



# VITA WA WATU

## BOOK NINE



**August 1986**

**\$ 4.00**

# Vita Wa Watu

## Book Nine

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If one seeks the social-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism. Socialism has characteristics in common with communalism...In socialism, the principles underlying communalism are given expression in modern circumstances. Thus, whereas communalism in an untechnical society can be laissez faire, in a technical society where sophisticated means of production are at hand, if the underlying principles of communalism are not given centralized and correlated expression, class cleavages arise, which are the result of economic disparities, and accompanying political inequalities. Socialism, therefore, can be and is the defense of the principles of communalism in a modern setting. Socialism is a form of social organization which, guided by the principles underlying communalism, adopts procedures and measures made necessary by demographic and technological developments.

Kwame Nkrumah

**Consciencism**

**Notes On the Link Between  
Oppression Of New Afrikan Women  
And The  
New Afrikan National Liberation Revolution**

**Part One:  
The Origin and Nature of Women's Oppression**

**A. Overview-1**

(These are sketches from the journal of a New Afrikan Prisoner of War. It's my belief that they reflect the thoughts and efforts of other individuals and organizations that are now re-building the New Afrikan national liberation movement.)

The Link: Practical

1. The New Afrikan national liberation revolution, and the movement to end the oppression of New Afrikan women, are inseparably linked -- to each other, and to the nation's struggle for socialism.

That is: 1) The national liberation movement cannot be effectively generated, and thus will never realize itself, unless the struggle to end the oppression of New Afrikan women becomes a cutting edge of all theoretical and practical activity; 2) New Afrikan women can't be fully emancipated unless and until the national liberation revolution is realized; 3) There can be no genuine emancipation for New Afrikan women, nor can there be realization of New Afrikan national liberation, without the struggle for socialism. The link must be grasped before a leap in consciousness and struggle can occur.

The link can't be grasped by continuing to focus on the effects of women's oppression or national liberation; it must be sought through a focus on causes.

That is, as We search for more accurate ways of conceptualizing and solving women's oppression in all its present manifestations, We must abandon the concepts, values, and goals that rest on amerikkkan, euro-centric, and bourgeois (capitalist) outlooks. We can't end the oppression of women by working and thinking within the framework of capitalist relations, because these very relations underlie the cause of gender and national oppression.

To find the link between women's oppression, national oppression, and the struggle for socialism, We must analyze and re-analyze the past, look for points of origin, and trace the paths of development: "If one

seeks the social-political ancestor of socialism, one must go to communalism."

We must go to communalism to seek the ancestor of -- and the resolutions for -- contemporary forms of women's and national oppression.

We must go to communalism to discover its underlying principles, and to get some idea as to how they may be expressed by us under contemporary circumstances. We must analyze communalism to discover how, why, and when these principles were departed from, and to understand the meaning of "demographic and technological developments" within past and present context.

We must go to communalism to seek its origin and motivating factors. Communal societies, like all others, expressed the sum of social connections and relationships in which its members found themselves. These relations were established in the course of their collective material and ideological activity in their struggle to survive and develop.

Communal societies are not characterized by the color or nationality of their members, but by the method of collectively producing and using/distributing the resources needed for survival and development. The relations between people in such societies (i.e., male-female, the presence or absence of dominant-subordinate, or exploitative, relations), depend upon whether this "collective mode" is maintained. If it is not, then "class cleavages arise, which are the result of economic disparities, and accompanying political inequalities."

In short, We must go to communalism and investigate the social reality, and seek out inter-relationships of such things as matriarchal systems of descent, communal (social) ownership of property, and the development of patriarchal systems of descent and private ownership of property; We must seek inter-relationships between the above, and the rise and development of social division of labor, the rise of commodity production and exchange, and the dissolution of clan/family bonds and the rise of exploitative class and state structures.

2. The oppression (and exploitation) of New Afrikan women is rooted in the appearance of social relations on the African continent, which have come to characterize the capitalist-imperialist system.

The specific forms of women's oppression (as women, and as citizens of the nation), can't be eliminated apart from the struggle to abolish capitalist-imperialist relations of production and exchange. New Afrikan women can't become 'collective masters of nature, society, and themselves,' without participating, as "complete persons," in the struggle to build a socialist New Afrika.

The oppression and exploitation of the New Afrikan nation is rooted in the development of the same social relations, and in the rise and development of capitalist-imperialism.

The nation's struggle for (political) liberation is simultaneously a social and economic revolution. The very concept of communalism/socialism embraces social, as well as political and economic aspects.

The nation's struggle for liberation **is** the struggle for women's emancipation **is** the struggle for socialism.

The new society (new social relations) that We struggle to create, begins to take shape as soon as ideo-theoretical struggle occurs, and as soon as practical activity -- in all spheres of life -- begins to occur.

The commitments to women's emancipation, national liberation, and socialist transformation must manifest themselves **now**, in the ways We live every aspect of our lives, each minute of every day.

We can't generate a people's war if We continue to think and act as if all the people are men, and as if all the children are boys.

We can't build a mass movement if We fail to educate and organize on the basis of the particular needs of women, who "hold up half the sky."

We can't shout "Black workers take the lead!" while failing to address ourselves to the particular interests of those workers who are women.

All problems facing the nation and all of its citizens are interrelated and interdependent, and the policies and programs of the new movement must base themselves on this reality. We must address all issues, and then coordinate the many struggles and fronts of war.

Yet, there must be (an) autonomous women's organization(s), mass-based women's leadership and full participation in all levels of struggle, organization, and spheres of life.

The Link: Theoretical

1. Why is it necessary to deal with theory (and practice) related to women's oppression (and to socialism) **during** the course of national liberation struggle?

A) Because We don't want to repeat the practice of other movements where, once in power, they failed to fulfill the promises made to women in the course of struggle -- a failure intimately related to their inability to fulfill other fundamental aims and principles of the socialist society for which they fought.

Without an appropriate theory and practice on women's oppression, there can be no valid and worthy theory and practice on revolutionary national liberation.

B) The lines We draw between "national independence" and "socialist revolution" are essentially abstractions. These lines help us grasp concepts, stages, and periods of struggle and social development.

But, the building of a new society -- a new socialist society -- takes place during the course of the struggle for national independence. We struggle simultaneously to destroy one set of social relations, and to create a new set of social relations...simultaneously, We struggle to overthrow an old, alien society, and to build a new one.

C) And, We need new theories, new concepts, new values and models of behavior.

Part of the old movement's failure was due to the dominance of functionalist, idealist theories which had (and continue to have) many of us believe, for instance, that the contradictions between men and women are caused by biological differences, or by the failure to fulfill "traditional roles" which somehow just fell from the sky (i.e., "head of the house," "providers" and "nurturers" and "kings" and "queens").

These theories led to models of behavior and forms of political practice that were ill-suited to **revolutionary** struggle. To view men as "providers" and women as "nurturers" is unfounded in the reality of our previously independent and **communal** societies, and contrary to the principles of **revolutionary** nationalism.

To take only one element: such a view ignores the "role" that African and New Afrikan women have always fulfilled in providing both productive and reproductive needs for survival and social development. It removes our women from the sphere of socially necessary labor, and consequently removes them from the sphere in which they share full responsibility and power in the society.

The very terms are ill-suited to revolutionary philosophy and practice, since "nurturing" is given a "feminine"/subordinate connotation, and "providing" given a "masculine"/dominant connotation. The very terms are sexist, patriarchal, bourgeois and reactionary.

The practical concepts surrounding the terms "kings" and "queens" are also loaded with sexist-patriarchal connotations, heavily class-based. Particularly, to refer to African and New Afrikan women only as "queens," ignores the **masses** of women who labor, inside and outside the home. This labor (the lives) of these "common" women is in and of itself the basis upon which women used to and should exercise social responsibility and decision-making power in communal societies...the basis upon which she shares and enjoys all rights and privileges in the society on the same footing as all other **persons**.

It's the majority of women that should draw more of the attention of the new movement; it's their "common" labor and day-to-day activity that is the basis of their contribution to the nation's survival and development.

Therefore, theoretical understanding and practical commitment to issues of specific concern to women, are in fact commitment to issues of specific concern to the nation. Theoretical understanding of the past and present experiences of women is essential for the proper conduct of



the nation's struggle now, and with regard to its post-independence policies and practice.

## B. Overview-2

1. New Afrikan ("black") women are oppressed and exploited on the basis of their gender, and on the basis of their nationality. Most of our attention is focused on the effects of this oppression, but We need to search for causes. Just as We say, "You can't know where you're going, if you don't know where you've been," the attempt to solve the problems of women's oppression and exploitation, without understanding their cause, will be frustrating and largely ineffective, because We'll be chasing shadows.

We need to discover the point of origin, and trace the development of gender oppression, and national oppression particularly as it relates to New Afrikan women. The results of these analyses are essential to the development of theory and programs to combat and eliminate gender and national oppression, and to prevent them from re-emerging in the future.

2. Because We're concerned with uncovering the point of origin of gender oppression, a good place to begin the search would be the point of origin of social units and socio-economic formations on the African continent. Our analyses must cover the specific forms of oppression of women in independent African societies (prior to Arabic and European influence), and they should cover those forms in African and New Afrikan societies after the emergence of capitalism and imperialism.

3. The oppression of African women predates by thousands of years the European colonization of Africa.

These "traditional" forms of women's oppression were given added features and only assumed new, "unnatural" forms as a result of foreign invasions and influences (i.e., Arab-Islamic; European-Christian; the trade in Africans as slaves, and the rise of capitalism, colonialism, and imperialism). The old and new forms had common roots. The new forms arose, in a sense, out of the old forms, retained their essential elements, built upon them, and strengthened them.

(At present, my studies indicate that the first social units arose during what i've come to call "rudimentary communalism" and what others call "the transition from animal to human," or "primitive communism." These social units arose on the basis of women's pivotal role in social production, which was the basis for their equality and full participation in all other social relationships. During the rudimentary communalist stage, there was a "natural" division of labor between women and men, adults and children, wherein each essentially contributed according to ability, and received according to need. There was no oppression of women (or any other group), and no exploitation.

(During the early phases of what i've come to call "transitional communalism" and what others call "communalism," the direct relation of all people in the society to the major means of production was essentially maintained. But, as the society developed, there first

appeared a simultaneous existence of relations of domination (oppression of women) alongside those of equality. This was a result of the development of productive forces, and the social division of labor that accompanied the domestication of animals, the development of agriculture, and production of surplus and its gradual appropriation by men, on the basis of rising forms of private ownership. The relations of domination (male-female) grew into relations of exploitation (class-class) as the creation of surplus product and greater social division of labor led to appropriation of the surplus first by men, and then by an exploitative class; the communal societies and the clans at their core began to break-up; communal property became private property; products came to be exchanged on a regular basis; and production for exchange became systematic. The oppression of women was the means by which communalism was undermined, and the way paved for the rise of private ownership.)

4. The contemporary forms of New Afrikan women's oppression and exploitation continue to reflect a material base in the common roots that all forms of women's and national oppression share.

### C. Cheikh Anta Diop and African Matriarchy

The matriarchal system is the base of the social organization in Egypt and throughout Black Africa... The matriarchal system proper is characterized by the collaboration and harmonious flowering of both sexes, and by a certain preeminence of women in society, due originally to economic conditions..(1)

1. My search for clues to the origin and development of women's oppression began with the reading of Cheikh Anta Diop's The Cultural Unity of Black Africa, and his The African Origin Of Civilization: Myth Or Reality? (2)

A theme of both these works is that a social characteristic common to most African societies (prior to Islamic and Christian influences), is the matriarchal system (the prominent role of women in social production and socio-political life), and the material (communal) conditions which serve as its foundation.

Diop's Cultural Unity shed light on the status of women in rudimentary and early transitional communal societies; African Origin illuminated some of the factors which brought about a change in that status, the disintegration of communal societies, and the rise of what Samir Amin calls "tributary formations (class and state societies). (3)

(The studies and practice that We undertake in this area would have to touch the way the term "matriarchy" acquired such a negative connotation, especially inside the u.s. empire. Evidently, the fact that the empire is patriarchal has a lot to do with it. i also assume that Islam has something to do with it. The frantic counter-revolutionary thrust against the nation in the 1960s, was largely inspired (in the socio-cultural sphere) by Daniel Moynihan's attack upon the New Afrikan family in general, and "matriarchy" in particular. This was an attack

that sought to weaken and undermine what were essentially communal characteristics, which contributed to the strength and capacities for resistance. The attack upon "black matriarchy" was an attack upon the spiritual and material foundations of national community. They appealed, in large part, to the bourgeois spirit. It was a contemporary expression of the factors that inspired the initial undermining of the communal societies.)

2. Diop sets out in Cultural Unity to uncover the matriarchal and communal homogeneity "still alive beneath the deceptive appearance of cultural heterogeneity." (4) He cites, for example, the prevalence of matrilineal descent systems in Ghana, Mali (Malinke), among the Pelus, Sereres, Swazi, Tswana, and Bantu. And he asserts that in Africa, "...matriarchy is as alive today as it was during Antiquity. In regions where the matriarchal system has not been altered by external influences (Islam, etc.), it is the woman who transmits political rights." (5)

Diop seeks to point up this unity by examining sociological facts (customs and traditions which reflect the presence of matriarchy), which he says are "motivated," i.e., they didn't fall from the sky. He therefore "tried to start from material conditions in order to explain all the cultural traits common to Africans, from family life as a nation, touching on the ideological superstructures, the successes and failures and technical regressions." (6)

3. But, before he can examine African matriarchy and its material foundations, he must take on the "universal transition" theory. This theory holds that all peoples began social development on the basis of a matrilineal descent system, and evolved toward the adoption of patriarchal/patrilineal systems. The theory believes matriarchy to be inferior to patriarchy. The basis for this alleged inferiority? The theory holds that matriarchy originated during a presumed stage of "sexual promiscuity," during which there were no marriage forms, and descent could, "unfortunately," only be traced through the mother, because the paternity of children allegedly couldn't be determined.

