

Tim

# Sojourner Truth Organization

4608 Forest

INTERNAL DISCUSSION BULLETIN NO. 22, APRIL, 1981.

FOR THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Logistics Memo.	1.
Agenda.	2.
Schedule.	3.
Clarification of Agenda.	4.
Premises and Assumptions, DH.	5.
" " " " , NI.	7.
Against the Third Worldist Drift in STO, NI & LZ.	8.
Black Nationalism, DH.	14.
Notes from the KC Debate, DH.	33.
Note on Capital Restructuration, LH..	41.
Theses on the Present Stage, KL.	42.
The Imperialism of the Multinationals.	47.
Proposal for a Citywide Workers Group, JC.	52.
Criticism of STO Factory Work, S. Vieux.	57.
Discussion Questions on Fascism, BH.	59.
Thoughts on the Rise of the New Right, R. McGuire.	61.
Review of STO Policy Decisions.	70.
History of STO, NI.	73.
Response to Alison on Women, CA.	80.



# Sojourner Truth Organization

ROUGH AGENDA FOR APRIL 15-19, 1981 GMM

The following are the topics around which the CC proposes to organize discussion in the first half of the GMM. The topics below fall into two categories: the first group, of three, deals with some questions of analysis of the current situation; these are questions which will have to be studied and debated for a long time and we do not expect the GMM to reach agreement on them. The second group, of five, takes up questions of line for STO; in these areas we expect the GMM to reach binding decisions. The CC is aware that the lines between one topic and another are not perfectly clear, especially within the second group; we believe that this is to some extent unavoidable. Also, the divisions below are not necessarily our final recommendation; they are being sent out now to give participants in the GMM some idea of what to expect there.

## QUESTIONS OF ANALYSIS

1. The character of the current crisis - secular or cyclical, the law of value, etc.
2. Irrespective of the point above - the position of the US within the world capitalist system.
3. Popular polarization and its character - attitudes and consciousness.

## QUESTIONS OF LINE

1. The war and the likelihood of increasing state repression.
2. Fascism and the klan.
3. The future development of the Black struggle, the role of nationalism.
4. Struggles in the sphere of social reproduction, what to expect from the anti-nuke movement, reproductive rights, etc. and evaluation of our previous decisions in this area.
5. How to organize at the point of production.

Papers on a number of the above topics have been and are being prepared. The CC will undertake to guarantee the clarification of the issues and ensure a debate where differences exist.

I M P O R T A N T  
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Memo from KC Branch to STO membership and friends attending GMM:

We need to know the following information immediately:

Who is coming.

Who needs a ride from what bus/train/plane at what time.

Who needs free housing. (We can house 48 people & have reserved 4 motel rooms for overflow. BRING SLEEPING GEAR!!)

Who wants us to arrange private motel accommodations.

Number of children and any other relevant childcare information.

Please respond quickly. Call or write Cathy at (816) 561-2861, after 4:30 PM  
4241 Charlotte  
Kansas City, MO 64110

The KC branch will provide snacks at the meeting. No grandiose plan of collective feeding is being considered.

The meeting will be held at Foolkiller, 39th & Main. Maps & directions will be sent soon.

Structure of agenda for main discussion and opening session. c.c.

### Wednesday

C.C. Report - outlining background of major points under discussion at GMM.

Discussion of c.c. report

Election of presiding committee

C.C. recommends committee of 5 - will nominate m.l., l.m., d.h.

Approval of meeting agenda

Presiding committee will have responsibility for overseeing agenda throughout the meeting

### Thursday

Presentation by d.h. on current crisis etc. (Wed. night if there is time)  
General discussion

Trends in popular consciousness (the subjective element) A panel of different views (2 or 3) followed by general discussion

### Thursday evening

Anti-nuke Fraction meeting...other small meetings; formal & informal

### Friday

The various discussions around more specific policy areas indicated in the rough agenda will all be introduced by short presentations. Where we are aware of major differences the presentation will be in a debate format.

### Order;

Black movement and nat. question

Production

Social Reproduction

Fascism

War danger and state repression

### Sat. morning

Women's wing

Rest of Saturday is discussion of external organizational question, extending into some internal organizational questions

### Sunday;

Conclude internal organizational questions

Elections.

Our intention is to leave some other time open for fraction meetings. The c.c. is approaching a number of people to introduce the various topics. One may be you, be prepared. This, of course, is a proposal. It will be considered Wed. night. It may be modified by the presiding committee during the course of the meeting.

## Clarification of GMM agenda

The gmm sets itself some difficult tasks. We expect two opposed frustrations. The general theoretical issues will tend to get lost in detailed arguments, while the specific implementation of new tasks while not be handled with sufficient concreteness. The C.C. hopes that the following general remarks on the major section of the agenda will help members prepare for the meeting.

We assume that there will be no challenge to the general structure of the meeting as it has been presented. Different concerns and emphases will be handled within it. However, it should be clear that all questions are open at the GMM and all past positions and decisions are subject to criticism and change. An elected presiding committee will be responsible for keeping the agenda organized and for establishing an order and priority among various possible areas of discussion. The presiding committee's decisions are proposals to the body as a whole and can be overturned by a simple majority.

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One major problem with the agenda is the breadth of the topics and the overlap between them. We will be considering complicated questions without the prior investigation and clarification that would be optimal. Necessarily this will limit what we can get done. On some points the meeting will be satisfied with a further clarification of the alternatives; on others we may only get to the point of categorizing the relevant evidence and arguments. On some, however, we should reach decisions, because our work must proceed on one or another set of operating assumptions and, if we are to function critically, these must be explicitly elaborated.

Given<sup>7</sup> the inherent difficulty of the meeting and the fact that we have a large percentage of relatively new members, the C.C. thought it might be helpful to outline some of STO's policies and assumptions which should be seen as under review in this meeting. Since this necessarily raises areas of controversy about what our positions are and what they mean, about their validity, and about their relationship to this discussion, we are including different views. Neither are meant to be inclusive.

Premises and assumptions at issue according to n.i. Supplement, and, in some cases, intended corrective to d.h.

1. (explicit) For oppressed peoples, nationalism is "applied internationalism."
2. (implicit) There could be no mass reactionary movement among black and other third world people in U.S.
3. Capitalism would continue indefinitely until it was overthrown by socialist revolution. (Explicit)
4. In discussing revolution, the terms "socialist" and "proletarian" are interchangeable. (my own view, not necessarily STO doctrine)
5. Estimates of the period bear great importance in determining activities. (Implicit in discussion of "lull")
7. | 6. Theories are not demonstrated right or wrong except in moments of historic shock, class polarization. (explicit)
7. The focus k of the Left must be on those capitalists and capitalist policies which actually exercise power, not on those which appear as potential greater evils. (explicit)

"Significant Crack" Group (p. 12)  
AGAINST THE THIRD WORLDIST DRIFT IN STO

It is now about four years that STO has been guided by an orientation toward the national liberation movements as the main determinant of our work. That orientation was formally registered in the goals we set for ourselves: to establish close ties with the national liberation movements, particularly those of the oppressed peoples within U.S. borders, and to realign the white Left by crystallizing within it a revolutionary current defined by solidarity with national liberation as the center of revolutionary strategy.

What results have we obtained from this orientation?

1. We have utterly failed to realign the white left around anti-imperialism, or to crystallize an anti-imperialist current, or even to advance the unity among those groups we identified as parts of that current.

2. We have, however, succeeded in alienating a number of serious revolutionaries, sympathetic to our previous positions or parts of them, who, as a result of our anti-imperialist orientation, identify us with groupings which they, and we, regard as political imbeciles.

3. We have not managed to develop closer ties with the national liberation groups towards which we looked for direction. Even in a case where these groups were able to take the initiative in launching programs we support - as in Human Rights Day or the National Black United Front Conference - we found ourselves, with some individual exceptions not reflective of or felt throughout the organization, in the position of spectators, and not very knowledgeable ones at that. In fact, our relations with some of the more prominent national liberation groups have deteriorated since we decided to orient towards them - in part because of our <sup>de facto</sup> abandonment of all efforts to intervene among white workers, a decision which flowed logically from our general orientation towards these groups. (In part the estrangement is due to our insistence, which we never seriously compromised, on arriving at our own positions independently and debating them within the so-called anti-imperialist current.)

4. As a result of our tendency to identify the revolutionary current in the Black movement totally with separatist nationalism, we have isolated ourselves from those forces within the Black movement who, while remaining committed to autonomous black organization and opposed to the subordination of the black struggle to any opportunist unity in the reform movement - the essence of our politics - are not particularly interested in territorial separation, preferring instead to regard the black movement as a detonator

of the general class struggle and choosing their programs with that goal in mind.

5. We have fallen into the traditional error of allowing the slogan of the right of self-determination to substitute for the direct challenge to the race privileges of white workers. An example of this is the Bakke-Weber campaign, in which STO took no part and therefore did not learn until too late of such things as a mass anti-Weber meeting in Gary that drew 600 black steel workers, or the persistent surfacing within the anti-Bakke coalition of debate over the material base of white racism - surely an arena in which we could have intervened.

6. In spite of the resolution passed at the last General Membership Meeting to reinvigorate our production concentration, we have been totally unable to do so, in part because of the impossibility of deriving from our orientation a sensible line on multi-national organization - something which is absolutely necessary in any production work we undertake.

7. We have become experts on the lines of the various revolutionary ~~mx~~ factions in other countries while remaining ignorant, for instance, of developments over the past year in a large auto parts plant in Chicago employing 4000 Black, Latin and white workers, male and female, who recently went through a struggle that set the entire revisionist, Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist Left against us. This is a plant where we have a ten-year history, where there are still influential former members of STO carrying out a line congenial to us, a plant where we could perhaps have influenced the outcome, had we paid attention to what was happening there. \*

8. From our explicit equation of revolutionary nationalism and proletarian internationalism we drew the logical inference that STO has nothing to offer the oppressed peoples by way of politics. From this we drew the further conclusion, also logical, that for ThirdWorld communists STO was, at best, a way station on the road to membership in one of the "genuine," that is, all Black, all Latin, etc. revolutionary nationalist organizations. This conclusion has led us to withhold our maximum contribution from several Third World individuals who agreed with us more than with any existing nationalist organization on questions which these individuals regarded as important.

9. Perhaps most serious of all, our orientation has given legitimacy to a notion of our own role as strategic auxiliaries of the "real" struggle. This



notion was recently expressed in an article in URGENT TASKS by Joe Acero - by the way, the writer's name translates into English as "Steel" and into Russian as "Stalin" - as follows: "we will have to adjust to a situation in which revolutionary initiatives, insights and strategies will come not from the center but from outside..."

We know that the writer does not believe that such self-denial should extend to tactical initiatives. Nevertheless, we do not believe that any sentiment, no matter how well motivated, that renounces in advance the possibility of taking initiative in any sphere can be of service to the revolutionary cause. At least one of the writers of this paper wishes to declare that the day such a sentiment, which has already gained currency within STO, becomes official policy will be the day he resigns his membership.

Now, we do not suggest that our opponents share all the above mentioned deviations. We know that Don, for instance (note: this paper was presented first in the debate between Don and Noel in Kansas City) shares with us an opposition to most, if not all, of them, and has been in the vanguard of the fight against some of them. Nevertheless, they are the legitimate offspring of the general orientation which he has advocated, and his opposition is rendered feeble by the strategic platform on which he is standing.

Our policy for the past few years has been based on the assumption that, for oppressed peoples, revolutionary nationalism is equivalent to proletarian internationalism. This was stated most explicitly in our fourth thesis on white supremacy and the national question: "... nationalism of oppressed peoples... is the most widespread and visible example of 'applied internationalism' in the world today. What is called 'narrow nationalism'... insofar as it exists at all, consists merely of limitations in outlook and understanding within liberation struggles..."

As a corollary to this, we developed the notion that national liberation equals class struggle in the present epoch, that if it is national liberation it is class struggle, and if it isn't national liberation it isn't class struggle.

We disagree with both the major assumption and the implied corollary. Since we have argued this elsewhere (see the articles in the first three IDB's) we will be brief, and attempt to focus on new arguments.

The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia followed by the Chinese invasion of Vietnam revealed a crisis of that school of Marxism that regarded the national liberation movements as the fixed point around which everything else revolved. Contrary to the Guardian, Workers World Party and virtually everyone else,

these events were not aberrations due to revisionism or some such. They were products not of the failures of national liberation but of its success.

This is the dialectic with a vengeance. The success, partial to be sure, of the national liberation movements of gaining for the underdeveloped countries some space in a world dominated by imperialism has given rise, in an "imperfect" form, to the class differentiation characteristic of modern capitalist societies. It is this success in bringing about the conditions for class differentiation, which does not necessarily mean the formation of a traditional bourgeoisie based on private ownership of the means of production, that is responsible for the visible reversal (e.g. China and Zimbabwe) of the greatest contribution of the national liberation movements to the world revolutionary process, their demonstration that people can change the world, as it becomes increasingly in the interest of the new bourgeoisies to substitute top-down mobilization of the "masses" for the disciplined spontaneity which is the essence of the communist society. The connection between national liberation theory and Stalinism is not accidental but necessary, since Stalinism is the theory par excellence of how to bring about major social change while treating the proletariat as object.

Now, if we recognize this process on a world scale - and we all do, to one degree or another - how much more does it manifest itself within the U.S., and in particular with relation to the Black people, who, while certainly sharing many characteristics with oppressed nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, are also the most highly proletarianized people on the planet, have an extremely high level of culture and are second to no people anywhere in their ability to detect the slightest manipulation by hidden enemies? The theory of Mao Tse-tung and Amilcar Cabral has proven that it can mobilize backward peasants to wage a mighty and successful struggle for national independence. It has also proven that it cannot win the confidence of the black proletariat in the U.S., who seek not merely mobilization but full self-expression in their struggle.

Something else is needed to realize the tremendous revolutionary potential of Black Americans, situated at the crossroads of history - something that transcends the national liberation theory that has sufficed elsewhere: perhaps a new synthesis of Gramsci, DuBois and C.L.R. James. And it is no accident that none of the national liberation groups we have encountered have been able to make that synthesis or even recognize its necessity. The reason is that they are starting from the view point of national liberation, even when they extend it to a world scale.

11.  
\*denies socialism as a transitory period encompassing two modes.

\* ~~of~~ white skin privilege is an constituent part of the hegemony of capitalist society - therefore, "significant crack" theory is counter to Gramsci's hegemony.

On the white worker: in one of our documents we put forward the notion of the need to win over a "healthy minority" of white workers. What is a "healthy minority?" The formulation solves nothing, and moreover it smells of sociology. You see, on one side we have 1000 white racists and on the other side we have 750 black revolutionaries and 251 white anti-racists and so we win because we have more, and it turns out that one fourth plus one is the "healthy minority." That is not the way the class struggle works. Workers, when they move, do not form close majorities. The white skin privilege depends, for its authority, on being able to present a solid front. Any significant crack will bring the whole structure down, and the result will be the masses of white workers lined up on the side of proletarian revolution. What is a significant crack? It is not possible to say in advance, but we do know that any successes in this area will have far more than simple numerical weight.

In order to have any success in this work, however, it is necessary to explicitly repudiate the implied corollary to our general orientation, namely that national liberation equals class struggle in the present epoch. We have written about this before, too, but a small reminder won't hurt. The Second International saw only trade unions and parliamentary struggle. Today our Third Worldists see only national liberation wars. Neither is accurate. The struggle of the workers in the imperialist countries, while it has not yet reached the level of a categorical challenge to capitalist rule, was crucial in making possible the victories of the oppressed peoples on a world scale. The victories of the national liberation movements, while not yet having broken free of the capitalist world system, have been vital in restoring to the proletariat its self-confidence. We are approaching the final conflict, and the two streams must be brought together. Where better than here?

uneven!  
must be concrete in examples.

Recently there has been a lot of talk in STO about the fascist danger. People should stop to consider. German fascism and the attempt to exterminate the Jews plunged the world into war and ruined Europe. Fascism in the U.S. and the attempt to exterminate people of color will inevitably mean holocaust on a world scale. It will not be very useful to speak of the victors in such a conflict. The workers in this country, including the white workers, are key to preventing such an outcome. In STO, regardless of our differing views on the current crisis, we are all agreed that a crisis is here. It will inevitably lead to different responses in the mass movement, including different responses from black workers. We must end our exclusive focus on one aspect of the black response, the nationalist aspect. Our attempt here is to

why?  
\*

not a corollary

argue the need for a theoretical framework that can provide a firm underpinning for such a practical change in our work, since, as has been proven in the past, good resolutions are not enough.

Finally, on rereading old IDB's, we notice a strong resemblance between some of what we have been arguing and the position put forth by Ted Allen in his letter to STO. (IDB # 4) There were things we disagree with in that letter, particularly his refusal to acknowledge that there could be any serious considerations, other than opportunism, that led us to the course we now oppose. Nevertheless, we want specifically to associate ourselves with Ted's argument, and to urge all members of STO to reread his letter.

Lenny & Noel

I am putting this section of my response to Joel Jordan in the IDB because I think NI and LZ's positions on Black nationalism are virtually identical to Joel's. (DHT)

Jordan page 3

#### BLACK NATIONALISM

I don't intend to respond in detail to Jordan's treatment of Black history. This does not indicate agreement with its major thrust, notably with its consistent depreciation of nationalist trends and tendencies. However, one point cannot go without challenge, both because it is very wrong, and because it leads into other problems with his position. Jordan repeatedly makes mistaken and completely unsubstantiated characterizations of Black nationalist politics. For example:

"By contrast, the Black nationalists, because of their separatist perspective, do not see the necessity for independent Black worker organization, but rather cross-class organization in which the needs of Black workers are strictly subordinated to the interests of separate national development." (U.T. 8, p. 20, Jordan's emphasis).

This is simply untrue. There are numbers of Black nationalists who do see the necessity for independent Black worker organization, and who would never argue that the needs of Black workers should be "strictly subordinated" to anything. Rather than considering how various revolutionary Black nationalist trends present their goals and priorities, Jordan apparently believes he can deduce everything important about Black nationalism from his own definitions of certain key concepts - self determination, nationalism, and separatism.

"Throughout this paper we use the terms 'separatism' and 'nationalism' synonymously when referring to Black people. This is because we regard 'nationalism' as an ideology which aims at the creation of an independent nation state." (U.T. \*, p. 10)

Journal page 1

In contrast with the vague conceptions of self-determination prevalent in the C.P. and SWP, which could cover almost anything except its literal meaning of secession and national independence, Jordan's definitions have some merit. But that merit doesn't stretch far. ~~Formerly~~ <sup>Current</sup> The political attitudes of white Americans are liberally dosed with a nationalism that has had nothing to do with the "creation of an independent nation-state" for the past 200 years. Indeed, its more immediate function is to deny an "independent nation state" to other peoples and to legitimate a range of national privileges. In my view, nationalism is not any one thing but is made up of different and contradictory elements. But those are points for later in the paper. Now, what is relevant is ~~that Jordan~~ <sup>the</sup> a remarkable arrogance with which Jordan assumes that through verbal equations he is able to determine what the political priorities of Black nationalists and their supporters must be - irrespective of time, circumstances, and what actual Black nationalists rather clearly state them to be.

