With the building of the transcontinental railroads, the land and timber and mining operations of the robber barons and the coming of the great trusts and finance capital and monopoly, the labor movement also grew and fought fierce and militant battles. Labor developed as a class and even as an anti-capitalist movement with beginnings of Socialist consciousness. The Knights of Labor, the Ancient Brotherhood of Hibernians (Molly Maguires), even early AFL unions that engaged in the struggle for the 8

hour day had anti-capitalist, pro-socialist provisions in their first constitutions and by-laws. Class conscious workers recruited in Europe by agents for the US labor market contributed to this.

But the white supremacy and chauvinism rooted in slavery and in the counter-revolution and continental expansion maintained its grip. When Blacks were forced off the land in the South, many came North to seek jobs in industry. They not only got the worst, lowest-paid and most insecure jobs, they were often used as scabs to replace white workers. Instead of helping Blacks to organize, white workers were often led into race riots and attacks. (Which had happened earlier in anti-draft riots during the Civil War, as in NY, etc.).

Blacks were either excluded from the unions or at best enrolled in second-class Jim Crow locals. There was also a split between a large part of the women's movement and the former abolitionists. The middle-class part of the women's leadership turned more and more to suffrage as the main issue and separated themselves from the needs and company of Black women.

The first half of the 19th century was a high point for women's struggles in the US. Scorned in the Declaration of Independence (mentioned only as victims of the "merciless savages," as Thomas Jefferson called Native Americans), denied legal and political rights, driven into exploitative social production in the early textile factories, white women rebelled. In the 1820's and 1830's white working class women led some of the first struggles for higher wages, decent working conditions, the 10-hour day, and forms of labor organization (such as the Female Labor Reform Association in the textile town of Lowell, Mass.). At the same time petit-bourgeois and some bourgeois white women took a leading role in the Abolition movement, where they found that their oppression as women restricted their ability to struggle for the freedom of Black slaves. Abolitionists like Lucy Stone and the Grimke sisters began to question the institutions that kept them powerless — marriage, the laws, the education system, voting rights — and began to struggle for women's rights as well as Black freedom from slavery. The pre-Civil War women's movement, while riddled with national and class contradictions from the start, was a broad social movement linking the issues of women's, Black and workers' rights.

Black women, who had been part of the struggle for Black freedom since they were brought to this country, led in uniting the Black struggle and the women's movement.

Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman fought to clarify the situation of Black women in the Black and women's struggles. Black men like Frederick Douglass were strong supporters of the women's movement.

At the time of this beginning alliance of national, class and women's struggles the white women's movement lacked a solid political grasp of the relationship between their struggle and the struggle of Black people. Absent in the early white women's movement was also a political base among white immigrant women. As well, this movement did not understand the importance of building a movement based on the needs of the most oppressed.

During the Civil War, white women threw their energies into the war effort, bringing a halt to the white women's movement. The National Women's Loyal League, including Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone in the leadership, collected 400,000 signatures in support of the 13th Amendment (for abolition), and passed a resolution calling for equal rights for women and Black people. The feminists, having struggled hard for emancipation, expected to be rewarded for their labor by being included in suffrage legislation.

But the 14th Amendment, proposed in 1866, was explicitly limited to male citizens. White feminists were horrified by the blatant disregard of their rights. After the Civil War, most of the white women's leaders capitulated to the calculated divisiveness of the 14th and 15th Amendments as drafted by the controlling forces of the Republican Party. These women opposed the amendments which guaranteed certain rights to Black people, including the right of Black men to vote, because the amendments did not grant suffrage to women. While Black women and men argued that passage of the 14th and 15 Amendments were an absolutely necessary first step in the equal rights struggle, white suffragists strenuously opposed these arguments with explicitly racist positions.

The 15th Amendment was a legislative effort to outlaw racial discrimination at the voting polls. The suffrage movement's position against the 15th Amendment was summed up by Elizabeth Stanton when she said "... are you willing to have the colored man enfranchised before the women; I say no: I would not trust him with my rights; degraded, oppressed himself; he would be more despotic with the governing power than ever our Saxon rulers are ... If women are still to be represented by men, then I say let only the highest type of manhood stand at the helm of State."

After this defeat for international solidarity, white women, led in particular by the National

Woman's Suffrage Association waged a campaign for women's rights to vote on the grounds that white women needed the vote in order to keep oppressed peoples and immigrant working class people out of power. White suffragists argued for the vote to insure a white American-born majority at the polls. The broad social scope of the early women's movement narrowed to a single-issue campaign for the right of women to the vote, and in doing so betrayed the national struggles of Black and other oppressed peoples. By abandoning the national struggles of Black and other oppressed peoples the early white women's movement also sold out the class interests of working women at the same time.

Black women continued to play a leading role in the struggles of their people throughout the Civil war, during Reconstruction, and after its liquidation. Ida Wells Barnett led a national movement against lynching and helped form the National Association of Colored Women to fight attacks on Black people. Despite continued Black efforts to involve them, white women did not take up the struggle against lynching until the 1930's when they did so under the leadership of Communist women.

The early 20th century labor movement offered opportunities for unified action and struggle by Black and white women although few Black women entered industrial employment until after World War I. Even so the uprising of 30,000 shirtwaist makers in New York City in 1909 was sparked when 53 Black women walked off the job.

The AFL, which was organized in the second half of the 19th century on a narrow craft, white and male supremacist basis, ignored the struggles of working women or tried to divide women from different nationalities. The AFL tried to sabotage the victory of workers in the great textile strike of 1912 in Lawrence, Mass.

Because the AFL perpetuated white supremacist, male supremacist and labor aristocratic forms of organization, white working class women allied with petit bourgeois women to organize unorganized working class women starting as early as 1903 with the Women's Trade Union League and have continued in similar forms to the present. These organizations have had some of the broad social vision of the earlier women's movement, but have tended to narrow reformist trade union consciousness and national chauvinism. Recent organizations such as the Coalition of Labor Union Women are opportunist attempts by the AFL-CIO to coopt and contain women's struggle within trade unionism.

A World-wide economic crisis commenced in 1929. The CP-US led unemployed and social

security struggles and labor organizing drives. It also conducted vigorous anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist propaganda and education. The early and middle 30's were a period of growth in working-class revolutionary consciousness and organizing. These struggles prepared the way for organizing the workers of the basic industries by the CIO.

The CIO was relatively progressive in terms of solidarity. It combated racism and sexism in some degree to facilitate its organizing drives. It was generally open to membership of all workers. But only token leadership positions (and no real power) were open to non-whites and women. Nevertheless, millions of women struggled in the 30's and 40's first around unemployment and relief, then around organizing into unions, on defense committees to aid families of the victims of the struggle and of the capitalist courts, against the Scotsborough frame-up. Women were active in defense of Republican Spain against fascist attack. Communist women gave leadership in many of these early battles and numbers of them became well known mass organizers and leaders.

During World War II, when women were called out of the reserve army of labor to fill jobs vacated by men in the military, unions tolerated the influx of women. Even so, they made no special effort to organize them, seeing them chiefly as dues payers. Internal discrimination against the women war workers was widely practiced. After the War, the trade unions joined with the employers to drive women workers out of industrial jobs back into traditional "women's jobs," into the reserve army of labor, or back into the home.

A solid anti-white supremacist base among women in the labor force has not yet been built.

The post-war expansion of clerical work has been almost entirely ignored by the trade union movement, even at the cost of a declining percentage of union members in the labor force. Since the 1960's, women in public employment have been organized to some extent, but the organization of private clerical workers is still in its infancy. White women have begun to struggle for union organization, in part following the leadership of Third World women in the farm worker, hospital worker and textile worker struggles in particular.

A Note on the Left and the Women's Movement

The revolutionary left generally did not adequately grasp the political importance of the oppression of women, male supremacy and male chauvinism. The Socialist Party, the CPUSA, and especially the IWW in its earlier days, had some strong women members and leaders, but

almost always reduced the question of women to a class question narrowly defined in terms of wage labor. Women's oppression in the family, the imperialist function of the institutions of male supremacy, and the impact of male chauvinism in the society and on the Left were taken seriously only partially and exceptionally for short periods. Even so, individual socialist and communist women exerted leadership in the struggles of women for union organization and in community organizations of tenants, the unemployed, etc.

Though there have been strong currents of internationalism and even of revolutionary Marxism and much militancy in the US class struggle, these have failed to overcome opportunist and chauvinist tendencies and leadership. This has continued to be the case except for some relatively short-lived periods of greater solidarity.

US capitalism went on to consolidate its continental power and reached the stage of monopoly-capital-imperialism in the 1890's. At this point US capital made war against the independence of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. With typical deception, this was called the "Spanish-American War." At first US labor opposed this war on class and anti-colonial and anti-war grounds. But the capitalist/imperialists manipulated unemployment, promised loot and jobs and promoted fierce white supremacy to bring Gompers and most of the AFL around to their way of doing things.

Puerto Rico and the Philippines were seized outright and Cuba was made a US "protectorate," a semi-colony. Workers from all three islands were brought to the US as laborers, where they were subject to extreme oppression and racist attacks. The US used the Philippines as a base to participate in "opening" China to the extortions, rape and control of all the imperialist nations from Britain to Belgium and Portugal.

A decade later, the official labor movement also largely supported imperialist World War I except for part of the Socialist Party (Eugene Debs, Chas. Reuthenberg) and much of the anarcho-syndicalist and insurgent IWW.

As a result of World War I, the Russian Revolution and the upsurge of anti-colonial and national liberation movements outlined above, the internal situation in the US changed as well. There was tremendous working class enthusiasm for the first workers' government, for Lenin and the Bolsheviks. A movement developed in the unions for recognition of the Soviets, for amalgamation of craft unions, for a labor party.



IWW women lead New York City support demonstration for striking Patterson, NJ silkworkers. 1913.

Drives were made to organize the basic industries in packing house and steel. A Communist Party was organized. The ruling class panicked and struck back with the Palmer raids, hauling in 9-14 thousand alleged communists overnight. Leading those raids got J. Edgar Hoover his lifetime FBI job.

As a result of the internationalist politics of the Communists and the impact of socialist revolution and the world-wide economic crisis of capitalism, national liberation struggles also greatly increased between World Wars I and II in Africa, in the Caribbean, and among US Blacks as well as in the colonial world in general.

Pushed by the Communist International and Lenin and Stalin, the then mainly white and foreign-born CPUSA turned its efforts toward both the native-born white workers and the issues of Black national oppression by the US and to combatting white supremacy and national chauvinism among whites.

Thus the CPUSA developed a positive position and practice of struggle against white supremacy, for recognition of Black people as a nation, and for support for self-determination of what they then called the Negro nation and Negro liberation. The CP also tried and publicly expelled a white member for acts of white chauvinism.

This was a totally new level of struggle in the working class movement of the dominant oppressor nation of the US. It led to historic changes in the attitudes of much of the US left and to many united struggles of Black and white workers and other progressive forces such as the Scottsboro case, tenant farmers' and sharecroppers' struggles in the South, organizing drives among agricultural workers, maritime workers, civil rights struggles, unemployed and welfare, against police brutality, etc.

During this period the CP was honored by many Black people and cursed by their enemies as the "party of the Negro people."

In 1929, when the entire US was shaken by the world economic crisis, the CP organized and led unemployed and social security struggles and labor organizing drives as well as vigorous anti-capitalist revolutionary and anti-imperialist propaganda and education. The early and middle 30's were a period of growth of working class and anti-capitalist revolutionary and anti-imperialist consciousness and organizing. This also laid the foundations for organization of workers in basic industry via the CIO.

The CIO was comparatively progressive on issues of solidarity, seeking to combat racism and sexism in some degree as an organizing strategy. It was generally open to membership of all workers. But only token leadership positions were open for non-whites and women. Nevertheless, millions of women struggled in the 30's and 40's, first around unemployment and welfare, then around organizing into unions, on defense committees to aid families of victims of the struggle and the courts, still later in movements to defend Republican Spain from fascist attack as well as in union activities. The CP had its most active, though still limited, period of attention to women's struggles, and consequently many CP women became well known communists.

Fascism came to power in Italy and Germany threatening the Soviet Union as well as capitalist rivals. This period also brought into existence a world-wide united front against fascism. One expression of the international solidarity which developed then was the Abraham Lincoln Brigade of anti-fascists from the US



Women played a leading role in the struggles of the 1930's, in the workplace, unemployed, and tenants', among farmworkers, and as shown above, against the state.

who fought Franco's armies in Spain. Communists formed the core of the Brigade.

But with the cross-class coalitions and alliances against German, Italian and Japanese imperialism/fascism, the CPUSA began to sacrifice more and more of its revolutionary principles to maintain its "everything to defeat fascism" strategy. This led to the CP defining Franklin D. Roosevelt as a progressive world hero and hiding the truth that the US imperialists are deadly enemies of the world peoples in spite of any temporary alliance that they formed with the socialist USSR against a common military opponent.

Opportunism, revisionism, and white and male supremacy came to dominate the CPUSA. Earl Browder led in liquidating the theoretical and practical struggles for Black liberation. He now denied the Black nation, claiming that Black people had "chosen integration." All whites had to do was oppose a few "racist prejudices." This is a main source of many "anti-racist" theories still going around. Having thus

prepared the way, Browder then liquidated the CP in the South and eventually in the whole country.

As a basis for liquidating the CP itself, Browder promoted a theory of peaceful and gradual transformation of capitalism into a progressive system. He denounced the "old books," those of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao Tse-Tung. This "made in the US" version of revisionism preceeded that of Khrushchov, who borrowed much of his modern revisionism from Browder. After World War II, the CPUSA repudiated Browder, but it never made it back to revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. Undermined by its own opportunism and desertion of the struggles of Black people, the CPUSA succumbed to the blows of the cold war and anti-communist repression. It was an easy victim to US world expansion, labor movement opportunism, and Khrushchov's cowardly revisionism . . . expressed in anti-China attacks, pro-

Israel concessions to Zionism, failure to defend the Rosenbergs until too late, capitulating to Murray-Reuther in the CIO, supporting unprincipled mergers and even anti-communism.

There have always been forces on the left to fight for internationalism and for revolutionary conduct. But the expanding US empire has always found opportunists and revisionists in our ranks to betray and prevent our forward motion. On a world scale it has been otherwise. In spite of setbacks and defeats, revolution breaks through in ever new areas. On the whole it is empire in general and the US in particular which becomes ever weaker and more desperate. Every major crisis — China, Cuba, Korea, Viet Nam, the Middle East, and Africa — ends with the enemy weaker and revolution stronger. This objective fact of crisis of empire and revolutionary victory world-wide gives assurance that our own future also lies in revolution: we turn away from the past of empire toward the future of the peoples.

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION AND LIBERATION

Anti-Imperialism and Women's Liberation — A Note

The history of class society is also the history of women's oppression — the enforced supremacy of one half the world's people over the other half. Yet the struggle for women's liberation has consistently been suppressed or ignored by the male dominated white left in the US. It was the mass women's movement of the '60's, a powerful anti-imperialist force, which forged consciousness of the reality of women's oppression among millions of people in this country as well as among the left.

But the acknowledgment of this reality is a far cry from a full grasp of and a commitment to the struggle for women's liberation as a necessary part of the revolutionary movement. Our task now is to develop an analysis of women's oppression which is rooted in an understanding of the imperialist system as a whole. This is the basis for building a self-consciously anti-imperialist movement of women within the oppressor nation. It involves exposing the operation of white supremacy among white women and the critical differences between women's oppression in oppressor and oppressed nations. It means identifying and attacking the pervasive practices and institutions of male supremacy wherever we find them.

This section, written by women of the oppressor nation in the US, deals primarily with what we know most about — the situation and

conditions of white women under imperialism. All too often white women have written about our own experience and labeled it the experience of all women. This is national chauvinist and masks the critical distinctions between women of oppressor and oppressed nations. It holds back the possibilities of building principled, political relationships with Third World women. In this section we attempt to analyze some of these critical distinctions and how white women have related to these differences historically. Because of the national chauvinism of the white women's movement, our knowledge and understanding of Third World sister's experience is very limited at this point. It is our political responsibility to study and learn from Third World sisters, to support their struggles for liberation as part of our fight against white supremacy among white women.

The fight for women's liberation is a central part of the revolutionary struggle in the US. A correct line on women is a necessary basis for building a communist party in the oppressor nation. We are committed to building a party which recognizes the centrality of women's liberation and to building a women's movement based on internationalist politics.

INTRODUCTION — OUR POSITION

The oppression of women within oppressed and oppressor nations is a pillar of the imperialist system. Women's labor — waged

and unwaged—is directly and indirectly profitable and socially valuable to imperialism.

Because the principal contradiction of imperialism is between oppressor and oppressed nations, the nature of women's oppression is determined by their position in oppressor and oppressed nations and has different content for white and Third World women in the US.