[Another example of the alleged inferiority of matriarchy to patriarchy was the easiness of divorce -- on the initiative of women -- in marriages of matriarchal origin, compared to the "civilized, superior" near-impossible divorce under patriarchy. Diop challenges this with "Facility of separation must not be considered as a revelation of mores which have undergone disintegration, but as an index of the degree of freedom which a society grants to all its members, without distinction of sex." (7)]

Thus, while the proponents of the "universal transition" theory held matriarchy to originate on the basis of "sexual promiscuity," Diop's view is that:

The sacred character of the mother [women] in the societies which are sedentary, agricultural and matriarchal, is ill-suited to the idea of a primitive stage of promiscuous intercourse which they could

be said to have passed through. (8)

He believed that the dominant elements in the system of matrilineal descent were peculiar to Africa, and to the material conditions underlying its socio-economic formations. He believed that these systems arose on the basis of "a system of political and social organization, from a sedentary and agricultural way of life." (9) He therefore had to take on the views of Johann Bachofen, Lewis Henry Morgan, and Frederick Engels, each of whom rest their views of the history and role of the family, and the development of successive socio-economic formations, on the "universal transition" theory.

4. Johann Bachofen, one of the earliest proponents of the theory, actually based his view on his interpretation of the Oresteia, written by (they say) Aeschylus. As described by Engels, it was:

...the dramatic representation of the conflict between declining mother right and the new father right that arose and triumphed in the heroic age. For the sake of her paramour, Aegisthus, Clytemnestra slays her husband, Agamemnon, on his return from the Trojan War; but Orestes, her son by Agamemnon, avenges his father's murder by slaying his mother. For this act he is pursued by the Erinyes (Furies), the demonic guardians of mother right, according to which matricide is the gravest and most inexpressible crime. But Apollo, who by the voice of his oracle had summoned Orestes to this deed, and Athena, who is called upon to give judgment -- the two deities who here represent the new patriarchal order -- takes Orestes under their protection; Athena hears both sides. The whole matter of the dispute is briefly summed up in the debate which now takes place between Orestes and the Erinyes. Orestes contends that Clytemnestra has committed a double crime: she has slain her husband and thus she has also slain his father. Why should the Erinyes pursue him and not her, seeing that she is by far the more guilty? The answer is striking: "**Unrelated by blood** was she to the man she slew."

The murder of a man not related by blood, even if he be the husband of the murderess, is expiable and does not concern the Erinyes. Their office is solely to punish murder between blood relations, and of such murders the most grave and the most inexpressible, according to mother right, is matricide. Apollo now comes forward in Orestes' defense. Athena calls upon the Areopagites -- the Athenian jurors -- to vote. The votes for Orestes and for his acquittal are equal. Then Athena, as President of the Court, gives her vote for Orestes and acquits him. Father right has triumphed over mother right. The "gods of young descent," as the Erinyes call them, have triumphed over the Erinyes, and the latter then finally allow themselves to be persuaded to take up a new office in the service of the new order. (10)

Now, Diop's interpretation of the Oresteia differs somewhat from that of both Bachofen and Engels, and it rests on a different base. He asserts that Aeschylus used cultural material that was "a reflection of the conscious struggle between the social principles of the North [i.e., patriarchal private ownership in Europe] and the South [i.e., matriarchal collective ownership in Africa]." (11)

In other words, Aeschylus was re-interpreting a political-economic struggle that had taken place between Africa and Europe more than a thousand years before he wrote the Oresteia. For, according to Diop, by 1450 b.c., "we have indeed reached a period of demarcation when the Indo-European world was freeing itself from the domination of the Black Egypto-Phoenician world. This economic and political struggle, similar in all respects to that which colonial countries are now waging against modern imperialism, was supported, as it is today, by a cultural reaction caused by the same reasons...At the outset...[matriarchy] dominated and spread throughout the Aegean Mediterranean thanks to Egypto-Phoenician colonization of populations, sometimes even white populations, but whose inconsistent [patriarchal] culture permitted no positive reaction at the time...In its forms most foreign to the northern mentality, Egypto-Phoenician cultural imperialism hardly survived economic imperialism."(12)

Going on to explain more specifically the distinction between the 'social principles of the North and the South,' Diop says that in the North,

...man was the pillar of that kind of life [nomadic]. Woman's economic role [alienation from the means of production] was much less significant than in Black agricultural societies [where, under communalism, women stood in direct relation to the means of production]. Consequently, the nomadic patriarchal family was the only embryo of social organization. The patriarchal principle would rule the whole life of the Indo-Europeans, from the Greeks and Romans to the Napoleonic Code, to our day. This was why woman's participation in public life [i.e., all activities related to managing the society, especially in contrast to an isolated "domestic" life said by some to be reserved for women], would arrive later in European than in [African] societies. If the opposite seems true today in certain parts of Black Africa, it can be attributed to the Islamic influence." (13)

5. Lewis Henry Morgan's theory of the universal transition and his history of the development of the family, were based heavily upon his misunderstanding of the origin and development of descent systems he encountered among peoples of the Hawaiian Islands and among the Iroquois, and upon his misinterpretation of the terms used within these systems (i.e., that children referred to all women as "mother," and to all men as "father").

While Morgan rested his view of "sexual promiscuity" and "group marriage" on his interpretation of these terms, Diop holds that the descent systems and the terms reflected "purely and simply the social relations of the peoples among whom they are in force," (14) and "reciprocal obligations" of collective ownership. (15)

6. Among the major criticisms Diop levels against Frederick Engels, is the latter's failure to recognize the economic base of the systems and terms studied by Morgan--a base similar to those in African matriarchal societies.

Referring to the Iroquois system as an example, Diop says that "the woman owes her social rank and her esteem exclusively to the structure of the society which allows her to play a leading economic role." (16)

7. Diop has taken great pains to demonstrate that the matriarchal system did not originate on the basis of "promiscuous intercourse." With his help, i've come to understand that:

- a) Up to the stage of transitional communalism, matriarchal social relations characterized most African societies;
- b) These social relations were based upon: 1) relations of production in which women played pivotal roles; 2) these relations were communal, i.e., characterized by collective ownership of the major means of production; 3) these productive relations were the basis for all other social relations (i.e., political, moral, legal, familial, etc.), and for the equalitarian character of the societies;
- c) These communal socio-economic relations constitute the fundamental distinction between matriarchy and patriarchy;
- d) Any transition to patriarchal forms of socio-economic relations must reflect the absence of collective ownership of the means of production, the decline or absence of major economic roles played by women and, consequently, the decline or absence of major social and political roles for women.

8. But, while Diop emphasizes the role of matriarchy and its material base in the structure of African communal relations, he admits that he doesn't know when or how matriarchy originated -- except that it's somehow related to women's role in the discovery and development/practice of agriculture. (17) And, he believes the practice of agriculture first appeared in the 8th millenium b.c., in the region of the Sahara.

He doesn't give any indication as to how or why women's role in agricultural societies accounts for their status. Also, he doesn't have much to say regarding how and why patriarchy overcomes matriarchy in Africa, and thus how or why African communalism enters the transition to tributary socio-economic formations (i.e., the rise of private property, class formations, embryonic capitalism, and the state).

We now have to turn to some anthropological evidence to help answer some of these questions. We can then return to Diop to get some insight into the factors which inspired the transition from communal to class-based formations.

#### D. Rudimentary Communalism - 1

It is generally conceded, in most scholarly circles, that mankind originated in Africa. This makes the African man the father and the African woman the mother of mankind.

...The first accomplishment of the African woman, in partnership with the man, was the creation of a functioning family unit. This major step in human development laid the foundation for the organization of all subsequent societies and institutions. (18)

1. Just how did the first family originate? Exactly how and why did the African woman form the partnership with the man? What was the material basis for the first form of family organization, and what were its superstructural elements? What role did the family play in the organization of communal societies?

Of course, these and related questions can't be answered with great degrees of certainty. But the field of anthropology is one, among others, that can lead us in the right directions, and give us something to build on.

2. This section relies almost exclusively upon an article by Boyce Rensberger, "What Made Humans Human?" (19)

Near the beginning of the article, Rensberger poses questions that are related to those above, relative to the origin of matriarchy, the distinguishing characteristics of both matriarchy and patriarchy, and what constitutes the material base of the social relations that allowed the earliest social units to survive and evolve.

Under a subtitle that informs us that "New theories hold that cooperation, not competition, divided [people] from ape," Rensberger poses his questions:

What led a population of apelike animals to diverge from an apelike way of life and set off on an evolutionary course that would establish human beings as the most extraordinary of animals?

Was it the use of weapons...that brought about the change from ape to [people]? Did the human brain evolve in the skulls of blood-thirsty killer apes... Or, as some of the more recent scenarios recount it, were the first humanlike creatures -- members of human-style social units -- clever gatherers of plants and scavengers of carrion? Is male dominance an

inescapable human trait rooted in the prowess of men bringing home the bacon? Or was "woman the gatherer" the real foundation of human progress? (20)

The article makes quick work of proving the unreliability of theories holding that brain size, weapons and "killer apes," the hunting of animals and the dominance of men, were primary factors.

A) Brain size of fossils had long been used to determine whether they were human or non-human. "Now it is clear that the big brain was the last of the distinctively human anatomical traits to evolve." (21) Over the past decade evidence shows that the earliest human ancestors were walking on two legs and forming basic social units nearly four million years ago -- and their brain didn't begin to grow beyond those of apes until only two million years ago.

B) The "killer ape" theory was first articulated on a wide scale by Raymond A. Dart, in the 1950s, and later taken up and popularized in the 1960s by Robert Ardrey in the book, African Genesis.

Dart is credited with discovering *Australopithecus Africanus*, the fossil of early humans believed to have lived two million years ago. This discovery undermined the previously held belief that people originated in Asia, and instead placed the origin of people in Africa.

But, it was Dart who found fossil specimens in Azanian caves, along with those of animals that looked as if they'd been crushed with a club. He erroneously interpreted this damage as evidence of people departing from a herbivorous diet to begin the killings of animals (for meat) as well as the killings of other people. Dart thus assumed that bipedalism freed the hands, which fashioned weapons, made people hunters and killers. Hunting (and killing) was then assumed to have created an environment where only the "strongest" would survive and evolve; the brain was assumed to have developed as a result of the need for greater killing skills.

C) Louis Leakey was among those who rejected the "killer ape" scenario, and argued that it was "the closeness of humans to the natural order and their obligation to protect the natural environment that nurtured their evolutionary rise." (22)

Leakey undermined the Dart-Ardrey theory by pointing out that the bones found by Dart were in caves where roof falls could have caused the damage to the skulls long after death.

D) The strongest evidence undermining the Dart-Ardrey theory came from C.K. Brain and Elizabeth Vrba, Azanian paleontologists who held that the predators of the animal bones found by Dart were leopards and not humans.

(Other evidence which tends to discount the Dart-Ardrey theory is the fact that most fossils of our ancestors found in East Africa were buried -- not merely left in caves. Burial, as opposed to, say cremation, is



one of the "sociological facts" relied upon by Diop to support his theory of African matriarchy.)

E) British archeologist Glynn Isaac was an early proponent of the now dominant view that "the forces shaping the human species were not violence and competition, but peaceableness and cooperation." (23)

While working with Richard Leakey in Kenya, Isaac found the remains of campsites estimated to be more than two million years old. He called these sites "home bases";:

The evidence was mainly a collection of animal bones, some with cut marks from stone knives, and the waste flakes of toolmaking in stone. The number of bones and stones suggested repeated or sustained occupation by hominids rather like the australopithecines that Dart had discovered. These sites were thought to be places to which the roving members of a hominid band would return each night to share the food obtained during the day.

The home base might have been little more than a shady spot by a stream, but the implications were enormous. However primitive the hominids seemed from their skeletons, they had already developed a stable social organization and an advanced degree of cooperation. No other primate shares food on a regular basis. Apes forage for themselves.

A home base would permit older or infirm members of the group to stay behind and wait for the others to come back with food. "It is the home base," wrote Sherwood L. Washburn, a physical anthropologist at the University of California at Berkeley, "that changes sprained ankles and fevers from fatal diseases to minor ailments." It also changes the image of murderous killer-apes into law-abiding members of society. (24)

F) While working in Ethiopia, in 1974, Donald C. Johnson discovered *Australopithecus Afarensis* ("Lucy"), a human ancestor that was on the scene 3.5 million years ago.

G) Mary Leakey discovers, in Tanzania, not only bones of the "Lucy" type, but also footprints that resemble those of modern humans, and which are believed to be 3.7 million years old.

H) Here We confront C. Owen Lovejoy, and a theory resting on patriarchal assumptions. "Lovejoy contends that human beings emerged from apedom because of the simultaneous appearance of bipedalism, regular food sharing, and the more or less continuous sexual availability of males and females in a monogamous pair bond." (25)

Lovejoy believes that men carried food back to the home base...to the women...because they allegedly couldn't obtain enough food for

themselves. And, "To keep her mate coming home with food, the early hominid female became continuously sexually attractive and receptive."  
(26)

(In point of fact, it seems that men were more likely to be the ones who couldn't feed themselves -- assuming a "male-hunter, female-gatherer" division of labor.)

I) Enter Nancy Makepeace Tanner, anthropologist at the University of California at Santa Cruz, and author of On Becoming Human. On the basis of the home base idea, Tanner suggests that the chief forces propelling human origin were the challenges faced by hominid females coping with the rigors of the semi-arid savanna, which demanded skill and ingenuity, because a premium was placed on intellect in the gathering of food. She suggests that this food gathering led to the first tools: digging sticks made of wood or hide, used to get at tubers and roots; baskets or bags used to carry food back to the home base.

Tanner also suggests that the first social units -- the first families -- were composed of mothers, their children and perhaps grandmothers; that pair bonding came later, after a long period in which females "in effect, tamed aggressive and socially disruptive males. They did this by preferring to mate only with 'those who were socially cooperative, willing to share and be protective.' Since the bearers of cooperative genes were given preference in reproduction, later generations of males were eventually domesticated and allowed into the social group as permanent members." (27)

Is this how the African woman, in partnership with the African man, created the first functioning family unit? Could this be the origin of the matriarchal system, and the origin of communal collective ownership?