It is slanderous to charge the actual Black Nationalist movement with the attempt to subordinate every specific concern of Black people, and all of the issues of the wider class struggle, to the attempt to build a separate Black state. This is not the position of any Black nationalist grouping or trend with which we are familiar. And Jordan goes even further:

15. "Insofar as separatists do take part in struggles for equality (i.e., busing, affirmative action, against police abuse), they do so half-heartedly precisely because their own separatist program can only be successful as a product of the failure of these struggles and the resulting cynicism of the Black masses towards the struggle for equality."

MORE

Why should Black people want to separate from the U.S., if they think they can gain equality where they are?" (U.T. 8, p. 14).

(If this argument has a familiar ring, it is because with the simple substitution of 'revolutionary' for separatist we will have a time-honored argument of every reformist theory against revolutionary perspectives.) Presumably all of us, including Jordan, are familiar with ~~the actual historical fact that~~ <sup>history and</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>know</sup> white socialists have often been "half-hearted" (at best) in the struggle for equality, because 'equality was impossible short of socialism! I am unfamiliar with any parallel examples of black nationalists downplaying and undermining the struggles of Black people around their immediate needs and demands, and know for a fact that all of the major revolutionary Black nationalist groupings are fully committed to exactly these struggles although they may not pursue them in the manner which Jordan would advise.

~~In short~~, Jordan's conception of Black nationalism is sorely in need of some contact with reality. Then, he would discover that Black nationalism has a very broad mass base unified by the conception that on questions of primary concern to Black people, Black people - not the Democratic party, not any existing or potential vanguard party, and not the 'multi-national working class', should make the decisions. This view is shared by reformists and by revolutionaries, by those orientated to the workplace and those focused on the Black communities, by those who believe that strategic alliances with white forces are possible and/or necessary, and those who believe that they are impossible and/or unnecessary.

There are nationalists whose operative goal is an independent nation on a definite territory, and there are nationalists who believe that the right of self determination should be exercised to gain real equality, guaranteed and implemented through institutions of Black Power. Undoubtedly some of the attitudes and views within this general nationalist framework are incompatible with each other, sometimes coexisting uneasily in the same organization, or even in the same individual.

In this entire arena, those who believe that the immediate priority for Black people is 'nation-building' in the 'Black Belt' are only one tendency, although a definitely legitimate one. However, not even this section of Black nationalism, to my knowledge, counterposes its priorities to the other needs and grievances of Black people in the way that Jordan, without the slightest bit of evidence, asserts that all Black nationalists, by their very definition, must.

This should be considered carefully. Sections of the Black movement that define themselves as nationalist are involved in the entire range of activities of the Black movement. Some are attempting to develop a struggle for land in the South. These apparently would meet Jordan's rigorous criteria. They are 'genuine' nationalists. But what about those nationalists, or those who think they are nationalist, who are working for Black control over the education of Black children, or against police and white racist violence, or against drugs and crime in the Black community?



What about those who are organizing Black workers and fighting for equality at the point of production? For Jordan these are just not Black nationalists. In fact, though they may not know it, Black nationalism is opposed to their concerns. This is really quite outrageous, but it is quite consistent with Jordan's treatment of Black history in general. Jordan is reluctant to view any upsurge of Black militance and radicalism as nationalism no matter how its participants viewed themselves. The Panthers, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, RAM, all of the militants of the sixties and early seventies, were not really nationalists according to Jordan. They were just confused, "...the ideology they developed - 'revolutionary nationalism' - had no internal consistency". (U.T. No. 8, p. 12) Even Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association come perilously close to missing Jordan's demanding standards for Black nationalism.

Of course, Jordan can use any definition of nationalism he prefers. But his choice has no particular privileged status. Jordan's definition doesn't explain anything. It may simplify his arguments against STO, but it does this only at the cost of losing contact with the vast and contradictory range of political behavior in this country which is determined in substantial part by reactionary <sup>and</sup> characteristic and progressive anti-imperialist manifestations of nationalism. Though this is merely an assertion on my part here, I believe that it will be demonstrated in the rest of the paper.

It is only fair to say that this feature of Jordan's paper, its self-satisfied ignorance of Black nationalist politics, is particularly irritating to STO because he treats our politics similarly. He attributes policies and priorities to us which we do not have, based solely on his view that such policies and priorities are necessarily entailed by our support for Black nationalism. An extended passage from his article will allow me to illustrate this point:

"STO does recognize the importance of Black struggles for equality. However, STO sees the Black struggle primarily as a struggle for self-determination, and in particular for a separate Black nation-state. Consequently, rather than viewing the Black struggle as a component of a united, multi-racial working class revolutionary socialist movement, STO sees the Black struggle as developing separately from that of white workers, with a different goal, i.e., a Black nation. They further argue that the primary responsibility of white revolutionaries is to win a significant number of white workers to give concrete support to this Black struggle for self-determination. Because of the separatist character of the Black struggle, STO opposes strategically the building of a multi-racial revolutionary party, preferring to encourage Blacks to build an all-Black revolutionary party."

(U.T. no 8, page 7)

Such is Jordan's summary. It's not our summary. On crucial points it is opposed to our expressly stated positions, and its general framework, a rigid separation between the Black struggle seen as a motor for the overall revolutionary struggle against capitalism, and the Black struggle as a national liberation movement in its initial stages, is explicitly rejected in our position.

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19.

On the struggle for equality ST^ says,

"The struggle for equality within the working class, which is the main antidote to capitalist hegemony and the main issue around which genuine proletarian solidarity must be built and tested, is obviously led by oppressed peoples."

"The fight for equality is so central to the development of revolutionary class consciousness that it must never be subordinated to any considerations of unity in the reform struggle." (Theses on White Supremacy and the National Question, Nos. 5 & 7, U.T. No. 2, page 2)

Contrary to Jordan's assertion, STO does not put specific priority on the struggle for a "separate Black nation state". ~~We~~ We argue ~~is~~ that there is a political and historical "potential" for such a struggle. We argue against those who, along with Jordan, dismiss this ~~particular~~ approach to the Black movement as a "romantic fantasy". However, we are familiar with the various reasons why it is not the immediate and over-riding priority of the Black movement. So are most Black nationalists. While we are quite familiar with the distinction between a potential and a reality, we have maintained, and still maintain, that a Black movement which determines that its goal is an independent Black nation will not thereby lose its ability to "generate revolutionary currents in the class struggle as a whole". (Theses no. 7 & 8, U.T. No. 2, page 2-3). Perhaps we are wrong on this point, though nothing in Jordan's argument convinces us of this.

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However, it is just not true that STO poses the impact of the Black struggle on the class struggle against its anti-capitalist potential as a movement of Black people, subordinating the former consideration to the latter. That is Jordan's opposition, it cannot be found anywhere in any of STO's written positions, nor can it be inferred from our political work.

STO does advance strategic priorities for white revolutionaries, but they are not the priority that Jordan attributes to us - "to win a significant number of white workers to give concrete support to this Black struggle for self-determination" (meaning the struggle for a separate nation. d.h.). Our argument in detail can be found, among other places, in our pamphlet White Supremacy and the Afro-American National Question:

"A central feature of strategy must be the winning of a substantial section of white workers to solidarity with the struggles of oppressed peoples, specifically with the oppressed Black, Puerto Rican, Mexican and Native American peoples living and working within the current territorial boundaries of the U.S. This entails a frontal attack on the institution of white supremacy. White supremacy is a major element of capitalist hegemony in this country. Its function is the development of white racial solidarity as a bulwark against and diversion from multi-national working class unity and working class/oppressed peoples' solidarity. This it is pre-eminently a "class issue". (W.S. p. 20)

If there is any question that we do not advocate the very narrow conceptions of 'concrete support' and 'self-determination' which Jordan believes we do, the point should be clarified by one of our Theses on the national question.

Oppressed nations have the right to set up an independent state on a definite territory. This basic right of self-determination cannot be separated from or posed against the right of oppressed nations and people to determine the form and content of their struggles for more limited objectives - struggles which we also support unconditionally." (Thesis 7 U.T. No 2 page 2)

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These selections demonstrate further Jordan's fundamental misstatement of our position. We specifically reject a dichotimization of the national and class aspects of the Black movement. It has never occurred to us that it might be possible, much less that it might be necessary, to subordinate "a struggle for equality through the development of Black power and Black consciousness"...to "self determination for Black people - i.e., separation and a Black nation. (U.T. No. 8, page 10. Jordan) This completely imagined policy is central to Jordan's criticism of STO's politics. Why?

Jordan winds up his 'summary' with an attack on STO's position on the development of multi-national vanguard party. He claims that we "strategically oppose" such a party and, instead, encourage the formation of an "all Black revolutionary party". Our actual position is quite different, and quite clear. We don't see STO, or any other largely white communist organization as the nucleus of a genuine vanguard party. On the contrary, the decisive political and, particularly, organizational impetus will come from the Black and Latin movements. Whether, when, and how a multi-national party emerges depends on the initiatives flowing out of these movements. In opposition to many Marxist Leninist groupings including, apparently, Workers Power, we support the formation of communist groupings within the Black and Latin movements and attempt to defend them against various ideological and organizational raiding forays.

22.



First, white supremacy is a central mechanism of capitalist rule, the most important way in which opportunism is manifested in the U.S. working class, the main form of the "competition among laborers" which Marx calls the "essential condition for the existence and sway of the bourgeois class." (Manifesto)

Second, white supremacy was a point at which capitalist power was vulnerable. A militant and growing Black movement was central to this second conception. The Black movement was the organiz link between the U.S. working class and the sharpest international movements against capital. It provided a model of resistance and struggle for white workers which was a practical alternative to racist solidarity and class collaboration. The demands generated out of the Black movement were not coporate and sectoral ones, but, particularly the demand for equality, were the central class demands. STO has presented these points in detail in many writings over the past 12 years.

In the late sixties and early seventies it appeared to us that the Black movement was on an upward trajectory and would be a growing factor in industry, particularly basic industry. Our organizing approach was premised on this estimate. We were proven wrong by subsequent events. There are a variety of reasons for our mistaken estimate. We were unaware of how heavily it depended on the continuation of a very unstable economic situation in the country; we underestimated the impact of state repression on the more militant sectors of the Black movement and against the Black communities in general; to name two of them.

24.

For purposes of the differences with Jordan, the more important point is not why we made the mistake we did, but how we responded to our realization that a mistake had been made. We considered the position that Workers Power apparently has. That is that the essence of the situation was that the Black movement, or a section of it was making a political mistake; that what was happening was a political retreat into a counter-productive nationalism. The implication of this view is just what Jordan argues is the correct position. STO should have - and Workers Power apparently does - criticized and challenged this mistake in order to convince a sector of the Black movement to take another course.

STO rejected this position although we were aware that our own work, particularly our emphasis on production work, would have fit much better into a different orientation of the Black movement. Instead, we asked whether or not the Black movement's growing preoccupation with contradictions within the Black community and with the capitalist state might not be correct, and our approach narrow and parochial. We concluded that in conditions where the Black movement was on the defensive and could not rely on a base of support outside of the Black community that had mass significance, its focus on rebuilding its base within the community made sense and should be supported even if it posed certain limits on our work.



The work of white revolutionaries in the working class would be helped if the Black movement focused directly on the issues and grievances of Black workers at the workplace, confronting the racism and backwardness of white workers in a framework that also provided a social base for common struggle. However, the actual strength of the Black movement determines the effectiveness of such an intervention. The first place in which the Black movement develops and manifests its strength is through its demonstrated capacity to deal with the immediate problems of the Black community. The racism of white workers and inequality on the job are far from being the only such problems - or even the most immediate ones.

If white workers were the only potential allies of a revolutionary Black movement this argument wouldn't be persuasive. This is apparently an assumption of Jordan's since he regularly makes reference to Black people being "only 11% of the population", as if this makes alliances with white workers an immediate necessity. However, other oppressed peoples within the current borders of the U.S. are also potential allies of the Black movement. There is a basis for unity with these peoples which is less dependent on a shared experience in social production than is working class unity in the narrow sense. And in production, they experience conditions similar to those of Black workers. Although a direct confrontation with racism among white workers might help the process of developing this unity with other oppressed peoples, it is not a necessary condition for it, and is certainly not a logical first step towards it. 26.

And, at this point it is certainly relevant to point out that the population base of the non-white peoples in the U.S., while not an absolute majority, is certainly a mass potential which would not stack up too badly against the alternatives which Jordan proposes.

When we considered these questions STO did not for a moment think that the Black movement could make substantial gains without confronting racism, and we disagreed with the tendencies in the Black movement which hoped to circumvent this obstacle by not directly challenging it. Neither did we think that the specific responsibility of white communists to fight racism within the working class would be eliminated or deferred by a decision of the Black movement to go in a more explicitly nationalist direction. We realized that the struggle against white racism would be more difficult and protracted, pursued under less optimal conditions for a period of time, and that white communists had to assume additional (note I say additional, not different,) responsibilities to develop mass working class support among white workers for the immediate priorities which the Black movement had chosen. While white communists can never function effectively, if they regard white workers as only a factor to be neutralized, rather than to be won to actual participation in the revolutionary movement, it is the right of the Black movement to decide that it can be most effective if it proceeds under that assumption. Certainly there are substantial reasons for arriving at such a conclusion.

27.

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(pages 17 & 18 are omitted)

Σ of the class struggle & national liberation as "two coequal components of the revolutionary process"  
STO advanced this formulation to counter common arguments among present-day Leninists that subordinate the national question to the class question. Our mistake was to accept the terms and definitions of those whose conclusions we opposed. Our real difference <sup>and nationalism</sup> with these folks concerns the conception of the class struggle <sup>and</sup> formulations which hide these differences in fact, <sup>appear</sup> which imply that we share ~~a~~ common <sup>definitions & disagree only over</sup> conceptions with them <sup>is</sup> are bound to create problems. Since this point <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ important for the general structure of the rest of <sup>my</sup> ~~the~~ argument, I will elaborate it ~~at~~ here.

During Lenin's life, and for some years after he died, the class struggle in Europe was the main impetus towards revolution in the world. Only in his very last writings (c.f., Better Fewer, but Better, Vol. 33, p. 500) did he even ~~raise~~ the question ~~of~~ whether or not this situation would continue into the indefinite future. Given his political circumstances, Lenin's assumption was ~~more than~~ reasonable. However, the last four or five decades have turned ~~what was once~~ a reasonable working hypothesis into a quite implausible article of faith. During this entire period, ~~the~~ "masses of working people in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of the globe..." (Vol. 32, p. 454), not the metropolitan proletariat, have been the international leadership ~~of~~ the struggle against capital.

It is not clear whether Jordan would contest <sup>this</sup> view. My position is that it is empirically evident and I will not attempt to demonstrate it any further, ~~more~~. Of course, <sup>of</sup> recognition of <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ shift <sup>in the</sup> ~~of~~ center <sup>of</sup> ~~in~~ the world revolutionary process is not ~~equivalent~~ <sup>denial of</sup> ~~land to~~ ~~denial~~ the problems and limitations <sup>of</sup> ~~that~~ the anti-imperialist movement, ~~has been~~ <sup>Never the less</sup> ~~abstracted~~. With all of these, it is still the leading element of the revolutionary process.

An initial problem with our formulation is that ~~it would~~ ~~be very difficult to argue that~~ "class struggle" and "national liberation" <sup>are not, & have not been</sup> ~~have been, or are,~~ "co-equal" ~~components of the~~ ~~struggle~~ except in accidental and temporary situations. Normally, one or the other predominates. However, STO did not intend to assert ~~that there was~~ a necessary quantitative equality between the two elements, <sup>rather</sup> but <sup>to</sup> argue for the irreducible and intrinsic importance of national liberation struggles as a part of the movement against capital. ~~This is a problem to~~ <sup>That is its real weakness.</sup> Our formulation ~~does not advance this argument effectively.~~ ~~It obscures what is~~ ~~actually decisive, the inter-relationship and mutual transforma-~~ ~~tion of the national and the class components of the struggle~~ ~~against capital with the development of capitalism into a~~ ~~world system characterized by relationships of domination and~~ ~~oppression between nations.~~

The correct position, <sup>must</sup> and a position which we ~~would argue~~, is essentially Leninist, <sup>& stress</sup> recognizing the qualitative changes that imperialism makes in the class struggle throughout the capitalist system.

By far the most significant of these is the changed relationship of national oppression and class exploitation, and the consequent change in the content of those political categories. To put it as Lenin understood the question - and I will go into some detail later to demonstrate that this, not Jordan's, is the accurate reading of Lenin - in the 'advanced' capitalist states in Europe, states whose internal national questions had, for the most part, been settled well before, nationalism reappears with imperialism and becomes a major obstacle and alternative to revolutionary internationalism among the sectors of the working class that were universally regarded as the most militant and advanced. This was the 'oppressor nation nationalism' which Lenin described quite clearly.

"...whereas the English, French, Germans and Italians lie when they speak of defending their fatherland in the present war, because actually what they are defending is not their native language, not their right to national development, but their rights as slave-holders, their colonies, the foreign 'spheres of influence' of their finance capital, etc." (Vol 23, pp39-40)

It is still with us.

On the other hand, imperialist oppression generates resistance to it developing immense new resources for anti-capitalist revolution. The process was in its very initial stages in the last years of Lenin's life, and he was only able to make some brilliant guesses about its potential (Better Fewer, But Better, op. cit.). Though certain leftists are still unable to realize it, we are living the facts that demonstrate the validity of his insight.

The essential error of our position was that it accepted the conception of nation and class as essentially distinct contradictions and dynamics would could somehow be measured against each other. This obscures the decisive point. With the development of imperialism, a world capitalist system characterized by relationships of domination and oppression between nations, national oppression and class exploitation increasingly interpenetrate and mutually transform each other. Quantitative modifiers such as 'less important', 'more important', and even 'equal to' fail to illuminate the inseparability of these elements and the extent and manner in which their interrelationship has qualitatively changed each other.

The motivations behind our position give it a certain element of validity, but its problems must be clearly understood or they can lead into a real swamp. For example, one mistaken formula, the subordination of the national struggle to the class struggle, could be turned upside down, and replaced with a position which would also be wrong, the subordination of the class struggle to national liberation movements. This conclusion could be easily extracted from current statements of STO's position and, in my opinion, would lead to political dead ends.

The attractiveness of simplistic categories is that they provide accessible formula solutions to difficult political problems. Solutions which are inevitably illusory. I believe that the only accurate reading of Lenin's statements about the necessity of subordinating all democratic demands, including the demand for national independence, to the struggle for working class power,  
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is that all partial struggles must be subordinated to the struggle as a whole. That is as true today as it was when Marx wrote it in the Communist Manifesto. However it is a truth that will not produce a formula answer to issues of political priorities. There is only one struggle against capital, but it has a variety of fronts, stages of development, and modes of expression. Though every partial demand and issue must be subordinated to the overall interests of the struggle, it will never be self evident just what constitutes the overall interests of the struggle at any given moment. Nor will the manner in which this subordination should be effected be revealed from on high.