The historical basis for the oppression of women throughout class society has been rooted in women's role as the reproducers, socializers and maintainers of the labor force. Under imperialism, women's oppression has become defined within the framework of their double function: as unwaged reproducers, socializers and maintainers of the labor force in the home; and as super exploited members of the wage labor force, primarily in the reserve army of labor. These oppressive functions are maintained and reinforced by male supremacist institutions, ideology and privilege which extend into every area of women's lives: political, social, cultural, psychological, and sexual.

The ways that Third World women are oppressed by male supremacy is defined by their position in an oppressed nation. Third World women reproduce a nationally oppressed labor force, they are the subjects of the imperialists' genocidal attacks on oppressed peoples through forced sterilization, they are the most superexploited sector of the wage labor force.

On the other hand, white women share in the relative power and privilege accorded to all white people in a white supremacist society. While white women are oppressed as women and the great majority are oppressed as part of the working class, their complicity with the institutions of white supremacy and the ideology of national chauvinism remains the most formidable obstacle to the development of international women's solidarity and the revolutionary movement of women within the oppressor nation.

Within the oppressor nation white working class women benefit the least from the privileges of white supremacy. This situation of white working class women under imperialism



SOJOURNER TRUTH

"That man over there say that a woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me a best place... And aint I a woman? Look at me. Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me... And aint I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it, and bear the lash as well... And aint I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen them most all sold off into slavery. And when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard... And aint I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth: Speech before the Woman's Rights Convention at Akron, Ohio in 1851.

gives them the potential to lead in the fight against white supremacy and male supremacy. The common aspects of all women's oppression under imperialism as reproducers of the labor force, as participants in the reserve army of labor and as victims of male supremacist institutions and ideology provides a special basis for the development of solidarity between women of oppressor and oppressed nations. Based on a firm commitment to uphold self-determination for oppressed nations, white working class women can lead in the development of international solidarity and revolutionary movement within the oppressor nation working class.

The system of male supremacy is an enemy to the liberation of all oppressed peoples. It institutionalizes economic, legal, political, psychological and sexual privileges for men and facilitates women's oppression, national oppression and class exploitation. It is one of the major props of empire within the oppressor nation working class. Male supremacy bribes men with privileges to enlist their support in the suppression of women. It creates one of the strongest material divisions within the working class and must be destroyed for women to be liberated and to develop a unified class struggle against imperialism.

For too long the revolutionary movement in the oppressor nation has refused to understand that it must take up the struggle for women's liberation and against male supremacy or fail to attack one of the strongest bulwarks of imperialism. Within the oppressor nation the struggle for women's liberation is a basic part of the struggle for socialist revolution and a new political order which will eliminate the material basis for all forms of oppression and exploitation.

II HISTORICAL ROOTS OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION

Women's oppression is as old as class society. We must take a historical view of the transformations of that oppression to understand its specific nature and functions under imperialism.

The first division of labor was sexual, based on women's reproductive and nurturing function. Women's role in production and reproduction centered about the home, in caring for children, domestic production and agriculture. Before class society, the importance of women's role in reproduction was often recognized in the institution of mother right which defined descent and inheritance through the mother. Men's labor role was mainly as hunters and gatherers of food away from home and their

social status in the community was not at the expense of women.

The capacity to produce surplus beyond the needs of immediate survival created the basis for private accumulation and private property and, therefore, for economic inequality and for emergence of a ruling class. Inheritance gained a new importance. Men could not assure the continuity of their surplus product or property under mother right. The system of mother right was overthrown and patrilineal descent and the patriarchal family were established. Women's oppression thus became rooted in the need to control women's reproductive function to serve class interests — the continuity of (male) property over generations. Sexual restrictions on women — virginity, monogamy, fidelity, heterosexuality — insured paternity and tied women's sexuality to the reproductive function. Legal (male) authority and ideological domination grew to maintain and legitimize women's powerlessness. While these male supremacist institutions determined the position of women in all classes of society and gave privilege to men of all classes, they ultimately served the class interests of the propertied, ruling class, as they continue to do to this day.

III CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

Before the development of capitalism, women's role in production and reproduction among the lower classes was located within the family. The feudal family was the unit of production in agriculture. Women worked in agriculture and in the production of goods for family use. As capitalist forms of production developed — commodity production and the sale of labor power as a commodity — the home and labor market became divided. The value of labor power came to be defined by its price in the labor market, and labor in the home, having no sale value, became devalued, and in market terms, invisible.

Capitalist development rested on and fostered expansion: the conquest of lands and peoples. The particularities of women's oppression came to be determined by whether they were part of a conquering or conquered people. In the US, a country built on conquest, this differentiation has defined the major outlines of the history of women's oppression. Women who came to this country from Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries as bond servants were miserably exploited but they were able to earn their way to freedom. On the other hand, Black African women kidnapped from their countries were consigned to permanent servitude as were their children. Many white women shared the benefits of their husbands' ownership and development of land and resources

forcibly taken from the Native American peoples. They reproduced the 'free' laborers who, since the first settlements, derived privileges from being part of the dominant economy, society and culture.

The development of the US as a capitalist economy and an oppressor nation was also based on the male supremacist exploitation of working class women. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries white working class women and their children were the mainstay of the new industrial work force, particularly in the textile industries. Their exploitation under inhuman working conditions was an important factor in early capitalist accumulation. White women of the upper and middle classes were denied property, political, legal and educational rights. These different forms of male supremacist exploitation and oppression laid the basis for white women's leading roles in the social movements of the 19th century for abolition, women's rights and labor reform.

But the sharp difference between the situation of white women and Black women in the 18th and 19th centuries is clear. Black women bound in slavery were subject to singularly brutal forms of oppression, along with Black men and children. The labor of Black women and men as slaves provided the basis for much of the primitive capitalist accumulation in this country and around the world. It was combined in the US with the land and labor stolen from Native Americans, Mexicans, and later externally from Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines. Black women, reproducers of a slave labor force, were bought and sold for their 'breeding' capacity. Black slave families were deliberately torn apart to breakdown their resistance to slavery. Black women were raped and sexually assaulted as a form of terrorist counter-insurgency. In spite of all these forms of oppression, Black women played a leading role in the resistance of the slave community. In the slave quarters outside the watchful eye of the overseer, and in the masters' house where slave women often held positions of trust, they led in sabotage, insurgency and the building of a culture of resistance among Black people. This was just the beginning of Black women's leadership in the fight of their people against oppression in this country.

IV STRUCTURE OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION UNDER IMPERIALISM: The Double Shift

The transformation of the US from earlier capitalism to a monopoly capitalist/imperialist economy and society transformed women's oppression and its relation to the economic political and social institutions of white supremacist/male supremacist class society. The

production of goods for family consumption became incorporated into the market structures of expanding monopoly capitalism/imperialism. Women's labor in the home lost the last remains of its directly visible economic function and value. Women's work began to take on its present dual nature: as unwaged reproducers, maintainers and socializers of the labor force in the home and as participants in the labor force primarily as members of the reserve army of labor, but increasingly as superexploited members of the regular labor force with consistently low wages, segregated occupations and limits to advancement. The exact character of the economic function of women's labor changes as part of the developing contradictions of imperialism, but it remains a double function that acts as a double bind on women. Women's primary role is defined as her work in the home. This role is used to justify women's superexploited, transient position in the labor force: women "don't have to work" or they aren't reliable workers due to their home responsibilities. On the other hand, the difficulty women have in finding jobs, their low wages and awful job conditions force them into marriage in order to survive where they can be used as unwaged reproducers of the labor force in addition to holding down a low paying job. This is women's double shift.

The maintenance and reproduction of the labor force is essential to imperialism. Women in the home perform this crucial function by giving birth, nursing, feeding, clothing, training and comforting current and future generations of workers. (Women of the bourgeois class raise future rulers). This function is justified ideologically by women's biological role in child bearing. The work of maintaining the labor force is made to seem like a natural, inseparable extension of women's biological function, a private service she does for her husband, although in reality it is an invaluable service to the imperialist system. The nature of women's labor in the home, as individualized, isolated, domestic labor is one of the blocks to development by women of a collective consciousness of their own social function.

One of the most critical parts of women's work in the home is the socialization of children. With the development of imperialist society the state has increasingly taken on a role in socialization through public education, the media, etc. to ensure a labor force which will serve its needs. But women as mothers (and as teachers and childcare workers) still hold major responsibility for raising children who will function in an imperialist society and for transmitting bourgeois norms, values and attitudes.

Male supremacist institutions like schools,

the media and the welfare system enforce women's role in raising children. Men as husbands and fathers help ensure the role through the economic, psychological and physical power that they exercise over women and children in the family. Bourgeois ideology perpetuates the myth that mothers are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of their children. The contradictions and frustrations in women's role as mothers under imperialism are overwhelming. Women put an enormous amount of their lives and energy into their children and understandably do feel a stake in their children's successful function in society. But their ability to really shape their children's futures is extremely limited. The relationships between women and children are mutilated by all the institutions of imperialism. When mothers do try to instill revolutionary, human values in their children both the children and mothers face severe repression.

Women's function in reproducing the labor force is qualitatively different for women of oppressor and oppressed nations. White women have the responsibility to raise a stable, oppressor nation working class which involves inculcating their children with national chauvinism, male chauvinism and the expectations of certain privileges. Although some have refused this role and led the fight for anti-white supremacist consciousness within the oppressor nation, the stake white women have in white supremacist privilege for themselves and their children has served to block the struggle against national oppression and women's oppression.

On the other side, Black, Mexican, Chicano, Native American, Puerto Rican and Asian women are supposed to raise children who accept all forms of national oppression including chronic unemployment and genocide. They have consistently rebelled against this role as perpetrators of their people's oppression and have helped raise generations of revolutionaries. They have fought for the survival of their peoples against genocidal forced sterilization programs, racist schools, health care and housing.

V WAGE LABOR

Imperialism shapes the character of women's labor in the home. The most important change in the nature of women's oppression brought about by imperialism is the development of the double shift. Besides the traditional social function of reproducing, socializing, and maintaining labor power in the home, working class women are increasingly pressed into the reserve army of wage labor (of which oppressed nationalities are the major part). Working class

women of both oppressor and oppressed nations are shifted in and out of jobs as the labor market expands and contracts. Within the labor force women work in sexually segregated jobs with lower wages and lower status than those of men. The material and ideological justification for women's exploitation in the reserve army is the other side of the double shift: their oppression in the home. Women are seen as the second, unessential wage earner. Their reliability on the job is questioned by their essential home responsibilities, although holding a job has become a necessary part of their family responsibilities for growing numbers of women. Women are an ideal constituency for the reserve labor force because they are relatively invisible as unemployed people: their defined social role is to be unemployed in the home. Whether or not they are actually performing two jobs at a given time, the situation of all women is shaped by the existence of the double shift.

The double shift has always come down harder on women of oppressed nations. The position of both Third World women and men as part of the reserve labor force has made chronic unemployment and low wages an important aspect of national oppression under imperialism. TW women have had to work for wages to insure the survival of themselves and their families. Within the labor market they suffer national oppression and women's oppression, holding the lowest paying, lowest status jobs with least job security in the entire society.

Within the oppressor nation the principle differentiating factor among women is their class position. Most white women are part of the working class and both they and their husbands work for wages for a large part of their lives. Women of the bourgeois class work because they want to, if at all. It is in their class interests to maintain the oppression and exploitation of working class and Third World women. However, the institutionalization of male supremacy in imperialist society means that women of all classes experience some forms of oppression as women. This means that there is some material basis for petit bourgeois women and some bourgeois women to give up their class power in the interests of fighting the male supremacist imperialist system. It provides the possibility of building a cross-class women's movement against imperialism within the oppressor nation under conditions where there is working class women's leadership for internationalist, proletarian politics. (We recognize the need to develop a much fuller class analysis of the forces for and against revolution among women in this country.)

VI THE FAMILY IN BOURGEOIS SOCIETY

The family is a core institution of imperialism, an institution which facilitates women's oppression, national oppression and class exploitation. Its different forms in the history of class society have been hidden by bourgeois ideology which depicts the family as a 'natural' social grouping rather than an economic and social institution. Under imperialism the structure and function of the family is very different within oppressor and oppressed nations.

Within the oppressor nation the family is defined by the bourgeois marriage contract. The bourgeois institution of marriage was set up to assure ruling class men paternity rights and to pass property to the next generation. It gives the state legal control over relations between women and men, helping to insure that sexuality will serve the function of reproducing the labor force. Women's legal rights are severely abridged by the marriage contract and domestic work and sexual intercourse are legally mandated. Marriage is a key form of imperialist control of women which institutionalizes forms of power for individual men over women.

The bourgeois family functions to maintain the double shift. It enforces women's role as socializers of the labor force through its nuclear, isolated structures which breed dependence, individualism, and conservatism among women. Nuclear families also lay a basis for competition, division and individualism among the white working class as a whole. As a consumption unit, the family is a major market for imperialist goods.

The oppressor nation family is a corner-stone of social roles in imperialist society. The father typically has control and authority because of his economic and physical power. The mother is forced to be dependent and to act as a shock absorber — an emotional and physical support for men. The traditional and legal sanctions of male violence against women keep women vulnerable and subservient to individual men and through them to the imperialist system as a whole.

The privilege and power which men gain from their socially sanctioned position in the family form one of their strongest ties to male supremacist society. The exposure of and fight against these privileges as reactionary are key in enabling women to take up the struggle for liberation and for winning men to solidarity with women's struggles.

Children are largely powerless in the family and in the society, being dependent on their parents for survival. As future generation of

workers they are taught early the lessons of powerlessness and the society's system of rewards and punishments. They are taught to compete among each other for their parents' approval and they are taught to expect the privileges of white and male supremacy within the family and in the world outside. Women directly provide children with most of their physical and emotional needs. Under the constant distorting pressure of imperialist society, this is an extremely difficult task and women sometimes end up using children as outlets for their anger against their own oppression.

As revolutionaries we must remember that children are the future of the revolution. Our dedication to the struggle for women's liberation and the liberation of all peoples must involve the collective responsibility for raising children who will fight to overturn all forms of imperialist oppression.

Within the oppressor nation, the nuclear family enforces women's oppression, children's oppression, white supremacy, male supremacy and helps to maintain a divided working class. In its present form it is reactionary. We must lead in fighting against the violent and oppressive features of the bourgeois nuclear family and join in day to day struggles for survival and for solutions of immediate problems.

Within the oppressed nations, the family has historically played a very different role. The imperialists have consistently tried to destroy oppressed nation families to prevent the development of stable bases for resistance to oppression. Black families have been subject to ferocious attacks ever since African people were brought to this country. During slavery families were forcibly separated. Since the Civil War, Black families have been continually undermined by chronic unemployment and forced separation in order to find work. They have been attacked by the structures of the welfare system and ideologically assaulted by bourgeois sociological theories such as the Moynihan report. However, Black people have developed social groupings such as extended families in defiance of these attacks.

Puerto Rican and Mexican families have also been split apart through forced immigration. Asian immigrants were required to leave their families to work in the US when Asian women were refused entry to the US with their husbands. Native American families have been attacked by the removal of their children from the reservations to attend schools which are set up to destroy their national identity. Resistance to this forcible destruction has been an important part of national liberation struggles.

The efforts of Third World people to build stable family structures in the face of imperialist attack are an important part of their struggle for economic, emotional and political survival. The national movements provide examples of political responsibility for children and youth, including schools and political collectives for young people. Third World women have taken up the struggle against male supremacy as a part of their peoples' struggle for liberation. It is important for white women to respect their right and capacity to wage this struggle on their own terms.

VII MALE SUPREMACIST INSTITUTIONS

The family is embedded in a whole network of imperialist institutions which reinforce its function. The laws, the courts, prisons, armed forces, mental institutions, the media, the church, education, health and fashion are all institutions which promote male privilege and the pervasive ideology of male chauvinism and aid in the control of women in imperialist society. Bourgeois ideology represents these institutions as neutral democratic institutions but they all serve the interests of the imperialist ruling class in maintaining women's oppression, national oppression and class exploitation.

The public schools train women to be homemakers and typists, discourage them from being as intelligent as men, encourage passivity and confirm the division of labor according to sex. Mental institutions and prisons lock up angry, rebellious women as a threat to all women who might "step out of line." Health care institutions use women as markets for drugs and as subjects for experimentation. The welfare system seeks to control women who are raising children by themselves and to substitute for the controlling power of a husband. All these institutions also serve to uphold white supremacy and affect Black, Mexican, Chicana, Native American, Puerto Rican and Asian women in different, much more oppressive ways than white women.