### **E. Rudimentary Communalism-2**

1. Rudimentary communalism begins with the formation of the first social units, and ends when people begin to produce their own food (i.e., hoe agriculture) rather than appropriate it in its natural state. During the rudimentary communalist stage, We can clearly see the existence of productive forces and their initial development (i.e., people; the acquisition and application of production experience and labor skills; the first instruments of production). The productive forces are at a very low level, but nevertheless exist, and express the relationship between people and the objects and forces of nature, as people acquire the means of their subsistence.

And, as people work together to provide themselves with food, clothing, and shelter, and to distribute these resources among themselves, We see the development of relations of production.

We see, even with the "home bases," embryonic forms of collective ownership of the means of production (i.e., the objects of labor, and the aggregate material means and instruments that people use in the labor process). All things gathered or made are used in common and is common property (although there was probably no concept of "property").

All things made are made for immediate consumption and direct distribution. There is no surplus, and any surplus that should arise (especially as the society develops) is, under rudimentary communalism, appropriated by the entire society and redistributed according to the needs of reproduction.

We see, as rudimentary communalism emerges, a "natural" division of labor between males and females, adults and children. This division of labor expresses no dominant-subordinant or exploitative relations -- because all labor is equally valued; everyone labors, and stands in direct, non-alienated relation to the means of production and the products of their individual/collective labor. Each person recognizes personal dependence on every other person.

So, at the beginning of rudimentary communalism, We can see the emergence of social relations (i.e., all relations established between people in the course of joint material and ideological (spiritual/cultural) activity). These social relations conform to relations of production, and allow each person -- male and female -- to acknowledge the rights and duties and responsibilities of each for the other and for the total welfare of the community. There is no "domestic life" reserved for women, and no "public life" reserved for men. All the power in the community belongs to all the people.

2. Under rudimentary communalism, kinship (the family) is the basis of social, political, and economic organization, (i.e., "the low level of development of the productive forces necessitates forms of cooperation within the village collective and between villages, forms which are the material key to understanding the function of family, lineage, clan, and tribal organizations." (28) All adults participate in socially necessary labor, and collectively own production (communal), so all adults participate in the making of all decisions affecting the community's public life.

This key to understanding the basis of familial relations (i.e., its forms and functions don't fall from the sky, but are based on the character of existing relations of production and social relations as a whole), should be grasped and applied as We move to resolve what's now being called "the crisis of the family," or "the attack on the family." At bottom, We can't resolve this crisis, or repel this attack, without ourselves attacking the fundamental contradictions underlying national oppression.

3. Rudimentary communalism continues to develop, largely on the basis of developments of productive forces and instruments of production. People move from merely gathering food in its natural state, to producing food on the basis of their own energy (i.e., without the use of animals). Population increases.

As these "demographic and technological developments" appear (i.e., larger and more families, clans, tribes, villages; making and use of stone tools, fire, ets.), occasional trade or barter may develop between, say people living in forested areas and those living near the sea. But any such trade doesn't develop beyond the bounds that would

require "social" division of labor, nor is it characterized as "commodity exchange." These and other fundamental developments must await the appearance of *Transitional Communalism*.

#### F. Transitional Communalism

There has been no communal, collective ownership of the land in Egypt (for the past five thousand years at least), nor in China (at least since the Han), nor probably in India (with some qualifications). These societies have long had private property in land in the same way as had feudal Europe. (29)

Sedentary life [in Egypt] led to the institution of private property and a whole ethic... (30)

1. In the "Introduction" to Diop's Cultural Unity, John Henrik Clarke tells us that during "the entire history of the Egypt of the Pharaohs, African women enjoyed complete freedom." (31)

But the reality indicates otherwise. Cheikh Anta Diop himself tells us that sexual inequality and class exploitation were apparent during the First Dynasty. It wasn't until the Third Dynasty that "relative" gender equality was re-established (resting on the elimination of "noble" and privileged classes), only to have male privilege and political and economic oppression reappear in the Sixth Dynasty. (32)

The existence of class-based exploitation is further demonstrated when Diop tells us that during the Eighteenth Dynasty, on the basis of what he describes as "marginal capitalism," the state apparatus was reorganized, hereditary posts were eliminated, and the clergy was dislodged from property that it had held privately.

And, near the end of the Twentieth Dynasty, "...the germs of feudalization had reappeared and were again undermining Egyptian society. Reinforcement of the clergy's administrative autonomy and the intensification of its immunity finally created a veritable clerical state within the Egyptian State." (33)

Finally, "under the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the Sudan revived theocratic monarchy and extended it over the whole country." (34)

So, it appears that not only did women not enjoy complete freedom during the entire history of the Egypt of the Pharaohs. Alongside the oppression of women, We see in this history the oppression and exploitation of classes.

How did women lose the status and esteem We saw in rudimentary communalism? How did collective ownership of the land come to be replaced by private ownership? Why did Diop use terms like "male privilege," "noble," "privileged classes," "feudalization," "theocratic monarchy," and "marginal capitalism," to describe socio-economic and political relations in the "Southern Cradle" that he earlier described as the antithesis of patriarchy and private ownership?

In part, Diop did what We must do: He continued to learn, to study, to reevaluate and to reinterpret. He also combined his study with revolutionary practice in his native country.

But, We'll begin to uncover most of the answers to these questions in our own examination (*and begin new research projects*) of transitional communalism.

2. Transitional communalism begins when people start to produce, on the basis of human energy, and ends when (on the basis of settled agriculture and the use of domesticated animals; the use of iron and other metals and the development of handicrafts), classes and state formations appear.

During the early phases of transitional communalism, the level of development of productive forces remains low, relations of production remain cooperative, and the form of ownership of the major means of production is still collective (social/communal), and regulated by the system of kinship, i.e., matriarchy.

Each person recognizes that the survival of the communal-clan group rests upon their mutual dependence...the work of each is the work of the whole. Labor is not looked upon as an individual undertaking, but as a collective one; the products of labor are thus understood to be social products, and not individual ones. The products of labor are not looked upon as things with an existence separate from the people who produced them. All relations in the society are recognized by all members as relations between people, not relations between products.

But, this began to change as population growth influences increased productivity of labor, and the development of productive forces creates a minimal surplus. "Occasional exchanges" take place between individuals, families, villages, and clans -- but exchanges on the order of "barter" or exchange of use values, since there is yet no material basis for exploitation.

There soon appears what Engels calls the "first great social division of labor," i.e., the taming and breeding of animals (by men) and their use in agricultural production (the sphere where the "economic role" of women had constituted the foundation for their political role, their status and esteem); the separation of pastoralists from non-pastoralists. It was this social division of labor that came to fundamentally effect the system of ownership, by first stimulating the disintegration of matriarchy.

3. When animals were first captured, tamed/domesticated, used in agricultural production (especially meat and milk), they were characterized as **instruments** of production (and as such were the "personal property" of men, similar to the way instruments used by men in the hunt were considered "personal property"), while nevertheless remaining the collective social property of the commune. The new instruments of production became, over maybe hundreds of years, new **means** of production (eventually "owned" by men), a change which further

influenced the displacement of women in major areas of socially necessary labor (i.e., as the importance of hunting declined, and as cattle and other domesticated animals became the source of new products/means of subsistence, and wealth), and thus the reduction in the value of the labor power of women.

Again, over time, and in combination with other factors, the herds (and later, agricultural land), pass from the clan (communal ownership) first through their allotments to villages, then to families, and then to individuals within the families. This transition is both cause and effect of the disintegration of the clan, and the undermining of the role of kinship (matriarchy) in the regulation (maintenance) of communal ownership.

Since the herds "belonged" to men (those individuals within the family who benefited from the transformation of instruments of production into means of production -- thus ever-increasing private ownership of these means), the men came to appropriate more and more of the products (surplus) derived from these means; the surplus turned into privately accumulated wealth, and the wealth into private property. Women were thus gradually removed from direct relation to major means of production, and the quality of their socially necessary labor was ever-greatly reduced in value.

Men were appropriating (first as "personal" and then as "private") surplus products (and consequently, surplus labor) and property that was actually social. But this social character was being hidden behind social divisions of labor, and hidden behind ever-developing commodity exchange and commodity production.

The oppression/domination of women, the overthrow of matriarchy, was the means used to enable the transformation of communalism and the rise of private ownership and embryonic capitalism.

4. As cattle and agricultural land lead to greater production of surplus, and pass into private ownership, the form and character of exchange enters transition. Exchange between villages and clans, between pastoralists and non-pastoralists, becomes more common, and involves greater diversity of products.

We can't overlook what Engels calls 'the second great social division of labor,' i.e., when handicrafts are firmly established and separate from the sphere of agriculture, primarily on the basis of the development and use of metals, especially iron. Nor can we overlook the fundamental changes in (and those caused by) agriculture, once the plow is developed:

The development of the productive forces, a necessary condition for the constitution of a surplus large enough to lead to irreversible state formation, occurs through the transition from human energy (hoe agriculture) to animal energy. Similarly, it is hard to imagine a state without the use of writing for census taking, dispensing information, and transmitting orders. The imperial

Ethiopian state and the Mahdist state in the Sudan were forming at the same time that the use of the plow and of writing were becoming widespread. (35)

The plow (and fertilization and irrigation) and a wider variety of better tools for crafts, leads to greater surplus and diversity of forms of labor, thus more specialization and division of labor -- and eventually to production for the purpose of exchange, the creation of classes, and the state.

Increased exchange, and eventual production for exchange, is only possible because the form of ownership has already shifted significantly from communal to private, and, again, the basis for this shift is the qualitative change in the role of the family and the oppression of women.

Products can't be exchanged on a regular basis without the prior existence of surplus products and private ownership. Products can't be produced for the purpose of exchange without agreement among the exchangers as to a "universal equivalent" -- a commodity by which all others will be valued.

Not all products of the (now relatively isolated) family are available over and above the needs of subsistence (except, maybe, cattle). Property can't be considered private so long as the system of kinship, i.e., matriarchy, is in force and continues to regulate/maintain the system of communal ownership. Therefore, the kinship system (relations of production resting on matriarchy) must be overthrown. It's overthrow begins with the reduction in the value of the labor power of women, the disintegration of the clan, and the separation of the family from the clan, turning it into "an isolated and vulnerable unit, economically responsible for the maintenance of its members and for the rearing of the new generation." (36)

Diop indicates the relationship between the disintegration of communalism and the clan system, and the rise of classes and the state, in Cultural Unity: "...beginning with the same period [the 10th century Islamization of West Africa] detribalization was an accomplished fact in West Africa; this is proved by the possibility of an individual bearing his own family name and not the name of a clan...It is only when the members of the clan are dispersed that they can retain as individuals, in memory of their primitive community, the name of the clan, which could then become their family name." (37)

## **G. Tributary Formations**

1. The term "transitional communalism" thus refers to the stage within which communal ownership and matriarchy were transformed into private ownership and patriarchy...classless societies transformed into class societies. It was the stage where "demographic and technological developments" arose, and the principles underlying communalism weren't given centralized and correlated expression.

Women couldn't have enjoyed "complete freedom" throughout the entire history of Egypt or throughout the entire history of any socio-economic formation that had witnessed the kinds of transitions indicated above. The oppression of women can't be separated from the development of exploitative class relations and the rise of oppressive and exploitative states.

Thus, too, We see that Diop used the terms that i isolated above, because the Egypt he describes had reached, with the First Dynasty, "...a level of development of the productive forces which makes the growth of the state both possible and necessary. That is, it necessitates the end of the dominance of kinship (which can continue to exist but only as a vestige dominated by another rationality). The forms of property corresponding to this second step are those which enable the dominant class to control access to the land and by means of this to extract tribute from the peasant producers. The extraction of this tribute is controlled by the dominance of ideology, which always takes the same form: state religion or quasi religion." (38)

The tributary mode is the first class mode of production. Such a mode made its appearance in Africa long before any foreign influences, and forms of (women's) oppression and (class) exploitation thus became the "traditional" ones that the oppression of New Afrikan women, and the exploitation of the New Afrikan nation by capitalist-imperialism, would build themselves upon:

Capitalism was not destined to be invented in Europe; it might also have been invented by the Chinese, Arabs, or others. The only reason it was not invented in Asia or Africa is that its prior development in Europe led to its impeding the other continents' normal evolution. (39)

If the evolution of Africa had not been impeded, We'd still face the struggle We face today. The link between the oppression of women and the oppression of the nation, is the rise of capitalist relations of production. To end the oppression of women, and to liberate the nation, is to struggle for socialism.

End -- Part One

(Parts Two and Three to follow)



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**Ending Colonial Police Violence In The African Community**

Community Self-Defense Program's Statement on the Murder of Michael Harris and Derrick Williams by the Occupying Army Within the Black Community Called the "Police"

Sisters and Brothers, once again two more of our warriors, our young bloods, our future, have been cowardly murdered from behind by the police. This is not the first time it has happened and it won't be the last! What is distressing for us has been the weak response by forces within the **Black Liberation Movement** and our present inability to address the problem up front. We are making this statement today in order to provide a brief analysis of the true causes of the crisis in the relationship that the police have in the African community, as well as provide a short to intermediate plan of action (leadership) to those political forces who are tired of selling wolf tickets, walking across bridges and waiting for the capitalist-colonialist state to solve our problems.

First off, we would like to pay our respects to the families of both young men who we know are grieving for their sons and are seeking answers and retribution for the crimes committed by the representatives of the united states government. It is very important for us to once again clarify the role of the police in our communities. The police are foot soldiers funded by, organized and represent the ruling class in america. The banks, owners of property and corrupt politicians need the police to use force of arms to crush rebellions, and control populations of people who are no longer needed for economic production in this society.

Contrary to some of our black talk show hosts and so-called leaders, the police are not in our community to protect us (that might be a stated objective), but are in the African community to protect the property of the slumlords, banks and other members of the ruling class.

The police role and function within the African community is to enforce the policies and directives of the capitalist controlled u.s. government. When people cannot be controlled by PAL (Police Athletic League) programs, drugs, community relations police teams, or Michael Jackson concerts, the police use the force of arms to terrorize and control our community.