I am sure that Jordan would agree that this acceptance of his criticism of our language does not narrow the gap between us on matters of substance. When we get further into his critique of our view of Lenin on the national question, the differences will become even clearer.

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(I think that some of the stuff from the K.C. debate may be helpful for the discussion in the first part of the GMM. I have left out some points I made there and expanded others. People who were at K.C. may not recognize some of the material here. That's because I only got about half-way through the notes I had prepared in my presentation and the later discussion was almost completely centered on points from Noel's presentation which had a quite different focus.)

I think there is an essential difference in the overall framework within which Noel and myself approach the main questions to be dealt with at the upcoming GMM. Let me indicate this difference in a general form now, and attempt to elaborate its significance later.

My point of reference is imperialism. By this I mean that capitalism is a world system, and that system is much more than the sum of its parts. The system is different from, and determines the capitalist social formations which constitute it, and which, in turn, are different in qualitative ways, from each other. In this world system of capitalism, relationships of national oppression are of decisive and defining significance - 'imperialism is...the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed peoples.' The national contradiction is not static. It has invaded the capitalist center in a massive way in the immediate past; the changing patterns of world capitalist investment and production have ~~xxxxxxx~~ given it a more explicit class character in the periphery; the category of oppressor nation is in tension of the increasing internationalization of capital and the contradictions this has developed between its economic and political interests as well as between its various components.

Noel's point of reference is post-imperialist state capitalism (a hostile person might say 'pre-imperialist'). In this framework the capitalist world system does exist, but it is essentially an aggregate, in which the constituent social formations, despite vastly different historical roots - revolution and counter-revolution, imperialism and anti-imperialism - are increasingly homogenous state capitalisms. Increasingly each national state capitalism is a cell form of the world system, just as Marx argued that the commodity was the 'cell form' of capital. This makes it permissible to develop revolutionary strategies that assume the various national characteristics as a pre-given framework. After all, they are essentially similar everywhere. In this view, and this Noel has argued explicitly, imperialism is an accident, an excursion of capital from the trajectory laid out in Capital, economically, and the Manifesto, politically, to which it has returned.

~~can~~ Differences between these two points of reference can be illustrated in terms of Marx's well known statement in the preface to Vol I of Capital:

"In the more developed nations, the less developed see the image of their future." (Hope I got it right - didn't look it up.)

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Noel would argue that this position is correct, although the development has taken a more complex path than Marx apparently envisaged. I would argue that Marx is wrong; that there is a distinction between the 'less developed' and the 'more developed' that is qualitative, not quantitative as the phrasing definitely implies; and that even apparent movements towards convergence as in 'third world industrialization' contain a real divergence. In fact, one strand of the argument that I am advancing about the current crisis implies the opposite of Marx's prediction. I think that in important aspects the 'less developed' are the image of the future for the 'more developed'. I will spell this out later.

(These points have some relevance to the discussion of the current crisis. When I point to the secular aspect of the crisis, as an example of a 'crisis in the law of value', I am not arguing that the law of value is no longer operating. On the contrary it operates with a vengeance. The argument is that it no longer can operate through the same mechanisms which obscured its essential features - the 'autonomous market' with its 'dollar votes' securing everyone their appropriate piece of the pie, and the parliamentary-party representative structure, autonomous and neutral in the same deceptive way in which the working class is atomized into voters and apathetics who get politically no more than they want and/or deserve. My contention is that this has been a feature of the capitalism of the periphery since the development of imperialism which is coming to be a factor in the center, specifically in this country.)

In Ken's Theses in IDB no. 18 there is a point which I think is crucial. I want to identify myself with it and attempt to draw out some implications which he may not agree with since my understanding is that he sees his theses in opposition to the thrust of my earlier arguments.

"The tendency of modern imperialism is toward a genuinely international bourgeoisie and an increasingly national proletariat.  
.. (9) Class polarization is the order of the day within the Western camp, but it is a polarization in which the imperialist bourgeoisie is organized multinationally, though divided, while the oppressed classes are divided by nation and privilege. (10)"

I believe that this framework makes it possible to explain some important developments which present themselves as paradoxes. How is it that national contradictions and 'nationalism' becomes increasingly important just when capital is most clearly transcending its national roots? How is it the capital is maintaining a formidable capacity for social control at a time of rapid erosion of the social foundation for this control in the center - the mechanisms and structures which made it difficult for workers to understand the essence because of its contradictory and reified relationship with appearances. (Capital I-1-iv, and III-Trinity formula section)

Considering the capitalist center as a whole, and the U.S. as a part of it, the fact that the distinctive feature of U.S. society, the institution of white supremacy in particular, and the black-white division in general is increasingly paralleled by the conditions of the so-called 'guest workers' in Europe and Japan, is most relevant.

For one thing, it means that the conscious process of transforming an oppressor nation consciousness among privileged workers with an internationalist stance must be a more general priority and a higher one, not a lower one as I think is implied in Noel's view. In no way is the discrimination against guest workers uniquely centered at points where there is a social basis for joint action, so it seems quite unlikely to me that much of their resistance will take a class as opposed to a national form. Thus we must see the critical distance which we have placed between ourselves and 'self organization' among white workers as an attitude relevant to all of the actions of the domestic workers in the capitalist center. They all have the same immediate test of their internationalism and class stand as do the white workers in this country.

On the other hand, there is an increased potential for spontaneous internationalism among mass vanguards based in the 'guest workers' or their functional equivalents. It does not seem likely to me that struggles in this area will normally take on a multinational form, including masses of workers from the host country. The spontaneous internationalist content will follow from the linkage of concerns about the conditions in the host country with the conditions in the country of origin. I would see it as having something of the character of the Lawrence Strike in this country. A related point; one feature of the current crisis, the curtailment of the social wage is bound to be felt even more strongly among guest workers in Europe, than among Black people here. The existence of parallel struggles in numbers of countries on issues with this common root will also be a spontaneous internationalizing factor.

The other half of Ken's thesis is equally, if not more, important. To me a genuinely international bourgeoisie is one that is not patriotic, and not patriotic in a much more basic way than the charges made against capitalist by muck-raking populists of putting profit above everything else. Let me use the oil crisis, or alleged crisis, for an example. There is no doubt that the international oil cartel profited enormously from this crisis, whether or not it manipulated it. There is also no doubt that this cartel has basically American roots although it is an international institution. The roots were apparent in the fact that the escalation of oil prices hurt other national capitalisms with no oil reserves of their own, more than it hurt U.S. national capitalism. Nevertheless, even in this country, the 'home' insofar as it has one, of international oil, the consequence of its profit maximizing was a structural weakening of sectors of American capital which have played a central role in integrating and cohering this society - particularly auto. It is not that auto has some tremendous economic significance in and of itself, but that it is part of a pattern of employment, ~~and~~ mass consumption, and leisure, that is characteristic of U.S. privilege and a basis of its political stability. This consequence is a risk that international capital may be willing to assume when capital, nationally based, is not.

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For a variety of reasons international capital's intention is a global restructuring of the world capitalist system. This has a variety of sources - the need to respond to, and incorporate, national liberation movements, changing considerations of political stability and the dangers to it - an increased concern for political stability everywhere contains a decreased concern for it in every particular place as contrasted with the capital rooted in that particular place. Another source is the need to outflank various points of working class economic strength. The class struggle has developed capacities to resist the extraction of value in forms which have been ~~very~~ very important up to now - large mass production units. As the Italians say, there is a crisis of 'capital's command' at these points. This also leads to a response of capital, breaking up these concentrations of working class strength, dispersing fixed plant. There are increasing social costs of capitalist production - these are both costs in a dollars and cents sense, and costs in terms of political stresses. They have to do with the social wage and countercyclical economic policies, and they have to do with the increasing knowledge of the toxic character of the capitalist work process in terms of those currently employed and of future generations. These factors, too, dictate a process of global restructuring. Finally, there are economic factors in the strictest sense, the declining rate of profit, the need to institute new technologies as a basis for a new cycle of accumulation. These too dictate restructuring.

All of these factors which give a certain dynamic and direction to international capital must confront a definite political reality, the capitalist state is still decisively national in form, and is not a pliable tool which will do whatever is willed of it. Indeed, if there is any state power which is the state power of multi-national capital, it is U.S. state power, and even here the conflicts and contradictions with the elements of the international capitalist project that I have indicated above, are evident. (This is not to deny some significant moves towards an international political structure - particularly in terms of police integration - and the significance of the overwhelming military strength of U.S. capitalism which allows it to impose itself on other capitalisms on certain questions.

I want to draw only one general conclusion from this point at this time, though I think many more are implied. If we have a situation of restructuring which to some extent is imposed on this society as a whole including some sections of its traditional ruling class, this will have certain necessary consequences. First, a process of economic ruin of the weak sectors of capital. We've seen this beginning, and the conflict within the ruling class over whether or not to 'rescue' Chrysler are well known. The point that I want to make here is that a ruined - or potentially ruined - dispossessed sector of capital has played a definite role in other historical situations - that of an economic base for, and promoter of, fascism and wars. It is likely that pressures to re-assert U.S. hegemony will find support here, and it is important to realize that this sector can have far greater political power and ideological weight than merited by its weakened economic position.

This is relevant to our consideration of the questions of war, repression and fascism.

The restructuring process will proceed from the international to the national and from the top down. It will proceed over the resistance and the dead bodies of sectors of the ruling class. It will proceed against the interests of major sections of the working class, including those sections that share in, and will continue to share in, I think, a variety of privileges. This dictates a strong state in the classical sense; a bonapartism not overly restrained by elected representative bodies, with the police and military apparatus necessary to ensure order.

The other side of this then, is the disruption of the basis of social consensus, the hegemonic aspect of U.S. capitalism. In my view the process of global restructuring will not proceed in a way that allows the U.S. centrism of the world capitalist system to continue. It is not profitable, not efficient, and the political risks which such a change would entail do not look prohibitive to capital. More specifically, I expect the process of breaking up concentrations of working class economic strength will not amount to a redistribution of employment internally, but the export of substantial sectors of production. I think that the coincidence of interests between economic conservatism and international capitalism in opposition to the social wage and various 'New Deal' rooted institutions will prevail, opening up major areas of social conflict. I think that the traditional weakness that we have always noted of social democratic integrative mechanisms will render 'liberal' alternatives less attractive to capital, and perhaps will make them completely utopian. The process of forming a new hegemonic consensus will stress the distinction between productive and non-productive sectors as the Italian comrades have already pointed out in terms of Europe. Here that will include an explicitly racist component.

How does all of this fit into the debate that we have been having over the character of the crisis, the cyclical, secular, apocalyptic argument? I think some of my positions are obvious, so I will only make the most general statement. There is a conception of capitalism in the section of the Grundrisse that I am always citing (699-710 approx.) It is a conception of it as an historically finite mode of production - producing on a narrow base which increasingly is at odds with the development of the forces of production. This narrow base is the use of the standard of direct abstract labor as a measure of value - increasingly anachronistic as ~~the~~ fixed capital ~~is~~ expands and technology and science take on a life of their own...all of the points indicated in the above-cited selection. My argument, as I indicated earlier, is that this characteristic of capitalism, its historical limits, became evident with the emergence of the imperialist stage. This is the essential truth of Lenin's view of imperialism as the 'highest' and the 'moribund' stage of capitalism. It became evident at the periphery of the world capitalist system, where ~~it became obvious that~~ capitalism's 'revolutionizing' impact was limited to the destruction of the pre-capitalist social structure. It didn't extend to the revolutionizing of the forces of production, particularly of the working population as the decisive force of production, as it had in capitalism's classical development.

Thus the marginalization of vast sections of the population whose traditional relationship to production had been destroyed without being replaced by an entry into capitalist relationships, was the condition of the incorporation of a minority of the population into capitalist production. Most of the population relate to capitalism extrinsically, as a force dominating their circumstances, but not as a set of relations in which they participate as producers. (that's not as clear as I want it to be)

I hope this indicates why I am uncomfortable in talking about a secular crisis, or a crisis in the law of value - even though I know that I started it. I'm talking about a feature of capitalism - a limit to it, not about a crisis in it, and I'm arguing that this limit is ~~is~~ manifesting itself increasingly in the capitalist center. Here I want to take the opportunity to disagree with Noel's citation from Marx in his piece in IDB 18. The disagreement is with Noel, not Marx, because I think he misunderstands what Marx is saying. "The barrier to capitalist production is capital itself...but that barrier is nowhere fixed".

In fact, Marx is talking here about the declining rate of profit (tendential) and the capitalist business cycle. On this point he is definitely right, Depression is as much a condition for future expansion as it is the indication of a limit on expansion. Capitalism is not mechanically and structurally impelled to destruction by the business cycle. At the same time Noel's conclusion is wrong, since it is used to support the notion of an objectively infinite flexibility of the capitalist mode of production - a position I used to hold myself. The limit Marx speaks of in the Grundrisse is no illusion that continually evaporates in front of us to reform itself down the road. It is a real limit. It exists. This does not mean that our ideas of it - of ~~what~~ ~~constitutes~~ ~~it~~, and where it will be found, and when it will become the decisive factor - are correct.

As I said earlier, my position is that a crisis in the law of value does not mean that it becomes irrelevant, but that its functioning takes on an aspect of arbitrary power, is imposed by force. This is another notion that the Italians have to take the blame for. They argue, and I think that it makes sense, that capital's command is increasingly overt and political. At first this takes the form a state intervention into the economy in a minor regulating fashion, but this role increasingly expands as the capitalist structure is increasingly confined by the class struggle and the forms in which it has responded to the class struggle. This reaches the point where the condition for the operation of the law of value is the marginalization of vast sections of the people, and state-imposed definitions of productive and non-productive must be enforced to disguise the absurdity that human productivity has developed to the point where humans - at least some of them - are redundant. This feature of contemporary capitalism is encribed in the capitalist business cycle which currently is particularly severe because the ~~various~~ ~~counter~~ ~~cyclical~~ ~~measures~~ that have been taken since the New Deal period have both contributed to an inflationary pressure which, among other things, exacerbates the business cycle, and have prevented the business cycle from performing its essential function for capital...the destruction of outmoded capital and development of the basis for a new cycle of accumulation based on a new relationship between wages and productivity. I think it is clear how this combination of factors raises the issue of Fascism, war, and genocide, the apocalyptic side.

I know that it has taken a long time, but I've come to some more specific political differences with Noel's position. These are on the related issues of the base for Black nationalism and the function of white supremacy. As I have said earlier, IDBs 17 & 18, I believe that a whole range of processes will necessarily expand the social base for Black nationalism, both in its broad - Black Power - and its narrow - Black Belt nation - connotations.

The central issue is whether or not marginalization of Black labor is a temporary phenomenon that is likely to be reversed in a new cycle of accumulation. I believe that it is not temporary and have made a number of arguments as to why. (IDB 17 & 18) I intend to expand these arguments at the GMM, but don't have the time to do it here. Instead, I want to respond to a misunderstanding of my position that concludes, erroneously, that I not only mean that marginalization is the only process operating among Black people, but that I believe it is a process which will be effectively concluded shortly without a great deal of struggle.

First, however, let me deal with Noel's main counter to my position as I understand it. His argument is that many have predicted what I predict - or something close to it. Since none of these previous predictions have materialized, we should assume that they will prove similarly mistaken this time. I can't imagine a more disastrous form of argument. I am certainly familiar with the historical fate of predictions of apocalyptic and ultimate crisis. There is a warning here for those who do not like to be embarrassed. But this is no sort of argument to support the opposed conclusion to mine. It is particularly out of place from one who is regularly talking about the need for 'new categories', and who maintains (I agree by the way) that a major upsurge of class struggle is likely in the capitalist center based on evidence that is much sparser and more impressionistic. I also think that it is not out of place to note that every generation has also predicted that socialism was at hand. Hopefully the fact that these predictions have been proven wrong will not bar us from making them in the future - with a better analysis and more evidence, of course. It would be a real difficulty if socialism caught us all by surprise.

In my view, our policy must be premised on one of two contradictory projections. Either marginalization or proletarianization will be the decisive trend within the Black population. I believe that there is more evidence for the former. Proletarianization will continue, but its form will change - less large scale mass production industry - and it will be less significant and less productive of mass radical protest than marginalization. When Noel argues for the opposite view, he is under no less obligation than I to provide arguments and evidence for his position. This is an area where a decision must be made (decisions), and we will not have some absolute standard of validity to apply, but must rely on the preponderance of evidence, not political inertia.

Now to the second point. Though he apparently does not think so, I agree with Ken that there are important counter-processes to marginalization. I do not think it is at all likely that the centers of strength in basic industry which Black workers have won will be immediately eroded. In the first place, despite the relatively placid closures of Chrysler's plants in Detroit, I don't think that Black workers would allow their general displacement without huge struggles. More importantly, I think that Black workers will play an important role in the process of marginalization. In order to develop the ideology appropriate to this process a growing division in the Black community between those who work and those who don't will be extremely important to capital.

This will give the distinction between productive and non-productive something other than a transparently racist character, at the same time as it creates difficulties for developing the maximum unity among Black people.

On the other hand the working section of the Black community will provide a substantial social base for generating white support, solidarity, and joint struggle. This is a point which I believe that I made in a previous paper, but apparently it was missed. My basic argument is not a denial of such processes and potentials, but the assertion that they will not be the basic ones - the points of the sharpest, most categorical, and most sustained struggle.

On white supremacy. I argued (D.B. 18) that its social control function would be undermined by the process of marginalization. This too, I believe has been misunderstood although I do not deny that what I intend to argue is probably quite controversial. Let me try again. First, I do not think that white supremacy can be reduced to its social control function for capitalism. It has a life of its own as an aspect of working class consciousness and behavior. Second, I do not think that the erosion of one function of the institution for capital means that it therefore has no function for capital, and certainly not that its continuation is somehow against the interests of capital. Here is what I do mean. The system of white skin privileges is a method of deflecting the white section of the working class from class struggle, it is a source of racial solidarity with the capitalists. For this system to work, the privileges must have some reality - that is there must be a real source of competition from Black labor. To the extent that Black labor is marginalized it stops being such a direct competitive factor. Thus it is difficult to respond to the demands of white workers with racial concessions and appeals that will persuade them of a continued common interest with capital. This must be put in the context of the overall process of restructuration which will certainly be taken out of the skins of all workers, white as well as Black, guaranteeing significant struggles among white workers.

Looking at this process in the light of the points made earlier, some other conclusions are apparent. White <sup>as we know it, is an element of normal capitalist rule</sup> supremacy has always contained an impulse towards its own liquidation. On the one hand, its inherent logic is genocidal, on the other, it will only function for capital if the ultimate white supremacist conclusion is not reached. We are talking about a situation where there are objective economic pressures on capital which have genocidal implications - that is the crude formulation of the crisis of the law of value. When this is linked with the sectors of capital that are also aggrieved, and that have revanchist dreams and plans, it is likely that the genocidal variant of white supremacy - which negates its historical function - will become more important. White supremacy then will be transformed into the organizing myth of a mass fascist movement. Finally, and I don't want to put this out as too big a deal, privilege is not necessarily privilege over time. We are quite familiar with the situation where the privilege of a monopoly over easy high-paying jobs has been translated into black lung ~~and~~ cancer and genetic damage. I am not arguing that those who have been last will be first, but these aspects of capitalist development will certainly lead some whites to question the significance of their privileges.