Through all these institutions, violence and repression is brought to bear on women. Outside the official violence of the state, there is the state condoned violence which individual men exert over women. Violence in the home is consistently ignored by the police because it is a "family matter."

Rape is a sexual institution used to terrorize and control women through sexual violence. Rape is a legalized part of the marriage contract. Rape is encouraged by TV, movies and books and is commonly seen as a natural extension of male biology. The possibility of rape threatens all women, limits their activities

and keeps them dependent on men for protection against other men.

Rape has also been used specifically as an instrument of national oppression against Third World women and men. Rape was publically promoted as a weapon of terror in Viet Nam. Rape was used deliberately against Black women as slaves, and subsequently throughout the history of this country, as a counter-insurgency tactics. Frame-ups of Black men on rape charges involving white women have historically been one of the heaviest weapons of social control meant to terrorize and intimidate Black men and women.

In a male supremacist society all men derive economic, legal, political, psychological, physical and sexual power and privilege over women. Male supremacy gives all men some stake in women's oppression. This is no flimsy "bad attitude" but a real material incentive to support the imperialist control of women. Struggle against women's oppression must involve exposing and fighting the operation of individual male privilege on jobs, in sexual relations, in relationship to children, in political work or it will fail to confront the material reality of women's oppression. Male supremacy is one of the chief competitive structures the imperialists have used to maintain divisions within the working class of the oppressor nation. No unified or successful revolutionary movement can be built which does not attack one of the strongest bulwarks of imperialism — women's oppression and male supremacy.

Men of oppressed nations also gain privileges as men within a male supremacist society although they take different forms and are extremely limited compared to those of white men. These limited privileges serve imperialism by enlisting the aid of Third World men in maintaining Third World women's oppression. They impede the development of unified national struggle. National liberation struggles around the world and in this country have taken up the struggle against women's oppression as an integral part of the struggle against imperialism.

VIII. MALE CHAUVINISM

Male chauvinism is the ideology which reflects and reinforces the material structures of male supremacy and the oppression of women. It is also in itself a material force that oppresses all women in their daily lives. When, as now, women are in motion — responding to the contradictions of the double shift as their labor

force participation increases, responding to the leading role of women in national struggles and to the impact of the women's movement — we see a growing emphasis on ideological controls designed to enforce women's continued acceptance of their increasing exploitation and oppression.

The ideology of male chauvinism is rooted in biological determinism; it assigns psychological, sexual, physical and social characteristics and potentialities to women based on their biological or "natural" characteristics. According

mary worth is defined through the ability to attract, please and keep a man through physical appearance and sexual performance. Older women whose reproductive functions have ceased are taught that they are worthless and unattractive. On the other hand, women are denied control over their bodies and free exercise of their sexuality. Patriarchal rules of heterosexuality, virginity, and monogamy; and myths that women must be penetrated vaginally to have sexual pleasure or that women like to be raped all reinforce women's dependence on men and acceptance of their family role.



SAN FRANCISCO Fall 1974

Gay men and women demonstrate solidarity with prisoners.

to this view, women's bearing and nursing of children is the natural basis for passivity, nurturing orientation, dependence on and inferiority to men. Men gain psychological, material, social, intellectual, and sexual privilege through the ideological justification of male chauvinism, and through their acceptance of male chauvinism. Women are taught to be dependent on men, marriage, and the bourgeois nuclear family structure. This is justified by the false myth that women can only be fulfilled through their role as wives and mothers.

The threat of women's collective resistance to oppression is met with specific forms of male chauvinism. Competition is encouraged among women for men's financial support and approval. Sexual objectification and sexual repression further insure women's emotional dependence on men. On one hand, women's pri-

While these are general patterns of dominant male chauvinist ideology under imperialism, the particular forms of male chauvinist ideology under imperialism vary according to the nationality and class of the women involved. As well, the impact of male chauvinist ideology differs enormously along the same lines of distinction. These myths are part of the way that male chauvinism is a material male supremacist force that is expressed through national and class chauvinism, and reinforces and justifies attacks on Third World women and families and abuse of white working class women, as ways of degrading all women.

IX. GAY OPPRESSION AND LIBERATION

The oppression of homosexuals, lesbians and gay men, under imperialism is based on the imperialists' need to maintain women's pri-

Sorry, but we laid out p.36 incorrectly.

To read it right, go from the bottom of p.35 to the middle of the right hand column on p.36...the line which reads "mary role as producers of..."

Continue reading the right hand column down to "...stay in their place and accept their oppression."

Then go to the top of the left hand column. Read the whole left hand column, then the right hand column through to "freedom and support for being gay."

Finally, skip down to "X IMPACT OF THE CHANGING NATURE OF IMPERIALISM."

The oppression of gay men is also based on the imperialists' need to maintain the oppression of women. By refuting the myth that sexuality has to be linked to reproduction within the family, male homosexuality threatens the division of labor based on sex. Male homosexuality also undercuts the idea of fixed roles for men and women in the family, demonstrating that men can care for themselves and each other physically, emotionally, and sexually. Open gay men suffer from discrimination on jobs and in housing, and from police harassment. Faggot-baiting is intended to insure men's compliance with male roles in society and deflect tendencies for men to identify with womanliness and femininity and thus undercut the rationale for the sexual division of labor.

However, there are aspects of male homosexuality, based on the structures of male supremacy, which reinforce male chauvinist ideology. Woman hating and the recreation of objectified sex roles within gay male culture are specific tendencies. It is in the interests of the bourgeoisie to encourage those aspects of homosexual culture which reinforce male chauvinism.

The oppression of homosexuals is one of the clearest and most severe forms of oppression of people who fail to follow the male supremacist sexual norms of imperialist society. The economic, legal, political and cultural institutions of imperialism punish homosexuality. Insofar as working class women and men of the oppressor nation maintain anti-gay attitudes and practice they reinforce the oppression of gay people and of the class as a whole.

The anti-imperialist movement and the struggle for women's liberation must deepen its understanding and support for gay liberation. The strength of male supremacy and the depth of biological assumptions of people in this country is evidenced in the anti-gayness of the left and new communist movement. Arguments against the potential of gay people to be communists or Marxist-Leninists are based on the acceptance of the biological imperatives of reproduction which require sex to be linked with reproduction. The test of commitment to political struggle between men and women is identified with the commitment to heterosexual relationships. Lesbianism is seen as an expression of anti-male feeling rather than the positive affirmation of women loving each other. Homosexual choice is said to equal petit-bourgeois individualism. All these assertions flow from the assumption that the only natural form of sexual relationship is between men and women and that alternatives hamper the building of socialism. These arguments are a thin cover for the effort to maintain male dom-

inated privilege and ideology within the movement. These positions serve reaction and are often linked to the denial of all superstructural forms of women's oppression. They reinforce the divisions between women and men rather than challenging them and encourage the anti-gayness of bourgeois society as a whole.

Communists must struggle for a more correct, scientific analysis of gay oppression. Lesbians have given leadership in the women's movement and in the anti-imperialist movement, and gay men have struggled to expose male supremacy and its relation to imperialism within the gay liberation movement. The forces against male supremacy and for revolution are strengthened by gay women and men. We must fight not only for the democratic rights of gay people but for freedom and support for being gay.

Gay men and women play a central role as reproducers and producers of the labor force within the nuclear family. Taboos against homosexuality are part of the repressive sexual rules which enforce the link between sexuality and reproduction and the division of labor based on sex. Homosexuality demonstrates that sexual relationships need not be based on the reproductive function and threatens the traditional division of labor within the family; homosexuality further denies the male chauvinist argument that women's position in the family and society is a necessary result of their reproductive function.

Under imperialism the characteristics of gayness are framed by the structures of a male supremacist society. Consequently, the features of lesbianism are different from male homosexuality. Lesbianism affirms that women are complete human beings capable of loving each other who do not need to define themselves through men. Lesbianism challenges male chauvinist ideas that women are necessarily psychologically and sexually dependent on men. However, lesbianism does not in any way eliminate or lessen the realities of women's material oppression under imperialism; in fact it intensifies it in many ways. Lesbians' lives are shaped by the double shift like those of all women under imperialism. Lesbians who are open about their sexuality suffer job and housing discrimination, police harassment, and are threatened with having their children taken away. Lesbian-baiting is used not only to harass lesbians but to intimidate all women to make them "stay in their place" and accept their oppression.

X. IMPACT OF THE CHANGING NATURE OF IMPERIALISM ON WOMEN

The expansion of US imperialism after World War II created new material conditions for

women in the US. The crisis of US imperialism brought about by the victories of national liberation struggles and socialism around the world has heightened the contradictions for women within the oppressor nation, opening new potential for the development of revolutionary consciousness and movement among white women. This is a beginning effort to analyze these contradictions and to define how we as white communists can intervene in this situation to advance the revolutionary struggle.

The enormous impact of women participating in socialist revolution and national liberation struggles around the world has caused significant changes in the consciousness of women within the US. In China, Cuba, Viet Nam, Angola and elsewhere, women's strength and capacity for revolutionary work have been clearly shown. The importance of women and women's movements to the defeat of imperialism has helped build women's consciousness of their power and has shown that national liberation, the liberation of women and the victory of the international working class are inextricably linked.

A material basis for the changes in women's situation in this country since World War II has been the dramatic re-entry of women into the waged labor force; women now compose almost half of the total labor force. The rate of entry during these years for white women has been even higher than for women of the oppressed nations; now almost as high a percentage of white as of oppressed nation women work for wages. Wage-earning white women are concentrated in the two sectors of the economy that have expanded most rapidly since 1945: the finance industry (banking and insurance) and the state (public sector). Manufacturing employment has declined within the borders of the US because the imperialists have reorganized the international division of labor so that an increasing part of basic industrial production is produced by the super-exploited labor of workers of oppressed nations inside and outside the US. At the same time the labor of US workers of all nations has been increasingly concentrated in jobs supporting the financing and allocation of profits from the production of the international proletariat, and on the maintenance of a massive state apparatus to control oppressed nations, women and workers within the US and the imperialist world. Women workers of both oppressor and oppressed nations have tended to find clerical jobs in these two sectors of the economy; Third World men and women are also employed in service jobs in these industries.

Clerical work in the expanding finance and

state sectors has become increasingly proletarianized: routine, relatively unskilled, increasingly mechanized, with little job security or opportunity for advancement. This new clerical proletariat is 75% women; more than a quarter of wage-earning Black and Latina women and almost 40% of wage-earning white women are clerical workers. White women benefit from white supremacy in many ways. For example, although Third World and white women are situated in the same job areas the white women are more often promoted to supervisory positions, and more often given jobs with some prestige or security. Male supremacist job patterns oppress all women workers within the clerical sector; the supervisor and management jobs are overwhelmingly the preserve of white men.

The needs of an expanding imperialism pushed women into the wage labor force and made the double shift the form of women's oppression under imperialism. Now, as the victories for national liberation and socialism have brought US imperialism into economic and social crisis, the pressures on women increase. The crisis is rooted in the economic contradictions of a contracting empire, but its effects are felt throughout all the institutions of daily life.

The economic crisis means chronic inflation, which increases the pressures on women to work for wages. At the same time unemployment increases, making it harder to get jobs, and white women replace Black, Latino, Native American and Asian women. Childcare and other social services are cut back and women cannot get jobs because they do not have childcare. Yet the pressure on women to work for wages to support themselves and their families is great. The changes in women's situation in the last three decades — increased participation in wage labor, women's growing role in national liberation and socialist struggles, the impact of the women's movement — has qualitatively changed their consciousness about their right to jobs and childcare as well as their need for them. The contradictions are explosive. The roots of these contradictions need to be exposed. Struggle against these oppressive conditions must be based on fighting the white supremacist and male supremacist structures which keep all women in an oppressed position so that the struggle doesn't become one to maintain white privilege.

The developing contradictions of imperialism have also caused changes in the family within

Federal and state cutbacks in social service money for welfare, childcare, and other services have sparked unified protests and militant actions led by Black and Third World women.



the oppressor nation. The greater number of jobs that have become open to white women has made survival outside marriage seem more possible. At the same time, various influences have led many women to struggle against male supremacy in their families, causing tension and contradiction between women and men in the family. These influences include job responsibilities, increased contact with women in similar situations, the triumph of national liberation struggles with prominent women's leadership, and the increasingly widespread impact of the women's movement analysis of male supremacy. The skyrocketing divorce rate and the growing numbers of white families headed by women are direct results of the increasing contradictions of the double shift and the changes in consciousness which the national liberation and women's movements have facilitated. These changes show the family and male privilege within it as instruments of imperialist control. But the remarriage rate is increasing along with the divorce rate, which shows that economic and social pressures force women back into marriage.

The state deals with the growing breakdown of families and the family function in the oppressor nation by increasing its direct intervention in the socialization of children and control of women who head families. Education, childcare, welfare and the media are

avenues of state control over the socialization of children.

As the state increases its oppression of women and people of oppressed nations, Third World women come under brutal attack. The state's attack on oppressed nations is literally genocidal, the attempt to destroy a people. One of the most blatant forms this genocide takes is the massive effort to sterilize women from the oppressed nations; 40% of Native American, one third of Puerto Rican and one-sixth of Black women of child-bearing age have already been sterilized. The changes and cutbacks in welfare, education, childcare and medical care are also part of the effort to destroy the lives and cultures of oppressed peoples. Increased police repression and prison violence are a systematic part of this genocidal plan.

The growth of the state apparatus has been accompanied by the proliferation of soft core police jobs largely filled by white women. Welfare work, all types of social work, counseling and teaching are all jobs set up to control Third World people and women. They effectively pit white women against oppressed nation women and peoples by tying their privilege to the perpetuation of national and women's oppression. On the other hand, increasing numbers of poorer white women are being exposed daily to the realities of male and white supremacy and class oppression through these same

institutions. We need to expose the contradictions of this situation, the real function of "social service" work and the impact of white women's collaboration with the functions of these institutions.

In the last decade, some of the strongest battles against national and women's oppression have been led by Third World women against forced sterilization, for changes in education, welfare, health care and childcare, and against police and prison violence. These struggles have directly affected the lives of white women subject to these same institutions. In many cases white women have joined these struggles under the leadership of Black and Chicano, Asian, Native American and Puerto Rican women.

As the crisis of imperialism deepens, the realities of a male supremacist class society force changes in the lives of white working class women and open up enormous possibilities for revolutionary movement among women of the oppressor nation. In this situation, the need for white women to understand and take up the struggle against white supremacy as well as male supremacy and class exploitation becomes critical. In such areas as anti-busing campaigns we can recognize the terrifying consequences of white working class women mobilized to fight for white privilege for their children instead of fighting white and male supremacy. It is our responsibility as oppressor nation communist women to put forward a political line which correctly explains why white women must take up the struggle to overturn the system of white privilege in the interests of national liberation, women's liberation and proletarian revolution.

XI. HISTORY OF WOMEN'S STRUGGLES IN THE US

In the history of the US, there has been strong, militant women's movement and leadership within the oppressor nation. Oppressed nation women have led struggles for women's rights and freedom in the course of their leading participation in national liberation struggles. When oppressor nation women have joined to support the struggles of oppressed nation women and peoples there has been unity. But white women have often opted for the privileges of white supremacy and abandoned the struggle for international women's solidarity by betraying the possibilities for a unified struggle by women of different nationalities.

The first half of the 19th century was a high point for women's struggles in the US. Scorned in the Declaration of Independence (mentioned only as victims of the "merciless savages," as Thomas Jefferson called Native Americans), denied legal and political rights, driven into exploitative social production in the early

textile factories, white women rebelled. In the 1820's and 1830's white working class women led some of the first struggles for higher wages, decent working conditions, the 10-hour day, and forms of labor organization (such as the Female Labor Reform Association in the textile town of Lowell, Mass.). At the same time petit-bourgeois and some bourgeois white women took a leading role in the Abolition movement, where they found that their oppression as women restricted their ability to struggle for the freedom of Black slaves. Abolitionists like Lucy Stone and the Grimke sisters began to question the institutions that kept them powerless — marriage, the laws, the education system, voting rights — and began to struggle for women's rights as well as Black freedom from slavery. The pre-Civil War women's movement, while riddled with national and class contradictions from the start, was a broad social movement linking the issues of women's, Black and workers' rights.

Black women, who had been part of the struggle for Black freedom since they were brought to this country, led in uniting the Black struggle and the women's movement. Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman fought to clarify the situation of Black women in the Black and women's struggles. Black men like Frederick Douglass were strong supporters of the women's movement.

At the time of this beginning alliance of national, class and women's struggles the white women's movement lacked a solid political grasp of the relationship between their struggle and the struggle of Black people. Absent in the early white women's movement was also a political base among white immigrant women. As well, this movement did not understand the importance of building a movement based on the needs of the most oppressed.

