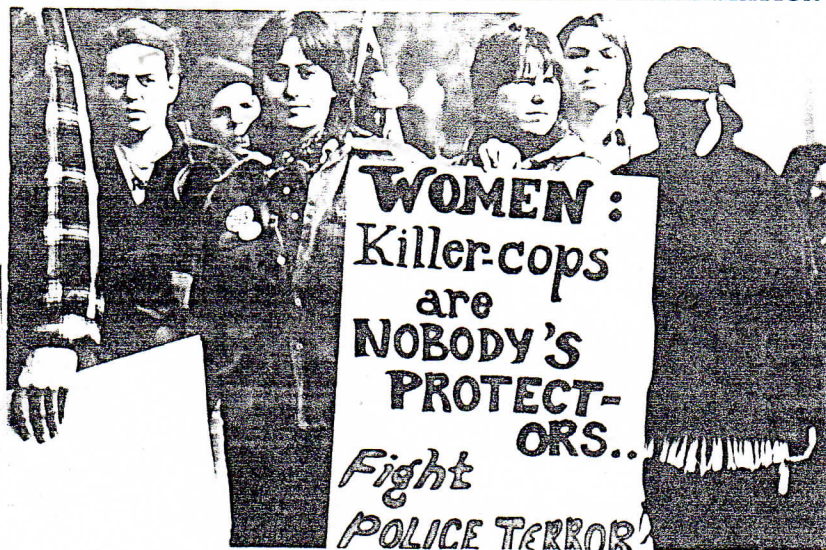


LIBERATION IN OUR LIFETIME:



A CALL TO BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY,
ANTI-IMPERIALIST
WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

MAY 19th COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION



May 19th Communist Organization

Who We Are

May 19th Communist Organization is a Marxist-Leninist organization committed to the defeat of U.S. imperialism and to the building of socialism. As members of the oppressor nation we believe that the national liberation struggles are the leadership in the struggle for Proletarian Revolution around the world. This is why we are committed to the strategy of revolutionary anti-imperialism. We take strategic leadership from the Black Revolutionary Nationalist movement in Amerika. We believe that revolution inside the U.S. will only come about through the waging of a people's war to free the land of New Afrika, which will destroy U.S.-led imperialism as we know it. Recognizing the necessity of people's war means a commitment on the part of white people to participate in armed struggle as well as to support all freedom fighters and Prisoners of War.

In this we believe that our key task is to build a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement in the white working class. We are committed to the liberation of women. We believe that this can only come about through the destruction of imperialism and the struggle for socialism. This is why we are calling for the building of a revolutionary women's movement. We believe that you have to dare to struggle to dare to win.

COVER PHOTO: FRELIMO women's detachment, Mozambique
COVER CREDIT: Photographer Unknown

COVER PHOTO: National demonstration called by John Brown Anti-Klan Committee "Take A Stand Against the Klan and Fight White Supremacy", Inauguration Day, January 20, 1981

COVER CREDIT: John Brown Anti-Klan Committee, Austin, TX

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Introduction

"It is our hope, Madam President, that at the end of the U.N. Decade for Women, we would be talking of a free South Africa, of a free Namibia and of generally improved life conditions in this region and the world at large. Indeed, it is our hope, Madam President, that by the end of the U.N. Decade for Women, we would be talking of societies where men and women are equal."

(Mrs. Sally Mugabe, President of the ZANU Women's League, in an address to the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women)

This is a critical moment in the struggle for women's liberation. The victories of national liberation struggles, like that in Zimbabwe, where oppressed peoples have overthrown colonialism and are fighting to build new societies, are ushering in a new era in the struggle for women's liberation. This new era is defined by the full participation of women in the reclaiming and rebuilding of their nation's land, resources and destiny. It holds out the hope for the fundamental transformation not just of women's lives, but of the whole society. With the destruction of imperialism—a system built on exploitation and inequality—the material basis for women's oppression will be decisively destroyed.

The liberation of women and the transformation of human society cannot be fully realized until the system of imperialism is defeated. Imperialism is the worldwide system of monopoly capitalism that was built and continues to exist through the oppression and exploitation of whole nations. In its continual drive for profit, the imperialist system has created a small number of oppressor nations which exist through the colonization and subjugation of the oppressed nations of the Third World. U.S.-led imperialism is the main source of inequality, exploitation and oppression in the world. It is a system becoming more vicious with every defeat it suffers. Defeats for imperialism include colonized nations winning independence, Third World countries controlling their own resources and exercising political power in international bodies, and nations freely choosing to pursue a socialist path. As the struggle for human rights advances worldwide, U.S.-led imperialism responds with heightened genocide and white supremacy: Zimbabwe is liberated, and the racist government of South Africa, backed by the U.S., Israel, and other imperialist powers, digs in its heels to maintain the subjugation of the African people of Namibia and Azania (South Africa). In the U.S.,

Black and other Third World people are mobilizing to demand their human rights. The response of imperialism is the escalating violence of the Ku Klux Klan and the genocidal policies of the Reagan administration. Oppressed peoples here and around the world have learned the lessons of the last 20 years of struggle: the only answer to repression is resistance; the only solution to genocide is national liberation; the only path to women's liberation is the destruction of imperialism and the building of socialism.

Everywhere that imperialism is being defeated, socialism is being built. Learning the lessons of thousands of years of class struggle, oppressed peoples understand that liberation will only come about when all the fundamental relationships of society have been transformed. For women, who have been oppressed since the first division of society into classes, this is clearly the case. The system of male supremacy is an underpinning of imperialism which oppresses and subjugates women for the benefit and maintenance of the system. Socialism is the precondition of women's liberation because socialism eradicates the exploitation of one part of society by another. It is only under socialism that the liberation of women can be achieved because, in the words of a Vietnamese, "there can never be equality between exploiter and exploited."

The rise of national liberation and the decline of imperialism affects all women. It means that the possibilities for women's liberation are greater than ever, at the same time that every contradiction in the society is heightened. This contradiction has a direct impact in the U.S. While the oppression and exploitation of white working class women is increasing, the white population as a whole is being consolidated to defend the system, and white women are playing a key role in that process.

At a time of increasing social upheaval and crisis, when there is a real erosion of material privileges and of the standard of living, significant numbers of white women are staunchly defending and supporting the system. At a time when women are more exploited members of the work force, when there is a decline in all social services and a rising tide of violence against women, white women have not attacked the fundamental causes of this situation. This is reflected in the white-defined women's movement of today that is still hoping to get a "bigger piece of the pie." Therefore this movement is dominantly white supremacist, reformist and ineffectual. A movement among white women which is truly fighting for the liberation of all women does not exist.

Mrs. Sally Mugabe posed the question: would the world be better off if women were in power? She answered the question by saying that until the white women of South Africa and elsewhere demand freedom and human rights for African peoples of Namibia and South Africa, there is no reason to think the world would be any better off under women's rule. Addressing the same issue at a different stage of the struggle, Assata Shakur says that Black women have no choice but to fight for survival—to follow the long tradition of Black women freedom

fighters and struggle for the liberation of the Black nation.