I have more to say as always, but Ira has only allotted me eight pages in the bulletin for this thing.

By L. H.

I've been following the capital restructuration debate at a distance, and for those of us that rely almost entirely on the bulletin for the substance of this debate, the outline is still sketchy. I have a few observations that I would like to make. Questions surrounding the "law of value" (here and abroad) will be dodged since the contending theories escape my command of political economy.

Part of the evidence of Don's theory, the reification of the shifts in capital, is the marginalization of Black labor. Now I will concede a few points here. The auto industry, where Black labor predominates, is in serious trouble. The northeastern industrial quadrant, or so called snow belt, is in a precarious situation, and there is every indication that sections of the bourgeoisie are considering the abandonment of these third world concentrations. The recent Reagan report of sunbelt vs. snowbelt is a harbinger of this movement.

But it would be a mistake to construe these shifts as permanent or structural, for they are just as much evidence for the cyclic changes in the labor force that follow the introduction of a new technology, as they are for Don's argument. I'd like to give two examples that I think reflect this relationship between technological innovation and people of color.

While there are many factors that compelled the post WWII migration of Blacks from the rural south, the most significant was the mechanization of the cotten industry. In 1960 about 60% of all Blacks lived in the south, and of these 57% were living in rural areas. Thus close to one third of all Blacks were residing in the rural south. As early as 1947 bourgeois economists were predicting the massive migration of Black labor from the south as a result of mechanization (Florence Peterson). In fact, while in 1950 92% of all cotten was picked by hand, by 1966 the figure dropped to 11%. A concomitant fall in worker hours involved in cotten production also occurred; from 7 million hours to 4 million hours. The statistics below are only approximate since they don't include part time labor (children, etc.) but they reveal the relative loss of jobs:

Year	Black Agricultural Workers		White Agricultural	
	Number	Index	Index	Number
1950	767,000,000	100	1000	2,741,000
1960	349,000,000	46.9	1630	1,730,000.00
1969	158,000,000	20.6	1439	1,192,000

I think that it is clear that the drop was dramatic, even though these figures represent the documentable work loss. They can not begin to express the traumatic impact on the rural Black worker. Modest estimates are that close to one and a half million Blacks left the South during the fifties, and these were often those that had marketable skills. The point is that for those that stayed as well as those that migrated, new work in manufacturing was found. This was not an overnight process. Usually the worker took on a second job to supplement the decreasing wages from agriculture, then they began to rely entirely on their second area of work.



THESES ON THE PRESENT STAGE (TENTATIVE) By K.L.

1. Every advanced Western country has a privileged sector of its working class. Those that historically had none because of their centuries'-old cultural homogeneity simply created one by the expedient of immigration. A labor shortage was generated, justifying the import of foreign workers. These immediately suffered from the following disabilities:

- a. they had no political rights whatever;
- b. they had no job seniority;
- c. the need of these workers to export their earnings to their families in the country of origin impoverished them to an extent greater than that imposed by national discrimination; and
- d. discrimination, poverty, and language differences were the mechanisms by which these workers were ghettoized.

2. In all probability the most extreme instance of this process is the United Arab Emirates. There the entire working class is "foreign," and therefore no sector of it enjoys any political rights. Privileges are accorded economically and socially, with discrimination according to religion, language, and national origin.

3. There are other countries that come close to matching this pattern. South Africa is an example; Kuwait is another. From then on down it would be possible to rank countries according to the relative proportion of "their own" citizens among the (privileged sectors of the) working class.

4. Obviously this characteristic of modern capitalism is sufficiently generalized that in some respects our theory of white skin privilege is today merely a special case of a typical situation, and the U. S. , in this particular framework, may not even be close to a polar position on the gradient of modern capitalist rule.

5. In general the so-called revolutionary left is unaware of this phenomenon. To the extent it is understood at all, the political approach is usually limited to polemics against chauvinism, and the theoretical elaboration of this point is usually some sort of purely ideological (i. e. , pre-Leninist) argument. At the worst, the revolutionary left is as chauvinistic as its country; this is a charge, for example, that the Irish comrades have made against the Belgian Marxist group Pour La Socialisme, with respect to PLS's treatment of radical organizations within the Turkish community in Brussels. But it is possible to postulate the best sort of group with a deep understanding of imperialism -- such as RS itself -- without the programmatic implications of that understanding necessarily resulting in a political line that confronts the issue of privilege.

6. Italy is a hybrid of all this; there may be others as well, but probably none as advanced. In most instances the oppressed sectors are workers from Southern Italy and Sicily, though in certain areas there are concentrations from other Adriatic and Levantine countries, and from the former Italian colonies. Despite this, it doesn't seem to offer the bourgeoisie an instrument of rule. Instead, the rule is directly political, through the opportunism of the PCI. The result seems to be the sharpest and most advanced form of political (including armed) class struggle of any (over-)developed capitalist country.

This seems also to be the only place where a truly distinct and novel political analysis has emerged.

7. In the February 1978 Strategic Resolution of the Red Brigades (see Ripening of Time number 12), the BR elaborate a theory called "The Imperialism of the Multinationals" in which they describe the new stage this way:

. . . the principal inter-capitalist contradiction is now no longer the one between national capitals (and hence between national areas and national bourgeoisies) -- but the one between big multinational combines (thus cutting vertically through the imperialist bourgeoisie). There are many parts of their analysis that are especially useful, and others I consider wrong, but the inescapable conclusion of combining our overall analysis with theirs is this: The tendency of modern imperialism is toward a genuinely international bourgeoisie and an increasingly national proletariat. (How's that for things becoming their opposites?) This theory has some immediate mundane utility in that it explains directly why the modern bourgeois state is increasingly less useful for mediating disputes among the rulers, and why they, in turn, are developing even greater dependency on institutions such as the Trilateral Commission, the European Economic Community, the European Parliament, The NATO Alliance, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Western Powers' economic summits, as well as, in some areas, the United Nations Security Council and the World Court.

8. That's fine enough for the other side, but what about the revolutionary forces? Why are we still stuck within the framework of (either) national liberation movements and (or) autonomous workers' organizations (of dual power, etc.)? Surely there must be a bolder and more elegant revolutionary strategy than this. Put another way, can this strategy, which is not ours only, but has characterized world revolution since World War II, possibly be adequate to the new stage of imperialism?

9. To a certain extent this is a rephrasing of the question posed but never answered by our last educational conference. We were unable to answer it partly because we did not fully understand the question and partly because we were seriously derailed by one of our participants, but at least we were on the right track. More so, I think, than in Don's proposal (IDB number 17) that we should focus "on an estimate of the direction of U. S. capitalism and its relationship to the world capitalist system . . ." (To explain the distinction anecdotally: I think 'politics' in the U. S. and Italy, say, may reduce themselves to various forms of apres moi le deluge, but I don't think anything approaching this characterizes the real institutions of arbitrary power in the world imperialist arena, whether the Trilateral Commission or OPEC.) In that sense, the depth of the U. S. crisis that Don describes is undeniable, and probably poses revolutionary openings, but it may also be simply a drastic mechanism for relocating world bourgeois power eastward. If so, then the U. S. -bound view could be merely imperial-ethnocentrism. Some U. S. imperialist institutions --- political, economic, and ideological -- are already heavily mortgaged to capital centered in

2. 7. 7.  
South Korea, Taiwan, South Africa, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. It cannot be theoretically excluded that title could pass to multinational imperialism, and, along with it, ultimate (i. e., military) authority. (Before you laugh, recall how recently tiny Britain ruled so much of the world.)

10. Is imperialism of the multinationals in crisis? That probably depends on whom you ask. Chrysler, or General Motors, or Lockheed probably think so, as do some sectors of the Trilateral bourgeoisie generally. But what about the OPEC ministers? (Again, to resort to the anecdotal approach: Without an explanation of this sort, the situation in Iran is almost impossible to explain, except as pure fraud. But if it is simultaneously true that Iran is a "fascist state" and an imperialist power, as Ashraf Dehghani's fedayee followers tell us, but if it is also true that a substantial sector of the Iranian right is truly anti-U. S., which seems to me likely despite the fedayee analysis, then this explanation -- a new form of imperialist rivalry -- is probably reasonable. In that case the U. S. bourgeoisie's leading Trilateralists (Kissinger, Rockefeller) are opposed not mainly by the Iranian petit bourgeoisie (supposedly headed by Khomeini) as the fedayee say, or by the national bourgeoisie (also supposedly headed by Khomeini, but denied by the fedayee) as the Mojahedin say, but by the new Iranian multinational bourgeoisie. In that case, the actual war danger may be increasing, since the most sensible time for the West to strike militarily is while those sectors in Iran (Bani-Sadr/Chamran, Beheshti, Bazargan/Yazdi) are bitterly feuding.) Imperialist war, of course, is a crisis of major proportions, and one that has always opened the floodgates of revolution, but it is not the same thing as the traditional Marxist understanding of capitalist collapse, even in the most extreme theoretical postulate that Don extracted from the Grundrisse. And on a practical level the implications are drastically different, since a militarized society, no matter how divided internally, is characterized by a ruthless generalized repression, not mainly by marginalization. Some of this can already be seen, especially in Western Europe, in the form of the obligations the various governments have assumed under the anti-terrorism treaty, which is having a "Bonapartist" effect of instituting a certain amount of direct multinational police authority while ~~minimizing~~ minimizing the individual state intervention.

11. Now to leap: I think all this means that class polarization is the order of the day within the Western camp, but it is a polarization in which the imperialist bourgeoisie is organized multinationally, though divided, while the oppressed classes are divided by nation and privilege. The crisis of the West is building toward war in a way that could result in some seemingly strange shifts in government alliances. (Did you know that Ghadafi has invested \$250 million of Libya's oil revenues in Fiat at the same time he is said to be piping money to the Italian armed left?) Under these conditions both the fight against state militarism within and without the armed forces, on the one hand, and the military aspects of the class struggle, on the other, may be significantly more important than we thought, even in the U. S.

12. This projection is not altogether inhospitable to Don's argument, although it speaks more to his second point -- the one he did not elaborate -- than his first, which he did. Some of his points can already be verified

empirically, such as the "reverse migration" of Blacks to the South. I agree that the fight for land and national independence will be greatly strengthened in the wake of these developments -- Miami obviously represents only the first spontaneous flash of what is to come. But what about the other side -- class struggle? Isn't it still true that Black workers predominate in what have always been the strategic heart of U.S. industry? (Yes, they do, alongside any tendency to marginalize Black workers.) And of those Black workers who are employed, a far higher proportion of them than whites have two incomes, giving them a higher family income. This is not a huge group, but it is one of several countervailing trends against marginalization.

13. If "imperialism of the multinationals" is a valid description of the current stage of world capitalism, the theory probably deals a death blow to the "state capitalist" analysis. (That is not to say that it doesn't exist, nor even to say that it doesn't currently exist, and even dominate, in certain countries. Indeed state capitalism may even have reflected an important stage of imperialist capital accumulation. But "imperialism of the multinationals," if it is the central feature of today's imperialism, is definitely the negation of state capitalism.) On the other hand, it seems to me that every stage of capitalism has its own "state capitalist" beginning. Without Isabella, could Columbus have initiated the explosive phase of mercantilism? Without the land grants, how would U.S. industrialists have got their railroads? Perhaps in this sense the James/Glaberman type of state capitalism (the Western variant only) was a necessary prerequisite of the imperialism of the multinationals. This does seem to be borne out by the evidence. They were right in noting that no private bloc of capital was big enough to supply modern capitalism's revolutionary needs. But once those revolutions, especially in technological innovation, were made and amortized, they were privatized. COMSAT is an example. Offshore oil is another. Anyone who doubts the scale on which corporations can now operate should examine carefully the doings of a single German rocket and space company -- OTRAG -- in Zaire. (See Dirty Work 2) And in any case there's really no difference in principle between a "public" oil pipeline and a public road. Furthermore, the most ideologically conservative capitalists will always favor nationalization of the unprofitable but essential sectors of the economy.

14. This analysis, if borne out, would also imply that Trilateralism is a great deal more than, and something quite different from, U.S. imperialism's strategy, as the MLN analysis calls it. If we are witnessing a stage of capitalist development, then its structural form is not a matter of policy.

15. I recognize the rough edges in this suggestion. At least some of them. There may even be fatal flaws. But the analysis does seem to comport with observed reality. It does require an openness to changing categories, and things becoming their opposites -- perhaps most provocatively the ability to view OPEC, born as an anti-imperialist defensive structure, as now a thriving imperialism. It also requires careful examination of the obvious structural difficulties, especially the fact that in the capitalist era, armies have always been national entities under state direction, at least nominally; it is not easy to see how that arrangement will be superseded, even as the class struggle internationalizes itself.

economism

good

16. But imperialism, by definition, is the ~~rule~~ rule of finance capital. It is not the rule of armies. Its main method of penetration is still cheap commodities, not the force of arms. It is true that imperialism is a single system, but that doesn't mean a single entity. It simply means that backward and advanced countries are part of the same world order. \* This new theory, however, tends to challenge the various theories about "sub-imperialism" or "dependent imperialism," at least in any epochal sense.

Ken  
6/26/80

\* In this sense, criticisms of Alison for ignoring the condition of oppressed Third World women in her analysis of modern capitalism are misplaced. The tendency she identified, properly, I think, in its most advanced form, also characterizes Third World modern capitalism also -- e. g., Nestle infant formula as the commodity equivalent of breast feeding.

## THE IMPERIALISM OF THE MULTINATIONALS

By *Imperialism of the Multinationals* we mean that phase of imperialism in which multinational capital is dominant.

The multiproductive multinational monopoly, that is, large trusts with branches in various countries and investments in different sectors, is now the dominant element in the structure; the fundamental basis for the movements of capital is thus no longer the national area, but the capitalist area in its entirety.

Although the basic constituent element of imperialism, since its origin, has been monopoly capital, it was only with the second World War that multinational monopoly capital asserted its presence throughout the whole capitalist area. Now the big monopoly combines can decisively overcome their national limitations and roam freely over the whole area, while the multinational structure becomes an indispensable factor for all further development. It is precisely because of this that it can fully exploit the existence of different rates of profit in the area, thus realising those enormous superprofits that are characteristic of capitalist accumulation in the imperialist phase.

"Multinationalism" is thus not simply the internationalisation of the capitalist market, but the internationalisation of capital in its totality: structure of production, market, property relations etc. Inside the bourgeois alliance, this process of internationalisation determines the domination of the *IMPERIALIST BOURGEOISIE*, the class expression of multinational monopoly capital; and as it asserts itself, its institutional instruments of intervention and domination are consolidated alongside (*Trilateral, Imperialist State of the Multinationals, IMF, EEC, etc.*).

But the domination of multinational capital and the imperialist bourgeoisie does not mean that every capital, in this phase, is therefore a multinational capital, rather that every other capitalist form, whether national or non-monopoly, now has to be analysed in its relations of *ORGANIC DEPENDENCE* to multinational capital: the movements of this capital determine the movements of all other capitals in the last instance. Thus the contradictions inside the bourgeois alliance are not overcome, but posed again in different forms: the principal inter-capitalist contradiction is now no longer the one between national capitals (and hence between national areas and national bourgeoisies) - but the one between big multinational combines (thus cutting vertically through the imperialist bourgeoisie).

In saying this, we don't mean to deny that contradictions still exist between the various capitalist 'nations', or between monopoly and non-monopoly capital. But we believe these contradictions to be

essentially the reflection of much deeper contradictions between multinational combines. In fact, the various national areas now exist as a backdrop for the multinationals : the 'point of strength' for each multinational is the national area in which it was born and developed, the zone in which it reaps the benefit of being an almost exclusive monopoly. So really when we speak about multinationals, we always imply " multinationals with a national pole ", and so use what at first glance seem to be contradictory expressions - " American, German...etc. multinationals ".

Non-monopoly capital, organically dependent on monopoly capital, exists by its side in what is certainly a contradictory unity ; but obviously it cannot have the possibility and the material strength to express these contradictions in the political form of a rupture in the imperialist alliance. Thus, the imperialism of the multinationals takes the form of a system of world domination in which the different 'national capitalisms' are nothing more than its organic articulations, where the different 'national areas' are the geographic expression of the international division of labour that it sets under way.

Thus, we can make our first observation. In each national area, the proletariat is in no position to settle up with its own 'national bourgeoisie', but rather with the local articulation of the imperialist bourgeoisie. This gives to the proletarian class struggle - even in the metropolises - the character of an anti-imperialist struggle, and thus, in a more general sense, the character of REVOLUTIONARY CLASS WAR. In the same breath it is also, in the metropolises, AN ANTI-IMPERIALIST LIBERATION WAR, A PROTRACTED WAR.

As we have seen, however, the imperialist chain is still characterised by its unequal development, defining the specificity of the economic social formation in each of its links ( the relation between the dominant multinational capital and the multinational capital of the particular 'pole', between monopoly and non-monopoly capital, between 'internal' imperialist bourgeoisie and proletariat ). For this reason the class struggle, despite its strategic homogeneity of contents and perspectives, takes forms and rhythms specific to the different national areas.

## IMPERIALISM AND WAR

The present economic crisis engulfing the entire imperialist system is, with respect to the whole Western capitalist area, a capitalist crisis of absolute overproduction. The means that imperialism has always used to resolve these periodic crises of overproduction has been war. It is war which first of all allows the victorious imperialist powers to expand their productive base at the expense of the losers ; but even more important, it is war which marks the destruction of capital, commodities and labour power, and thus makes resumption of the economic cycle possible for some time to come.

To still remain 'restricted' to the Western area means, in fact, that imperialism must accumulate ever more disruptive contradictions : the concentration of capital increases in an accelerated way, the rate of profit hits rock bottom, the productive base gets ever more restricted, unemployment soars. Short moments of apparent recovery are followed by ever more severe recessive phases, defining what amounts

to a process of permanent crisis ( the unfolding of the crisis in the last few years has broadly demonstrated this ).

Because of this, imperialism faces an ever more pressing need to widen its area. But it can only be widened at the expense of Social-Imperialism ( the USSR and countries of the Warsaw Pact ), leading inevitably to a direct collision between the USA and USSR. The partial clashes carried out through " intermediaries " receiving assistance from them, in the Middle East and Africa, are only the first stages of this process.

This, therefore, is the historical perspective presented by multinational monopoly capital in this phase, for both itself and the revolutionary movement. The position of the proletariat inside it can only be objectively put as a decisive frontal confrontation with imperialist domination. And its immediate tactics can only be fixed by the same historical perspective : either class war in the imperialist metropolises, or else imperialist third world war.

