

On Organization in the Revolutionary Movement

Since 1971 the revolutionary movement has been unsuccessful in organizing the mass movement. Even though this country's economic and political life is in a shambles, even though mass consciousness has never been higher and even though the spontaneous mass movement is again building rapidly, mass organizing by revolutionaries has been sporadic and uncoordinated. When there is successful organizing, it is confined to local areas such as a city. The one example of large scale nationwide organizing has been the African Liberation Day organizing. But after two years, the work is going downhill. The west coast Bay area, which had the largest rally last year, is no longer recognized by the national committee. National leadership is being fought over by reactionary and petty bourgeois nationalists, and the day-to-day struggle of African people inside the U.S. was not integrally connected with the year round organizing work being done.

Several problems have contributed to the lack of successful organizing:

1. Localism - the mentality of not looking beyond one's own area for ideas and/or assigning unique prominence to the importance of one's local area and beliefs.
2. Defeatism - losing confidence in the masses and the revolutionary movement, taking the short view and not the long view.
3. Unsystematic and unprofessional propaganda among the masses and the vanguard. Also propaganda work being done is so hard to read and sloppy that people do not want to read it.

In the past few years, the most organized and sustained element of the revolutionary movement has been the military aspect. However, the military work has suffered mostly from lack of connection with the mass movement. This has mainly been the fault of the above ground organizations - most of which consider the military forces to be completely divorced from the revolutionary movement.

This has caused them in some cases to actually repudiate the military forces of the movement. In other cases, the above ground organizations do not openly repudiate the military forces but do not do any propaganda or organizing among the masses to explain the necessity for military action. These are reactionary attitudes as Chairman Mao teaches, "without the people's army the people have nothing."

On the other hand, the military forces themselves have not emphasized propaganda work anywhere as much as necessary. In some cases isolation from the masses has caused our military forces to make severe political mistakes in the selection of actions. The killing of Marcus Foster is a good example of a military action that more retarded the movement than moved it forward. Although the evidence overwhelmingly suggests that Marcus Foster was a pig agent, he was not a recognized enemy of his people. Propaganda work among the masses was not done either before or after to show the masses the necessity of his death. There were undoubtedly other targets that were much clearer in the minds of the people for assassination. This one incident tainted in the eyes of many of the masses the SLA's later courageous and revolutionary actions. Our comrades in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have learned that military actions that cause any confusion in the minds of the people must not be taken. Military actions must clarify the struggle. If the masses are confused by military actions taken by revolutionaries, the people will not be willing to provide the guerrillas with shelter and help. As Chairman Mao teaches a guerrilla must be able to go among the people "like a fish swims in the sea." Lastly, all elements of the vanguard of the movement also suffer from occasional but fatal overconfidence, sloppiness and a lack of tight internal security.

Consequently the revolutionary movement is faced with a situation where the aboveground organizations are not succeeding in organizing the masses and the military forces are suffering serious losses due to isolation from the masses and slack security and execution. It is clear from the actions of the BLA, Weather-underground and the SLA that the foco theory can be applied to the urban jungles of the U.S.A. The successful armed actions of the BLA, SLA and Native Americans have moved the revolution forward and in themselves raised the consciousness of the people. The battle of New Orleans showed that a very small number of trained revolutionaries can confound the military might of the state. The Hearst kidnapping showed the potential of armed action connected with a mass people's political demand. The Battle of Wounded Knee showed the connection between the Third World masses demand for self-determination and land and the mass armed struggle by all those who support those just demands.

However, armed action by itself cannot organize the masses of people into the sustained revolutionary activity necessary for liberation. It is also clear that military forces cannot even long exist without the protection of an active revolutionary mass movement. Mao sums up by saying, "The revolutionary war is a war of the masses. It can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them." On the other hand, the experience of the BPP, the Crusade for Justice, the RNA and



the anti-war movement shows that mass organizations cannot exist without a people's military force to defend it. Our Palestinian and Latin American comrades correctly point out that a mass movement divorced from illegal work will invariably be destroyed or turn toward reformist goals.