This paper is an argument from white anti-imperialist women to other white women to heed the words of these African and other Third World women who are struggling for liberation. This paper is an argument against defending imperialism, against upholding the system of white supremacy and participating in building fascism in the U.S. This paper is a call to all progressive women to build a movement which will fight against genocide, imperialism and white supremacy and for the liberation of women.

"Liberation through Participation"

The leadership in the struggle for the liberation of women comes from the women who have fought and are fighting to defeat U.S.-led imperialism. On the battlefields, from inside prison camps and in the international community of nations, the women of the Third World have forged the path to liberation. The clearest lessons have emerged from those struggles where the battle against imperialism has been hard-fought and decisive. China, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Albania, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola are all nations whose struggle for liberation has brought profound changes in the role and lives of women.

In the current period the liberation of Zimbabwe has crystallized and given leadership to the worldwide struggle for the liberation of women. When the Independent Republic of Zimbabwe was declared on April 18, 1980, it was a major defeat for imperialism and the system of white supremacy. Overcoming enormous obstacles, including a brutally repressive and fascist Rhodesian regime, the African people of Zimbabwe won victory through the full mobilization of the population. Under the leadership of ZANU-PF, 16 years of armed struggle and people's war led to negotiations and independence. Now the Zimbabwean revolution has entered the critical stage of Reconstruction and the transformation of the society along a socialist path.

Under colonialism and the system of white supremacy the entire nation of Zimbabwe was subjugated. Its very existence as an African nation was denied, as the country was renamed Rhodesia and the African population was oppressed and exploited for the benefit of the white colonizers. Everything that was positive about Zimbabwean society was destroyed or distorted. Certain negative aspects of the traditional and feudal society—including the oppression of women—were heightened. Imperialism brought the systematic underdevelopment of the nation. The people were wrenched from the land and a self-sufficient economy was destroyed. Agricultural and industrial development went forward solely for the benefit of the colonizers and the white minority population. The impact on the African population was devastating. Family life was systematically disrupted as men were shuttled about the country. Women and children were forced to remain on land set aside for Africans—the least productive land in the country. As the liberation strug-

gle developed, they were forced into "protected keeps," which were little more than concentration camps. Fifty percent of Zimbabwean women were sterilized, schools and hospitals for the African population were virtually unheard of, and any white person in the country could beat, degrade, or abuse any African person at will.

The women of Zimbabwe felt the full impact of colonialism. Women were raped, imprisoned, and killed by the colonial armed forces at the same time that they were forced to service the white Rhodesian population. And women bore the brunt of the attacks on the African family and way of life. The British colonizers and white settlers understood the necessity to control and subjugate Zimbabwean women in order to subjugate the Zimbabwean nation.

From the first moment of colonization Zimbabwean women fought along with Zimbabwean men to overthrow colonialism and win independence. They have fought to maintain the national culture and identity of the Zimbabwean people in the face of the onslaught of white European "culture." Zimbabwean women have fought against genocide and for the survival of their nation. They have fought for their liberation through full participation in every aspect of the struggle to liberate Zimbabwe, including participation in the armed struggle.



ZANLA women freedom fighters at bayonet drill.

Women in Zimbabwe: Liberation Through Participation

There can be no doubt, that the Zimbabwean women have stood up. We have won our rights and place in the Revolution not by anyone's pity, but through our own determination, devotion, and bravery in our Chimurenga.

—Comrade Teurai Ropa, formerly Commander of the ZANLA Women's Detachment, now head of the ZANU Women's League and Minister of Women's Affairs

Zimbabwean women and women freedom fighters throughout Southern Africa are playing a leading role in the defeat of U.S.-led imperialism and white supremacy, and the building of socialism. Zimbabwean women challenged the traditional roles for women, demanded to be trained, and fought in the war for national liberation. The 10,000 women freedom fighters in ZANLA—the People's Army of ZANU—became a decisive force in winning independence. Zimbabwean women forged a path to their own liberation by joining the armed struggle, and are now demanding programs to insure their total liberation as women.

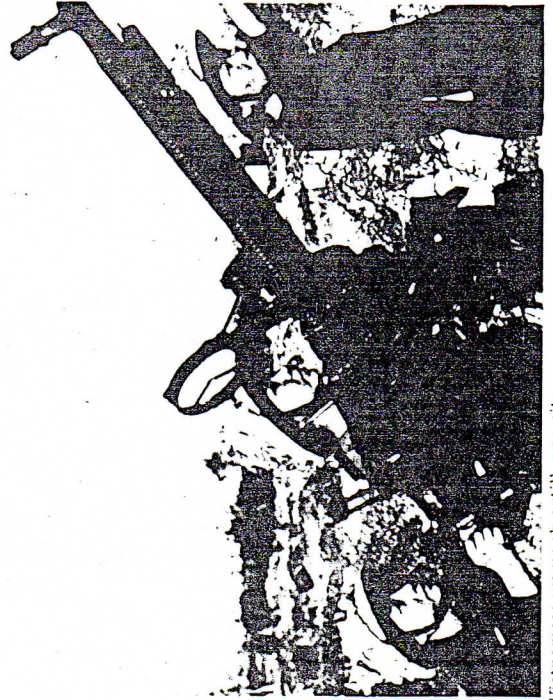
The government has created a new Ministry of Women's Affairs which along with the ZANU Women's League, and the newly formed Zimbabwe National Women's Organization is insuring through education and training, the participation of masses of women at all levels of the economic, political, and social life of the nation. Zimbabwe is advancing through national reconstruction. The continuing struggle of the women of Zimbabwe is to fundamentally change themselves and their society, and create the material basis for their total liberation.

Zimbabwean women lead the international struggle for women's liberation, fighting through their participation that people's war and the continuing struggle to build socialism is the only strategy to win their liberation.

In 1980, the May 19th Communist Organization participated with many other organizations in the National Campaign in Solidarity with the ZANU Women's League. The Campaign raised over \$20,000 in three months to build a National Institute of Women in Zimbabwe by fighting for the victory and leadership of Zimbabwe—particularly for the leadership of Zimbabwean women who have identified and defeated the enemy of all women—U.S.-led imperialism. This Campaign contributed to building an active anti-imperialist women's movement in the U.S. The continuing struggle for solidarity with Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean women is helping to build a women's movement committed to the defeat of worldwide white supremacy and full solidarity with African liberation worldwide. A movement which fights under the leadership of African women to win the liberation of all women in our lifetime.

In the process, there has been a transformation of women's relation to society. For women to fully participate in the people's war, to become fighters and leaders, they had to overcome traditional views of women's role. As Zimbabwean women fought, they built the unity of the nation to fight colonialism and imperialism. Women became the leading force in the full mobilization of the people to wage people's war. Full participation means exactly that—as guerrilla fighters, political cadre, teachers, farmers, nurses. The mobilization of Zimbabwean women was a strategic blow against the enemy. From carrying supplies behind enemy lines to gathering intelligence under the noses of white Rhodesians, Zimbabwean women turned years of oppression into an offensive weapon. The first major military assault inside Salisbury was carried out by a ZANLA women's detachment.