Derrick Williams and Michael Harris plus countless others were murdered by the police because we as a people **presently** do not have the power to drive these military forces out of our community. In fact, every facet of our community (political, economic, cultural, military), is controlled by a foreign power (u.s. government) for profit. The Koch administration decided to close *Sydenham Hospital* against the will of the black working class community of Harlem. The u.s. government decides on which rotten corrupt welfare hotel our families will reside in. the state is the determining factor which explains why our schools lack resources for books, computers, and repairs to the physical plant. Brothers and Sisters, this is called **Colonialism**. Even though there are some who don't believe it, we are a colonial people, and when we fight to break this yoke of control, the ruling class deploys the police.

The police commit individual acts of terror and murder against the black community (like what happened to Michael and Derrick). Then the police are sent to infiltrate and dismantle social movements that threaten the power of the ruling class of this society. Examples of this form of violence is when the **Black Panther Party** was organizing free breakfast programs and other independent liberation institutions: the united states government sent the police to destroy this organization. When the black working class in Harlem, New York attempted to prevent the state from closing *Sydenham Hospital*, the banks and corrupt politicians sent the police to physically terrorize and break up the social movement. When the entire black community unites in Crown Heights to transform their community college (*Medgar Evers College*), Mayor Koch threatens to send SWAT Teams on a search and destroy mission to neutralize the leadership and the movement.

The police departments who murdered these two young men are not an independent entity divorced from the rest of the u.s. government. When there is a crisis in one structure of the political system, it is usually a sign that the overall political system is suffering. This is best represented in the ongoing political corruption, cronyism and graft present in the Koch democratic party administration (Government As a Burglars Tool), and the inept social service and housing system that dumps our homeless people in run-down hotels for high profits. Colonialism explains the inability of the city legal system to indict the police officer (Stephen Sullivan) who murdered Eleanor Bumpers with two shotgun blasts, and why the eleven pigs who murdered Michael Steward were set free. We as a people cannot use the existing social structures of imperialism to gain justice for the crimes above, because these structures don't provide for us the power to overturn this situation.

Sisters and Brothers, this political system can no longer pretend to serve the needs of our community. The economic and political crisis in the u.s. is best observed by the decline of the U.S. Steel, high-tech, auto, oil and farm industries. This economic crisis is caused by national liberation movements in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, who are taking control of their labor power and natural resources from u.s. imperialism. U.S. imperialism is also facing increased economic competition from its "allies" in Western Europe and Japan which is cutting into its profit margins and control of key world economic industrial sectors. Political and economic crisis on the international front signals similar social dislocation in america's centers.

Today, the most significant obstacle which prevents our movement from solving the day to day problems like police violence has been the poverty of theory and practice by the petty-bourgeois (middle class) who represent in the flesh the neo-colonial strategy implemented by the u.s. government to keep our community powerless and leaderless. The black politicians, militant preachers, rainbow makers, and black bankers for the last 15 years here in New York City have proposed solutions to the social crisis in the African community that rely on the good will of the state (u.s. government), instead of relying on the strengths of our own community to solve our problems. These mis-leaders for the last 15 years have called for more black policemen, police brutality hearings, psychological testing of the police, and FBI and other state-sponsored "investigations." Let us examine each of these proposals briefly.

Police brutality hearings are useful on a tactical basis because they serve as a forum where the masses can vent their anger and communicate with other suffering victims. However, they become a political football when weak leaders (David Patterson of Harlem), offer up this as a solution recently when the masses of our people live each day within the colonial contradictions of police terror. Our people do not need to be reminded of the fact of police terror continuously. **We want real leadership to solve the problem!**

From time to time our hand-picked leaders call for *More Black Police*, and cry "racism!" as the cause of police brutality. This argument and solution has been shown to be incorrect when we have documented within the last two years black policemen killing unarmed individuals, and disrespecting and harassing black people in this city. **Lester Primus, a 26-Year Old Black Policeman Killed, in cold blood, Derrick Williams!** Racism can no longer explain this behavior.

Our middle class leadership cannot target colonialism as the problem because they are fighting tooth and nail to be the "black" rulers of New York City. This corrupt leadership cannot target the system because they would be instructed to condemn the entire police department (black or white) as an occupying army in the African community. These mis-leaders would have to admit that the police are a military force which enforces the policies of the capitalist-colonialist state. More black police won't solve the problem when the problem is the police department itself, a military force that the black community must eventually neutralize. Racism is just the negative views and values in white folks' head. We can't end racism, but we can transform the structural relationship our community has with the police and the whole state.

Many of our self-appointed leaders have suggested more rigorous psychological testing of policemen before they patrol our community. We feel that this is another stall tactic because as we mentioned earlier, psychological arguments don't explain individual and social movement police terror. Police behavior is explained by a political environment which sanctions police murder of black people with no justice from the legal system, and no response from a drugged, unorganized, African community.

Finally, Brothers and Sisters, a favorite tactic called for by some of our black leaders, is FBI and state sponsored "investigations." Rev. Daughtry and others have called on Governor Cuomo and other state officials (Rudolph Giuliani) to appoint a special prosecutor to "investigate" police brutality in the black community. To date, the following individuals have been murdered by the police or white working class nationalist vigilantes and a special prosecutor was called for but no justice or reparations have been won. They are Eleanor Bumpers, Michael Steward, Clifford Glover, Randy Evans, Louis Baer, Willie Turks, Arthur Miller, Larry Dawes, Kenny Gamble, and Peter Funches. It seems like it's an organized script. One of our people is murdered by the police, a call is made for a federal "investigation," mis-leaders appear on television crying racism at the funeral, and soon everything is business as usual. Brothers and Sisters, "investigations" immobilize the masses by suggesting that the state can solve our problems. We have to begin now to operationalize the slogan, **We Are Our Own Liberators!** The paltry solutions critiqued above, reveal the inability of the black middle class to provide effective leadership for our poor and working class communities. Their solutions and arguments reflect the political and economic crisis which plagues the rulers of the society in general. Well, if these solutions have failed, **What Is To Be Done?**

First off, there are no quick solutions or short-cuts to ending police brutality and the general colonial conditions in our community. Tactics and methods that have out-lived their usefulness must be dropped in the waste can and it is time to roll up our sleeves and rebuild the **Black Liberation Movement** for revolutionary political power (not rainbow electoral power), Land and Socialism. This movement, at least it's progressive revolutionary sector, is weak and also has not responded in the fashion called for by the period. What follows is a brief outline of a tactical program plan which must be implemented immediately if we are to make some measurable head way towards our long term goals.

1. Our movement has been plagued by too many *mobilizations*, and not enough **grassroots organizing**. We have basically been organizing ourselves, at demonstrations, forums, rallies, and conferences. It is time for every progressive, activist, or revolutionary individual or organization to target a block or entire neighborhood and work that block-community, guided by specific, measurable and time-framed political and organizational objectives.

Making a revolution is not just making a powerful speech or picking up a gun! It begins with patient, consistent work in agitating, educating and building revolutionary working class organizations which will solve some of the basic problems of our people and prepare the people for the long march of taking power away from the police, corrupt politicians, and the owners of the factories and sweat shops who presently control our community.

We are not stating that the focus of all work should be only paramilitary. However, it is an area of priority. Self-defense is usually related to housing problems (Mrs. Bumpers), youth organizing, problems with single mothers, employment needs of our community, drugs and "black on black crime." Let's admit it: We need to build the base of our movement with fresh troops, the **Black Working Class!**

2. All formations need to develop immediately a self-defense structure or program within their organizational structures and make it a part of their general political work. Here again this work must have an organizational presence on the blocks and in the projects. This work can take the form of tenant patrols, first aid training, block watch activities, and security science and physical training programs. The



**Community Self-Defense Program** can provide assistance in initiating this work for anyone that is interested in organizing this work in their community. We are calling on martial artists to open their dojos to train the community. Vietnam veterans, nurses and mental health workers all can play an important role in promoting and structuring a **security system** on your block-community.

This work locally must be coordinated on a city-wide basis. We are calling for the development of a *Citywide Security Network* for our community. It will be charged with assessing the security needs of the African community in this city. It must develop a city-wide plan which will plot a path to attain the goal of self-community defense, and finally serve as a coordinating center for information on training programs. This network must design a database of training personnel and organizers and serve as a command and control center to coordinate communications, and deployment of forces in emergency situations. **Long Range Planning** and anticipation of threat situations must begin now, with detailed contingency plans ready to be implemented when that threat occurs.

3. Our movement must increase our work with our young people who are presently influenced by drugs (Crack, Black Tar, etc.), dropping out of educational institutions that don't teach and have no hope or vision for the future. Despite this negative situation above, our youth are a social force who have no fear of the police and other representatives of the u.s. colonialist government. They possess and abundance of fervor and hatred of the state that at times gets targeted by our own community. Our tasks, if we choose to accept it, is to immediately begin recruiting our youth into our organizations, where the black masses can utilize their ingenuity, cunning, strength of mind and courage to achieve our liberation. If we don't organize our youth, the state will continue to kill them or organize our youth as shock troops (Guardian Angels) against our community and movement. We must create a political environment where our youth will begin to respect their communities and love their people while heightening their hatred for the system.

4. While the black middle class politicians and preachers cannot lead our struggle in this period against the state, they black church, politicians, and black bankers can assist our movement financially to build a community infrastructure which will address the many needs in our community that the u.s. government can no longer take on. **With No Strings Attached!**

5. The political, economic and social system in this city and country as a whole is in crisis. The social system has proven that it is incapable of housing, feeding and educating our people. We are now faced with the stark reality of making the slogan and principle, **Self-Determination**, real. The task before our movement is to build the foundation of an independent political, social service, educational and military infrastructure that will serve our people's daily needs and compete and contend with the representatives of the capitalist-colonialist u.s. government. Just as our Sisters and Brothers in Azania are dismantling the township structures set up by the foreigners, and replacing them with revolutionary **People's Committees** and **People's Courts** which now settle disputes among the people, and have begun to serve the people with community development projects -- our movement here must begin to establish embryonic forms of **People's Dual Power** on our blocks, by immediately strengthening and building educational, housing, and other working class economic development ventures. We need to build a local city-wide paramilitary response system in our communities now!

The police are not the only enemy institutions that must be driven out of our community. Let the welfare hotel owners, EMS personnel (who refused to walk up the stairs twice to serve two members of our community who eventually died), UFT controlled school systems that can't teach our children, slumlords, and stingy social service workers join the police. If we state that **We Are Our Own Liberators**, we must take the offensive on mass issues solving the day to day

problems of our people while destroying the rule of the u.s. government in our community.

6. Finally, our movement must step up our efforts in political support of the **Black Liberation Army** and the many political prisoners who are rotting in u.s. colonial prisons. they have dedicated their lives to our people's total liberation and the vast majority of our people do not know the history of this formation, why it came into being, and the positive effect it had on the police department in stopping police terror in our community. In our black work we must inform the people why we need a **Black Liberation Army**, the difference between a terrorist and a Freedom Fighter, and what to do when the FBI knocks on your door. While we do the mass infrastructural work, the political work to heighten our people's consciousness concerning the police, showing the failures of the black middle class leadership, and revealing the knowledge that the people must rely on their own resources to address the present crisis, must go on.

### **Conclusion**

The tasks above are a hefty challenge to our people and movement. However, we in the **Community Self-Defense Program** believe that the principled, courageous and dedicated activists in our community are working to make the sacrifices that will turn this vision into a reality. One thing is sure: We will not make any measurable progress by begging the state to solve our problems! Our preachers and misleaders who call for FBI "investigations" simply have no faith in the people and immobilize the people by projecting that the u.s. government, dripping in graft and corruption, can solve the crisis in our community. Soon these appointed leaders will be exposed for who they are and swept away by an armed, politically conscious people who will no longer be influenced by charlatans (personality and media hounds) but will begin to speak for themselves on every block and neighborhood we live in.

Many of our cadres have listened intently to the cries of the masses for people's justice and action. While the level of outrage against the murderers of Michael and Derrick is high, no revolutionary political leadership has begun to lay the planks of political glue which will channel the fervor of the masses into political and organizational action. Our plan above attempts to do this by showing how we can actually transform the colonial relationship we have to the police departments of this country. The murders of our two young bloods is a clear defeat and loss to our collective family as well as our movement. Despite this loss, this spontaneous anger, **let us step forward** with a profound **trust in the working people** as the only social force to bring us out of this crisis towards national liberation and socialism. We cannot put this work before us on hold. It has been said before: **"Every Struggle We Fail To Fight Today We Will Be Forced To Fight Tomorrow."**

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**ORGANIZATION MEANS COMMITMENT  
or COMMITMENT IS THE KEY**

(Anonymous)

**Introduction**

As the u.s. enters the 70's, some people are beginning to discuss the question of how to build a revolutionary cadre organization. Most of those who are discussing it will never get beyond the point of discussion, while of those who are actually beginning to organize, only a minority will probably be around a few years from now.

This is because it is not at all easy to build a revolutionary cadre organization. It takes a lot of time and patience; a lot of hard work and struggle; a continuing relationship from and to the revolutionary and progressive social forces within your society; a continuing expansion and enrichment of your own revolutionary vision and that of the revolutionary social force; the ability to think independently as well as to accept discipline cheerfully; and unrelenting self-criticism and struggle to overcome your own shortcomings. This work and struggle, this time and patience, this continuing relationship, this expansion and enrichment, this independence and discipline, this criticism and self-criticism, can only come from a continuing commitment in theory and in practice to the conviction that at the heart of (every great revolution) is the urgent need to transform Man/Woman into a new and more advanced form of human beings by means of struggle. **The only justification for a revolution is that it accelerates the evolution of man and woman.** The first thing you need for such a commitment is an unshakable conviction that **Correct ideas matter: and that once the correct ideas are grasped by the great masses of people, they become a material force capable of changing society and the world.** In a country like the u.s. where there is so much respect for things and so little respect for ideas, the number of people with this conviction is still very small; and the number whose convictions cannot be shaken is even smaller. When your friends and associates accuse you of having too much faith in ideas or in "human nature," it takes a pretty strong person to hold firm.