Presently we can see that in the dialectic between mass organizing and military work it is now key that the mass work must move forward. Over the past few years the work of our armed comrades has taken a qualitative leap both in implementation and political substance. However

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In 1959 members of the Black community defend NAACP's Dr. Perry from KKK attacks in Monroe, North Carolina.

ON SELF-DEFENSE Build the Militia!

Ten year old Clifford Glover's murderer, NY policeman Thomas Shea, was found innocent and is again free to commit murder. Black 17 year old Brandon Gibson was murdered June 22 by a nigger pig in Atlanta. All community people witnessing the murder stated that Brandon was unarmed. In the feaceful civil rights protest on the following Wednesday, Atlanta police SWAT squad members rode their horses over little girl children while beating their mothers bloody. Twenty-three Black people have been murdered by Atlanta police in the last 17 months.

The murderer of 12 year old Chicano, Santo Rodriguez, got a mere five years. The only reason why this pig went to jail was that Chicano and Black people in Dallas took to the streets in violent protest. The police pig had stuck a gun to the child's head and fired. He thought that the gun, his service revolver, "was unloaded."

You'll find that the vast majority of the people shot at or beat up are poor, Third World people, and that the police are rarely disciplined for murdering a poor person. This kind of "accidental", and "justifiable" homicide that happens in poor communities, never happens in rich communities.

It isn't that rich people don't break the law, it's that they control the police who supposedly enforce the law. If, instead of the businessman, the people controlled the police, the real criminals would have been brought to trial long ago. The criminals who carried out a

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Strong Marxist nationalist parties must be forged to lead the revolutionary masses. The BPP was the strongest of the early nationwide revolutionary nationalist cadre organizations.

policy of genocide against the Vietnamese and Native Americans, the criminals who keep millions in subsistence conditions worldwide for the sake of their vast profit. We can not expect the police, the paid agents of these businessmen, to serve us.

The murder of our youth such as 14 year old Tyrone Guyton in Oakland, 15 year old Greg White in East Palo Alto, California, and 10 year old Clifford Glover in NY shows us the need for self-defense. The murder of our leaders such as Malcolm, Martin, and Fred Hampton shows us the need for armed and organized self-defense. The vigilante actions of Nazis, the KKK, etc. in San Francisco, Indiana, Denver, Cairo and Newark also show us the need to build a militia for self-defense.

These self-defense organizations must involve the whole community. It is every oppressed person's responsibility to protect his/her neighbors and neighborhood. We Chicanos, Blacks, Boricuas, and all oppressed people have reacted violently to these crimes. This is good and necessary. Murderers (pushers, pimps, mad-dog pigs) should be punished and the criminal establishment must know that the people will not quietly watch the murder of their own. But the time for reacting to the murder of our people must end. We must move to the time that we prevent these atrocities by patrolling and controlling the streets of our communities.

In this society, successful individual self-defense completely depends on community support. It is vital that people insist on their right to be present when the police are at the house on the

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without a corresponding leap in mass organizing the revolutionary movement cannot go anywhere but backwards. The question then becomes what will move revolutionary mass organizing forward at this time.

There seems to be two main responses to this question. On the one hand we hear the call for building revolutionary national united fronts. On the other hand we hear the call for building a genuinely Marxist-Leninist revolutionary party. (Of course it is not that simple. There are two lines on how to build a revolutionary party.) The comrades who call for the revolutionary national united fronts correctly point out the following:

1. That the vanguard of the revolutionary movement are the Third World masses. Correspondingly the most developed revolutionary cadre are on the whole Third World.
2. That the struggle of the vanguard masses is a struggle against national oppression and working class oppression. The Third World masses are overwhelmingly working class and, in fact, mostly proletarian.
3. Therefore the struggle of the vanguard masses is a struggle for national liberation and proletarian revolution. The just demands of the Third World masses are for self-determination, land and socialism.
4. That in order to satisfy either national liberation or proletarian revolution, the first step must be the destruction of US imperialism (monopoly capitalism).
5. That the history of the US and the world revolution shows that in struggles of national liberation, the primary form of involving the masses in revolution are Fronts for National Liberation.
6. That the history of the world revolution also shows us that these fronts must be led by an alliance of the working class and poor people. (In America, Marxist capitalist degeneration has proceeded to such a degree that large numbers of the proletariat and the working class are no longer employed and have become members of the reserve unemployed army. It is un-Marxist to deny that this is a very revolutionary class. Marx himself said that this is the most revolutionary class because they have the least to lose in revolutionary struggle. They should not be confused with the parasitic lumpen class of big-time pushers, pimps, ripoff artists and other lumpen whom comrades in the Congo and China describe as being good fighters but often shaky loyalty.)

On the other hand, several of our comrades are equally correct in calling for the building of a new Leninist fighting party. They point to these points:

1. That in every successful revolutionary struggle, a scientific combat party with iron discipline has been the general staff that has led the revolution to victory.
2. That the experience of the Black Panther Party shows the potential of what a Leninist combat party closely connected with the masses can accomplish in America.
3. That only a party of this type can successfully combine legal and illegal work over the long run, in such a way to maximize the effects of both.
4. That national liberation struggles and national united fronts have been led by disciplined, scientific combat parties.
5. And that such a party(ies) is needed to coordinate as many of the revolutionary forces as possible so that American imperialism can be destroyed.

Unfortunately, most of the discussions on how to move revolutionary organizing forward have discussed these two forms of organization as an either one or the other proposition. Most discussions have been extremely narrow-minded. Many revolutionaries deny the application of revolutionary science outside of the classical Russian and Chinese works. Others let racism fog their discussions. It must be re-emphasized that revolutionary science did not stop developing in Yenan (and the Chinese would be among the first to agree to this!) Conditions at home and domestic history are always the primary considerations in formulating any revolu-

tionary strategy. Chairman Mao's firm principle is that we must consider all revolutionary experiences and assimilate the useful and reject the rest in accordance with the conditions at home and our own history.

In formulating a strategy on how to move mass work forward the three elements that we must consider are the present domestic conditions, the history of this country (especially of the progressive and revolutionary movements) and the experience of our comrades internationally that have the most relevance to our situation.

Presently the spontaneous movement is rapidly growing and mass consciousness among all segments of the populace has never been higher. In the Third World communities this is due to increasingly violent economic, political and police repression, consistent organizing by revolutionaries for the past decade, and a long tradition of constant resistance to imperialist/racist oppression. In the white working communities this new consciousness is not as high as that in the Third World communities, but much higher than it has been since the thirties. This is due to the economic and political shambles that the Nixon regime has brought on. However the ideology of racism is still very strong among the white masses and poisons serious attempts to organize their potential into a revolutionary instead of a fascist force.



The Third World revolutionary movement, despite being disorganized above ground and suffering intense repression underground, is still effectively organizing local areas and executing sporadic but effective armed activity. Third World revolutionary cadre are still working at some level in many communities, and new attempts at are being made to move work to a more organized and higher level. While disorganized, many individual cadre are founded in the basic principles of revolutionary science and in many cases have the experience of revolutionary practice to draw upon. The situation among white revolutionaries is not nearly as favorable. Most predominately white organizations are thoroughly pervaded by revisionism, opportunism and racism. The Weather Underground and YAWF seem to be the only large organizations that have been struggling along anti-racist, anti-fascist lines for any sustained period. However few organizations are doing consistent organizing in white working communities against fascism, racism, capitalism, in support of self-determination and armed struggle, for proletarian revolution. The few principled white above ground cadre are usually scattered and do their work in support of either the prison movement or the national liberation struggles and not in organizing their own communities. The experience of third world cadre in many so-called multinational organizations is that the white cadre are usually more concerned with organizing third world communities. When organizing in white communities is done, it is usually along reformist and/or petty bourgeois lines.