Today, women are playing a leading role in carrying the Zimbabwean revolution through to the building of socialism. During the years of the armed struggle, women literally fed the people's army by cultivating the land in the liberated zones. Now, it is in those same areas that the basic institutions of a socialist society are being built. In this period of Reconstruction, women are fighting for the economic, political and social changes which will create the conditions and material basis for their total liberation. The lesson that Zimbabwean women have given to women everywhere is that the path to liberation is through participation in the defeat of imperialism and the building of socialism.



Vietnamese women's artillery unit.

This is a lesson that was impressed upon the world by the heroic struggle of Vietnamese women. They showed the world that women could and would perform whatever tasks were necessary to defend their nation from imperialist aggression. Their participation in the war for national salvation insured that the Vietnamese people could never be defeated. Vietnamese women provided leadership to women all over the world in the struggle for liberation. They defined the enemy of women as imperialism and the strategy for women's liberation as national liberation and socialism. Vietnamese women showed that the struggle against centuries of women's oppression is inseparable from the struggle of oppressed peoples for independence and freedom, and that by waging a people's war for liberation, a small oppressed nation could defeat the greatest and most vicious imperialist power in the world.

Today, from Namibia to Palestine to Puerto Rico, women of the Third World are fighting for women's liberation through their participation in people's war. In this same tradition, New African and other Third World women fighting for human rights and self-determination within the borders of the U.S. are the leadership for women struggling against U.S. imperialism.



Palestinian women freedom fighters.

CREDIT: PLO Information Bulletin



Namibian women are full participants in PLAN, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia

Women Freedom Fighters: Live Like Them! Dare To Struggle, Dare To Win!

Women around the world are fighting against imperialism, genocide, and colonialism. Through women's participation in revolutionary armed struggle as full combatants they are transforming their lives through the struggle to transform society. Armed struggle leads to the full mobilization of the people to people's war.

National liberation war in Vietnam and the victory over U.S. imperialism changed the balance of forces in the world. It broke U.S. imperialist hegemony, advanced the strategy of people's war, ended genocide and colonialism in Vietnam, and led to the re-unification of the country on the path toward socialism. Vietnamese women participated in every aspect of building people's war. Women's militias were formed to defend the liberated zones; women's battalions were a key part of the People's Liberation Army; women acted as spies, messengers and munitions carriers, farmers, nurses, political leaders and cadre who mobilized the whole people and built a mass movement of women to defend the right to live and defeat the enemy. Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, Minister of Education and Culture of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, was Minister of Foreign Relations and chief representative of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam at the Paris Peace Talks. She was also Vice President of the Union of Women for the Liberation of South Vietnam. Madame Nguyen Thi Dinh was Deputy Commander in Chief of the People's Liberation Armed Forces, and President of the Union of Women for the Liberation of South Vietnam. In 1961, she led the Ben Tre insurrection that served as a model in the war for national liberation. These women led the building of an international movement in solidarity with Vietnam. The leadership of the Vietnamese women helped to build an anti-imperialist women's movement here that proclaimed "Live Like Her, Madame Binh, Dare To Struggle, Dare To Win."

In 1954, Lolita Lebron, led a commando unit of four Puerto Rican Nationalists into the House of Congress, and opened fire on the chamber. This action brought the war being waged between U.S. imperialism and the Puerto Rican people fighting for independence into the U.S. For 25 years, Lolita and her comrades, Oscar Collazo, Irvin Flores, Rafael Cancel Miranda, and Andres Figueroa Cordero were illegally held captive in U.S. prisons. It was the growth of the current armed struggle in Puerto Rico and in the U.S., and the struggle of the whole Puerto Rican people that finally won the unconditional freedom of the 4 in 1979. Lolita is still fighting today to defeat U.S. colonial domination and genocide. The current stage of armed struggle and the development towards people's war in Puerto Rico was launched in the 1970s and advanced by the FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional) in this country. This activated the armed clandestine struggle on the island and made it clear

that to support self-determination and independence for Puerto Rico means support for armed struggle inside this country. The demand to free the 4 Nationalists was raised by Nydia Cuevas and Pablo Marciano Garcia when they took over the Chilean Consulate in San Juan on July 4, 1978. Today, five Puerto Rican women freedom fighters along with six men are being illegally held captive as Prisoners of War in U.S. prisons as part of imperialism's attempt to crush the FALN and the armed clandestine movement and the independence movement as a whole. The revolutionary actions of these women make clear that Puerto Rico will be independent and socialist in the coming decades. Puerto Rico is a direct colony of this country, and is key to the political and military strategy to maintain imperialist control worldwide. The liberation of Puerto Rico is central to advancing revolution in the region, and to advancing revolutionary struggle in the U.S. All women must demand the freedom of the 11 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, all political prisoners, and independence for Puerto Rico.

Native American women have always been leaders and fighters in their peoples' struggles for sovereignty. Anna Mae Aquash from the Micmac Nation was a leader of AIM (American Indian Movement) and a warrior who participated in the liberation of Wounded Knee in 1973, the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and many other actions. She was an active fighter in the struggles for sovereignty and against FBI terror on the Pine Ridge Reservation after Wounded Knee. The government brutally murdered her when they invaded the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1976. The Native American struggle continues to fight to expose her murder and to avenge her death by winning their land and sovereignty.

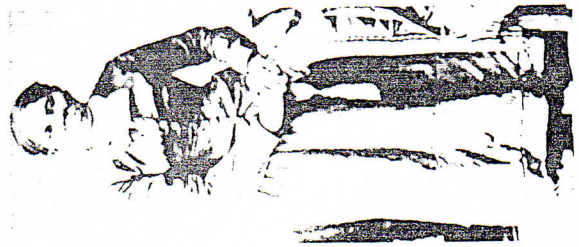
Since the illegal invasion and occupation of the land of Palestine and the creation of the settler state of Israel, Palestinian people have fought against genocide to win back their homeland, to build a non-secular, socialist Palestine. Palestinian women have played a major role in advancing the liberation struggle. Women in the thousands lead mass mobilization of Palestinian people against repression, and imperialist aggression and expansion. And thousands of women have joined the armed struggle. Leila Khaled, leader of the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) is a militant woman freedom fighter who led a commando unit that sky-jacked an American plane in 1970 to demand the release of captured Palestinian guerrillas and the liberation of Palestine. In 1980, Leila Khaled led the PLO delegation to the International Conference on Women in Copenhagen. United with the women of Africa and all the national liberation struggles, they forced the issue that women could never be free without the destruction of apartheid and Zionism.

These women are meeting out death to their enemies and winning victories for their people—giving inspiration and leadership to women all over the world.