During the Civil War, white women threw their energies into the war effort, bringing a halt to the white women's movement. The National Women's Loyal League, including Elizabeth Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone in the leadership, collected 400,000 signatures in support of the 13th Amendment (for abolition), and passed a resolution calling for equal rights for women and Black people. The feminists, having struggled hard for emancipation, expected to be rewarded for their labor by being included in suffrage legislation.

But the 14th Amendment, proposed in 1866, was explicitly limited to male citizens. White feminists were horrified by the blatant disregard of their rights. After the Civil War, most of the white women's leaders capitulated to the calculated divisiveness of the 14th and 15th Amendments as drafted by the controlling forces of

the Republican Party. These women opposed the amendments which guaranteed certain rights to Black people, including the right of Black men to vote, because the amendments did not grant suffrage to women. While Black women and men argued that passage of the 14th and 15 Amendments were an absolutely necessary first step in the equal rights struggle, white suffragists strenuously opposed these arguments with explicitly racist positions.

The 15th Amendment was a legislative effort to outlaw racial discrimination at the voting polls. The suffrage movement's position against the 15th Amendment was summed up by Elizabeth Stanton when she said "... are you willing to have the colored man enfranchised before the women; I say no: I would not trust him with my rights; degraded, oppressed himself; he would be more despotic with the governing power than ever our Saxon rulers are. . . . If women are still to be represented by men, then I say let only the highest type of manhood stand at the helm of State."

After this defeat for international solidarity, white women, led in particular by the National Woman's Suffrage Association waged a campaign for women's rights to vote on the grounds that white women needed the vote in order to keep oppressed peoples and immigrant working class people out of power. White suffragists argued for the vote to insure a white American-born majority at the polls. The broad social scope of the early women's movement narrowed to a single-issue campaign for the right of women to the vote, and in doing so betrayed the national struggles of Black and other oppressed peoples. By abandoning the national struggles of Black and other oppressed peoples the early white women's movement also sold out the class interests of working women at the same time.

Black women continued to play a leading role in the struggles of their people throughout the Civil War, during Reconstruction, and after its liquidation. Ida Wells Barnett led a national movement against lynching and helped form the National Association of Colored Women to fight attacks on Black people. Despite continued Black efforts to involve them, white women did not take up the struggle against lynching until the 1930's when they did so under the leadership of Communist women.

The early 20th century labor movement offered opportunities for unified action and struggle by Black and white women although few Black women entered industrial employment until after World War I. Even so the uprising of 30,000 shirtwaist makers in New York City in 1909 was sparked when 53 Black women walked off the job.

The AFL, which was organized in the second half of the 19th century on a narrow craft, white and male supremacist basis, ignored the struggles of working women or tried to divide women from different nationalities. The AFL tried to sabotage the victory of workers in the great textile strike of 1912 in Lawrence, Mass.

Because the AFL perpetuated white supremacist, male supremacist and labor aristocratic forms of organization, white working class women allied with petit bourgeois women to organize unorganized working class women starting as early as 1903 with the Women's Trade Union League and have continued in similar forms to the present. These organizations have had some of the broad social vision of the earlier women's movement, but have tended to narrow reformist trade union consciousness and national chauvinism. Recent organizations such as the Coalition of Labor Union Women are opportunist attempts by the AFL-CIO to coopt and contain women's struggle within trade unionism.

A World-wide economic crisis commenced in 1929. The CP-US led unemployed and social security struggles and labor organizing drives. It also conducted vigorous anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist propaganda and education. The early and middle 30's were a period of growth in working-class revolutionary consciousness and organizing. These struggles prepared the way for organizing the workers of the basic industries by the CIO.

The CIO was relatively progressive in terms of solidarity. It combated racism and sexism in some degree to facilitate its organizing drives. It was generally open to membership of all workers. But only token leadership positions (and no real power) were open to non-whites and women. Nevertheless, millions of women struggled in the 30's and 40's first around unemployment and relief, then around organizing into unions, on defense committees to aid families of the victims of the struggle and of the capitalist courts, against the Scotsborough frame-up. Women were active in defense of Republican Spain against fascist attack. Communist women gave leadership in many of these early battles and numbers of them became well known mass organizers and leaders.

During World War II, when women were called out of the reserve army of labor to fill jobs vacated by men in the military, unions tolerated the influx of women. Even so, they made no special effort to organize them, seeing them chiefly as dues payers. Internal discrimination against the women war workers was widely practiced. After the War, the trade

unions joined with the employers to drive women workers out of industrial jobs back into traditional "women's jobs," into the reserve army of labor, or back into the home.

A solid anti-white supremacist base among women in the labor force has not yet been built.

The post-war expansion of clerical work has been almost entirely ignored by the trade union movement, even at the cost of a declining percentage of union members in the labor force. Since the 1960's, women in public employment have been organized to some extent, but the organization of private clerical workers is still in its infancy. White women have begun to struggle for union organization, in part following the leadership of Third World women in the farm worker, hospital worker and textile worker struggles in particular.

A Note on the Left and the Women's Movement

The revolutionary left generally did not adequately grasp the political importance of the oppression of women, male supremacy and male chauvinism. The Socialist Party, the CPUSA, and especially the IWW in its earlier days, had some strong women members and leaders, but almost always reduced the question of women to a class question narrowly defined in terms of wage labor. Women's oppression in the family, the imperialist function of the institutions of male supremacy, and the impact of male chauvinism in the society and on the Left were taken seriously only partially and exceptionally for short periods. Even so, individual socialist and communist women exerted leadership in the struggles of women for union organization and in community organizations of tenants, the unemployed, etc.

MOVEMENTS OF WOMEN IN THE 1960's and 70's

In the 1960's the movement of women within the oppressor nation once again became a leading social movement. This women's movement had two social origins. The first was the revival of the equal rights movement, led by Betty Friedan and the National Organization for Women which she founded. This movement exposed the pervasive forms of women's oppression, mainly among petit-bourgeois and bourgeois women. The Civil Rights movement and the anti-war movement in the US oppressor nation which developed into support for the national liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people stimulated and encouraged the second main political tendency of the new women's movement. Both these sources built the women's movement as a force against Imperialism.

Black women were leaders in the civil rights struggle; Vietnamese women led the struggle for women's emancipation in a movement for national liberation; women led in the anti-war and student movements in the oppressor nation. In all these struggles, women came to realize the contradictions between women's strength and creativity and their subordinate place and function under imperialism. This realization was the basis for the explosive development of women's consciousness of the nature of their own oppression as they played a leading role in spreading anti-imperialist consciousness among masses of people.

As white women began to struggle to apply their growing consciousness of the contradictions between women's strength and their oppression under imperialism, they faced strong male supremacist opposition within the sexually mixed white Left. The struggle was so sharp that masses of women made the decision to withdraw from activity and organization with



men so they could address the nature of women's oppression. This withdrawal was portrayed by the white male dominated Left as an abandonment of Left politics and solidarity with Third World struggles. This was not true. This part of the women's movement was in fact rooted in solidarity with the struggles of oppressed peoples in this country and around the world. It unleashed women's energy to analyze and organize around the basic forms of women's oppression — national, economic, social, psychological, sexual and cultural. Job inequality, abortion, women in prison, education, cultural work, lesbianism, rape, psychological and physical abuse were taken up by the women's movement in the oppressor nation. From this base of strength the women's movement has become a leading force in the anti-imperialist movement in the oppressor nation.

The white women's movement began to

expose the function of the nuclear family as an instrument of capitalist control and exploitation. Numbers of women examined and restored to the women's movement and the Left the early Marxist analysis of women's oppression, especially that of Engels. The white women's movement affirmed the social importance and value of women's unwaged labor in the home, affecting the consciousness of millions of homeworkers about their role. It challenged the male chauvinist ideology which assigned women a "naturally" inferior place in society and then forced women to accept this picture of themselves. It developed the use of consciousness-raising groups as a means of analyzing and exposing the connections between women's personal experience of oppression and the reality of women's oppression in the society as a whole. The lesbian movement increased the understanding that sexual taboos and repression maintain women's passivity, dependence on men, and competition with each other. By demonstrating that women can live, work and make love with each other, lesbians strengthened the capacity of the entire women's movement to be self-reliant, to develop women's leadership and to build women's solidarity. White women all over the country began to express poetry, music and art which spoke out loud their long-suppressed experience as women, transforming an experience of oppression into a strength-giving women's culture.

The white women's movement of the 1960's contained within it the contradictions of a social movement in the oppressor nation. These contradictions were not unique to the women's movement, as the male supremacist white Left has attempted to portray them, but were in fact manifestations of white supremacist privilege and national chauvinism that infected the white anti-imperialist movement as a whole.

White supremacist privilege and national chauvinism led to the domination of petit-bourgeois politics and leadership in the white women's movement and eroded international solidarity with the struggles of Third World women and working class women in the oppressor nation. One form these politics took was the line of universal sisterhood, a bourgeois ideology that obscures national and class differences among women. Radical feminism, the logical consequence of this line, identified all men as the enemy, which eliminated the basis for understanding national and class struggle and promoted individual solutions within the framework of the imperialist system. Lesbian separatism was based on the bourgeois idea that sexuality is the determining factor in

people's lives and limited political organizing to lesbians.

National chauvinism caused white women to analyze their own experience and generalize it as the experience of all women. The national and women's struggles being led by Black, Mexicana, Chicana, Puerto Rican, Native American and Asian women were ignored or even attacked. White women insisted on organizing for the right to abortion without recognizing the absolute necessity of struggling against the genocidal forced sterilization of Third World women. White women criticized Black women who were struggling to build solid families to resist the attacks of US imperialism and insisted that they should smash the nuclear family. When anti-war women met in Vancouver with Vietnamese women, some lesbian women criticized the Vietnamese sisters because they did not see the relevance of lesbianism to the Vietnamese struggle. Many white women's groups have worked for affirmative action programs for women in national chauvinist ways that have made the struggle of Third World people for affirmative action programs more difficult.

These examples show the depth of national chauvinism within the white women's movement; white women committed to women's liberation through anti-imperialist revolution must grasp this fully and struggle against it thoroughly. Only by developing an anti-imperialist, Marxist-Leninist line on women's oppression and liberation and communist women's leadership around that line can women build a solidly anti-white supremacist movement for women's liberation.

The leadership which Third World women have given has helped some white women understand the need to put international solidarity in command of the developing women's movement. In struggles for community control of education, daycare, and health care; in labor struggles to organize the unorganized at Farah, Oneita and Jung Sai; in building militance and armed capacity; in struggles against genocide and sterilization and for the right of self-defense against sexual violence, Third World women have challenged the imperialist oppression of women and have objectively weakened imperialism's hold on all women.

In the last few years, the "socialist-feminist" women's movement within the oppressor nation has tried to link the struggle against sexism with the struggle against racism and class exploitation, but has failed to become

anti-imperialist. Socialist feminism fails to identify imperialism as a totality, a system, of which the oppression of women is a major part. It fails to identify national liberation as the leading force of anti-imperialist revolution. Socialist feminism has an idealist rather than a materialist understanding of socialist revolution which does not address the role of armed struggle. It denies the need for a communist party to lead the socialist revolution. It tends toward economist and reformist strategies and tactics for organizing white women; these tendencies are often embodied in essentially social democratic so-called "mass socialist" forms of organization that build neither revolutionary cadre nor a mass movement. A number of women searching for an analysis that went beyond radical feminism have been attracted to socialist-feminist politics; we must wage a serious struggle in the women's movement to explain the errors of socialist feminism and win these women to a truly revolutionary understanding of women's oppression.

White women's work in solidarity struggles, prison support, daycare, anti-sterilization campaigns, support for women's self-defense, and the party building movement all show the potential for oppressor nation women to unite around anti-imperialist politics. White working class women are oppressed under imperialism through both class exploitation and male supremacy. The structures and effects of these exploitations provide an internal basis for white working class women to have the greatest potential to build anti-imperialist consciousness and lead class struggle within the oppressor nation in solidarity with the struggles of women and men of the oppressed nationalities.

At the same time, more privileged white women also have the basis to join an anti-imperialist women's movement. The oppression of women cuts across class lines and this means that women of all classes experience some form of oppression due to the institutionalization of male supremacy. This is the basis for the development of a cross class movement of women.

In order to be a solidly based conscious anti-imperialist force, the women's movement must be firmly led by an anti-imperialist line.

XIII. WOMEN AND THE OPPRESSOR NATION LEFT

The strength and power of the women's movement within the oppressor nation has forced changes in the entrenched male supremacy and chauvinism of the white left. When first confronted by the politics of women's liberation and women's demands for real

political power within the white left, the male response was a vicious attack on women who were fighting for these politics. Men seized opportunistically on the oppression of Third World people to deny white women the right to struggle against their own oppression. Men intimidated women with sexual power, threats, and contempt. These men exposed the depth of male chauvinism and the large stake men had in maintaining women's oppression. Masses of women left the male dominated mixed organizations and began to organize women autonomously, developing a mass base and power which forced men in the left to respond. Women who stayed and fought within the mixed left drew strength from the growing autonomous women's movement. Men on the left were forced to take women's liberation seriously when thousands of women demonstrated their political, psychological, and sexual independence of men.

Change in left male consciousness and practice has been painfully slow and incomplete. The power of the women's movement has forced political struggle over women's oppression and liberation, but the struggle to establish a revolutionary line on women has not been won. The male-dominated left has tried to co-opt and distort the gains of the women's movement. One of the most common opportunist ideological forms this has taken has been the reduction of women's oppression to a so-called "class question" through a narrow, incorrect economist definition of women's oppression that limits its material base to wage labor or women's exclusion from wage labor. This position ignores the role of women's labor in the home, the function of the nuclear family in the oppressor nation as an instrument of imperialist oppression of women; and the importance of institutional and ideological forms of women's oppression. It denies the privileges which male supremacy gives to all men and justifies the inattention to male chauvinist attitudes and practice in the revolutionary movement. This leads to the denial of women's right to separate forms of organization, undercuts the political basis for women's leadership of the anti-imperialist movement, and takes a tokenistic approach to women in leadership positions. It justifies and reinforces anti-gay attitudes and practice and supports continued male privilege in the movement for male political control, little or no child care and house work responsibilities, more free time, and sexual power.

In the two years of PFOC's history these serious male chauvinist errors were part of the opportunist line that dominated the organization. An integral part of PFOC rectification has

been a struggle against all forms of male chauvinism in the organization, to develop women's leadership and to build revolutionary line, strategy, and program for women's liberation. Even though we have a long way to go, we think these first steps represent an important

direction.

XIV. PARTY BUILDING AND BUILDING THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Building revolutionary organization of women and men within the oppressor nation



Women demonstrate solidarity for Joan Little, a Black woman who went on trial in 1973 for defending herself against a rape attack by a Beaufort County Jail guard in North Carolina. This solidarity greatly aided Joan's acquittal.

unified around an anti-imperialist revolutionary line is the primary task at this time. A correct understanding of women's oppression under imperialism is a key part of an anti-imperialist line: it defines the critical structures of women's oppression which we need to attack and what the leading role of women within the oppressor nation must be. In struggling with other forces around our political line we must give central importance to spreading the understanding of women's oppression and liberation. Recognizing women's leading role within the oppressor nation, we must place a priority on struggling with women around all of our politics to unify politically and organizationally with them. Seeing white working class women as the potentially leading force among white women and the white working class, we must commit ourselves to work and struggle among white working class women around anti-imperialist politics.

In building conscious revolutionary organization, our political work must emphasize the development and struggle for correct political line and its externalization through propaganda among the left in our mass work. We should locate strategically where the most advanced anti-imperialist women's struggles have been taking place (in education and daycare, health, prison, organizing the unorganized, anti-sterilization, welfare, right to self-defense, gay liberation). Within these mass movements we must seek to struggle over line to unify with the most revolutionary-minded sisters. We must become able to apply our line to analyze and expose the conditions where we do political work from an anti-imperialist perspective. This is the only way we will ever be able to lead successful mass struggles against the state.

The development of revolutionary line and strategy and the ideological defeat of opportunism are all part of a party building period. The formation of a truly revolutionary party or parties in the U.S. is absolutely critical. Without revolutionary organization, our work among the broad masses will not move forward to overcome spontaneity and victory will remain distant. At this time, the struggle for revolutionary line within the left is a precondition for successful party organization. Side by side with the struggle for revolutionary political line, we, as oppressor nation communists, must lead in deeds and words to actively stand in solidarity with oppressed nations in their struggle for self-determination and we must struggle against all forms of privilege particularly white and male supremacist privileges.

Our long term strategy is to build mass anti-imperialist women's organization. There

will be a need for separate mass women's organization to ensure the struggle for women's liberation until women's oppression is totally overthrown.