The history of the revolutionary organizing during reconstruction, the thirties and the late sixties also show that when third world cadre are not organized along national lines, the interests of the various national struggles are submerged

to some abstract conception of "working class unity". Recent history does show, especially the experience of the BPP and DRUM, that when revolutionary cadre are organized along nationalist lines under Marxist principles an extremely strong and broad alliance of the working class is possible. Concrete multinational struggles and organizational alliance were achieved.

On the other hand, third world cadre who became members of multiracial organizations had very different experiences. While these organizations called themselves multinational, they were not organized as alliances between nations for the sake of national liberation and socialist revolution. (Multinational usually is defined as white with some other nationality, not between two or more third world nationalities.) In these organizations, (Venceremos, Revolutionary Union), much time was spent explaining "multinationalism" and not so much on other vital questions of revolution.

Lastly but importantly, on the other side of the dialectic we see that much very good military work, working class organizing and some propaganda work has been done by multinational groups (through organizational alliances or actual multinational squads). Willingness to work with other nationalities seems to be a crucial aspect to these three forms of work. Nationalist organizations which are unwilling to form alliances are quickly isolated and rapidly destroyed by the state.

What is needed are organizational forms that safeguard the needs and wishes of the Third World national struggles while at the same time being able to coordinate on the broadest possible scale the revolutionary forces necessary to destroy U.S. imperialism. This complicated problem is the key to successful revolutionary struggle in the US. The ideology of racism and the consequential backwardness of the white masses and most white revolutionaries make this question the most difficult in the world. But the experience of our Indochinese, Latin American and Palestinian comrades, while not providing any easy solutions to our specific problems, do suggest some possible directions and examples to the problems of party and united front building in the U.S. We must abandon our subjectivity and dogmatism and study these examples carefully.

Our Palestinian comrades' struggle has developed in a way similar to the potential of one wing (the underground) of our revolutionary movement. They have developed liberation fronts (the best known are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a splinter of the PFLP). The fronts have attempted to combine mass action with disciplined and militant activity. This has been the Popular Front's strategy for the past few years. In their recent report from their national congress (see this issue) in the spirit of self-criticism they say that they absolutely need to build a militant party and pay more attention to mass organizations and mass struggle. They also state that they need to focus their military activity more in line with the needs of the masses, but they also state that to eliminate consistent, sustained and high level military work would be suicidal and revisionist. Their conclusion is to build the party, expand the Front, pay attention to the needs and struggles of the masses and continue focused military work.

Our Indochinese and Latin American comrades' experiences are even more directly applicable to our situation. In both cases, various national liberation struggles have faced a common imperialist master. In Indochina, despite the fact that there were various national liberation struggles and different fronts, there was one imperialist enemy (France, Japan and finally the US). The victory against the French at Dien Bien Phu was due in no small part to the struggle of Laotian military cadre who tied down large numbers of French troops. In the seventies the joint Indochinese military command coordinated their struggle in such a way to

maximize for the beneficial effects of each fraternal party, National Front, and military forces on the other two nations. The defeat of the imperialists in Laos and Cambodia in the late 60's and early 70's was due to the close cooperation of the military forces of the DRVN, PRG, Khmer Rouge and Pathet Lao. As imperialism has entered the last stage of its downfall in Indochina, the various national fronts are formulating policies, while not contradictory, speak to the specific conditions of the different countries.

The struggles of the Latin American comrades speaks to a similar type of development. In Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina (among others), national fronts were developed in line with Marxist guerrilla warfare. Unfortunately the combination of the local fascists and capitalist in league with the American fascists and multi-national corporation usually proved too strong for the local revolutionary forces. In Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Bolivia the local armed detachments were destroyed or seriously defeated in their armed actions. In the spirit of self-criticism the Latin American communists (non-revisionists) analyzed their defeats and tried to move their struggle forward. They made two basic conclusions. One is that international imperialism in their areas can only be defeated by international armed scientific socialism. This realization has led to the creation of the Latin American Joint Command. They also realized that the masses must be more totally involved in revolutionary struggle (after major defeats the Tupamaros came to this conclusion relatively early) and that also a Marxist party of iron discipline was absolutely necessary to the successful waging of the revolution. Recently they are coordinating their military activities, and they also are striving to build one Leninist combat party for the region. They have not abandoned their national fronts but are broadening their struggles to maximize the struggles nationally and internationally.