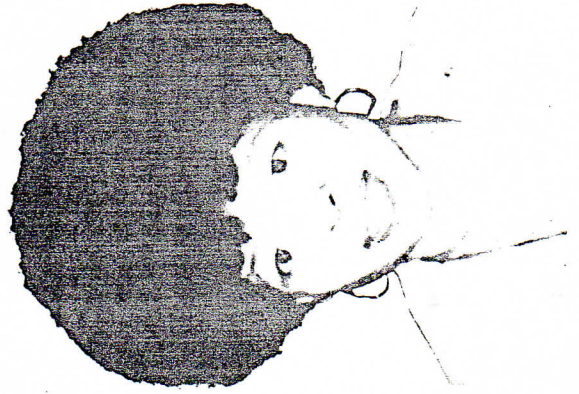
Black Women Under U.S. Imperialism

The Black liberation struggle is a struggle for land, independence and political power, to build a non-exploitative society. Black people are waging a national liberation struggle within the very borders of the U.S. empire. Like the women of Zimbabwe and Vietnam, Black women are fighting for self-determination and human rights, as part of their nation's struggle. The Black nation in the U.S. has always faced colonial oppression: the forcible expropriation of Black people's land, and the destruction and distortion of their institutions. By these means, the human and natural wealth of the Black nation have been exploited to serve the economic and political needs of the colonizer. In the struggle of kidnapped African peoples against colonialism, a New Afrikan nation was forged.

The attempted genocide of African people has included the forcible kidnap of African people through slavery, the defeat of Black Reconstruction, and the re-enslavement of the whole Black nation after the Civil War, Jim Crow, and the present reign of terror. The colonization of the Black nation provided the material basis for the building of the U.S. empire and the system of white supremacy. The freeing of the Black nation will mean the destruction of the U.S. imperialist state as we know it.



Harriet Tubman



Assata Shakur

Black women have resisted genocide and fought for the liberation of their people ever since they were brought here as slaves. Harriet Tubman in the U.S. during the Civil War—like Nehanda in Zimbabwe during the first Chimurenga—was a general who led her people in their fight for freedom. As was true in Vietnam and Zimbabwe, the colonization of the Black nation has required the particular and brutal repression of Black women because they provide a mainstay in the survival and resistance of the Black nation. Black women have struggled on every level, including participating in the armed struggle for the survival, dignity and freedom of their people. In so doing, they helped ensure the survival of Black people and helped to build the Black nation.



Center: Sister Dara Abubakari, President, Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika and, Right: Queen Mother Moore, Organization of Ethiopian Women and African Peoples Party, at National Black Human Rights Coalition demonstration at U.N. on Black Solidarity Day, November 5, 1979.

Throughout the Civil Rights era, Black women by the thousands fought to destroy Jim Crow apartheid, and the rule of white terror. When Rosa Parks, a Black working woman, refused once and for all to move to the back of the bus in 1954 in Montgomery, Alabama, she sparked the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. Women like Fannie Lou Hamer, head of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, and Ella Baker, who gave leadership to SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee), through their leadership and courage laid the basis for the development and advances of the Black liberation struggle in the 1960s. Now, in the 1980s, Black women are in the forefront of the struggle for human rights. Queen Mother Moore, who is founder and President of the

Assata Shakur: Black Freedom Fighter and Leader of the Black Nation

Assata Shakur is a Black Freedom Fighter and former Prisoner of War who was liberated from prison on November 2, 1979 who has continuously provided revolutionary leadership to the Black liberation struggle for land and independence. She is one of 1,000's of Black women who joined the Black liberation struggle and heightened its struggles during the 1960s and 70s, an example of the commitment and practice of masses of Black women who have and always will take up arms and fight for liberation.

In the early 70s, the Black Liberation Army, which Assata helped to forge, fought through action that the Black movement had to escalate and build an armed clandestine capacity in order to survive and win liberation for the Black nation. As Assata argued, "There is and always will be until every Black man, woman and child is free, a Black Liberation Army... We must defend ourselves and let no one disrespect us. We must gain our liberation by any means necessary."

On May 2, 1973, Assata was arrested after a nationwide hunt by COINTELPRO the government's strategy that targeted hundreds of Black leaders in the vicious attempt to destroy the Black liberation movement. This hunt resulted in a shoot out on the New Jersey Turnpike, the arrest of Assata and Sundiata Acoli, and the murder of Zayd Malik Shakur, and one state trooper. Assata was sentenced to life plus 30 years in prison but after 6½ years she was liberated from Clinton Prison maximum security by the fighting forces of the Black liberation movement. Her liberation and continued freedom is a tremendous victory to the Black liberation struggle and to all women fighting for liberation from imperialism. In the statement she made on Black Solidarity Day, 1980, Assata argues for an army to free the Black nation, and particularly calls on Black women to fight against systematic terror and genocidal attacks aimed at killing the present and future generations of the Black nation.

The struggle to free Assata became a dividing line issue in parts of the women's movement in the 70s and women who took the position that she was part of the Black liberation movement contributed to the struggle that supported her and fought for her freedom. Today all anti-imperialist women must fight for Assata's continued freedom and her complete exoneration. Every day of Assata's freedom is a tremendous blow to the system of imperialism and its need to defeat the revolutionary struggle of Black people to be free. Every day of her freedom is a victory for women and anti-imperialists all over the world.

Organization of Ethiopian Women, and founding member of the African Peoples Party; and Dara Abubakari, President of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika, have fought for decades for the strategy of revolutionary nationalism and for the key role of New African women in the struggle. Today, Black revolutionary nationalist women are struggling to consolidate the Black movement and push it to a higher level of struggle and organization towards the ultimate goal of people's war to liberate the land of the Black nation—the five states of Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, and Louisiana—and establish a free and independent Republic of New Afrika.

Particular attacks have been aimed at New African women leaders and fighters because they set a key revolutionary example for all Black people. Sandra Pratt, a militant fighter and leader in the Black Panther Party, was brutally murdered by COINTELPRO in 1971. Malika Majid (s/n Frankye Adams), a revolutionary New African freedom fighter, went underground for four years when charged with attempting to aid the escape of Black Liberation Army prisoners from prison in New York City. Safiya Bubakar (s/n Bernice Jones), arrested January 25, 1975 declared herself a citizen of the Republic of New Afrika and refused to recognize the legitimacy of the U.S. courts to try her. Two New African women, Njeri Quduss and Tamu Sana, were among eleven leaders and citizens of the Provisional Government of the Republic of New Afrika who held off a military assault on the government center of the RNA in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1971 and were then tried and imprisoned for the crime of surviving the raid. Assata Shakur was liberated from Clinton Correctional Facility for Women on November 2, 1979 by the fighting forces of the Black liberation struggle. Her escape and her continued freedom is a mighty blow against imperialism and a rallying cry to struggle. The participation of Black women as political cadre and freedom fighters is building the liberation forces of the Black nation in preparation for full-scale people's war within the U.S.

Black women, along with Puerto Rican, Chicana/Mexicana and Native American women fighting for national liberation lead white working class women in struggle by defining the enemy, the nature of the system, and how to fight for liberation.

The U.S. in the current period is in crisis. A reign of terror has been unleashed against Black and other Third World people today. Killer cops, the FBI and klan attacks are leading a vicious effort to terrorize Black people into submission and institute a state of martial law in the Black community. Twenty-two Black children are murdered or missing in Atlanta—and the government and police institute a dusk-to-dawn curfew on Black youth and threaten to bring the National Guard into the Black community. Twelve Black women are murdered in Roxbury, Boston in 1979, while more and more Black women are murdered throughout the South. Black women, men, and particularly youth are being murdered by killer cops in cities across the country.