Within PFOC as a developing communist organization, we must emphasize study on women and the development of line and program which is understood and supported by the entire organization. The political development of all women cadre through special bodies such as women's caucuses is absolutely necessary to ensure the development of strong solidarity among women and to support the ongoing struggle against male chauvinism in the organization. The development of political bodies like Women's Commission to lead line and strategy on women is also indispensable. Male chauvinism within the organization must be continually exposed, analyzed, and overthrown.

The struggle against women's oppression and for women's liberation must be grasped and fought for by all aspiring communists as a central part of the anti-imperialist struggle. Unifying revolutionary forces around a correct understanding of women's oppression as an integral part of our anti-imperialist analysis will immensely strengthen our collective potential to struggle for the liberation of all oppressed peoples and classes in this country and around the world.

HISTORICAL FORCES THAT HAVE SHAPED WORKING CLASS AND REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN THE U.S.

From the beginning the US was a settler colony, shaped by piracy of land and resources, genocide against Native Americans and by an economy based on Black slave labor. The bourgeois-democratic and anti-colonial revolution of 1776 always had that dual character: democratic only in a limited and exclusive sense; already laying out its expansionist course rooted in genocide and slavery and white and male supremacy.

The history of the working class and popular movements of the dominant nation in the US is one of hard and militant struggles. But this is always strongly exclusive and shaped by its involvement in the empire building of the US ruling capitalist class. Workers and farmers in the US were both intimidated and bribed. Willingly, and unwillingly they fought Indian and Mexican wars of conquest against the resistance of those nations. They took part in counter-revolutionary terror against Blacks after the Civil War and reconstruction. Later it was the same for Puerto Rico, Cuba and the

Philippines. Our class and our people have been subject to all the pressures and forms of opportunism; bourgeois liberalism, and democratic illusions, reformism, electoral and peaceful utopian illusions. These are all rooted in the institutions of white and male supremacy and the chauvinist ideology and culture built up in the US on the material foundation of bourgeois competition, the myths of popular (bourgeois) democracy, and privileges of empire.

OPPORTUNISM AND REVISIONISM

Right and left opportunism are opposite in form, but they are both counter-revolutionary in content. Right opportunism is historically the main tendency and danger within our working class and people. Opportunism is the open expression of self-interest, small group and craft causes, electoral and legal reforms, peaceful transition, peaceful competition, and pacifism and class collaboration. Ideologically, and culturally it is based on (and saturated with) white and male supremacy, and chauvinism and sexism.

Left forms of revisionism are usually a reaction to the corruption and betrayals of the right opportunists. A common form of sectarianism is the presentation of Marxism-Leninism as a dogma or blueprint—a religion to be preached instead of as a scientific guide to action. Sectarrians do not analyze or deal with the real history and contradictions of the US. They have a scarecrow version of revolution, remote, unreal and unrelated to life. Another version of left opportunism rejects Marxism outright and bases itself on 'far out' military type actions designed to release spontaneous mass energy through passionate appeals and by the deeds of heroes. They oppose leadership, discipline, and organization as unattainable by advanced workers or the masses; they are petty-bourgeois individualists at heart and have no faith in social revolution.

However, in our country opportunists have made a regular political career out of labelling revolutionaries as dogmatists and 'left sectarians.' Any militant or forceful act becomes adventurism in their view. We have to keep in mind that the task of revolutionaries is to unite with masses of our working class and people and with the oppressed nations in order to move forward, not backward.

If we don't find the ways to move more people in a revolutionary direction, it doesn't matter at all how far forward we ourselves may go. However, we say to the opportunists the same thing as did Lenin: "Don't blame the masses for your own backwardness." What the right wing does is to drag people back in the name of starting from where they are. In revo-

lution, direction (political line and strategy) is firmly in command of leadership and organization, or disaster follows.

Historically, the first revisions of Marxism were based on a liberal view of class rule and state power. Armed struggle and revolutionary violence were rejected; and bourgeois democracy and capitalist liberalism and reform were substituted for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bernstein, the German Social-Democrat wrote: "The movement is everything, the goal is nothing."

Modern revisionism goes further and arrives at social-imperialism. (Socialism in words, imperialism in deeds.) It puts competition for privileges to be had from expanding empire ahead of internationalism, betrays the oppressed nations and the oppressed sections of its own class (women, youth, the unskilled, unorganized workers). Now that empire is declining, revisionism seeks to defend its threatened privilege against rising revolution. It takes up counterrevolutionary positions thinly disguised: opposed Black liberation and the Vietnamese (Progressive Labor) or the liberation of Angola (October League). Modern revisionism may loudly talk about the historic role of the working class and the dictatorship of the proletariat, but it fears to confront US imperialism as an internal and worldwide system. It will not fight the white and male supremacist institutions, ideas and privileges that enable the US ruling class to stay in control of the US labor movement for its own purposes.

Revisionism uses Lenin's name, but opposes his analysis of oppressor and oppressed nations and the role of bribes and privilege and the aristocracy of labor. Mythology is substituted for the real history of the working class of imperialist countries. The working class is extolled to the skies and fables about spontaneous revolutionization are invented to avoid real contradictions. Figures about strikes are given without analysis to sustain this fiction. The question of class stand and consciousness is outlawed. Revolutionaries are denounced for their parents to avoid dealing with politics. Denouncing revolution doesn't work—so revisionists resort to falsehoods and tricks.

Thus opportunist revisions of Marxism-Leninism are rooted in special privilege and bourgeois competition. Revisionists endlessly propagate white and male supremacy and national and sexual chauvinism. One form of this white supremacy is either outright denial of, or eternal quibbles about, the existence of oppressed nations within (or partly within) the borders of the US. Of these there are at least four: the Black nation, the Mexicano and Chicano nation(s), the Native American na-

tion(s), the Puerto Rican nation.

REVISIONISM AND CLASS STRUGGLE

A prime example of revisionism is the falsification of Marxist analysis of the relationship of economics, class struggle, and politics. There are dozens of allegedly 'Marxist-Leninist' 'class lines' that in fact substitute their own capitulation to the most reactionary features of bourgeois business unionism (which they worship) for Marx and Lenin's analysis of the real world. Opportunists cover these tricks by much talk about the world historic revolutionary mission of the working class.

Marx urged the working class to inscribe on its banners the revolutionary demand for "abolition of the wage system," in place of the AFL demand for a 'fair day's wage.' The opportunists hold to the contrary. They contend that "economic struggle over the price of labor power (wages) leads in itself gradually to the struggle for power and social transformation." Lenin refuted this position at length in his pamphlet "What Is To Be Done."

Lenin held that the target of a revolutionary is the entire system, all of its contradictions and the relationships of all its classes. Our aim is total destruction of reactionary power and institutions and the complete overhaul and reshaping of society and human beings and all their relationships. The model revolutionary is not a Trade Union Secretary, but a tribune of the people. Lenin rejected outright the economist and reactionary notion that the only strategic contradictions are those of direct exploitation — the class struggle at the point of production — between workers and owners directly.

Lenin demanded that communists raise the consciousness of the workers about all contradictions of society, about class and state power, about internationalism, about the infinite possibilities of communism and human society. He brought forward the relation of workers with other oppressed classes and nations; with the peasants, with urban middle classes, with dissident aristocrats, small land-holders, with the oppressed peoples of the empires and all other revolutionary forces (*What Is To Be Done*).

Far from confining himself to the factories and the trade unions, he concerned himself with all sectors and forms. The peasants and workers in the army, the insurance and death benefit societies, the creation of the Soviets; with war and peace, the supply of bread, the co-operative movement. His approach to focus and priority was historical and strategic, not dogmatic and doctrinaire. At one time he held that elections to the Czarist Duma were decisive, at

other times it was necessary to boycott them. At one time to participate in elections to the Constituent Assembly — at another time to disperse the Assembly and concentrate all power in the Soviets.

Contrary to these outstanding examples of scientific approach to class and revolutionary struggle, the dogmatists and opportunists of the US avoid like the plague any concrete analysis of US history and conditions. A common approach is to string together twenty or a hundred pages of quotes and generalities, call that theory and political line and plunge into 'workplace — point of production' organizing based on reformist demands.

Cries of "left-sectarianism" and "anti-working class" automatically fill the air when opportunists are stung by righteous criticism. To answer this for the Nth time: Workplace organizing is of strategic importance when and only when it is carried on as part of an overall revolutionary politics and strategy that takes into account all the principal contradictions of our country in the present stage of world and national struggle. The workplace is not and never has been, in and of itself, the basis of Marxist-Leninist strategy. It is one major and strategic battle front and recruiting ground (but sometimes is a rear area when class and/or national war reaches the level of armed struggle.)

Working class organizing as conducted by opportunists is nothing more than the organizational-structural-tactical expression of the politics of economism, spontaneity, reformism, chauvinism. To understand this better we need to examine the conditions under which workers sell their labor power.

Sale of their labor power by workers is the necessary means of getting a livelihood. To the capitalist it is something quite different. To the owner it is the advance of variable capital (meaning that the capitalist expects to realize surplus value — a handsome profit from the deal). What is at stake in the bargain are wages and conditions of the laborers on the one side and some of the terms and costs of production of the capitalists which affect profitability and the competitive position of the business at hand. Wages do not solely determine these, for other costs enter in.

Opportunists falsify this, calling it a quarrel over the division of the product of labor. Which it is not. Capital controls the entire product from the start — as owners of raw materials, land, factories, power, and of labor power once they have bought it. (All of this adds up to the capital — collectively). Opportunism poses the struggle as a purely economic affair, bargaining over division of the product (the AFL-CIO position) instead of an essentially political class



PUERTO RICAN DAY PARADE

New York City

June 1970

struggle about ownership and power. (Marx and Lenin.) Thus the opportunists avoid the basic question of social revolution and the contradictions of the capitalist system, especially its basic one, the contradiction between social production and private appropriation. The class struggle is reduced to a family quarrel about what is fair, reforms are everything and one need not be concerned about remote things like imperialism and oppressed nations.

It is also worthwhile to examine how wages are regulated by the cost of production of labor power. (This cost is simply the cost of reproducing and maintaining the laborer.)

Within the cost of labor power there is a social factor. The biological minimum to sustain life is the lower limit. (A seven year working life for slaves on Columbus' Caribbean plantations is the so-far lowest record.) This social factor in the cost of labor power includes many things — historical levels of productivity of a given labor force at a given time in a given country, educational and technical levels, the history of empires and their command of slave labor and other low-cost forms, the natural resources available, the degree of organization and struggles of labor, the form of government, the growth of monopoly, world expansion, etc.

In the U.S. at the peak of its world power, with relatively high wages as the basis of its boasted high standard of living for a part of the

masses, there have been two most outstanding social factors:

1. The enormous natural resources resulting from genocide of Native Americans and war with Mexico and external war and financial control as well.

2. The super-exploitation and oppression of Black slave labor and of Mexican, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native and Asian labor and cheap labor of women.

Based upon these sources of super-profits, the US capitalists have been able to devote larger amounts of variable capital to cultivating an aristocracy of labor in the US and white and male privilege and supremacy. This set of circumstances is institutionalized in the manipulation of Business Unionism and opportunist politics, as well as in the usual class institutions.

So that what we have here is that the wages and conditions of middle and working class privileged categories in the US come down according to the "historical and social factor" of imperialism. Far from any possibility of arriving at any fair day's pay, discrimination and super-exploitation, and privilege and oppression, are loaded into the weighing machine from the word go. High wages for some are cheap at the price for imperialists because they need the opportunists and labor bosses, not just to protect their current super-profits but to control the most oppressed part of the population, to protect the power of the ruling class,

At this time, national struggle was seen as a democratic struggle and revolution came forward first in the more economically developed countries of Europe. National liberation movements were judged mainly as to whether they furthered or held back working class revolution.

With the emergence of imperialism and the growth of socialist revolution in Russia in the East, national struggles and self-determination became a decisive practical as well as theoretical question for all revolutionaries. It was at this time that Lenin wrote his polemics against imperial annexations and Stalin developed the five criteria of a nation. Later, with further expansion of empire and the victory of the socialist revolution in the old Czarist empire, Lenin concluded that the national revolution is now a part of the world proletarian revolution against capitalism and imperialism. Between World War I and II, there has been a tremendous further upsurge in this process (China, Korea, Cuba, Eastern Europe, Vietnam, Africa, the Middle East . . .).

In our own times, nations continue to form and develop and unite or are split up by the pressures of imperialism and by the pressures of class and national revolution. The objective conditions under decaying imperialism and the needs of the struggle are different than in 1913. Stalin's criteria cannot be used as a rigid yardstick to settle all the questions of the present. The process is dynamic, not static. Nations

must expose all the anti-Black and minority theories: the no-land theory, no-class-structure theory, the idea that Black liberation must wait until we are all ready for total socialist revolution—all these wipe out any real self-determination, and we are firmly committed to self-determination of all oppressed nations.

Recently there has been much discussion about the multi-national character of the US working class. We think that it is more clear and precise to say "international" when talking about the national composition of the US work force. This emphasizes the fact of workers of different nations joining together to support one another's struggles.

In the US the term "multi-national working class" has been used mainly to avoid or hide the distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. It implies and usually covers melting-pot politics and integrationism in practice. "Black and white, unite and fight" is one form of this. "Multi-national" puts the emphasis on the class as one integrated body, not on the presence of workers belonging to oppressed nations.

The fact that within the US merger and integration mean oppression and not equality is the bitter reality that Black, Mexicano, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Native American nations and their peoples have experienced for hundreds of years.

Members of these oppressed nations have

Those who reject Black liberation and the Black nation are rejecting the most powerful revolutionary force in the U.S.

consolidate themselves in the midst of resisting and defeating imperialist oppression.

So it is with the strategic role of the black nation in the US. Born as a people in resistance to slavery, doubly oppressed after the Civil War by the alliance of Northern capital and the former slave owners, betrayed by white allies of the time of Reconstruction and many times since, forced to migrate to survive, lynched and mobbed, segregated and humiliated, Black people have increased their national and class consciousness and their resistance and rebellion. Black people here have increasingly identified with Black and world-wide revolution, especially those of African nations.

Melting pot and integrationist pressures have not destroyed the Black nation regardless of all liberal claims, laws, court decisions, and phony reform. Those who reject Black liberation and the Black nation are rejecting the most powerful revolutionary force in the US. We

found that separate organizations of the masses of their people as well as of their revolutionary and communist leaderships is something that is necessary for effective leadership of their national liberation and working class revolutionary struggles. World and US experience show that Black and other Third World leadership is powerful only when it has organized revolutionary leadership based among its own people and working class. Only when that power exists can reluctant and arrogant white leaders be expected to recognize and accept equality. Women have had much the same experience in their efforts to gain equal standing in white male dominated movements. Internationalism means the unity of national and class struggle and ultimately of the nations themselves based upon the principle of absolute equality. This means that we uphold the right of self-determination at all levels and circumstances.

For whites to *insist* on a multi-national party violates self-determination by denying oppressed nations the right of organizing their own national parties. And this is the crux of the matter; it is the desire of the multi-nationalists to forcibly include everyone in *their* party that reeks with arrogance and chauvinism. More, this hides and covers in disguised form, support of the practice of the imperialists, who *forcibly retain within the borders of the US* all the oppressed peoples. For if these peoples were free to order their own lives and government, then there would be no way for chauvinists to give orders as to what parties they could or could not organize.

We are for an open, non-exclusive party, not a "white" party and not a "nationalist" party. We are internationalists. But as members of the dominant nation of the imperial US, we have special duties and tasks to unite the advanced forces of our class and our people to fight against white supremacy/chauvinism and male supremacy/sexism and to build a revolutionary force to support and ally with the oppressed peoples and nations to destroy the empire and make socialist revolution.

We do not deny the validity of unitary, all-inclusive forms of organizations under certain conditions. We do insist that the right of self-organization, self-leadership is the only power able to guarantee real equality to the oppressed. In the US today, no matter how democratic the rules and promises, or even the intent, the real advantages of white male power in society at large will win out unless the oppressed come well fortified. At present, alliance and co-operation are necessary forms of unity, integrated forms are secondary.

The first requirement for all communists in imperialist countries is to uphold these principles and practices of internationalism — the obligation of revolutionaries of the oppressor nation to wholly support the struggles of oppressed peoples against empire. Without this there is no revolutionary movement worthy of the name. To build a party and a movement based upon these principles is our primary strategic duty at this time.

XIII. WOMEN AND THE OPPRESSOR NATION LEFT

The strength and power of the women's movement within the oppressor nation has forced changes in the entrenched male supremacy and chauvinism of the white left. When first confronted by the politics of women's liberation and women's demands for real political power within the white left, the male

response was a vicious attack on women who were fighting for these politics. Men seized opportunistically on the oppression of Third World people to deny white women the right to struggle against their own oppression. Men intimidated women with sexual power, threats, and contempt. These men exposed the depth of male chauvinism and the large stake men had in maintaining women's oppression. Masses of women left the male dominated mixed organizations and began to organize women autonomously, developing a mass base and power which forced men in the left to respond. Women who stayed and fought within the mixed left drew strength from the growing autonomous women's movement. Men on the left were forced to take women's liberation seriously when thousands of women demonstrated their political, psychological, and sexual independence of men.