In the U.S., we have a situation where Blacks, Chicanos, Boricuas (Puerto Ricans), Native Americans are all attempting to form National Fronts and/or national parties, Asians are organizing along revolutionary nationalist lines in their local communities. In general, white working class communities are unorganized. TW revolutionaries feel both the need for organizing their national struggles and coordinating revolutionary forces. White revolutionaries in general (although some definitely recognize the need for building strong national fronts) are agitating for increased coordination between revolutionary forces but balk at organizing their own communities (party because the lower consciousness in white areas makes organizing a frustrating job). Clearly the Third World masses will not follow leadership that they do not believe will safeguard their national rights and just as clearly all revolutionary forces must be coordinated to destroy imperialism.

What we then need is not one organizational form to solve the problems of organizing now, but a skillful combination of two or more organizational forms. There are three organizational forms that, if flexibly combined, could move the organization of the masses and the organization of revolutionaries forward. National United Fronts, Leninist Party(ies) and a council of coordination seem to be the most viable organizational forms available to us now. Propaganda, military work and workplace organizing must be coordinated for the struggle to succeed. National fronts are absolutely necessary to involve the broad masses of the vanguard third world peoples in revolution. There is much confusion about the differences between types of united fronts and parties. United fronts have classically been defined as a front of different classes inside the national liberation struggle, so that as many people as possible participate in the liberation struggle (it is not the front of the Revolutionary Union which is more of a federation). National fronts are usually involved in militia work, mass organizations and national governments (using Stalin's definition of nation). Par-

ties are usually involved in the army, propaganda work, party organization and are the main leadership elements of the front. If the goals are the same, large ideological differences are permitted in the united front (the PRG of Vietnam has Buddhist monks, communists and others), but the party must have one ideological line.

Leninist parties are necessary to provide leadership to the national fronts if they are not to be taken over by bourgeois nationalists and reactionary nationalists. Leninist parties (y) are also needed to provide leadership to coordinated work.

Revolution is a process. Organizational forms which are primary now will not (cannot) be the primary organizational forms later. Many comrades are calling for the formation of a multi-racial communist party now. This demand seems to:

1. Ignore history which shows how such parties betray the third world masses unless TW cadre are independently organized.
2. Ignore the masses which are clearly looking for militant, scientific nationalist leadership.
3. Ignore the development of the white masses and white organizations which, with notable exceptions, are far behind.
4. Ignores that multinational organizations formed artificially without regard to the development of the struggle usually do more to hinder the developmental process than to move it forward.

At this point we must emphasize that this is merely the summation of the experiences of some Third World Marxist cadres. This is not a dogmatic solution to the problems of organizing. It is only a document submitted for discussion to revolutionary cadre of all nationalities throughout the country. The Communist League and Black Workers' Congress have made their positions on organizational forms clear. We are eagerly awaiting analysis from our comrades who take George Jackson's analysis of fascism and revolution as the basis for their understanding of organizational forms in the revolution.

What we foresee in the immediate future is a two-fold process. One side of development must be organizational. Practice is primary in the relation between knowing and doing. Many questions on organizing can only be resolved through the concrete process of organizing the people and struggling against the state. Revolutionaries of various nationalities must come together now to discuss the situation in their local areas and in the country and then put their ideas into practice organizationally. It is clear that the mass movement cannot move forward unless the masses are directly involved in the revolutionary struggle on a day-to-day basis. The people will not involve themselves unless they are led by tightly organized groups of practiced revolutionaries dedicated to protracted struggle. White cadre in particular need to come together and discuss how to best organize white working people to struggle against fascism, racism and imperialism and for socialism, armed struggle and the self-determination of Third World peoples.