National Black Human Rights Coalition demonstration in New Rochelle, N.Y., to protest the police murder of Emory Robinson in 1979.

On every level things are getting worse. Starvation. Joblessness. Homelessness. Mass imprisonment and the re-institution of the death penalty. This is not just a quantitative issue, but a question of survival itself. It is part of imperialism's response to the Black liberation struggle. The Black liberation struggle represents a powerful revolutionary force within the U.S. Imperialism's strategy to stop this force has moved from containment and control to the actual extermination of Black people. Therefore, Black women, in fighting for human rights and self-determination, must fight genocide.

White Women and Imperialism

The foundations of imperialism, the system that necessitates the oppression and exploitation of white working class women, are being shaken and threatened from within and without. White women's lives—their responsibility for the reproduction and maintenance of the labor force, their role in the family—have always been defined by the needs of building the empire and the system of imperialism. The U.S. empire was built and continues to exist based on the theft of the land and resources of Native American people; on the annexation of part of Mexico and the exploitation of the labor of Chicano/Mexicano people; the enslavement, subjugation and exploitation of the Black nation; and the direct colonization of the Puerto Rican nation. White women, along with men, have been forged into a white oppressor nation through which U.S. imperialism has carried out the colonization of whole nations of people within its borders. For example, white women were critical to U.S. imperialist expansion through their role in the pioneer family. Life in the pioneer family was highly exploitative and oppressive for women. But the pioneer family was much more than a unit of exploitation of women's labor.

It was a basic fighting unit to wage genocidal war against Native American peoples, claiming Native American land and resources for the growing U.S. imperialist state. Wherever a pioneer family settled, the U.S. Army was brought in to "protect" them—by waging all out war against Native American people in the area. White women faced dangers and hardships and participated in the murder and subjugation of Native American peoples because the land represented economic wealth, independence and power for them and their families.

People are familiar with the parallel stories of the white woman indentured servant and the Black slave, man or woman. The white woman, oppressed and exploited, works or marries her way into the freedom of white Amerika, while the Black woman, kidnapped, oppressed, exploited, is condemned to a lifetime of slavery, as are all of her children. This is a qualitative difference based in the difference between oppressor and oppressed nations, and the system of white supremacy.

Every struggle by white women for equal rights that has not self-consciously fought against white supremacy has served to build imperialism. By the turn of the century, the early women's movement had chosen to fight for the vote for white women at the expense of and in direct contradiction to the struggles of Black people for human rights. This choice served to build a white supremacist, petty bourgeois movement incapable of addressing the interests of masses of working class women who were struggling against intolerable working and living conditions. Today, the bourgeois women's movement fights for reforms that give bourgeois and petty bourgeois white women more power within the imperialist system, and thus does nothing to challenge that system.

The very nature of women's oppression is defined by the primary contradiction in the world today—between national liberation struggles and imperialism. This can be seen in the heightening of violence and rape against women. Rape is a weapon of terror and social control, rooted in male supremacy and the subjugation of women. In imperialism's wars of subjugation against Third World peoples, rape has been transformed into a weapon to dominate whole nations. The absolute right of any white man to rape any Third World woman has been and continues to be upheld by law and by force as a sacred institution of white supremacy. Hand in hand with rape, the lynching of Black people has been used as a mass weapon of counter-insurgency to target Black leaders and destroy the capability of the Black nation to resist. Lynching has never been a response to rape. But it has been justified, historically and currently, in the name of protecting white womanhood.

During slavery and in the defeat of Reconstruction, rape and lynching were weapons of mass terror and counter-insurgency. Today, too, imperialist control is maintained through heightened white supremacist violence and terror. Joann Little, a Black woman prisoner who killed the prison guard who tried to rape her; Yvonne Wanrow, a Native American woman who killed the rapist who tried to molest her children; and Inez Garcia, a Chicana/Mexicana woman who found and killed the

man who helped to rape her, have all made one thing clear: Third World women's determination to fight rape and lynching for the sake of their whole peoples. Struggles of Third World people for human rights expose the police, the government and the klan as the real perpetrators of violence and terror in our society.



Propaganda from Houston Conference to recruit white women as U.S. Marshalls

The government and police have waged a campaign to get white women to ally with the police as the way to fight the rise of violence against women. By calling for more police protection, "Take Back the Night" and the entire state-led anti-rape movement appeals to the armed forces of the imperialist state, whose sole purpose is to defend and maintain the system against Third World people and anyone else who threatens the status quo. This movement feeds the racist 'law and order' movement that justifies police murders and terror against Third World people. It aligns white women with the very perpetrators of violence and genocide and does nothing to address the underlying causes of women's oppression. Such a movement is antithetical to the liberation of women because it is white supremacist and collaborationist—and therefore must be destroyed.

Imperialism's strategy

Faced with defeat and crisis, imperialism fights to regain power by tightening its hold over what it has left. It does this by waging wars throughout the Third World, by heightening genocide against Third

World people, by attacking every basic human right and the very survival of Third World people, by threatening world war, by expanding counter-insurgency, and by supporting the most reactionary military dictatorships around the world.

The increased exploitation and oppression of white working class women is critical to this strategy. Women constitute a huge reserve army of highly exploitable labor for an economy faced with perpetual crisis. White women are entering the work force in larger numbers than ever, in order to maintain their standard of living. A small number are taking jobs that directly bolster the repressive apparatus of the state—in the army and the police force, as welfare workers and as teachers. But the vast majority of white working class women forced into the labor market are working the worst jobs at substantially less pay than white men. Because this is happening within a shrinking economy, these white women are competing for and taking jobs previously held by Third World people. Thus, imperialism is recruiting one sector—primarily petty bourgeois women—and tightening its hold over white working class women by creating competitive conditions whereby Black people, rather than imperialism, are perceived as the enemy.



Women demonstrating for abortion.

Imperialism is attempting to shift the burden of its crisis by forcing women to provide for the survival of their children, families and communities. Under Reagan, women in working class communities will find themselves with no childcare facilities, no basic health services, and schools that don't teach, in neighborhoods that are increasingly decayed and drug-ridden. Under these conditions, women are responsible for maintaining the stability and reliability of the workforce and community. Thus, the exploitation of women's labor is intensified.

In the consolidation of fascism and white supremacy, women are being repressed, and subjected to violence, degradation and oppression. Every aspect of women's lives must be geared toward the survival of

imperialism. Any woman who resists, or even steps out of line, is subject to attack. It is no accident that white supremacist forces such as the Moral Majority fight to push women back into the most oppressive, subservient positions. By building a racist 'right to life' movement and calling on women to face the hardships of these times by standing up for God, family and country, they attack any gains that have been won in the status of women. The wholesale attack on reproductive rights now has the full force of the highest levels of government behind it, with Richard Schweiker, head of the Health and Human Services Department, leading the fight. These forces put a premium on white women's 'femininity,' while in fact glorifying violence against all women. White women are supposed to take more responsibility and be self-reliant, yet they must not challenge the basic values or system. This will be enforced by murder, rape, violence and terror. Recently, a white minister and his wife were terrorized by the klan in West Virginia because he would not allow his church to be used to recruit for the klan. One of the klan's main tactics of attack was threatening to rape the minister's wife.