Change in left male consciousness and practice has been painfully slow and incomplete. The power of the women's movement has forced political struggle over women's oppression and liberation, but the struggle to establish a revolutionary line on women has not been won. The male-dominated left has tried to co-opt and distort the gains of the women's movement. One of the most common opportunist ideological forms this has taken has been the reduction of women's oppression to a so-called "class question" through a narrow, incorrect economist definition of women's oppression that limits its material base to wage labor or women's exclusion from wage labor. This position ignores the role of women's labor in the home, the function of the nuclear family in the oppressor nation as an instrument of imperialist oppression of women; and the importance of institutional and ideological forms of women's oppression. It denies the privileges which male supremacy gives to all men and justifies the inattention to male chauvinist attitudes and practice in the revolutionary movement. This leads to the denial of women's right to separate forms of organization, undercuts the political basis for women's leadership of the anti-imperialist movement, and takes a tokenistic approach to women in leadership positions. It justifies and reinforces anti-gay attitudes and practice and supports continued male privilege in the movement for male political control, little or no child care and house work responsibilities, more free time, and sexual power.

In the two years of PFOC's history these serious male chauvinist errors were part of the opportunist line that dominated the organization. An integral part of PFOC rectification has

been a struggle against all forms of male chauvinism in the organization, to develop women's leadership and to build revolutionary line, strategy, and program for women's liberation. Even though we have a long way to go, we think these first steps represent an important direction.

XIV. PARTY BUILDING AND BUILDING THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Building revolutionary organization of women and men within the oppressor nation unified around an anti-imperialist revolutionary line is the primary task at this time. A correct understanding of women's oppression under imperialism is a key part of an anti-imperialist line: it defines the critical structures of women's oppression which we need to attack and what the leading role of women within the oppressor nation must be. In struggling with other forces around our political line we must give central importance to spreading the understanding of women's oppression and liberation. Recognizing women's leading role within the oppressor nation, we must place a priority on struggling with women around all of our politics to unify politically and organizationally with them. Seeing white working class women as the potentially leading force among **white women and the whole working class**, we must commit ourselves to work and struggle among white working class women around anti-imperialist politics.

In building conscious revolutionary organization, our political work must emphasize the development and struggle for correct political line and its externalization through propaganda among the left in our mass work. We should locate strategically where the most advanced anti-imperialist women's struggles have been taking place (in education and daycare, health, prison, organizing the unorganized, anti-sterilization, welfare, right to self-defense, gay liberation). Within these mass movements we must seek to struggle over line to unify with the most revolutionary-minded sisters. We must become able to apply our line to analyze and expose the conditions where we do political work from an anti-imperialist perspective. This is the only way we will ever be able to lead successful mass struggles against the state.

The development of revolutionary line and strategy and the ideological defeat of opportunism are all part of a party building period. The formation of a truly revolutionary party or parties in the U.S. is absolutely critical. Without revolutionary organization, our work among the broad masses will not move forward to overcome spontaneity and victory will remain distant. At this time, the struggle for revolu-

tionary line within the left is a precondition for successful party organization. Side by side with the struggle for revolutionary political line, we, as oppressor nation communists, must lead in deeds and words to actively stand in solidarity with oppressed nations in their struggle for self-determination and we must struggle against all forms of privilege particularly white and male supremacist privileges.

Our long term strategy is to build mass anti-imperialist women's organization. There will be a need for separate mass women's organization to ensure the struggle for women's liberation until women's oppression is totally overthrown.

Within PFOC as a developing communist organization, we must emphasize study on women and the development of line and program which is understood and supported by the entire organization. The political development of all women cadre through special bodies such as women's caucuses is absolutely necessary to ensure the development of strong solidarity among women and to support the ongoing struggle against male chauvinism in the organization. The development of political bodies like Women's Commission to lead line and strategy on women is also indispensable. Male chauvinism within the organization must be continually exposed, analyzed, and overthrown.

The struggle against women's oppression and for women's liberation must be grasped and fought for by all aspiring communists as a central part of the anti-imperialist struggle. Unifying revolutionary forces around a correct understanding of women's oppression as an integral part of our anti-imperialist analysis will immensely strengthen our collective potential to struggle for the liberation of all oppressed peoples and classes in this country and around the world.

There are still many important things we have not covered. One we must not leave out is the fact that a revolutionary communist organization must understand and master all forms of struggle and their relationships. Revolutionaries, advanced workers and all progressive people must consciously proceed on the basis that social revolution inevitably includes dealing with the violence of the ruling class and its armed forces. This is why there must be not only a party, but also a people's army if there is to be victory.

In addition, the ruling class has amply proved that it will not surrender its power and possessions without the most violent kind of resistance. The movement today is mainly open and "legal" in form, but all the same the capitalist state employs its laws, courts, prisons, police, CIA, and open and clandestine

armed forces to control the population and enforce its class/imperial rule. The state uses its forces selectively; the more violent forms of fascist-type repression come down especially on Blacks, Native Americans, Mexicanos, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Asians. The oppressed have always had to defend themselves from ruling class violence. Fascism is not that different from traditional practices of colonizer rule.

White revolutionaries who work to build communist leadership and organization openly and in the midst of mass struggle and movements will also find their freedom to do so more and more restricted as they become effective and the state moves to counter action. Knowing what we face, we must be bold in action, but prudent in our methods and not take undue risks for small reasons. We will fight for every one of our rights and for those of others to carry on work and struggle. But we know that ultimately our security and success depends upon developing the consciousness and activity of ourselves and our ties with the working class, the oppressed peoples, and the masses generally. No agent can fake forever the honesty and commitment of real revolutionaries. No organization with deep roots will be destroyed if it maintains correct policy and responsible practice.

The contradictions as to legal-illegal, under-

the future. There could be no real confidence internationally or internally that the oppressed peoples could count ultimately on support from revolutionary forces within the home base of the empire, within the US itself. The underground and clandestine struggle in the US also compels the Left, the people and the state to always consider basic questions of class and national oppression and power.

Having said that, it remains a fact that the massive power of our class and people is still mainly to be reached in above-ground formations and mostly in formally legal ways. Under present conditions, this is where and how we reach the base of our social revolution. What is more, underground and armed forms of struggle will only survive and grow together with the greater consciousness and organization of that mass base as its ultimate source of political and material support.

In this mixed situation, underground formations have a necessary, indispensable role in sharpening consciousness (armed propaganda), in preparing and training for higher levels of struggle, in promoting self-defense consciousness and organization of communities and people under heavy attack, in enabling prisoners to escape and survive, in gathering intelligence and exposing weaknesses of the enemy, and finally in disrupting enemy insti-

...there must be not only a party,
but also a people's army
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ground-above ground, armed-non-armed forms of struggle revolve around the fact that the great mass of people in the US as well as of activists, still carry on the bulk of their activities more or less on the terms of formal legality. At the same time, many formally legal acts and rights are rendered non-existent or de facto illegal by actions of the city, county, state and federal authorities. (Boston and desegregation, prisoners' rights, GI rights, law enforcement in the ghettos, barrios and reservations, vigilante gangs, etc.) There is also no security on the streets for many people unless they organize their own self-defense in their own areas.

In this situation, if there were no underground, no illegal or armed struggle, all the false propaganda of US constitutional democracy for all would go unchallenged, people would have no hope for real change or power in

tutions that are promoting aggressive war and genocide and are assassinating leaders of the people.

There needs to be more flow of communications between all parts of the Left as to the significance of these things as well as about all the general political questions of the revolutionary and mass movements. With the exception of questions involving security, open publication of analysis and opinion will strengthen all of us.

We of PFOC have arrived at our revolutionary politics in fierce internal struggle with a wrong opportunist and white and male supremacist politics. This is known to our friends but not generally, for the Left and general media have boycotted this information. Nevertheless, this two-line struggle is not our internal monopoly. The issues and principles we have been debating here are vital to the

Left, the revolution, and everyone else, too. They are the essential stuff of world contradictions, history being made.

It is therefore appropriate that we have also been seriously trying to struggle with this opportunism beyond our own ranks, out in the world. It is right that a major target of our efforts is the pushers of false and fake communism, whether it comes in old or new guise. This seems obvious.

Less known is the fact that there has been a major opportunist and chauvinist line and force pushing the same bourgeois line with a left cover. We, who started our organization by distributing, studying and debating the book *Prairie Fire*, the Political Statement of the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), have now come to understand that the WUO itself never organized around the politics of *Prairie Fire*, but has worked might and main to overthrow and bury the revolutionary part of its own statement.

We have circulated an analysis of the political line of *Osawatimie*, the journal of the WUO, and of a WUO article, "Politics in Command," to establish these facts. The article we circulated is titled "In Defense of the Book, *Prairie Fire*."

The political assault by the leaders and responsible cadre of the WUO upon anti-imperialist politics has been a heavy blow to the revolutionary Left. First, because for a time this group made important, even historic breakthroughs in fighting opportunism and chauvinism in the white Left and in advancing anti-imperialist consciousness and action. All the more does its wrong white and male supremacist line influence many people who have admired its accomplishments. Secondly, the organization intervened not only openly via *Osawatimie*, but it misused its security needs and clandestine skills to mobilize intensively to disrupt and corrupt many white Left activists and to deceive still others. Meanwhile its turnabout entirely liquidated its own previously highly advertised program of politically oriented attacks upon the property of selected enemy targets. Our political exposure of this state of affairs has had an initially positive effect. The fake self-criticism of the last issue of *Osawatimie* has no support within PFOC. Numerous cadre in mass movements formerly influenced and damaged by the wrong and diversionary line of this underground group have come to understand its reactionary content.

This content is essentially liquidation of of a revolutionary anti-imperialist communist party with a line as a basic concept in favor of the idea of a military underground (themselves) in

command of everything. All they lacked was large numbers of live bodies, which they hoped to attract with reformist bait.

Sincere comrades who may have been influenced by these or similar opportunist politics will have to deal with their own complicity and find the ways to change for the better. Above all, what is required is to approach all the continuing problems of resistance, defense-offense in an honestly revolutionary and internationalist way. All of us would be happy to support such efforts wholeheartedly. But naturally there must be adequate demonstration of change. For everyone has contributed to damaging the people's revolution.

WHAT'S AHEAD

Out of these struggles we have gained some beginning insight into principles of communist organization. We have learned about the primacy of line and political struggle, something of the relations between revolutionary line and organization and about the meaning of ties with our class and people and of leaders and members.

Criticism and self-criticism and evaluation of cadre have come to have real meaning. Democratic centralism, self-discipline, collective work as contrasted with commandism and bureaucratic controls or the opposite, participatory chaos; the means of overcoming passivity; the responsibility for members to struggle with leadership and individuals as well, all reflect more consciousness and so does a better understanding of the dynamic between class consciousness and class composition.

Our unity is beginning to have a solid foundation—more group self-reliance—the capacity to find a direction and pursue it is sprouting here and there. Now we shall move on, consolidating and growing at the same time—building solidly and carefully, but not sluggishly or conservatively—knowing that we do not have a monopoly on revolution or politics, but not buying shoddy and damaged goods either. This political statement is neither complete nor without flaws. Nor it is forever. We will go on debating, developing and correcting. But our revolutionary thrust we will not allow anyone to undermine.

Our political statement concentrates on current political issues and contradictions and the historical analysis that can help to move us forward. We have only touched on New Left and recent history, very sketchily. To evaluate this history is an important task for all of us—to recover our scientific and historical resources and roots, but to also understand and build on the contributions of our own generations.

The resolution of the evils and contradictions of capitalism requires the overthrow of the ruling class and the seizure and destruction of its state power by the working class on behalf of all the rest of the people. Then it will be possible to build a new and human society upon the ruins of the old. Socially produced wealth will then be socially appropriated, owned and utilized by society as a whole.

To accomplish this, the working class must not only be conscious of its antagonistic relationship to the capitalists; it must understand its own revolutionary potential and mission to create a new society. This revolutionary consciousness is embodied in Marxism-Leninism, the science which analyzes the historic role of the working class and the relationship of class and national struggle in the final stage of capitalism: imperialism. This science must be fused with the working class movement if it is to become a material force

achieved through active engagement of masses of people in class struggle, which is part of the process carried out under the strategic leadership of a vanguard communist party.

What Malcolm X realized perfectly is the hardest thing for whites (including we revolutionaries) to understand: The chickens are coming home to roost.

The contradictions inherent in a society that proclaimed equality 220 years ago but has always rested upon human slavery, women's oppression, land piracy and genocide have ripened to the bursting point. The social fabric is ripped and torn.

One demonstration of the weakness of imperialism at the present moment is that, under the blows of wars of liberation and social revolution, the sense of power and control, of superiority and arrogance of the rulers is wavering and shaken; and it has all but vanished among the people of the dominant



SAIGON WELCOMES LIBERATION

able to change history.

Building a working class movement that is consciously revolutionary and anti-imperialist is a requirement for socialist revolution. Revolution is made by masses of working people, not by individuals or small groups. Mass revolutionary consciousness can only be

nation itself. Words are still recited, but they echo hollowly and true belief is not in them.

Defeats now coming home to the system were concealed within the seemingly unchallengeable victories of the US during and immediately after World War II. The source of these defeats is the unleashing of the revolu-

tionary energy of the peoples of the world — the real makers of history. The computerized, mechanized and airborne legions of the US have met the same fate in Vietnam and elsewhere as did General Custer when he raided the Oglala and Hunkapapa Lakota in Montana. The reckless push for world power, the coldly calculated use of the atom bomb in Japan, war on Korea and Vietnam, intervention in Guatemala, Lebanon, the Bay of Pigs, missile crisis, use of food and starvation as weapons, these have escalated the confirmed enemies of US imperialism into the hundreds of millions, world wide.

What the outside world has long known comes slowly to us, but it comes. The military, political, economic, moral, and cultural dis-

asters eventually create the forces that abolish the old monster society and create a new one here, too. So advisers to the ruling class worry about "credibility" and question if the US is "governable" at all. This uncertainty underlies Watergate and the erratic course of the 1976 elections. The rulers are frantic about their failure to prop up the Portuguese client empire. They have nightmares about Black Africans wiping out the last settler colony states in South Africa.

At home and abroad, the system is producing its own grave-diggers at the fastest rate ever. Our problem is to break through all the false propaganda about the real state of the nation and the world. The crisis grows faster than our capacity to deal with it. It is a time for change and acting. VENCEREMOS.

Class and Revolutionary Politics

THE MEANING OF CHICAGO

The revolutionary movement in our country can gain immensely from the Chicago Hard Times Conference (HTC) if its lessons are understood and acted upon.

The Black caucus and Third World leadership intervention at Chicago posed our choices clearly. Their criticisms of the presiding leadership of the conference were solidly based upon Marxist-Leninist principle as it applies to our responsibilities here in the US.

We were emphatically reminded that for revolutionaries of an imperialist country the distinction between oppressor and oppressed nation is the main thing. This means that to be a communist it is not enough to be for class struggle, for socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. A white communist must especially fight for the national liberation of oppressed peoples, for self-determination and against special privilege, white supremacy, chauvinism. Our duty to fight great nation chauvinism and for the right of separation of captive peoples is our first priority.

History further demands of us that we fight first of all for the rights and liberation of the Black colony. It also demands that we fight hard for the rights and sovereignty of Native American Nations, the Mexican and Chicano

nations and for the independence of Puerto Rico.

An important strength of Chicago was that most white activists responded to the Black, Chicano, Mexican, Native American and Puerto Rican leadership. The majority of the conference were well ahead of the official leadership in consciousness of the political issues and in support for meaningful anti-imperialist class and national struggle. In the US today this is essential — there is no other kind of politics that can progressively move toward social revolution.

We need thorough criticism and correction of the disastrously wrong line put forward in Chicago. This is the only way to move on to successful struggle against the white supremacist and chauvinist opportunism that has been the historic downfall of the white left and revolutionary forces in the US.

It is not enough to register and agree with the criticisms offered by our comrades at the conference. We have to search out and deal with the particular roots and causes revealed in this particular event. We, [those of the revolutionary minded part of the left who are white], must take this task for our own. If we leave it mainly to our non-white brothers and sisters,

we will have failed before we start. The only way we can show understanding and appreciation of this special kind of help is to make it less and less necessary in the future.

The Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC) was the principal carrier of the wrong line in organizing the Hard Times conference. The issue for us is even more specific. Can we understand deeply enough our own brief history to root out the causes of the chauvinism and opportunism that made the criticism necessary? Can we change from an organization that is trying to be revolutionary and communist to one that is so in reality? Or will we join RU, PL, the CP etc. in the swamps?

We can change, only if we analyze our own wrong line, its causes: only if we define clearly the revolutionary course, take concrete steps to overcome the wrong line and constantly struggle to remove its causes.

However, our aims cannot be narrowly limited to that. We must aim to unite the best activists of our class and people around politics that are anti-imperialist, that fight discrimination, national and racial oppression, that fight white privilege and fight for self determination, for full equality, for national liberation. This is an indispensable part and priority of fighting for socialist revolution. As we examine and criticize our history, we do so publically and for the benefit of all. This is the only way to become stronger. What is decisive is not us as an organization, but the creation of solidly based revolutionary communist organization as a guarantee of the forward motion of our entire movement.

This can't be done instantly or painlessly or in one paper. Theory and practice, politics, organization, leadership, political struggle, criticism-self-criticism, all enter in. So we have to touch on a wider range of things to avoid a narrow and short-sighted view. We have to avoid substituting issues; like talking about two wrong lines or making the issue how well someone opposed the wrong line. In due course we all have to criticize ourselves and others. It won't come out equally, people have different kinds and amounts of responsibility.

Right now our priority is to understand and deal with the particular criticism and analysis of a particularly dangerous wrong line. We may have some differences in our views, but we must agree to examine our main errors, the causes and remedies; to base our evaluations and criticisms on our political priorities. We need to face facts and evaluate our history. And to remember that criticism is aimed at correcting policy and strengthening people. Smashing is for enemy politics and bourgeois habits and for identified enemies. Sharp

criticism is called for, but must be aimed at the right target.

To turn this bad thing into a good thing we first have to understand why the main thing for revolutionaries in imperialist countries is to understand the difference between oppressor and oppressed nations.

We know that such was Lenin's conclusion from his study of imperialism, the stage of capitalism which is also the era of socialist revolution. It is no secret that Lenin also concluded that national liberation struggle is no longer part of the bourgeois revolution. National struggles are now a component part of proletarian socialist revolution. Lenin went on to recognize, as did Mao Tsetung and Ho Chi Minh, that liberation struggles grow to become the cutting edge and vanguard force as imperialism is forced to give way to the advance of world revolution.

All this is not new to us. Anti-imperialists of the new left have repeated this a thousand times in a thousand ways. How then did PFOC take the same old wrong turn toward chauvinism and opportunism? How could it lose sight of and liquidate the very foundations of revolutionary anti-imperialism?

It is true that middle class and intellectual instability come through as an important factor. But it is too easy to offer the remedy of changing our class base as a remedy in and of itself. That mechanistic notion is part of the problem. Historically, working class movements in imperialist countries have also turned opportunist, social democratic, reformist, national chauvinist, and social-imperialist. Especially in the US. And logically, to unite intellectuals still full of chauvinism and opportunism with a militant but pragmatic and economist working class movement is never going to produce any other result.

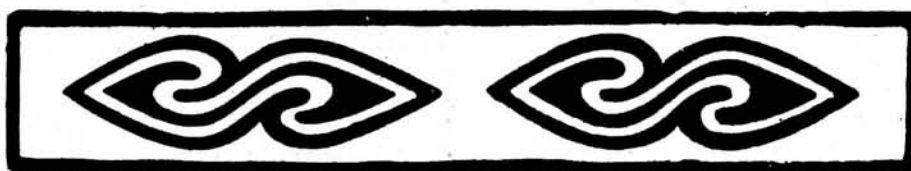
We have to strengthen our understanding of, and commitment to, revolutionary anti-imperialism. We have to create a revolutionary ideological firmness that will grow stronger and bolder in the very struggle that we now approach so timidly and feebly. (We have to raise our banners high instead of dragging them along buried in the baggage.)

We have to examine closely the devices used to justify abandonment of our revolutionary positions in the name of building a "mass" or a "class" base. (These are also not new.) First we have to put the task of building a base in a revolutionary and not in an opportunist way.

Our task is to combine the universal truths (world experience) of Marxism-Leninism with the revolutionary experience of the working

—cont. to page 63

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE OF THE WUO FROM SOME NATIVE AMERICAN WARRIORS



We have read your criticism of the WUO, its Self-Criticism, and the statement by one of its leaders, Bernardine Dohrn. We have read of the crimes which it perpetrated against the Women's Movement, the prison movement, the BLA, and of course, we knew only too well those crimes that it committed against us, the armed segment of the Native American liberation struggle — its warriors!

In this past year that was such a crucial one in our struggle for sovereignty — the Bicentennial — in this year in which you were "going to bring the fireworks" — we had begun to wonder what the WUO was going to do to contribute to the revolution we have envisioned. To add to our growing disillusionment with the WUO over these years was the absence of actions against the State by the WUO during this Bicentennial. Instead of armed actions directed against the enemy, we received copies of *Osawatimie* — but again we read an entire issue without seeing a firm dedication to revolutionary principles, knowing that in the actual struggle going on within this oppressor nation, our People were virtually fighting alone and without that WUO support we had expected.

Now we understand more completely why this happened. Our first reaction to *Prairie Fire* was one of comradely joy in knowing that some of you in the white Left had begun to understand the necessity of armed struggle and had made it a vital part of its program for revolution. We fell to some extent under that "myth of the WUO" which you referred to in your criticism of the Central Committee. But that admiration soon turned to skepticism when we saw how our movement was treated by the WUO; how our struggle was written up in your press: how little space was given to its

struggles in your publications; how "lip service" to support for Indian resistance would occasionally appear in an issue of *Osawatimie*; how articles about Indian people were so dated ("historical"), failing to give current material, or actually contained errors in fact; how an article referring to a Native American struggle was reported by a non-Indian, instead of relying on some of the plentiful Native American accounts of those same events, or failed to utilize some of our Native American political worker/writers for contributions. It was obvious to us that the Native American struggle was not regarded as a leading element in the US revolution by the WUO. As the year went on, the white, male, national chauvinistic tone to *Osawatimie* — the voice of the WUO — began to become an explosive issue with us.

And then the abandonment of armed struggle! Armed Struggle is the foundation of our movement. Our people have been fighting imperialism for 300 years. Today, extreme repression and confrontations with the state are continually upon us: our homes are attacked, our leaders shot or assassinated, our women raped and thrown in jail, our children are dying in the cities of decay. To this, knowing our enemy's true nature, we have responded with direct action! We intend to defeat this enemy. We had expected the same of you. Only now we are beginning to understand how these changes in your organization had come about, and how the WUO had abandoned the politics of *Prairie Fire*.

Now, in your return to those revolutionary politics of the book, we wonder how deep this new insight has become. We wonder if you truly understand the meaning of armed revolution within this nation, really know the nature of our struggle and of the material basis for our

oppression. Do you understand our leadership, and above all, our women? Do you know that many of our leaders in the armed struggle are women? Perhaps we are not vocal, or do not appear before the media. That has not been our concept of leadership. It surely is not guerilla leadership!

Do you know how many of us are Marxist-Leninist? In sweeping aside organizational arrogance, do you pretend to know all there is to the Native American liberation struggle? Or do you take the isolationist position that there is no need to know of our movement or struggle, since you had been planning to lead only the white classes and Left? Is it a reflection of national chauvinism that you cannot see those of us who are Marxist-Leninist? Or is it just another step that kept you from working with us, Native American Marxist-Leninists? We may have had something to contribute to Marxism-Leninism in the Oppressor Nation.

We would call it national chauvinistic to continue to ignore the historical and current rip-off of our natural resources in your analysis of imperialism in the oppressor nation; that in the United States, the oppressor nation continues to oppress those Indian NATIONS within its present borders in the exploitation of those resources, and that this of which we speak is more than a historical fact of "The White Man took Indian Land and built his empire on slaved labor of the Black people." In this period of history, when imperialism has suffered the loss of its colonies in the Third World, it is beginning to intensify its exploitation of those resources found on Indian land, within this country, to replace those it can no longer get elsewhere. The importance of this fact for the future of imperialism and the potential for dealing a mighty death blow to this monster by denying it those Indian resources, is staggering. We would call your analysis of the economic crisis incomplete and lacking in the understanding of the material basis for imperialism in the oppressor nation. Indian voices have told you this before, but you do not listen.

Now we still have these concerns: We are concerned how a revolutionary group criticizes itself, and how it allows the enemy (the State) to know of its errors. We are concerned about the value that the Revolutionary Committee places on security. We are concerned about where the only group we see in the white Left that has been able to successfully conduct clandestine warfare against the State, is now going, for we believe strongly in the necessity of such an organization in the revolution! We want to say: now that you have "cleaned house," where are you in the struggle? Where

WOUNDED KNEE 1973



"One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk."

Tashunka Witko (Crazy Horse)

are you in the revolution? We do not mean where your statements about yourselves say you are. We want to know if the Revolutionary Committee is indeed different from the Central Committee that it has just exposed. Do you still hold on to vestiges of white privilege? Have you truly rid yourselves of male chauvinism? Are you accepting Third World leadership and criticism? Have you truly reinstated armed struggle and clandestinity to its important, vital, rightful place? Do you acknowledge Third World Marxist-Leninists within the oppressor nation, especially our women?

In what way do you differ from the old leadership? We can only judge by your actions. Is the Revolutionary Committee of the WUO going to lead to a change in the actions of the organization, so that the WUO becomes a vital part of the internationalist struggle for nations' self-determination, sovereignty, and ultimate Revolution? We have seen generations of the white man speaking many words of change, and of support for our People. We have learned many times over that the white man cannot always be trusted because he says many things and that his actions do not match his words. We want to see now, what you are . . .

TO MY PEOPLE

by Assata Shakur July 6, 1973

Black brothers, Black sisters, I want you to know that I love you and I hope that somewhere in your heart you have love for me. My name is Assata Shakur (slave name JoAnne Chesimard), and I am a revolutionary. A Black revolutionary. By that I mean that I am a field nigga who is determined to be free by any means necessary. By that I mean that I can never be free unless all of my people are free along with me. By that I mean that I have declared war on all forces that have raped our women, castrated our men and kept our babies empty bellied.

I have declared war on the rich who prosper on our poverty. The politicians who lie to us with smiling faces and all the mindless heartless robots who protect them and their property.

I am a Black revolutionary, and as such I am the victim of all the wrath, hatred and slander that amerikkka is capable of. Like all other Black revolutionaries I have been hunted like a dog, and like all other Black revolutionaries, amerikkka is trying to lynch me.

I am a Black revolutionary woman and because of this I have been charged with and accused of every alleged crime in which a woman was believed to have participated. The alleged crimes in which only men were supposedly involved, I have been accused of planning. They have plastered pictures alleged to be me in post offices, airports, police cars, subways, banks, televisions and newspapers. They have offered over Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) in rewards for my capture and they have issued orders to shoot on sight and shoot to kill.

I am Black revolutionary and, by definition, that makes me part of the Black Liberation Army. The pigs have used their newspapers and TV's to paint the Black Liberation Army to be vicious, brutal mad dog criminals. They have called us gangsters and gun molls and have compared us to such characters as John Dillinger and Ma Barker. It should be clear, it must be clear to anyone who can think, see or hear, that we are the victims. The victims and not the criminals.

It should also be clear to us by now who the real criminals are. Nixon and his crime partners have murdered hundreds of thousands of Third World brothers and sisters in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique, Angola, and South Africa. As was proven by the Watergate, the top law enforcement officials in this country are a lying bunch of criminals. The president, two attorney generals, the head of the FBI, the head of the CIA, and half the White House staff have been implicated in the Watergate crimes.

They call us murderers, but we did not murder over 250 unarmed Black men, women and children, and wound thousands of others in the riots they provoked during the Sixties. The rulers of this country have always considered their property more important than our lives. They call us murderers, but we were not responsible for the more than 6,000 Black people lynched by white racists. They call us murderers, but we were not responsible for the 28 brother inmates and the 9 hostages murdered at Attica. They call us murderers, but we did not murder and wound over 30 unarmed Black students in the Orangeburg massacre. We did not shoot down and murder unarmed Black students at Jackson State or Southern State either.

They call us murderers, but we did not murder Martin Luther King, Emmitt Till, Medger Evers, Malcolm X, George Jackson, Nat Turner, James Chaney and countless other Black Freedom Fighters. We did not bomb 4 Black little girls in a Sunday school. We did not murder, by shooting in the back, 16 year old Rita Lloyd, 11 year old Rickie Bodden, or 10 year old Clifford Glover.

They call us murderers, but we do not control or enforce a system of racism and oppression that systematically murders Black and Third World people. Although Black people supposedly comprise about 15% of the total amerikkkan population, at least 60% of murder victims are Black. For every pig that is killed in the so-called line of duty there are at least 50 Black people murdered by police.

Black life expectancy is much lower than white and they do their best to kill us before we are born. We are burned alive in firetrap tenements. Our brothers and sisters O.D. daily from heroin and methadone. Our babies die from lead poisoning. Millions of Black people have died as a result of indecent medical care. This is murder. But they have the gall to call us murderers.

They call us kidnapers, yet Brother Clark Squire (who is accused along with me, of murdering a New

Jersey state trooper), was kidnapped on April 2, 1969, from our Black community and held on \$100,000 ransom in the New York Panther 21 conspiracy case. He was acquitted on May 13, 1971 along with all the others of all 156 counts of conspiracy by a jury that took less than 2 hours to deliberate. Brother Squire was innocent. Yet he was kidnapped from his community and family. Over two years of his life were stolen, but they call us kidnappers. They call us kidnappers, but we did not kidnap the thousands of Brothers and Sisters held captive in amerikkka's concentration camps. 90% of the prison population in this country are Black and Third World people who can afford neither bail nor lawyers.

They call us thieves and bandits. They say we steal. But it is not us who stole millions of Black people from the continent of Africa. We were robbed of our language, of our Gods, of our culture, of our human dignity, of our labor and of our lives. They call us thieves yet it is not us who rip off billions of dollars every year through tax evasions, illegal price fixing, embezzlement, consumer fraud, bribes, kickbacks, and swindles. They call us bandits, yet every time most Black people pick up our paychecks we are being robbed. Every time we walk into a store in our neighborhood we are being held up. And every time we pay our rent the landlord sticks a gun into our ribs.

They call us thieves, but we did not rob and murder millions of Indians by ripping off their homeland, then call ourselves pioneers. They call us bandits, but it is not us who are robbing Africa, Asia and Latin America of their natural resources and freedom while the people are sick and starving. The rulers of this country and their flunkies have committed some of the most brutal, vicious crimes in history. They are the bandits. They are the murderers. And they should be treated as such. These maniacs are not fit to judge me, Clark Squire, or any other Black person on trial in amerikkka. Black people should, and, inevitably must, determine our destinies.

Every revolution in history has been accomplished by actions, although words are necessary. We must create shields that protect us and spears that penetrate our enemies. Black people must learn how to struggle by struggling. We must learn much by our mistakes.

I want to apologize to you, my Black brothers and sisters, for being on the New Jersey Turnpike. I should have known better. The Turnpike is a check point where Black people are stopped, searched, harassed, and assaulted. Revolutionaries must never be in too much of a hurry or make careless decisions. He who runs when the sun is sleeping will stumble many times.

Every time a Black Freedom Fighter is murdered or captured the pigs try to create the impression that they have squashed the movement, destroyed our forces and put down the Black Revolution. The pigs also try to give the impression that 5 or 10 Guerrillas are responsible for every revolutionary action carried out in amerikkka. That is nonsense. That is absurd. Black revolutionaries do not drop from the moon. We are created by our conditions, shaped by our oppression. We are being manufactured in droves in ghetto streets; places like Attica, San Quentin, Bedford Hills, Leavenworth and Sing Sing. They are turning out thousands of us. Many jobless Black veterans and welfare mothers are joining our ranks. Brothers and sisters from all walks of life who are tired of suffering passively make up the BLA.

There is, and always will be, until every Black man, woman and child is free, a Black Liberation Army. The main function of the Black Liberation Army at this time is to create good examples to struggle for Black freedom and to prepare for the future. We must defend ourselves and let no one disrespect us. We must gain our liberation by any means necessary.

It is our duty to fight for our freedom.

It is our duty to win.

We must love each other and support each other.

WE HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE BUT OUR CHAINS!

IN THE SPIRIT OF:

RONALD CARTER
WILLIAM CHRISTMAS
MARK CLARK
MARK ESSEX
FRANK HEAVY FIELDS
WOODY CHANGA OLUGBALA GREEN

FRED HAMPTON
GEORGE JACKSON
JONATHAN JACKSON
JAMES McCLAIN
HAROLD RUSSELL
ZAYD MALIK SHAKUR

ANTHONY KIMU OLUGBALA WHITE

WE MUST FIGHT ON!!!