The various imperialist powers are quite unable to make war without their own " pacified and solid " background, so they can endure the fierceness of the clash. Many examples could be given of inter-imperialist wars which were concluded just as soon as the threat of communist revolution appeared, when different imperialisms, previously the bitterest of enemies, united against armed proletarian rebellion. Two examples will suffice : the Paris Commune and the October Revolution :

Here is the example that Marx drew from the Commune :

*".....that after the most tremendous war of modern times, the conquering and the conquered hosts should fraternise for the common massacre of the proletariat - this unparalleled event does indicate, not as Bismarck thinks, the final repression of a new society upheaving, but the crumbling into dust of bourgeois society. The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable is national war ; and this is now proved to be mere governmental numbing, intended to defer the struggle of classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into civil war. "*





In the crisis which precedes war, however, the relations of forces are strategically favourable to the proletarian revolution. The crisis actually generates the strongest social contradictions, which determine a most violent class confrontation ; insofar as this confrontation is deepened and transformed into class war, the bourgeoisie is unable to move on to the footing of imperialist war : thus the crisis becomes irreversible, while further sharpening the process of civil war that is going on at the same time.

This is the dialectic that can nail capitalist development.

So we can formulate the following generalisation : inside the crisis the password of the bourgeoisie is " *block the process of civil war, transform it into imperialist war and thus defeat the revolution* " ; for communists it then has to be " *develop the process of civil war that is taking place, and thus obstruct imperialist war* " .

### THE IMPERIALIST STATE OF THE MULTINATIONALS

A. It is first of all necessary to fix some methodological criteria that are basic to the determination of the concept of the Imperialist State.

So we will begin by saying that we do not believe that during this century the substance of capitalism, that is its specific contradictions, has changed. On the contrary, what has changed is the form, and hence the ways in which these contradictions historically tend to be shown.

For clarification, we point to the divergence between Lenin and Bukharin on the nature of capitalism. Bukharin argued that imperialism was a completely new phenomenon compared with competitive capitalism, to which Lenin replied : " *Imperialism is a superstructure of capitalism* ", i.e. that imperialism has the same basic contradictions as capitalism - the substance remains unchanged, only the form is different ( from 'private capitalism' to 'State monopoly capitalism', from 'free competition' to 'competition between monopolies'... ).

In other words, the problem for Lenin was not one of superceding basic categories of Marxist analysis, but rather their formal redefinition ( historical-political ) in the light of a new reality.

Paraphrasing Lenin, we could also say that : " *The imperialism of the multinationals is a superstructure of imperialism* ", so that our task is not to throw overboard the categories of Leninist analysis ('Nation State', 'imperialist chain', 'weak link'...), but to re-examine them in terms of the form they take in the present phase, in order to clarify it.

The same is true of the categories 'Party' and 'Dictatorship of the proletariat' ; our theoretical-practical consideration of the Fighting Communist Party is really nothing other than the reproduction of the substance of Leninist experience, and its developments through the Chinese revolution, in the present phase. That is why we call ourselves 'marxist-leninists'.

B. The Imperialist State of the Multinationals is the 'national' institutional superstructure which corresponds with the phase of the imperialism of the multinationals. Its essential characteristics are :

- 1 The formation of an imperialist political personnel
- 2 The rigid centralisation of State structures under the control  
of the Executive
- 3 Reformism and annihilation as integral forms of the same function
- 4 Preventative counter-revolution

### THE FORMATION OF AN IMPERIALIST POLITICAL PERSONNEL

Together with the development of a multinational economic structure in our area since the mid-fifties ( with the massive penetration of USA multinational capital on an international scale since 1957 ), an imperialist bourgeois fraction is formed inside the bourgeoisie.

We define the 'internal' imperialist bourgeoisie as that fraction of the bourgeois class that is integrated with the world imperialist system, which is the expression of multinational monopoly capital and the pulling element of the imperialist restructuring process, and related political and institutional superstructures, in our economic area.

In this same period the supranational institutional structures ( IMF, EEC, NATO ), through which the imperialist bourgeoisie aims to impose its global strategy, gain strength ; they assume power to the point of subordinating, making functional to themselves, the 'national states', which are thereby forced to redefine their internal structure.

Through this restructuring, they are ready to carry out two basic roles :

- The transmission belt of the global economic-strategic interests of the dominant imperialism,
- The 'normalisation of the area', i.e. the organisation of preventative counter-revolution in order to wipe out all 'desire' for revolution.

Naturally, in the links which are economically weakest and politically most unstable, these functions become decisive, and therefore get carried forward by the 'internal' bourgeoisie, borrowing from the strongest links the most repressive practices and models which they are already applying, under the supervision of the imperialist centres of supranational command.



*" The Nation-State becomes the transmission belt of international capital organised against the people. The bourgeois Constitutional-State, in its process of contradictory evolution between the socialisation of production and the international concentration of capital, is dissolved and replaced by the Strong-State or armed democracy "*

Croissant

Introductory note to K.C. production stuff

Janeen

I think that this proposal, and the decision by the K.C. production fraction that we could not justify the time and energy required to get it off the ground, bring out some important questions about STO's approach to production work. I still favor my proposal despite seeing the difficulties it involves more clearly than I did when I wrote it. They are the necessary difficulties in implementing the last GMM's decision to revitalize a concentration in production work in a small organization with competing priorities. Needless to say, the GMM decision has not been implemented anywhere according to any standard.

Mark and I are writing a paper which will be ready for the GMM. It will present a more detailed position. However I would like to make three points here: We can't develop production organizing in K.C. alone. there must be a national approach which seriously considers the organizational changes needed to implement the approach. Production work must focus on actual organization of workers, not on just presenting STO's positions to a working class audience. Unless we make some real progress in production organizing, the advances we make in other areas of work will be undermined and lack substance.

# Proposal for a Citywide Workers Group

The Kansas City branch unanimously passed a proposal that our production work be to build a city-wide workers group. The other proposals, which were defeated, were to continue TDU work and to start working in CLW. This paper is an elaboration of the proposal we passed.

In the last three years Kansas City's point of production work has varied considerably. We put out leaflets concerning issues and struggles that occurred at the shops we were working in. We participated in attempts to force the union at a specific plant to take up the issues around which workers in motion (discriminatory application of a new attendance policy). We tried to use a newspaper (Workers' Voice), which spoke to the contradictory elements of workers' consciousness, as a means of attracting advanced workers. We put out purely anti-imperialist propaganda to factory workers all over town. We attempted to build and participate in a trade union reform organization (TRU). Usually our work was sporadic and isolated in one particular factory. Probably the most successful outcome of any of this recent work was political discussion with people at work. It is my opinion, though, that such discussions could have, and in fact did, occur without any "production work."

All of the above approaches were based on the estimate that the class struggle was in a period of lull. Furthermore, none of these approaches entailed an estimate of when the lull was likely to end or what "the end" implied about the changing form of struggles. Basing production work on this estimate tended to justify doing nothing at any time--whether ~~xxxx~~ there was a lull or whether there was an upsurge in class militancy and action. While it was positive that we decided to put more emphasis on production work, even when there wasn't much going on, I think our concept of the lull obscured the distinction between the kind of work we should do in different periods, as well as prevented a well-thought out analysis of the state of the working class movement. We tended to not have much hope for success and the kinds of work we attempted reflected that estimate.

Times have changed. We're in the process of analyzing the present crisis. We're discussing what that means for our production work. Some of us think the potential for increasing class militancy exists now where it didn't as recently as early this year. The estimate that potential now exists for workers to take direct action regarding a broad range of issues that are affecting the class is the basis for my proposal. This estimate is, in short, that all hell is breaking loose--Three Mile Island, massive lay-offs, Miami, cutbacks in welfare, inflation, lousy contracts, Chatanooga, Reagan and most recently Poland. These events and many others have combined to make people question almost everything. When workers no longer buy the explanations put forth by the ruling class, when they're searching for ways to survive, when they view themselves as distinct and separate from the government, the company, the union, we have to conclude that a significant partial break has been made. Now is the time to fight for, struggle out and systematize this aspect of workers' consciousness.

How can we best do this? Put out a newspaper with our line and hone it "clicks?" Find a shop floor struggle and intervene with our politics? Channel all this militancy and rebellion into a union reform battle? No, no, and DO!!!

I think the answer for Kansas City is to build a city-wide, multi-national, class-conscious, hell-raising, ass-kicking group of working class people who view themselves as organizers.

The time has come to rebel. Working class resistance has a history. Some of that=resistance was reactionary and some of it was revolutionary; some was mass, a lot has been individual. We should expect that to be true today and tomorrow also. What we must do is actively build upon the positive aspects of that history.

I also think that mass rebellion is becoming accepted by more and more people. For example, it was my experience at work that the reaction to Miami was not as negative as I had expected. The Blackworkers not only talked positively about Miami, but also talked about the possibility of it happening in Kansas City as well as other cities. The white workers reactions were a hell of a lot better than I had expected. I think its significant that they didn't witness cops beating heads, etc., in Miami on TV as they had witnessed Watts. But they didn't question the fact that ~~KKKK~~ McDuffy was murdered by the cops for being Black. They know it happens, and they know there is going to be resistance to it. In addition demonstrations for everything, both good and bad, are commonplace and are not viewed as deviant, but as an acceptable (even if ineffective) thing to do. Developing and refining this emerging defiance has to be an important part of this group's work.

Another important part of the group's work must be understanding and demonstrating the necessity to take up a broad range of issues--not only factory life, but all aspects of our lives. This means we would take up issues such as strike support, unemployment, discrimination, police brutality in the Black community, and cutbacks in city and state health services to name a few. Around these issues the group will have to decide on what tactics to use. Probably there will be a combination of traditional actions such as picketing, leafletting, with more creative, dramatic actions. This part of the work will most likely be more difficult to accomplish than the other. However, I think the composition of the group will be a strength. The workers we are asking to form this group are people with whom we've worked in factories. Some are old contacts. Most are people we've had substantial political ~~discuss~~ discussions with and also have worked with on various shop issues.

The majority of people we're contacting are Blacks. Our contacts also include an almost equal number of employed and unemployed. Both of these should aid in broadening the vision of the group.

Also, among potential members of the group there is a wide range of ideas about why everything is fucked up, what the solution is and how to most effectively accomplish it. I think it is incorrect for us, STO, to go into the group with an elaborate program and structure. Certainly we should argue for what we think is correct, but with the realization that we'll probably be in the minority on some questions. We also must understand that discussion within the group is necessary for political development and that our activities/actions will both reflect that development and further it.

In addition, since from the outset this group will be an organizing group, people will be forced to think in terms broader than their own shop or their own union. They will also view this grouping as something they're responsible for building. Both of these contribute to a sense of collectivity which is essential for developing a mass working class organization.

Three statements Noel made in the introduction to Workplace Papers (p. iii) about organizational form are ones which should, I think, guide ~~us~~ our production work: 1. "which encompasses and focuses the mass subversive destabilizing motion of the class" 2. "which permit it to play an active creative role in the revolutionary process", and ~~XXXXXXXX~~ 3. "which embodies the revolutionary aspect of the proletariat." This work could be a step in that direction.

Janeen September 1980

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By S.V.

STO in KC has a big printing outfit and any number of smart and capable people with years of experience working in factories. Yet the branch has proven itself incapable of carrying out even the simplest propaganda in the local working class. Human and technical resources aren't lacking but theoretical resources are. Dual consciousness, dual power, and working class self-activity are so many alibies forbidding consistent work in the factories.

#### Dual Consciousness

"Second, the separation between conflicting worldviews is not a clear one, and perhaps more important, it is temporary, present only spasmodically and sporadically in the heat of the struggle. As struggles subside, the characteristics ~~which~~ which foreshadow the possibility of socialism are generally submerged..." Towards a Revolutionary Party.

It's all very well to renounce any scoffing at propaganda and education in the introduction to this ~~pamphlet~~ pamphlet. But the fact is that a formal declaration can't alter the logic of the position taken in this paragraph. The logic is that the working class moves in lockstep from periods of heightened class struggle into normal periods without any residue in the form of political differentiation inside the working class. It is the existence of numbers of workers inside each workplace who have drawn some conclusions from past struggles and who maintain a relatively high level of class consciousness and activity which makes propaganda an effective way of provoking discussion inside the working class even in a time like the present.

Leaving aside other obstacles to revolutionary consciousness, past struggles leave an organizational residue as well, in the form of reformist parties, reformist trade union leaderships, etc. If you imagine that the level of the class struggle inscribes itself directly on the workers' consciousness without reference to the whole process of organizational accumulation, degeneration and recomposition then you throw the tiny matter of encountering and defeating the reformists and sub-reformists out the window. The results of such a policy can be seen clearly in Germany in 1918-19 when the reformists shut down a powerful and growing council movement from the inside and in a few months engineered the murder of the best leaders of the German far left. Some sort of initial defeat probably ~~could~~ couldn't have been avoided anyway. But the far left would have been in a much better position ~~and~~ had it separated itself organizationally from the reformists and begun a struggle against them much earlier.

#### Dual Power

"The party combines a clear and critical estimate of social forces and processes with programs to clarify to the workers the ways in which their own actions, ideas, and relationships prefigure socialism. In this way the urgency of the revolution can be transformed from an intellectual conclusion to a matter of felt need, and the workability of socialism can be changed from a matter of endless abstract debate to a fact of experience." TRP

STO uses the term "dual power" to refer to anything which advances the organization, autonomy and confidence of the workers, so far as I can gather. It does not restrict the meaning of the term to institutions of proletarian democracy which have emerged during general strikes, after putsches etc: soviets, factory councils, the Chilean cordones and so forth. In the entire pamphlet there is not one single mention of the historical experience of the working class with institutions of dual power.



A whole series of decisive strategic questions surround the matter of dual power. In what periods do they emerge? What concrete needs of the struggle for political power do they meet? What are the demands and slogans necessary to defeat and isolate the reformists within them? What tactics are necessary to get rid of the last constitutionalist prejudices of the people and insure that the new democracy isn't subordinated to parliamentary democracy? What is the relationship of the new democracy to the insurrection itself? Of course STO is perfectly free to use the term "dual power" to refer to anything whatsoever. But in using it to describe actions, ideas and relationships which prefigure socialism, all strategic discussion is turned into a hopeless muddle.

In any case this attempt to wring a drop of due power out of every struggle is just a substitute for grappling with the age-old problem of how to link the day-to-day struggles of the workers with the struggle for political power. Instead of attempting to work out a way of bridging the chasm between the two sorts of struggles, STO simply proclaims that if we look hard enough we'll divine the struggle for political power in the innards of this or that episode in the class struggle. Is it any wonder that a group with this outlook finds it difficult to carry out propaganda work in a lull when what the class is doing and what it is ~~capable~~ capable of doing differ so greatly?

#### Self-Activity

"The revolutionary component-self activity-is manifested on a daily basis in the process of production...Adherence to 200% production contains elements of such an alternative view even as it demonstrates the opposite. The worker expresses both revolutionary and nonrevolutionary elements." Working Class Self-Activity, Le Holstein, Urgent Tasks.

This view is of course at odds with the idea of dual consciousness which appears in the rest of STO literature and even elsewhere in the Holstein article. Elsewhere it is argued that the worker expresses "revolutionary ~~elements~~" elements" during periods of sharp class struggle while remaining verbally subordinate during normal times. As Gramsci has it this verbal subordination isn't just so much icing on the cake but a form of domination with real effects. But Holstein informs us that the "revolutionary elements" can be discerned not only in periods of struggle and not only in workers who resist the bosses, but even in lulls and in those lulls even in the behavior of workers who bust their asses for the greater glory of the stockholders. STO is like one of those Christians who finds the portent of the coming of the Savior in every page of the Old Testament. "IN fact, in the same day, the same hour or the same sentence the working class consistently demonstrates this duality." The King is coming!

This conception of self-activity downplays the importance of ideological struggle and therefore the importance of day-to-day agitation and propaganda. It is one thing to argue the existence of a class instinct and spontaneous ideological struggle during normal times. It is something else entirely to set along side each other "revolutionary and nonrevolutionary elements" in a relations of duality and ~~therefore~~ therefore essential equivalence and equilibrium. With this device the fact of the ideological domination of the bourgeoisie, resulting finally from its mystery of the division of labor is ignored and slighted. This is just as plain a deviation from the principles of Marxims as anything Hindness and Hirst, Theoretical Review or Michel Fourault have yet cooked up. But it is consoling!

Steve Vieux

# STO Open Meeting on Repression Work

by B.H.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Part 1 - Theory

1. STO has traditionally argued that fascism - understood as a move into the extraordinary by the bourgeoisie - is unlikely in the U.S. because ordinary class rule/white supremacy has proven adequate. Is this still an accurate assessment? Was it ever an accurate assessment? Does the rise of the right/Reagan's election indicate changes in the state apparatus?
2. What is fascism? Is fascism necessarily autonomous of the state? Is the Klan fascist? Do Third World people in the U.S. live under fascism? What is the difference between fascism and imperialism?
3. Is there a world crisis of capitalism? Is it apocalyptic?
4. Does capitalism inherently tend towards fascism? Is fascism capitalism?

### Part 2 - Implementation

1. What is the connection between the anti-abortion/anti-gay and anti-Third World components of the right-wing? Are they essentially the same movement with two different rallying points? Does one take precedence over the other?
2. "Reagan's election forbodes the reversal of gains made by women, Third World and Gay people in the 60's and represents the consolidation of the Right with those who would profit from right wing policies. The attacks from the Right on women and Third World people have come in the form of moves to outlaw affirmative action programs in employment and education, cutbacks in social services such as AFDC (welfare), food stamps, children's nutrition programs and childcare. The movement to deprive women of the right to abortion and family planning services directly impacts our reproductive and medical rights as women. In addition, the increased activities of the Ku Klux Klan and the "Moral" Majority have intensified the challenge from the Right. The Right is targetting the Lesbian/Gay community, waging a "moral" war in the Bay Area and proposing capital punishment for homosexuality. The surfacing of the KKK in the Bay Area and the attacks on Third World people by the KKK nationwide represent part of the overall right wing trend in this country today.

Thus it is imperative that we build the broadest and deepest political unity among progressive peoples to meet the challenging times ahead. We hope to reclaim the importance of International Women's Day...." (Leaflet by Women's Committee to Celebrate International Women's Day and the Alliance Against Women's Oppression.)

Do you agree or disagree? What would you say differently?

3. To what extent do right wing movements such as the Klan and Right to Life reflect popular dissatisfaction with capitalism? To what extent are they autonomous and posed against the state? Is their base our base? ?

4. STO's traditional opposition to the "unite to fight the ultra-right" approach taken by most of the left usually becomes a position of "main blow against social democracy." Is this similar to the mistaken Comintern position taken by R. Palme Dutt, when the Communist Party refused to unite with the Social Democrats as the Nazi's were coming to power?
5. What is the most decisive terrain for doing anti-fascist work?