Heightened repression and male supremacy have a particularly devastating impact on lesbians. Lesbians challenge women's dependent and subservient role in this society. Lesbians reject the prescribed roles of women in the family and other institutions imposed to oppress women, and they identify with other women rather than with the system of male supremacy. Lesbians stand in contradiction to what is considered the norm in this society, and face daily conflicts with their families, bosses, and social institutions. Attacks and violence against lesbians are on the rise through loss of jobs, homes, and children, and through outright physical assault and rape. Failing to identify the enemy as imperialism, lesbians will make their peace with the system and live with their oppression. But when their objective conflicts and contradictions with imperialism are organized into a self-conscious movement that fights the system, lesbians pose a threat to imperialism.

The choice that confronts lesbians is true for white women in general. Not to make that choice is to collaborate with imperialism. The mobilization of white women is a key part of the imperialist strategy for consolidating fascism. The recruitment of white women is the major target of the klan and other white supremacist organizations, and white women form the base of mass white supremacist movements like the anti-busing movement. This serves on the one hand to build the mass base needed to wage war against Black and other Third World people, and, on the other, to stop women from organizing their discontent into a movement that fights imperialism. Simultaneously, the government is promoting a small sector of white women into the highest echelons of government and business. These women, in their role as spokespeople for the bourgeoisie, are calling for white women to identify with the needs and interests of imperialism, despite the eroding conditions and increased degradation in women's lives. We saw this strategy at the National Women's Conference in Houston in 1977, when the klan was

admitted as a legitimate minority opinion, and the CIA, FBI, police and multi-national corporations openly recruited women. What was most serious was that this conference, which literally called for women to "build a more perfect union" with imperialism, was hailed by virtually everyone in the women's movement and the white left as a victory for women's liberation!

Zionism is part of the strategy of imperialism to build and maintain white supremacy. Zionism is racism. Zionism is what allows the fascist state of Israel to exist. As an international force, Zionism organizes for white rights and the system of white supremacy. Zionism fights ideologically and militarily for the preservation of white settler colonialism. The Palestinian people, fighting for national liberation, are fighting to defeat imperialism and Zionism. Israel and world Zionism frontally attack not only the Palestinian nation, but also the struggle of Black people for human rights and self-determination in Africa and in the U.S.

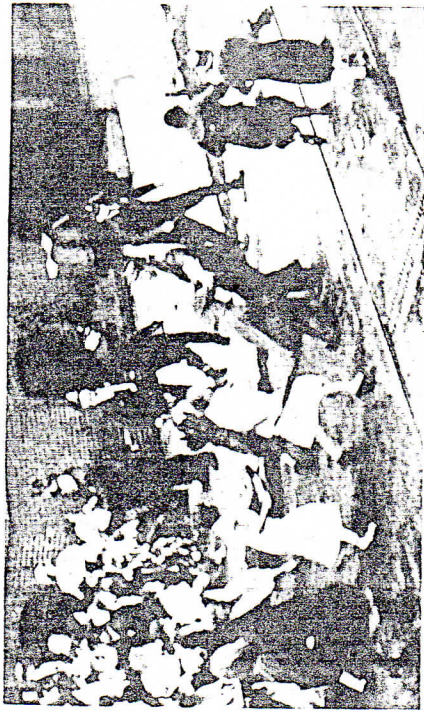
Counter-Insurgency Against the Women's Movement

Because women are potentially a revolutionary force, imperialism must prevent the very beginnings of discontent from becoming organized and self-conscious. The government's strategy of counter-insurgency against the women's movement was part of imperialism's counter-intelligence war strategy (code-named COINTELPRO by the FBI) against the Black and other Third World liberation movements within its borders. COINTELPRO against the women's movement feeds on the white supremacy and internal contradictions within the movement. Its primary goal is to prevent white women from organizing into a movement which would ally with the Black liberation struggle. For instance, in the early 1970s COINTELPRO undermined support for Black leaders facing repression, by encouraging and spreading rumors of their sexist behavior. A women's movement that had earlier mobilized hundreds of women to support the Black Panther Party now rejected that leadership and openly attacked the Panthers.

COINTELPRO's tactics have included the use of agent provocateurs, physical assaults, the firing of progressive and Marxist women on campuses. The media was used to ridicule and distort the movement. Lesbian-baiting was rampant. False leaders such as Gloria Steinem were promoted by the media and had access to extensive financial backing, while real leaders, Third World women and anti-imperialist women, were attacked as "male-dominated." COINTELPRO infiltrates and sets up state-led groups to confuse, divide and mislead women. Through grand juries, indictments and rumor-mongering, COINTELPRO has targeted individuals and organizations who are anti-imperialist and support armed struggle.

A result of all these contradictions and factors is that the women's movement is disorganized and ineffectual at best, and a tool of imperialism at worst. This is a devastating situation for masses of work-

ing class women who confront the heightening contradictions of the 80s. An anti-imperialist women's movement must be built to represent the interests of working class women and fight for the liberation of all women worldwide.



Striking women battle police. 1933.

To Build a Revolutionary Movement for Women's Liberation

The starting point for building a movement for women's liberation today is a clear identification of imperialism as the enemy and source of our oppression, and a recognition that we must destroy imperialism and build socialism to gain our liberation. Fighting to gain or even maintain a footing within the status quo means allying with white supremacy and strengthening women's dependency on the system. We must make a qualitative break with imperialism and the system of white supremacy and identify ourselves, through struggle, with the people and the women here and around the world who are fighting for national liberation and socialism. This is the only chance we have to build a movement that truly addresses the needs of the masses of women.

There are several key issues facing us in building an anti-imperialist women's movement. First, we must recognize that just like every other movement, our movement must wage a self-conscious struggle for power. We will have to fight for our liberation. It will not be granted to us. This is a violent system. Imperialism is waging war for its survival with every weapon it has. In order to win our liberation, we will have to engage in a revolutionary armed struggle against the military forces of imperialism, under the leadership of the Black and other Third World

liberation struggles inside this country. Armed struggle is the means by which oppressed peoples win their liberation. National liberation struggles have developed people's war as the strategy to win self-determination. We need to support this strategy and be part of it. We can deprive imperialism of the consolidated home base it so desperately needs. In order to fight for socialism, we must wage armed struggle.

When women wage armed struggle against imperialism, all the terms of social relations and women's oppression are challenged. As the women of Zimbabwe have said, an AK-47 in the hands of a woman freedom fighter is a great equalizer.

Second, a revolutionary anti-imperialist women's movement must follow the explicit leadership of national liberation struggles and of Black and other Third World women in particular. Our strategy and program must be defined by the strategy of the national liberation struggles. This means supporting the absolute right to self-determination of oppressed nations, and fighting white supremacy. It means recognizing and supporting the leadership in the struggle to defeat imperialism and for the liberation of women, from the ZANU Women's League to Third World women fighting for national liberation here.