One of the most difficult hurdles that a cadre group has to overcome at its first meeting (and often at subsequent meetings) is the feeling among those present that there must be something wrong with them because they are so few. In a country like the u.s., where it is normal and natural to judge the value and importance of everything according to the size (the bigger the better), it is not easy to grasp and hold firm to the historical fact that **every advance that has ever been made by humankind was started by a few people**, often, to begin with, by only one individual, since every beginning can only be a beginning. Someone--it may have been a man or a woman--was the first to use a piece of stone as a hatchet or hammer or ax; in other words, to take the first step in tool-making (two million) years ago, which has now led to the machine age of lathes, punch presses, and dynamos. Similarly, someone--it may have been a man or woman--was the first to mold a pot out of mud...Elsewhere on earth, maybe another continent, or maybe only a few miles away, another man or woman at approximately the same time may have been doing the same things. But the first man or woman to take this first crude step in tool-making or pottery did not know this. Nor did he or she stop to speculate why only he or she or just a few others were taking this step.

The practice of judging a step forward in humankind's productive or political evolution by the number of people involved is a modern, western, and especially amerikkkan prejudice. When a handful of people met in 1921 to organize the Chinese Communist Party which now governs 750 million people, they knew, of course, that the party had to become much larger before it could lead the Chinese revolution to victory over imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism. But those present did not look around at each other and ask, "Why us rather than anyone else?" They knew that anything which men and women create, any advance which humankind makes,

must have a beginning and that every beginning must be made by those few individuals who choose to begin something because they feel it should be begun. Before something can GROW, it must first BE.

#### **A. The Role of Revolutionary Cadre Organization**

Building a revolutionary cadre organization is enormously difficult, but there is no mystery about the essential functions of such an organization. Just as the individual human being requires a mind to synthesize the many varied experiences which it receives through the senses, so the revolutionary social forces in a revolutionary period require a revolutionary cadre organization. Just as the mind acts as a **center** for the senses giving and receiving impulses, so the revolutionary cadre organization acts as a **center for the revolutionary social forces**. Neither can replace the other; nor can either develop without continuing interaction with the other. They are the two poles of a developing and dynamic relationship, continually enriching one another in a never ending spiral process of "from the masses, to the masses."

This **dialectical** concept is the key to the building of a revolutionary cadre organization.

The first task of a revolutionary cadre organization is theoretical **analysis** and **synthesis**. That is to say, the cadre organization must first reflect upon the specific social realities within which it is operating, with the aim of arriving at a clear conception of: **A) How this social reality has developed historically, and B) Of the contradictions within this reality which are the basis for further development**. The cadre organization must then, **C) Define which of these contradictions are the principal and major ones** requiring solutions if the society is to advance; and **D) Develop a vision of what kind of new reality** will be created by the resolution of those principal or major contradictions. Finally, the revolutionary cadre organization must, **E) Determine which sectors of the society have the greatest potential for the struggles necessary to resolve these contradictions and create this new reality**.

These theoretical concepts together constitute the **ideology** of the cadre organization.

After deriving its ideology **from** reflections upon the social realities, the cadre organization must devise **concrete programs** to go to the revolutionary social forces (masses, people) in order to mobilize them in struggles to create new reality through resolving the major contradictions of the society. In devising and projecting these concrete programs, the cadre organization must be concerned not only to increase the momentum of struggle and the physical power of the revolutionary social forces. It must also be concerned to bring about a **transformation** in these forces. That is to say, it must seek to increase their initiative, their critical, political consciousness, their sense of collectivity and responsibility, and the structures with which they can not only bring about the collapse of the existing oppressive society, but also create a new society.

The cadre organization, in other words, must be concerned not only with the **quantitative** but with the **qualitative** development of the mass struggle and of the revolutionary social forces. It must take seriously the fact that all the people within a given society, including the revolutionary social forces, are shaped by the dominant values of the society. In the light of the revolutions that have taken place all over the world in the past half century, beginning with the Russian Revolution of 1917, anyone claiming to be a revolutionist must be willing to look beyond the question of power to what happens after the taking of power. Hence, s/he must be concerned not only with increasing the anger and militance of the oppressed but also their determination and capacity to transform themselves. Otherwise, willfully or not, s/he is only preparing them for despair and hence for the leadership of demagogues, and s/he himself/herself is not a revolutionist, but a rebel or a demagogue.

At the same time the cadre organization is also providing the **framework** within which the cadre members themselves can be constantly transforming themselves into more conscious, more responsible, more creative and more critical human beings--to who the revolutionary masses can increasingly look for leadership because they can recognize in them actual, living witnesses to the possibility of creating new men and women.

If the **ideology** of the cadre organization is sound; if its **program** meets the needs of the revolutionary social forces; if the cadre themselves are in a close and continuing relationship with these forces, then the revolutionary social forces will begin to struggle around these programs.

In turn, these struggle will bring about new situations, involving new contradictions and new conflicts. This means that the cadre organization must be continuously prepared to re-evaluate its ideas of the social reality and to devise new programs to take to the revolutionary social forces.

Thus constantly deepening and enriching both their ideas and their relationship with the revolutionary social forces, the cadre never lose sight of their primary commitment to the revolutionary cadre organization. It is the center from which they go outwards and to which they return. It provides the framework within which they can be continuously re-evaluating their theory and practice and continuously transforming themselves so as to be better able to live up to the historic task for which they accepted responsibility.

## **B. The Amerikkkan Political Background**

The difficulty in understanding the role of the revolutionary cadre organization does not stem from any intrinsic mystery in this role. Rather, it stems from the lack of experience of amerikkkans in the political process of continuing commitment to the kind of systematic, collective, dialectical, theoretical and practical struggle which is at the heart of a revolutionary cadre organization. For historical reasons, the approach of most amerikkkans to social problems has always been a pragmatic or problem-solving approach which is essentially anti-intellectual. In what has been described as the "headache syndrome," they react to and try to resolve each problem as it arises, as if each were a sporadic, isolated or accidental problem in a system which is fundamentally sound, and therefore capable of quick and easy solutions.

In the recent period, confidence in the soundness of amerikkkan institutions has plummeted, chiefly under the impact of the revolutionary struggles of Vietnamese people and the revolt of blacks...The result is that a great many amerikkkans, black and white, no longer think of amerikkkan problems as isolated or accidental. They have traced their roots to the "system" of "capitalism and racism" and concluded that a revolution is necessary in the u.s. They have further identified the chief revolutionary social forces to make this revolution as the blacks and other non-white (so-called) minorities.

However, for the most part, these people still strongly resist the ideas of committing themselves to the kind of collective and protracted struggle in the dialectical relationship to the revolutionary social forces outlined above. They no longer look at the problems of this society in a piecemeal fashion, to be solved one by one. But they still regard the revolutionary struggle as a series of isolated events, "happenings" and "experiences." The result is that they do not have a framework within which to do the continual evaluation that is necessary, and their angry attacks on the system turn into abstractions and rhetorical denunciations.

Always "on the go," attracted to whatever or whoever turns them on, they jump from one activity or group to another, judging the revolutionary content of that activity or group by its militancy or by the excitement and relief which it offers from boredom and frustration, i.e., quantitatively and subjectively. In the past few years, white youth, rebelling against the materialism and individualism of their middle-class parents, have been drifting in and out of communes and collectives. They claim to be seeking collectivity but they are unwilling to make the long range

commitment to any one group which is the prerequisite to collective struggle and collective learning. As a result, the collectives and communes springing up and disappearing all over the country are little more than aggregates of subjectivities in which each individual is still doing his or her "own thing."

These young people have substituted for the pragmatic, anti-intellectual attitudes of their forebears, a new anti-intellectual attitude which is the unique product of the post World War II society. Raised in a world of unceasing novelty and mobility, of revolutions in production and abundance in consumption, of instant communication and space-ship transportation, they have been culturally deprived of the experience through protracted struggle which has been the good and bad fortune of every previous generation, if only in the productive arena. As a result, they have an existentialist philosophy or the conviction that life consists essentially of momentary experiences.

In the 1960's, this lack of experience in protracted struggle was not a serious handicap. In fact, in retrospect, it was an enormous advantage since it enabled young people to leapfrog the old radical organizations with their obsolete theories and programs (still stemming from the experience of 1917 revolution in Russia), and to create instead a new and unique style of politics. This "new style of politics" centered around the dramatization of confrontations which were then carried into every living room through television. Staging these confrontations and using the mass media with enormous skill, the movement leaders of the late 50's and 60's, black and white, were able to overnight bring home to the entire society the barbarism of u.s. racism and the genocidal war in Vietnam. Radicalized by these methods, young amerikkkans particularly young black amerikkkans, exploded in the streets of practically every major city in the country, creating by the late 60's a social crisis of unprecedented magnitude with the entire society.

However, while the social crisis was obviously maturing, no cadre organization was being created to evaluate the new reality and to give direction to the emerging social forces. The result is that today the great majority of amerikkkans, both those who feel oppressed by the system and those who support the system because of the benefits they have received from it, are completely bewildered. They feel as if they were being tossed about in the eye of a great storm with no idea where they should go or how to get there. Likewise, in the absence of a revolutionary cadre organization, most young people who played such an important role in creating the movement of the 60's have been without any framework within which they could collectively evaluate the situation and make new projections to the country, let alone transform themselves into more responsible, more conscious, more dedicated and more critical cadres. Left to their own individual devices, the great majority of them have drifted out of the movement or have gone the way of left or right opportunism. This is to say, many have become pure **adventurists**, making isolated and desperate attacks on the power structure or anyone who they think supports the power structure. Others have become **careerists**, "on the go" in one way or another, as consultants, project directors, or staff persons supported by federal, city and state agencies and by churches and universities in order to co-opt the "heavies" of the movement.

### C. Commitment Is Key

Against this background, it should be clear why the first step of any group of people seeking to build a cadre organization, must be the decision of each individual in the group to commit herself or himself to a collective, protracted struggle in a dialectically developing relationship with the revolutionary social forces [people]. Those who are convinced of the need for revolutionary social change and who, out of sober reflection on the concrete experiences of the recent past, have become convinced that spontaneous rebellions, revolts and confrontations--no matter how many or how spectacular--lead not to revolution, but to despair and confusion, should be ready to make this commitment out of their own volition.

If, among those who have come together to discuss the question, only two people are ready for this commitment, these two must resist the temptation to continue meeting with the others in the hope or illusion that by doing so, they will persuade the others to stop wavering and make a commitment to this temptation, they will discover in the end that they are left either with the same two people, or that they themselves have begun to waver, since the waverers are the ones who have behind them the pressure of the way things are, rather than of the way things should be.

The decision by a group of people, no matter how few, to commit themselves to this collective and protracted struggle and to reject "on the go" politics, shapes everything that follows. If their commitment is to become more than rhetorical "testifying," they must now embark on the concrete steps necessary to create a collectivity out of their separate selves. As it is, they are still individuals, with their own very different ideas about what is and what should be, what they should do and how they should do it, what they can expect from each other now and what they should be able to expect from each other as they begin to struggle together.

In order for the group to start **transforming their separate subjectivity's**, they must first arrive, through organized discussion and an agreed-upon method of decision-making, an agreement on the following:

1. Their ideology.
2. A program or programs for activity within a prescribed period, long enough for them to complete some projects, and yet short enough so that they can see the end at the beginning.
3. A structure within which they can carry out these programs and which will also provide for the continuing growth and developing of the group as a whole and for every member in it.
4. Standards of membership.
5. Methods for continuing evaluation of their activities and themselves.

Some or all of these may be modified in the course of the organization's continuing development. Particularly in a revolutionary period, situations change very rapidly, and the ideas of the revolutionary organization must change accordingly. As situations change, different views over what should or should not be modified may at such time lead to such opposing proposals that those holding these opposing views cannot continue to co-exist in the same organization, and a split becomes unavoidable. But unless these changes or differences have developed in relationship to an original set of basic ideas, they cannot be dealt with as political differences, but will instead be interpreted as subjective or personality differences, with all the bitterness that usually accompanies such interpretations.

#### **A (1): Ideology**

For the last 50 years most radicals in the united states have thought that it was sufficient to define the amerikkkan historical reality in terms of Marx's 19th century analysis of european capitalism and Lenin's pre-World War I analysis of european imperialism, simply adding to these the analysis of amerikkkan racism, usually interpreted as a manifestation of capitalism or domestic imperialism. In the past ten years, the New Left radicals have continued to define the amerikkkan historical reality in these terms. However, in recognition of the post World War II struggles of Third World peoples inside and outside the united states and the increasingly middle-class character of the amerikkkan workers, they have simply substituted Third World peoples for the working class which Marx and Lenin regarded as the revolutionary social force to destroy capitalism and imperialism.

None of these radicals, either in the past or recently, ever took seriously the fact that Marx and Lenin were both developing their theories in systematic reflection upon their specific historical reality, a totally different historical reality from what exists in the united states today. Marx was writing at the beginning of the industrial revolution in europe 100 years ago, and Lenin in backward Russia over 50 years ago, in periods when rapid development of the productive forces was the urgent concern of europeans and Russians respectively. Today the united states is the most technologically advanced country in human history, producing goods and developing the productive forces with such rapidity that every politically conscious, socially-responsible person is trying to think of how to slow development down. Far from being in material want, even the poorest layers of the population are constantly being courted by capitalism to buy, buy, buy; and state agencies subsidize these layers so their publicly-financed purchasing power can keep the economy going.

Yet, instead of analyzing this new social reality with the seriousness with which Marx and Lenin analyzed theirs, most radicals have simply reacted to the revolt of Third World peoples by casting them in the role which Marx and Lenin gave to the working class. Subsequently, as if vying for the leading role on the stage of this social drama, other groups, victimized and alienated within the society (women, youth, prisoners) have begun to substitute themselves for blacks. Now, some radicals, reacting to the chaos and absurdities into which this kind of rivalry to take the center of the stage is plunging the movement, have fallen back on the working class as hero, hoping against hope that spreading unemployment, inflation, taxes and other economic miseries may yet turn the working class into the revolutionary class which Marx's 19th century analysis called for.