We must avoid narrowmindedness and realize that there is uneven development can different conditions between different geographical areas. Some regions may be ready for a fully multinational cadre organization. Some regions may be ready for a third world cadre organization. In some regions councils of coordination between strongly moving nationalist struggles may be the primary organizational form for some time, and in many areas the nationalist struggles themselves need intense work. However, people throughout the country need to know the experiences of others in building the revolution in general and cadre organizations in particular. Also it is absolutely necessary that a coherent nationwide strategy to build and strengthen cadre organizations and mass struggles be devised immediately.

The other aspect of our task is ideological. There are two major ideological struggles occurring within the revolutionary movement at this time. It is our feeling that there is very little room for compromise on ideological struggle. Many

would join a cadre organization and struggle about ideological differences (esp. on national liberation and self-determination) later. This is an incorrect and dangerous approach to organization. Cadre organizations are not united fronts! Che said, the party is "persons fused by a community of ideas who organize themselves..." There must be theoretical unity within the party if it is to succeed. Mao says, "To lead the revolution to victory a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidarity of its own organization."

One ideological struggle is around how to build a party. One line is that it will spring from the spontaneous movement of the masses. The other is that small disciplined groups of cadre from the vanguard of the movement will unite to form a small but iron organization. The history of the entire revolutionary world supports this view. The parties of China, Russia, Vietnam, etc. support this view. One of the major problems with the BPP and other organizations was that they attempted to combine the form of a mass organization with the tasks and responsibilities of a M-L party. Mass organizations are crucial and so are united fronts, but they cannot be confused mentally or practically with party type formations.

The other major ideological debate is whether or not the US is a fascist state and the consequent form of organizing needed. Those who believe that the US is a democratic or quasi-democratic state scorn armed action, emphasize open aboveground work and focus entirely on parliamentary forms of struggle. The other side embraces Jackson's analysis of fascism and assert that armed, propaganda and party organizations must develop concurrently and that organizing must become more clandestine as the state becomes more insecure. This is not to say that mass work will not exist! It only means that reasonable security procedures are taken to insure the smooth functioning of the aboveground and propaganda units. Unsurprisingly, those who take the first view emphasize the entire working class struggle and downplay the national struggles of TW people domestically. The second side takes the view that the TW national struggles are the vanguard of the overall revolutionary movement. As we said in the first issue of SEIZE THE TIME, the entire staff agrees with the second side of this struggle.

The revolutionary movement is now faces with the crucial task of building the mass movement and revolutionary cadre organizations. We will only succeed if we firmly grip our ideological and organizational tasks, don't divorce theory from practice and realize that practice is primary in the relation between knowing and doing. There are no easy answers. We submit this summation to the revolutionary movement for discussion. We will struggle to remain undogmatic and call on our comrades to do likewise. Come together, talk, and submit your views to others while you attempt to put them into practice. We will try to do the same. Meanwhile let us know your positions, criticisms and practice so that we may move our understanding and work forward. We must emulate our Vietnamese comrades who say, "Our organization, supervision, exchange and summing up of experiences are still weak. This is our shortcoming. From now on we strive to overcome them and the emulation movement will certainly bring about many more and better results..."

The difference between our force and the enemy's was so great that there were at the time people who likened our Resistance War to a locust fighting an elephant!

It was so if things were seen from the material side, in their actual conditions and with a narrow mind, we had to oppose airplanes and cannons with bamboo sticks. But guided by Marxism-Leninism our Party did not look only at the present but also at the future and had firm confidence in the spirit and force of the masses, of the nation. Therefore we resolutely told the wavering and pessimistic people that: "Today the locust fights the elephant, but tomorrow the elephant will be disembowelled."

Build fighting National Fronts
Build the fighting cadre organizations
Staff of Seize the Time