1971. U.S. women meet with Vietnamese women at conference in Canada.

These principles break with the dominant position of the women's movement, which has imposed its own terms of support for Third World struggles. For example, women in the women's movement supported Assata Shakur solely as a fighting woman and leader of the women's liberation struggle. This position denied that she is a leader and a fighter in the Black liberation struggle, and undermined support for other African Prisoners of War. This position did not challenge white supremacy, and instead attacked the Black movement and the forces who

were leading the struggle—forces who ultimately succeeded in liberating Assata Shakur.

Only the achievement of self-determination can secure the human rights denied to Black and other Third World people by wresting control of their destinies from imperialism. The only way to support struggles for human rights is to support self-determination for oppressed nations.



Women take a stand against the Klan. Inauguration Day, 1981.

Third, we need organization. Our oppression is collective. There can be no individual path to liberation. Because we are fighting a whole system of male supremacy, we cannot act spontaneously. Spontaneity leads to reformism and defeat. To contend for power, we have to build an organization that can sustain and build our movement. To fight localism and narrowness and to maintain our principles, we need to build national organization.

We need to build organizations of and for women to fight against male supremacy within the left itself—the refusal to recognize the legitimate struggle for women's liberation. Even under socialism, when the material basis for women's oppression is overturned, women need organization to fight against the ideology of male supremacy and insure the continuing struggle for the full liberation of women.

Finally, we must recognize that this is going to be a very protracted struggle. We must fight until we win liberation, rather than settling for short-term reforms. We need to build and secure our movement to be able to survive under fascism. More than just survive, we must build our capacity to fight.

Women's Committee Against Genocide

May 19th Communist Organization, in calling for building a revolutionary anti-imperialist women's liberation movement and struggling for the necessity to build national organization, is committed to building the Women's Committee Against Genocide.

The Women's Committee Against Genocide is a mass organization for women, committed to building an anti-imperialist movement for the liberation of all women. It recognizes that women must fight together and be organized to be able to exert power and change the balance of forces in society.

The Women's Committee Against Genocide is for every woman who wants to be part of the worldwide struggle of women for liberation. It is for every woman who recognizes that to fight our oppression as women, we must fight imperialism. It is for every woman who rejects the bankruptcy and white supremacy of the dominant bourgeois women's movement and wants to be part of building an alternative. It is for every woman who, as part of anti-imperialist and progressive struggles, needs the strength of a women's organization that fights against male supremacy and for the needs and concerns of women. It is for every woman who won't stand by passively and be attacked, physically, sexually, economically, politically, but wants to fight and wants to win.

Begun two years ago, the Women's Committee Against Genocide has always participated in the struggle to stop killer cops as key to fighting white supremacy and attacking the source of violence against women. It participated in the anti-police vest campaign in NYC that exposed the police as killers of Third World youth and built material and political support for the National Black Human Rights Campaign that mobilized 5000 Black people to the UN, demanding human rights and self-determination. This work revealed that the increased attacks and degradation working class women were facing were perpetrated by the state and imperialism's strategy over all.

The Women's Committee Against Genocide builds solidarity with the leading struggles of African women worldwide, both in South-eastern Africa and New Afrika. We participated in the struggle to free Assata Shakur, celebrated her liberation, and fight to keep her free. We build political and material support for the ZANU Women's League and the struggle in Namibia.

As we move into the Reagan years, a key part of the program of the Women's Committee Against Genocide is the fight against heightened attacks against women, by participating in the struggles to take control over the institutions and services that women need and have a right to, from child care, education and health care, to reproductive rights.

Part of our contribution to building an anti-imperialist women's movement is fighting to reclaim the international and revolutionary character of International Women's Day, by co-sponsoring events for March 8, 1980 and 1981. We also give classes on the revolutionary struggle for women's liberation.

Fight for the Liberation of Women! Join and Help Build the Women's Committee Against Genocide!

Within the women's movement as it now stands, there are concrete political obstacles to the building of a revolutionary anti-imperialist women's movement. The line that women can be "anti-racist" just by raising their own consciousness (or worse, by fighting the sexism of Third World men) is a racist position that denies the necessity to fight imperialism and the system of white supremacy. It pits anti-racism in opposition to national liberation struggles by defining the problem as one of individual bad ideas. This argues that a movement of Black, Third World and white women should be built based in anti-racism because all women are defined primarily by their common oppression as women, rather than by the existence of oppressed and oppressor nations.

Separatism is a strategy based in defining all men as the enemy. This is biological determinism, which is a fascist ideology that leads to positions that women should kill all male babies. It is a self-conscious attack on national liberation struggles, in the name of being against all men. Separatism negates what is really going on in the world because it denies the existence of every other contradiction. Thus, separatists can present solutions, such as buying land and building all-woman communities, that are antagonistic to Third World people who are struggling for their right to that land, and are completely irrelevant to working class women who don't have the privilege to make those choices.

Bourgeois reformism organizes women to fight for more power and privilege within the system. NOW (National Organization for Women) and MS Magazine fight for the preservation of imperialism for the benefit of a small sector of privileged white women. Bourgeois feminists fight for a collaborationist position in every struggle for women's rights today. Thus, NOW has built an alliance with Planned Parenthood to fight for abortion. Planned Parenthood is one of the major international tools of imperialism that institutes sterilization programs throughout the Third World.

Socialist feminism is a racist, white-centered, elitist line that liquidates the struggle against imperialism and puts forward white petty-bourgeois intellectuals of Europe and the U.S. as the leadership of the struggle for women's liberation. It is a distortion of Marxism-Leninism that denies the principal contradiction in the world today, and thus denies the leadership of national liberation struggles and the necessity for white women to fight white supremacy.

Zionism has become a major reactionary force within the women's movement. At the same moment in history when women of every liberation movement in the world took a united position at the Copenhagen Women's Conference in support of the Palestinian struggle and against zionism, zionism has been legitimized in the women's movement. Zionism: the ideology that is the foundation of the white settler state of Israel, fights for white supremacy and opposes the struggles of oppressed peoples for self-determination.

We must defeat these positions because they all represent one line that has built the reformist, collaborationist and white supremacist

women's movement that will never win women's liberation. We will wage this struggle primarily by organizing women to fight imperialism and white supremacy for the liberation of all women worldwide. We must also struggle against male supremacy within the left—a concrete obstacle to women's full participation and leadership in the anti-imperialist struggle.



Chicana women, Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico.

Program

Our program must address the needs of women and oppose the key aspects of imperialism's strategy today. This means fighting heightened genocide and white supremacist violence, and fighting the building of white supremacist forces led by the klan.

Twenty-two Black children have been kidnapped and twenty found murdered in Atlanta; seven Black men have been killed in Buffalo; Third World people have been knifed to death in NYC; killer cops wage terror in every city in the country; and the klan is openly training, mobilizing, arming, and waging war against Black people. This is where women must take a stand. It can only be white supremacy that stops the women's movement from identifying the murders of twenty Black children in Atlanta as a fundamental and pressing issue for all women now. What could be more basic to women everywhere than the fact that white supremacy is being consolidated through attacks on Third World women and youth?

Women in this society are responsible for the care and raising of children. The fact that imperialism threatens the very ability of Third World children to survive must be addressed as a collective issue for all women.