Instead of just reacting to rebellions and to each other as these organizations are doing, the revolutionary cadre organization must make its own serious analysis of the unique historical development of the united states and of the new social tasks which have been uniquely posed as a result of its unprecedented material development. It should then be able to recognize that the major contradiction in this country is not an economic one, but rather the contradiction between this country's extremely advanced technological development and its extreme political and social underdevelopment. This contradiction is manifested in the pre-occupation of its people with their own private pursuits and their material comforts and in their lack of political consciousness and social responsibility, as well as of genuine self-governing institutions which could encourage the development of political consciousness and social responsibility. It can then be seen that the chief purpose of the [revolution] is to accelerate the rapid growth of political consciousness and social responsibility in the...people so that they can **put politics in command of economics**, instead of being ruled by economics as they are today.

#### **A (2): Program**

Most movement groups are reactive, issue-oriented groups who are constantly plunging into activity around the innumerable issues, usually defense issues, which are constantly surfacing in this period, such as "Free the Prisoners," "Free Angela Davis," "Abolish Stress," "Bring the Boys Back from Vietnam." The result is that most of them disappear as rapidly as they appear. What usually continues is: A) either one of the Old Left organizations (CP-USA), SWP, PLM, etc.) or B) cliques of individuals who are often clustered around a particularly charismatic individual or one who is particularly gifted at fund raising or C) social groups of alumni or veterans of various struggles in the 60's.

Few of these, if any, have ever sat down to work out a program that a half dozen people could carry out over the period of a year in order to build themselves into a viable organization with their own collective identity and specific contribution to make to the overall movement. Most of the so-called revolutionaries in the u.s. can rap about the need for a planned economy or for the reorganization



of the entire united states from top to bottom. But they never have taken the time to think through the **program** for even a small cadre organization: a clear conception of the **purposes** the group is trying to achieve, the **methods** by which they propose to achieve these purposes, a proposed **time schedule**, including deadlines for each step of the program, and the specific step-by-step **processes**.

When an organization works out clearly such programs, it also establishes a basis for the evaluation of its programs. Thereby it does one of the most important, yet deceptively simple, things that a revolutionary cadre organization can do: Learn from experience or develop its theory from social practice. No-where more than in the u.s., is it so necessary to recognize and emphasize the importance of learning and the development of theory through a continuing relationship of your theory to practice. This is the only way to combat the powerful tendencies in this country to empty rhetoric (or talk without practice), and mindless activism or reactionary militancy, i.e., militancy to prove one's militancy or because it is fashionable to be militant, rather than to act because one has some deeply felt convictions about the way man/womankind can and should advance, and realizes that these convictions can only be tested in social practice.

Therefore, in the initial period, the main programs of a revolutionary cadre organization should be **internal programs**. That is to say, they should be consciously aimed at transforming those who have come together on the basis of commitment to a collectivity, with a powerful sense of their developing and continuing collective identity and purpose. The first year programs of a cadre organization should center chiefly around the following:

- A) The theoretical strengthening of the members (political education).
- B) The development of the literature of the organization and the skills of the membership to enable them to take the ideas of the organization to the masses (propaganda).
- C) The increase of the organization's members (recruitment).

The **Propaganda Program** of the organization is crucial to the development of the revolutionary struggle since as it cannot too often be repeated, once the correct ideas are grasped by the masses, they become a material force capable of changing society and the world. Particularly at this stage in the struggle, the major emphasis of the organization's propaganda must be on expanding the vision and increasing the critical political consciousness of the people, i.e., inspiring them with the broad purposes of the struggle and developing their capacity to de-mythologize and de-romanticize. To mobilize the masses in struggle or to increase their militancy without at the same time expanding their consciousness of their responsibility and capacity to create "new men and women," is only to lay the groundwork for their despair.

In mapping out the **Recruitment Program** of the organization, great care should be taken to make the process of recruitment a selective one, aimed at slow and **qualitative** growth, rather than rapid expansion, taking care not to judge the growth of the organization by the numbers of its members, rather than by their commitment to the ideology and programs of the organization.

In the matter of recruitment, the cadre organization has few models to go on. In the past, it was ridiculously easy, particularly for a worker or a black person, to acquire membership in the CP-USA or the Trotskyite parties. The organizations, except for relatively brief periods right after the Russian Revolution had so little contact with the workers, and even less with blacks, and so few workers or blacks were attracted to these organizations, that each one became a kind of "prize"; so that if he or she showed any sign of being willing to join, the organization virtually subsidized them, sending them around the country on tours for the party so that the party could present a public image of black or worker membership.

Since the 60's, on the other hand, thousands of young people have been attracted to the new political organizations of all persuasions, ready to drift into (and out of) these organizations with the same lack of commitment as they have given to ad hoc organizations, particularly if the mass media has given these organizations any publicity. In turn, these organizations, living for the moment and for the spotlight, have recruited furiously in order to give the impression of a large public following. In the recent past we have had some instructive experiences with organizations who have expanded rapidly for the sake of and with the help of the media. Often they have discovered that they were recruiting many police agents. Even when this was not the case, they have still been at the mercy of their new members, most of who were attracted to the organization in the first place by the image of confrontation which they got from the mass media and who have therefore led the organization into confrontation after confrontation, until its entire energies and resources were exhausted in defense activities.

For all these reasons, it is important that the revolutionary cadre organization seek to avoid both rapid expansion and any kind of publicity, in full recognition of the fact that any rapidly expanding or publicity-oriented organization has no chance to do the learning and developing which are absolutely essential to preparation for rapid growth at a later stage of the protracted struggle.

For the same reasons, a cadre organization must acquire its basic finances from dues paid by its members and from the strictly political activities of the organization (sales of literature, public meetings, etc.), and not from grants or funds from private or public agencies. The danger is not that these agencies will put direct pressure on or try to dilute any militant activities which the organization may want to engage in. The corruption is much more insidious, arising from the fact that external funding deprives the organization and the membership of the opportunity and the responsibility to develop and test their own commitment and their own ideas.

### **A (3): Structure**

Regular meetings at least once a week and always **starting on time**, the keeping of minutes at every meeting and the reading of these minutes at the subsequent meeting, and a clearly-organized agenda for each meeting, are the elementary structural requirements for a revolutionary cadre organization. If it seems strange to emphasize what should be obvious, it is because these are not at all obvious in the "on the go" political atmosphere of today's movement, which is more likely to call meetings when the spirit moves it, to disdain the keeping of minutes and to regard presentation of an agenda as incipient bureaucratization or elitism.

Through regularly scheduled meetings, each member begins to internalize the structure of the group as part of his or her own living routines. Through the promptness with which every member arrives at the meeting, the unity of every one starting together is established. Through minutes a group takes responsibility for its programs and procedures from week to week and begins to get a concept of its own development as historical. Through a clearly organized agenda, the essentials of which should be the same from week to week, every member can be preparing between meetings for his or her participation at the meeting, thus creating a framework for the maximum participation of each member.

At the beginning of each meeting, the Chairperson is the one responsible for preparing the agenda. This can then be revised by the membership who must accept the agenda in its final form before the meeting proceeds. This apparently simple situation is an example of the leadership-membership relationship which is essential to the development of a revolutionary cadre organization.

The establishment of structure with which leadership and membership can be developed is a very difficult problem inside the united states. On the one hand, there is a strong tendency in ordinary non-political working people to hold back and

wait for direction from those who they may consider to be more capable or experienced, i.e., to see themselves as permanent rank and file. Coupled with this is the tendency to rally around and rely upon charismatic leaders to lead them out of the wilderness of oppression.

Movement people, including young blacks, also tend to be caught up in this "cult of personality." But there is an even more widespread tendency among young people to regard **any leadership** as "elitist" and "bureaucratic" and to insist instead on what they call "participatory democracy" or the uninterrupted rule of the rank and file. Although apparently contradictory, both the "cult of personality" and the "ultra-democracy" of young people actually stem from the same existentialist, ad hoc approach of movement people to revolutionary struggle. Constantly on the go from rally to rally, living for the psychological impact of each meeting on their feelings, they are not concerned with the development of collective struggle, but rather with their own momentary feelings as individuals.

The structure of the revolutionary cadre organization, on the other hand, is created to develop a dialectical, i.e., a developing, relationship between the leaders and members of the organization analogous to that between the organization and the revolutionary social forces. The important difference is that the members of the revolutionary cadre organization elect their leaders out of their own ranks, choosing those who they believe to be the most capable of guiding and directing the organization, and holding them responsible for giving such guidance and direction.

This is one of the many ways in which the revolutionary cadre organization is constantly making creative use of the dialectical interplay and tension between the two opposites, Democracy and Centralism, for its own collective development. Or, to put it another way, it is precisely because collective development is so critical to the essence of the revolutionary cadre organization that it is able to make conscious and creative use of the interplay between the two opposites, Democracy and Centralism.

Most amerikkkans find it difficult to understand the principles and practices of **Democratic Centralism** because amerikkkans, generally speaking, proceed not from the concept of **roles**, but from the concept of rights versus privileges and prerogatives. This concept of rights, embodied in both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, predisposes amerikkkans to regard any relationship between individuals and leaders as an antagonistic contradiction and to look at every situation from the viewpoint of the individuals preserving his or her right from external infringement.

The concept of **roles**, on the other hand, involves looking at relations in terms of the development of the collectivity, whether this be the organization, the society as a whole, or any institution in the society. At the heart of Democratic Centralism is the question: "What functions must be performed by each part of the structure if the collectivity is to be able to act as and continue to develop into a strong nucleus of revolutionary leadership and as a framework for the continuing development and transformation of every member?"

It is necessary to have leadership within the structure of a revolutionary cadre organization because it is necessary to have some persons or a Central Committee that is playing the role of projecting and generalizing, unifying and coordinating. If there is no chairperson within a particular committee, or no Central Committee within an organization with a number of committees, who is playing this role as "center," then there is only the plurality, the specificity and the variety of the members on the constituent committees. On the other hand, if the various members and the various committees who are responsible for specific programs, are not constantly developing their programs, are not increasing their contact with the revolutionary social forces, are not discussing issues and programs of the organization, and not developing their ability to think independently, then the unity of the organization turns into homogeneity.

This, **Discipline and Democracy** are both part of the principles of the daily practice of a revolutionary cadre organization, not because they have been imposed or because they are guaranteed by statute, but because of the deep

conviction of each member that these are both necessary to the development of the organization. Every member is bound by the decision of the organization because every member realizes that without discipline, everybody and anybody could go his or her own way, do his or her own thing, and the organization would fall apart.

On the other hand, the leadership is constantly encouraging and seeking to create situations in which there is full discussion by the membership because it knows that if decisions are arrived at without the full democratic discussion and even debate of the members, the organization cannot penetrate to the issues involved in any decision or the dualities that are implicit in every unity. Leadership knows that agreement reached through a process of full discussion and debate is always more effective than agreement reached through unquestioning ascent. Leadership and membership both know that liveliness of mind must go hand in hand with **Unity of Will** if the organization is to develop. Structure should be the basis of flexibility, not rigidity.

Both leadership and membership in the revolutionary cadre organization is an art, in the sense that both leaders and members must learn to play creative roles in the development of their mutual relationship. There are no exact rules for the behavior of either leaders or members as there is in a scientific experiment, or in learning an athletic skill, where uniform conditions can be artificially set up and repeated again and again. However, experience has shown that certain procedures and attitudes can be immediately recognized as contrary to the general dialectical principles of Democratic Centralism.

For example, the "rotating chairperson" (which is often proposed in the name of "participatory democracy"), destroys the possibility of leadership playing its essential role as "center." A chairperson must hold office for a period of time long enough so that s/he can develop the responsibilities of this role. On the other hand, a chairperson who is not constantly listening to the members of his or her committees will soon be speaking only from her or his limitations and will be unable to project to the members a unity which has the richness of variety embodied in it.

A chairperson must be efficient at running meetings, but she or he must also be willing to do "propaganda work" among the members of the committee individually, in order to develop a common language with them. A leadership which resorts to agitation and exhortation of the membership is usually one which has failed to fulfill its responsibility of projecting programs and positions which embody the relationship between what the organization is doing from day to day and the long-range role of the organization in the acceleration of the evolution of humankind.

If the leadership does not fulfill its role of projecting, creating and innovating but is only reacting to the membership, then the tendency is for weaknesses of individual members to surface, i.e., for individual members to "act up." In this situation leadership feels threatened, is tempted to overact, reminding the members of their duties and of its rights, i.e., of the chain of command, and sometimes even to mobilize those members whom it considers more loyal and supportive against those who are "acting up." But this type of administrative, disciplinary, commandist and subjectivist behavior on the part of the leadership cannot possibly restore the moral authority of leadership, since by definition the role of leadership is not a defensive but a creative one.

The organization must be constantly on guard against the tendency of members on all levels to self-cultivation, i.e., the use of the organization's resources only for the development of the individual. On the other hand, if the leadership is not playing its proper role of encouraging the independent creativity of the membership, the tendency of membership is to slip into passivity, merely receiving and supporting instructions from the leadership. As the organization then begins to stagnate, leadership again is tempted to exhort the membership to greater efforts and liveliness. But this exhortation is futile, since by definition, agitation of the members is contrary to the role of leadership, and so forth and so on.

In all these ways, through living and often painful experiences in the correct and the incorrect handling of the very demanding relationships between leadership and members, the members of the revolutionary cadre organization and the

organization as a whole begin to internalize the rhythms of **the dialectical as contrasted to the administrative method**. This internalization becomes decisive in the handling of contradictions between the organization and the revolutionary social forces; both in the struggle for power and in the even more important and awesome responsibilities that ensue after seizing power.

#### **A (4): Standards**

Every collectivity of any kind, whether an organization, a class, a race, or a nation, must establish standards, i.e., those values and patterns of behavior which all members are expected to strive to embody in their daily thinking and practice, chiefly in order to advance the collectivity. A revolutionary cadre organization, on the other hand, establishes its standards not only to advance the group but in full consciousness of the group's responsibility to advance the evolution of humankind.