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

- \*\* "Imperialism in the Silicon Age" by A. Sivanandan, Monthly Review, July-Aug, 1980
- \*\* Mark of the Beast: Southern Exposure, Summer 1980
- \*\* Discussion of capitalist crisis, STO Internal Discussion Bulletins #17 and 18
- \*\* "Fascism in the U.S.?" STO pamphlet, 1976
- \*\* Fascism: Some Misconceptions" UT #4 and Correspondence, UT #9
- \*\* Frank Giese's paper on Fascism in UT #11
- \*\* "On Unconditional Support and Follow Third World Leadership" Editorial in UT #6
- \*\* The writings of R. Palme Dutt & Leon Trotsky on Facism
- \*\* "Work, The Energy Crisis and the Apocalypse" by Midnight Notes Collective. Try Modern Times.
- \*\* Letter from Huey Newton and Erica Huggins on Gay Liberation, 1970-71.
- \*\* Something on the anti-abortion, anti-gay movements; haven't found anything we like yet.

Bay Area STO  
March, 1981

## A DARK CLOUD'S RISING OFF THE DESERT FLOOR

-Bruce Springsteen

### SOME THOUGHTS ON THE RISE OF THE NEW RIGHT?

I. The Reagan administration represents a fundamentally different approach to politics, economics and foreign affairs. For the first time in fifty years America has a president that doesn't believe in the basic reforms made under the New Deal. Even Nixon and Ford never questioned the role of the government in mitigating the grossest social inequities. The New Deal was accepted by all the ruling class as the price that had to be paid to maintain social stability. Keynesian pump - priming was, mitigating economic downturns through deficit spending was seen as necessary medicine for the economy in times of trouble. To be sure Nixon, Ford and Carter were all fiscal conservatives but while they fought to stop expansion of the welfare state, they never attacked its basic assumptions.

II. What does this mean - what can we predict about Reagan's policies?

First, Reagan is not a bad dream. He represents the triumph of the radical right within the ruling class. The proverbial Cowboy triumphing over the Yankees. More importantly, the entire ruling class, including the Yankees seem determined to support his attempt to bring back unbridled rule of America in the world and rule of the capitalists in America.

Second, Reagan is not crazy. His own intelligence notwithstanding his inhuman policies offer the best hope possible of restoring health the American capitalism. His mass support is also based on real values held by the majority of white people in this society.

III. Concretely what can we expect in the coming years?

Reagan's foreign policy is based on the recognition that the strategic position of the United States relative to the Soviet Union has been steadily deteriorating for the past 35 years. MacArthur was correct. If war is inevitable between the US and the USSR the sooner it happens, the more advantageous it will be to the US.

The left in this country must realize that no matter how we regard the Soviet Union the foreign policy of the USSR has been based on the notion that their system was healthier than the US and that by avoiding war Russia would steadily gain strategically. Further, as the USSR developed economically and militarily they achieved conventional superiority in almost all the potential theaters of conflict in the world (with the exception of Cuba). Russia would have little difficulty overwhelming US and NATO forces in any conventional war in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and probably most of Africa. And Russia's strategic position is improving all the time. Even their major defeat, the rupture of their alliance in China, hasn't given the US strategic superiority in Asia.

Consequently, if the US is going to contend with the Soviet Union militarily the US must develop a high technology arsenal to overcome the Soviet conventional advantage. Also the US must convince the Soviet Union that Reagan is willing to seriously contemplate using nuclear weapons to counter Soviet superiority on the conventional side.

The left must understand the motivation of the US and the Soviet Union. No matter how we feel about the class character of the Soviet state we must understand that the US is the country that would almost certainly start a nuclear conflict. First the US is weaker conventionally and will not be able to defend its Eurasian and African interests conventionally and second the US and USSR both perceive continued peace to lead to continued decline of America's influence and eventual triumph for Russia.

The Russians probably would not initiate a world war because they perceive their cause as winning and in the event of a limited war they could prevail as long as nuclear weapons weren't used.

This all means that Reagan's people are serious about confronting the Soviet Union. I believe they will learn from the failures of Vietnam and will not get involved in a conflict requiring the permanent presence of hundreds of thousands of troops. Rather they will develop a policy of support for comprador regimes and the option of using a rapid deployment force supported by a beefed up navy and air force.

It is no accident that a member of the national security council stated last week that not only is detente dead, but war between the US and the USSR is inevitable, unless Russia adopts a capitalistic system. Even if the denials from the White House and the state department are to be believed the undeniable fact is that this member of the National Security Council felt that such a public statement was appropriate at this time. It is clear that some dark discussions are occurring on the NSC these days.

So I am certain that Reagan's advisors really believe that the US has to go on the offensive against the Soviet Union now, before the strategic balance shifts further. The problem is they must prepare the American people and the American military for this task. They want to avoid a Vietnam style war with hundreds of thousands of troops stationed virtually permanently in a war with no end. Consequently, the administration will try to rely on right wing comprador and mercenary forces in the third world as much as possible. If direct US military intervention is needed I expect they will try to develop a blitzkrieg type option (the rapid deployment force backed by a beefed up air force and navy).

Concretely, I think the administration is now laying the groundwork for military action against Cuba. The Soviet Union is strategically exposed there and cannot defend Cuba short of nuclear war and Reagan may be willing to risk a possible Soviet move in Berlin or the Middle East. Certainly Cuba has much more strategic significance than Berlin.

There are many political and strategic factors that will tend to make it difficult for Reagan to invade Cuba. Also, defeating the Russians is one thing but setting up a government in Cuba that could rule without involving the US in a continuous military operation to prop it up is not likely at this time. However, I am convinced that if the administration decided to make a massive military intervention in El Salvador, or anywhere else in Latin America, it will make Cuba a prime target. *W.*

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So while an invasion is unlikely a blockade is very possible and would be difficult for the Russians to respond to. The point is we can expect the US to adopt an aggressive foreign policy and as the leaders of America realize they are losing the competition with the Soviet Union they will become increasingly more desperate.

On the Domestic scene Reagan signifies a break with the welfare-statism that has characterized American domestic policy of the past fifty years. The supply siders truly envision a society without significant welfare supports.

The point here is that these economic policies are a rational response to the failure of liberalism. In the past the left pointed out the limitations of welfare as being a stop gap measure that didn't deal with the fundamental problems of unemployment and periodic crises in production. In fact US productivity has been falling and more and more people have come to rely on public assistance as a way of life. On the other side of the coin artificial restraints on capitalism, such as minimum wage really do contribute to unemployment. There is an unlimited demand for labor at zero wages and if capitalists were free to offer people \$2.00 or even \$1.00 an hour and there was no public assistance available, then people would be forced to work. These are the goals I think Reagan is working toward economically!

1. Dismantling the welfare system as we know it. If the federal government steps out of the welfare process state governments will be very tight with welfare payments since recipients will migrate to the more liberal states. This will create political pressure on state officials to compete to have the most tight fist system.
2. Ending or severely reducing minimum wages. Engendering a plethora of subsistence jobs in private industry and providing no options for people who refuse to accept them.
3. Radically redefining the level of subsistence society will guarantee its members. The new deal moved America far from the Malthusian principle of bare subsistence. As inadequate as our welfare programs are they provide more social security for poor people than existed before the new deal.
4. Ending the governments commitment to education and many other services. Citizens will be expected to purchase educations for their children. Many republicans realize that as more people become economically marginalized, they will not need a high school education. You don't need twelve years of schooling to work at McDonalds for \$1.85 an hour.

We can also expect reworking concept of aid for senior citizens. It is increasingly popular to advocate holding the line on social security taxes by increasing the retirement age.

5. Raising the salaries in the military and forcing people into the military. This may not primarily entail a draft.

The military is suffering from a lack of skilled personnel and filling the ranks with the dregs of society is not Reagan's idea of solving the problem. Instead we can expect financial aid to college students to be radically cut and many students will find that the only way to finance a college education will be to sign on for four years in the military in exchange for college benefits. We see the beginnings of this policy already.

These policies will obviously create the need for vastly increased law enforcement; both increased personnel and material and a much stricter criminal code.

Reagan's administration will work to make abortion illegal although it will try to subtly derail the Right to Life Amendment for reasons I\ will go into later.

As with Reagan's foreign policy, these domestic policies are a rational response to the decaying American position in the world. Once the wealthiest country in the world the US has slipped to tenth in terms of per capita income and productivity continues to decline. The New Deal was based on the assumption of a basically productive majority being taxed to support the non-productive minority. As US imperialism declines and as the normal levels of unemployment increase and living standards continue to fall it becomes harder for politicians to justify large outlays of taxes toward public assistance. Reagan has correctly read the signals from white people in this country and has proposed a program that has sent the bankrupted liberals scurrying for cover.

IV. Reagan's polls give him the lowest ratings of any new president in recent history. Almost 50% of the voters didn't vote in November. Aren't these heartening signs?

The apathy at the polls represents disenchantment with the basically continuous LIBERAL government of the past fifty years. While the majority of Americans are not conservatives, the right wing movements among white people are incredibly stronger and have much greater mass support than anything the left has been able to do with white people. Any objective reading of the growth potential of the Moral Majority versus the RCP would have to conclude that while white people are entering a state of ideological flux, the signs seem to portend a move to the right much more than a move to the left.

About Reagan's popularity, possibly for the first time in the history of the Republic Americans have an ideology for president. All previous presidents have attempted to appeal to a broad consensus typically producing high poll ratings early in their administration and lower ratings as they filled out their term. Reagan has totally written off broad sections of the population. He owes no political debt to third world people, he does not expect to win any of the decaying industrial centers. He cares not a whit about support from organized labor. The teamsters have been slavish in their attempts to form some sort of accommodation, but Reagan has steadfastly refused to recognize their unflinching support in any of his appointments.

The Reagan administration understands that his support is basically ideological and his main political aim is not to win the center but to keep the radical right from withdrawing its support from his administration, as Jerry Falwell and others have hinted. This is a significant departure from previous administrations.

The Reagan administration is deliberately attempting to polarize the national political picture. They have accepted that as the price of carrying out an ideological program.

V. Does this mean the radical right has taken over the government?

Hardly. While it is necessary to recognize that Reagan represents a fundamental break with the governing philosophy of the past fifty years he is not the candidate of the radical right. Rather he represents the most right wing elements in the ruling class.

My thesis is that economically, America is in a crisis in many ways different from the 1930's.

One difference is that the wherewithal to have a new deal type solution is not available. America's declining economic hegemony and declining productivity makes a welfare state increasingly harder to maintain. Mainly, we are witnessing a redistribution of the worlds wealth, but also we are harvesting the fruits of fifty years of maintaining a society with increasingly large numbers of adults being non-productive.

Like the 1930's the ruling class perceives a threat to stability and is resigning itself to radically altering the system to placate that threat. But that threat is not coming from the CIO, the unemployed leagues or the Communist Party. The ruling class is frightened by the meteoric rise of the radical right. The right to life movements and the Moral Majority, even more than the Klan, Minutemen and their ilk represent a potential Phlansist movement in America and are not taken lightly by the elite. The left has nothing comparable to these mass movements among white people and objectively it seems that the right has a greater growth potential at this point.

These proto-fascist movements are led by people who have never had the responsibility of being a part of the actual ruling class and consequently have developed none of the restraints that the actual power brokers have learned.

For example, there is a real chance that the Right to Life Amendment will be passed over the objections of ruling class conservatives due to strong popular support. This amendment would go much further than outlawing abortion. It would define abortion as murder. It would be the most radical change in the political life of America since emancipation of the slaves. There is no way society could remain stable if hundreds of thousands and possibly millions of women and doctors are made into felons, not only felons but felons in a capital crime.

It is for this reason that the most conservatives members of the government are furiously working to find a way to outlaw abortion within the judicial process. The ruling class perceives the social cost of the right to life amendment as being too much to bear. The fact that this amendment might pass over the practically united opposition by the ruling class indicates the extent to which they are losing control of events in America.

The Right to Life amendment is not the only threat to the ruling class from the right. While business supported Proposition 13 in California, it was not originated by the corporate community. And almost all of the ruling class joined in opposing the follow up measure. Not because they favor higher taxes, but because they understand that you can't run a government with nothing but a police force. Yet this proposition got over 40% of the vote and was seriously in danger of passing.



The strategy of the radical right has been to go to the grass roots. The strategy of the ruling class has been to try to placate the right by using the Judicial branch of the government as a check on popular excesses that could lead to social instability. It is for this reasons that Reagan and other conservatives are trying to put a damper on the calls for constitutional ammendments.

So as Reactionary as Reagan is he is still representing part of the ruling class and he is attempting to co-opt the radical right in much the same way Roosevelt attacked the mass base of the left.

Very simply put, the policies advocated by the likes of John Briggs, Paul Jarvis, Jerry Farwell would at the very least lead to a fascist police state if not to outright civil war.

VI. So if Reagan doesn't represent the radical right, who does?

There is a real potential for fascism in the coming years. In all liklihood, if Reagan's policies are perceived as failing the white people who supported him will move further right.

I believe Jerry Farwell is the most dangerous man in America. The Moral Majority is a proto-fascist movement that doesn't carry the stigma that still accompanies the Nazi's and the Klan in many patriotic circles.

The Moral Majority and other right wing groups have made it clear that their support for Reagan is conditional. If the American society continues to decay under Reagan, as I believe it probably will, these groups have the capacity and will to form an effective force that if not let into the ruling class could destabilize the government.

I want to add the Farwell the individual is not the problem. His movement has real roots, deep in the aspirations and world view of millions of white Americans and that there are many fascists who could replace him or supplant him in the coming years.

So as bad as Reagan is, the worst is yet to come.

VII. What about the workers?

The outlook is not good for the political development of white people at this time.

The common wisdom on the left is that hard times tend to move people to the left. This is false. Hard times tend to create ideological flux, but the prevalent direction of that flux depends upon the material and ideological condition of the society.

The white workers need to make a fundamental break with their bourgeois ideology if there is to be a progressive alternative for them.

The left has made a horrible mistake in attempting to tell people what they want to hear instead of the truth. The truth is a few years ago the US had the highest per capita income in the world. Today America is number 10 and still falling. The truth is that while oil companies are gouging, the price of fuel is going up because of increasing demand in the world and decreasing supplies.

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For decades America had cheap energy. We still pay much less than most of the world though powerful economic forces are acting to equalize those levels.

The truth is that the world cannot support the American style of living any more. There are countries in the world where per capita energy consumption is less than one half of one percent (0.005) of what it is in the US. US energy consumption is 50 to 100 times greater per capita than most severely underdeveloped countries. Canada is the only country in the world where energy consumption is more than half that of the US.

Not now!

The truth is that the single family tract house in the suburbs can only exist under capitalism. Such an irrational solution to housing people can only be made a reality for an increasingly small minority of the world's four billion people.

The truth is that the American standard of living has not been produced by the high productivity of Americans, but rather by an unequal exchange of goods and labor. This inequality has been enforced by American force manifested in military, political and economic spheres. This hegemony is being increasingly challenged by developing countries, socialist countries and even competing capitalist countries.

The truth is that inflation is not mainly caused by corporate greed or military spending. It is mainly caused by a gradual change of the distribution of the world's wealth reflecting a change in the power relationships resulting from the decline of America.

The truth is that the military is not nonproductive, as the left likes to claim. Every right winner knows that the unequal distribution of the world's wealth can only be maintained by American military superiority.

If you want a house in the suburbs, a two car garage, an all white neighborhood, cheap energy and increasing purchasing power, your best bet of obtaining this is by supporting a strong military and returning America to its position of supremacy in the world. It is not important that only a minority of white people get the house in the suburbs. The important thing is that the majority ASPIRE to it and blame themselves if they fail.

Having spent a decade working in construction I have seen firsthand the effects of this ideology among construction workers. Most whites I worked with were very class conscious. They understood their own oppression, they even understood black oppression. They also condoned the system because they aspired to become the oppressor. Even though many would not make it, they all felt that they had the chance to make a good living and if a white worker lost his job while others kept working, internally he would often blame himself. They also understood the importance of maintaining capitalist interests overseas to protect their only shot at the good life at home. None of these guys personally wanted to go to war, but they were totally willing to fight the war, assuming people younger than them would be called to go.

I say all this because the left has to understand that the programs of Reagan are a rational response of the ruling class to the deteriorating situation for the US in the world. They also realize that we are reaching the limits of welfare statism.

Reagan's policies represent the best desperate gamble of America's ruling class to reverse the historical trends of the twentieth century. I think it is unlikely, but not impossible that they will succeed. If I was fighting to uphold the ruling class I would support a strategy similar to Reagan's.

VIII. If Reagan's policies will probably fail, why don't the white workers support a progressive alternative?

Even if Reagan succeeds in arresting the decline of US imperialism, Americans will look forward to a falling standard of living. The key is that under capitalism white people have a CHANCE at getting the house in the suburbs. Under socialism that will be an impossibility.

There must be a cultural revolution among white people if there is to be a mass movement for social change supported by whites. We as socialists believe that life will be better with less consumer goods, with co-operative housing replacing single family dwellings, with public transportation replacing reliance on the private car, that a co-operative society is more meaningful than a competitive society.

Unfortunately, most white people don't share these values. The possibility of preserving the middle class dream for the majority of Americans only exists in a resurgence of imperialism.

For the left to make any headway at all in the coming period we have to critique the ideology of the white working class. To attempt to blame the capitalists for the falling standard of living is suicidal because people are not fools. They understand the role of US hegemony in maintaining living standards here.

I believe many of us will have to resurrect ghosts from our hippie pasts and realize that for all its shortcomings there was a cultural movement among hundreds of thousands of white people a decade ago that attempted to oppose a war, oppose consumerism and affirm co-operation. Admittedly, this was not mainly a working class movement but I suspect their are important lessons to be learned from an analysis of the 60's youth culture by the 80's left.

For the left to be relevant to the 80's we must see the 70's as a decade of failure and learn from our mistakes. The seventies saw the demise of left wing mass movements that affected millions of white Americans and the subsequent rise of the radical right. The seventies were a period where those leftists who attempted to organize the white working class were attempting to win short term victories organizing caucuses and the like. This caucus activity came at the expense of doing a critique of ruling class ideology in the working class. People instead opportunistically accepted the materialism of white people. We are now, in our isolation and growing irrelevance to the course of events, sowing the harvest of that opportunism.

7.

Paradoxically, the only chance the white left has of making revolution in America comes if we break with American chauvinism and start seeing the revolution as a phenomenon involving 4 billion people and not 200 million. We must realize, as many of us did over a decade ago, that the revolution is happening in the world and that white Americans will be among the last people to join en masse. More than that, and tragically, white people may decide to go down with the bourgeoisie much as the German people supported the fascists. It is late and I am not sure that the white left will be able to succeed in the face of the rightward trend of the coming years. I can only hope so.

I repeat, if there is not a cultural revolution, white people will move further to the right. Behind Reagan looms the spectre of the real fascists.

DISCIPLINE originally adopted at COE, 1976, reaffirmed at 1977 GMM

A. General

We adhere to the general Leninist framework of democratic centralism - minority bound by majority decision, lower bodies bound by higher bodies. Except for specific agreed upon actions, freedom of discussion should hold, both externally and internally, consistent with security. The right of minorities to question and criticize on any points should be prompted, with the understanding that 'majority rules', and all members are bound to implement all decisions.

B. Specific

The following modifications are dictated by the particular circumstances of our organization, i.e. we are in a party-building period and are small:

1. Priority should be placed on clarification of differences.
2. Consistent minorities on basic points of estimate and strategy should be excluded from the organization.