CHICAGO: cont. from p. 58

class and oppressed peoples of the US. This includes, but is a tremendous lot more than "base building."

For this task we require a theoretical and historical grasp of both world and US experience and a practical working relationship to struggles inside the US. The first never arises spontaneously, we have to struggle hard for our science.

One of the splendid achievements of the New Left was its active response and support to Black struggle, to China, Vietnam, Puerto Rico, and others. In ideas our movement has been internationalist, anti-revisionist, pro-armed struggle. But within this there have been great weaknesses. One that is typical is the tendency to reduce the question of oppressed nations within the US entirely to a "race" question.

On page 7 of the Dec. 1975 PFOC National Committee (NC) meeting report, amid much general confusion, "internationalism, and national chauvinism" are treated as "matters of external relations" whereas **racism** is posed as an "internal question that divides workers."

We have a clear and urgent duty to oppose and defeat racist ideas among the people and within our class. (And also the sexism and arrogance of white males.) But there is much more to it than this. We have to fight the extraction of super profit and the special oppressions of the capitalist-imperialist system — a system that is also white and male supremacist through and through — we have to be anti-imperialist at home as well as abroad. One aspect of this is to fight against the privileged positions of all whites especially of white males.

To struggle against "racism" is to recognize that exploitative and oppressive societies use distinctions of skin color and race to divide those they oppress. But this is not enough for scientific revolutionary struggle. Under imperialism race struggle is in essence class struggle. But it is also, especially in the US, part of the struggle for national liberation and overwhelmingly a part of the counter-revolution against Black liberation — Boston, the Wallace campaign, "white back-lash." At most, communists should limit the expression "racist" to describe the ideological and cultural-psychological conditioning which causes us to participate in the humiliation and oppression of other peoples at home and abroad. We can never substitute that struggle for the struggle for national liberation, self-determination, against economic, political, and social-cultural discrimination and oppression, against white privilege in all those areas. If we don't carry the struggle to these levels, then we are no longer

revolutionary internationalists, we are ordinary social-chauvinists, opportunists, liberal or reactionary tools of the empire and its ruling class. This means to fight the **white supremacist** institutions of the system, all of them: the government, laws, courts, police, prisons, schools, press-media, armed forces, medicine, union bosses, management bosses — the whole thing. These are not just "racism institutionalized." They are the imperial structure of an oppressor nation and class which uses them to perpetuate and guard exploitation and super-exploitation; "racism" suits them to a "T". They will allow anyone of any color to help them run their system, but not as equal partners.

An article in *Osawatimie* #3, "Our Class Stand" by B. Dohrn states that the main contradiction within the working class is racism. This is wrong. The main contradiction within our class is competition between the workers. In the **Communist Manifesto** Marx and Engels wrote: "Wage labor rests exclusively upon competition between the workers."

Internally, such competition is expressed in wage and skill competition, for jobs and in discrimination by race, national origin, age, sex, social status. But it is all about economic (material) and social relative privilege offered by the system. Externally, there is seizure of colonies, super-exploitation of oppressed peoples, white supremacy, national arrogance, war for redivision of the spoils, etc.

Racism is a major prop of empire, and it can reach the level of really antagonistic contradiction between people. But to take it for the whole is to substitute a slogan for thought, to wipe out the duties of white revolutionaries. As in the approach to organizing the HT conference. To make a fully Marxist analysis does not weaken the fight against "racism"; it puts it on a solid foundation.

The "Our Class Stand" article is a step beyond earlier *Osawatimie* editorials in that it doesn't just make pronouncement, it discusses issues. It fails to arrive at correct conclusions, at least in part because it has a sloppy, careless approach to basic Marxism, like most of the New Left writers who attempt this. This reflects a major weakness, not only of the new left, but of the US historically. Extreme hostility to theory and science, (except in terms of immediate results: pragmatism) runs very deep. So it is commendable to want to try to correct weakness of the left in grasping the theoretical and class struggle foundations of the largely pragmatic and imitative struggle of the late '60's. And these struggles, objectively, were of great strategic class and revolutionary impact, regardless of political limitations of the participants. But posing class struggle against

anti-imperialism is to go backward and not forward. The "correction" is worse than the error.

This is expressed in another error of the same piece. It is stated that the fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the workers and the capitalists. This is wrong. The fundamental contradiction of capitalism is that between social production and private appropriation. The class struggle grows from and constitutes an expression of this fundamental relationship. So does the "anarchy" of production — which is the contradiction between the organization and planning of production in a single factory or sector of industry as against the lack of planning of social production as a whole.

These contradictions express themselves in intense competition developing via the laws of value, leading to monopoly and world-wide extension of the fundamental antagonism between social production and private appropriation. And to the giant monopolies crushing small scale competition and swallowing up all previous productive stages and forms, slave feudal, tribal, etc. All this creates new and greater contradictions, rivalries, wars, crises, power clashes, revolutions, etc. & etc. When imperialism became a world system, dominating all previous social formations, this compelled the socialist revolution to also become world-wide in scope, not abolishing, but uniting with and transforming earlier forms, principally national liberation in our time, but still with anti-feudal, anti-slavery tasks in many cases.

This process is what Lenin deals with in the work **Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism** and in his addresses to the Communist International after the 1917 revolution. Whoever wishes to define US imperialism in a different way than the classics should explain why, not just mush it over. But it is clear that imperialism and national liberation could never be understood if we take class struggle as the foundation without considering the contradictions between the material base and the social relations of production which give rise to that struggle, and condition its forms at the present stage.

It is this fundamental process underlying the uneven development of empire and the super-exploitation of colonies and dependent peoples and countries, and neo-colonies and the resistance thereto in the era of victorious socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles that makes the struggle against imperialism the primary focus of world revolution in our time. This applies to the US both internally and externally as the US is a modern prison house

of nations.

This is the crux of proletarian revolutionary class consciousness and struggle in our time. Anti-imperialism is the essence of class struggle in our time and place. (See Engels, **Socialism, Scientific and Utopian** for better description of the fundamental contradictions of capitalism, chap. III, from **Anti-Duhring**.)

Within this overall unity, our strategic fronts and forms of struggle and national identities are different. Therefore we compose separate national contingents against the common enemy. A most important form of our unity is alliance. This is also an expression of the principle of self-determination. We unite and work together even as we respect our differences. There can be no working class version of the melting-pot that does not end up serving the enemy. At the same time our unity is not merely one of convenience, uniting antagonistic systems against a more immediate danger as was the alliance of capitalist and socialist countries in WWII.

We share a common goal and ultimate destiny that unites us all in fighting for the world-wide victory of social revolution. In this sense, we are of one human family, uniting all working classes and all oppressed peoples.

Our alliances are between equals. No one from a dominant nation can be allowed to regard others as mere reserves to their own 'more important' cause! Internationalism can be crucial for victory, but each working class and people are necessarily the main force of their own revolution.

Another of our departures from revolutionary thinking and action has been in our attitude toward the economic crisis. In order to justify the substitution of "class struggle" in general for revolutionary anti-imperialism (which the opportunists put down as "left sectarian") the crisis was described as just another cyclical crisis of the system, or as primarily the result of the inflation attending the Vietnam war. It was 'analyzed' out of wishful thinking that the crisis would level out the material base of relative privilege. Oppression would become more equal. The needs of the whole class could be primary. Of course facts proved the opposite. Millions of whites suffered, but Blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans were hit by far the hardest. Within the white population, white males suffered least. Discrimination due to sex, age, skill and lack of organization also became greater rather than less.

While not everyone expressed all of these errors, in sum they justified an organizing strategy that wiped out the Leninist analysis of reflections of the class struggle within the class, and of Mao's line of unite with the ad-

vanced, win over the intermediate, struggle with the conservative. And in our country we have whole strata that are even reactionary and outright support the enemy!

Worse, proposals to base our politics and organizing on the needs and struggles of the most oppressed peoples and the most militant, conscious and advanced white workers and women were not heeded but rejected. This happened at the PFOC Boston Conference in 1975 and in the Bay Area immediately afterwards when the July NC report was discussed. In this instance, national representatives took the lead in pushing the wrong line and criticising heavily those who spoke for a revolutionary content. The same sort of push for the wrong line then followed in the Bay Area steering committee, in membership meetings, in documents. In some cases it was even theorized that the economic crisis was wiping out or at least reducing the material base of national and racial oppression and privilege!

In the Hard Times work, even talk about white supremacy and chauvinism among the white left and white workers was dropped. Instead there was substituted an emphasis on working with particular Black and Third World activists. Criticism of the opportunism involved in this was called racist. Thus, right from the start, all out "unity", economism, reformism, utopianism, became the politics and the style. All unity and no struggle with liberalism and all struggle and no unity with proposals to give priority to national liberation and to the needs of those hardest hit by crisis and most open to struggle. Events compelled some gestures toward change. They were too half-hearted and too late. At the end of Dec. the NC was still defending its wrong line in a report rejecting criticism and proposals from the Bay Area Steering Committee which was moving toward unity around correct politics.

In our society all weaknesses feed into and reinforce the wrong line on class and national struggle, as in the case of PFOC. This is not only a theoretical and political process. It is profoundly influenced by social, cultural, psychological and material competitive pressures. And it is most essential to understand that the ever present climate of white supremacy and chauvinism feeds all other class and political weaknesses of white revolutionaries and activists.

So it is with the contempt for theory mentioned before. For the first half of 1975 the question of who and what we are was debated in terms of cadre and organizational form as opposed to mass organizing. It took months of struggle to gain a toe hold for the idea that communist organization is an urgent priority of political analysis, of line and leadership. Even

then, spontaneous ideas remained very strong. Boston reinforced those ideas, even after we accepted communist organization as a goal. In fact organization was put ahead of politics to protect opportunism.

About bourgeois concepts of leadership: wrong politics need bureaucratic protection. Manipulative and factional methods serve bad politics. They cover for opportunism. They facilitate liquidation of struggle against national oppression and white supremacy. This is the real content of the "non-political" approach of the organizers of our Boston Conference (PFOC). A headlong rush to national organization without a revolutionary political line led directly to the suppression of the anti-imperialist and pro-communist party building politics of elected delegates from the San Francisco Bay Area. This suppression was enforced by an indecent attack upon women and men alike for our politics, but covered by false charges of sexism. Charges "withdrawn" but never dealt with.

This opportunist misuse of the cause of women's liberation expresses a tendency to substitute the issue of sexism for the struggle against male supremacy and women's liberation as a major component part of social revolution. This misuse and wrong focus not only weakened our struggle against national oppression; it weakened our struggle against the oppression of women as well. This was the case at Chicago. PFOC leaders (former) made a commitment to struggle for a stronger position; they did not do so. They were heavily criticized at the conference by Black, Third World and white women. Properly so; it was a major failing.

Thus, bad methods are not only internal questions. They always affect mass politics and practice. Bad politics and leadership at Boston reproduce themselves a hundred fold at Chicago. Suppression of politics at Boston is matched at Chicago by a program that restricted political debate to the few who were chosen. Black and Third World women and men were strong enough to break through. Otherwise it would have been disaster.

We also need to criticize acceptance of the PL, CP, RU, OL mush about multi-national class and party.

We already said that the system conditions us. One way is by the old left, the CP, Trotskyists, and the inbetweens — PL, RU, OL. We react to them and to even 'newer' dogmatist-opportunists. But we haven't criticized their bad politics and treachery. This is a liberal conception of uniting the left. We have to expose all wrong policy and practice with national liberation and fight all phony anti-racism, instead of imitating it. Unless we fight for our

anti-imperialism, it will always fade under attack.

We too are crippled by heavy resistance to theory and a devotion to 'practicality.' A variant of this contempt is to study classics without regard to our real needs. Again, the Dec. (1975) NC report is a prime negative example. The NC studied Lenin's **What Is To Be Done** and ended up supporting everything Lenin opposed!

Too many of us imagine that ordinary workers and people will only fight for the most immediate selfish needs. This is nonsense. Most people need and want a better life even more desperately than we ourselves. They are right, the crisis is a cumulative one marked by convulsions of a dying system. We can't go on living as we have. Society is wasting. The rulers can't go on ruling the same old way either. What is missing is a strong Communist Party with massive revolutionary support. But there have been too many hollow revolutionaries with loud promises. We need honesty and hard work to produce results and show strength, not timidity. Lenin said it:

"Don't blame the workers for your own backwardness!"

Facing the facts is the first part of correction. More is required. Thinking deeply, serious political evaluation and criticism. Digging out roots and causes. Then self-criticism: concrete searching out the individual and group and leadership responsibilities for wrong line and bad methods. **This has to include the active participation nationally of those who opposed the wrong line; there must be recognition of the inner struggle. Honesty is totally important for us now.**

Our rectification must be public as well as internal. This is the only guarantee of a new style of responsibility to members, the left and our class and peoples. Our study and political statement discussion must be reoriented to these needs.

We must be exemplary in struggle against national oppression and white and male supremacy. "Tell no lies—claim no easy victories." (Amilcar Cabral)

REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONALIST POLITICS IN COMMAND

Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC) is a young and growing communist organization situated in the white oppressor nation in the United States. Our politics, revolutionary anti-imperialism, are rooted in dialectical and historical materialism, the science and ideology of Marxism-Leninism. PFOC is committed to building socialist revolution, which is the essential first step toward a worldwide communist society. To achieve this goal requires the total destruction of imperialism, opportunism and revisionism, and white and male supremacy. There must also be a revolutionary communist party in the white oppressor nation in the U.S. in order to bring about the defeat of imperialism. We define party-building as the central task for white communists at the present time. Our political journal, BREAKTHROUGH, is joining the struggle for revolutionary anti-imperialist, Marxist-Leninist politics and practice as a necessary part of building a revolutionary communist party.

We understand that all forms of struggle, including armed struggle, are necessary to bring down U.S. imperialism. PFOC's strategy for working class organizing in this period is to situate ourselves where national, women's, and class struggles are the most intense, where white and male supremacy and privilege can be clearly identified, and where white workers can be won to unite with national liberation struggles and women's struggles. Only in this way will the class struggle in the white oppressor nation be combined with the leading struggles of U.S. oppressed nations and women against U.S. imperialism. This means committing ourselves to various struggles in the prisoner solidarity movement, in communities, in workplaces, and in international solidarity movements. We understand that revolutionary theory must guide revolutionary practice, and that practice tests the correctness of theory. We rely on the principles of democratic centralism and criticism/self-criticism to help determine, evaluate, and correct our practice.

As an organization, we commit ourselves to active solidarity with national liberation struggles, to supporting the right of self-determination for oppressed nations inside and outside the U.S., and to combatting the white supremacist institutions of U.S. imperialism. We commit ourselves to fight for women's liberation, and gay liberation, against the male supremacist institutions of U.S. imperialism. We commit ourselves to fight against all forms of opportunism, national and male chauvinism, privilege, competition, and arrogance which have historically characterized most of the white oppressor nation left in the U.S. We commit ourselves to struggle with all comrades who relate to us on the basis of equality and mutual respect. We will struggle with all who have honest differences with us and who are principled in the struggle. We will unite with all who break with opportunism to struggle against imperialism.

WHAT IS LEFT?

*After the bars and the gates and the
degradation*

What is left?

*After the lock ins and the lock outs and the lock
ups*

What is left?

*I mean, after the chains that get entangled in
the grey of one's matter*

*After the bars that get stuck in the hearts of
men and women*

What is left?

After the tears and disappointments

After the lonely isolation

After the cut wrist and the heavy noose

What is left?

I mean, like, after the commissary kisses

And the get-your-shit-off-blues

After the hustler has been hustled

What is left?

After the sad futile maneuvers

After the shrill and barren laughter

After the contraband emotions

What is left?

*After the murderburgers and the goon squads
and the tear gas*

After the bulls and the bullens and the bullshit

What is left?

*I mean like, after you know that God can't be
trusted*

After you know that the shrink is a pusher

*That the word is a whip, and the badge is a
bullet*

What is left?

After you know that the dead are still walking

After you realize that silence is talking

That outside and inside are just an illusion

What is left?

I mean like, where is the sun?

Where are her arms and where are her kisses?

There are lip prints on my pillow

I am searching

What is left?

*I mean, like, nothing is standstill and nothing
is abstract*

The wing of a butterfly can't take flight

The foot on my back is a part of a body

The song that I sing is a part of an echo

What is left?

I mean like, love is specific

Is my mind a machine gun?

Is my heart a hacksaw?

Can I make freedom real? Yeah,

What is left?

I am at the top and bottom of a lower-archy

I am in love with losers and laughter

I am in love with freedom and children

Love is my sword and truth is my compass

What is left?

ASSATA SHAKUR



Assata Shakur