Starting from the fundamental premise, a revolutionary cadre organization at this time must establish its standards in the light of two major realities: 1) the peculiar and contradictory character of the chief revolutionary social forces; and 2) the protracted struggle that will be necessary to bring about the revolutionary transformation of this society. These realities make it essential that the revolutionary cadre organization adopt as its standards those values which have proved to be most durable and universal in the course of humanity's millennia of development. Such values must include: **love and respect for one's own people**, not for their sake alone but as a springboard to love and respect other people; **respect for ideas; dedication; dependability; and discipline, self-reliance, and accountability; care and development of one's body as well as of one's mind.**

Young people in the u.s. today, both black and white, and particularly black, are potentially the chief revolutionary social force for the overthrow of the present society. They are the ones most hostile to the present system and the ones with the maximum energy for fundamental social change. At the same time, these young people both black and white (the latter especially in so far as they have become alienated from their communities and are imitating black radical youth), are the ones most deficient and lacking in the above values. Hence they are "now" people for the most part, standardless and valueless. Hence their "revolutionary" energies are most likely to explode in rebellions and rebellious activities of the most negative kind: dropping out, copping out, freaking out, "ripping off" and other helter skelter, individualistic and adventuristic actions. Rebels without a positive cause, they have no vision of what the struggle must be for and therefore no concept of the "new woman/man" who must be created through revolutionary struggle.

Typical of their inability to put the development of humanity at the center of their thinking is their endorsement and encouragement of "ripping off" merchants (as representative of the capitalist system) as if this could possibly leave unaffected the humanity of those doing the ripping off.

The result of these negative rebellions is that large sections of the population are becoming completely alienated from the perspective of revolutionary social change, either becoming passive and despairing, or in many cases, actively counter-revolutionary. Thus, instead of increasing the revolutionary potential, these potentially revolutionary social forces are actually decreasing its potential.

Most liberals, and these young rebels themselves, are reluctant to face the new reality which is being created by these negative rebellions. Instead, they excuse these rebels by saying that their attitudes and actions are "only" or "in the final analysis" the product of objective and historical conditions and therefore outside their control. They point to the post-war world of abundance and electronic media which have provided instant gratification of every physical and psychological want to the youth generation; to the barbarism of racism and the genocidal war in Vietnam which have demoralized young people by exposing the dehumanized character of amerikkkan capitalism and imperialism and the amerikkkan political-economic-academic

power structure; and to the failure of the older generation over the years to resist this barbarism and inhumanity.

However, in citing objective and historical conditions as an excuse for the negative rebellions and rebelliousness of young people, these liberals and the rebels themselves are evading the crucial contemporary contradiction: that, on the one hand, these young rebels in their rebellions are the most complete expression of a corrupt value-free society; while on the other, they are the ones with the greatest potential to bring this system to an end. In other words, the revolutionary cadre organization cannot wait upon the revolution to change the objective conditions that have produced these social forces as they are. It must find ways and means, within the present, to bring about the revolutionary transformation of these young people in order to make the revolution, i.e., in order to bring about changes in the objective institutions and conditions.

One of the most important ways that the revolutionary cadre organization can do this is by projecting and embodying in its own ideas and practices, the values which have proved most universal and enduring throughout the development of humankind; in other words, the revolutionary cadre organization itself must insist on the **indivisibility of politics and ethics**.

This indivisibility of politics and ethics is also indispensable to the development of the revolutionary cadre organization for the protracted struggle which lies ahead of it. Without the above standards, it is impossible for the cadre to develop trust in one another and from those whom they seek to lead. Without trust, no protracted struggle can possibly be successful.

In affirming the indivisibility of ethics and politics, the revolutionary cadre organization is breaking consciously with the political tradition which has dominated western thought since Machiavelli, five hundred years ago, created the science of politics as a question of strategy and tactics. Marx did not challenge this Machiavellian concept chiefly because politics was, secondary to what was happening in the process of production. There he believed, the very development of the productive forces and the struggles of the workers against exploitation, were creating in the workers the highest standards of collectivity, discipline and social responsibility. For Lenin, politics was much more important than it had been for Marx, but Lenin had conceived the revolutionary party chiefly as a means to increase the hostility of the masses to the system as a whole so that they could then be mobilized in struggle to overthrow the system.

Today, however, in the u.s. in the last quarter of the 20th century, our historical conditions and therefore our responsibilities cannot be the same as Marx and Lenin. In the revolutionary forces with whom we are the most concerned, there is no lack of hostility and antagonism to the system as a whole. What they lack is a concept of: A) transformation of man/woman which must be at the center of revolutionary struggle; and B) protracted struggle. Together these require a new concept of the indivisible relation between politics and ethics.

#### **A (5): Methods of Evaluation--Criticism and Self-Criticism**

After the completion of every project, no matter how small, there must be a thorough-going evaluation of the project by the revolutionary cadre organization. Were the purposes of the project fulfilled? Were they clearly defined and understood by everyone involved in the first place and were they kept in mind throughout the project? Were the methods effective? Were they the best methods or the only ones that could have been chosen? Were schedules maintained and was every step of the process carried out? If some steps of the process were left out, was this harmful to the project or were some of them superfluous from the beginning? What were the achievements and shortcomings of the project, and what lessons can the group learn from it? What were the reasons for the breakdown or failure of the project at any point? Which of these were outside the control of the group and which might be anticipated and prepared for in the future? What were the expense and income from the project? Was strict accounting kept at every point and made available to the

group as part of the final evaluation? Was every member clear about his/her responsibilities at every stage of the project? Were the resources of the group (skills, contacts, equipment, time) adequate to the project as planned, or did the group exhibit over-confidence and impatience in the planning?

This kind of methodical evaluation is a concrete manifestation of **politics in command**. In other words, it stems basically from the philosophical conviction that in all relations between human beings and their environment, human beings must assume conscious responsibility for their actions and not resort to the vulgar materialism of always blaming others or outside conditions and thus seeing themselves as passive victims.

All this may seem very elementary and common-sensical, but it is far from being obvious, either in the general overall political atmosphere of this country, or in the particular atmosphere of the "movement's" helter skelter, on-the-go politics. Amerikkans generally tend to have a technical approach to every project, to try to overpower those whom they are seeking to influence or to defeat, by the sheer weight of their know-how and equipment. Or they have a "new frontier" approach: if something doesn't work out so well, or things go bad, just abandon the project, or the place or the people involved in it, and go on to something or somewhere or somebody else. They are always running off to a new beginning.

Because "movement" people have failed to make serious examination of the amerikkkan philosophical environment, they have simply carried these same attitudes into their own activities, simply adding their own special contempt for ideas and their love of rhetoric, their predisposition to spectacular confrontations, and their hunger for continuing emotional excitement. Engaging in activities for the sake of activism, and not in order to test clear convictions in social practice, they have rarely worked out clear programs with purposes, methods, schedules and processes, clearly defined, and therefore are incapable of careful evaluation. Hopping from one issue to the next, they have not even stayed together long enough to develop a sense of commitment to one another or to particular constituencies, which is a prerequisite to the practice of evaluation. Reared in an economy of abundance, they have little or no idea of how many working people (who have had to sweat for every dollar) judge a political organization by the seriousness with which the organization handles the questions of finances.

When one realizes how deeply ingrained these helter skelter attitudes and practices are in the objective environment and historical tradition, one realizes how futile it is to depend on rebukes and reprimands to correct them. Rather, through understanding the historical and philosophical roots of these practices, the revolutionary cadre organization can arrive at a firm appreciation of why, by contrast, it must build itself step by step on completely different philosophical foundations, based essentially on the dialectical method of development through collective and protracted struggle.

The theoretical acceptance of this dialectical method, however, by no means guarantees that the attitudes and practices so deeply rooted in the history of the country will immediately disappear. To uproot and correct these attitudes and practices on a continuing basis, the revolutionary cadre organization must include a place for criticism and self-criticism on the agenda of every meeting.

The concept of criticism/self-criticism has become a popular phrase in the "movement" only in the last few years as a result of the role that it played in the protracted struggles leading to the victory of the Chinese Communists and which it continues to play in the building of a new society in China and in revolutionary struggles elsewhere in Asia, Africa and Latin America. As long as the revolutionary movement all over the world was dominated by the D-day concept of revolution (which had been borrowed mechanically from the example of the 1917 Russian Revolution), criticism used to take the form chiefly of post-mortem analysis. For example, one group or individual would insist that a particular setback in revolutionary developments in a particular country was the result of a mistaken policy and therefore of the group or individual sponsoring the policy. Simultaneously, the

claim would then be made that if those in charge had pursued the policy of the critic instead, then there would have been success rather than failure. This kind of arrogant subjectivism and hypothetical after-thinking is completely foreign to the concept and practice of revolutionary criticism and self-criticism.

Revolutionary criticism and self-criticism is based, first and foremost, on the dialectical concept of development through collective and protracted struggle. It involves the clear recognition that in every situation there is a contradiction which requires a choice between two roads, that no one is immune from making a mistake or wrong choice, but that the entire group, the individual making the mistake, and indeed everyone concerned with revolutionary struggle, can learn from the mistakes and wrong choices that have been made by the individual or group. Moreover, the recognition, the examination, and correction of mistakes and weaknesses all provide additional energy for the advancement and acceleration of revolutionary struggle. This is the dialectical concept of the "dynamic of error."

In order for this "dynamic of error" to develop, the group must be united by certain common principles and ideas. All the members must be committed to common perspectives or a common ideology; they must share common standards, must be committed in time, and they must share a fundamental recognition of the role that struggle itself plays in developing. Without these common principles, criticism/self-criticism cannot rise above subjectivity and get to the essence of what is wrong in any particular situation, i.e., the **objectivity** of the mistake. Essential to the concept of objectivity is the recognition that the mistake is not just an accidental one, i.e., that it is not unique to the particular individual or to the particular occasion. On the contrary, it probably relates to the particular historical environment or to the social background of the individual involved, e.g., intellectualism, technocratism, male chauvinism, permanent rank-and-file-ism. This objectification enables the entire group to raise its consciousness and helps others with the same background to be on the alert against specific weaknesses.

In the amerikkkan social and political environment at all levels, it is very difficult to make this kind of objective criticism/self-criticism a real part of daily life and practice. This again is for the very deep historical reasons already referred to, especially the tendency of amerikkkans to look upon problems as nuisances and headaches, to be gotten rid of by some external means (e.g., pills), rather than as challenges from which one can learn. Therefore, the tendency is to cover up mistakes rather than to admit or grapple with them. Amerikkkans are also very preoccupied with their own personalities or individualities and inclined to develop guilt feelings about their own mistakes or as a result of hurting other peoples feelings, by pointing out mistakes. For example, an individual may apologize for making a mistake because he feels guilty, thinking that he or she is criticizing himself or herself when s/he is really just expressing subjective or personal feelings. Often what is put forward as self-criticism is simply self-protection, e.g., when an individual rushes to admit a mistake to avoid criticism or further examination of the mistake by others.

**Subjectivity** assumes many forms, e.g., the protection of one's feelings or those of others; fear of hurting feelings or discouraging people by pointing out their mistakes; attacking those who hurt your feelings by criticism; fear of taking issues with others; not pointing out the person who makes a mistake or not pointing out a mistake at once but waiting until the persons involved are less emotionally caught up in their mistakes and then dealing with the question only as an abstraction and therefore without the sharpness which enables the maximum lessons to be learned by all concerned; hesitating to take issue with or criticism of the leaders; hesitating to criticize themselves for fear of undermining confidence in the organization (emperor protection); "selling" ideas to others rather than discussing and debating issues in such a way that members can make responsible choices; making excuses for oneself or for others when mistakes are made (not enough time, something else came up, conditions beyond our control, etc.), thus being "understanding" and "sympathetic" rather than demanding on oneself and others.



All these are manifestations of **liberalism** which is part of the very air we breathe in the u.s. Liberalism or the evasion of responsibility is what most amerikkkans mean by "freedom." Freedom is the right not to be held responsible or accountable for one's actions. Since this tendency is so powerful in the society, it is inevitable present in the organization. In the past the u.s. has been able to survive liberalism because of the unique historical conditions of this country, particularly the "wide open space" which have allowed people to pick up and leave the scene of their mistakes. Finally, however, the chickens are coming home to roost in the country. In a revolutionary cadre organization, they come home much sooner.

Liberalism leads to the covering up of mistakes and therefore to the weakening of the organization. When mistakes are covered up, they also pile up to the point where it becomes impossible to isolate and correct the specific mistakes, and the organization is in danger of breaking up in demoralization and bitter antagonisms.

The above list of liberal weaknesses, incomplete as it is, is familiar to everyone who has ever been in any kind of organization. When one realizes how many of these have characterized one's own practices in the past, it is easy to become discouraged, unless you keep in mind at all times the goals and methods to which you are committed and the collective commitment to this goal which will enable the organization to grapple with and overcome these weaknesses one by one, week in and week out, through criticism and self-criticism in the course of the protracted struggle.

#### **A (6): Relationship With The Masses**

Up to now, we have been discussing the revolutionary cadre organization's relation with the "masses" or with the "revolutionary social forces," as if these masses were "faceless masses" or as if these social forces were units of undifferentiated physical energy out in space somewhere. This is the way most radical groups talk and think of "the masses" and the "revolutionary social forces." Fortunately, their conceptions do not correspond to the way things actually are.

Actually, "the masses" and "revolutionary social forces" already are bound together in varying degrees and in different ways, sometimes in actual organizations, more often by loose structures of various kinds. For example, people live in particular geographical areas, work at particular places, join together because of ethnic, age, sex ties, or because of common cultural, religious, political, professional, recreational, economic or community interests that can range all the way from bowling to Community Control of Schools. They may organize rapidly in response to particular issues and then separate, each going his or her individual way, or they may try to find ways and means or reasons for staying together.