We must take up the struggle to stop killer cops and the klan, because they are the instruments carrying out genocide today. We must support armed actions that bring killer cops to justice. The government's strategy is to build a white supremacist base of support for killer cops and to mobilize vigilante, civilian law-and-order groups. We must fight this strategy by exposing the police for what they are: murderers of Third World youth, promoters of racist violence, crime, and corruption, and the armed defenders of the system. In struggling to defeat the klan, we must expose the police as "blue by day and white by night."

The klan attacks every struggle of Black and other Third World people for human rights, and it is spearheading the building of fascism. The klan is gaining power. It is firmly embedded in the infrastructure of the society. Klan members are judges, police chiefs, heads of Boards of Education, and government officials. The klan must be exposed and fought wherever it exists and wherever it is organizing a base.

In our program we must fight the intensifying genocide against Third World people in all its forms. Imperialism literally survives on the daily death and destruction of Third World people and communities. Chemical warfare (drugs), the closing of hospitals and all human services, and the destruction of communities through 'urban renewal' programs all expose the white supremacist basis of this society. Forced sterilization is a weapon of genocide and counter-insurgency used by imperialism against Third World women around the world and inside the U.S. Over one-third of all Puerto Rican women and over 40% of Native American women have been sterilized; a 1970 study found that 20% of Black married women have been sterilized and 20% of Chicanas under the age of 45 have been sterilized. Forced sterilization must be fought by

women as a conscious genocidal strategy and not just a side issue in the struggle to save abortion.



Poster by San Francisco Poster Brigade

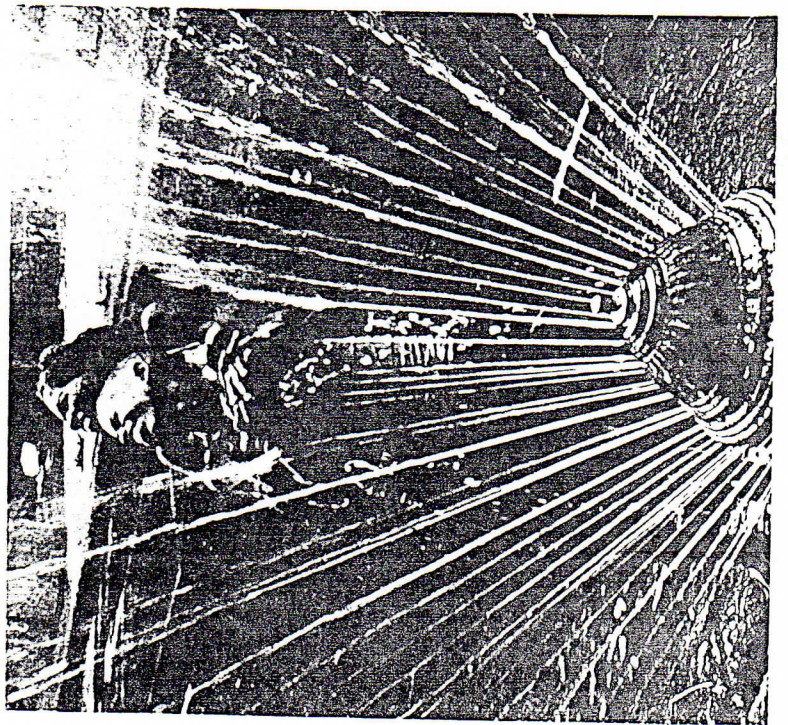
The urban decay and crime that working class women confront are part and parcel of genocide. "Gentrification" is the government's strategy to force Third World people out of the cities through police and klan terror, arson, and the spread of drugs, regaining the cities for white bourgeois and petty bourgeois people. It is only through fighting urban genocide that the problems of our communities can be addressed. Simultaneous to urban genocide is the forced removal of Native American people from their land and reservations to claim the energy sources and resources that are concentrated there. This is a major response of imperialism to the crisis brought on by defeats internationally.

The heightened struggles today by Native Americans for their treaty rights to the land is a life and death struggle against genocide that must be supported. Native American women have participated with their people in actions from the Long Marches across the U.S. to court battles to land seizures like Wounded Knee, to fight against the U.S. government's invasion of Native American lands and its plans to wage all out war to seize the oil that lies below Native American land.

Because we are fighting for the liberation of women, we must fight for all the just demands of women. Women have a right to everything that is necessary to insure our welfare and that of our children, and to realize the full potential of our labor. We have a right to end forced sterilization. We have a right to live without world war. We have a right to be free from sexual harassment and physical assault. We have a right to reproductive freedom. We have a right to be lesbians.

Imperialism will only concede those demands that don't threaten its existence. In this period of crisis and reaction, the fight for child care, health services, education and abortion will be bitter and must challenge power directly. Women must fight the state to take control of what is necessary in order to survive and carry on the struggle for our liberation. We may lose some battles, but we will build our strength to survive and to fight. Our movement must fight against attacks on all women. We must fight against the rising attacks on lesbians. We stand committed to the struggle for lesbian liberation as integral to our struggle for women's liberation. We must fight against the rising tide of violence against women, by recognizing the real source of that violence and by building the capability to make the perpetrators of that violence pay.

At the heart of a program to fight genocide and imperialism must be support for national liberation struggles and solidarity with the women of the Third World. When we build material and political soli-

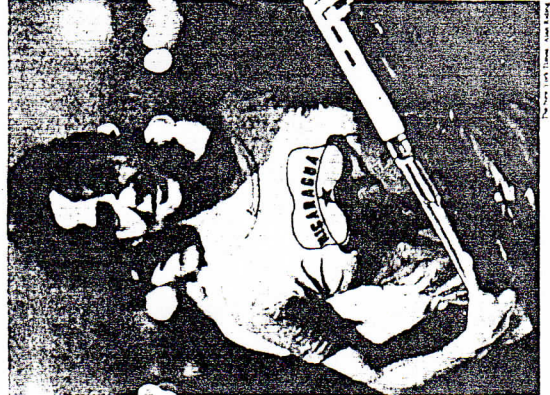


Juanita Bermudez, a secretary and the mother of two children, during the

darity with the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Azania (South Africa), Palestine, Native American nations, Chicano/Mexicano nations, Puerto Rico and New Afrika, we become part of the struggles that are winning. These struggles show that women's liberation is being forged on the battlefields of people's war and in the building of socialism. Supporting the women freedom fighters of these nations is therefore a way to fight against opportunism.

In the course of national liberation war, prisoners of war are captured by imperialism. The fight to free all prisoners of war is a critical struggle to support the leaders and freedom fighters of the national liberation movements, and to build the capacity to fight to win. Our program must fight for the freedom of all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

May 19th Communist Organization is committed to participate in building a revolutionary anti-imperialist women's movement to make a significant contribution to the struggle against U.S. imperialism and fight for the liberation of women. We are in the era of the defeat of imperialism and the building of socialism—the era when the centuries-old oppression of women, rooted in class society, is being overturned. A new era in the liberation of women all over the world is beginning. This is a call to all white women to become part of the worldwide struggle, to fight genocide, fight white supremacy and for the liberation of women. This is a call to build a revolutionary anti-imperialist women's movement and a challenge to fight for liberation in our lifetime.



Juanita Bermudez, a secretary and the mother of two children, during the