Spouse Policy adopted July 31, 1977 CC

Spouses (narrowly defined, not to involve a license, but to include only people in close relationships over a period of time with STO members) should be able to attend STO meetings, consistent with our policy of attempting to draw spouses closer to the organization. Other non-members, however, should not attend meetings unless specifically invited and should not be invited except for specific, limited reasons.

Spouses should not be barred from meetings if they wish to attend, solely because they have resisted joining STO for a long time.

This policy includes "for members only" items unless otherwise designated.

Resolution on Third World Recruiting adopted 1976

1. We believe that a multi-national communist party is essential to revolution in America.
2. The main path to the achievement of such a party lies through merger of Marxist-Leninist groups in Third World and white communities, each with an independent history and base.
3. This does not mean denying the possibility or desirability of recruiting Third World people to what is, at present, essentially a white organization. It does mean that any such recruiting be done with a view toward strengthening, rather than undermining, any autonomous revolutionary formations which exist or may develop among Third World people.
4. Given our decision to undertake active recruiting, we resolve to pursue this policy among all people, Third World and white, recognizing the principle of autonomy of Third World individuals and groups within the Marxist-Leninist organization on all questions of concern to their communities.
5. The means of implementing this principle, as well as the means of involving the entire collective in making all political decisions, including those which affect Third World struggles, will have to be worked out as we gain more experience.

Jan. 1979

STO dues are 6% of a months gross pay or ten hours gross.

The policy of the organization is that anyone 4 or more months in arrears is automatically suspended.

Branches send in 75% of their dues revenue to the center, individuals are to send all. Two people may constitute a branch for financial purposes however if they do they will be expected to maintain the rest in a local treasury that must be accounted for and available to be called on nationally as well as locally. We want financial reports from the branches for the GMM and from individuals where they or we deem necessary.

Local treasuries and individuals often spend more than their dues (additional assessments are usually voluntary). On the one hand, we expect members to put significant demands on both their money and their time, on the other hand, members experiencing financial hardship should feel that they can call on the local and national treasuries to aid their political work. Individual exceptions can and are made.

STO's ADOPTED POSITION ON LEGAL/ILLEGAL WORK

May 1977

1. The strength of U.S. capitalism consists primarily in bourgeoisie cultural and ideological domination of the peoples and class which are potentially revolutionary. The state apparatus (military and police power) are not the immediate and over-riding obstacles that they are in other societies. This general estimate is extremely important in setting strategic priorities.
2. It is a maxm of Leninist organization that the party must function legally and illegally - openly and secretly. Even in countries with an established tradition of bourgeoisie democracy, no major mass upsurge can develop without both breaking with capitalist legality and developing forms of protection against state attempts at repression and supression.
3. Our work in the present period is facilitated by the ability to function openly and legally. This is an advantage which we will not sacrifice lightly and certainly not abandon voluntarily.
4. The anti-imperialist movement throughout the world relies heavily on underground organizations. Though such forms of struggle in this country are not in accord with our current priorities, we recognize that they can play an important and useful role. In addition, we recognize that the political conditions among oppressed peoples within this country do not afford nearly the opportunity for legal struggle which is present generally.
5. The use of military tactics in non-revolutionary conditions is an important reality in the world revolutionary movement. We do not agree with those who use Lenin's well known criticisms of "terrorism" as the basis for evaluating such tactics, and we certainly have no principled opposition to them. Of course, in an area of work where mistakes can be so extremely costly, a sober appraisal of political risks and consequences is particularly vital.

PARTY BUILDING THESIS, ADOPTED AT GMM 5/14/77

This is a party-building period. Every aspect of our work - internal, external, mass and left - should be considered within this framework.

Specifically:

1. STO places a priority on the elaboration of a correct strategy for revolution in the US, and the development of that strategy into a political tendency which is a major force on the left. Our capacities and liabilities fit this task well.
2. STO recognizes that the major organizational impetus toward the organization of a revolutionary vanguard will come from oppressed nations and peoples and we should give all possible assistance in this direction.

No actual or potential area of mass work has a validity independent of these tasks.

AUTONOMY FOR WOMEN IN STO ADOPTED 1977

All women in STO will compose the Women's Wing (WW). This body has the authority to meet separately and elect its leadership the Women's Commission (WC). The WW and WC have 5 areas of authority; 1) To oversee the development of theory on the question of male supremacy; 2) to deal with male supremacy as it exists and is a debilitating problem in STO; 3) to pursue an active interest in the women's movement; 4) to facilitate the development of women in STO; 5) to implement a program of aggressive work on reproductive rights - including abortion rights, sterilization abuse and women's control over their bodies.

Autonomy for women in STO is tactical autonomy. The WW and WC are bound to make tactical decisions within the general political line of STO. The WW and WC has no strategic authority and cannot discipline its members.

Women have the right to vote on issues affecting women. When there is a conflict on determining what a women's issue is, the organization as a whole decides.

## OUTLINE HISTORY OF STO

In order to understand the history of STO it is necessary to know something about SDS and the various currents within it. In a piece of this length it is not possible to go into this (there is a useful article by Jim O'Brien called Beyond Reminiscence: The New Left in History, published in Radical America, July-August 1972) but several points should be made here: first, that the history of the New Left and SDS in particular is a history of radicalization of a large and largely spontaneous student movement under the impact of the growing black movement of the 1960's; second, that in the last year of SDS there arose three broad tendencies: (a) a "pro-working class" tendency that discounted and even opposed the progressive content of the black movement and national liberation generally (this was represented by the so-called Worker-Student Alliance headed by the Progressive Labor Party); (b) a "third worldist" tendency that wrote off the U.S. working class (except for its black section) as bought off (this developed into the Weather Underground and later into Prairie Fire and May 19th); and (c) a third tendency, called the Revolutionary Youth Movement and later R.Y.M. II, that attempted to work out a line of support for the black movement and national liberation from a working class standpoint. It was this third tendency, which included present STO members Marilyn K. and Noel (as well as some others such as Mike Klonsky, Slim Coleman and Bob Avakian) and which was given distinctive definition by some of Noel's writings, in particular The White Blindspot (1967), that provided the principal source for STO.

In the fall of 1969, following the explosion that shattered SDS into at least three parts, a group of people who had been active in community, high school, industrial, student and defense work in Chicago in the late 1960's began to meet together to analyse what had happened and what to do next. That group included Carole T., who had been active in New Politics and the Conspiracy Seven, and Don, who had recently moved to Chicago from the west coast and had been a leader of a Left current within the CP, based mainly among youth, and who had maintained ties with R.Y.M. people over the previous few years. Around Christmas of 1969 the ten or so people who had been taking part in those meetings agreed to form a collective and begin common work, as the only way to test and develop their agreement, which at that time took shape around three points: (a) the white-skin privilege thesis; (b) the need to do production work and, within that work, implement an extra-union policy; and (c) the need for a Marxist-Leninist party. Implicit was the view that the way to build a party was to function like one, as much as possible, where the group existed. Fairly shortly was added another area of agreement: the notion of hegemony and dual consciousness, which was brought into the group mainly by Don. The Preface to Workplace Papers is accurate when it says that the main influences on the young STO were the experiences of the IWW and more recently the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the French General Strike of May '68 and the Italian "Hot Autumn" of 1969, and the writings of W.E.B. DuBois, Gramsci and C.L.R. James.

For the first several months of the group's existence, all members met together. Afterwards, they elected an executive committee, whose functions consisted at first of planning group meetings and handling



practical details between meetings. Soon the group found it necessary to divide into two branches, based on areas of mass work: thus it formed a production branch and a community-defense branch. From the beginning all women in the organization met together regularly to discuss problems of work among women in general and within STO. The group also organized its first educational, a weekend course of basic Marxism, which was important in giving it cohesion.

STO's first involvement as a group in mass work was the beginning of a semi-illegal newsletter at International Harvester Tractor Works, as part of an unsuccessful struggle to fight a threatened plant shutdown, and the successful battle to win the freedom for a black youth framed on a murder charge, which was accomplished through the organization of his family, friends and neighbors in a mass campaign on his behalf. At this time the group had about 14 members, and undertook to publish its first mass newspaper, which was a single issue of Bread and Roses, directed towards working class women. At a review-of-work meeting held at the end of 1970, the group agreed that its main accomplishments during the first year were the establishment of internal discipline, development of the ability to agree upon a line, carry it out and collectively evaluate the results, and the conducting of internal education.

1971 saw a rapid numerical expansion of STO, and also an expansion into new areas of work. As part of our efforts to develop relations with the Black Workers Congress, one of the successors to the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, we sent several people into the steel mills, which in turn brought new contacts and made possible additional recruiting. We sent people into Stewart Warner, where they began Talk Back, establishing a presence for our politics that continues up to the present day. We expanded our work to other IH plants, into several hospitals, to Motorola and other plants in the western suburbs, and elsewhere. We also recruited a collective of people doing military organizing, as well as several lawyers.

For the first year of its existence STO followed a policy of deliberate self-isolation from the Left. By 1971 it felt sufficiently self-confident to take the first steps to reach out to other groups to develop a common tendency. The first efforts along this line were the publication of a special newspaper, aimed at the steel industry, together with groups similar to STO in Detroit and Buffalo. Later in the year, at the founding convention of N.A.M., STO people established contact with workplace organizing groups in Kansas City and Cleveland and later, through them, with groups in St. Louis and Danville, Illinois. Through other channels, STO learned of and established contact with groups in Denver, Portland, Los Angeles, Louisville, Philadelphia, Boston and New York (where we had in fact stimulated the formation of the group).

During 1971 and the first half of 1972 we published our first two strategy position papers, Call to Organize and Towards a Revolutionary Party, both of which gained some attention nationally, and the first two issues of a mass workers' paper, The Insurgent Worker, in addition to the two papers mentioned earlier. By the summer of 1972 the membership stood at about 30, consisting of 3 Latin Americans, the rest white. Slightly less than half were female. The median age was 26, with a low of 20 and a high of 40+. About 80% had at least one year of movement experience

prior to contact with STO. About 90% had some education beyond high school. About two-thirds were working in workplace situations estimated to have organizing potential. There were three branches, each organized around a geographical area and responsible for work in industry, community and schools within that area. In addition, there were several committees which cut across branch lines and were responsible for particular areas of work, for example, internal education, the Insurgent Worker, etc.

By the summer of 1972 STO felt ready to take the initiative in calling a national conference of local collectives that had developed in various cities along work lines (although not necessarily political lines) similar to our own. That conference met at Loveland, near Grailville, Ohio on Labor Day weekend, 1972, and was attended by about 200 people - all, with one exception, part of local collectives. To give some idea of the diversity, included among those in attendance were the groups that were later to become the leadership of the CWP and the OCIC, as well as some who were later to take up Wages for Housework, PUL, the CLP, or were to go into the IS. Following that conference, STO decided, after controversy, that the conference as a whole was too broad to sustain itself as a tendency and to focus our attention on those groups with whom we shared the closest political agreement (K.C., St. Louis, N.Y.) and to pursue relations with them largely through coordinated projects in common areas of mass work; essentially, this amounted to a decision not to engage in tendency building. Out of that process, however, emerged the Federation of Marxist-Leninist Collectives, which included, in addition to the groups in K.C., St. Louis, Danville and N.Y., new groups in Boston (brought in by N.Y.) and in Quad Cities, Iowa, whom we had learned of through one of our recruits out of the steel work in Gary.

For the first six months of 1973 STO continued to grow, reaching 40 members and adding one new branch. It was perhaps the major Left organization in the area after the CP, was in contact with virtually every development in workplace struggles, and had great prestige among the uncommitted Left. 7

In an earlier history written for the Grailville conference it is stated: "The people who began STO by no means had worked out unified positions on all political questions, or even the most important, although they did know each other well enough to feel fairly close. They agreed to work toward this unity through continuing discussion of theory and evaluation of experience. In the meantime, they would make decisions, by majority vote if necessary, only on matters involving immediate steps to be taken. People joined the group based on a willingness to work in this way, with the understanding that if a decision was made which a person disagreed with and considered too important to go along with, that person would be free to leave the group.

"We have followed this policy since, of refusing to impose discipline on matters of theory and fighting for discipline on matters of practice. It is one reason why we have managed to survive for almost three years without a split.... There is no guarantee that splits will not occur in the future, but we do believe that this policy of making decisions only on practical questions increases the likelihood that, if they do occur, they will take place along principled lines comprehensible to all concerned."

1974? Slightly more than one year after the above words were written, STO underwent its first split, the so-called "Crisis" split, named after the paper presented by the group. Led by Mike Goldfield and Mel Rothernberg, the group of eleven people charged that the line of STO was anti-Leninist, that the notion of the "seeds of socialism" inherent in the spontaneous movement was a syndicalist deviation, and called for a line closer to traditional Leninism of the What Is To Be Done? variety. Six months later, another grouping, called the "Balloon," also after the name of their paper, split from the opposite direction, charging STO with being dogmatically Leninist, and called for the dissolution of the organization into a federation of autonomous work groups. On the heels of the second split, others left with particular grievances that their areas of work had been neglected, or that the leadership was bureaucratic, or simply out of demoralization.

→ Inside of about eight months, STO had lost 80% of its membership and nearly all its production work. Those who remained came to the opinion that, while the refusal to discipline members on questions of theory had been correct, it had served to paper over existing differences by discouraging debate on fundamentals. Thereafter it was resolved to attempt always to bring out the implications of different proposals, to debate them fully and clarify their meaning, while still insisting on unity only on matters of activity.

good A second reason for the massive hemorrhaging of members was the general demoralization of the period. It had been STO's estimate, coming out of the 60's, that the coming years would see an upsurge of movement in the working class. People went into industrial concentrations with that expectation in mind; when it didn't take place they became demoralized and began to question their commitment, if not to politics in general, to the rather rigorous demands of a disciplined organization. Out of that experience and the reevaluation of the period to which we were forced by our losses grew the beginnings of the present notion of the "lull," a period of relatively, though uneven, quiescence of the struggle, which imposed different tasks on the Marxists.

One of the shifts brought about by STO's reevaluation of its work was a decision to turn its attention more definitely towards efforts to coalesce a tendency in the Left. Key to this effort was a turning of attention to the Federation, which STO began to take more seriously than it had earlier.

good Instead of continuing with its earlier orientation of seeking unity through common mass work, STO began the conscious process of seeking areas of political agreement in the Federation. The first battle there came up over the path to unity. STO argued that the only way to discover and test agreement was to develop organizational unity apace with political agreement. It argued that the groups had already known each for some time, that they shared explicit agreement around white supremacy and extra-unionism, and that they should unify and advance from there to other political questions. Other groups, particularly the Boston group (which later became the core of PUL) argued the need to spend a protracted time clarifying stances on each of the questions - the party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, etc. STO's view prevailed, and the Boston group was excluded from the Federation, along with the remnants of the N.Y. group, which aligned itself with them.

Among the groups that were left, the first tests of the tentative unity came around STO's decision to join N.A.M. as a constituent, autonomous chapter, and the question of the Hard Times Conference. On the first, most of the other groups (except the Quad Cities group, which had been active in N.A.M. and still maintained some tie with it) disagreed with the decision, some on grounds of tactics, but some on the grounds that it represented a principled deviation from Leninism. In the latter case, their opposition was revealed as unwillingness on their part to accept the special responsibility of groups like those in the Federation to fight for a revolutionary line within the white Left; these groups found themselves attracted to the standard course of building the multi-national party typified by organizations like the CP (M-L). In spite of the various objections, STO did gain agreement that it, as a constituent group in the Federation, could join N.A.M. without committing the Federation as a whole. (As it turned out, the decision, which was implemented, had little consequence one way or the other. By the time STO joined N.A.M. its reasons for doing so - the presence there of pro-working class groups moving to the Left - had largely evaporated, if ever they existed, and membership quickly became little more than a formality. When STO departed after a year, it did so without leaving any traces either in N.A.M. or itself.)

The second test, the Hard Times Conference, held in January of 1976, was paradoxical. The Conference was initiated by PFOC, one of the groups towards which some in the Federation wanted to orient. Yet when STO proposed active participation, along with political critique, of the Conference, some of the Federation groups dragged their feet, mostly on grounds of not wanting to critique the Conference's "unite and fight" line, but also not wanting to identify with that trend within the Left, which was widely seen as an alternative to the traditional M-L groupings.

When the dust had settled from these two controversies, it became apparent that there was a division in the Federation, between on one side the groups in St. Louis, Danville and the group of former STO people in Chicago who still maintained ties with the Federation independent of STO, and the groups on the other side - STO, Workforce in Kansas City and the Haymarket Organization in Davenport-Quad Cities. The three latter groups decided to merge into one, which took the name STO. This took place in the spring of 1976.

Contemporaneous with the above organizational realignment there was gradually taking shape a new political orientation which, depending on one's point of view, was either a continuation and elaboration of the previous stance or a negation of it. This centered around the black <sup>①</sup> question, which previously had been seen primarily in terms of a structural division within the U.S. working class, key to bourgeois social control, which would be overcome primarily through confrontation within the working class. In this view, the white-skin privilege was seen to be especially vulnerable to attack in situations where black and white workers shared certain common experiences of exploitation, and the <sup>②</sup> autonomous black movement was viewed mainly significant for its effect in challenging the race privileges of the white workers. In the new view which was gradually emerging

white supremacy was seen as a particular manifestation of oppressor nation privilege, of the central distinction into oppressing and oppressed nations that characterized the imperialist epoch; thus the autonomous black movement was regarded as, in essence, a national liberation movement,

1976  
whose main impact was not in the direct challenge it posed to the race privileges of the white workers but in the blows it could deal to the imperialist state. This new orientation was given programmatic shape at the Conference held in Coe College, Iowa, in June of 1976, where it was agreed to de-emphasize production organizing in favor of (a) providing direct support to oppressed national groups and movements inside current U.S. borders, and (b) engaging in struggle within the white Left to coalesce a national anti-imperialist tendency with the Black and other Third World movements as its core.

At the same time, STO decided that its major emphasis internally would be on clarifying its own political positions, through internal education and an intensified period of debate and study. Also at this time, STO put forward for the first time in explicit form positions on autonomy within the organization of Third World members and women. (See documents elsewhere in this Bulletin for more specific statements on these positions.)

Implementation of the above tasks involved turning major attention towards the movement in solidarity with Puerto Rican independence, which seemed the most active of the internal national liberation struggles, including great efforts to develop direct ties with the leading Puerto Rican revolutionary organizations; similar initiatives towards Black revolutionary nationalist organizations, in particular the African People's Party and the Republic of New Africa; discussions clarifying the meaning of unconditional support; the launching of URGENT TASKS, whose aim was to be two-fold: breaking new ground in theory, and defining and fighting for STO's distinctive politics within the Left; expanded internal education, most notably the dialectics class; expanded internal debate, especially through the Internal Discussion Bulletin; and the "State Capitalism" conference of November 1978.