Particularly in a revolutionary period like ours [the 60's], when large sections of the population have lost faith in existing institutions, the prevailing tendency in the country is **centripetal**. This takes organizational form in the tendency to form all kinds of groups. Some groups spring together as a result of spontaneous eruption or in order to make the struggle over a particularly burning issue more effective. Others are formed chiefly in order to give individuals a sense of belonging to some collectivity because they have lost faith in the nation. Others exist for no other reason than that the power structure needs them as channels of communication to the potentially rebellious sections of the society.

Because of this general self-structuring by the masses which is going on all the time, and because this self-structuring gathers momentum in a revolutionary period, the revolutionary cadre organization's relations are basically not with single individuals and never with abstract generalized masses. Instead they are usually with particular groups of various kinds which can range from political to recreational to ethnic to economic. Usually most of these groups are going in their own separate directions which may be parallel or diverging but which rarely converge. However, again because of the revolutionary character of the period, there are many reasons why these groups should or could converge to go in a particular

direction together or to conflict on particular issues. Usually a particularly raw issue is enough to bring them into conflict, although sometimes a counter-revolutionary or revolutionary group may for reasons of its own seek to bring about a clash. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the many groups which have within them the potential for united action in a revolutionary direction will work for any extended period of time unless under the open or quiet leadership of a revolutionary cadre organization.

Therefore, the more rapidly various sections of the population are in the process of self-organization, the more important is the role played by the revolutionary cadre organization. In anticipation of this increasing momentum towards self-organization as the crisis deepens, it is never too early in a revolutionary period for the revolutionary cadre organization to begin the painstaking task of organizing. In fact, all previous history (including that of the u.s. in the 60's) shows that once the dam of public confidence in existing institutions begins to break, the centripetal tendencies in the population far exceed the cadre organization's ability to provide leadership.

Relations between the revolutionary cadre organization and other organizations fall into several distinct categories:

1) The revolutionary cadre organization and/or its individual members can simply join with other organizations in a **United Front** as a member of the Front, like any other organization in the Front. This usually happens over a single, limited, momentarily very popular mass issue, usually a defense issue. In this kind of united action, the Front usually disappears as rapidly as it appeared, i.e., it is a sporadic or episodic unity that usually does not require the leadership of a revolutionary cadre organization.

2) The revolutionary cadre organization and/or its individual members can take the initiative of bringing together a number of various organizations in a United Front to carry on extended struggle for positive goals, e.g., the community control of schools in a particular district and eventually over a much wider area. In this case, because the United Front has extended time and geographical perspective, the revolutionary cadre organization must undertake to build it only after it has conducted careful advanced preparation of the constituency and has carefully trained cadres who will be able to influence the United Front and keep the struggle from disintegrating, without, however, assuming actual leadership positions.

3) Individual members of the organization can be assigned to join one or more of these organizations, not to take over the leadership, but to influence them in a revolutionary direction or even in some cases to bring about their disintegration (if they are not playing a progressive role in the general movement), meanwhile recruiting some members from the group to the cadre.

4) Individual members can sometimes be assigned to help form a group for a particular purpose, e.g., for revolutionary study or to act as a revolutionary current within a general movement.

In all these relationships, the revolutionary cadres are always conscious of their interpenetrating role, i.e., "from the masses, to the masses." In other words, they are using their contact with these groups to get a better idea of the stage of development of the social forces as well as to influence the direction of the social forces. In this interpenetrating dialectical relationship, they never lose sight of their primary commitment to the revolutionary cadre organization and the protracted struggle, no matter how pressing may be a particular issue nor how desperately a particular community or organization may want to turn over to the cadre members the main responsibility for leading that particular community or organization.

## Conclusion

In the foregoing we have outlined the fundamental dialectical principles and some of the most important concrete practices of a revolutionary cadre organization as a developing reality. If the members of a revolutionary cadre organization are not constantly striving to **internalize** the dialectical principles motivating their practices, the organization sinks into routinism. On the other hand, if they are not constantly striving to **externalize** the dialectical principles in concrete practices, the principles turn into empty rhetoric.

Many of those reading this pamphlet may vigorously disagree with what it sets forth. Others may draw from it the conclusion that a revolutionary cadre organization is necessary if there is going to be a successful revolution in the united states. Not all those who arrive at this conclusion are ready to build or join such an organization. Some may be against a revolution altogether. Others may say that they agree with the ideas theoretically, but that building or joining such an organization is a job for someone with the patience and the capacity to think more grandly.

If, on the other hand, some readers decide that they do want to commit themselves to a collective and protracted struggle, they probably know one or two or a few other people who have arrived at the same point. These few people need some way to arrive at some kind of basic agreement on fundamental ideas and some knowledge of one another.

One way to do this is to form a revolutionary study group, in order to study previous revolutions and the specific contradictions in the united states which require resolution by revolution. The study of the theory and practice of previous revolutions is for the purpose of learning from them what is and what is not relevant to the specific contradictions of the united states [i.e., the relevance of a party and cadre organization]. Through study of previous revolutions, we can gain an appreciation of the way in which revolutions have advanced the evolution of humankind, and therefore, a profound conviction that [our] revolution must also advance the evolution of man and woman. At the same time, through the study of previous revolutions, it should become clearer to us that **every revolution is unique**, the specific product of specific energies of specific masses, specific organizations and specific leaders in a specific country under very specific conditions, all of which have been developed over a number of years, at a particular time, in a particular historical period, and which therefore cannot possibly be repeated at another time and in another place. This general truth is of crucial importance in seeking to determine the specific contradictions requiring resolution in the united states, the first country in human history to face problems posed by economic abundance, the first people in human history to have discovered from their living experiences that material well-being does not necessarily bring happiness and therefore the people who have the privilege of pioneering the revolutions of the Twenty-first century.

In forming a revolutionary study group, the purpose, procedures, schedules and responsibilities of each member, should be clearly worked out and accepted by all the participants at the first meeting. It is never a good idea to leave your purposes and procedures fuzzy in the hope that thereby you will keep some people with you who might otherwise be scared off by a straightforward statement of your goals and what will be expected of every participant. Nine times out of ten, this kind of liberal attitude does not prevent the eventual breakaway of the person or persons involved; it only postpones the crisis and makes it more painful.

A revolutionary study group should not be organized for the sake of study alone, but for the purpose of laying the basis for a revolutionary cadre organization. Therefore, participation in the group should be restricted to those ready to do the systematic work required for such a study, including reading, leading and recording discussions, disciplined attendance at regularly scheduled meeting, criticism and self-criticism, over a period of approximately six months. During this period some members are bound to raise the question of getting involved

in struggle over some burning topical issue. This will be one of the group's first tests as to who, if anyone, in the group really accepts the principle that "without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary practice," and that without commitment to collective and protracted struggle, there can be no successful revolution. Anyone who is not able to refrain from involving the group in topical struggles until it has at least worked out some minimum ideological understanding, some programs of its own and some structure and standards, is not likely to be much good for the protracted struggle.

In this way, not only the material studied, but the way it is studied, is itself preparation for the organization of a revolutionary cadre.

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## Historical Foundations of the New Afrikan Nation

Land, independence and self-government have been objectives sought by black people ever since we were kidnapped from Africa and brought to this country as slaves. Many ran away and established communities in the woods, mountains and swamps; armed themselves and created bases on which they could operate and to which other slaves might flee. Others organized rebellions, aimed at freeing slaves and liberating territory from which to build an independent state. To the black people who were forced to come to this land, black nationalism was not taken lightly. Although brutally crushed, our ancestors continued revolting. Although sold down the river, they continued to escape. Independence and self-determination was what they wanted. These blacks were, in effect, laying bricks on a foundation which was later to become known as the Republic of New Afrika.

By 1660, the social practice and oppressive laws of the emerging euro-amerikkkan nation had made it clear that Afrikans, free or slave, were not to be permitted to join the new white nation. Despite vicious repression, the essence of our African culture survived and bound us strongly together as a New Afrikan nation that has endured up to this day.

In 1865, the 13th amendment recognized the freedom of black people. Under international law, black people had four options as to a political future: 1) the right to return to Africa, as we were the victims of warfare and illegal kidnapping; 2) the right to general emigration, as our families were cruelly fragmented and scattered throughout the diaspora; 3) the right to seek admission as citizens into the united states and strive for a multi-racial democracy, and 4) **the right to remain on this soil, negotiate with the native american and establish our nation in an independent territory, for we found ourselves on soil claimed by the u.s. in great numbers and with severed homeland ties. Clearly this right to self-determination was available under u.s. law, because the 13th amendment simply recognized the freedom of all Blacks; it imposed no political conditions whatsoever on the newly freed slave, and contained no statement of citizenship in the amerikkkan community.**

In varying degrees, each of these options were to be exercised by various sectors of the black nation. At no time, however, was a national plebiscite (people's vote) held to inform our people of these options so collectively a choice could be made. For over 100 years after 1865 the New Afrikan nation was kept alive by a succession of dedicated nationalists led by Henry Adams, whose movement sought independent land anywhere; by Benjamin Pap Singleton, whose movement went into Kansas; by Edwin McCabe, whose movement went into Oklahoma; by Marcus Garvey and Drew Ali and Elijah Muhammad; by Queen Mother Moore, Malcolm X, and others.

### *The Founding of the Provisional Government*

Marcus Garvey once exclaimed, "Where is the black man's government? Where is his president, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs?" On March 31, 1968, the seed of Garvey's prophetic vision came to fruition as a force of over 500 black nationalists met in a convention in Detroit, Michigan and issued a **Declaration of Independence**

for the black nation on the North American continent, named that nation the **Republic of New Afrika**, identified five states in the deep south as the subjugated National Territory, created basic law and a provisional (pre-independence or temporary) government, with elected officials under a mandate to **Free The Land!**

**The Provisional Government teaches that all Blacks, descendants of slaves in North Amerikkka, are citizens of the Republic of New Afrika by birth, for We had been snatched from every region in Africa and molded by this common history of oppression and struggle into a New Afrikan Nation in the world.** We were geographically separated from the continent of Africa, but just as African as any nation there. Blacks may choose to give up their New Afrikan citizenship, or they may choose to have dual RNA/usa citizenship, or they may opt for exclusive RNA citizenship. But, New Afrikan citizenship is a right of birth, and the right to choice in this matter lies at the heart of the New Afrikan Independence Movement.

Thus, when the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika was established, it set about the task of informing black people of their rights under international law to self-determination, land, and reparations. Since its existence, the Provisional Government has sharpened the theoretical basis for New Afrikan Political Science, organized national elections for officials in the Government, demanded reparations from the u.s. government, defended itself against enemy attacks, sought to establish diplomatic relations with other governments and struggled for the rights of New Afrikan Prisoners of War. Freedom, self-government, and self-determination, the objectives sought by blacks since our arrival on these shores, had now reached a higher stage.

For more information write to:

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**Position Paper  
On  
The Independent Foreign Policy of the Black Nation**

Chapter One, 14 August 1983

From time to time foreign countries have marvelled that We, New Afrikan people in North America, allow ourselves to be used by the United States Government, which has never accorded us, descendants of slaves, our international law right freely to choose our citizenship and our political future.

This marvelling at us, by foreign governments, has happened again and again at the Olympic Games, when the achievements of black athletes have been counted as the achievements of the United States instead of as the achievements of our own subjugated, but 300-year-old, New Afrikan Nation.

It happened in Vietnam, where in many cases, when it was possible, Vietnamese troops did not fire on black troops because they knew that the United States' war against them was **not** the war of the New Afrikan nation.

Today, the Reagan administration has particularly sharpened the contradictions between our oppressed, 300-year-old black nation -- declared as the Republic of New Afrika in 1968 -- and the United States.

The United States policy of support for the abominable government of the Republic of South Africa is **not** the policy of New Afrikan people in the United States nor of our Provisional Government. The Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, and black people, do **not** support the u.s. policy of subversion of the Cuban and Nicaraguan and Grenadian revolutions or the attacks on Angola, Mozambique, and the freedom fighters of Namibia. All these countries and peoples are fraternal countries and peoples to the black nation in North America.

Similarly, the United States policy of sending mercenaries into Nicaragua and u.s. troops into other parts of Central America is **not** the policy of the New Afrikan people in North America or of the Provisional Government of our nation, the Republic of New Afrika. We denounce and separate ourselves from these interventions and violations of international law.

It is particularly outrageous that the u.s. government should subvert the progressive programs of the Provisional Government, Republic of New Afrika, as the u.s. government has done for a decade and a half, and then take young New Afrikan men and women -- who are consequently forced to join the u.s. military for jobs and education -- and send them, like Tonto, to die in Lebanon and El Salvador. We demand, again, that the u.s. government return all black troops from combat zones until they have been able to vote, freely and with full information, in accordance with operative paragraph Nine of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 (passes 15 December 1960), whether their primary allegiance lies with the United States or with the black nation, the Republic of New Afrika, into which they all are born.

We now call upon and request the Governments of Mexico, Columbia, Venezuela and Panama to urge the United States to accord immediately the plebiscite rights of U.N. General Assembly Resolutions 1514, 1541, and

2625, and the self-determination provisions of the Helsinki Agreements, to all New Afrikan personnel now in the u.s. military who are stationed in zones of potential combat or proximate to such zones. We respectfully suggest that this would be a major contribution to the reduction of tensions in Central America.

Necessarily, We must also request that the Governments of Mexico, Columbia, Venezuela and Panama urge the United States government to extend full Geneva Convention rights to Tarik N. Kwesi (aka James Haskins), Sundiata Acoli, Herman Bell, Jalil Muntaqin, Dharuba Moore, Mpinduzi Aminisha (aka J.W. Partee), Hamisha H. Utumwa (aka Boggy Lee Howard), Daka A. Deku (aka Dock Walker), Simba Hawa (aka Jerome Ransom), Sekou Odinga, Kwesi Balagoon, Elmer Geronimo Pratt, and all other prisoners of war held in United States federal and state jails. We also ask these nations to request the United Nations Secretary-General to do his duty under U.N. Resolution 2676 (9 December 1970), to assure humane treatment for our prisoners of war.

People's Revolutionary Leadership Council  
Provisional Government  
Republic of New Afrika