The GMM held in two sessions in December of 1977 and January of 1978 generally continued and elaborated the lines worked out at Coe. But it was also the scene of another major split, this time over the question of Third World autonomy within STO. STO had always been open to TW members, [redacted] (in fact one of the founding members was black) but except for a brief period in 1972 had never given much consideration to the matter as a separate category of recruitment. At the end of 1977 the organization recruited four people of color, and the question arose of their relation to the line and discipline of the organization. [redacted] The TW members, supported by a number of other members, placed before the organization the demand for authority over all work done in their communities, as well as the authority to determine the general line of STO on all questions relating to national liberation. The position that prevailed was that the organization as a whole would have to determine its general line, including its assessment of TW organizations, but that TW members would have control over the implementation of that line within their communities, and would be exempt, [redacted] from the [redacted] discipline of the organization in certain cases where that [redacted] discipline would interfere with their ability to establish close and harmonious relations with TW revolutionary organizations. This was deemed insufficient, and all four withdrew from the organization, along with a number of white supporters, some of whom were motivated additionally by opposition to STO's [redacted] decision to curtail base building at the point of production.

1979  
The GMM of 1979 reviewed the work of the organization and, while reaffirming the general course, recognized certain failures and attempted to rectify some shortcoming. Specifically, it was recognized that certain TW groupings identified as crucial developed in directions that undermined the possibility of crystallizing a tendency around them; that PFOC et al proved impervious to any kind of class analysis and serious approach towards either the working class or the Left; that other forces, in part because of STO's association with PFOC et al, took the organization less seriously than before; that solidarity work and recruitment to the tendency did not advance; and that internal demoralization was once again becoming a serious problem.

The GMM resolved that in order to develop an anti-imperialist tendency - a goal which it reaffirmed - it would be necessary to implement more of the totality of STO politics, specifically its line on dual consciousness. To do that it would be necessary to develop a greater body of work that could proceed independently of the other potential forces in the anti-imperialist current, both TW and white. Thus it was decided to reinvigorate the organization's work at the point of production, and to attempt to participate more actively in certain new social movements which were developing, specifically, the women's movement (the reproductive rights sector) and the anti-nuclear movement, which was explicitly declared, by majority vote of the GMM, to be the arena in which the largest number of whites were being radicalized.

Lastly (I'm sure this should have gone in earlier but I'm too harassed to go back and insert it where it belongs) the organization renewed its commitment to efforts to reach out to co-thinkers in other countries, especially Europe) which began in the fall of 1978 with the trip of two members to Europe, and continued through a later visit of another member, a visit by a delegation from the Irish group Revolutionary Struggle, participation in efforts to launch an international journal of those tendencies close to STO, the first issue of which has now appeared... in Italian, and another European trip by two STO members.

Partly as a result of STO's contact with sections of the revolutionary Left in Europe, a number of new questions have been posed to the organization regarding the character of the present crisis, the nature of the capitalist response, and the likely political implications. These will be expected to take up the major portion of the time at the 1981 GMM.

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note: this outline history was compiled by Noel, drawing heavily on materials prepared by Marilyn, Carole T., Don and Lowell. Contrary to the usual pro forma acceptance of responsibility for any mistakes, I wish to stress that, especially for the period after 1974, errors are more likely not be mine. In any case, don't bother me about them.)



Women and modern capitalism -- A response

Allison Edwards concludes in Part 1 of her article that the material base of women's oppression as women has been significantly eroded by capitalism -- ~~that is,~~ that capitalism no longer needs women's labor in the home; ~~She argues further,~~ that women's emergence into social production tends to equalize the status of men and women within their respective classes. This she says does not mean that women are no longer oppressed, but that because of their increased exploitation as workers, their oppression as women is lessened. (p. 11)

Allison argues base erosion, in the first article, on the basis that increasing numbers of women are entering the workforce (which as a consequence undercuts the sexual double standard); the changing role of women in the family due to economic independence from any specific relationship with a man; and the increased penetration of the commodity market into the areas of household labor, All giving women choices unequalled in the past. While I would agree that all of these things (including birth control) have certainly changed or clarified the material base of ~~male supremacy~~ <sup>women's oppression</sup>, and given women choices unequalled in the past, I do not agree that the base is eroded. -- <sup>not that the</sup> <sup>choices are avail to all & because</sup> <sup>things other</sup> <sup>than these</sup>  
Is the Material base eroded? What is the relationship of the base to ideology?  
Has Male supremacy then on a life of its own?

Throughout Allison's papers, even she seems unclear about the extent of erosion...  
"...substantially eroded" p. 6; ~~conditions have been eroded~~ <sup>is not the same as</sup>; "...conditions have been eroded" p. 8; ~~"...has been gradually eroded"~~ <sup>is not the same as</sup> p. 15; and in the second article, "...tendency to erode..." p. 13; "...in spite of the erosion of the material base" <sup>the</sup> <sup>in which</sup> p. 21. It is with this last quote that Allison is most definitive. And I quote in full "Such has been the fate of male supremacy, which has persisted in spite of the erosion of its material base. <sup>(my emphasis)</sup> Male supremacy is more than just a few centuries of accumulated prejudice. It is a few centuries of accumulated prejudice uniquely transformed and transmogrified to keep humanity afloat in a culture of nothing." <sup>might</sup> <sup>had she quote</sup> -- "through Alison."

In arguing Capital's tendency, Allison separates the consequences of the development of capital from capital's response to the collective (subjective) struggle of women. <sup>(1) I see</sup> ~~and~~ further, separated the impact of these changes on men and society ~~in~~



a whole. Both consequence and response are involved in the change/erosion of the material base. My point, is that collective(subjective) struggles of various groups in their particular interests, forced concessions to be made by the capitalist/imperialists — concessions which capital will always attempt to contain and limit and turn against those forcing them. But even so, the fact that particular changes did occur has to have an impact on society as a whole in changing preconceived common sense notions previously held by those affecting the change as well as those affected by the change. In the case of women's emergence into social production, while it does not mean that women are liberated, it does mean that women are in a place to act collectively to further the liberation process. I say further the process because at least on an individual(subjective) level, economic independence from men does allow for individual women to act as subject in relation to individual men, equalizing the individual (sexual/personal) relationships. Allison consistently underestimates the impact of mass struggle on social conditions, particularly the mass struggle of women. (her section on "love" denies any possibility of human relations between men and women, she sights the example of child raising as the model of human relationships when mother-child relationships are essentially unequal, I mean how more dependent can you be if you are under the say, 12?)

Allison, despite her statement that capitalism's tendency gives women choices unequalled in the past, totally denies women, on an individual level, having the capacity to make choices — being an object as well as a subject— determining the course of her life within the confines of Capitalist society. In her comparison of footbinding in china, to women wearing 4inch high heeled shoes. [By doing so she <sup>ignores</sup> denies the movement which brought forth those changes and increased choices and the reciprocal effect the choices and changes have and have had on individual men.] I don't mean to argue that the potential for individual ~~equality~~ equality within individual relationships .....

Allison confuses individual subject with collective subject — <sup>it was, I think, a new answer to the</sup> <sup>challenged the</sup> the collective subject of women, based on <sup>the role of</sup> the question of biology, which forced the <sup>of a</sup> changes which made way for women on an individual subject level to have and make <sup>solely</sup> <sup>wife</sup> <sup>black</sup> choices ( to become independent individuals under capitalism, independent and free

82.



While Allison qualifies, to the area of sexual objectification, increased oppression, this again is directly contradictory to her first article in which she stated <sup>that</sup> as women become more exploited as workers, they become less oppressed as women. Sexual objectification, it seems to me, speaks directly to the question of women as women, for what defines woman as woman except her biology? Her distorted view of women as objects and pawns of the all-encompassing media is an insult to the struggles of women for change, and an insult to those women who make the choice to wear 4 inch heels, wait til later to bear children if ever, etc.

I will attempt to show that Allison's recent conclusion is not only not proven but her one-sidedness and misunderstanding of the duality and complexity of the phenomenon of the woman question leads to a position of men are the enemy and reduces the woman question to one of biology. I disagree that men has taken on a life of its own, I disagree that men are the principal beneficiaries of male supremacy. I disagree with her conception of alienation and her ideal of women. All of which I will deal with in the remainder of the paper.

First, What is woman?

"It seems to be correct to begin with the real and concrete, with the real pre-condition, than to begin, in economics, with e.g. the population, which is the foundation and the subject of the entire act of social production. However, on closer examination this proves false. THE population is an abstraction of I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed. These classes in turn are an empty phrase if I am not familiar with the elements on which they rest. E.G. wage labor, capital, etc. These latter in turn presuppose exchange, division of labor, prices, etc. for example, capital is nothin without wage labor, without value, money, price etc. Thus, if I were to begin with the population, this would be a chaotic conception of the whole, and I would then, by means of further determinations, move analytically towards every thinner abstractions until I had arrived at the simplest determinations. From there the journey would have to be retraced until I had finally arrived at the population again, but this time not as the chaotic conception of the whole, but as a rich totality of many determinations and relations.... The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence the unity of the diverse."

K. Marx -- Grundrisse p. 100-10

"...in the theoretical method, too, the subject, society, must always be kept in mind as the presupposition."

K. Marx -- Grundrisse p. 102

"Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connections, Only after this work is done can the actual movement be adequately described."

K. Marx -- Afterward to the 2nd German Ed. Capital Vol. I p. 15

2.

*introduction*

Allison creates in her analysis of the woman question the ideal of woman and man, non Marxist and ahistorical even though she attempts to place them in the context of Capitalist society. I quoted from Marx to make the point that if you look at Marxism only as an economic philosophy you can say he ignored the woman question but if you look at it in also the context of his method for knowing the world you can analyse various phenomenon not directly economic, but within that context. Marxism is not just a critique of Capital, his point of departure was individuals producing in society. (individuals, I take to mean, men, women and children.) For Marx the essence of man <sup>is</sup> was not an abstraction inherent in each individual, but the real nature of the individual is the totality of his social relations--the individual has no existence apart from his historical existence.

It seems to be that in using Marx's method for studying various social phenomenon (particularly under capitalism which distorts all human relationships), to begin with woman and end with woman is an imagined concrete, there for an abstraction. The category of Woman must be broken down into its constituent and contradictory parts in order to have an understanding of women's oppression and how to deal with it. Abstract woman denies the qualitative and quantitative differences which exist among individual women who make up the totality of biological woman. To not break down the category speaks only to some biological creature with a relationship to some other biological creature. The biological creature woman, while <sup>(generally?)</sup> capable of bearing children as well as a whole series of other capabilities is socially defined more so than biologically defined, something Allison aptly points out in the differences between bourgeois women and working class and slave women but concludes that biology is the basis of unity -- the culprit of sowing division was the by then male medical profession. P.1: To look only at biological differences, <sup>between men & women</sup> limits and does not reflect the quantitative and qualitative differences between classes and races of women (essentially contradictory but constituent parts of this biological abstract woman). ~~Qualitative and quantitative differences of what exists a woman has~~ Allison's abstract woman and abstract man are seen outside of bourgeois ~~abstract~~ productive relations, since according to Allison it is men who benefit from male supremacy, not the bourgeoisie. Her analysis does not speak to the differences that exist for example, between a

*of*

foreman pinching ass of a female worker vs a co-worker pinching ass of a female worker and the choices that woman has in each case. One difference, and I think a qualitative difference is loss of means of subsistence vs individual anger or perhaps respect of the co-worker depending on the individual man involved. It does not speak to the differences, again qualitative I think, between the bourgeois woman who when deciding to have a child, has access to (because of her class position) the best of health care, time, ~~off~~ adequate nutrition etc. etc. etc. vs the working class woman who works and has to work with toxic chemicals up to her due date, for financial reasons as well as because it is company policy—policy made by men and women, although I would grant that most policy makers are men, class position determines policy more than sexual position. It does not speak to the fact that Jackie Onassis has a \$20,000.00 weekly pin money account while tilli mae <sup>?</sup> hustles tables for 1.15 plus tips, or maggie mae cleans 15 motelrooms (that rent for no less than 75.00 a nite) for \$3.37 an hour.

Allison assigns the same abstraction to men. Asserting that men are the principal beneficiaries of male supremacy because of alienated labor, Allison explains how "alienation" caused the basis of male supremacy to change (p. 25), an explanation I think, that is not only non-marxist but specifically anti-working class and anti-male. I will attempt to show how and why her "logic" and method is wrong but first, what does she say?

"Society characterized by alienation and a culture of hedonism distorts and denatures humanity, not just women. But its transformation of the ideology of male supremacy already present in capitalist society has affected women uniquely and ruthlessly. A world of men rendered powerless by their relation to their own labor and its products is a nation of men (my emphasis) possessing some highly unattractive qualities. The remnant of male supremacy's functional base - power - has been replaced by sexual prowess and material wealth. One result has been fear of inadequacy and corresponding self-consciousness, fear, and hatred of women."

"A world of men rendered powerless" means to me, <sup>is only true to</sup> working class and oppressed men, for Allison couldn't argue that ruling class men are powerless, and if that is the case then it is not men who principally benefit from male supremacy, but rather ruling class men because their functional base has not been replaced by sexual prowess and they have always <sup>had</sup> material wealth ~~stolen~~ from working class and oppressed men and women, whether by direct exploitation of women on the job, or by indirect exploitation through her husband. I think Allison would also have a rough time ar-

going that working class men and third world men (highly unemployed) really have much material wealth, although I would like to hear her try.

The err in her logic I think, is her misunderstanding of <sup>the Marxist conception of</sup> alienation <sup>from labor</sup> and thereby her comparison of "biological alienation". She says on page 13, that the essence of the dichotomy between the material base erosion and women's inability to throw off male supremacy under capitalism (what a hopeless situation— again women are seen only as victims) lies in an understanding of alienation, "the hallmark of the modern age". Her three pronged notion of alienation must be examined in order to get at the logic of her argument.

She first lays out a conception of alienation in regards to societies collective (abstract) producers and says in regards to the process of alienation: "the essential degradation of labor which sets in motion a world which separates man not just from his product, but from himself (as his labor belongs to another) and to a significant extent from other people, as what binds person to person in society is common purpose achieved by common effort, largely absent in modern society except in times of crisis or collective resistance."

*There is collective purpose in the process of prod. its just is missing its alternate side that is that by the abstract collective labor of alienated — + perverted, but its always present*  
~~societies producers they actually produce use commodities with use value with a common effort and a common purpose (socialized production).~~

It is not largely absent in society, it is part of the basis of capitalist society. <sup>In fact</sup> It is the contradiction of Capital itself not an accumulated process as Allison would have us believe.

Anyway, This tendency (alienation) she says "affects the worker at minimum wage in a candy factory or a worker paid \$9.50 at an auto plant. Her second pronged concept of alienation is "women's alienated labor" which she extends the concept of jobs traditionally held by women i.e. clerical, nursing, teaching which she concludes but does not argue, that these jobs have become highly proletarianized and— she may be wrong or right I don't know, my objection is her separation and exclusion <sup>of women</sup> from the first concept of alienation; of women. It is implied by Allison only man is societies producer (thus she can reach e

producer (thus she can reach her conclusion that alienation turns men into women haters, etc. of which she concludes), but Allison would be hard pressed to argue that too many men would be found working at the candy factory, cookie factory, rubber boot factory, and all the other little sweat shops which primarily employ women. Women are direct producers and have since capital's inception, been producers, not women in early textile industry, home industry, slave industry. To separate man's alienated labor from women's alienated labor is a mistake although it does conveniently set the stage for her concept of "biological alienation" ~~of / bodies~~ — Biological alienation of ahistorical woman. Allison says "Biological alienation of women has been a critical part of the transformation of male supremacy from an economic necessity for capital to an ideological crutch for men. Objectification of woman's body for man's pleasure and everything that follows from this mangled view of woman is utterly inconsistent with woman's natural (my emphasis) relation to reproduction." And just what is this "natural" relation to reproduction that Allison speaks of and who, may I ask "designated" women to gestate, bear children and to nurse her young? "natural" under what set of historical circumstances, what social relationships? What methods and means exist to consciously alter the "natural" biological question? Under capitalism, women's oppression ~~is~~ is not solely a question of biology — to reduce women's oppression to a question of biology as Allison has done is to deny the material reality in which women live under modern capitalism — a complex and contradictory reality, but a reality which at least potentially exists for all kinds of choices to be made in regard to reproduction, motherhood, sexuality, relationships to men — at least on an individual level — to act as subjects. Again, the quality of those choices depend on more than just biology. Abstract woman as defined by Allison incorrectly assumes that the conditions facing white women — not specified in terms of class positions — illuminate the general questions of women's oppression under modern capitalism.

Worse yet, Allison's "biological alienation" taken to its logical conclusion regards women's product to be "her child", a totally individual concept as well as a conception of children not as individuals but as objects. <sup>to be owned.</sup> Creation of that "product" is not the result of creative human activity in the Marxist sense, it is biological

activity, It was insult enough that Allison denied the ~~women's~~ <sup>members of</sup> history of women's collective struggles (wether as women, as <sup>members of</sup> the working class or as members of oppressed nations) <sup>making no mention and favor of media + men</sup> but now he treats of the individual women little more than an upgraded animal with "creative" potential in the biological arena. <sup>- A dog would be so cute</sup> If women's self-actualization" (what-ever that means?) it to be found in child rearing, some women, for physical reasons may never reach self-actualization, other women would be denied their sexuality --this seem an attack on gay and lesbian forms of relationships if the quintessence of alienation is birth outside of the woman's body. It seems to me the quintessence of alienation was what individual women <sup>in ind. ult.</sup> in individual households <sup>island</sup> outside of social production, taking away from any possibility of social relationships -- "that which binds person to person in society".

218



Response 1.

~~DRAFT 3~~

Allison Edwards concludes in Part 2 of her article that the material base of women's oppression as women has been significantly eroded by capitalism-- that capitalism no longer needs woman's labor in the home; that women's emergence into social production tends to equalize the status of men and women within their respective classes. This she says does not mean that women are no longer oppressed, but that because of their increased exploitation as workers, their oppression as women is lessened. (p. 11)

Allison argues base erosion, in the first article, on the basis that increasing numbers of women are entering the workforce (which as a consequence undercuts the sexual double standard); that the role of women in the family is changing due to economic independence from any specific relationship with a man; and that the increased penetration of the commodity market into the areas of household labor, all give women choices unequalled in the past. While I would agree that all of these things (including birth control) have certainly changed the material base of women's oppression, I don't agree that the material base was solely women's labor in the home. Women's exclusion from social production, I think, was the basis of her oppression as woman, i.e. isolated individual primarily dependent on individual family relations as opposed to social relation. Women's labor in the home has never existed necessarily for all women--bourgeois women have always had other women labor in their home and raise their children, or at the very least, have always had that option. I agree also that these changes have given women choices, unequalled in the past, at least in regards to individual/personal/biological choices, although those choices are dependent on the means one has realize the choice. I do not agree that the base is eroded nor that, as Allison asserts in her second article, that male supremacy has taken on a life of its own. (I would like to make it clear that I do not equate women's oppression with male supremacy, although it is an aspect of women's oppression.)

IS THE MATERIAL BASE OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION ERODED? WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE MATERIAL BASE TO IDEOLOGY? HAS MALE SUPREMACY TAKEN ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN?