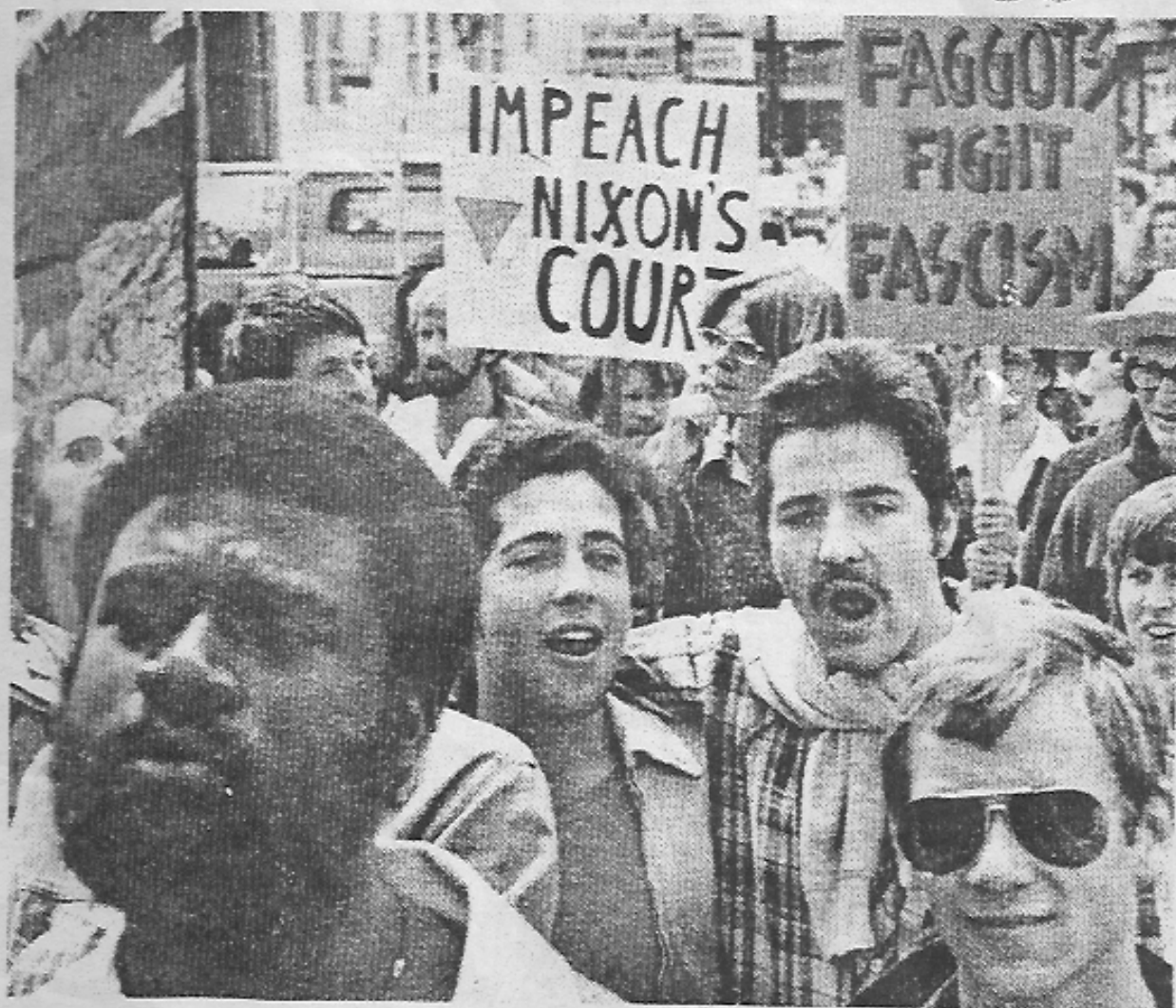


A Conference Report

1.25

Faggots and Class Struggle



A Special Issue of

morning due:

A Journal of Men Against Sexism
November-December Vol.2, Issue 6

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cover photo by efren ramirez

Collective Statement

This is a special issue of Morning Due. It is the official report from the West Coast conference on Faggots and Class Struggle which Morning Due is publishing for the conference planning committee. This issue is special because the conference was a valuable experience for all of us who attended and we want many others to share in this.

We also have a new format: bigger pages, more of them and it's printed on newsprint to cut costs. Our usual format wouldn't work for such a large issue which has given us this opportunity to experiment with a new style.

The costs of this special issue are nearly double our usual. Unfortunately, Morning Due has only a hand to mouth existence. None of us are paid a wage for our work. Morning Due needs the financial support of its readers (donations are gladly accepted and tax deductible from \$1.00 to \$1 million); needs the support of its political work and of its continuing efforts to relate our journal to working and oppressed people's struggles. **HELP SUPPORT MORNING DUE AND ITS WORK!**

There is so much material, really important articles in this issue, but it has required a great deal of work, much more than usual at a time when there are only five of us now actively working as collective members, plus a few friends. We gladly welcome new collective members.

A substantial part of this issue is transcriptions from tapes of the 5 presentations of the conference. It was our goal to reproduce the oral flavor of the conference with transcriptions, at the expense of well-worded sentences, grammatical constructions and more tightly organized material. Moreover, typing from the tapes was new to us and took hours upon hours. If at times it appears too sloppy remember transcribing was pushing our patience and energy to their limits.

We also have been extremely sloppy in some of our duties and practice. In particular we've ignored alot of mail in the past months, partly due to our laziness, partly due to the lack of energy in the collective, and partly due to our involvement in the conference. Things will get better. For example, we have already instituted a new system for handling the mail.

Finally, we have chosen to change peoples' names in this issue to continue the sense of security at the conference, but in a way that may remind those who attended who the actual speakers were. We apologize to any of you who may be offended by your newly awarded names.

In love and struggle,

Morning Due Collective
Billie, Danny, John,
Patrick and Roger

And friends: Brent, Gary,
Michael, Phil, and Robert

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sissies

we are sissies rising up strong
and beautiful

raising our voices with song
bread but roses, too
taking our nurturing power for own
anger from seeing our womanness ripped-off
our song:

sissies
faeries
&
witches and all
discovering together our revolutionary spirit
exposing the lie within our selves
learning not to lust after the man
stiff and hard
the wonderment of our looking
towards sissyness

we rise bringing feminine powers to the revolution
the yeast grows stronger

no longer accepting the epithets

'dizzy irrational queens bourgie & decadent my dears
our voice in solidarity with sisters & brothers
against the bloodsuckers of imperialism

sissies
faeries
&
witches and all
"from all color--of women
we anglos must fight our racism
fight class privilege of the ruling class"

we are revolutionary fighters
we dare not abandon the revolution
for our own sakes

even more for the sakes & lives
of our sisters & brothers

sissies
faeries
&
witches and all
struggle for unity with our brothers, sisters
for bread and roses.

sissies
faeries
&
witches and all

Conference Planning Group
P.O. Box 10405
Eugene, OR 97401
October 15, 1976

Dear Friends,

Here, at last, is the report on the conference, 'Faggots and Class Struggle.' The Morning Due Collective is printing this report as a Special Issue of Morning Due. The Conference Planning Group has, however, made all decisions concerning the contents of this report. We are extremely grateful for the cooperation of the Morning Due Collective for agreeing to do this Special Issue.

The first major section of the report is the sum-up of the conference. It summarizes, as we see it, the principle aspects of the conference. To do this work, we relied heavily on the criticisms which we received before, during, and after the conference. The sum-up was based on these criticisms along with our own experiences. The sum-up includes alot of the planning process in hopes that our criticisms will help future conference planners. We feel confident that major trends and important contradictions of the conference are included, however we also know it is far from complete. Each and every person who attended had a unique experience which was important and should be evaluated. This task we appropriately leave to each of you.

In addition to the sum-up, we included in the main section, the five presentations, the conference schedule, the caucus reports, and the workshop reports. An appendix includes other miscellaneous, but important, items which we want to share with you.

After the mailing of this report the Conference Planning Group will dissolve. It is easy for us to be nostalgic as we have worked and struggled together for nearly a year. However we don't see this report as the conclusion of our work but rather as the beginning of a new phase of work. We feel a great deal of satisfaction that the conference accomplished its goal of enabling faggots to come together in a cooperative spirit to further our thinking and practice in a great struggle to which we are now even more deeply committed.

The prime ingredient for victory over our oppressors is the people united. Each of us felt that unity at the conference. And each of us felt victory a little closer.

Yours in love & struggle,

The Conference Planning Group



Sum-up

The conference accomplished its goal set out in the Statement of Purpose--gay men talking cooperatively about class struggle and faggot oppression. This success was primarily due to the organizational work of the planning committee.

Looking back, we can see that the conference was overall a very unifying experience. People came away feeling a higher sense of cooperation among political faggots on the West Coast. We were mostly nurturing, responsible and straightforward with each other. Criticism was offered in a dialectical, materialist way: offering both sides and seeing our actions in a historical perspective. Self-criticism was used by many. We used the conference as a place for serious investigation of our political practice and theory, and really created an atmosphere of unity-struggle-unity. How did this happen?

UNITY (see page 12, excerpts from the mail out)

The unity of the conference came out of the leadership taken by the participants and out of the leadership provided by the Planning Group. Participants at the conference generally had organizational experience and many had practiced criticism/self-criticism and felt at home with it.

For example, the people from June 28th Union who had worked for weeks to prepare the Faggots and Imperialism presentation, offered to drop their whole talk when it appeared that the whole group might be unable to hear more at that point in the afternoon. Another example of a response to the immediate group needs, was the self-organization of the Practice Panel, where an effective, coherent presentation on Practice was created the day before (with little outside encouragement).

A key factor in the cooperation of conference participants was the way we dealt with class background. People from working class backgrounds by in large were not trashy but took risks to expose feelings and offer constructive criticisms. People from Petit-bourgeois backgrounds showed not defensiveness, but a willingness to be self-critical and seek avenues for change.

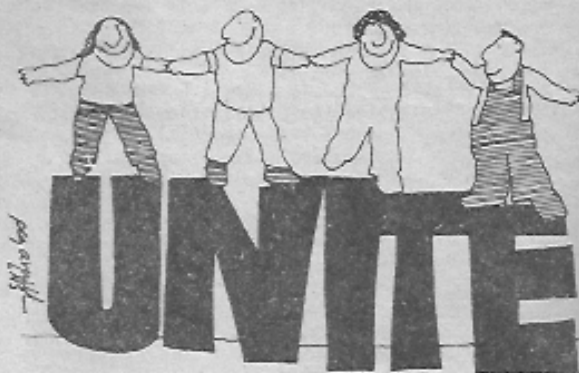
The principal aspect of the conference unity arose out of the strength of the planning group leadership and the acceptance of that leadership by the conference-goers. For seven months the planning group worked to anticipate and develop unity. We clarified early on the purpose of the conference and the process expected. These were stated clearly in the brochure and in the last mailing. We were explicit about our function as not only a planning group but as the central committee of the conference itself. And we demonstrated our responsibility by inviting and accepting criticism early in the planning process, by struggling through challenges to our credibility in pre-conference open meetings (in particular, at a Thursday night, early arrivals mass meeting), by anticipating the need for open central committee meetings at the conference itself, and through our openness to change at the conference as material conditions changed.

"To struggle as we all did, not only with the theoretical issues involved, but with the more concrete problems of logistics, work-sharing, and all the while being consciously critical of our actions, presents a really strong basis for us to change in

really revolutionary ways. But it also has the potential of opening wounds, exaggerating differences, and making people seem self-righteous and petty. The fact that very little polemicizing, back-biting and insensitive trashing went on, is a direct result of the way that the conference was set up. I felt that the structure of the conference was seriously open to question, flexible and open to change, and I feel this set the tone for people to be cooperative, as well as take criticism of others seriously. . . ." (from a brother in Santa Cruz)

The success of the clear, responsible leadership, (evidenced by the many positive criticisms we received) helped change our paranoias about the need for centralized decision-making. Many of us come out of counter-culture experiences of false collective consciousness that says "we're all equally responsible here," which mostly amounts to informal, invisible leadership or non-leadership.

Again, though the leadership of the planning group was key to the unity at the conference, the participants responded with dynamite cooperation, as evidenced by the superb ecological consciousness and the well-staffed kitchen. Certainly, such exemplary leadership like the extra work taken on by San Francisco in the last weeks (including a fundraising dance for transportation for poor registrants); the people in Santa Cruz who collectively studied to prepare for the weekend; Mulberry House who arrived to help dig shitters and paint signs; or the Eugene crowd who came early to fix up and set-up; all set the stage for the togetherness we all felt.



LACK OF UNITY

The principle contradiction of the conference was the lack of political unity in the planning group versus the work that had to be done. As stated earlier, the latter aspect of this contradiction--the work to be done--unified the planning group and was most important, leading to a successful conference. On the other hand, our political disunity led to such problems as the lack of Third World participation, the lack of a major presentation focussed on gay oppression and how that fits into class struggle, the lack of sissy and working class leadership in presentations and workshops, the fact that planning group members took on too many individual tasks (leading workshops, making presentations, security duties), the lack of structured sexual-emotional sharing, the shunting of cultural work to the evenings, the confusion of scheduling, etc. All these problems arose primarily out of the lack of political unity of the conference planning

group.

Our disunity and the months of struggle to come up with a "statement of purpose" for the conference, arose out of the initial stages of our formation as a group. Only a few of us had ongoing working relationships and we were from three different cities (Seattle, Portland and Eugene). Two of us thought it would be neat to have a Northwest political faggots conference and so we each invited our friends to a meeting. Our self-selection raised questions of accountability from participants during the pre-conference planning.

The initial meetings consisted of eight to fifteen planners, all white, in our twenties and early thirties, from working-class and petit-bourgeois backgrounds, sissy and non-sissy, Marxist-Leninists, Socialist-Feminists, Effeminists, and Anarchists. Given these beginnings, it's a wonder we became as unified as we did.

The key to unifying this initial group was the work we did on establishing our principles of unity (statement of purpose for the conference). After agreeing on this, we consciously dropped most struggle around political differences. Our unity was increased through agreements around process (use of dialectical materialism, criticism/self-criticism) and our dogged adherence to the principle of "cooperative exploration of class struggle," instead of pushing our political lines.

ML vs. NON-ML SPLIT

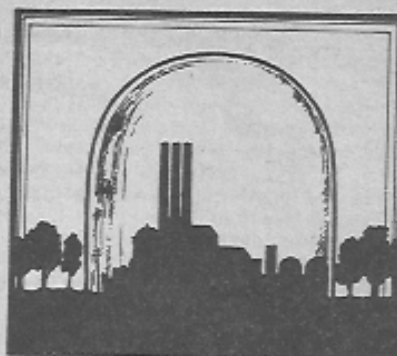
A major conflict within the planning group, which stemmed from the lack of unity, was the contradiction between the leadership taken by five Marxist-Leninists, particularly the four from Eugene, and the resentment of that leadership by non-ML's (who were predominantly socialist feminists)

Since the Eugene group was studying together, had a clear class politic and a firm grasp of group dialectical materialist process, they initiated alot-- set up agendas, wrote drafts of the statement of purpose and the last mailing, and facilitated meetings.

Non-Marxist-Leninists in the planning group felt resentful to varying degrees. Non M-L planners in particular, who were cultural workers, workers, sissies and inarticulate working class people all gave up power which resulted in, for example, three types of people not being represented in presentations and workshop leadership. On the other hand, non M-L's, particularly socialist-feminists, had a lot of input into the initial brainstorming of workshops for the conference, and the planning group was represented by a socialist-feminist who went to San Francisco and the Bay Area for a month over the summer. (Half the conference participants were from the Bay area.) This leadership of a non Marxist-Leninist attracted like minded people.

What was primary in this ML/ non ML split in the planning group was the unifying aspect of the Marxist-Leninist leadership. They were self critical, shared their understanding about class struggle and class background (from which everyone grew) and did a whole lot of organizing work which others didn't have time for

From this criticism of the leadership of the planning group, we see that a more unified conference would result if the planning group/central committee came out of (perhaps chosen rather than self selected) an already existing unified work group who could clearly see how leadership was needed, who asked for leadership and get particular



agreements on the type of leadership needed from people. (Both inside and outside the central group.)

Such a group would not be tied up in the process of establishing unity and could see more clearly the need for inclusion of under represented elements into the leadership (e.g. undereducated working class people, Third World people) early in the planning process. Such a group could have more carefully assessed its workload, delegated responsibilities for presentations, workshops and even security to other groups, while giving more validation and support to those groups that we did delegate responsibilities to.

For example, this time, due to our scattered vision, cultural work and scheduling was dumped into the laps of individuals with no back up. The result was one person (not a planner) was being held responsible for constantly changing schedules, and cultural events being too much work for one person to coordinate, especially late at night. As a result, far too few people worked far too late into the night. A more unified planning group may have anticipated these tasks to require more continual criticism and support by planners throughout the conference.

On the positive side, we did anticipate the need for a good sound system, a colorfully decorated barn and lighting for the evening events. We did accomplish schedule changes and anticipated on-the-spot workshops and caucuses during the noon to three time period. We can see that our own struggle for political unity and the long time period of work together was essential to the unity we did experience at the conference.

RACISM

During the conference, at the conference criticism session, and for several months before the conference, the planning group was criticized and offered self-criticism about the lack of Third World leadership, the subsequent lack of Third World conference participation, and the lack of practical discussion around anti-racist and national liberation issues at the conference. We agree that we were racist in overlooking the needs of non-white gay men.

The core of this racism arises out of our not contacting the political Third World gay groups which we knew about in the Bay Area (Gay Latinos Alliance, Gay American Indians, and the Black Gay Caucus) in the earliest planning stages. We were relying (whether right or wrongly) on our Bay Area friends to take the lead in informing us of Bay Area needs. Our early contacts in the Bay Area were self-critical about not taking initiative; given the fact that they were more in touch with these

Third World gay groups, to make those contacts or urge us to do so. This was apparently due to their lack of time and not seeing the conference as a real important concern at the time.

As a latino brother at the conference acknowledged, our concrete situation as planners led us to space out Third World concerns. Here in the Northwest, there are no political Third World gay groups or, in white-dominated gay political groups, no significant Third World participation addressing the particular needs of Third World people.

Although at least two planning members had worked with Third World gays around racism in the gay movement, these concerns did not surface strongly (1) due to the lack of unity in the planning group around the importance of national liberation and anti-racism in the class struggle, (2) due to the mistaken notion that the Third World gay groups that existed in the Bay Area were social groups (like those in the Northwest) without a political thrust, and (3) due to the belief in the planning group that to "recruit" from these groups would be tokenism. And, by the time this discussion took place, the planning process had progressed to the point where non-white involvement definitely would have been "recruitment" and "tokenism."

Our planning had progressed to such a point that powerful, equal Third World leadership was impossible. This arose directly out of our sloppy transition from seeing the conference as a Northwest conference, to seeing it as a West Coast conference. In our first few months, the leadership group contacted some friends in the Bay Area, asked them to come to a meeting; when they didn't come, we went on without them and dropped the initiative to really thoroughly investigate the needs and political climate of our neighbors to the south.

By the time one of our group visited the Bay Area, three months later, the brochure had been printed, and workshops and presentations were all planned. Through this representative, the leadership asked for the participation of the three Third World gay groups on a panel and in workshops on racism and imperialism. When approached, GALA, GAI, and BGC all stated that the conference didn't suit their needs, and all eventually decided not to send representatives to the conference.

All three groups had similar reactions. Their major criticism, beside not being included in the conference leadership, was that the conference was racist by excluding gay women--as Third World people, they saw their primary struggle as gay people within their national communities, which do not exclude women (their gay groups are sexually mixed). Each Third World gay group also objected to the use of the word "faggot" in the conference title as having European, white origins. In addition, these groups felt generally that Third World experiences were left out--that of cultural imperialism, mother-centered families, the effect of race on class position, the national question, etc.; and they felt that imperialism and racism had been lumped together and tacked onto the conference. The conference leadership agrees with these criticisms.

Some of the white faggots in the Bay Area took initiative at this point to ask that certain workshops dealing with racism be added, that the Imperialism presentation be moved to the first day, and that a consciousness of racism be included in the planned presentations. All these suggestions were agreed to by the planning group but the main problem of an all-white leadership group and the lateness of the changes, resulted in a nearly all-white con-



Photo by Christopher R. Harris

ference (approximately 5 of the 140 were non-white).

We in the leadership group had long discussions about the racism of the conference. We think it was good that the Gay Latino Alliance, the Gay American Indians, and the Black Gay Causus chose not to come to the conference. In refusing, they were being powerful in choosing not to be patronized and oppressed in a white setting. We are excited that people from these groups are now organizing a series of workshops on Racism, Imperialism, and Sexism (open to men and women) focussed around the needs of Third World gays, moving further in the leadership of gay liberation and class struggle (see ad elsewhere in this issue).

On the other hand, we also think it was good that white faggots got together as white faggots, and especially good that, because of the powerful actions of Third World people (here and everywhere), we struggled with each other around racism. We do not think we were sexist by not including gay women. In our white communities, lesbians have made it clear that now is not the historical moment for gay women and gay men to work together in any large, organizational way.

Our racism came in overlooking the importance of Third World gay struggles. In the future, if we were to contact Third World gay men and find that they needed primarily to struggle with Third World women and men, gay and non-gay--we might appropriately call a conference for white gay men to struggle with racism and meet our particular needs as white faggots. This would not be racist because we would be respecting the needs of Third World people.

But at present we in the conference leadership are not in a position to know how to resolve this contradiction between white faggot and Third World gay people's needs, primarily because we were unable to struggle with GALA, GAI, and BGC at the conference.

Alot of this sounds abstract because our material conditions at present force us to deal with racism abstractly. This is what we've come up with for now.

PRESENTATION

Our criticisms of the five presentations at the conference include the lack of representation of working class, especially non-college educated working class people, leading to the complex wording and style of many presentations. Also many presentations were too long (over an hour) and were of a lecture format rather than something more exciting and involving. On the other side, we acknowledge the many, many hours of work that went into the presentations and the new information and important analysis they all offered.

The basic contradiction which led to the lack of leadership in presentations and workshops from faggots of working class backgrounds, was the lack of this leadership in the planning group itself and a lack of agreement in the planning group about the importance of recruiting and encouraging working class leadership. (Three of the five presentations were organized and delivered by planning group members). The result was that although the conference composition was 40% working class background, 40% petit-bourgeois, and 20% mixed, 60-70% of the presentation leaders were from petit-bourgeois background, and practically all presenters had college educations.

The language used in the presentations was criticized by the working class, sissy, and anarchist caucuses. As one high-school educated brother wrote--"The fact was that middle class (bourgeois) language was used to talk about classism and the struggle against classism. That left the working class person, like myself, feeling alienated at his own conference." We appreciate these people taking the risk to expose their feelings and these criticisms, since its hard to go against what we are all taught--to depend on bourgeois language from outside authorities who are confident in their ideas.

Those of us on the planning group who have learned to use mystified, bourgeois words and phrases (including mystified Marxist terminology), talked about how we've been miseducated, how we tend to make things super-complex. We need to learn from people more oppressed by class, who understand oppression more directly and can more clearly see what things are primary to talk about.

We appreciate the people of working class backgrounds who did make presentations and especially those from non-college educated backgrounds. Getting up behind a microphone in front of 140 people is real hard, especially when you've all your life been in the audience, depending on the 'experts' to give the word.

The first presentation on Class Background and Bourgeois Ideology was praised by many people. The use of beautiful graphics, three speakers, and carefully defined words kept people's attention. Their handouts set us up for the class background workshops, which helped form a common understanding of class for the rest of the weekend.

We support one self-criticism of the second presenters (on Imperialism) who, because of the lack of group preparation (four speakers), spoke too long, but made good use of handouts. The presentation on the History of the Father Dominated Family was too

long and several people said they didn't understand the need for the many stories told. The Socialist Feminism presentation made good use of graphics, but also was long and complex. The Practice Panel made good use of their time (about eight speakers) and defined the meaning and function of 'practice' well.

"It seems that through the better use of visual aids and handouts, more attention to defining uncommon words, a strong awareness of the time factor, and the use of references to reading materials for further information would have helped make presentations more interesting and more productive." (from a letter of a conference goer)

We see the main problems with the presentations, their wordiness, their length, their lecturing, the fact that there were too many of them, all stems from the disunity of the planning group--our not being powerful enough to delegate presentation to other people who would have more time to develop them in a colorful, clear way. As it was, we were each so over-extended with other work, that the presentations only came together at the last minute. One exception was the Class Background presentation, which was pulled together by people who had the option of group criticism and a high political unity--it showed in the final result. Future planners should try to delegate presentational work to groups such as this, as well as maintaining critical contact with the group's work.

WORKSHOPS

The result of too long presentations was too short workshops. People were almost unanimously frustrated with the time limits of workshops. Elsewhere in this evaluation are more workshop descriptions. We are unable to give a very complete picture because of the approximately seventy-five workshops which happened, only twenty reports were turned in. In general, the workshops were criticized for being too theoretical, not enough emphasizing our daily experiences of class struggle and gay liberation. We agree that trying to fit 'practice' workshops into one workshop period was inadequate; they should have been included in every period. We also agree that presentations or demonstrations or role-plays or singing should have happened within workshops. Which brings us to the next section: cultural work.



CULTURAL WORK

Our main self-criticism here is that the planning group didn't take cultural work seriously, saw it as not central to the conference and relegated culture to evening 'entertainment.' We dumped three evenings worth of barn performances onto a San Francisco queen and said 'take care of it, honey.' And he did. The poetry, songs, fairy tales, plays, and dancing sparked us all.

But the dinner hour tended to drag on, most of us were pretty tired, and some of the most striking cultural work happened quite late. So there was almost no time for the planned criticism or discussion of the work. And our friend, the culture organizer was justifiably angry.

It seems obvious to us now, especially given the amount of criticism around this mistake, and the fact that this problem has been criticized at other recent conferences (Hard Times and Cultural Workers Conference), that songs, poetry, dancing, role-plays, theater, group writing, graphics-sharing, and film should happen throughout the day and evening, as part of presentations and workshops, and be given the respect of thoughtful criticism. Criticism of cultural work not only helps that work be more effective in the future, it also helps us understand its relevance to building revolutionary spirit and learning.

Actually, several cultural events did spring up spontaneously during the conference. Group writing happened in the caucuses, singing in some workshops, and poetry was read during the criticism session. Also the orgy in the tipi (see report elsewhere) arose spontaneously and should be considered cultural work, as well as the moon ritual which arose out of the spirituality workshop, and the massive circle hug, singing and spiral-dance-goodbye kisses which ended the conference. There were also the 'day after' of psychedelic ritual, hiking, and swimming, singing, storytelling, and folk-dancing all of which was birthed by the ten left-over sissies.

The use of drugs, definitely part of our culture, in general brought faggots together in the orgy, ritual, evening activities, and the 'day after'. However, the Thursday nite before the conference, marijuana brownies tended to make a heavy meeting of 30 people scary and difficult. We can learn from this to take more responsibility for drug use in considering the work to be done.

Our delegation of cultural work to the evening and someone outside the planning group, reflects our scattered, burdened reality as planners, as well as our lack of knowledge of the quality of cultural work coming to the conference. But primarily these mistakes reflect our internalized oppression that learning only happens from words and lectures and reading and not from experiences and emotions. We are discovering that the togetherness and power we feel through culture is learning, revolutionary learning.

BROCHURE

Another note about cultural work for the conference. Our brochure, which was most people's first contact with the conference planners, was criticized as 'slick' by many. On the surface, it looked expensive, as if we were a heavily financed group (even though the price was only \$115 for 800) and the print job looked 'professional,' all of



which was intimidating. On the other hand, it was good to create something nice looking to show people how serious and committed we were to pulling off the conference. The main negative criticism we have is that, with the long reading list, the long, drawn out statement of purpose, the many workshops focussed on theory, and the lack of graphics, we presented an 'academic,' 'intellectual' image. This format and especially the lack of graphics was due in part to our backwards attitude toward cultural work and toward the worker who produced the brochure. We didn't really struggle with him about the importance of stimulating graphics or easily readable format. We just plopped the work in his lap and said, "do it this way." This lack of understanding of his important contribution was oppressive to him as a worker and the conference suffered for it.

SISSIES

The group of people most responsible for starting and carrying out cultural work at the conference were sissy-identified faggots. They did the shit work of setting up the performances, they did alot of the performing, they initiated the orgy and the moon ritual. Sissies were responsible for organizing childcare and kitchen duties and (although this is disputed by some) did more than their share of these maintenance duties. This sexual division of labor (female-identified work vs. male-identified work) between sissies and 'straight-identified faggots' (STIFS as the sissy caucus labelled the non-sissies) was criticized in the sissy caucus statement. Sissies said that the focus of the conference was on intellectual theorizing, which was primarily led by non-sissies, and they felt their own work was discounted.

Many (seven or eight) non-sissy identified men responded to the Sissy Manifesto at the open mike criticism session. Most expressed appreciation of sissy strength at the conference and thanks for help in touching on sissy parts of themselves. Some warned of the importance of not reinforcing self-

hating, oppressed-woman patterns of submission, passivity and emotional manipulation in ourselves.

We agree with the sissy caucus that cultural work and sexual-sensual-emotional nurturance in general was discounted and that the spontaneous masses, sings, orgy and rituals (often led by sissies) were people's way of responding to those discounted needs. In the future, we would structure more group getting-to-know-you and trust building, as well as safe group sensuality (dancing, hand-holding, massages, swims, sings, chants) into a conference of this sort.

CHILDCARE

One maintenance, cultural work task that even the sissies didn't hold together was childcare. Organized childcare was non-existent the days before the conference and before the first afternoon of the conference. All during the conference there were pleas for help with inadequate response. Five children arrived and the men who brought them had to be largely responsible for them during meals and after dinner. One father delivered an angry criticism at the open mike about how the pre-conference brochure had led him to believe he would be able to choose when he wanted to be with his daughter, and how he felt trapped in the contradiction of being thankful that childcare was provided at all and pissed that it wasn't well provided.

We agree that the brochure intended for 24-hour childcare or at least dawn to bed-time childcare to be provided, and we did prepare by finding a coordinator and asking registrants to agree to do childcare by filling in a blank on their registration form. However, we only knew of one child coming (parents didn't properly inform us ahead) and our coordinator arrived half-a-day late. But the primary responsibility for the childcare fuck-up lies with participants who didn't come through on their pre-conference agreements to provide childcare.

We see this mistake coming from our inexperience with children, because we are men, and our discounting the needs of parents, as we discount 'women's' work in general. We also suspect that many of the registrants felt guilty and offered to do childcare when in fact they should have said no if they didn't want to take on that responsibility. In the future, space should be provided to include children in cultural activities, a more explicit understanding of parents' desires to be child-free, even during the night (a place set aside for kids to sleep together), and inservice training for inexperienced childcareers.

SECURITY (see page 12, Excerpts from the Mail Out)

The conference security system--including registration deadline, ticket taking, turning away non-registrants, banning cameras, and limiting tape recording--all came under considerable criticism before the conference and during the conference as well. Security was one of the most difficult, time-consuming, and frustrating tasks of the conference leadership. We had a separate security committee working for months before the conference (including some of the central planning group and others). We spent an entire day of group meeting deciding to up the registration deadline one week but make no exceptions after that. We spent hours answering as honestly and directly as possible, by mail and in person, the many individual requests for exception to the 'no register? no come!' decision. We understand that its real frustrating to be turned away from such a conference, and we think we were as

nurturing as we could be to those we did turn away, given the limits of our time and energy. What follows is another explanation of why we did it the way we did.

First of all, none of us had ever done anything like this before. We knew this conference was qualitatively different than other faggot's or men's gatherings we'd been to. We were talking about class struggle, about revolution, about overthrowing the ruling class, which is specifically illegal. There was a workshop on armed struggle. That's also illegal.

We knew that some people coming to the conference openly intended to be part of these struggles and wanted to talk about how. We knew that the "unfriendly opposition" would love to gather damaging information, manipulate, or disrupt at such a conference. Certainly the recent rash of Grand Juries and FBI-CIA exposures seem pretty unfriendly. So we figured we had to come up with some kind of security system.

We knew that this conference was not as dangerous as it could be, but certainly it wasn't a picnic. We welcomed the chance to learn about security in a setting where mistakes wouldn't be too drastic. Some of us in the planning group, from petit-bourgeois backgrounds especially, have strong fears of violence and are sometimes not sure if we really are in opposition to the ruling order if that means violence, or we can't imagine an escalation of repression that would threaten us. Given that most working class people understand their gut level opposition to bosses, and have lots of experience with the bosses repression, working on security and seeing the need to protect ourselves has been good for combatting liberalism in our class stand.

We developed a working model for conference security which would be very helpful for future planners, however it would also be very helpful for future disruptors. So we've left out details. We decided to limit the number of participants to 160 (up from 80), not only because of environmental and leadership considerations--we also wanted to keep the number down so that the security committee could know everyone by sight and keep track of suspicious or disruptive behavior. We insisted that people pre-register three weeks early so that we could check-up on people, find out if we knew them, find out who we could feel secure about and who we couldn't. We banned cameras because pictures can include people who don't want to be included, even unintentionally. We limited tape recording to interviews and presentations by people who agreed to it and were prepared for the possibility of their voice print ending up in an FBI file.

These were some of our procedures which came under attack. Some people didn't see how this conference was more dangerous than others and couldn't see themselves being involved in extra-legal activities in the future. Its one thing to say I don't need security for myself because I'm not going to be involved. Its another to say I'm willing to endanger others (who do intend to be involved) by not being secure or by disrespecting the security set up for everyone.

We in the leadership group want to criticize those people who disrespected the security system by coming to the conference, unregistered, and attempting to get in with a ticket with another persons name on it. The tickets were part of our security, our checking up on each other. In not taking our system seriously, these people were being individualistic and dangerous (as were the original registrants who gave away their tickets). They were making our security job tougher, putting us all on edge, and disrupting the cooperative,

trusting atmosphere of the conference.

At the criticism session on the last day, some of these late arrivals criticized the planning group for not allowing them in at first. We are angry that some used emotional manipulation (I had to drive a long way) to gain sympathy without validating the group need for pre-registration.

The change we would make in the future would be to establish a waiting list so that registrants who know they couldn't come would send back their ticket for a person on the waiting list. Also we would role-play possible security problems to help us anticipate.

We on the security committee are self-critical that we maintained a tight gate keeping only on the first day. That night several people walked onto the land and were only noticed the next day. Also a car load of local party-seekers drove onto the land, to be stopped by one of us only because he happened to be there at the gate by chance. We didn't anticipate the contradiction between our desire to attend the conference and the need for constant gate watching.

We want to thank participants for not bringing cameras and KPFA radio for being so cooperative with our taping system. We appreciate not being tested, we appreciate being taken seriously. Finally, we appreciate the Thursday nite meeting, where the planners security system was questioned and where, through a combination of our presenting a unified position on our leadership and the cooperative criticism of the thirty participants, we all set a tone of responsiveness and unity for the whole conference.

POLITICAL DIFFERENCES

By in large, we were extremely pleased with the cooperation in dealing with political differences. One prime example was the generation of caucuses (anarchist, working class, sissy, Jewish, older faggots, etc.) where people could give each other support to develop principled criticisms of other groups at the conference. The criticisms were delivered in the form of written statements at the open mike, backed up by the physical presence of the members of the caucus. These caucus statements were responded to by individuals throughout the open mike session. The microphone and the support of a caucus allowed people to feel powerful about their political stand.

One of the groups represented at the conference, the Lavender and Red Union, was uncooperative at times. We single them out for criticism here because we and others at the conference have had a great respect for their politics and look to them for leadership. L & RU came to the conference with a printed statement saying that they disagreed with our statement of purpose. We had specially asked to come only those people who agreed with the unity of the conference. We felt this disagreement was uncooperative, as well as the fact that they sometimes acted as instructors who didn't take into account others experiences. We do appreciate that the L & RU took the time to prepare their statement, and that they did take leadership and offered a workshop. For further development of this L & RU criticism, see the critique by the Eugene Marxist-Leninists from the planning group, in the appendix.

Further, along the line of political differences, we appreciate the self-criticism of some San Franciscans for some of the regional chauvinism they exhibited in assuming that the faggot politics of the Bay Area was right for the material conditions of the faggots of the Northwest.

SITE

Some of the regional chauvinism or more appropriately city chauvinism that the planners showed in not considering the needs of the residents of the Wolf Creek Land got ironed out, so that by the time the conference arrived, shitters were dug, signs about smoking, parking, camping, and water were up, and consciousness of the land and animals was the rule.

Only two cigarette butts were discovered on the ground after the conference. The goats had survived the psychological trauma of 140 strangers. The wheat and oat fields were untrampled, the creek unpolluted, and the trail to the swimming hole intact. The chickens continued to lay and the rooster continued to crow (as he had during some presentations). Flat spots in the grass were all that was left of the camping meadow. Squashed leaves remained under the many fir and maple trees where workshops had been. The garden vegetables and store of beans was a bit depleted, but the floor of the cook shack-farm house was left scrubbed like never before and enough wood was chopped to last weeks. Banners and flags no longer decorated the barnyard or workshop sites, but the barn and tipi still reverberated from the evening activities. And the six residents of the Creek Land tried to settle back into their daily work routines. We all felt a tremendous solidarity with the land, appreciation for eighty acres of dazzling fairy land, and the generous fairies there residing.

COOPERATION

A lot of workers put together this conference. The planning group put in hundreds of hours of time. The Eugene Stonewall Day Union picked up many little tasks and led workshops. The Center for Creative Survival found facilitators, kitchen crews, child-carers, and coordinated cultural work. The Magnus household coordinated transportation and workshops. The Sharon Street crowd organized a benefit dance and first aid. The Creek Land boys took on scheduling and motel reservations as well as providing material for banners and dress-up clothes (drag). And of course the cooking and clean-up crews at the conference were great.

Cooperation was real hot at the conference. Criticism was given in nurturing ways to advance our thinking, not to trash. We were a bit disappointed that criticisms weren't more developed, weren't more specific about what we could learn and how we could change in the future. But openness to criticism was very evident, especially the last day, where all of us experienced the incredible power of self-criticism in front of one hundred comrades.

The fall out from the conference is only beginning. Santa Cruz reports that the nine conference goers are forming a personal-political support group. San Francisco is keyed up in forming a new group split-off from Bay Area Gay Liberation. Portland has expanded from initial post-conference meetings to a new study-action group. The Eugene Stonewall Day Union was formed during the process of creating the conference. Morning Due will never be the same.

We sense from the feedback we have so far, that the faggots who were at the conference came away seeing more clearly how their oppression arises out of their relationship to production and the sexual division of production. We sense that class struggle and Marxism are more real to those who came, and that we will see in the future more outreach from and to non-faggot groups, especially lesbians and Third World groups, around issues of class.

Statement of Purpose

We are gay men from Eugene, Portland and Seattle who are calling a conference to discuss class struggle as it specifically applies to our own oppression. The purpose of the conference is to share information, experiences, and ideas, and to provide a format to begin to clarify the relationship between gay men's oppression and class struggle. Further, we want to work toward an analysis to develop strategies in a systematic way.

There is definitely a trend toward socialist revolution in this world today. Some of us believe it is inevitable. The same ruling class that oppresses faggots is also responsible for the oppression of women and millions of people in the third world. We should understand that our oppression is part of a large global pattern, and that this oppression will not end unless we support the struggles of women and third world peoples as well as those of the working class in the United States. All of us see a socialist revolution as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for our liberation. It is critical for us to support this great change and to participate in the development of a theory and a practice which gets to the root of faggot oppression and which takes into account that the oppression of faggots and women and third world peoples has been integral to the consolidation of the power of the ruling order.

It is easy to see that great masses of people in countries like China and Cuba have gained tremendous advantages through socialism. Even though faggots share these advantages, they still suffer a heavy burden of oppression. We are angry that some Marxist-Leninists in the United States have mechanically applied the model of existing socialist countries, assuming that their line on sexual politics is correct for OUR situation.

We cannot ignore that, in our experience, male supremacy is a special source of the oppression of women and gay men. All men benefit, in the short run, from sexism; and, therefore, most do not as quickly see why it is in their interest to struggle against it. It is clear that in the long run all people will benefit from that struggle. The ruling class derives the greatest advantages from sexism. Some of these are: keeping the working class divided (e.g. straight men won't show their tenderness and support for fellow working men to avoid fag-baiting); and providing a cheap reserve of labor for industry and a free source of labor in the home. We are eager to explore further these interconnections between male supremacy and class society.

In our country there has been a rise of feminist and gay consciousness, which gives us confidence that a socialist revolution here will be different. This revolution will deal with issues of sexism, such as male violence, male-dominated heterosexuality, the sexual division of labor, and the nuclear family. Women and gay men must take leadership in providing concrete analyses of these issues which complement the strategy of a socialist revolution.

Because all of the conference planners are white and many of them have petit bourgeois backgrounds (although several are working class), we recognize that the conference reflects some petit bourgeois thinking. We would hope that this conference will not follow the typical trend of being mainly a gathering of petit bourgeoisie. We therefore encourage registration from working class and

third world faggots, and we particularly encourage your criticism. We need this criticism to help us clarify this bias and change our class stand.

The format of the conference will encompass five major presentations with accompanying workshops. These are: 1) Marxist definition of class; 2) Socialist feminism; 3) history of the father-dominated family; 4) imperialism; and 5) discussion of what is being done and what is to be done. The planning committee is working to provide a structure and facilitation which offers information and focusing questions. We feel it is important for faggots who share our concerns to work together, and we recognize that we are starting from widely differing political viewpoints. Therefore, we want to discuss these issues in an environment that gives people ample opportunity to air differences, fears, negative feelings, and criticism about the content and process of the conference.

We hope to help each other develop strategies which relate to ongoing projects, and initiate actions in our communities. It is necessary for many faggots to work together to establish a broad-based solidarity. Our analysis must not be based on the needs and experiences of just a few of us. If you seriously desire to help advance the developing strategy about faggotry and class struggle, please join us.

In love and struggle,

Billie, Brian, Charles,
Garrett, Jamie, Kent,
Patrick, & Roger



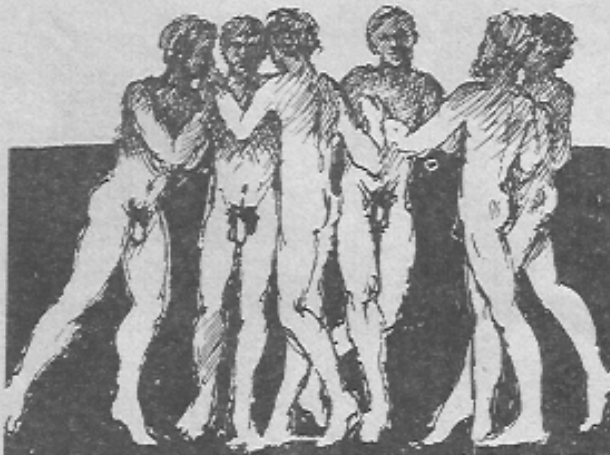
Excerpts from the Mail Out

UNITY

Our principle basis of unity is explained in the Statement of Purpose inside the conference brochure. Our basis of unity is not that we have a common political ideology but rather that we are committed to working co-operatively to explore, demystify, and develop our understanding of class struggle. This process is very difficult because there is a lot of mystification and confusion (both internal and external) surrounding this topic. The most powerful weapon we have against this mystification and confusion is the basis of unity with which we come to this conference.

The Conference Planning Group has worked to be clear about this unity and the purpose of the conference so as to avoid mistaken expectations. What this means is that we warmly and enthusiastically welcome all those who share this unity and come to struggle together. It means there is not room at the conference for those who do not wish to work co-operatively to explore, demystify, and develop our understanding of class struggle.

We do understand that, beyond the basic agreement that brings us all to the conference, there will be a wide range of experience, backgrounds, thinking, and political ideology. Because of this, there will be disagreements. Therefore it will be especially important to struggle co-operatively. It will be through sharing information, and honestly expressing and struggling with diverse viewpoints that we will build on our initial unity and strengthen ourselves. This process will be the life of the conference. Given the limitations of a three day conference, we have made space for this to happen; in the planned workshops as well as in the noon to 3:00 pm and evening periods when caucuses, ad hoc workshops and meetings can be held, without forcing those attending to miss planned presentations.



LEADERSHIP

The people in the Conference Planning Group are Billie, Brian, Charles, Garrett, Jamie, Kent, Patrick and Roger. We will introduce ourselves at the beginning of the conference. The Conference Planning Group does see itself in the capacity of

leadership at the conference. We do so because we have met since February to develop the purpose, overview, structure, and many details of the conference. Through drafts of the conference brochure and many conversations, we have sought out and received much valuable criticism. It has deepened our understanding and we have learned from our mistakes. This process will continue beyond the conference. This work has given us a solid basis and the responsibility to take leadership at the conference. The reasons for structure and leadership are not to control anyone's political development. It is to make sure that those who come to do what the conference was planned for have the opportunity to do so with a minimum of confusion and in a safe and nurturing setting.

Decisions affecting the conference which need to be made during the weekend will involve the conference at large, but the Conference Planning Group will have to agree to any decisions. This is necessary for security reasons as well as the general concern for continuity.

Naturally ours will not be the only leadership at the conference. The Conference Planning Group has taken leadership for the overall structure and purpose. However, we need and are soliciting other kinds of leadership, especially in developing the political ideas which will advance our struggle. We encourage everyone coming to the conference to take this question seriously and think ahead of time about how to make positive contributions to the conference.

If you have questions about or objections to the need for leadership, the nature of it, or who we are, please don't wait until the conference to raise them. Contact us ahead of time so we can devote all our energies to a productive conference once we get there.

SECURITY

Because of who we are and the nature of our discussions, the Conference Planning Group has given much thought to the need for conference security. There will be a security committee. Taking care of security is not a paranoid reaction, but a realistic concern based on the present political climate in rural Oregon and throughout the country. The security committee is directly tied into the Conference Planning Group, but will not necessarily be visible, as will the Conference Planning Group. This means there will not be any arm bands or badges. Nor will security people be sneaking around being secretive and freaking us all out. Their role is to take on these worries in a casual and clear way so the rest of us can focus our attention on the conference. Both the Conference Planning Group and the security committee will be subject to exactly the same rules as all conference goers. The security committee has the power to enforce only one rule on its own. All attending the conference must be registered with absolutely NO exceptions. All non-registrants will be told to leave with no appeals.

Conference Schedule

Saturday September 4

- 8:00 Breakfast
 9:00 Introductory Statement
 9:15 **Presentation**
Class and Bourgeois Ideology
 10:30 **Workshops** on Personal Class Background
 1:00 Lunch
 2:00 Open Planning Committee Meeting
Workshops:
 Marxist Understanding of Gay Oppression
 Socialist Realism (for Cultural Workers)
 Open Time
 3:00 Announcements
 3:15 **Presentations**
The History of Imperialism
Faggots and Imperialism
 5:00 **Workshops**
 The Imperialism of Food
 Faggot Oppression and Imperialism
 Racism in the Gay Community
 National Liberation in Africa
 National Liberation in Puerto Rico
 Native American Struggles
 Imperialism and the Canadian Gay Men's
 Movement
 What is Imperialism?
 How Imperialism Affects our Personal Relationships
 General Discussion of Imperialism
 7:00 Dinner
 8:30 **Cultural Activities**
 Stonewall Guerrillas
 Poetry
 Singing
 10:00 Sexuality Workshop: Practice in tipi

Sunday September 5

- 7:00 Dance and Exercise Workshop
 8:00 Breakfast
 9:00 Announcements
 9:15 **Presentation** **The History of the Father-Dominated Family**
 10:30 **Workshops**
 Personal Family History
 Production and Reproduction
 Father and Son Relationships
 The Jewish Family
 General Theory of Presentation
 Material Basis for the Family Structure and Changes in It
 Matrifocal Families
 The Nuclear Family as a Mini-Model of the State
 The Oppression of Children
 12:30 Lunch

- 1:00 Open Time
Workshops:
 Lavender and Red Union Workshop
 Working Class Caucus
 Jewish Caucus
 3:00 Announcements
 3:15 **Presentation**
Socialist Feminism
 4:30 **Workshops**
 The Sexual Division of Labor
 Socialist Feminism
 The Leadership Role of Minorities and Women in Socialist Feminism
 The Men's Movement and Class Struggle
 Faggots and Childcare
 Sissies
 Drag Queens
 Anarchism
 Gay Men Against Rape
 Socialist Feminism and National Oppression
 Dance Workshop
 6:30 Dinner
 Open Planning Meeting
 Working Class Caucus
 Sissy Caucus
 8:30 **Cultural Activities**
 Lavender Star Players
 Singing
 Fairy Tales
 Sing Along
 Acting Workshop
 11:00 Ritual

Monday September 6

- 8:00 Breakfast
 9:30 Announcements
 9:45 **Presentation**
Practice
 11:00 **Workshops**
 Prisoner Support
 Alternative Institutions
 Mass Organizing
 Theater as a Revolutionary Voice
 Cultural Workers (Working Class)
 Armed Struggle and Violence
 Union of Sexual Minorities
 Media: Magnus and Morning Due
 Civil Rights Organizing
 Organizing Faggots in the Workplace
 12:30 Lunch
 Older Faggots caucus
 1:00 Open Mike
 1:30 Criticism/Self-Criticism
 3:30 Closing Circle

CLASS AND BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY



INTRODUCTION

Hi! My name is Garrett; and this is Chuck, Kent, and David. Our basic presentation is long so there's going to be a short break in the middle of it. We're into hearing feedback, so feel free to talk to one of us during the conference if there's stuff you need to take care of.

A brief note about where we four are politically. We are all definitely gay men, and we are also definitely Marxist-Leninists. We believe that the economic system we're all living in, capitalism, is in a stage of decay. It will be eventually overthrown by the organized sectors of the working class who are the most oppressed and the most organized by the system. We believe that following that violent revolution there will have to be a dictatorship of the people (or proletariat) to replace the dictatorship of the ruling class under which we now live; but because that someday dictatorship will represent the will of an overwhelming majority of people, it can and will wither away. That's some basic Marxist stuff the four of us firmly believe in.

Our particular experience in problem solving has significantly helped us to thoroughly personalize our political beliefs. Through facilitating and sharing in a lot of problem solving work, we have come to see that a whole lot of the bullshit that we've internalized and that we go with day after day is a direct result of living under capitalism, and it's bullshit that is vitally necessary to keep capitalism running. And further, we've seen that how you internalize messages varies according to class background.

That's where the four of us are at. We don't feel it's necessary that everyone here agree with our analysis; but we are all certainly into talking to people during the conference about our politics, and our input will be from that basis.

The presentation and workshop this morning will be focused on class background. We are going to share with you a little bit of Marxist theory to lay a material basis for understanding how certain key aspects of how we grew up affect the way we think, act, and feel today.

We define class as relationship to the means of production, which means where do you fit in the economic system--worker, professional, manager, small business owner, large business owner, are some examples. We'll be going into this more in the presentation. What's ultimately important is class stand--how do you see the class conflict: which side are you on and working towards?

We are concentrating on class background, however, because it has too often been discounted, and with disastrous consequences. This part is hard and scary to write and say, because I have a lot of anger, and I don't want to blow you away with it. It's definitely not directed at anyone here.

I am from a working class family, poor, oldest of ten kids. For the past fifteen years I have totally discounted myself and felt off the wall because I was living with people from petite-bourgeois backgrounds who felt, acted, and thought differently than I did. And I thought they were the way everybody in the world was supposed to be; and I thought I was absolute total shit because I obviously wasn't.

Just this past summer I found out that I'm not absolute, total shit--I feel, think, and act differently to a large extent because I came from a different class than those people. I freaked out, I felt totally alienated from most of my friends and lovers, and I was seething with anger.

The reason I'm telling you all this is that through working on my feelings, through investigation of differences in class messages between me and Charles, and me and Kent, and me and David, and through the leadership of close lesbian friends in Eugene, also from the working class, who were going through similar experiences, we began to see a lot

of basic work that had to be done.

An important part of our analysis was about the left of the 60's and 70's. We see that the main reason we as gay people and many other oppressed groups of people have been so alienated from the new left is because it was organized and led mostly by people from petite-bourgeois backgrounds whose internalized ideas about life were drastically different from the people they were trying to lead or help. And it was precisely because these leaders discounted their backgrounds that they could not help but be alienating. We are going to try to lay the basis for understanding that if you grew up in a petite-bourgeois home you have to take that into account every minute that you're organizing, or writing your newspapers, or doing your radio programs, or "helping" people.

All of us here, working class and petite-bourgeoisie alike, internalize garbage that helps capitalism, and we're going to try to start getting in touch with that stuff and how that affects us every day.

Afterwards, when we break up into small groups we're going to do it along class lines; there will

be both working class and petite-bourgeois facilitators for those groups. We are doing this because this process of getting in touch with messages is difficult and scary, and there could easily be anger across class lines and misunderstandings. Further, unless there is already an ongoing commitment for struggle between people, there are going to be limits to how much your feelings can be taken care of with somebody of a different class background. If you're in a workshop of people mostly of your own class background, it will be easier to get in touch with internalized messages, and you'll find out that other people have felt the same way about a lot of things. So we encourage this kind of small group breakdown.

So, what follows now is a first discussion of production and how that looks under capitalism, with short definitions of working class and petite-bourgeois classes; and then we'll talk about bourgeois ideology, the stuff all of us learn, no matter what our class background, that keeps the system going, and how that differs in character between classes.

MATERIAL CONDITIONS of CAPITALISM

Introduction

My name is Kent. My part of this presentation is about how production is organized in capitalist society and how that determines class. First I am going to talk about production in general and why we think it is so important. Then I am going to talk about capitalist production, then a description of the basic internal contradiction of capitalism. All this will lay the groundwork to understanding what the different social classes are and why they are important. That's what I'll explain last.

Production

So what's the big deal about production anyway? It's a big deal because production means making stuff that we need to live: basically food, clothing and shelter. Without these things we would die. Almost all people spend most of their lives working so they can live.

People band together in societies and work together co-operatively in production to meet each others needs. The basic purpose of societies is to organize production in some logical way so that everyone's material needs are satisfied. Because providing food, clothing, and shelter is so important, the way a society organizes production forms its backbone, around which all other social institutions are built. Therefore, all our analyses begin with production, because we see this as the central human activity, the activity which gives us food, clothing, and shelter. Now let's take a look at capitalist society and see how it organizes production.

Capitalist Production

Capitalist production is based on a monumental rip-off. The majority of the people, the worker, are directly exploited by the minority of the people, the owners, or the ruling class. The nature of capitalism disguises this exploitation. But using tools which Marx developed we can expose this rip-off. To do that let's take a look at the economics of a craftsman who makes and sells a particular product and compare it with the economics of a craftsman who works for a capitalist making and selling the same product.

SHOEMAKER	CAPITALIST
\$4 Living Money	\$1 Living Money
\$3 More Raw Materials	\$3 Profit (Surplus Value)
\$3 More Raw Materials	\$3 More Raw Materials
\$2 Rent	\$2 Rent
\$1 Tools	\$1 Tools

TOTAL VALUE \$10

First of all the independent craftsman. Let's use the example of a shoemaker. He makes a pair of shoes from raw materials and takes the shoes to the market where he sells them for \$10. With this \$10 the shoemaker will spend \$3 of it on more raw materials, \$2 of it on shop rent, and save \$1 of it for the purchase of new tools when he needs them. This leaves him with \$4 which he is free to spend anyway he likes. Most likely much of it would go toward food, clothing, and housing, and the rest he might save or else spend on entertainment or other luxuries.

This cycle of buying raw materials, making shoes out of them, and selling them can continue indefinitely. The shoemaker buys raw materials and does work on them. This work increases the value of the raw materials. Where there was once just leather, there are now shoes. Through his labor he increases the value of raw materials and with this increased value he buys what he needs to live.

Now let's take a look at a shoemaker who works for a capitalist making shoes. Exactly the same process takes place as before. The shoemaker takes the raw materials and with the tools increases their value by doing work on them. But because the capitalist owns the shop, he, instead of the shoemaker, takes the shoes to the market and also sells them for \$10. Like before, the capitalist, instead of the shoemaker, takes this \$10 and spends \$3 on more raw materials, \$2 on shop rent, and saves \$1 for new tools. But now, and here's the catch, the capitalist does not give the remaining \$4 to the shoemaker whose labor it was that increased the value of that leather. The capitalist will give in wages only part of the \$4, maybe only \$1 or \$2, whatever is just barely enough to keep the worker alive. The rest of the \$4 the capitalist keeps for himself. And this is what he calls profit.

We can see now just exactly where this profit comes from. It was the labor of the shoemaker which increased the value of the raw materials, but the shoemaker did not get back in wages the full value of that labor. The difference is the profit. The entire capitalist system of profits is based on this rip-off of the labor of the workers. While the example of the shoemaker might be simplified, there is nothing essentially incorrect or misleading about it. In any large industry you can divide the expenses into the same categories of money for more raw materials, money for rent, money for more tools and machinery, and money for wages. And in any large industry the profit comes from exactly the same source, and that is the labor of the workers.

Even though the profit comes from exploited labor, the capitalist thinks he deserves the profit. He thinks he deserves it because he was the one who gathered together the raw materials, tools, buildings, and workers. But what did it take to gather together all these things? All it took was money to start with, or capital. The capitalist did no real labor. Only the workers did real labor. It's their labor which increases the value of raw materials and thereby enables the capitalist to make a profit.

Now that we've seen where profit comes from, let's take a look at another critical aspect of capitalism, namely competition. Before a capitalist can make a profit, he must be able to sell his product in the marketplace. If a competitor under-sells him, he'll go bankrupt. In order to be competitive then a capitalist must be able to make his product cheaply. He must continually search for

ways to decrease his production costs. To the capitalist this is a life and death struggle. Any capitalist who cannot sell a product competitively goes under.

Another effect of competition is that a capitalist must expand his business. Any capitalist who is content with his current rate of profit will soon discover the businesses around him growing in size and power and threatening his own existence. A larger, more profitable business is always in a better competitive position. On pain of bankruptcy then, a capitalist must decrease production costs and simultaneously expand his business.

The compulsion to decrease costs and to expand have profound effects on our society and the world. Let's examine the way capitalists do these things and the effects they have on us. There are primarily three ways a capitalist decreases costs: a) increasing productivity, b) reducing wages, and c) reducing the price of raw materials.

Let's talk about productivity first. Productivity is a measure of how much value a worker creates in a given time. If a capitalist can find ways to get his workers to produce more value in the same amount of time, then the capitalist can get a bigger profit out of his workers. One of the ways to increase productivity is with the use of machinery. Machines enable workers to process more raw materials quicker. One result of machinery is that capitalists need fewer workers. Every time a capitalist buys a new machine he can fire a few workers. When this happens on a nationwide scale, high unemployment is the result. This isn't the only cause of unemployment. I will show other causes later. But the total effect is that today there are seven million workers in the US who are officially unemployed. Who knows how many more are unofficially unemployed?

Another way to increase productivity is through increased division of labor. It works like this. Originally a capitalist might have 20 shoemakers each working separately making shoes. The capitalist discovers however that if he sets up an assembly line process with each worker only doing one particular task on each pair of shoes that many more shoes can be produced in the same amount of time. In other words the more a capitalist can reduce a job into component tasks and assign separate workers to each task, the more productive are the workers.

General Motors is quite proud of an auto assembly plant in Lordstown, Ohio, which can produce one Vega every 36 seconds. What does this mean to workers? It means that a worker has only 36 seconds to do a task on a car. It means that the worker must find a substitute before getting a drink or going to the bathroom because the cars never stop on the assembly line. It means that the task a worker must do is so simple that it can be done in 36 seconds and repeated hundreds of times every day. The capitalist has even hired efficiency experts to do time and motion studies on each worker's task and they have determined the most efficient way for a worker to move his or her arms and legs. The capitalist has robbed the worker of even organizing his or her own little fragmented task in the way that feels best.

It doesn't seem right of fair but the capitalist is free to do all this to the worker. The worker has no control over the labor process or over the product. This alienates the worker from the work itself and the product of the work. The efforts of the capitalist to increase productivity to absurd limits drastically increases the alienation the

workers feel. Anybody who has ever worked for someone else knows what this alienation feels like. When was the last time you talked to someone who liked getting up in the morning and going to work? When was the last time you talked to someone who just liked their job? That feeling you have when you go to work in the morning is the feeling of alienation I'm talking about. Multiply that feeling by 70 million workers in the US and imagine what kind of effect that must have on an entire society.

Increased productivity in a socialist state would be a good thing, because it would mean a higher standard of living for the people. But under capitalism the biggest benefit goes to the capitalist in profits, and the people are told to tighten their belts because times are hard.

Increasing productivity is only one way a capitalist cuts costs. Another way to cut production costs is by reducing wages. Nowadays wages in any one job don't tend to decrease but capitalists continually redefine jobs so they can pay less and less. Increasing the division of labor is the primary method for doing this. For example it takes a fair amount of skill to make a complete pair of shoes, and for that skill the capitalist would have to pay a relatively high wage. But once the capitalist puts the shoemaker on an assembly line with the job totally redefined and simplified, the capitalist can get away with paying much less.

With the number of well-paying jobs becoming fewer, the competition for these jobs becomes greater. Racism and sexism are ready-made ideologies which capitalists use to keep women and minorities from these few well-paying jobs.

Moving factories to the Third World countries where the standard of living is lower and reactionary governments prevent workers from organizing, is another favorite way to reduce wages paid to workers. Here again, racism is used to justify extreme exploitation of Third World workers.

Besides increasing productivity and reducing wages, the third way that the capitalist cuts costs is getting cheaper raw materials. The principal source of cheap raw materials is the Third World. Using every means possible up to and including warfare, capitalists have extracted from the Third World billions and billions of dollars of raw materials. The result of this plunder has been the death and suffering of hundreds of millions of Third World workers. Once again racism provides a ready made excuse to explain away this misery; racism which the capitalist uses to blind white people to the real causes of the suffering in the Third World.

Summarizing then, we've seen how the efforts to cut costs causes unemployment, alienation from work, increased racism and sexism, and the devastation of imperialist aggression.

Besides forcing capitalists to cut costs, competition also forces capitalists to continually expand. The capitalist who doesn't expand will be quickly swallowed by a larger competitor. The primary tools which capitalists use to expand are creating new markets within the US, creating new markets outside the US (which is another aspect of imperialism), and mergers.

Let's talk about new markets first. Capitalists continually search for new products and services which they can capitalize on. This effort to expand has resulted in capitalism encroaching on nearly every conceivable facet of our lives. Today we are forced to pay for goods and services which only a

few years ago were totally outside the realm of capitalism.



The need to expand has also forced capitalists to invest outside the US. Investment does not only happen in the Third World, in fact, US owned industry in Europe represents the second largest industrial power in the world following only the US itself. In the next presentation J28U will be talking more about imperialism, so it's not necessary to go into more detail here. An important point though, is that the competitive pressure of capitalism forces capitalists to exploit the Third World. Imperialism is not just a clever idea which some capitalists dreamed up one day in their leisure. It is an essential and integral part of the entire capitalist structure, and without it, the structure will crumble.

Besides finding new markets and imperialism, the third way capitalists expand is through mergers, or buying out smaller competitors. Over the years this has meant a steady growth of some businesses, while many others have gone bankrupt or been absorbed into larger firms. This process is so pervasive that the nature of competitive capitalism itself has altered. Where many years ago there may have been hundreds or even thousands of firms competing with the same product, today you may find as few as 3 or 4 firms competing. This is especially true in strategic industries like transportation, communication, energy, and steel. This results in a change in the very nature of competition itself. I'll talk more about this in a minute, but first I want to briefly summarize where we are.

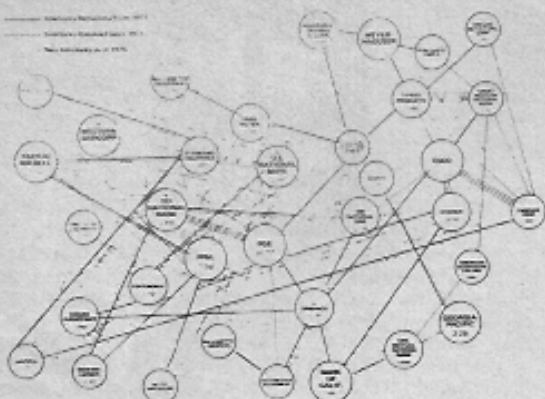
In order to make a profit in a competitive system the capitalist is forced to cut production costs and to expand. To do this he increases productivity, reduces wages, searches for new markets inside the US, expands into foreign countries, and buys out competitors. The results of these actions are monumental profits for the capitalists. For the workers they mean unemployment, racism, sexism, alienation from labor, Third World exploitation, and increasing dependence on capitalism to meet our needs. These actions change the nature of competition itself because of the growth of monopoly. Let's examine this change in competition.

The major effect of monopoly is that capitalists are able to co-operate because the number of competitors is reduced to a manageable size. Co-operation to a capitalist means finding ways to increase profits. This is done primarily by agreeing to keep prices artificially high. Consequently the consumers must pay even higher prices for goods and services due to monopolistic price agreements. A chart of interlocking directorates shows how easy it is for monopoly capitalists to come to agreements which are mutually beneficial.

At this time it appears that monopoly capital is very strong, but such an obviously destructive

INTERLOCKING DIRECTORATES: 1971-1975

The Growing Web of Corporate Power



system of production cannot proceed for very long without certain contradictions surfacing. These contradictions have long since surfaced in the Third World and they are being resolved by wars of national liberation. Let's take a look at the basic internal contradiction of the capitalist mode of production within the US.

Basic Internal Contradiction of Capitalism

We have seen how monopoly capital tries to increase profit by inflating prices, increasing productivity, and decreasing wages. But what is the source of profit to begin with? It is the purchasing power of the people. In order to make a profit the capitalist needs rich consumers to buy all the products which are turned out every day. There is no profit in an unsold product. But the problem is that there aren't enough rich consumers. With the increase of productivity, there is a great increase in the number of products which must be sold. But at the same time monopoly industries keep their prices high and their wages low. This means that the majority of the people who are working for these low wages don't have enough money to buy all the products that are produced. So there are too many products and not enough consumers.

How does the capitalist respond to this dilemma? First of all he relies more and more on the exploitation of the Third World to bolster sagging profits. Inside the US he responds by cutting back on production. In the old system of competitive capitalism, a capitalist would have to cut prices when the supply of products exceeds the demand. This would reduce the profits but the people would then be able to afford them. In the new system of monopoly, prices are fixed at a high level and production is cut. This reduces the supply of products and all of them can then be sold. The biggest burden is felt by the people in unemployment. For when capitalists cut back on production unemployment skyrockets. When this effect is especially pronounced, capitalists call it a recession.

Another way the capitalist responds to the problem of underconsumption is through the sales

effort. He constantly preys on the insecurities of the people to get them to buy. We are told that whatever it is that we want, even a lover, we can have, if only we buy the right product.

One of the craziest paradoxes of capitalism is that production is retarded at the same time that there are millions of hungry people in the world. For the first time in human history there is enough productive capacity in the world to meet the needs of every living human. But because the capitalist demands a profit, these needs will go unmet. The basic purpose of society is to organize production so that people can get what they need to live. But capitalism is rapidly progressing to a stage where it is failing in its basic purpose.

This is the single fundamental problem of capitalism. That because industry is privately owned and the owners demand a profit, the needs of the people cannot be met. There is a basic contradiction between the capitalists and the people. Using Marxist terminology, the private ownership of the means of production, that is, the capitalist, contradicts the social character of the forces of production, that is, the workers.

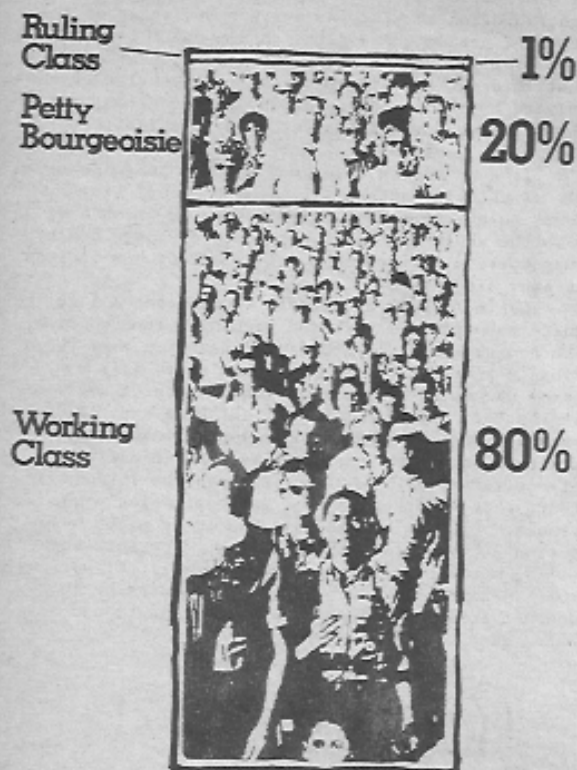
The Resolution of the Contradiction-Class Struggle

This contradiction means that there are primarily two opposing forces in our society, on the one hand the capitalists who are the ruling class and on the other hand the majority of the people who are the working class.

Besides these two primary classes, the ruling class and the working class, there is a third class of people who are in between. This class is called the petite-bourgeoisie. The petite-bourgeoisie is needed by the ruling class to assist with the exploitation of workers. The petite-bourgeoisie provides invaluable help like keeping the capitalist social institutions running: institutions like government, schools, churches, and social services. Workers do most of the labor in these institutions, but it is the petite-bourgeoisie who run them. The petite-bourgeoisie is paid more money than the workers because they are more important to the capitalists. And petite-bourgeoisie jobs are much less alienating than working class jobs because they carry with them a measure of prestige and responsibility and require more brain power. As a class the petite-bourgeoisie has more to lose in the struggle against capitalism and therefore cannot be depended on to lead the struggle, though of course there may be important individual exceptions. Some examples of petite-bourgeois jobs are lower and middle management in industry, or government, professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, or accountants, college professors, and owners of small businesses. By percentages, the ruling class comprises about 1% of the population, the working class about 75%, and the petite-bourgeoisie about 25%.

This contradiction between the ruling class and the working class is a real conflict, a movement of opposing forces. Generally in our experience, due to the vast economic, political, and military power of the ruling class, and due to the mystification of the class conflict itself, it is the

ruling class which is the stronger of the two forces. But like all contradictions, this is not a static one.



Because the exploitation among the working class is more blatant, the dehumanizing and fragmentation of work more total, the mystification of the class conflict is less effective than with the petite-bourgeoisie. This difference exists on a huge scale when we consider the working class of the Third World countries, ravaged by imperialism. Because the form of capitalist domination in the

Third World has been more desperate and destructive than anything experienced in the US, Third World peoples have resisted with increasing strength. Thus for the working class, here and internationally, the developing side, the rising side of the contradiction is the social character of productive forces, the fact of the humanity of the workers, that the workers have common human needs, the fact that they all must work to survive, and suffer exploitation at the hand of the same class enemy. Capitalism itself cannot solve its own basic internal contradictions. But it is the development of these contradictions which will inevitably awaken the people to the necessity of class struggle. For it is only through class struggle and the overthrow of capitalistic relations of production that the exploitation of the people will end.

What This Means for Us Here Today

Because class struggle is the tool which will change capitalism, we think it is important for people to get in touch with their own class background and especially with the messages, that is, with the thinking and feelings which were determined by that class background. As Marxists we know that thoughts and feelings have real causes. Thoughts and feelings don't just appear from nowhere. They come from the material conditions of your life. If you grew up working class, your material conditions were substantially different than if you were petite-bourgeoisie, and therefore your thinking and feelings will be different. I have tried so far to present an outline of the most important material conditions of capitalism. This should help us to understand the source of class messages, that is, what the material conditions of the different classes are and how these messages are different.

After a break Charles will get into this in more detail.

BOURGEOIS IDEOLOGY

Introduction

Now that we've seen what capitalism is and how it's had to develop into its present monopoly and imperialist forms, let's look at how this affects our thinking. To do this we're going to focus on what Marxists call bourgeois ideology. Bourgeois ideology is a system of ideas, ideas which come directly from our experiences in the material conditions capitalism has created, ideas which are mainly in the interest of the ruling class or bourgeoisie, and generally not in our interest.

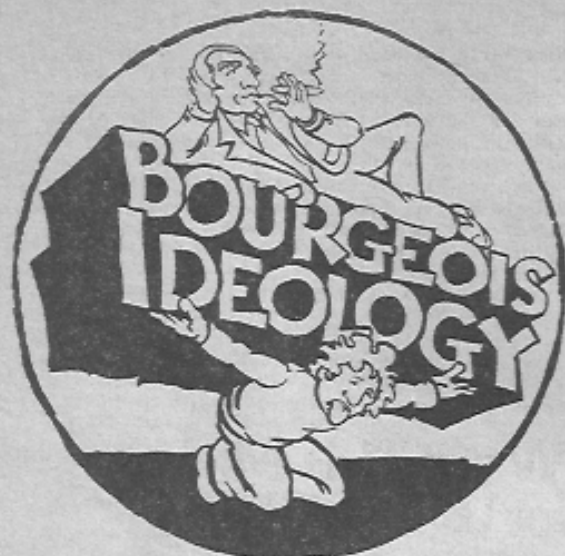
First I'm going to talk about the general character of bourgeois ideology, then I'm going

to talk about two specific examples of bourgeois ideology: individualism and romanticism.

Bourgeois Ideology in General

We can make a pretty good generalization about the overall character of bourgeois ideology. Mao calls it, in "On Contradiction", the metaphysical conception of the world. Basically, it's the notion that things just happen, that certain things change or don't change because they do or don't. This notion ignores or passes over the concrete conditions and the development of conflicting forces which give rise to change.

Concrete conditions and the development of conflicting forces are at the heart of dialectical materialism. We won't be talking specifically about dialectical materialism in this presentation. But we've tried in developing this talk to focus in a clear way on material conditions and to be



pointing out the conflict of opposing forces where it will be clear and helpful. Also, in my own experience, getting clear on what bourgeois ideology is and how I've internalized it has done a lot to help me understand dialectical materialism.

The main thing to keep in mind as we talk about this is that the very form of the system we live in demands that we think in this non-materialist, metaphysical way. Just look at what we live with day to day. At work, we're suddenly told to do a new job, or to do our job differently; a new piece of machinery comes in, a new rule; or worse, we're laid off. We're evicted from our homes, rent is raised, food prices go up, products appear on the market or disappear regardless of our needs. And in general the economy is chaotic and nobody seems to be able to do anything about it. The message of all this is that things do just happen, or—the same message in different language—that things are basically complex and impossible for most of us to understand.



"That's the way it is."

We've tried to show, in Kent's part of the talk, that there are in fact real internal dynamics that lead to these changes—real power and real social relationships. Capitalist society is chock full of contradictions, all stemming from the central contradiction between the private ownership of the means of production and the social character of the forces of production. All the conditions that I just laid out are direct or indirect results of the private ownership of the means of production, and the way those conditions force us to think is bourgeois ideology.

It's no wonder then that the things-just-happen way of thinking enters all corners of our lives. Ideas we get from work experiences, or first hand with the whole system of commodity exchange don't just operate in isolation. They affect how we look at many situations.

Let's look at an example from personal life, quite removed from work and seemingly removed from the economic system around us. Have you ever said, "That's just the way he is." Let's say it's a lover who doesn't feel sexy when you do or as much as you do. Any kind of brief thinking over the person's past or even his present will show you pretty clear reasons why you're both in different places sexually. Take for starters the intense fears that heterosexism and gay oppression can create. Or look at the many places he might have gotten heavy notions about having to perform sexually, notions he's long since given in to, notions which demand superhuman sex. It could be he just doesn't feel safe after some recent experience of being hurt or manipulated.



"That's the way he is."

Investigating this stuff together could make clear the kind of support you each would need to make changes in the relationship. But so often, in the intensity of the moment, it's easier just to say, "That's just the way he is, forget about him."

I've given examples of how our direct experience with the capitalist system of production can give us this "that's-the-way-things-are" outlook. But in more indirect ways our conditions lead us to this conclusion. Because alienating work is so physically and emotionally draining, and because the whole commodity system around us gives us no validation for our feelings and basic human needs, there are in fact real limitations on the change we can make as individuals. As frustrations add up, one on

the other, we often get to the point where the limitations seem total.



"I can't change!"

But where does this metaphysical view leave us? Mostly it's a good thing for the ruling class. First, it makes us ignore the many sidedness of a thing or a problem. And if we don't understand a problem we'll certainly ignore the options for change. Each time we go along with this it's another reinforcement of our powerlessness. Second, and because of all this, it leaves us seeing our friends and lovers as the problem rather than the bourgeoisie who set up the conditions which demand that we fall short of each others needs.



This is just one example of the metaphysical thinking which underlies all bourgeois ideology. All racist and sexist stereotypes rely on this outlook to make them seem logical. All of these ignore the real internal dynamics and external conditions of a person or group of people, and attribute

characteristics to women or third world people or gay people "because that's the way they are". For many people it's easy to see the masses of unemployed people as people who just don't want to work. The real causes of unemployment are pretty hard to see day to day. What we see is people not working.

We're going to talk briefly now about two particular aspects of bourgeois ideology: individualism and romanticism. We want to limit ourselves to these two examples in order to keep things brief. There are many other examples: racism, sexism, heterosexism, competitiveness, ageism. Some of these will be discussed in following presentations. We decided that these examples together with those presentations would be a solid enough framework for us all to begin investigating the oppressive attitudes we learn on the basis of class.



Individualism

For most of us individualism used to mean those good old qualities of self-improvement, self-reliance, and success. Most of us here through our experience have seen through this and recognize individualism as more of a bad thing than a good thing. It is our individualism that keeps us from looking to each other for support and which gets in the way of working cooperatively. We carry around messages like "you've got to figure this out yourself or you won't really understand it", or "basically I'm real different from anyone I know, so I can get away with doing things other people can't." For me, coming from a high petite-bourgeois background, the main class message was "I'm special." My individualism comes out something like: "Why bother saying my real feelings since I'm basically different and no one will understand anyway."

Again, if we look at our material conditions and the relations of production, we'll see where this way of thinking comes from. We're forced to compete with others who work to sell our labor power, competition which feeds our racism and sexism as well as our individualism. Our jobs are increasingly fragmented and automated, and we are isolated in our work from other workers. We in fact do have to make it through on our own in many work situations.

The exact form of individualist ideas varies according to class because the conditions differ. For the working class the human contact in work is at a minimum, the alienation more intense, and the capitalist more ruthless in striking a bargain for the worker's labor power. The individualism tends to come out in more out-front competitive ways. For the petite-bourgeoisie more thinking is usually involved in work, and when the capitalist buys their capacity to work he's dealing with more of a whole person. This carries with it some self-respect for the petite-bourgeoisie. But along with that the petite-bourgeoisie looks at more of herself or himself as a commodity. Their capacity to think as well as work is thrown into the bargain. Thus there's reinforcement for thinking that they have to and can work everything out themselves.

You might think about this for the workshops. Look at the particular form in individualist thinking you have and think about what aspects of your parent's work or expectations they had for your work were the material basis for this thinking.



We've chosen romanticism as an example of bourgeois ideology because we see it and its connections with sexism and the family as a crucial support for the capitalist system, and one that is central to our oppression as faggots. Our notions about love stand out in the maze of bourgeois ideology, because they tell us that love is the one place where our basic human needs for support, cooperation, validation, and contact have a place. But the kicker is that our romantic ideas mainly operate in a way that reinforces our powerlessness.

Looking back over the conditions of capitalism we have described, you'll see that our emotional needs are suppressed by the conditions set up by the private ownership of the means of production. First work is more and more fragmented and individualized, by the division of work into separate tasks. And more and more monopoly capitalism has been able to speed up work by simplifying tasks. We just don't have time to have contact with other workers. In addition we are forced to see ourselves in competition with other workers and to discount our common experiences and the support we could get from each other. Working a 40 hour week at alienating work leaves little time or energy to develop a range of relationships outside of the workplace.

Those of us who have had and taken the option of not working and devoted our energy to communal living situations and a broad range of relationships have discovered with rude shock that its near impos-

sible to maintain these relationships when we're forced to go back to work.

So where does this leave us? To totally suppress our emotional needs would reveal and intensify the central contradiction of capitalism. Instead we have the safety valve of the family and the romantic bourgeois ideology to support it. As faggots we are outside the heterosexual nuclear family but the same romantic notions control and shape our relationships, because we experience the same conditions which suppress and limit human contact for all other people living under capitalism.

The romantic myth is the supreme insult of the metaphysical outlook. We live in conditions which make it next to impossible to learn how to express our own or hear others feelings, to understand the basis of a friend or lover's needs and cooperatively create ways to meet those needs, to feel close and nurture each other. And when our efforts fail, romantic ideology tells us "love conquers all" and we brush aside the contradictions in our relationships until they flare up again, or, when these conflicts get too intense to handle, we give it up, with the explanation that it just wasn't true love or that so and so didn't fit the perfect lover model. Again, the metaphysical trick of treating the outward appearance of the problem as if it were the explanation of the problem. And we go on trying to get what our conditions make it impossible to get, telling ourselves we just plain fucked up, or didn't find true love this time around.

The more we're frustrated in our efforts to deal with the real internal conflicts in our relationships, the harder it is to even recognize them. And capitalist society places little value on the important aspects of a relationship, like learning to meet each others needs. It does value things like dress, appearance or mannerisms. It also plays a central part in establishing uniform norms for these superficial things. In our frustration and confusion with our relationships its easy to focus on these norms as if they were real, to objectify each other. The power of these norms in our lives increases the more our experience shows us we just can't make it with the real people we relate to. And to top it off the norms are exploited and further reinforced by capitalism's sales efforts, which tell us that if we buy the right clothes, cigarettes, cars, toothpaste, we'll be the perfect lover.

For lesbians and faggots, the difficulty of maintaining real relationships which meet our needs is compounded by gay oppression. We're forced into the closet and denied any validation for our relationships. The only place many of us can turn is the bars and baths where the norms become the basis for once again seeing ourselves as commodities. And those of us who can't deal with these marketplaces because we don't come close enough to the norms are excluded from even this exploitation of our needs.

Class difference shows up again when we look at romantic ideology. One place is how we internalize the romantic norms and what we do with them.

The petite-bourgeoisie in general gets more of what they need, or what they're told they need, and tend to expect more of what they want. There's generally more human contact at work. And generally more space to make choices in relationships, to ask for what we want. When conflicts come up in relationships it's easy to discount the real connections we do have with each other. We look at the romantic

ideal we carry around with us and figure that we could surely come closer if we looked harder elsewhere, or if that person would just change to fit our ideal. So we ignore the real options for struggle, for building on what's there.

For the working class, there's much less time, little or no human contact in the workplace, and generally a really strong message to forget about what you want. So it's easy in relationships to look at the idealized friend or lover and, seeing the vast difference between that and the real lover, to just accept that they'll never get the ideal. There's a good and a bad side to this. On the one hand, real connections between people are accepted. But on the other, the options for asking for changes are discounted and real needs are passed over.

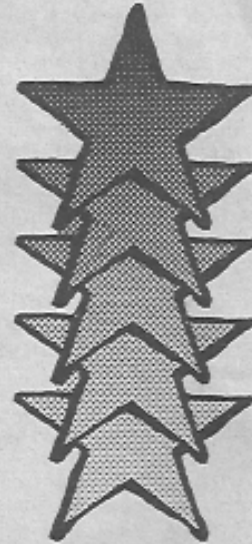
This is a very generalized scenario, and specific situations will look a lot different. But what's key here is that both petite-bourgeoisie and working class people end up discounting options for change in relationships, and the problems look similar. But investigation will show that for the petite-bourgeoisie this happens in the context of relative privilege, and for the working class in the context of powerlessness.

Conclusion

These two examples of bourgeois ideology are only a part of the whole system of ideas that keep us fragmented and make it hard for us to see the material basis for the problems we face. In each case we've shown examples of how bourgeois ideology is forced on us by the conditions we live in under capitalism. They are ideas we have all internalized and go with every day, although differences in class background critically shape the way we internalize and act them out. It's just plain not an option to get around or wish ourselves out of these conditions or the ideas they foster. What we can do is recognize them, the particular source of them in our own experience, get support in combatting them, and ultimately work to overthrow the private

ownership that is their prime source.

We have focused here on bourgeois ideology because it is the main obstacle to seeing the basic class nature of our society. These are not the only ideas we have. Our experiences also show us things which though suppressed, are mainly in our interest, not in the bourgeoisie's. The very same oppressive conditions we find ourselves in which foster bourgeois ideology are the identical material conditions that foster ideas which will bring bourgeois ideology to an end. Ideas like cooperation, or the strength we can have in unity. We will have to work to develop and nurture these ideas in order to make change around us. And we will have to make external changes in order to develop these ideas. A back-and-forth, dialectical process. Again this process can only be completed when the conditions that create bourgeois ideology are eliminated.



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The History of Imperialism

I'm Feed and this is Fervor. We are going to talk about U.S. history. And, it's hot.

We decided to do this presentation because we feel like U.S. history is real important and most of what we learn about history in the schools is a bunch of lies. So what we want to talk about is class relations in U.S. history. We are going to be focusing on three class relations: colonialism, slavery and black labor, and the situation of the industrial working class, especially women workers. We are going to try and do it in a half hour.

I wanted to say one more thing and that is that aside from how terribly nervous I feel just sitting here trying to do this, I also feel nervous about the question of unity and the question, ... that people have been saying about being abstract and being concrete and things like that which came up in our class background workshop. First of all, the stuff that I am going to present is stuff that I really do believe. I not insistent that everyone believe it, so that I would like you to be thinking of it in that frame of mind, that I'm not trying to push something down peoples' throats.

The other thing is that we tried to put as many examples of real things in as we could, but we, I, think it is necessary also to see how things work. The reason to see how things work is to understand what you have to do to change them. So there is some, like a lot of theoretical stuff mixed in with the historical examples. I hope that in addition to the regular nervousness, I can deal with that and with the directness too.

I am going to start out talking about colonialism, which began as we all know when Columbus discovered America. Columbus was sailing in behalf of the king and queen of Spain. Spain was a monarchy, basically a feudal monarchy. The church had a heavy influence in Spain. Columbus was looking for a more profitable trade route. This was the period of expansion. He ran into the Carribean Islands.

One of the things he wrote in his journal was the people that he found there are ingenious and would make good servants. So, what I want to try and explain is that the material basis of his travel was to find better trade routes because the economy of mercantile capitalism was beginning, was expanding, was taking over the economy of feudalism.

Also in this statement of Columbus' you can see the racist ideology which was backed largely by the church, which he had from the minute he got here. All the European nation states that had consolidated at that time got into competition for plunder and expansion in the New World.

I want to talk for just a few minutes about two examples. One was Spain which set up a plantation system in the New World and was also into mining. They took out alot of gold from the New World. Basically their strategy was to work the natives to death. They practiced genocide and it was endorsed by the church and the monarchy at that time. The second example was Britain. Britain chartered the Hudson Bay Company which held a total monopoly over the fur trade in the North Country of the New World. They were the law of the land. Their influence spread as far as they could extend their trading posts. What they tried to do was to create a totally dependent relationship between them and the native population. For ammunition and guns, the Indians had to depend on the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Hudson's Bay Company also started the whiskey trade which was also designed to create total dependency on the part of the native population. Up until that time they had a self-sufficient economy. The strategy of the Hudson's Bay Company was to take that away, and make them totally dependent on them, so that they could make about a 100% profit on every fur that the Indians brought in.

So these are two examples. They showed that the exploited countries that came to the New World not only exploited the land and resources of the native population, but they also forced the natives to do the labor, to exploit themselves. So, colonialism is fundamentally a class relationship, between the exploiting class of the colonizing nation and the masses of people in the colonized nation.

There are two aspects of this that I want to point out. One is that the productive forces were privately own by the colonizers, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Spanish plantations. But what they encountered amongst the natives was communal ownership--everything own in common--which presented a fundamental contradiction, a fundamental challenge to their economic system. Also the European nations had developed into states by that time, they had developed in to nation-states. Amongst the native population there was no state apparatus. They lived tribally and there was much more a feeling of equality amongst them.

The exploitation of land, resources and labor provided the accumulation of wealth for the colonizing nations--this is called Capital. Most of it went to the exploiting class in the colonizing nation, the European nations, but it also created a base of capital for emergence of an exploiting class in the colonies, say in the American colonies. This rising class is called the bourgeoisie.

At that time most of the profits were made thru trading. The idea was to try and trade at an advantage. Something that you produced for a small amount of money you would try and trade for something that was worth more. That was how mercantile capitalism made its profits.

Now, also all these European nations were in competition with each other in the New World for the mining for all the resources. They competed with one another. The rising class in the colonies, the American colonies, also got into shipping and mercantile trade. Itself became a competitor with the European nations. In that period say the 1750's, 1760's, that period, there were lots of trade wars between the European nations. You have heard of the French and Indian War in this country. It was essentially a trade war between the nations of France and Britain in which both nations tried to involve the native populations on their side.

I feel the American Revolution is in many respects a trade war also. In was a situation in which the rising trading class in the colonies was in competition with the trading class in Britain. There were alot of rivalries about shipping and there was also rivalry for all the land that was west of the alleghany Mountain. Do you know geography? Do you know what I'm talking about? All the western lands west of the thirteen original colonies. They were competing over who would be able to expand into those western lands, and the terms of trade because

England tried to regulate all the trade.

As we know the American colonies won their independence in 1781, but the competition between the bourgeoisie, the trading exploiting class in what then became the United States, and that class in England continued. Then there was the war of 1812. That whole period was continual competition between those two powers.

So the competition of expansion formed the economic bases for U.S. colonialism. The U.S. wanted to expand to gain more agricultural land in the South, and it wanted to expand to gain more ports in the north and form a buffer zone between the hostile natives and the civilized cities of the United States.

There were a lot of native American people living west of the Allegheny Mountains. I think about eight million.

At this time what is a racist ideology called manifest destiny was pushed by the ruling class in the United States. It was an ideology that said it was the supreme goal of the white population to expand from coast to coast. They wanted the whole continent. Their strategy was to either push the natives out or wipe them out.

The first contact between the new United States and the native Americans was one where the United States was negotiating from a position of weakness. What they wanted was treaties of friendship with the native population, so that the natives would feel more allegiance to the U.S. than to Britain and wouldn't be attacking trading posts all the time. So in 1787 the first treaty was made between the U.S. and a Native American nation, the Fort Stanwick Treaty. It was with Iroquois confederacy also called the six nations. The six nations were a very powerful group of Native Americans. The strategy of the U.S. was to neutralize their power.

The second part of the colonial strategy of the United States was military force. There were hundreds of military campaigns against the Indians. In 1787, the same year, Congress authorized the take over of the Ohio Valley. The nations of Indians which lived in the Ohio valley joined together and put up a lot of resistance. The Indians beat a force of 1,400 U.S. troops in 1790. Then in 1791 they beat a force of 2,000 soldiers. But then in 1794 the U.S. sent in someone called Mad Anthony Wayne, sort of similar to John Wayne, and he won at the battle of Fallen Timbers. On his way back he burned every single Indian village along the way.

These military campaigns were very expensive. You don't just send out two or three thousand man forces with no bucks behind them. The thing that I keep going through in my mind is where did the bucks come from, where did the money come from to finance that kind of military campaign. Keep that in mind.

Immediately something called the Ohio Land Co. was set up in which George Washington was one of the principal owners. They divided up the stolen land into tracts and sold it for a nice profit. The land business was a big business and it was very profitable. They also set up forts and trading posts immediately where they could trade more whiskey for furs and use the whiskey to destroy the native culture and build up the dependency of the natives. They also started trading small pox blankets to the Indians.

Immediately missionaries came in too, although they weren't sure that Indians even had souls---that was a big debate at the time---to civilize the savages. Essentially spiritual destruction.

Another aspect of the colonial strategy was outright purchase from a competing colonizer. The prime example was the Louisiana Purchase in which the U.S. bought more land than they had at the time. I don't know what the figure is that they paid for it, but it was in the millions of dollars. If somebody knows they could speak up. Eight million. Three million. Four cents an acre. That's still pretty big bucks, three million dollars. I still want to know where that money came from. My feeling is that it is part of the capital that was ripped off from the native Americans from the very beginning. It was also part of capital that was accumulated from slavery which will be talked about later.

From the very beginning Indians put up resistance to this colonialism. I feel like it is America's longest war. It has been going on since 1492 when Columbus wiped out the Indians of Hispanola. So armed struggle has been a constant form of resistance of the native populations.

In the 1660's was an example of this armed resistance. The Wampanoag Nation which was the nation that helped the Pilgrims get through their first tough winter in the New World which we celebrate at Thanksgiving. There was a war between them and the colonies. They attacked fifty-two of the ninety settlements that were in that area. They eventually lost.

There is also the six nation confederacy of the Iroquois. George Washington burned their villages during the American Revolution. They fought against the colonies in the American Revolution. There are the five civilized tribes: the Choctaw, the Cherokee, the Seminole, the Creek, and the Chickasaw which lived in the Southeastern United States. They had very advanced civilizations based on agriculture. When the U.S. decided to expand the strategy was to push them toward the Oklahoma territory. Three quarters of the Cherokee died along the way in what is called the trail of tears. That was in 1838. Andrew Jackson rose to fame as a village burner and his reputation was made through the Indian wars.



Another example was the Sioux. In 1876 at the Battle of Little Big Horn they defeated General Custer---one of the greatest victories for the Indians in over four centuries of colonization. The United States responded by assassinating Crazy Horse, one of the leaders of the Sioux by tricking him into one of their forts and just murdering him.

Indian resistance was basically crushed in 1890 when a force of United States troops masqueraded what was left of the Sioux Nation at the masquerade of Wounded Knee. That was in 1890. That's colonialism.

If one of the first foundations of the U.S. power was ripping off all these native American nations, the second big one was the use of black labor, either as slave or later as free labor. So I want to go back again to the beginning where we started off and show some things about what happened that made slavery what it was.

It started in the Western Hemisphere because there was a tremendous need for cheap labor. The European nations were competing with each other to expand their wealth and to gain more power. It was a very national kind of struggle with one nation fighting with another. So they founded colonies in Asia, Africa and the Americas to provide bigger markets for profitable trade and also to provide for raw material which they could then trade amongst themselves, among the European Nations.

So in North America colonists started to go into sugar, cotton, tobacco, indigo, and molasses to trade for English manufactured goods. England of course was just starting up its incredible industrial push. The colonists first tried to use native American labor. But the native American nations fought back. They refused to change their social system just to provide slaves or let's say agricultural labor for the colonists.



Then the colonists decided that they had to import labor. They first started by bringing over indentured servants. That means that a big percentage would be people who were just taken out of debtors prison, because England at the time were closing down farms. Millions of people were going into the cities. They had no way of earning a living. A lot of people would be thrown in prison. A lot of them were released from debtors prison if they would agree to be shipped to the New World and spend about 7 to 10 years being a servant. Women in particular were taken out of prison and sold to the farmer to be used as wives, servants needless to say. So the colonists that imported each one of these servants got 100 acres of free land. Guess where the land came from.

Since Africans were already being brought from Africa to Spanish and Portuguese colonies, around 1620 the British decided that they would get in on that too. When the Africans first came they were in fact treated more or less as servants. There legal

status was not clearly defined for about the first sixty years that they were here. In fact a few early African actually became free and imported servants themselves. Black and white servants often intermarried and they often ran away from their masters together.

No one liked the indentured servants system needless to say. There are many cases of blacks and whites who got together to fight against the whole system. This was an early form of class struggle in the colonies.

Two things happened that made slavery of black people possible. First the ruling colonists began to think of slavery as the only solution. But, they knew that the poor people in England that they were shipping over here would never consent to be shipped to the colonies as life-long slaves. In fact, even if they were forced over here the English system called the mercantile system, one of the things that it required was that every ship that had English goods or goods from the English colonies had to go through an English home port. That drove up prices for shipping. It meant it was more expensive to import those servants from England. They decided since the white Englishmen would never go for it and since it was too expensive in the first place, they would reduce the African people that were being brought here to live-long hereditary slavery.

They started doing this through a series of laws that began in about the 1660's. For example in 1662 a Virginia law says that all children of slave mothers were automatically slaves. At that time there were about 6,000 African people in Virginia and they sold for the equivalent of about five hundred pounds of tobacco each. In 1682 a Virginia law said officially that a black skin meant slavery and a white skin meant freedom.

What was it like for black people under slavery? First of all about 18-24 million of probably the best, healthiest people were brought from Africa at least taken from their homes in Africa at least got as far as the western shore. Estimated range from 20 to 60% of the Africans shipped over here died in the ship.

The trade was extremely profitable. It was the first large scale international trade. So the slave trade ended up being profitable by being triangular relationship of Europe, then Africa, then over to the colonies. England and France supplied manufactured goods and ships, Africa supplied the human merchandise, and the colonial plantations supplied raw materials for manufacturing. The ship left the home port with manufactured goods which sold for a very good profit in Africa for a ship load of slaves. The slaves were exchanged for another good profit for sugar, cotton, whatever. These crops which had already been produced by black slaves were where the new slaves were put to work. Finally, the agricultural goods from here, from the colonies were returned to the home country and sold at another profit. Usually a voyage would make about a 100% profit--that was an average. Some voyages made up to 400% profit.

All this trade made England the richest country in Europe. But, New England also got in on the shipping. The New England colonists got rich doing shipping, also producing food crops and fish that were sold to the Southern plantations which were already so specialized growing cotton or tobacco that they weren't growing food to maintain the slaves they were using.

The combined profits of the Southern planters and the Northern shippers and farmers were the money

accumulated together with the money coming from the rip off of the land, the labor and the resources of the native peoples who were here originally were the things that made the colonies rich enough to be able to declare independence. Black slavery and the rip off of native Americans can be considered as the main basis of the American Revolution.

For the blacks themselves, slavery meant mainly agricultural work and mainly in the South. Only about one quarter of the southern farmers owned slaves, but the importance of crops like cotton made slavery the main institution of labor. About two million out of the three million slaves in about 1860 worked on cotton plantations. The rest were mostly working in tobacco, rice and sugar cane. In Virginia and some of the other eastern seaboard colonies, slaves mainly worked on smaller farmers and the owners worked with them. Around the time of 1890 when the slavery trade was closed, Virginia and those states were going through an agricultural depression because the land was being worked out and was no longer rich enough to support tobacco and cotton which really drained the land apparently.

Virginia and Maryland decided instead of going into producing agricultural crops since the slave trade was closed they would go into producing slaves. They were specially bred for export in those states. This amounted to forced breeding, forced rape of all the women to produce children which were sold away from them as soon as they were of a profitable age. The owners were only interested in workers. They did not care about the black family. Their intention was to reduce all workers to one single unit so they could be shipped around easily.

The profits on this were pretty good too. It cost about twenty dollars a year to feed and clothe each slave. But by 1860 a prime field hand was worth a \$1,000. in Virginia and \$1,500.00 in New Orleans. So at the high point in 1850 Virginia sold 120,000 slaves in a single year. That comes out roughly to \$118,000,000.00 in slaves for one state for one year. The slaves were mostly sold to the deep south states of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana where cotton plantations were really booming. Here the slaves worked in large gangs usually with an overseer in charge. This is where

the plantation system reached its high point. This is like the mythological Old South where everyone lived in comfort sipping their mint juleps. It usually meant there were two sets of slaves; a set of house slaves that took care of the master's family, their laundry, their cooking, their cleaning, their everything. These house slaves were usually the most immediate victims of the master's every whim. That means that they were most subject to sexual exploitation for example. They were usually in a trickier psychological position than the field hands who were much worse off physically but rarely ever saw a white person except for their overseers.

The field hands had to cultivate the crop and they worked about 18-20 hours a day during harvest. A healthy adult slave was expected to pick about 200 pounds of cotton a day during harvest. That's about twice as much as I can lift, maybe five times as much. The slaves were allowed a ration of food every Saturday and they had to make it last a whole week. That meant maybe three pounds of bacon and one peck of corn meal and maybe they were throw in a sweet potato or a little rice or whatever and a little syrup. The slaves lived in little shacks without windows and only the better ones had beds. They were usually given shoes only in the winter.

That's a description of southern slavery, but of course, it was going on in the North too. Up

until about 1800 when most northern states started to free their slaves. By about 1860 there were about 5,000 free blacks in the United States about half in the North and half in the south Atlantic states. The free blacks tended to be urbanized. They tried to enter trades like machinist, carpenters and black smiths. But, usually the labor unions which were white wouldn't let them in. They were very afraid in at this early date of black competition. The free blacks often had to find work as common laborers. They replaced white workers who were moving into the western territories that were being every year ripped off from the Indians.

The free blacks were very restricted in their freedom. Their status was very shaky legally. Anybody could claim that a free black was a slave, turn that person in and usually collect a reward. It was practically an impossible situation.

Now here are some interesting figures. The institution of slavery generated incredible wealth for the United States. There are estimates I just read in a NACLA report that the total value of black labor from 1790 to 1860 up until a year before the Civil War. . . the total value from 1790 to then measured in current U.S. dollars, ones now, was some where between \$450,000,000 and \$995,000,000. I don't know what the gross national product of the U.S. is now, but I think you can get a fairly good idea where some of the money that made U.S. expansion possible came from. That doesn't even include the added value of Northern labor and shipping profits that were all connected to the textile industry that was growing up in the North, mainly based around the milling of cotton.

The rising plantation capitalism of the South soon came in conflict with those rising industrial capitalist in the North. The conflict came to a head over the struggle of both sets of capitalists to control the western lands which were freshly being ripped off from native people and from Mexico. The South wanted the land to extend the cotton kingdom on a slave basis because they stood to make more profits as cotton exporters. The northern industrialists needed the west to expand the national market for manufactured goods. They wanted it to be based on free workers who could buy their products and work their mines, factories, farms, whatever.

The North never really wanted to end slavery, but to contain it. The Civil War was really a fight over which capitalists were going to rule the United States.

Now I'm going to stop in a second, but there is one more important thing about slavery. People should keep in mind that it was not a coincidence that slaves in the United States were black. Remember the class struggle that I talked about when black and white indentured servants would run away. The colonists decided to go for black slavery.

The other side of black slavery was white supremacy. If someone is on the bottom, then someone else is on the top. Up until the Civil War the main white privilege was freedom from slavery. That means that you had at least some opportunity to rise economically, socially. But in general, the main reason for giving whites these privileges which they did have, and deliberately push black people to the bottom was to keep both blacks and whites down.

At first, it started out with the problems of the indentured servants running away. Even during slavery time it was still a problem. If blacks and whites had united the ruling class would have been out of there. By making whites believe that no matter how bad things were, they were still better off than the blacks, the ruling class could

rip off both very easily.

Let me stop with a little quotation from Karl Marx, you remember him. "While the white working men allowed slavery to defile their own republic, (while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence) they boasted as the highest prerogative of the white skinned laborer to sell himself and to choose his own master. They were unable to obtain the true freedom of labor."

So it was a good system. It threw almost a trillion dollars into the U.S. economy, and also enabled the ruling class to keep down everyone at once.

We've got more and I think we have already used up our time. . . Oh, know. . . We are going to have to go through the rest as quickly as possible.

In the early 1800's there was a period of industrialization in the United States. It was the period of accumulation of industrial capital. The growth of machinery as well, power looms, spinning jennies. The industries were textiles and shoe making especially.

The goal of the owners was to produce these goods at the lowest cost possible. To do that they wanted the cheapest labor possible. The first work force, the first free work force they used was women and children. In this early period 75-90% of the work force was women, the factory work force. There wages were already one fourth to one half of what men were earning. They were often paid by the piece \$3 or \$7 a week. At some times up to 2,000,000 children were in the work force. One reason for that was there was no free public education. There was a way of getting an education if you went to work in the factory. The official policy was forced illiteracy. In 1834 there were 1,250,000 kids who couldn't read or write.

The owners of these new factories also had the system going where the workers had to live in company housing and buy their food in company stores. They could also make a profit at that. The 12 hour work day was standard at the time. There weren't any labor unions. Working conditions were pretty hot and noisy in factories. Working in the textile and cotton mills produced a lot of lint in the air which got into the workers' lungs and coated their lungs. This is called brown lung disease, which is still going on in textile factories today. It is similar to black lung only there is no compensation for brown lung.

Also in this period there were strikes. The first strike of women workers was in Dover, New Hampshire in a cotton mill. They went on strike for a union. In 1828 also, boys and girls went on strike in Paterson, New Jersey against 12 hour day.

The biggest strike of the time was in 1834 in Lowell, Massachusetts in the mills there. A woman worker protested a 25% pay cut and was fired. It sparked an incredible strike with over a 1,000 women marching out of the mills. They were defeated, but they stuck together and eventually won a 10 hour day.

This is a period of transition in the means of production. Before that things like clothes and shoes were produced in the home by families in which women did a lot of that labor too, but it was more shared. In this factory system which was developing it was necessary to find the cheapest labor. Since single women couldn't own land, they could be brought to the cities and become the cheapest labor. Also they came with some skills which they learned on the farm.



I just want to bring out three points about women's work at this time. Work in the family and the home was defined as non-productive. It was unwaged and unvalued. This meant that even though they were reproducing the labor force, feeding and caring for children, doing a thousand jobs that women do in the home, it was defined as non-productive. There was just no way of survival for single women. From the beginning women were used as a reserve work force of labor. Whenever they were needed in the work force they could be brought in like in this early period or like during WW II. When they weren't needed they were kicked out. It depended on economic fluctuations. In the period around the 1840's the women in the work force were replaced by Irish workers. This pattern continued. The wave of immigration provided even cheaper labor. So the women were kicked out, the Irish were brought in. Later the Irish were kicked out and the Italians were used. It is a recurring pattern.

Also in terms of ideology, women suffered a lot under paternalism in the factory system. The factory owners took this attitude that they were bringing up these nice young girls, keeping them off the streets preventing them from being idle and picking up money from selling themselves--a totally paternalistic attitude. Also, many of the women who lived in the company housing had hours. They might often finish work at eight o'clock at night and have to be in their room at nine. The attitude was that these women were temporary workers they were only doing it for a few years until they married and began family life. Sexist ideology was there for sure.

The last thing I want to say about this period was there were periodic depressions, like the panic of 1837. What these economic fluctuations did was to make it real hard for labor unions to get going, because all the workers fought for the available jobs. One third of the work force was idle during this depression of 1837. The people were scrambling for the jobs. It was real easy for the owners to prevent labor unions from forming. Also at this time, 75000 people were in jail for debt. Wages were way down. At one point in 1839, nine tenths of the New England factories were out of operation. If it wasn't profitable for the owner to keep his factory going he just shut it down. He may have suffered a little bit, but the workers suffered more.

SOME OF THE MAIN CLASS RELATIONS THAT DEVELOPED UNDER U.S. CAPITALISM

Growth of Industrial Capitalism	Colonial Relations with Native Peoples	Super-exploitation of Black Labor	Subjugation of Industrial Working Class--Double Day for Economic Base
1. Accumulation of Wealth to be Invested	1. Economic Base Economic & Territorial Expansion	1. Economic Base Slavery to Produce Agricultural Wealth in South & Industry in North	1. Economic Base Development of Industrial Proletariat--at first Women and Kids
2. Brutal Competition of Business & Industry	2. Wars against Natives	2. Denial of all rights to Blacks	2. Constant Search for Cheap Labor--Immigration
3. Quick Unplanned Extraction of Resources	3. Systematic Destruction of Native Government and Culture	3. Whites given Benefit of Freedom from Slavery--Chance to rise--Beginning of White Supremacy	3. Repression of Labor Organizations
	Ideology	Ideology	Ideology
	"Indians are savages"	"Blacks need & like slavery"	"Everyone works"--transformation of the family to provide workers
	"Manifest Destiny"	"Only whites know how to govern themselves"	"Different nationalities, men & women, can't get along together--compete" "Workers are illiterate drudges" "Women need to be taken care of"

Look at the chart. We have covered colonialism, black slavery and the situation of the industrial working class especially women workers. I was going to summarize these points but it (the chart) is basically divided so you can see what the economic or material basis was during that period in history and also what ideology was going along with it; manifest destiny, blacks are inferior to whites, sexist ideology. These were major props of the economic system that was developing. Ideology and the material base reinforce one another and produce the kind of shit we were talking about. We got to move right along.

The period that begins in 1890 there is a change to what is called imperialism. I want to read a couple of quotes of what was going on in this period. It was a period in which colonialism was spreading beyond the borders of the U.S. to the Spanish-American War back when the U.S. took control of the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other nations.

This one senator says the Philippines are ours for ever. And just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets. We will not retreat from either. We will not repudiate our duty in the Archipelago. We will not abandon our opportunity in the Orient. We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustee under God of the civilization of the world. And we will move forward in the world with gratitude.... This was spoken by Senator Albert Beverage.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts said something similar but he also goes into some of the history of it. "Our opponents put forward as their chief objection that we have robbed these people of their liberty and have taken them and hold them in defiance of the doctrine of the Declaration of Independence in regards to the consent of the governed. As to liberty they have never had it and have none now except when we give it to them protected by the flag and the armies of the United States.

"The second objection as to the consent of the governed requires more careful examination. Jefferson took the Louisiana Purchase without the consent of the governed, it was right there. We received a great cession of territory from Mexico. There were many Mexicans living in the ceded territory, we never asked their consent.

"If the arguments which have been offered are

just then our whole past of expansion is a crime. Does anyone really believe it? I am not ashamed of that long record of American expansion, I am proud of it. The taking of the Philippines does not violate the principles of the Declaration of Independence but will spread them among a people who have never known liberty and who in a few years will be unwilling to the shelter of the American flag as those of any other territory we have ever brought beneath its folds.

"The next argument is that we are denying self-government to the Philippines. Our reply is that to give independent self-government at once to a people who have no just conception of it and no fitness for it is to do them with a curse instead of a blessing. We have no right to give up those islands up to anarchy, tyranny, and piracy. The Philippines are not now fit for self-government. The form of government natural to the Asiatic has always been a despotism. You cannot change race tendencies in a moment."

That was 1900 also. Right around the time. Actually the situation in the Philippines was that people there had taken over self-government. They had kicked out Spanish colonialism and actually set up their own government with elected representatives and democratic rule. But the United States decided that they couldn't handle it and moved in. The main reason was to expand trade and because of its racist ideology which these two dudes bring out real well.

So, the United States took over a lot of other islands at the time with different strategies. The island of Hispanola was divided in two into the Dominican Republic and Haiti, both of which are still maintained pretty much as neo-colonies, they are controlled pretty much by the U.S. Guam has become a territory of the United States, and the Hawaiian Islands were annexed and now eventually became a state. Cuba was also taken over at that time. Since then they have had a socialist revolution and their experience has been a little different from those other islands.

Part of the same expansionist mentality was the War in Vietnam. In 1945 Ho Chi Minh declared independence from French colonialism. But from 45 to 54 the Vietnamese had to fight a war against the French. The French forces were paid for almost entirely by the United States. Then when the French were driven out, the United States moved in. From '54-75 the Vietnamese had to fight against U.S. imperialism.

I want to close my section by talking a little bit more about the Indian wars which have sprung up again since February 27, 1973 when Wounded Knee was liberated. The Oglala Sioux who live in the area around Wounded Knee based their hopes for sovereignty on the treaty made in 1868 between them and the United States which has been broken as all the other 371 treaties made between the U.S. and native American nations have also been broken. The treaty guarantees them most of the land in South Dakota and they say they want it.

There have been other land take overs like in Northern New York the Algonquian Nation claimed by Mohawk Indians. There have also been factory take overs on the Navajo nation and on the land of the Yankton Sioux. The workers there have taken over factories because they know that the factories are owned by white people and the whites are getting the profits.

There have also been a struggle for fishing and water rights. The Pitt River Indians have been fighting Boise Cascade, the Hearst Corporation, and Pacific Railroad, whatever, it is. A huge fight to be able to have fishing rights.

There has also been a constant struggle against the FBI and the BIA. I really want to wrap this up quick. There is a lot more I would like to say about native claims to sovereignty. They have a lot of resources under their land: 90% of the Uranium, 70% of the coal, and 60% of the oil. They are taking their case to the United Nations. They recently had a treaty conference at which Australian Aborigines, Mexicano people, natives from Africa and from Puerto Rico, all came together to talk about defeating U.S. Imperialism.

When I stopped talking before it was sort of like the Civil War. What happened was the North won the Civil War. Originally they didn't plan to end slavery. But, what happened was that in addition to the 250 recorded times that black people rebelled against slavery during slavery times and the millions of times that individual slaves refused to work, the main things that helped the Civil War come to an end and made the slaves free was that the slaves left the plantations. They refused to work for the Confederacy. So, they had what you could call a huge general strike and they ended the Civil War.

Then there was a short period of reconstruction from about 1865 to 1877 when black people and poor whites for the first time since the original colonists decided to have black slavery, for the first time they worked together. They did some incredible things. They established free public education for all. They started mental hospitals, aid to the poor, and they abolished debtor's prison. They exempted homesteads from seizures by banks. Laws gave women rights to divorce, control to their children and child welfare laws were enacted.

But, reconstruction was smashed. It was smashed not just by the Ku Klux Klan, but in every state there was a coup which took power for the new ruling class of white people who were mostly white people connected with the northern industrialists and they were also people who were interested in developing markets in the South. Black people instead of receiving forty acres and a mule which they thought they were fighting for in the Union Army, instead of ending up with their forty acres and a mule ended up with being put back on the land. This time they literally weren't slaves, they were serfs, they were sharecroppers. That meant that they worked on a small farm. They agreed to give the owner of that farm a certain percentage of their profit and would therefore get to keep part of their crop. Unfortun-

ately they ended up so in debt by the end of the year that often as not they ended up owing money to the owner.

In the North black people continued to work and have a difficult time getting into industry. Until about 1890 most blacks were still in the South. After the 1890's blacks started moving more often to southern and northern industrial cities.

Then the whole structure of the U.S. started to change to a system of imperialism. The United States started to expand. It started to move out to the Philippines, to Puerto Rico, to different places. That meant that they could make other countries work for the United States profit, for the capitalist's profit. It meant that the struggles of working people here a little bit softened up because they could make people, for example, in Puerto Rico even worse off than people here.

Black people, native people, and Mexicano people ended up being special sets of the workers in this country. They ended up being treated pretty much the way those people in the Philippines, or those people in Puerto Rico, or those people, for example, in other countries that the United States controls economically. They ended up being treated in that way. They were made a special lowest class of people. It was especially important that they do that. Their work generated more profits if they didn't get paid as much, if they were held down the lowest. By keeping those Third World people down, there would still be competition by white workers who would fight to protect their jobs from Mexicanos, Blacks, Asians, and keep the groups fighting with each other so they could never get the power to take over.

In the age of imperialism, black people started leaving those farms. They started coming to the cities. By 1910 80% of the black population was still in the South. But by World War II black people started leaving the South in a much bigger movement. So that after World War II it was more or less half and half with half the black people living in the South and half living specifically in northern cities.

Technology of the farm made it more and more difficult for the Black people to work as sharecroppers. They got moved out more and more. They started moving into the cities. Unemployment went up in the cities. Black people were always relegated to the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs. They consistently earned less than whites in the same occupation. They have always been the last hired and the first fired.

Right now with the crisis of unemployment that exists in the U.S. right now, Blacks and other Third World people along with women form a labor reserve. They form a special set of people that can always be pushed on in case of unemployment. I work with a job that does work with welfare recipients. It looks like Blacks and other Third World people in addition to being merely unemployed are no longer even being maintained on welfare. It appears that the idea now is not merely to stop employing people when it gets too tight, but to kill them off too. That's why, for example, 33% of the women in Puerto Rico have been sterilized. In the United States also among Third World people, Black people, Mexicano people, the Puerto Rican people that live in the United States, there is a tremendous push for sterilization. Also the police have to come down much harder now on Third World communities because Third World communities know they are being fucked over.

The economic changes under imperialism means a new kind of oppression for Black people. It means they're oppressed not in the slavery way, they still

occupy the lowest level, but now they are underemployed and underpaid wage earners. This position makes bigger profits. It also keeps everyone fighting. If white fight to keeps blacks away from their jobs then the bosses don't have to worry about the threat of all workers fighting to destroy the whole capitalist system.

Just to try to finish up. I wanted to talk a little bit more about industrial workers. The whole history of industrial workers since about 1860 has been wave after wave of immigrants who have come in and replaced each other. One group tending to move a little bit higher as the next group moved in; first Irish, then German, then French, Poles, Russian Jews, Italians and others. Usually they first lived in cities in crummy tenement housing. In the West were land speculators ripped off land from the Indians, cattlemen and the railroad barons turned Mexicano people into new kinds of workers who worked on the railroads and the mines, or the big factories in the fields instead of in sweatshops they way people worked in New England or in New York.

In the mid-1800's Chinese men first came to work on the railroads and in the mines. They worked in competition with the eastern shops. On the west coast they made woolen goods and cigars, too. Later Japanese and Philipinos came here. They were usually contracted. Contractors would go to the Philipines and say come on to Hawaii and later to come on to California where you can work and find good jobs. Usually that meant they made about \$4 a month and lived in labor camps. The agricultural worker in California is in the same position now.



At first only Asian men were allowed in. Later Asian women were allowed in, but they were called prostitutes when they came to join their husbands. This was because the arrangements were often based on Chinese and other Asian societies' traditions in which not always the man and woman were introduced to each other before they got here. So they were called prostitutes for not conforming to the U.S. system of the way romantic love and marriage were supposed to go.

That is what the history of industrial work has been like in the United States. People first worked in sweatshops, for example, in the lower east side in the early 1900's. There was a ward called Jew town where one-third of the people slept in rooms without windows, where most people worked sewing garments. A labor contractor would get a contract from a manufacturer of clothes. He would take the contract back to the workers. Suppose he got a contract to make a hundred overcoats. This week there wouldn't be so much work. The contractor would say he would take the coats but he would take them at a lower price than other contractors. Then he would go home to the workers and say, 'I didn't

want to reduce your wages, so all you have to do is that each of you has to turn out one more coat than you usually do.' So if you were making seven you would make eight, if you were making nine you would make ten. It was a speed up. He very kindly would not reduce their wages, but he would make them work harder, make them produce more in the same amount of time.

It was a bind, because the contractor was usually somebody that worked right beside the workers. He was stuck in a position between the manufacturers and the workers. Needless to say the workers who did the sewing and not the contractors were the ones who ended up with the crummy part of the deal.

Here is just a little example from Chinatown in San Francisco right now. The shops where Chinese women work to sew shirts, for example, get about \$6,000,000 a year. That's the little sweatshops that are distributed throughout Chinatown. The workers get about half of that amount, maybe around \$3,000,000. The manufacturers like Levis Strauss who farms out all these shirts sells them for \$18,000,000 to places like Roos Atkins, or other stores that sell Levis Strauss clothes. Roos Atkinson or the stores that sell the clothes get \$36,000,000 for selling the same amount of clothes. It is a situation where these Chinese women work and get about three million dollars out of the thirty-six million.

There came to be a big problem of labor organizing among these Chinese workers. There's a problem because the union organizers didn't understand the situation. The Chinese women who work in these sweatshops are women who usually have kids. They need to work in a situation where they don't have to be at work a set eight hours a day. They need time to check with their families. They have to go home and do the cooking and do whatever is necessary. So, they like a situation where they can fit their hours into what needs to be done. So they do piece work. Not because if there wasn't a better situation they wouldn't do it. But it is a situation where the fact that women are expected to in the home and are expected, in this case since they are poor working class families who can barely survive, to go out and work. It is a situation in which those women are oppressed three ways. They are oppressed as Chinese, they are oppressed as women and they are oppressed as workers in this situation.

What happened is that a labor union went into Chinatown and said we must organize these Chinese women. They had trouble organizing them because the women needed some situation that was similar to that (one where they could go home during the day) even if it wasn't or wouldn't always be this capitalist situation. The Chinese women resisted organizing because the unions wanted to change the entire system, the entire way they worked. The labor unions got so pissed off the Chinese women wouldn't join their unions that they tried to get all of Chinatown zoned residential so there couldn't even be any factories in Chinatown. This would have meant that there wouldn't be any economic basis for those Chinese women to work at all. This is obviously not a solution to the problem at all.

It comes up and it is another example of where the people who are called workers here in the United States are not just workers. One of the main things that imperialism has done for the entire United States social structure and the way it deals with its power over seas is that there is certain forms of oppression that cut across, cut through the class of working people. One of those is the way that women are doubly

oppressed. They are oppressed both as women who are expected to work in the home. That means that there is unwaged labor for the boss. The woman takes care of the boss' workers. She also takes care of all the boss' future workers. At least 50 of women in the United States also work for wages. So, she is oppressed twice. Third World people are also oppressed in the same way, twice. They are deliberately excluded from a number of social, political, legal rights. They are also kept deliberately on the bottom of the economic scale. It is a creation of special oppressed classes.

Finally we can finish. People who are still awake enough to read this chart will notice that there are two sections. The first one is about the rise of U.S. industrial capitalism. We went thru that up to the Civil War. The second section is how those three relationships change and develop under imperialism. We defined imperialism as the United States going international, and making other countries be the workers for our profit as well.

It also means the state and the capitalists work together to plan economics and politics. We can keep Chile down economically and if that doesn't work we can arrange for a coup. It also means better conditions for U.S. workers than for workers in other countries.

In some special relationships these three that we are showing you here, that doesn't exactly work out. The three sets of people we have talked most about: women workers, native americans, black workers. There is another special set of oppression that splits the working class. It is that special oppression that makes the fights of women, of Third World people, in general, native americans and blacks, other Third World people in the United States, Mexicanos, Asian, Puertorican; that makes those struggles particularly sharp.

I just want to stop. I am sorry that I went on so long. One of the workshops about imperialism can be used to go into things further. One more thing, this was not a June 28th Union presentation.

Rise of Imperialism—International Monopoly Capitalism	Colonial Relations with Native Peoples	Super-Exploitation of Black Labor	Subjugation of Industrial Working Class—Double Day
	Economic Base	Economic Base	Economic Base
1. Division of International Market Among Industrial Giants	1. Systematic Concentration on Native Mineral Resources	1. Blacks Made Special Lowest Group—Last hired, First Fired	1. Use of Third World People as Reserve Army of Labor
2. State & Capitalists Work Together to Plan Economy and Politics	2. Puppet Native Governments	2. Brutal Repression of Black & Freedom Struggle	2. Concessions to Workers & Poor in U.S.
3. Better Conditions for U.S. Workers—None for Oppressed Nations	3. Sophisticated Genocide Sterilization, etc.	3. Whites get Relative Privileges—White Supremacy	3. Management of Labor thru Bargaining and Unions
	Ideology	Ideology	Ideology
	4. U.S. National Supremacy		4. White & Male Supremacy
	"White Man's Burden"	"Blacks will take our jobs"	"Women's Place is in the Home"
	"Fight Communism"	"Third World Peoples are Inferior"	Racist & Sexist Ideology keep Workers Fighting & Weak

Faggots and Imperialism

We have all come here to this conference because we are striving to improve our work in the struggle against gay oppression. We know that oppression exists and that we want to learn how this system that oppresses us works. That knowledge will teach us how to fight effectively.

We are members of the June 28th Union and we prepared this presentation because we believe that gay oppression is part of the world-wide system that uses sexism, racism, and all other forms of oppression to maintain itself. This world-wide system is based in the economic and political institutions of monopoly capitalism, but as a system it creates a social structure that conditions our every action, every feeling, and every thought.

Our presentation is based on the idea that by understanding how imperialism works, we get at the root cause of all oppression, including the oppression we suffer as gay men. We will use Marxist ideas to explain and to analyze how the imperialist system works.

Marxism provides excellent tools for understanding the inner workings of capitalism in order to destroy it and replace it with a cooperative, anti-profit system of socialism, under the rule of the working class. But Marxism is not a set of dogmatic rules. Each successful revolutionary struggle has adapted Marx's ideas and tools to fit its own situation and the conditions of a continually changing world.

In our country we also have the responsibility and creative task of studying and using the lessons of the past, but also of applying them to the actual conditions of our country, if we are to succeed in building the revolutionary movement we as faggots need to join in constructing. It is in this spirit that we share our ideas.

Definition of Imperialism

Imperialism is the most developed form of capitalism. It has expanded to control most of the peoples

of the world today. Imperialism is a total system--economic, political, social, and cultural--that dominates much of the world. A capitalist ruling class and to a lesser extent Western Europe and Japan, mostly corporate giants, make enormous profits thru the exploitation of the resources and labor of Third World peoples. The wealth created by workers and from these resources goes back to the U.S., Western Europe and Japan, mainly to the capitalists, but a little to the better off workers in the imperialist countries. In return for cheap labor, raw materials, and markets, the Third World countries are left with poverty and starvation, dependent economies, ecological devastation, rape and genocide, and the



1961, 400 Years of Chicago History

destruction of popular culture. Development in the imperialist nation means underdevelopment in the imperialized nation. For example, in Puerto Rico, the agricultural farming industry has been destroyed by U.S. imperialism. People who were agricultural workers left farms to work in sugar factories. Puerto Ricans were then displaced to the U.S. in attempts to find jobs.

In the U.S., the imperialist system means not only the oppression of Third World peoples, but the denial of democratic rights to all people through such things as SB 1 and the CIA and FBI, who use outright spying and sabotage.

In the 20th century, imperialism has taken the form of neo-colonialism. This means outright control beneath a facade of national independence. Political power is in the hands of a collaborationist bourgeoisie, e.g. the Philippines or Puerto Rico.

For the majority of the majority of people in the world today, imperialism means a complete lack of control over their own existence. People around the world are struggling against imperialism, a struggle which eventually will create socialism world-wide.

A Brief History of Imperialism

European powers started to colonize the non-western world in the 16th century (the New World conquered, Indians exterminated, Africans enslaved, Asia conquered).

In the New World, the English colonialists established an independent country of Europeans by ripping off and killing Indians and by exploiting the labor of all peoples brought here, mainly African slaves.

As Spain declined as a colonialist power, the former Spanish and Portuguese Empires became independent but came under U.S. control as a neo-colonialist area.

More directly, the U.S. conquered the northern two-thirds of its neighbor, Mexico, while expanding to conquer all the Indian nations of the Pacific.

As capitalist economy expanded, it had to grow. New markets, sources of raw material, and labor were needed. Large numbers of poor Europeans were brought to the U.S. to supply that needed labor.

The U.S. also imported Asians from colonial areas in Asia, e.g. China and the Philippines, as a cheap labor source.

In conclusion, Imperialism included the U.S. ruling class controlling Third World people throughout the world and also Third World people in the U.S., either through direct conquest--e.g. Mexicans and Indians--or those who were brought here as slaves or as cheap labor--e.g. Africans and Asians. It also creates economic crisis within the borders of the U.S., as we shall shortly see.

How Imperialism Works

The way imperialist capitalism oppresses people works in three main ways: the oppression of Third World people, the oppression of women, and in class oppression.

Imperialism and Third World oppression are two aspects of the same historical process of the exploitation of Third World peoples inside and outside of the U.S. Outside the U.S. it takes the form of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Within the U.S., the imperialist system is felt particularly in the forms of national oppression and class oppression of Third World peoples. National oppression means in



part that the survival of imperialism depends on the deliberate and systematic oppression of Third World people beyond the exploitation that faces the working class as a whole. All institutions are set up to exclude Third World people--poor housing, poor education and health care, for example, always hit Third World people the hardest. Third World people are at the bottom of the working class. Employment and unemployment systematically places Third World people on the economic bottom and it always has.

The imperialist capitalist system is based in part on the oppression of women, too. Unpaid labor in the home is one way. Women carry most of the burden of cooking, cleaning and childcare. They also supply a reserve labor force, i.e. they are available to work outside the home when they are needed. The jobs they are likely to have are

non-unionized and low paying. What this means is that women are in a double bind. They are forced to work inside and outside the home.

Women's unpaid labor helps to maintain the family which occupies a central position in the U.S. economic system and also maintains sexism. The family as an institution provides for the transference of private property, reproduction and socialization of the work force and is the main unit of consumption.

Under imperialism, women face a particular oppression. Third World women are sterilized when their children are no longer needed as workers, e.g. Puerto Rico. This means genocide as with Native American women. Third World women are used as prostitutes for imperialist armies as was the case in Viet Nam.

In imperialist countries the working class as a whole is deprived of political power and is economically exploited. Since this can only change basically through socialist revolution, the basic self-interest of the working class is with the revolution--working people's collective control of resources, and human equality and dignity for all women and men.

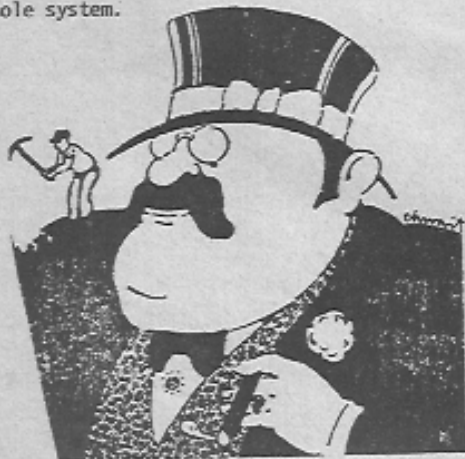
Some of the wealth taken from the Third World is given to some of the working class, largely the white workers. So even though they are exploited and are powerless, they (the white workers) have more material benefits than the super-exploited Third World workers in the U.S. and in Third World countries.

As imperialism is defeated in the Third World and as imperialists lose their wealth, this loss will be passed on to the working class in the imperialist countries--even those that receive extra material benefits now--in the form of inflation which is a form of cutting back wages and in cut-backs in welfare, unemployment benefits and other social services.

As U.S. workers organize and demand better conditions, businesses move to the Third World countries, e.g. Puerto Rico. These are called runaway shops. As U.S. farm workers organize more oppressed Mexican workers are brought in and played off against U.S. workers.

Imperialist Ideology

Why are these contradictions seemingly invisible? Because imperialism has required an ideology to justify it, and that ideology has been imposed on us to benefit the ruling class that runs the whole system.



An ideology is a set of ideas and explanations of the way things are that justify a particular political reality. For example, white chauvinism is the belief that white people are innately superior to Third World people. This false belief has been used as a justification for the subjugation of many Third World peoples (e.g. Kipling's *White Man's Burden*). The ruling class uses racist ideology to turn white workers against Third World people. White workers are encouraged to protect their relative advantages over Third World workers, instead of uniting with them against our common enemy -- capitalism.

National chauvinism is the ideology that U.S. and Western European culture is superior to all other cultures, and it therefore must be imposed on all other people of the world. These people are often judged by how well they accept and imitate Western culture. Part of the process of colonizing a country is destroying indigenous culture and imposing the culture of the imperializing country.

Male Supremacy is the ideology that men are innately superior to women. This ideology is institutionalized in all spheres--the economy, the home, and in cultural ideology. When imperialism is in crisis, women are hit harder than men, although all oppressed people bear the brunt. Part of the definition of maleness in imperialist cultures is being willing to fight to defend the interests of imperialism through war ('defending the free world'). Male supremacy uses strict socialized sex roles to keep people in line.

Bourgeois ideology includes the following ideas:

- Mostly everyone is middle-class.
- If you work hard and are smart you can get rich, so if you're not rich, it means you are either lazy or dumb.
- People are isolated individuals. We are all basically alone and unable to join up together. No one has any power.
- All this comes from human nature and we can't change.

Heterosexual chauvinism is something all of us know about. It is the false belief that non-gay people are superior, that gayness is sick and depraved. It is rooted in sexist roles that uphold capitalism: women are taught to want to be wives, and anyone who doesn't is a dyke. Men are supposed to be breadwinners and the heads of families. If you're not you're a fag.

These are some of the lies that are used to enslave us. The struggle against imperialism includes the struggle against these ideologies. Part of the struggle is to create a revolutionary culture that reflects joy and the realities of working people's lives.

Imperialism in Crisis

Throughout the world, Third World people are fighting wars of national liberation against both colonialism and neo-colonialism. They are winning (Viet Nam, Angola) which means that the imperialist ruling class is losing some of its power and wealth.

In a time of imperialist crisis, economic and political, the economy slows down in both the oppressor nation and the imperialized country. As a result, millions are thrown out of work. Populations need to be controlled and so arise special police squads, prisons, and sterilization.

As unemployment soars, competition amongst workers is fostered and contradictions are raised. The fostering of competition undermines effective

Angolan civilian greets MPLA liberator in Huambo.



Altoque-Adm

material basis of gay oppression. The oppression of lesbians and gay men is related to the nuclear family as defined by capitalism. The family--as it exists among white middle-class people especially--supports the imperialist system as a whole. Men are trained to be workers and military defenders, and women to raise and train workers and warriors, "to keep the home fires burning." Lesbians and faggots just don't fit into these definitions, which denies our labor to the system at least in this area. Therefore gay people are defined by the ideology of capitalist society as bad and/or weak.

The oppression of gay people includes oppression in the workforce. Many of us fall into a reserve labor force because of our gayness i.e. we are fired for being gay, or that we are tracked into the service industry sector so we can be more 'out'. Or, some gay people work in gay businesses at crummy wages. Some of us lesbians and faggots can't even get jobs because we're too 'butch' or too 'fem'.

Men are also required to be warrior defenders of the empire, and faggots are seen as unfit for this. Effeminate men face their own particular oppression under imperialism. It appears that especially now as imperialism undergoes crisis, both the gay and non-gay media are pushing a super-masculine fashion and ideology for men--especially butch faggots. Since sissy men can never be this way--and don't want to be--we are further excluded from our own community, our jobs, our families, and the non-gay community.

Some of the questions that we all must attempt to examine are:

1. what is the material basis of gay oppression?
2. how is this material oppression related to the capitalist family?
3. how are lesbians' and faggots' job situations related to gay oppression?

class unity. For example, affirmative hiring vs. seniority: affirmative hiring plans to end discrimination against Third World people while seniority continues the privileges of white workers which forces them into competition.

Naked force and facism are the last resort in crisis along with the complete denial of human rights, e.g. Chile and the mass murder of Black revolutionary leaders.

Imperialism and Faggots

We recognize that the analysis of gay oppression and its relationship to class struggle and imperialism is the most important task confronting the gay movement. We do not pretend to have the answers to these questions, what we have done is raised some critical areas to be examined.

The faggot's stereotype put out by both the straight media and the bourgeois gay press, e.g. the Advocate, is that gay men are white, butch, middle-class, and concerned only with sex, clothes, and playing. In fact, most of us are working people concerned with rising prices, getting and/or losing our jobs and our foodstamps.

This false image of us also keeps us and non-gay people who might be our allies from seeing our common interests. It also makes it that much harder for working class and Third World people to come out, because they experience the crisis of imperialism much harder.

The important thing to do is to analyze the



GUERNICA POSTSCRIPT: WEeping WOMAN 1937

PABLO PICASSO

4. how can white faggots best struggle to support the Third World struggles against national oppression?
5. how does our analysis of gay oppression fit into our obligation to struggle against women's oppression?
6. how does the special oppression of effeminate men fit into this struggle and analysis?

Conclusion

The main reason to understand imperialism is to know how to end our oppression. The knowledge that we gain in understanding our oppression will help us to struggle better.

The main force fighting imperialism is the Third World. We must always support Third World struggles--both internationally and in our lives, as faggots and as North American workers.

We must remember that except for those on the very top and those on the bottom, everyone experiences the contradiction of being oppressed and oppressor. As white North Americans, we are part of an oppressor nation, as faggot workers or unemployed, we are oppressed.

We must struggle against imperialism through our understanding of both sides of this, but knowing that the second is primary--that as faggots and as workers, we must stand on the side of oppressed people against capitalist imperialism.

class background handout

Workshop on Class Background Handout

The conference this weekend is heavily focused on the sharing and developing of our ideas about dealing with our oppression as faggots. We're all trying to look at class and what it has to do with our struggles. Most of us are coming to advance our understanding of how to be growing, what to be doing.

We feel it's important to start off this weekend trying to get some first hand experience of class, to be in touch with a solid focus from our own experiences for the many ideas we'll all be sharing. We want to offer in this workshop a safe place to co-operatively expose and clarify our class backgrounds, to get in touch with messages and ways of thinking coming from that background and to look for ways those messages operate now.

Our feelings about and reactions to what comes out in this workshop will help clarify class for all of us. And it will be important for all of us to support and validate each other's feelings when we can.

The class based messages and feelings we're dealing with have been heavily suppressed all our lives. Opening up about this stuff can be scary. Because of this, we feel it's important to be clear on the limitations of this workshop. Many of us are strangers. We don't have commitments to work and struggle with each other ongoingly. We can't change, right now, all the bourgeois ideology we've learned all our lives. This doesn't mean holding back our righteous anger, fears, or hurt. But it does mean getting the support we need to feel o.k. about where we are and the support we need to find ways to change--and that may not be from the person next to you.

It will be helpful for each workshop to decide on how to focus the discussion. Here are some suggestions:

I. SHARING CLASS BACKGROUNDS. This can be a brief and specific description of the conditions we grew up in. Some questions which might help:

- Parents jobs? What were the jobs like; how much control did they have over their work?
- What were their expectations and yours about work?

- What jobs have you had? How has that changed over the years?

- What was your neighborhood like?

- How were feelings dealt with in your family? Were you in touch with messages about your own feelings or others feelings?

- Family's income when growing up and changes in that.

- Messages about money? How did you/do you deal with money: spending it, earning it, loaning it?

II. HOW OUR BACKGROUNDS HAVE SHAPED OUR THINKING, FEELINGS, AND ACTIONS. It could be helpful to focus this part of the discussion on how your class background comes out in specific situations. Here are some possibilities:

a. In meetings or groups

- how you see yourself in relation to the group

- when someone's dominating the group, what feelings come up? How do you deal with it?

b. Getting criticism

- What feelings come up? Are you in touch with messages about yourself when you get criticism? How do you react?

c. Work

- Your expectations of a job, level of control or responsibility.

- Contrast your expectations with the jobs you've actually had. How you've felt about this.

- In social situations or at work, how do you feel about and deal with people in different class positions (jobs)?

d. Relationships

- How do class messages affect getting to know someone, expectations for that person and the relationship. How do you 'decide' who to relate to?

- When your relationship comes to an end. How does it look? What feelings or conflicts happen when things turn sour? How do you deal with it?

With whatever situations you focus on, try to be thinking and talking about specific situations or conditions your notions or messages come from.

The History of the Father Dominated Family

Part One - Roger

This presentation is going to be a history of the development of the family from matriarchy and pre-history the changeover to patriarchy and civilization. We're going to trace the social relationships that developed between people and discuss what the causes of these changes were. The emphasis of this talk will be on the historical perspective of the family. At a personal level, we are all advocating change. That's why we're here. But we're not always sure what it is going to be like. There is always a certain amount of fear and anxiety in dealing with the unknown. By looking at the past, we get a perspective for understanding these changes now and in the future. Just for example, in this talk, maybe we'll get a better idea of what the roots of oppression in the family for faggots were. We also want to analyse the past, and determine the factors which created these and other changes, see the patterns which occur so we know that change isn't random, that there's some patterns which follow in sequence.

In terms of society, there have been six stages. We started out with primitive society, then tribal society, followed by slave society, feudal society, capitalist society and finally socialist society. We want to be able to predict types of changes that will occur in the future, and I hope to bring these out in my talk. What types of changes are the possible causes of other changes in primitive society, or in any society for that matter? I'm going to talk about four possible ones. One would be geographic changes that cause certain other changes in society. This would be like the kind of land and climate changes which would allow a population to grow or develop. Another would be population density. The more people there are in a certain place, the more likely it is that certain changes are going to happen. A third one is consciousness; that someone thinks up some idea for social change and then institutes it. The fourth one is that economics, that the means of survival of a people is a factor that changes society. This fourth one is the one we're going to talk about. I'll give a brief explanation of why we think this is the most important factor. Also, some of this isn't going to be new, since it was talked about yesterday.

If you think about an individual person, and what the needs of an individual person are, the most important need is for oxygen. People who don't have oxygen can't breathe and die. After that, water is important, then food, followed by shelter and clothing. These are sort of the basic needs of people. Once all those are satisfied, and you don't have to spend all your time looking for water and food or shelter, then you could start to develop social relationships, and satisfy needs for love and friend-

ship, not to mention more basic forms of social relationships such as common mothering or collective hunting. After that, one could move into higher order things such as self actualization, feelings, intellectual stimulation and so forth. People don't have time to deal with those unless they have their basic needs satisfied.

The same is true for society. It too initially must concentrate on providing water, food and shelter for people. Only after this is accomplished can it start developing very intricate systems of social organization and other institutions like religious systems, legal institutions and institutions like the family. I don't have a detailed analysis of how all these institutions follow from the means of production in providing for people, but there is a general pattern that we can all assume for this talk. I've listed here a needs pyramid for society. It starts off with production. What are the means of production? There are really two parts to that. First are the forces of production, that is the tools and technology used by people, followed by the relations of production, and that's the way people are organized together to do the work.

After that, we go to the next step; social organization for defense, legal systems, religious organizations, the family and finally the individual. This is the format we're going to use to discuss change in society.

How did human society develop? Let's start at the dawn of society. I'll try to give you a brief picture of what this was like. People were food gatherers. They didn't live in any particular place, but wandered around and gathered particular foods like berries and nuts and roots. They were vegetarian. For the most part, they found food by themselves, except for the women. They had the extra responsibility of caring for the children and getting food for them, too. This is very important as it is the key to social development.

An important factor in human development is that children, in order to learn, need to have a long dependency period. Most animals have instincts, and can survive with them. In order to depend upon learning, humans could not depend upon their instinct. They needed experience, and a place to learn to depend upon their experience. This means you have to have a protected environment for a while. In the case of children, this takes several years. So there's a fairly long dependency period where children are dependent on their mothers and other women in society. Food and protection are important to children. This long dependency period is the experience which led to the development of women socially. They had to learn how to care for

others, take social responsibility and develop more lasting relationship; between them and their children.

Another aspect of society was sexuality which was also controlled by the women. For the most part, the men and the women lived separately. The women separated themselves during pregnancy, during birth, and while they were raising their children, and lived apart from men in groups of women and children. They cared for each other and protected each other. There were no male "heads of households" like most traditional anthropologists tell us about. While the women were cooperating with each other, men were involved in dominance-hierarchy patterns and fighting with one another for mating rights and for general dominance. They were much more individualistic than the women. For this reason, they were dependent upon them because in this kind of society, it's not possible to exist by yourself. But the men couldn't get it together to do a good food trip. They were dependent upon the women for providing them with food, shelter and clothing.



the family

-Su Negrin
A Graphic Notebook
on Feminism
LNS/AIAW

At some point in this primitive society, people discovered how to use stone and developed stone technology. This led to a lot of changes in society. The first change I want to talk about is an internal change within the immediate family leading to a change in their community. The stone plow, for example, and the understanding that one could grow food from seeds led to gardening. The women started gardening, and didn't have to roam around any more. They could grow all the food they needed in that one location. But high intensity gardening required a high degree of cooperation. They all had to work together to do it. This greater cooperation which was required for gardening was interfered with by the men. They were having a lot of trouble getting it together working and cooperating. They were a disruptive influence in terms of providing food for the community.

The other change was an external change outside the family. It was the invention of stone weapons for hunting. To the men of the time, everyone else outside his immediate family, the people he lived with, was not human. All other people and animals beside the people in the family were the same; all animals. They were all what these men hunted and ate for food. This led to a period of cannibalism.

Cannibalism was very dangerous to society. It threatened to wipe everyone out. In order for society to survive, the women came up with a dual invention. It dealt with both the internal contradiction, the one dealing with gardening, and the external one, which was cannibalism and warfare among the men. The twin inventions are called food totem and the incest taboo. Let me explain briefly what they mean. These inventions always go together. The incest taboo meant that the women forbade the men from mating with the women in their family, and forced them to go outside the family to mate. It also meant the women were taking in mates from outside the family. This reduced the competition within the family. It allowed the men to cooperate with each other as they were not fighting with one another any longer about mating dominance. It reduced the competition among the men within the family grouping. But at the same time, it meant that the men had to go out (it was usually the men who went out) where they were considered the enemy in other villages, and were under a lot of danger from being hunted and killed. They were also out there doing a lot of hunting and killing.

The other invention is the food totem. It was that the men could not kill and eat other particular people from particular villages or families. The women taught the men how to recognize other people as people, and thus shouldn't be eaten. They did this by forming alliances with neighboring families. Each of them had totems, which are names of animals. Like the cat or the fox. The agreement was that the men from the cats wouldn't eat the men from the foxes, and the men from the foxes wouldn't eat the men from the cats. Also, it allowed at the same time for mating relationships, which meant that the men and women from the cats could mate with the men and women from the foxes without the fear of being killed or eaten while this was happening. Often, the word for sex and eating in tribal society were the same.

These two inventions led to the formation of tribal society, which is basically the unification of two families into one tribe. I'd like to give you a more complete picture of what this new tribal society looked like. This period is what I'm going to call the matriarchy. If you look at the chart to my left, begin with technology. This means the forces of production are stone plows for making gardens and grinders for making flour, and also stone weapons for hunting. The means of production was cooperative food gardening by the women. Social organization was matriarchy, tribal, meaning all property was jointly owned. There were democratic community councils for decision making, and the members of these councils were elected. The other part of social organization is mutual defense. People at this time mystified death. They didn't know the natural causes of death so they assumed anyone's death was caused outside the tribe by someone. They developed a system of blood revenge which was a system of revenge seeking for who-

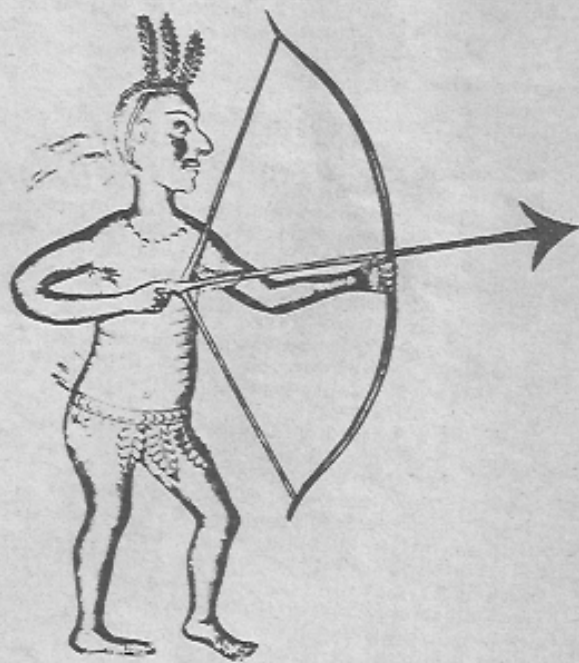
ever this was who caused the death. In terms of the problems I was describing, there is a carry-over into this mystification of death so that outside the village, all men are suspected of hunting and cannibalism. That is the presumed cause of a death whenever it occurs. The important part is that the whole tribe got together and protected itself. In terms of religion, it is totemistic. All the different totems like the cats and the foxes have dieties. There are lots of them. One for each family. It was also female oriented around mystification of reproduction. People knew that women had babies and were pregnant, but they did not understand the biology of it like we do. There was no recognition of paternity or the father. This led to the reverence of women because they produced new children and no one knew how it happened. The legal system was organized around retribution, not punishment. Like you had to give something equal back if you stole something, or in terms of death, if you killed someone, that demanded a death back. It wasn't like our legal system of punishment. They had trial by peers, and the trials were very specific to the situation. There were no codified or written down laws. Every case was judged by the circumstances around it.

The family was matrilineal, matrilocal, all the descent lines were passed through the women, and everyone lived in the village of her or his mother. There were no father. There was open sexuality. There was no defining of mates. There were festivals that were designed as orgies for mating purposes. Women for the most part controlled their own sexuality and reproduction. There was also cross gender identification and homosexuality. A good deal of the time, the women were with women and the men were with men, and that was like the basic support system, so that's where people in the society got most of their support and worked out most of their important relationships. Individuals in the society exist only as part of the tribe. There is no was an individual could survive on their own. They had a collective consciousness without which they wouldn't have survived very long. This is very important to understand, and it is very different from the way we are today.

For the rest of the talk, let us further focus on the family, though actually it is but a small part of the pyramid of needs. It changes, like the family is changing today. What were the important determinants in this change? To examine this, we are going to focus on heterosexual relationships because these are the ones that brought about the changes, even though they may not be the primary relationships at the time. The first type of family I will describe is group marriage. I think it's easiest to understand by going through an explanation of what the kinship system was like. To begin, it was a system of matrilineal descent. Everyone was related through their mother. All children are from the same totem as the mother. All the women in the cat family have a cat for the family totem, and all the children will likewise have the cat for their totem. What we would consider the fathers are of a different totem because of the incest taboo. For example, they could be foxes. The children of these men are of a different totem than their fathers. The most important men in the children's lives are the ones from their same totem; their mother's brother. At this point in time, all the women of the same age are consid-

ered mothers to all the children that they have. There is cooperative child care. All the children are defined as brothers and sisters to each other. This is a part of their collective consciousness.

Some of the features of society are that women are the center of society and in fact control it. Men have power in the tribe only in relation to their sisters and their mother. The women provide food, shelter and most other production. Mating is done real casually with the men visiting women in different villages or having secret meetings in the woods. Relationships are real casual. Men and women have many different mates. All the men of one totem are allowed to freely mate with all the women of the other totem. They don't really make a point of pairing up at this point. The marriages were lots of people married to lots of other people. It was called group marriage, a very clear term for what was going on. What are the major conflicts with this kind of marriage system? Although two groups got together and formed a tribe consisting of two totems, there were other people outside the tribe, and the relationships between tribes were still not very good. They still had the same problems families had, namely cannibalism, blood revenge, fighting. Since these people lived near each other,



they had to settle these conflicts because they were still disruptive to their society. Keep in mind what I said before about the fathers being outsiders of a different totem. If anything happened, they could still be blamed as causal for the deaths and other bad events within the village. Things we're still pretty unstable, even though these allegiances were being formed. Relationships between tribes have not yet been formed at all. This is a basic problem which led to a change in mating, which led to a new type of pattern ultimately ending up in what is called the "pairing family" which was formed with individual couples. Let me explain how this happened.

To help form intertribal allegiances, the women set up group marriages between one tribe and another tribe which was similar to marriage of one totem to another. Men from one tribe went visiting to the other tribe. They would be received, and put in a separate house after bringing gifts. They would be watched for a certain number of days as outsiders, after which certain trusts developed in time. Out of their houses there would be some ritualistic festival which was a group marriage festival. They would meet, exchange a lot of gifts and eat and have orgies. This is the way group marriage started. The relationships were casual and non-possessive. After while, a problem arose in that lots of men from different villages end up living together in the same village, even though each may have a different totem and a different pact with the totems of that village. They have no such pact among them, and there is a lot of distrust among them. It is potentially a very explosive situation.

On one hand these group marriages between tribes led to more stability, but on the other hand, it led to a much greater potential for war and blood revenge to be happening. There are all these men distrusting one another, and the villagers will assume them to be the cause of the deaths. This led to a situation where individual marriages were set up by the mothers. The men from these different tribes were isolated from each other, and separate couples were set up together in separate houses so that the distrust between them could be nullified. This is how the conflict was resolved. They have no monogamy, but they have a pairing relationship, which provided for greater permanency. This greater permanency over time led to a system of emotional bonds between the men and the women and their children which didn't really exist before. Still, the major bonds were tribal ones, and the most important men in the villages are not the husbands but the mother's brother. This form of pairing marriage solved one conflict, but led to another. Now, there were two men within one village that were sharing some responsibilities.

There was a husband to a mother, and also that woman's brother. The most important was that with the brother, but both existed. It also meant that brothers were themselves married outside the village, thus none from home part of the time. This void was filled by the husband. There was a conflict with in society as well as a conflict within each individual man. Both were husband as well as brother so much confusion arose over which role was to be played during various times. New relationships grew that were based on feelings, not just blood allegiances. Whenever divorce happened however, which was frequent, or death, the mate returned to their villages. That is, the men returned to the village of their mother.

Then the Iron Age started. Men and women invented iron usage. Let me briefly explain the types of changes which happened. First, now they had an iron plow which meant they could do large scale agriculture instead of gardening. They could plant and grow much more food. Surplus food could be fed to domesticated animals, especially the cow. Instead of hunting, one could raise cattle. Ever so often, the men could kill the cattle and eat them. Also, one could get milk. This was an important change since it led to more food. The cows became a form of property.

It also led to iron weapons. When one has stone weapons, most fighting is done one on one and there is not much advantage one person has over another if both have a stone axe. But when one has an iron tip arrow or lance and the other has only stone arrows, there is an imbalance of power. The discovery of iron led to warfare on a scale much different than the warfare of the stone age. The agricultural abundance also led to the ability to feed a standing army which didn't exist before. It also allowed for a type of warfare in which property, that is the cattle, were taken. It allowed for people to be taken as slaves because now there were iron chains to keep people locked up. Before that, people could too easily break chains of less durable material and escape. Slavery was born.



Pan - A god from Celtic Culture

How did the economic changes brought about by the discovery of iron effect the family? Let's return to the pairing family in which as I pointed out earlier, the mother's husband was coming into conflict with the mother's brother. The husband was just attaining social status as partial caretaker of the mother's young male children, although he was still of secondary importance to the mother's brother since the children were of his totem.

A custom established in matriarchal group marriage which extended to the pairing family was gift exchange. When the men visited other tribes they brought gifts. These would be given to the family, i.e. the mother of the woman to be married. The gifts were either food or non-valuable items such as beads, shells, etc. These gifts were then as likely to be passed on by the mother's son as an exchange when he married.

With the advent of iron technology for the first time there was real wealth, cows, and agricultural crops, especially grasses to feed the cows. At first cows were exchanged as bride gifts. Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the change from gift exchanges to buying a bride was that the men in general tended the cows. So, the exchanges ended up in the hands of the brother and not the mother even though the mother's tribe technically owned the cattle.

Just as the men who learned to make iron weapons realized that war was pointless if they didn't retain the wealth they captured, so it was with cattle exchanged for brides. The wealth that cattle represented qualitatively changed the gift exchange into a price for a bride. This had two results, one was that the husband would want his cattle back if the marriage failed and two, that the brothers wouldn't want their sisters to divorce because they would lose the cows. Often the children would be viewed as property too. If a woman left her husband, he would keep the offspring instead of getting his cattle back.

But for this accumulation of wealth, i.e. cows, to succeed not only was iron weapons necessary for wars and iron plows to feed the cows and armies, but a third element--the idea of paternity i.e. the right of the husband to be the father of the family thus establishing the line of inheritance thru the males instead of the females.

These changes that came from iron technology threatened to drastically change society. Recognition of the father's lineage (primarily), accumulation of wealth and warfare for property were the complete opposite of matriarchal society. As a result an intense struggle went on for thousands of years to resolve this conflict. The interests of the husband and brother came into antagonistic contradiction to each other.

Patrick

Well, I thought I was going to do my presentation this afternoon, so I thought I would have from noon to three to get my shit together. But here we are in the morning and my shit isn't quite together. I'm still going to try and do two basic things. Roger brought us to the beginnings of the Iron Age. The Iron Age led to the disintegration of tribal society and led to the establishment of slave society. I'm going to be talking about what happened inside the family that led to the demise of the tribe. The action inside the family was central in the internal contradictions that caused tribal structure to fracture. I'm going to talk about that.

I'm going to talk about various societies who had fathers in their families, some six or seven such societies, who recognized paternity. I will show you that not all societies who developed fathers in their families succeeded in turning classic matriarchy as outlined by Roger here into its opposite. That was a development which took some time. In my opinion, there is only one major culture that is the true opposite of classic matriarchy. We know from our Marxism studies that things have a tendency to turn into their opposite, so that's why I'm running that down.

The first thing I'm going to talk about is the demise of the tribal family. The primary way that Roger was able to talk was through the science of archeology and anthropology. After all, it's conjecture what happened six thousand years ago. Anybody could have any opinion. But there are some things that are recognized as ways of going about it. One is anthropology and the other is archeology. In anthropology, there is a notion about the myths of a culture. I'm going to talk about some myths. Myths are important to study. There are very few remnants of ancient culture left, and what we have passed down to us is the mythology and often nothing else. So, from one point of view, the myths are important because that's all we have.

But there is this fairly developed theory in anthropology that says the mythology of the culture is really important for two reasons. One, it is an accurate historical reflection of what really happened in that tribe; in other words, the mythological stories are not myth but true fact, true historical recordings of events, perhaps somewhat distorted from passage one generation to the next, but basically, in fact, true events. The other point that's important about the myths is this. If you can discover how those people conceptualized their dieties, then you can have a photograph of what those people thought were ideal social relationships. So that the way Greek gods acted in the myths is in fact a picture of the way Greek men acted, or tried to act. Through mythology, we have a full history in some cases, of how the tribal structure was fractured by patriarchy, the Iron Age and class society.

There are a couple of familiar myths that will bring us into a closer look at the central conflict inside the family. Two of them are in the Bible, and familiar to most of us. The reason that tribal structure fractures was that contradictions escalated to such a point that there was inner family murder as a pattern. Of course, murdering someone of your own totem was totally unheard of. An underpinning of tribal society as outlined by Roger was that if you were an owl, you didn't kill a brother or sister owl. It was primary. What we find in the myths, however, is a recording of family memb-



Isis and baby Horus

ers killing one another with alarming regularity. What those myths are is historical recordings of when that tribal structure fractured, and class society took over. Cain and Abel is one example. Briefly, Cain was on the patriarchal side and Abel was on the matriarchal side, and Jehova found one's gifts pleasing and the other's not because one supported the advent of patriarchy and the other did not. So there was this murder, brother against brother. Whatever totem they were fractured from the event, and we have a recording of it in the Bible.

Another myth in the Bible is that of Jacob and Esau who were the two sons of Isaac and Rebekah. One was older and favored by Isaac. The other younger and favored by Rebekah. In matriarchal cultures, the emphasis is on the younger child, while in patriarchy the opposite oldest child is considered most important. So Isaac and his wife Sarah were in direct conflict. She wanted the younger to inherit the property and he wanted the elder. Isaac was old and could not see. Sarah brought in Esau instead of Jacob. Isaac thought he was Jacob, blessed him and gave him the family property. Then discovered he was deceived. Thus, Esau and Jacob were in direct conflict for the estate.

My favorite story, because it really shows a different flair, is Egyptian mythology of Isis. What happened in Egypt was different. When the Iron Age came to the Nile Valley and the father was introduced into the family, there was a matriarchal counter-revolution as a political force which was the essence of the four thousand year Egyptian dynastic period with the familiar pharaoh's and pyramids, etc. Basically, this is the myth.

There were two brothers in the Nile Valley. One was named Osiris and the other named Set. One, Osiris, was from the north delta, an agricultural society, and the other from the south desert, a culture oriented more toward hunting. They got into it about who was going to get the property. Set lured his brother into a parley. At the parley, Osiris was killed by Set, who tricked him into laying down into a cedar box. When he did, Set nailed the top on (with iron nails, no doubt) and threw it into the Nile. Off went the coffin, drifting down the river.

It turned out the two brothers had two sisters named Nephthys and Isis. A lot of us are beginning to hear a little about Isis. Isis was ingenious; real smart. She felt she had to bury her brother. She was into one of those Antigone conflicts where if you didn't bury your brother in the ground his soul wouldn't pass on to the next lifetime etc., so off she went chasing the body. The coffin floated all the way into the Mediterranean and to Phoenicia. She chased it all the way. When she got there a couple of months later, the body was, you know, a little wasted. It hadn't been in the ground. So Thoth, a stork like bird taught her the secrets of mummification. He is a very important diety in Egyptian mythology. So she mummified her dead brother there on the spot, and brought the body back to Egypt for a decent burial. When she got there, Set stole the body. He seemed quite threatened by the body, and needed the body not to have everlasting life to make his political point, so he took this pickled body, and he chopped it up in fourteen pieces and buried it one piece at a time all the way from the mouth of the Nile to the first cataract. Now, if you recall your Egyptian geography, that's a total distance of several hundred miles. He buried thirteen of the fourteen pieces. The piece that he did not

bury was Osiris's penis. He kept it with him. He wasn't taking any chances on that penis going anywhere. It sounds funny now, but the symbolism gets really heavy. He was so threatened by that penis. You must remember that they just turned on to the fact that their penis had a role in reproduction. They didn't know that before. Now all of a sudden, their penis's gave them power. Get it. The social power of paternity was a new political force.

Isis, and this is the real ingenious part, turned on to the conflicts of paternity and the social conflicts it was creating. She realized that the husband was in direct conflict with the brother in her ancient tribal family, and if she didn't do something quick, all the women in Egypt were going to loose thier power to the stranger-husband. She thought that if she could turn the husband and the brother into the same person, there will be no conflict. She decided it was her responsibility to violate the ancient incest taboo. So she married her dead brother, Osiris, to save the Nile Valley. How could the husband fight the brother if they were the same person?

She also decided that this new business about needing a penis for reproduction was a bunch of bullshit, and that women always had been and always would be the center of reproduction. She ran into the desert and picked up a stick, and stuck it into the corpse of her new husband. She hopped on the stick. The body came into a half life trance and began to levitate to the magic of Isis. Isis copulated with the body, hopped off, put the body in a rock quarry tomb and sealed the entrance so it was secret, and took off toward the mouth of the river, quite pregnant.

When Set found out, he was just incensed, but Isis hid in the bullrushes at the mouth of the Nile until her son was born. She named him Horus. She taught him all the neat things she could remember about Osiris, his uncle-father, how Osiris was really a neat person, and he developed a whole heritage based upon his new form of conception, and felt the need to protect it as he grew older. When Horus was fourteen, the very predictable thing happened. He turned into the arch-enemy of his Uncle Set, and started pursuing him to avenge his uncle-father's death. So the second generation in Isis's family is bent on another round of this family murder business.

They do come into direct conflict - battle - and Isis is right there at the time witnessing. She freaks out because she doesn't know who she wants to win the battle. If her brother kills her son, it constitutes tribal-family murder. If her son kills her brother, it's still family murder, and she can not dig another round of murder in the family. So they go round and round while Isis does some magic to keep them from killing one another. Finally, Horus gets Set in a death grip, and Isis goes in to break it up. She says, "No, stop this. I won't let you kill your uncle. You stop right now." Horus is so angry that he can't kill his uncle that he picks up his axe and takes a swipe at his mother's head, and chops the top of her head off.

So Thoth, the ibis bird, runs into the desert and gets a skull of a cow. He runs back to Isis, gives her skull surgery (honest, that's the myth) and Isis pops back to life with the two horns fastened securely on her head and says, "OK, it's very obvious the two of you can't get along so I'm taking over." And she does. That forms the basis of the Egyptian classical family. Brother-sister marriage. All property then is maintained in the family because both parents are from the

same family. All the property is literally in the name of the women on the deeds, and they likewise maintain control of the family throughout the classical period. A class society is introduced into Egypt with women in control. We hear about the pharaoh, but that's a patriarchal misrepresentation of what was really going on. The real ruler was queen while the pharaoh was merely the leader of the army. There are many instances in Egyptian history of pharaohs being put in line by their sisters. There are several instances, in fact. There are even women taking over the armies themselves because they don't trust their brothers to do it. Hatshepsut did that, took control to the army herself and literally led the army herself.

That's the central mythology of ancient Egypt, which describes what happened when class society, iron and fatherhood hit that place, what Isis did about it, and subsequently Egypt had four thousand uninterrupted years of this kind of family and class society. That family model is not just the family model for royalty, for brother-sister marriage is preferred throughout the entire culture. It is preferred to marry your brother. Later, a very interesting thing happened. Isis had the position of averting family murder. At the end of that dynastic period, Cleopatra, the end of the line, is coopted by the forces of Roman patriarchy. She sallies up to a couple of Caesars and has a couple of children. She wants her children to get together with the Caesars and rule Egypt. In order for her to make the royal line clear for hers and Julius Caesar's kids to inherit the Egyptian throne, she has to clear the way because she has some relatives, her own brothers, whom she is supposed to be married to and whom are supposed to be the pharaohs. She believes the best thing to do for Egypt is to cooperate with the Roman forces, so she kills both her brothers. So the whole cycle of family murder in Egypt is averted for four thousand years. But in the end, it collapses. Cleopatra is in a position where she must kill her brothers so she does. She kills them both. What happens to her in turn is well known, but what happened to the children of the Caesars? Julius's child and Marc Antony's child are either killed or sold into slavery, for they are in line for the throne, but this interferes with the plans of Octavius to have the throne for himself. Cleopatra's plot turns against her.

In Greece, the mythology is rich in terms of describing the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy. I'd like to briefly describe two sets of myths. One is the familiar story of Oedipus. I'm going to talk about the children of Oedipus and his wife-mother Jocasta. The boys were named Polynices and Eteocles (I'm not sure I have these pronunciations right). When Oedipus killed his father and left Thebes, Jocasta's brother, Creon, takes over the throne. The throne is really a mother right throne, being passed from Jocasta to her children. So her brother has the right to share the throne with a sister in the absence of her husband. But really, Creon is trying to pull off the establishment of a patriarchal line in Thebes. One of the sons, Eteocles, takes the side of Creon, while the other, Polynices sides with his mother and sister, Antigone. Each has a big army. It turns out in this story that each of the brothers slays the other on the battlefield. Antigone then enters the scene. Remember, it's her throne. She feels the responsibility to bury her brother because he died trying to protect her throne for her. She gets into the ritual burial complication and is discovered. She is forced to commit suicide by

Creon. The plot continues, but Creon fails at establishing a father right throne.

There are several other illustrations of Greek tribes failing to establish father right thrones in their respective cities. There is much family murder recorded in the Greek myths. These are basically the Greek tragedies. What's really interesting is apparently what's so tragic about it is that these virile Greeks men didn't succeed at creating father lines. The myth of Orestes, for example, is full of family murders, generation after generation, but the Orestes cycle is not viewed as a tragedy either by the Greeks or by modern bourgeois literary circles, though the five generations of in family murder are certainly tragic enough events in themselves. I'm not going to run down all the family murders that occurred in the cycle before Orestes. You all remember Agamemnon of the Trojan Wars. He was Orestes' father and Clymenestra was his mother. At the beginning of the Trojan Wars, Agamemnon sacrificed their daughter, Iphigenia to the gods to insure his victory. She is supposed to be the next queen, right, but he kills her and offers her up to the new patriarchal gods. Then he runs off on this ten year stint to win the Trojan Wars, which he does. When he comes home, Clymenestra is still at home. She is still the queen and she is still very angry. So she lures her husband seductively into a hot bath after ten years of war, or whatever, and when he is laying there all relaxed in the tub, she draws a double bladed axe from behind the curtain and chops his fucking head to smithereens.

That leaves Orestes with a problem. The new gods of Greece are telling him that he has to avenge his father's death. The old matriarchal gods and goddesses are telling him that there is no such relative as a father, and that his real loyalties are with his mother, and to avenge his father by killing his mother is not cool. So there is a big struggle among the gods about it. Orestes is like that dude from Shakespeare in Denmark, Hamlet and Lady Macbeth. He lacks the courage. He prays to Apollo who tells him that men are the true creators. He says that men are really the determining factor biologically, and that really women have nothing to do with it. Their wombs are merely receptacles, and all the life is contained in the sperm; that his mother really wasn't his mother at all. She was just the nurse, and therefore not related.

That gives Orestes the moral justification to kill her, and he does. He takes over the throne. The Greeks then consider the Orestes cycle as a glorious victory while the others are viewed as terrible tragedies. See what's really going on here is a recording of the victory of class society and patriarchy over Greek tribal society. The murders reflect the fracturing of the Greek tribal structure and the subsequent emergence of classic Greek patriarchy. That's the tee on the myths, and I have to get a drink of water.



There are other examples. There is an example in ancient Babylonia of brother killing brother. Even in Ireland, I found an example of the same conflict. A murder split the clan there, too. I predict that the process of family murder is necessary in order for society to progress from tribal matriarchy to classical patriarchy. One can locate these murder records in many or most societies of the old world, or at least that's what I'm postulating. I haven't checked them all out yet, but I'd sure love to.

The second issue for discussion is which society did what with the discovery of iron and or paternity. To discover what kind of struggle came down and which society emerged as the true opposite of tribal matriarchy is the objective. First, I'd like to talk about the Sodomites and Pre-sodomites. They were the people who lived in the Fertile Crescent on the banks of the Jordan when iron and paternity were discovered. They were the people who "sinned" by choosing to give the new-fangled fatherhood no significance. They understood that fatherhood was happening biologically, but chose to accord it no social importance at all. Their society continued pretty much along the same lines as it had before. So, the Sodomites had fathers in their families but there was no change in the social organization. They did not succeed in turning tribal matriarchy into its opposite.

Then there were the society of Trobriand Islanders that Evelyn Reed talks about. They recognized social paternity at least, though ignorant of physical paternity, and it did have some effect. They had patrilocal families, where the family lived in the husband's village instead of the mother's. But that's about all they did. The rest of the institutions of ancient matriarchy remained the same. The society was communal, had awe and reverence for women who were in no way controlled sexually by their husbands, the whole of the islands were patriarchal in form but matriarchal in essence, including reckoning descent through the women. They did not succeed in changing their society into patriarchy.

Then there were the Egyptians. I already ran that whole thing down to you. They had a class society with slavery. They had vast armies and committed clear acts of imperialist aggression against their neighbors at one atypical point in their history, but amid all this, they had women running the whole outfit. That doesn't sound like tribal matriarchy turned into its opposite.

We could talk about the split kingdoms in central Africa. After they recognized fatherhood, they went one step further than the Egyptians in transforming matriarchy into patriarchy. Their attitudes was that parentage was an "even stephen" type arrangement. Instead of deferring power to the women they split things up. The brother got half of the kingdom and his sister got the other half of the queenhood. What was happening in this culture was that there were really two land areas in the same society. In one, the brother ruled. In the other, the sister ruled. There was cooperation between them. While there was a certain "aristocracy of nobility in one family" they weren't really a class society as their means of food production remained communal. They did have, however, standing armies in both land areas. The area that was ruled by the sister had legions of amazon warriors up until their virtual military conquest by the imperializing Europeans as late as the seventeenth century! This culture had some elements of patriarchy, but remained essentially tribal. They did

not succeed at changing matriarchy into its opposite either.

Let us examine the Celts, the people who inhabited pre-Christian Europe. They were doing something similar as the split kingdoms of Africa, but one step further because they reckoned lineage through the father and not the mother. They also had the rudiments of the kingship system, though again, basic production remained communal. This so called kingship system just happened to produce a long line of highly important and influential queens like Meb in Ireland and Boudicca in Britain. Both were literally warrior queens, and held a candle to no man. The Celtic aristocracy had control of all the cultural "neat shit". That is, they had the bronze worked bowls and the engraved weapons and the gilded goblets, but they did not control the means of production, which remained the free farming system until well into the feudal era. So this Celtic aristocracy had the icing, but they didn't have the cake, which is not exactly your most wise tactic if one intends to transform tribalism into class society. The sexual ethics of the Celts were a far cry from Christianity which overcame it. Divorce, orgies and sexual license were downright institutions, while women maintained equal control over property and children in any marriage.

But Judeo-Christian society, who would a think it, did succeed in transforming tribal matriarchy into class society and feudal patriarchy. Roger described matriarchal society in these terms. They had collective labor of women, stone plows and stone weapons as the basis of their means of production. In Judeo-Christian society, we have the iron age, with iron weapons and slave labor. The social organization was/is an oligarchy with a few people ruling at the top, and masses of people as serfs or slaves on the bottom. The defense system transformed from blood revenge and mutual defense into war with iron weapons giving a distinct advantage to one side. The politics of plunder and conquest began to upstage the important of revenge as the basic motive for war. What was going on in the Greek myths, for example, was a history of warfare under the guise of somebody's death. But instead of revenge being the point, the point was to conquer, subjugate all the people, steal all their goodies and take them home. This is really quite a different phenomenon than blood revenge. Right? The plunder and conquest, that is stealing goods and property and taking over control of productive land, ie, imperialist aggression, became the prevailing politics. The religion switched from being a totemistic, polytheistic number with the mystification of women and reproduction at its center into monotheism with only one god allowed. Of course, we all know who that one god was. The religion had a father god focus, a switch from the mother being the hot shit diety to the father being the only diety. The legal system changed from being non codified and being oriented toward retribution into clearly codified laws that were arbitrarily applied across the board and they had as their focus punishment. It all right in the Bible. All you have to do is read it, and these issues lead out at you. I've been into the Bible a lot lately. It's just fascinating.

Finally, the family changed from being a matrilineal family into a patrilineal patrilocal and patriarchal family. It changed from a tribal clan into an individual father dominated family as opposed to the mother dominated, collective fam-

ily. Even the conception of self turned into its opposite. At last, individual interest became directly opposed to group interest. In other words, your gain became your brother's loss.

So, we took a long time. It took four thousand years for the ancient class societies to figure out which society and which family and sexual ethic was going to be the best for taking over the world. Many societies have tried to take over the world. It was quite the popular thing to do in the latter stages of ancient classism, but one society in fact emerged as victorious, and is in fact none other than this rat trap we're now living in, Judeo-Christian patriarchal society.

CHAPTER 27

AND it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, here am I.

2 And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:

3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison;

4 And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son, and Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

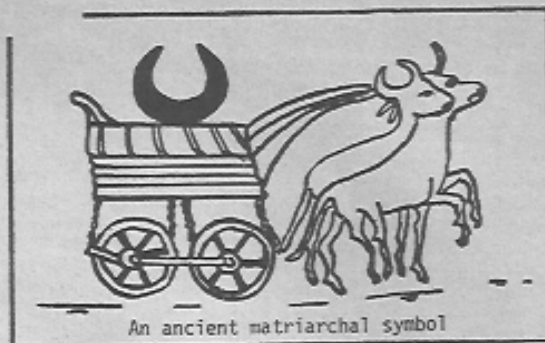
9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man:

12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

13 And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.



An ancient matriarchal symbol

20 And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.

21 And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.

23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

28 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father.

29 And Isaac lifted up his voice, and wept, and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

30 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

31 And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

Socialist

Hi, I'm Jamie. I'm new to socialist feminism, I've studied the theory for less than a year. I'm coming from an effeminate place of looking to radical feminists and lesbian feminists for political direction. So I'm new to class politics.

I'm coming to this presentation from a petit bourgeois background. I'm a highschool teacher. I'm also coming from a white place, although I try to incorporate some third world perspective (Tom will speak later about socialist feminism and national liberation).

I'm coming from a sissy place, from a life-long alliance and identification with women. I know that not all of you here come out of this experience and my vision sometimes gets distorted because of my sissiness, but I do believe that for most gay men, coming out forces us to look to women for support and companionship, because we sure can't get it from straight men. This woman-bond is the emotional basis for faggot socialist feminism.

This presentation will be a half hour long. These are the points I will cover:

- 1) Our oppression as gay men grows out of the degradation of women.
- 2) The degradation of women comes from the rise of the father-dominated family and currently from the sexual division of labor under capitalism and the unpaid labor of women in the home.
- 3) Strategies for attacking the sexual division of labor, in particular the primary importance for faggot liberation of supporting the struggles of working class women.
- 4) Tom will critique socialist feminism as a strategy for revolution, especially with respect to national liberation struggles.

Feminism

Degrading Stereotypes

	WOMAN	FAGGOT
A	delicate	swishy
	loose	swinger
	exotic	Kinky
B	scattered	dizzy
	intuitive	irrational
C	submissive	passive
	castrating	bitchy
	coy	cruisy

Faggot oppression grows out the degradation of women: we are seen as unmanly, woman-like, we don't fit into the role of a man: tough, competitive, woman-fucker so we get stuck with powerless women's roles.

The above graphic shows ways in which our sensuality (A), our sensitivity, our thinking and feelings (B), and our reactions to our oppression (C) are degraded and mystified in this society.

Straight men or straight-identified gay men who are scared, mystified and envious of this sensitivity and sensuality, react by trying to grab onto those qualities by grabbing onto women or sissies. At the same time as they feel the need for emotional strength or gracefulness, they degrade it in themselves and in us, they rape women and sissies, beat us up and harass us.

I used to see masculine men and straight men as the enemy. And then I saw the system of male dominance and male supremacy as the enemy. I still do. It's real clear that the rise of the father-dominated family was directly connected to the suppression of open sexuality and femininity. But there is more.

Maybe at one time, most men really benefitted from the crunch on sissies and women. But today, the privileges of straight men don't amount to much. Sure it's true that straight working men have more freedom to hang out with children than we do and they can be more lovey dovey in public with their sweeties than we can. But most jobs numb the body and dull the mind, so that off the job straight men hardly have the energy to put into kids or be really loose with their lovers anyway. Sure, working-class men beat the shit out of us, but are their neighborhoods any safer because of it? And what about straight women? Mothers teach faggots to hate ourselves and female supervisors fire us for our gayness. But are these women more secure, with better jobs because of it? No, of course not. Compared to the rich straight, white, men on top of the heap, we are all suffering, honey.

We are all put down in similar ways. None of us are allowed to be whole, sensual, feeling, thinking people. We are blamed for our own oppression

And actually believe this stuff about ourselves and others. Our own minds and bodies are ripped off. It's cultural imperialism. We are set up with opposite stereotypes, opposite self images so as to turn us against each other. It's a set-up to see each other as the enemy.

What I want to talk about today is how the rich, white, straight boys on top, the ruling class, use all these divisions--the class divisions, the race divisions, the sex divisions--for their benefit. In particular I want to talk about how sexism divides people against each other.

Gay men against straight men, straight women against gay women, gay men against straight women, dykes against faggots, straight women against straight men, all these are outgrowths of sexism/heterosexism and male supremacy and they are crucial to struggle with. Alright, I'm not going to go into all the ways sexism rears its ugly head. Because this conference is focused on class struggle, I'm going to focus on the economic "guts" of sexism, which is the sexual division of labor. Any attack on the sexual division of labor is ultimately an attack on capitalism and the boys on top because it is a step toward uniting the full power of the working class.

OK. What is the sexual division of labor under capitalism? It is the division between the primary work women do and the primary work men do. It is based on the split between the production which happens at home and the production which happens outside the home. In the home, the woman is the primary producer. In the outside workplace, men are primary producers.

The sexual division of labor is the split between the private and the public. The paid and the unpaid labor. In the movement, it is the split between the political and the personal. This split in production happened with the change in the economic base from feudalism, where all production occurred at home, to capitalism where men left the home to sell their labor.

I want to outline the basic economic ideology of socialist feminism, with emphasis on the role of

Degrading Stereotypes = Cultural Imperialism

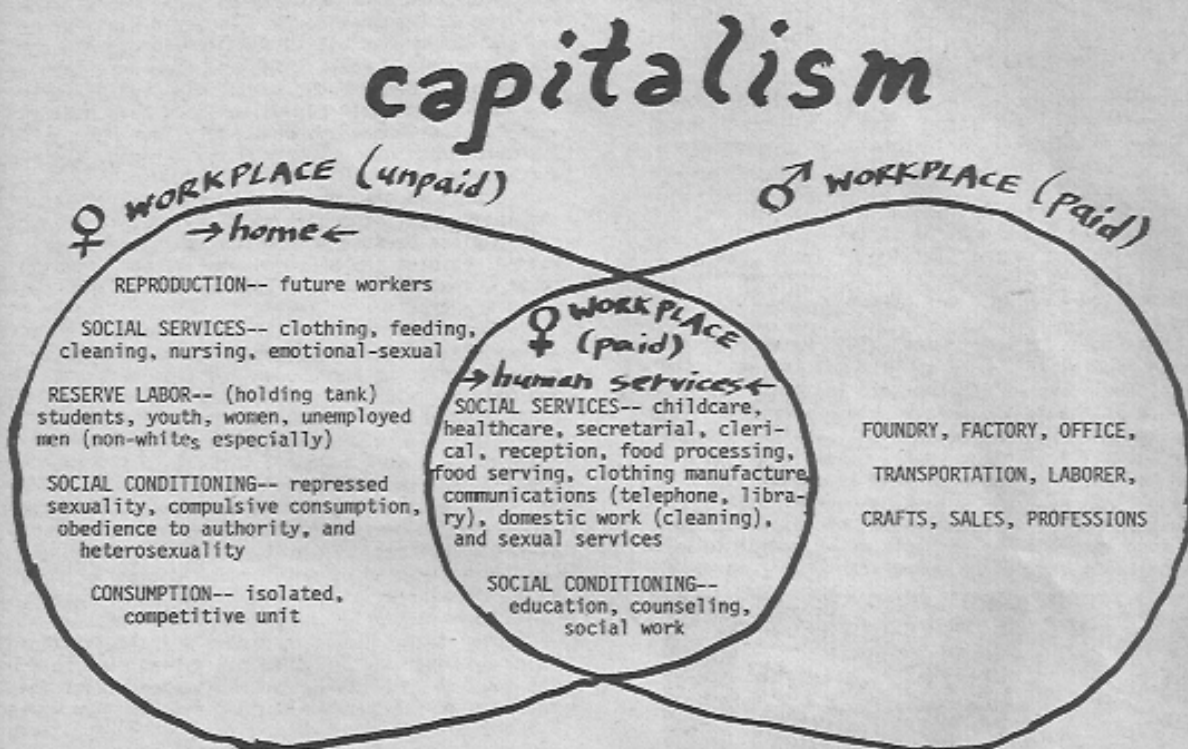
BLUE-COLLAR	BLACK MAN	WOMAN	FAGGOT
stiff	rythmh	delicate	swishy
stud	oversexed	loose	swinger
greasy	flashy	exotic	Kinky
thick	mindless	scattered	dizzy
moody	animal	intuitive	irrational
drunken	shuffling	submissive	passive
violent	hostile	castrating	bitchy
cocky	hustling	coy	cruisy

the housewife mother within the sexual division of labor and then explain how faggot oppression and liberation fits in.

The work within the family is unpaid, it is not recognized as valuable. It is women's work, it is invisible. Actually, the modern family, mother and children with or without a husband, serves capitalism as a unit of reproduction, social services, reserve labor, social conditioning, and consumption.

1) reproduction-- The family produces labor power for the bosses by reproducing children.

The child has natural urges to kiss, fondle, suck, piss on, cry, and have orgasms. The family represses this and by denying physical sensations, prepares the child for dull, boring schools and jobs. At the same time this produces compulsive reactions: people obsessed with sexuality, people constantly seeking sexual-genital thrills, open to being sold Madison Avenue sex in all its form: baths, pornography, cologne, Acu-Jack. You get the picture. This sexual/sensual void helps create the compulsive consumer. It also helps create the rapist.



2) social services-- The family clothes, feeds, cleans, nurses, and emotionally and sexually nurtures the laborforce. At the same time, this productive work, especially the sexual and emotional nurturance, is made private by bourgeois ideology. As pointed out earlier, this work, which is primarily done by women, is mystified and degraded.

3) reserve labor-- The family serves the bosses by providing a holding tank for unemployed workers; it cools out pissed off workers and students; and of course its unwaged members form a vast reserve labor pool to bring into waged work, to break strikes, to force down wages and divide the working class.

4) social conditioning-- This is where the crunch comes, where mothers teach the bourgeois ideas behind the sexual division of labor and so they act as agencies of faggot and dyke oppression as well as feeding right into their own oppression as women.

The family squashes child sexuality, producing feelings of secrecy, darkness, dirtiness, guilt associated with touching ones own or other's bodies.

The family also teaches children to depend on adults for answers, students depend on teachers for answers, workers depend on bosses for answers. It teaches us to focus on others for fulfillment and direction. The family teaches us sex roles, then it reaches us to fall in love with our "opposite" (heterosexuality) instead of learning to love ourselves and to look to ourselves for direction, (homosexuality).

The family teaches obedience to authority, to be passive. A set-up for good students, workers and soldiers.

5) consumption-- Finally, the family as an isolated unit in competition with other families, is the primary means of marketing all the useful and useless junk produced by capitalism. Here, the housewife/mother is the chief purchaser.

Now in all this, of course, the primary producer is the housewife/mother. The relationship of the housewife/mother to the capitalist class is a basic

worker/boss relationship, in which the worker's labor is ripped off: eg. the work is unpaid, women don't control their own bodies (their means of reproduction and production). If there is a husband, his role is like that of a foreman. A straw boss. Sure he carries our messages from the big bosses, he has more privilege, but he is essentially out of control of the work the woman must do.

The big bosses need the family as a social unit of production. This need sets up the condition of women in all realms of society. This is true whether she is a single woman, a divorcee, a lesbian, a welfare mother, a student, a social service worker, a hooker. Doesn't matter. The discrimination she suffers, her low pay, the dependency and humiliation that is forced upon her, are all results of the need to have her redirected into the family, to maintain that profitable slave labor. The work open to women for wages is primarily an extension of the unpaid work she does in the family.

The working class in the USA is deeply divided by sexism. Just the outrageous divorce rate tells you that. The basic goal of socialist feminism is to undermine the sexual division of labor, and by thus lifting the class position of women, make possible a unified working class attack on the ruling class.

What does undermine mean? This means pushing both to 'socialize' (make social, not isolated) the work of the house-wife/mother and integrate men into the work of the family and the human services. This means women struggling to gain full control over all their social service and social conditioning work which can only fully happen as a process of the working class as a whole gaining control over all productive work (and establishing socialism).

Even though their struggle is essential to a working class revolution, women, as family workers



and human service workers, will sometimes need to work autonomously, separately as women because of the male privileges which make husbands and co-workers resistant to change. Men will bear the brunt of a lot of the attack on capitalism as it is waged thru the attack on sexism. This attack will be redirected as a together class struggle when men realize that the rising of women is gonna really change the nature of production, the sexual division of production, which also keeps men trapped in their family roles as provider and protector.

It looks like straight men will only begin to get into 'women's work,' to integrate the sexual division of labor as powerful women demand it. When

these guys are forced into revolutionary family and community work, they'll begin to experience the value of cooking, cleaning, nursing, and what all. They'll begin to experience the rush of righteous women's leadership, and feel how raising revolutionary children and healing and feeding each other gives strength to the overall class struggle.

Now a lot of this integration into the family can only happen when men have grabbed some control over their workplace so that they can work part-time for enough bucks to work at home too, and/or as women can push into well-paying jobs, where husbands won't be as responsible for the bread winning.

So...how does all this relate to gay men and class struggle? Well, first and foremost--faggots are a basic threat to the sexual division of labor. It's no accident that our culture has been made invisible--our language, our history, our home life, our heroes, our humor, our sanity invaded, distorted and suppressed.

I believe that open faggotry basically serves the interests of the working class against the ruling class because we are men who have to some degree resisted the bourgeois social conditioning to be competitive, tough, anti-sensual, other-centered workers.

On the job, we can risk more rebellion than the worker who has family to support. Open faggotry really shakes the homophobia and fag-baiting which not only keeps queers and straight men divided, but keeps straight men rigid and separated from each other, as well as keeping queers divided (better believe it). Open faggotry works to unify the working class because we offer heteros a model for men supporting each other in emotional and physical ways--ways to resist the mindless drudgery of capitalist workplaces. An army of lovers...right? If I'm correctly reading Join Hands, the gay prisoner support newspaper, that process of faggot leadership seems to have started in prison organizing.

Open faggotry threatens the sexual division of labor by contradicting the traditional male role on the job. In the family sphere, we contradict the notion that fucking has to be for making new workers and the notion that men have to be father/protectors and breadwinners to feel good about themselves.

In not depending on women to be emotional/sexual service stations, we are undermining the sexual division of labor and taking some of the unpaid load off women. We are spreading the responsibility for this work beyond the class of women and demanding mothering from men. It's no accident that the phrase "what you do in bed is your own business" has become a stock response to gay liberation by those attempting to hold onto the private/public split, the personal/political split in the sexual division of labor. What we do in bed is work, it is socially useful work. Those folks who were in the tipi last night can tell you about that.

And we do other 'women's work' as well. Of the unpaid labor, we certainly are involved in clothing, feeding, cleaning, healing of ourselves and other men, and if we are sissies, we did/do this work with women in the nuclear family. Of the paid labor, we find ourselves shoved into the same shit paying social service jobs as women--waiting tables, cooking, cleaning, nursing, typing--because we can be more 'out' with women co-workers and because we learned these skills in the unpaid sphere. We are also often turned on to the 'social conditioning' jobs, especially jobs working with children because our lifestyles generally excludes us from the nuclear family type childrearing situation.

In the present historical period, the American family is going through traumatic changes which have

uncorked the conditions for a gay liberation movement and the breaking down of the sexual division of labor. The divorce rate is climbing rapidly, lotsa folks just never get married, and partly due to the availability of birth control and partly due to a growing plastic, machine-driven and fragmented world, people are looking for new lifestyles. The counter-culture, communes, open-marriage, etc. all point toward the beginnings of 'socialized' families.

With the strains on the family and the pressure to accommodate the growing reserve labor pool of family workers into the paid workforce, the monopoly capital in the last 30 years has opened up tons of new areas of the economy which employ primarily women, the human services, to shore up the crumbling social services and conditioning functions of the family. About half the women in this country now work for wages. There are more people doing paid service work than industrial production work. While this process is socializing some family functions (day care, food service, counseling, nursing, etc) and brings women out of their isolation into group work situations, they have less power about who to serve and how. Their relationship to the boss is right there and they gotta toe the line.

At this time, the socialist feminist goal to integrate the two spheres of public and private work is happening in the fight for wage-worker & community control of the services which are already socialized, and the struggle to socialize those services, under home-worker and community control, which now only exist in isolated family units. As I have pointed out, as faggots we have already begun the process of getting men into women's work, but that process should really be secondary to following



women's leadership and struggling to gain the support to come out wherever we can. As I've said, to come out in itself can be a revolutionary act, as attack on the sexual division of labor.

In more specific terms, within the family-community sphere, we should especially become involved in consumer struggles for childcare, food co-ops, communal kitchens, and laundries, schools, the environment, healthcare, housing. And the struggles

against the family being used for reserve labor--welfare rights struggles and wages for housework struggles. In all these struggles, our survival depends on our coming out, defending our right to be part of the larger 'socialized family,' whatever community has come together in the struggle. We gotta defend our right to work as open faggots with children, to be part of their social conditioning, as well as their feeding, clothing, cleaning, nursing, emotional nurturing and defend their right to understand our sexual nurturing on our terms. We gotta defend our rights to child custody and recognition of our gay families as part of the larger socialization process. These are our only guarantees to cut through the sexual repression and authoritarian conditioning which is at the source of gay oppression.

What's real exciting is that we can take heart in the example of Third World women who are in the leadership of 'socializing' the family and demanding control over already socialized services in the USA. Due to the high unemployment in their communities, these women find themselves daily nurturing many people, an extended family, and that mothering is in increasing conflict with bourgeois ideology, it feeds rebellion against the rising capitalist need for more ambitious, passive-submissive workers. This work of Third World women is motivated most clearly out of defending their cultural integrity, their national unity from the ravages of the racial division of labor. Their struggle is one of survival, their labor is largely unpaid, so their only way to get the necessary social services is to draw together and create them or fight for them. For example, the struggle for community control of schools or rent control. Not surprisingly, faggots seem to be more accepted as part of this Third World community liberation process, where all hands are needed to stay afloat, than in white communities.

Because of the particular form that racism takes, Third World women often have to work for wages while unemployed men take on the social production in the family. As stated earlier these female wage earners more and more end up in the human services where they feel really sharply the need to have more direct control over their working conditions as well as the services provided their Third World sisters and brothers. Again because of racism. Because of imperialism these women are forging worker-community alliances because they need national liberation.

We would do well to follow their lead. We gay people too have our own culture, which has been imperialized/ripped off. We have a community liberation process, our job security, our housing, our legal rights, our health, our education, and our children to defend.

In particular, lesbians have had their women's culture and their gay culture ripped off. It is no accident that some hot healthcare worker-patient coalitions and childcare worker-parent struggles (like the Daycare Workers Alliance of Portland) have been led by lesbians. Dykes' defense of their sexuality depends directly on women's healthcare and control of their own bodies. Dykes defense of their children and our next generation of dykes and faggots depends directly on grabbing control of childrearing and schooling from the agents of the bourgeoisie. As faggots we would do well to follow their lead. In particular, in the so-called private sphere, our liberation is tied to taking responsibility for 'socializing' childcare by caring for gay people's children and by becoming the foster-parents of gay children.

A great example of how dykes and Third World women are leading worker-community struggles and opening doors to gay liberation, is a story I just

heard about a school district in the Bronx. The Catholic Church, one of the largest landowners in NYC, has been attempting to gain power in the public schools by influencing local school boards. Their representatives urged the board of a largely Black and Puerto Rican district, to send a resolution to the state legislature to exclude school teachers from gay fights legislation. In the process of fag and dyke-baiting that divided the board, progressive gay and non-gay women pointed out how the powerful bourgeois Catholic Church was using homophobia to divide poor people and move into power in the school district. The resolution was defeated. Yea for working class solidarity!

It is no accident that gay workplace struggles have been focused in the human services, e.g. the Gay Schoolworkers and the Gay Healthworkers in the Bay Area, the Action Childcare Coalition in Seattle. It is no accident that the first union in the Bay Area to adopt a non-discrimination clause around sexual orientation for contract negotiations was a hospital workers union. Campaigns are now being waged in restaurant and clerical worker's unions for gay rights. The pattern is the same in Canada and Britain, where the gay movement is more connected to union struggles. All these human services unions are predominantly women and have a concentration of gay men. Our liberation as faggots depends on following the leadership of these women in fighting sexism in existing unions and advancing the class position of women and faggots by organizing the masses of un-organized human service workers.

Beyond these struggles for basic economic, union rights and for the right to be 'out' in non-sensitive jobs, our next steps will be to defend our right to services which represent the needs of gay people both as workers and consumers. Our most crucial and difficult steps will be demanding work for wages in the socialization of children as gay teachers, gay childcare workers, gay counselors, gay recreation directors, even in scouts and little league. Of course, what I mean, since we're already

socializing children for wages, is demanding the right to our culture, humor, history, and lifestyle on the job.

We gotta realize too that the struggle of children, which happens particularly in school rebellions runaways, is part of the class struggle, part of the attack on the authoritarian conditioning and sexual repression of the family and its extension, the schools. Since the socialization of children is the core of our liberation struggle, we must ally with this uprising.

So, to summarize; our gay oppression and the oppression of women comes from the rise of the father-dominated family and in the current historical period, out of the sexual division of labor under capitalism. Our primary strategy as gay men to undermine the sexual division of labor is to follow the lead of working class women, especially Third World women and lesbians in forging worker-community alliances for socialism. Waged workers in particular have the power to withhold our labor power and pressure the capitalist, who depends on us directly for profit.

Working class women are finding it in their self-interest to gain control over the social means of production and the means of reproduction, their own bodies. This struggle against ruling class control of reproduction--against forced sterilization, for free access to birth control and abortion, the struggle to separate sexuality from reproduction--all adds up for us, lays the guts of the struggle toward open sexuality.

These women are realizing that by repressing sexuality and teaching heterosexual, authoritarian relationships, they are setting up their children and themselves to be raped. These women are demanding community childrearing and self-reliant children. All this stuff is basic to gay liberation, and women wage earners have got the power to whip up these struggles, to pull together the working class and further the conditions for gay liberation and socialist revolution.

Socialist Feminism presentation, part 2

What I basically want to do is cover and combine a lot of different perspectives that are involved with socialist feminism. I feel that its one area of the political movement that really encompasses a lot of different forms of oppression.

In terms of Jamie's analysis and explanation of the division of labor, there is a political movement which is evolving in this country, a Socialist Feminist Movement. I want to talk about that, what that means to us. And also in terms of Imperialism, throughout the world.

One criticism that I heard of this presentation, when we first saw the brochure and people in the Bay Area were first starting to relate to it, was that they thought it was a bit off the wall for men to be sitting here and talking about socialist feminism. I want to respond to that by saying that my understanding of socialist feminism is that its been put forth as a strategy for revolution and in that context, I think we have a responsibility as socialists to talk about that, to get into dialogues about what that means. I think there's a difference between that and talking for women.

For that reason there will be a lot of quotes in the presentation. I don't particularly like quotes in presentations, but in this situation I think it is a real good thing to have, to get the voices of the women who are making that movement, to get those



across, and to share those.

I'm gonna start by describing the character of socialist feminism: the political outlook, a brief look at the history of the divisions in the women's movement, then go on to talk about third world women and how they relate to feminism, and finally conclude with socialist feminism and the direction of gay liberation.

First, a little bit about my background. I first got turned to feminism through the anti-war movement. A lot of women friends, who were close friends, who I looked to for political leadership, got involved with the women's movement and made that connection for me. And I went through a bit of a political drought for a few years and got into yoga real heavy and totally dropped politics. When I came out I saw the connections again between women's oppression and gay oppression. I worked in the New American Movement last year for about three months, went to the NAM convention, talked with a lot of the women there. NAM is one of the organizations which has had a lot of influence on the development of socialist feminist theory, so part of my development came from that.

Most recently I've had some different perspectives, outside of the context of the white women's movement: working on the July 4th Coalition in the Bay Area, doing some study on my own, and starting to take more and more responsibility for racism. I'm working in the Native American Solidarity Committee, which is giving me some insights about the relationship between the oppressions of sex and class and race.

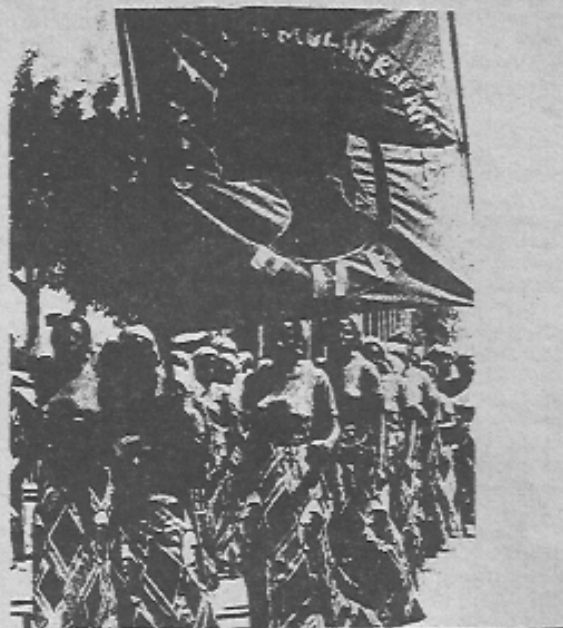
I'd like to start out describing the basic principles of socialist feminism by using the first national socialist feminist conference, which occurred July 4th weekend, over a year ago, in Ohio. 1800 women attended the conference, it was mostly white, although there were some third world people there. From that conference, a very elementary groundwork was established for people to take what they thought socialist feminism was back to their various communities, and begin developing that more and more.

At that conference, there were a lot of speeches dealing with the theory of socialist feminism, because it was still a pretty new concept. I've taken a lot of the common threads running through those speeches and come up with a working definition. The following four principles of unity defined the conference:

- 1) We recognize the need for, and support the existence of, the autonomous women's movement throughout the revolutionary process.
- 2) We agree that all oppression, whether based on race, class, sex, or lesbianism, is interrelated and the fights for liberation from oppression must be simultaneous and cooperative.
- 3) We agree that socialist feminism is a strategy for revolution.
- 4) We take our movement seriously; discussions at the conference should be in the spirit of struggle and unity to move socialist feminism forward.

From the speeches comes the next part I'm going into, which is just the basic groundwork of socialist feminism. The first characteristic, and I think the most major, is the role of women in the revolutionary movement.

Socialist feminism contends that women are central to the revolutionary process and crucial to its success. Understanding the character of socialist feminism is to realize that female socialists and socialist feminists are not the same thing. While traditional Marxists see the women's movement



Northwest Passage

as another group oppressed by capitalism, socialist feminist thinking acknowledges the critical and primary importance of women in any upcoming revolution.

In a speech by Barbara Ehrenreich at the Ohio conference, she spoke to this point by stating, "When I say 'critical importance' I mean not in an auxiliary role, or not as a minority group that

needs to be appeased by the revolutionary forces—I mean women as a revolutionary force, as a leading force."

A second characteristic of socialist feminism is the role and function of autonomy. Socialist feminists feel that just as women are central to the revolutionary process, so is the need and the right for autonomy central to socialist feminism. The Berkeley-Oakland Women's Union spoke to the issue of autonomy by stating, "We are autonomous because we are oppressed as women by capitalism. We have seen in the past years that only a strong women's movement independent of the mixed left can take leadership and make the left move on the questions raised by feminism. Only through autonomy can the struggle against women's oppression be central to our practice."

A third characteristic would be the connection between the personal and the political, which the women's movement and the gay movement have really advanced a lot in the last five years. Again another quote from a woman at the conference: "The personal is political is a crucial perspective because it legitimizes people's oppression by acknowledging that what people already feel to be important is important. It is a starting point from which we can understand our experiences differently than when they first occurred to us. By making the connections between our own and other's experiences, we begin to demystify and struggle against the bourgeois ideology that we all have internalized."

The last major point is in the area of the primary contradiction for women. Socialist fem-

inists feel that their political outlook is necessary because sexism and capitalism form one integrated system. The principle is particularly relevant to the women's movement where a lot of energy has gone into the debate over what the primary contradiction or conflict for women actually is—sex(gender) or class. Socialist feminism maintains that socialism and capitalism complement one another and cannot be separated.

This principle is particularly important in terms of the relationship between socialist feminism and Marxism. It demands that the Marxist method and analysis be applied to developing an understanding of the realities of women's oppression. Socialist feminism uses Marxist methodology and applies it to whole areas of society that traditional Marxists have not addressed. In the past, socialists generally have been concerned only with that part of life directly organized by capital—production for profit and the activities of the State that maintain capitalism. Sexuality, lesbianism, and raising children—personal life in general—have not been seen as appropriate subjects of socialist analysis.

The analysis that Jamie came up with here on these charts, is a real good example of the development that's happened in the past few years, of the clearer understanding that we're having of the social division of labor, although it existed all the time.

So this is the basic principles that I want to use as a working definition of socialist feminism, and the one that most women who identify as socialist feminists subscribe to at this time. I want to go next into the history of the divisions in the women's movement, because I think it's real important to look at the socialist feminist movement as not something that just happened in the past few years. The women's movement itself didn't just start in the late sixties but has a long history.

From the earliest history of the women's movement, white middle class women have both dominated the movement and sold out the most oppressed of women—third world and working class women. This division reflects the difference in perspectives between women from these two sectors of society. For middle class white women the movement meant political equality in a society they basically accepted. For third world and working class women, the fight was one for survival.

The 1850's saw this type of division reflected in the composition of the abolition movement and the women's movement. Most active Black women worked for abolition of slavery rather than in the women's rights struggle because for them it was a question of survival, not rights. Those Black women who did work in the women's movement did so because they wanted the right to speak at anti-slavery meetings and they desired their full share of political rights to further their fight against slavery.

While there was an alliance between the women's movement and the abolition movement it was not based on any political unity or understanding of the common enemy shared by both. In fact, in the women's movement there was a tendency to equate women's oppression with that of Black slavery, which reflects the low level of understanding around racial oppression that existed then.

This antagonism around race and class repeated itself continually throughout the history of the women's movement. Regarding the Fifteenth Amendment, which outlawed racial discrimination at the polls, white feminists exposed their racism in



FAGGOTS & CHILDREN

"...are you willing to have the colored man enfranchised before the women; I say no. I would not trust him with my rights. Degraded, oppressed himself, he would be more despotic with the governing power than ever our Saxon rulers are... If women are still to be represented by men, then I say let only the highest type of manhood stand at the helm of State."

While there was a tendency among the feminists to support Black struggles, their radical positions were increasingly attacked, forcing them to ally with the middle class tendency that pushed only for women's suffrage. Middle class reformists used their power in labor struggles to dominate and sell out working class women. In the Women's Trade Union League, a coalition of house workers and working women that existed from 1903 through the late 1930s, the division of class interests and perspectives eventually split and dissolved the League. Working class women pushed for their need to form unions to protect them from harassment from their bosses. Middle class women pushed for legislative reforms that would adjust the minor flaws in what they saw as a basically good system. The reformists encouraged rich sympathizers to join the League, people whose class power and privilege allowed them to take over the League and shape its politics.

These patterns of division have been carried right into today's women's movement. Again, most of the power and leadership rests securely in the hands of white, middle class women. It is from this movement and its history that most socialist feminists have come. While allying themselves verbally with third world and white working class women in their struggles, the middle class composition of their movement reflects one of its major contradictions. As a result of this composition, many of the issues raised by socialist feminists fail to speak to the needs of third world women.

The racism of the women's movement is rarely discussed openly; nor are the differences between the political outlooks of third world and white women discussed often. Speaking to this, one third world woman explains the central reason that third world women do not work in the women's movement:

"Activist sisters understand that in order to improve the lives of third world women as women, it is essential to end their oppression as third world people. So much of the sexual and class oppression suffered by third world women is integrated with racial oppression."

I think this is real key here, and I think this is one area that a lot of white feminists and some

socialist feminists really haven't come to grips with yet. One good example of how third world women's struggles differ from the women's movement's demands is seen around the issue of abortion on

demand. This demand is put forth as an important right for women to control their own, individual bodies. But for third world women, a greater threat to that principle is the reality of forced sterilization. Women who are forcibly sterilized don't have the freedom to decide if they want children ever again. Furthermore, in this imperialist society, forced sterilization is more than a violation of a woman's individual rights. It is an attack and a violation on her whole people.

"In this context a third world woman may ask 'What does abortion on demand mean when the children I have are taken from me by the courts, when they are murdered in a thousand ways by this racist, dog-eat-dog society?' Third world women have fought for the liberation women. Most often our struggles have been in the context of enabling us to contribute even more to the liberation of our entire people, to the liberation of working people, to the ultimate end of all forms of hierarchy and oppression." (Third World Women, *Seize the Time*)

In this critical area of understanding the realities of third world women, socialist feminism has not offered much as a strategy for revolution for those women. Socialist feminists have failed to understand that for third world women, their national oppression is more important than their oppression as women. For this reason feminist organizations have little to offer to third world women.

The ability and desire to organize autonomously, as women independent of the left, does not correspond to the needs of third world women politically. The failure of socialist feminism to recognize this reality reflects their lack of understanding of the intensity of national oppression that third world people experience. While recognizing that women have a vast potential to lead a socialist revolution, socialist feminism fails to recognize that third world women will be the leading force for the liberation among women.

CONTRADICTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

While the position of the importance of an autonomous socialist feminist presence is a weakness of socialist feminism in relation to national oppression, this autonomous formation also serves as a strength in the context of fighting male supremacy and heterosexism within the socialist movement. Having an autonomous base to work from keeps issues of sexism and heterosexism from being avoided, especially in coalition work. It also enables women to become stronger through mutual support, allows them to develop leadership among themselves without having to be intimidated by male heavies.

With lesbian leadership and a commitment among socialist feminists to deal with anti-gayness, the issues of gay oppression are viewed as integral to the oppression of all women. In these ways, socialist feminism advances the role of lesbians and non-gay women in the left.

In terms of organizational and individual leadership, socialist feminism plays a dual role. By having an all women's organization committed to the principles of socialism and feminism, women can discuss and share ideas in an atmosphere free from the intimidation of leftist male politicians. This has certainly aided in the political development of many women and has encouraged women to take leadership

both within socialist feminist unions and outside of them.

Socialist feminism has made many significant contributions both to women and to the white left. Specifically, it has struggled to provide a class analysis of women's oppression, involved many women in developing theory and analysis, provided an alternative to the reform-oriented, middle-class feminist movement, provided an organizational structure for socialist feminists, encouraged the development of women's leadership in the left, and challenged a male-dominated left around issues of sexism and heterosexism.

Its weaknesses include failing to organize large numbers of white working class women, failing to meet or understand the political needs of third world women, and failing to identify and correct political errors.

SOCIALIST FEMINISM AND THE DIRECTION OF GAY LIBERATION

I want to talk now about the relationship of the socialist feminist movement to our movement as gay men involved with gay liberation. There is a corresponding tendency among mostly-white politically active gay men that reflects many of the basic perspectives of socialist feminism. Many of the men who identify with this outlook support feminism and generally support socialism in principle, and tend to be somewhat hostile toward the organized left because of its male dominance. A lot of this support for socialist feminism appears to be naive and more often than not uncritical. I think that the logic that many of us have had at one point or another, or maybe still have now, is the overly simplistic look at socialist feminism which says that since feminism is right on and socialism is right on, then it follows that socialist feminism is going to meet a lot of our political needs.

Tied in deeply with such a blanket acceptance of women-defined politics is a dangerous subservience to any political outlook coming from women, without checking out the class and racial background of that political perspective. Following the leadership of women is an important dimension of revolutionary struggle; but blind and uncritical acceptance of women's theory, strategy, and leadership is not only irresponsible politically, but will ultimately hold back revolutionary development in this country. If we believe that women's victories are our victories we must also accept that women's errors are also ours.



Reflecting both its racial and class composition, the gay men's movement like the women's movement, has leaned heavily toward political reforms. Its program has benefitted middle-class white gay men the most, many times at the expense of third world and working class gay brothers.

Political organizations like Gay Activists Alliance continue primarily to serve the interests of white, middle class men, sometimes giving strong verbal support to third world struggles but maintaining organizational power and leadership among middle-class, white men, be they liberals or socialists. Within the growing socialist, pro-feminist tendency among gay men lies many of the same racist and classist political assumptions and errors that exist amidst the socialist feminist tendency in the white women's movement.

I feel real strongly that third world people are the leading revolutionary force in this country and in the world today. There are alot of examples of that: in Latin America, in Africa, in Southeast Asia, in the Phillipines. In the United States itself, there are Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexicanos, and Native peoples who are involved right now, who have been involved continually in struggles for self-determination of their own lives and communities. At times these have reached the point of armed struggle; right now for instance around Wounded Knee at Pine Ridge, not to mention the day-to-day police harassment and warfare that exists in Black communities and all third world communities.

Unless gay men who identify as socialists or anti-imperialists come to recognize the leading role of third world struggles through study, discussion, and practice, the gay men's liberation movement will offer little real support to revolutionary struggle and development. Unless we acknowledge the importance of third world and working class leadership in the gay liberation movement and act concretely on that acknowledgement, the ideas and perspectives of gay liberation will remain isolated among middle-class gay men and lesbians and will never reach deep into society.

Ultimately this will involve the somewhat painful experience of exposing to ourselves and to each other our racism as well as our classism.



Middle class privilege and white chauvinism among gay men in the movement clearly explain why the bulk of the gay liberation movement is ambiguous and at times hostile toward building class consciousness and a socialist movement.

There exists an urgent need for working class gays, third world gays, and their allies to put forth an analysis of the relationship of gay struggles to anti-imperialism and socialist revolution. Throughout the world, revolution and national independence are the major trend. Inside this country, in the belly of the monster of imperialism, key sectors of the Black liberation movement and the Native American movement are focusing their strategy for liberation on national sovereignty, meaning the possible emergence of both an Indian nation and a Black nation which would stand autonomous and independent of the American government. Among white workers and third world people, police repression, wage and welfare cutbacks, and attacks on unions and the right to strike are furthering dissent.

Our role as gay people in any upcoming revolutionary movement will depend entirely on liberating the gay liberation movement, seizing power from the middle class white men who dominate it, and putting that power in the hands of working class and third world gays who have areal stake in building a people's movement. Our role will also depend on ending the isolation of gay struggles from third world struggles, labor struggles, community struggles, and struggles of the unemployed and of those on welfare. It is imperative to remember that for the majority of the estimated twenty million lesbians and gay men in this country, gay oppression is only one of the oppressions experienced in this society and it is not, necessarily, the central oppression.

In denying the relative privileges that exist among all oppressed people, privileged whites will often ask why they should organize around someone else's oppression before their own, not seeing that they can do both simultaneously. The core of this response comes from our collective oppression which pits us all against one another for crumbs of freedom. In this context, one of the most important lessons that gay white activists need to understand is how the oppression of others directly and personally affects us. Basically we need to acknowledge who benefits the least from imperialist oppression and who benefits somewhat more from it. We also need to understand who holds the greatest revolutionary potential and who, once effectively organized, will lead the fight that will destroy our common enemy.

I want to close with some quotes from this pamphlet by a woman named Selma James. I'm not sure if she's a Black woman or not. I know she's involved in the socialist movement and in the women's movement in England. She wrote a pamphlet called Sex, Race, and Class, which came out about two or three years ago. She tries to deal with the apparent confusions that have resulted from the emergence of socialist feminism as an ideology:

"We are seeking to describe that complex interweaving of forces which is the working class. We are seeking to break down the power relationships among us, upon which is based the hierarchical rule of international capital. No man can represent us as women, any more than whites can speak about and themselves and the Black experience. Nor do we seek to convince men of our feminism. Ultimately they will be convinced by our power."

"...The anti-racist point of view, the point

of view that is, of struggle, is to discover the organizational weaknesses which permits the most powerful sections of the working class to be divided from the less powerful, thereby allowing Capital to play off this division and defeat us. The question is in fact one of the basic questions which the class faces today.

Where Lenin divided the class between the advanced and the backward, a subjective division, we see the division along the lines of capitalist organization, the more powerful and the less powerful. It is the experience of the less powerful that when workers in a stronger position—that is men with a wage relation to women without one, or whites with a higher wage than Blacks—gain a victory, it may not be a victory for the weaker, and may even be and represent defeat for both. For in the disparity of power in the class is precisely the strength of Capital."

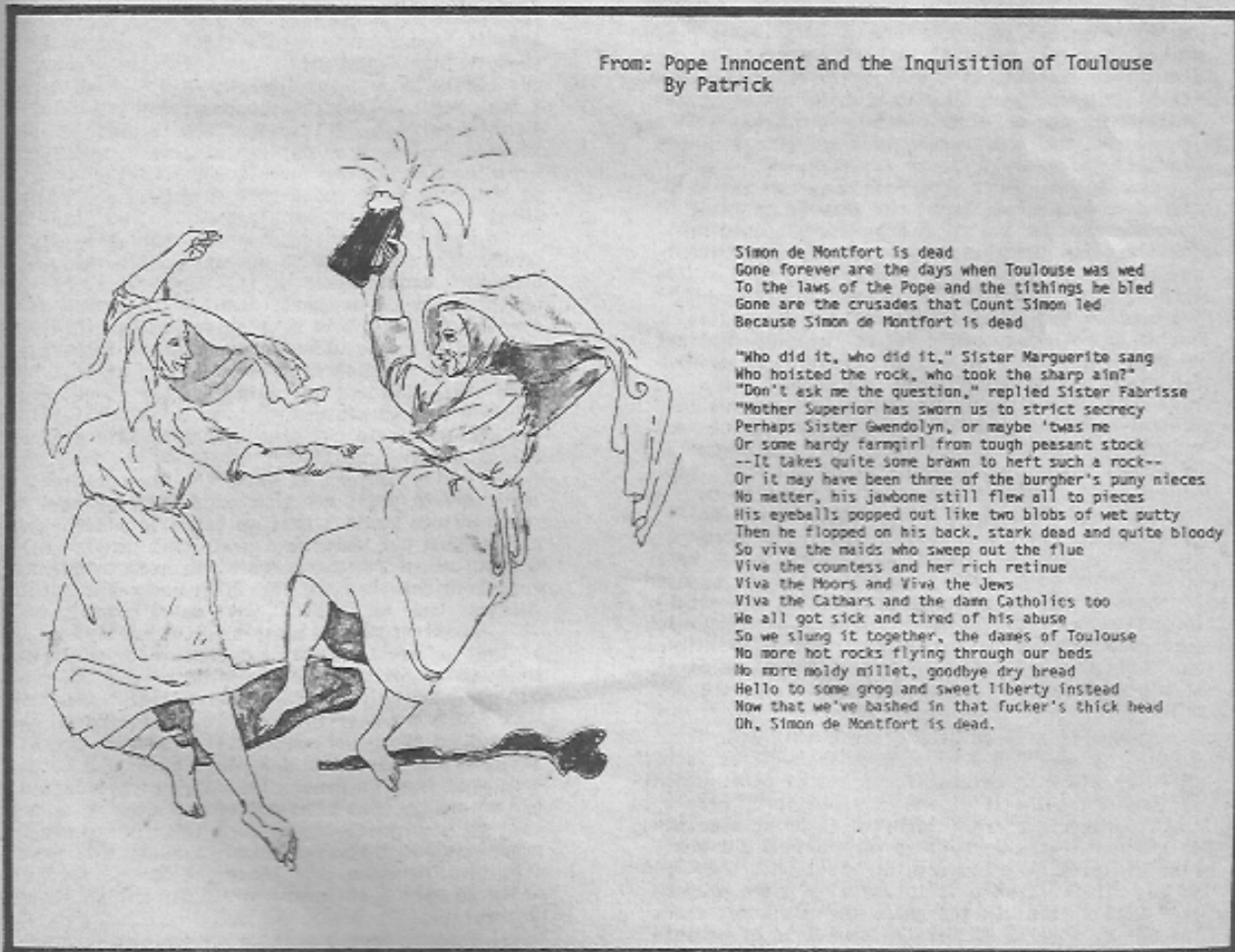
That's all....

I just wanted to add one more thing too. The things I put forth in this presentation I want to have taken in a general context, because there are some organizations, (particularly up in Seattle, the Freedom Socialist Party) which appear to be taking these issues of class, race, and sex real seriously, and are doing alot of progressive struggling around that.

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From: Pope Innocent and the Inquisition of Toulouse
By Patrick



Simon de Montfort is dead
Gone forever are the days when Toulouse was wed
To the laws of the Pope and the tithings he bled
Gone are the crusades that Count Simon led
Because Simon de Montfort is dead

"Who did it, who did it," Sister Marguerite sang
Who hoisted the rock, who took the sharp ain?"
"Don't ask me the question," replied Sister Fabrisse
"Mother Superior has sworn us to strict secrecy
Perhaps Sister Gwendolyn, or maybe 'twas me
Or some hardy farmgirl from tough peasant stock
--It takes quite some brawn to heft such a rock--
Or it may have been three of the burgher's puny nieces
No matter, his jawbone still flew all to pieces
His eyeballs popped out like two blobs of wet putty
Then he flopped on his back, stark dead and quite bloody
So viva the maids who sweep out the flue
Viva the countess and her rich retinue
Viva the Moors and Viva the Jews
Viva the Cathars and the damn Catholics too
We all got sick and tired of his abuse
So we slung it together, the dames of Toulouse
No more hot rocks flying through our beds
No more moldy millet, goodbye dry bread
Hello to some grog and sweet liberty instead
Now that we've bashed in that fucker's thick head
Oh, Simon de Montfort is dead.

Practice

First, Mississippi Sissi has handouts which are evaluations of BAY AREA GAY LIBERATION that the office committee put out. How many people don't have them yet. Brian is going to be passing them out, so raise your hand if you need one. I'm going to make an opening statement about what people who are on the panel think are points we all want to bring out in common. Then, there'll be a couple of statements. Then there'll be representatives from five different organizations and groups. Then a closing statement followed by workshops. We are approaching this panel today in terms of different forms of organizations instead of specific organizations and places. That way people can get a better idea of what forms of organizations exist in different places and adapt them to their own needs and their own localities. We've had a whole lot of presentations the last two days. We've talked about class, socialist-feminism, families, as well as personal ways we have felt oppression. Now is the time to put these all together and figure out how we can build organizations that can fight back and build a movement. Individual people can't make a difference, or so we've all been brainwashed to think, but I think we are all starting to learn that individuals are going to get crunched unless they work together with a whole lot of other individuals and build a strong movement that will defend our rights and eventually seize the means of production.

In the U.S. under imperialism, there is, as discussed by Kent, Garrett and Charles in their presentations on the first day, a whole cult of individualism that has developed. Bourgeois ideology teaches us that the individual can make a difference, become rich, be happy, and to hold our frustration and anger in year after year, so it builds up. We just can't get out all the feelings we have inside us. We end up screaming or drinking or we end up doing other things that are real self destructive. Capitalism teaches us to destroy ourselves. Building organizations can do a number of things about this. They can become a political expression of anger and emotions. They can become cultural expressions. They help us intergrate our personal lives with our need for political strength and unity. They help us meet people who are interested in the same things we are in an environment that is not alienating as opposed to the bars, baths and other capitalist gay establishments we have. So organizations, if we develop them effectively, can become ways for us to channel our emotions, to release our anger, and to do it in such a way that productive work can change the way things are.

There is a three step process that BAGL is working on now, and I'm going to share it because I think it might be helpful for a lot of other organizations too. The first one of those is for people to come together who are interested in doing something, talk about what they want to do and find out what kind of unity they can develop about what they want to do. The next step is to actually get a program that will accomplish the goals they want to reach. The third step is to develop some kind of organization which will really carry out the program.



Organizational forms are going to be different for different people and different cities. In San Francisco, there are a hundred and twenty thousand gay people. What works there isn't necessarily going to work either in Los Angeles or in a small town where there are maybe twenty or thirty people who are openly gay. So that one of the reasons we want to talk about form today is so that people can understand what kind of things are possible, and then adapt them to their own needs and communities.

How many people are familiar with Mao Tse-Tung and his famous essay on practice? Oh, good. I'd suggest that everybody who is interested in organizationally building a movement read it, and make it a real key task that they set out for themselves. In the essay, Mao talks about how the base of our knowledge comes from our own experience - what we experience with other people and society. Once we start to think about that, and read and study about it, and asking people about it, we start developing strategies for changing our material conditions. Then, we go out and do something, and come back and think about it. We think about it and analyse what we've done. Then we go out and do something else. This develops a process that ends up building a revolution. Theory and intellectualism are real good, and men are real good at it. At the same time, they are not going to help us get anywhere unless we can get in touch with our feelings and emotions, and translate all this into organization.

Finally, before we start the presentation, it's important to point out that organizations need to reach out to people; that we learn to listen to people and find out what they need; what people really need to serve their interests. We need to develop organizations that are flexible, and can adapt to change. Once we find out what we're going to do, it's important not to have our egos so tied up in it that we can't change, but that we do adapt and continually become more powerful, strong, sure of our goal and able to change our material conditions.

There are several kinds of organizations that are not on the panel, especially cultural organizations. We've seen a few plays here, and we've seen what they've done. The fairy circle last night had an energy that came out of the evening that was sort of an organizational form too. There are two organizations that were asked to be on this panel from San Francisco that chose not to be. Raphael wants to make a statement about Gay Latino Alliance. (Raphael)

O.K. I don't have a written speech or anything. Also I'm not sent here to represent GALA or the

Gay Latino Alliance either. I'm also very nervous. There were a lot of real, real hurt feelings from the gay Latino brothers in San Francisco. Feelings of being not forgotten but not even considered, and for a long time I had that position myself. I was not going to come to this conference either. The only thing that changed my mind was going to Los Angeles and seeing the fascism there. That was enough to make me change my position. You know, compromise, on a lot of levels. What we've initiated here anyway out of this experience should help. I believe that a lot of people here will take responsibility for the racism in the planning, and the lack of consideration and consequent tokenism of



third world people at this conference.

One thing that GALA and other third world communities and people are formulating right now is a conference, not really a conference, I should say a get together. Something that will be open to men and women and other progressive groups from Seattle Portland and Los Angeles for anyone interested. We will get together in a series of programs where each group will have a week end to present political and social as well as cultural events or whatever. We hope to get this together hopefully by the winter; January or February. That's just a real rough idea of the date. There's a lot of planning involved. But from this conference, we've learned a great deal. This was a first. Whatever the group wants. The question is: What is the focus of the program? We want to bring together progressive groups in the Bay area and throughout the West Coast. Through the series and at the end of the series, however long it takes, we will have a panel to develop principles of unity and plan strategies, ideally. If anyone here wants to talk about it I have some letters here to pass out for anyone interested.

I'd also like to say that I feel really good about the conference. I mean, it was really hard for me to be here, I mean a great deal. But it was a first, and something that we've all learned from, and I think we can all benefit. I want to thank you all. That's it.

(Siva)

The Black caucus of BAGL made a similar statement and decision. They chose not to participate for two reasons. First, because there was no third world participation in planning the conference and second, because it was for men only. The Black Gay Caucus is a group of men and women together, and points up one of the differences that Blondie pointed out in his presentation about socialist-feminism yesterday brought up that the needs and realities of the white gay community is really different than the reality of non-white communities, in that Gay American Indians, the Black Gay Caucus of BAGL and Gay Latino Alliance are all men and women

together who are trying to overcome problems, and feel that racism and national oppression is the most severe problem they face, that is, racism.

(moderator)

Mississippi Sissi and I will make a ten minute presentation on BAGL and then each group is going to make a ten minute presentation on what they are doing. There will be a closing statement, and then workshops. When we introduce the workshops, it will be like a way of summing up the different organizational forms because that's how we decided to do the workshops; around different kinds of organizations some of which won't be represented on the panel.

The handout about BAGL will be discussed first. BAGL started a year and a half ago. Two hundred people were at this organizing meeting. There are now about five hundred people on the mailing list, and anywhere from seventy to one hundred and fifty people come to meetings every two weeks. A lot of campaigns, or I should say one of the most important campaigns we've had were around gay teacher's rights in San Francisco. We got gay teachers able to teach openly now in the city legally as a result. There was a boycott of a bar that was discriminating against third world people and women that was successful. They changed their policy of admissions.

Some of the areas we've talked about are male violence which ties together rape, street violence against sissy faggots and women and anti-sissism (which is a new word) which is the oppression which sissy men feel from straight identified gay men. Another area is around police harassment and brutality. We had a demonstration against an anti-gay statement that was made by the police department, and they retracted the statement. Recently, BAGL supported the case of Cynthia Forseer, who is a lesbian mother. The state was trying to take her kids away in Orange county of all places. It was thrown out of court. We've helped build real big demonstrations around Gay Freedom Day, real big Stonewall contingents this year and last year. On July 4th this year, the gay participation in the July 4th Coalition was one of the largest and most together participations of all the groups that were in the July 4th Coalition. A lot of BAGL people worked in that coalition.

One problem has been that BAGL was set up as a gay liberation organization. Gay liberation has not really yet even been defended or talked about for the whole year and a half. We had a big split last year that really pointed up the differences. It came around the Matlovich issue. Does everyone know who Matlovich is? He's an Air Force sergeant who wanted to be openly gay in the military and had a big legal case about it. The two sides, I mean there came to be a really clear division around that issue. One side wanted to support Matlovich uncritically. They said because he was gay, he should be supported to come out and be a good gay soldier. The other side said that the Air Force has a really vital role in maintaining imperialism and oppressing third world people all over the world and in the United States. Where anybody should have the right to be openly gay, gay cops and gay military people are still going to kill people unless they have some kind of anti-racist and anti-imperialist understanding. So, with that, a lot of people whose feelings had not been listened to, who felt they had been discounted blew up. We had a couple of real stormy meetings, and the organization hasn't quite recovered from it yet. We still don't have a clear direction yet. I would not call it floundering, but we haven't had any

clear direction for about ten or eleven months now. The evaluation we passed out is coming out of that split. The conclusions we have reached are that we must see gay liberation is a broader context than simply the struggle for democratic rights. Gay people are not only oppressed as gays, but many also oppressed as women, third world, poor, effeminate, transsexual and tranvestite. If BAGL continues to see itself as just a gay liberation group or other organization without putting gay liberation in some broader context so that our analysis of our oppression ties into everyone else's, we are going to be isolated. We don't want that to happen. We believe imperialism is the force which links all these oppressions together and perpetuates all the different



kinds of oppression. We believe BAGL should therefore define gay liberation in the context of anti-imperialism. Now, we've developed this three step method of evaluation BAGL that I talked about earlier. We are now trying to develop principles of unity, or at least a tighter statement of purpose. Like, develop a lot deeper agreed upon goals about what we're trying to do in the organization. Secondly, we're going to talk about specific program areas we're going to work in. Third, about how BAGL can change its organization to to that.

(mississippi sissi)

I come from a working class background, so I'm going to talk about what BAGL has done for me and what it's not doing for me from that point of view. As a mass organization, it provided a safe place for non-political people to come in and feel out the situation and maybe get involved with certain groups and maybe get a little bit more politics within their own lives. One of the groups that was formed was the working class caucus. Another group was the sissy caucus. This is the one I was introduced to. With BAGL being a mass organization, I felt fairly safe about coming in and start chairing some meetings and get over the fear about talking in front of people. I got in touch with more politics and met some very interesting brothers who have been involved with politics a lot longer than I have and they had some interesting things to say. (Oh, my I'm still frightened, O.K.?)

One thing that I noticed when I first came to BAGL that BAGL lacked was a working class caucus and a working class consciousness. That was because BAGL was formed and ran by white middle class men. Another thing that BAGL was missing was women's input and sissy input. These things I've discussed with Rama and other brothers. They are working to introduce it into the evaluation.

As far as BAGL being a mass organization, it is very difficult to keep that together because there isn't no political leadership or no political line

that people can identify with. Because of lack of leadership, there is a lack of interest within the organization. Because of all that, there seems to be less and less people coming in and putting their input into it. Personally, I don't know what to do about that except for working with this evaluation. I learned by working with it the three steps, a process to come up to a conclusion.

Some of the men in there are still dealing with their privileges as far as being white, middle class, straight identified. Hopefully, . . . I see a lot of men working through that or struggling around that. I am hoping that after the evaluation there will be space where Third World people and women feel that they can come in and put input into it.

JOIN HANDS

Hello. We're from Join Hands, the gay prisoner support collective. We'd like to first talk a little bit about our work because we feel that prison work is really important and it is an area that has been neglected by the movement, particularly the gay movement in recent years.

It is hard to imagine a conference on class struggle that didn't deal with prisons. The criminal justice system is a powerful mechanism of class rule and domination of Third World people. We all know the role of schools, media, etc. as social control mechanisms for classism, racism, and sexism. Given this understanding it becomes apparent that prison is one of the most powerful of such mechanisms. The vast majority of prisoners come from poor or working backgrounds. Of these about 70 or 80% are Third World. A liberal analysis would suggest that poor and Third World peoples' poverty drives them to a life of crime. That is bullshit. Crime occurs at all levels of a class society.

A survey of upper class New Yorkers elicited the data that 95% of those surveyed admitted to a felony. Ain't none of them in prison. Yet while Dow Chemical Co. is fined \$500.00 for destroying the ecology, multi-nationals are reprimanded for price fixing and bribery, and Nixon receives a \$200,000.00 a year pension, Third World and poor people are brutalized by police, courts and prisons.

The class and racist nature of the criminal justice system begins on the streets of the heavily police patrolled Third World community. Driven by the necessity to survive with other options closed to him or her, the future prisoner does on an individual level what the bourgeoisie does on a collective level. He or she rips somebody off. The ruling class having reserved this privilege for itself, the "criminal" must be controlled and punished.

Lacking money for a fast talking lawyer and convicted by a white upper or middle income judge and jury, the convict is relegated to the horrors of the prison system. The racism in choosing who goes to America's concentration camps is evidence by the fact that the average sentence for the same offense is longer for non-whites than white offenders.

Once incarcerated the prisoner finds prison society an intensified version of the classist, racist society that has oppressed him or her. The prisoner is forced into prison industry for which he or she is paid about 5 cents an hour. This is a reflection of the unrewarding labor which characterizes capitalism. Rehabilitative education is a joke. Prisoners must compete to get into training programs which train him or her on outmoded equipment for jobs which no longer exist. Prisoners in California learn how to make license plates. That's great.

You can't get out and get a job making license plates because the prisoners do that.

Health care is grossly inadequate. The liberal concept of rehabilitation is contradicted by the inhumane treatment that prisoners receive.

The prison movement is a most revolutionary movement. In rebelling as did the prisoners of Attica the prisoners speak out against the potent class and racist exploitation. As revolutionaries we can and should support our brothers and sisters in prison.

I am going to try and talk some about the history of Join Hands and what we have tried to do and then try to get into some of the problems faced by gay prisoners, particularly gay men prisoners--we deal almost exclusively with gay men prisoners.

Join Hands was started about four or four and a half years ago when some gay brothers in San Francisco became aware of the special needs of gay prisoners, the special oppression they face in prison (I'll get back to that later) and the extreme loneliness of gay prisoners. Many gay people have been cut off from family and friends. When they go to prison very often they have no contact with the outside world. So Join Hands started a correspondence program. Correspondence to prisoners is a tremendously important thing--receiving a letter from the outside--having some contact and feedback from the free world (what many prisoners refer to as minimum security). It is not a rare thing at all for --we get letters from people wanting penpals -- people not to have had a letter for 10 or 15 years from anyone, no contact with the outside.

One of the problems with this is that we could arrange for penpals, but then we lost track of what happened between the outside person and the inside person. We had no way of keeping that together. Join Hands wanted to bring the plight of gay prisoners in the prison situation to more people.

Several years ago there was a petition campaign around equal and democratic rights for gay prisoners, an end to discrimination against gay prisoners which gathered several thousand signatures and was taken to Sacramento. The Governor and the head of the adult authority which is the parole board refused to accept it.

One of the things which Join Hands started about three years ago which was very successful for about a year was an outreach class called Brothers Behind Bars. There we tried to reach a lot of people in the gay community in the Bay Area to come together for Sunday brunches and study about the situation of prisons and the social reality of gay people in prisons to work towards gay people and prisoners to change the conditions there. This continued for about a year. Unfortunately many of the people who became involved in Brothers Behind Bars didn't want to make an organizational commitment to working with Join Hands. But a lot of people gained a lot of useful practice and knowledge about the situation in prisons.

About a year and a half ago we had a demonstration at Palo Alto at a conference of prison guards and parole agents. We managed to get quite a lot of support from the gay community. We had about forty or fifty people there picketing, very spirited very noisy. We didn't get a lot of news coverage unfortunately.

About a year ago Join Hands saw the need to really start bringing together outside people and inside people more closely. We wanted especially for prisoners to communicate with each other and with the outside. After a lot of struggle we decided to

start a newsletter. The newspaper is eight pages long. It is primarily writings by gay men prisoners. Join Hands--if there are specific areas of knowledge such as legal matters, health matters--contributes articles too, if it will be informational and beneficial to inside and outside people.



An interesting thing about the newsletter is that gay people have a lot of trouble receiving openly gay mail. Ten months ago we mailed out the first issue of the newsletter. We only had 33 names of people inside who were willing to receive a gay newsletter. The last mailing we did about two weeks ago went out to 400 prisoners. So, we have had a lot of growth.

Very specifically, one thing that people can do to really support people is come to us if you feel that you would like to start writing to a brother inside. It is so important to them. It seems like a little thing to us on the outside, but that contact is so important and it really is a learning experience on both ends--learning that prisoners are not a different sort of people than we are out here. Perhaps there are privileges. Many of us being Anglos, there are definitely lots of privileges involved in why we are here and not inside. That (writing) is something that everyone can do. I hope that people will come to us and volunteer to start a correspondence with a prisoner inside.

Come to the workshop and we can talk more specifically about the kinds of things that come down on gay prisoners.

(Moderator)

I was in Brothers Behind Bars for awhile. One thing I learned when I was working while I was working with the San Quentin Six defense committee last year was that Eagle Crowed, the Watergate Plumber, got six months in the cushiest prison, federal prison, for second degree burglary. Fleeta Drunga got an indeterminate sentence of 5 to 15 years for the same offense, second degree burglary --in his case stealing a car. He was released after being acquitted of all charges against him after serving 10 years in prison, the last 6 in solitary confinement in San Quentin. Eighty percent of county and state prison populations are not white. (Question of Join Hands)

As an ex-prisoner, I spent 21 months in prison. I really resent that sexual oppression of gay people in prison wasn't at least given a sentence.

(Response by Join Hands)

The social oppression that comes down on gay prisoners covers the entire spectrum from behavior modification programs, to job assignments, to punitive segregation, to denial of parole. Gay prisoners serve longer than anyone. We can go into this more in the workshop.

(June 28th Union)

I'm in the June 28th Union and I'm also in Fruit Punch, a gay men's radio collective in the Bay Area. But, I'm now speaking for June 28th Union.

This is supposed to be about practice and about organizational forms in practice. June 28th Union was started about a year and a half ago. It's got 10 members, all gay men. We got together because all of us had been involved in different political activities--some in Join Hands, in the prisoner support movement, some in Fruit Punch, some of us in BAGL -and we felt a need to come together in a group that had principles of unity, a more disciplined group, a group that we could struggle in around political line.

We had two major goals. The first was to bring anti-imperialist, class conscious politics to the gay community. The second goal was to bring gay politics to the non-gay left. We tried to develop an organizational form that would allow us to conduct that kind of practice. That would allow us to accomplish those two goals. Of course, that is a long run goal. We haven't accomplished it. It is a place to start.

There are lots of different communities, lots of different people who are oppressed in different ways--all of us by class, but many of us have special oppressions. One way that we wanted to work was to draw connections between different struggles, between different people's oppressions.

Our first practice was trying to bring up the struggle of Joanne Little, who is a black woman who was raped and killed her rapist in a prison in North Carolina and was later put on trial for murder. We tried to raise money for her, we leafletted for her, and raised the issue of her struggle among gay men. Basically we thought that straight people weren't going to organize gay men. They totally failed at it. It is up to us to organize ourselves. It is up to gay men to organize gay men. When we have gotten our shit together then we can work with the non-gay left, maybe in the same organization. We don't need to be separate. But right now we feel we do need to be separate.

Our next practice was working with other gay men and lesbians on an event called- "Gay solidarity with the Chilean resistance." This was about a year ago. Over 350 people attended. It was the largest Chilean support rally last year in the whole Bay Area. Gay people were out there supporting the Chilean resistance; more so than all the non-gay organizations that had been organizing around anti-imperialism. It was really exciting.

Then we had a series of benefits. The benefits were supposed to address different people's oppression and draw the connections between gay oppression and other oppressions. Join Hands and June 28th co-sponsored a benefit to bring up the subject of gay prisoners in the gay community.

We had a benefit with the Gay American Indian in the Bay Area for Dennis Banks. This was drawing connections with native american struggles for autonomy and sovereignty in their own lands.

In another event June 28th Union worked with the Gay Latino Alliance and the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee. This had two things going for it. Not only was it white gay men working with Third World gays, but we were also working with a non-gay organization, the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee.



Photo: David LaJoy

Contemporary Soviet art reflects (unwittingly) faithfully the condition of workers in that country: downtrodden, dejected beasts of burden, faceless members of the "labour force". (Tair Salakhov: Workers) So there were all of those connections that had to be made in the organizing of it, and there was also the connections that would be made in the presentation to the people who came to the event.

One of the things we have been working on in study is the relationship between theory and practice. As was mentioned the article by Mao, On Practice, talks alot about how theory and practice are related. Here we have been talking alot about theory. But that theory is just off in space, it is not grounded in practice. Each of the things we have done in practice has been an attempt to solve theoretical problems. We weren't sure about how white gay men could work with Third World gay people. Working on that benefit helped us alot in trying to resolve those problems, resolving the differences between us, understanding why gay Third World people needed separate organizations, why they needed to have their own structures and their methods. It also helped us learn how we as white gay men could work with them.

Also working with the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee was a beginning in solving problems and lack of understanding of how gay people and non-gay people could work together. This is another example of how our practice is tied up with trying to solve theoretical questions.

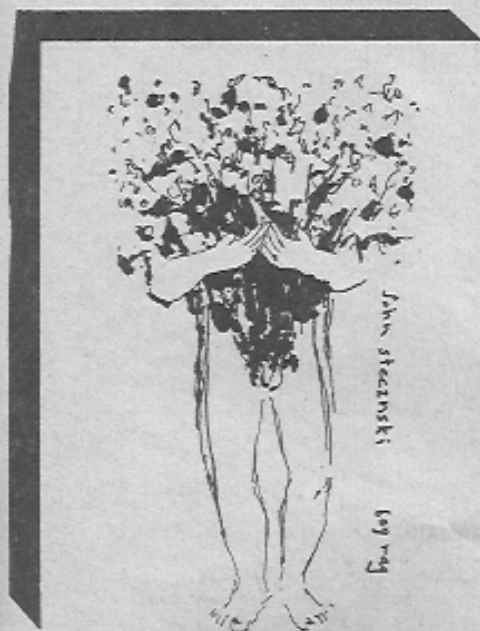
We have also started a study program. Theory doesn't only come out of practice, it comes out of study, too. One of the major tools in pushing forward the struggles of oppressed people is dialectical materialism. We didn't have a clear understanding of it, and we still don't. But we are studying it. Between study and practice theory evolves. Theory provides the guidelines for more practice and more study. From the practice we've done, from the study we've done, from the theory we have developed and the political line we have developed we come up against the national question.

This is something that's been talked about somewhat here, not thoroughly. It is not totally understood by us obviously because we don't have a line on it. We have got beginnings of a line, beginnings of understanding. We have been studying the question and also have been testing out in practice. There is a long way to go before we understand how Third World and white people can work together and separately in the same struggle.

We worked with a lot of gay people in what was called the gay sector of the July 4th Coalition. The July 4th Coalition was a nation-wide coalition of people to combat all the bullshit around the bicentennial and to talk to peoples' needs. People from our organization worked in the gay sector and there was one person from our organization that was on the steering committee of the Bay Area region of the July 4th Coalition.

I think some real important things came out of that. We struggled with non-gay left organizations in that coalition to make gay people a real legitimate part of that coalition, and to have that demonstration speak to the needs of gay people as well as the needs of all oppressed people--working class people and Third World people. Organizations that were participating in this and struggling with the gay sector and with people from our organization in the gay sector and on the steering committee really changed significantly through that struggle. They changed to having a really pro-gay line: Prarie Fire Organizing Committee, Northern California Alliance, KDP (which is a Phillppino Revolutionary organization). All these and several more that I think I've forgotten have significantly changed their attitudes towards gay people.

In any case, this also translated into the national coalition. Although we didn't have as much effect of the national coalition, they too came out with a progressive line on gay people. That is an example of how gay people can gain in consciousness by working with non-gay organizations. There was a large gay sector, about 20% of the demonstration on July 4th was made up of gay people. At the same time the non-gay left really is taking us seriously, really is struggling with us and really is changing. That is something that really made the politics of getting involved in that coalition make sense to us. We felt real good about that.



I think in the future one of the criticisms of ourselves is that we have not been connecting up to things like workplace organizing. That is one direction that we plan on going. There is only 10 of us. We are not a party, we are not a preparty, we are not a mass organization. We are a small

group of men that are trying to develop strategy, trying to develop theory of how the gay movement can grow and move and change and connect up with the movements of all oppressed people. By doing study and doing practice that connects us up, by developing theory and coming to conferences like this we can all grow together. I think that is what it is all about. That is why we are here. I think that we have learned and grown and changed. I think we have all really appreciated the conference. Thank you.

(Moderator)

Morning Due

(Morning Due)

We are two of the members of Morning Due. What I will do first is to give a brief introduction about Morning Due and then go a little into the history of the magazine.

We are a collective of nine white men, both faggots and straight men. We all live in Seattle. We come out six times a year--we are a bi-monthly publication. We print 550 issues and we distribute primarily in the Northwest. Morning Due is a part of a larger organization called Gay Community Social Services which is a non-profit tax exempt corporation that some of us put together about three years ago. We serve as an umbrella for different projects: Elwha; RFD; Through the Looking Glass, which is a prison newsletter for women and children; Gertrude, a women's carpenter collective; Sappho School Survival, which is a lesbian farm in Eastern Washington; and a couple of other groups. We banded together for the financial benefits that being a part of a non-profit tax exempt corporation has: we can mail really cheap--I think it is 3¢ per issue--and we are able to receive tax deductible donations.

On the history of Morning Due, Morning Due began back in 1974. It was an outgrowth of the men's resource center project in Seattle. The political evolution has gone from originally dealing with men's issues, what we think of as being men's issues, and then into issues of feminism--women in institutions, women in self-defense. We did a lot of coverage on Yvonne Wanrow. She's a native American woman who shot a man trying to rape her child in Eastern Washington. We've done coverage on rape cases.

About this time in our history a group of us in Morning Due, although not all of us, formed a study group. We went in a new direction toward the study of Marxism. We started to develop an analysis of what was going on around us.

About the time that we were doing the study group the George Jackson Brigade was issuing a lot of publicity in Seattle. If you've never heard about the George Jackson Brigade, it is an underground left organization which has taken responsibility for bombings in the Seattle area including a bombing of an electric power substation in a ritzy neighborhood in Seattle, and a Safeway store. The George Jackson Brigade sent out several communiques concerning their activities and Morning Due received these communiques. We had to decide whether or not we were going to print them. This was sort of a change in focus for the magazine.

We were also divided about whether they thought this was a good thing to do. The basic issues that it got down to were that some people felt that non-violence was the correct way to build a revolution and other people felt that armed struggle would be necessary for revolution.

The other big issue that we had disagreements about was whether we should continue to deal with sexism as an issue in isolation from other issues or whether we should take a broader political per-

spective and try to fit sexism into that. We finally decided that we would print the two communiques that we had received.

As a result of discussions that we had around printing those, we decided to form a study group that would be an actual part of Morning Due. By this time the study group that some of us had been in had folded due to schedule conflicts and a lack of motivation. Since then we decided that to be in the Morning Due collective it is necessary to be in the study group. We meet once a week in addition to our regular business meetings to study together.



George Jackson.

As a result of those changes that started dealing with different issues in the magazine. We did a critique of the George Jackson Brigade's women's day communique which told something about why they believed armed violence was necessary. We did a critically supportive critique of that. In the last issue there was a marxist analysis of S&M and how sexual repression was a cause of S&M. We have dealt with Sexual Politics and Bourgeois Ideology which was the article that one of us had made an announcement about.

On the content of the magazine, we have some regular features that we do. One is the collective statement explaining the process that we've gone through in putting out the issue and issues we've had to deal with in putting out the magazine. We have some regular features. We have a cooking article. The last one was on sugar and imperialism. Another regular feature is Faygele's Grim Fairy Tales.

We also do a lot of reporting on court cases: Assata Shakur, Gary Tyler, and Yvonne Wanrow. On generating material we have done one theme issue where we decided what we wanted to write about and then people chose the topics that they wanted to do. Our past practice has been that we waited for people to send in articles. This was a bit shaky. We gave up a lot of control by allowing this process to go on.

At present, individuals in the collective are generating a lot of material. It still is not happening that collectively we are deciding what to write about, but individuals are deciding that. A change that the magazine is going through is that the magazine will collectively decide what we are going to write about.

As a result of our study group some of the other areas of the magazine that we've started to criticize and understand a little better are

one, we haven't had a very clear understanding why we think doing a magazine is important and how we see Morning Due as a political tool. That is something that we are just starting to talk about, and something we should have talked about before. We also realized that we didn't have a real clear idea of who reads Morning Due. So in the next issue we are doing a survey to try and find that out so we can direct our articles toward that we want to be reaching from now on.

Another problem area that we began to deal with recently is about emotional issues in the collective. Even though we have been going through a lot of really good political changes, emotionally the collective has not been real tight. There have been lots of disagreements and tension between people. That has kept us from working together effectively. We just started to recognize that as something we wanted to deal with and that it is important to deal with. It is an old issue that has been kicking around for a long time. For a while people did not think that it was important or worthy of attention.

The way that the conflict around the emotional issues manifested itself was that there was one perspective which said that feelings are not important and that our emotions are separate from the concrete work and action that we do. On the other side of the issue is where the sissies were. It was the ideology that our feelings are important and that our politics are an extension of what we feel as people. To struggle as a large level, it is important that we be able within our own collective to struggle out interpersonal issues as well.



Union of Sexual Minorities from Seattle

I represent the Union of Sexual Minorities in Seattle. We began in January of 1975. The reason why we call ourselves the Union of Sexual Minorities is because our organization also includes women, transsexuals, and transvestites. In our statement of purpose as gay women and gay men, transsexuals and transvestites we believe in giving active support to the feminist movement, the Third World liberation movement and the labor movement. As I go through different types of activities that we have taken on you will see how we carry out this program.

Our organizational form grows out of these goals that I have just expressed. We are a mass organization. We have a steering committee which we see as providing the leadership for the organiza-

tion. We also have an educational committee which has set up during the last year a series of educational which I'll describe a little bit later in my talk. We have a newsletter committee which puts out a newsletter every three months.

The reason why we saw a need in Seattle for a mass organization like USM is because we feel what is needed right now in Seattle is an organization



to push the gay movement a little bit further beyond the reform types of organizations that have sprung up all over the country, like GAA for instance. We also see ourselves as developing strong leadership potential among gay people. We didn't see that those reform organizations were trying to develop leadership as much.

We also feel that as a mass organization more working class people or people who haven't done a whole lot of study of political theory will benefit more by a mass organization than by a more intensely political organization. This is because we feel that you have to come in stages to that advanced political thought. We also feel that a mass organization can take care of people's basic needs in terms of changing laws and providing certain basic rights for gay people. From there people can do more studying out of having these basic needs met.

In terms of practice what we have done to fulfill these goals as a mass organization and as an organization for all sexual minorities is to gather support in Seattle for a housing ordinance that prohibits discrimination against gay people. An ordinance in Seattle that prohibits discrimina-

tion in terms of jobs had already been passed. So with our leadership the housing ordinance was able to be passed.

We have also organized demonstrations against police brutality in Seattle. That was a long campaign that is still going on. We did organize a whole lot of gay people around this point. That in itself is important.

We are also a member of the coalition for protective legislation. The coalition is a group that was organized after the Equal Rights Amendment was passed. A committee was set up to extend protective legislation to everybody. Instead of extending the protection what it did was to really lower the standards of working conditions throughout Washington State. Formerly, women in Washington State had been protected with legislation and now what the Industrial Welfare Committee did was to cut out this particular legislation for everybody, supposedly as a result of the Equal Rights Amendment. What we have done as part of the coalition is to make the labor movement in Washington State more aware of gay working people. That has been a really important step.

Another way that we support the Third World movement and other movement is the example of our support of Seize The Time For Oppressed Peoples work in the Emma Boston case. Seize The Time For Oppressed Peoples is a group in Seattle of all different kinds of people who want an end to police brutality in general. Emma Boston was a woman whose



son had been followed by the police and murdered by the police. She wasn't notified by the police about her son's death until after the inquest had already been held. So we just had to support STOP and inform the police of what they had done.

Also, we sent a speaker to the People's Bicentennial Celebration in Seattle. That was really important. There was a lot of cooperation between our representative and the other groups. That was a major step, believe me.

As far as our educationals go as a part of our practice, some of the topics that we have covered are: The roots of gay oppression; gays in the McCarthy era; the history of the early gay rights movement; and how gays can get their message across to the media. The purpose of these educationals is to inform, be a public forum, and to recruit membership. That is the kind of practice that relates back to our goals.

Workshops

The function of the workshops was to provide a space for people to meet in small groups and make contact with each other. They were meant to be the backbone of the conference, helping us to come to a better understanding of questions we have around being faggots involved in class struggle.

After each presentation there were about 17 workshops dealing with what was presented or some related aspect, like after the Socialist-Feminist presentation there were workshops on the oppression of effeminate men, sissies and drag queens as well as one on anarchy.

All the workshops were unique in the sense of group process. The size of the group, which varied from six to fifteen people, the amount of time and space an individual took in the group, and the content, whether it was abstract theory or concrete experience, were important factors in determining the success or frustration with the workshops.

In most cases, there was not enough time given to fully explore ideas in the workshops. Many workshops attempted to cover an incredible amount of information and sharing in a short time. When people were able to share personal experiences we had in our lives or political work, there was a more equal group process and it led to a higher feeling about the group.

Many of the workshops had an awareness of how the group was going; smoothly, frustrating, a drag. A lot of them had criticism/self-criticism sessions at the end. This was helpful for people to air their frustrations or feelings that weren't dealt with or validated throughout the group, as well as positive feelings. It also enabled a consciousness to grow by learning from the process, by finding the good and bad aspects of the workshop that could be shared in following ones.

After the workshops, participants were asked to fill out a workshop report sheet to be used in this evaluation. Some of these reports gave personal feelings about the groups. Some also wrote topics discussed or what was focused on and what came out of the group. About one-fourth of the workshops handed in a report sheet. Following are some excerpts from those responses:

On Class Background

"From there we went on to a discussion of how class messages have influenced our lives, specifically those of individualism and romanticism.

We talked about problems arising in working class-petit bourgeois relationships and uncovered in several people a preference for relationships with people of a working class background.

(from a p.b. class background workshop)

"...Reasons why working class are more open emotionally: petit bourgeois (p.b.) want to retain some control, working class (w.c.) don't have the investment to maintain control. P.b. sells mind to bosses, w.c. sells body. P.b. attraction to w.c. "I'll take care of you, your feelings (false strokes)"; vicarious in touch with strong feelings through w.c. person, get sexual strokes without giving up a lot of control (impotent with other p.b.'s), p.b. doesn't play the game (feelings, vulnerable sex) he makes the rules. Other p.b. messages: "I'd better say it or it's not gonna be



said"/"I've got the right ideas", compete for control of the group, responsible for the whole group, react to strong feelings by withdrawing or saying, "there, there it's okay."

(from a p.b. class background workshop)

Unfortunately there were no report sheets from the workshops on class background by 'working class only' groups. However, a working class caucus statement was written during the conference.

On the Nuclear Family

"...As America becomes more fascist, more emphasis placed on nuclear family.

Nuclear family as power relationship model to the state.

Nuclear family in today's capitalist society. Psychological role of nuclear family- singles are more isolated and lonely. Psychological benefits for men and hazards for women.

Reproduction in the nuclear family as means of replenishing work force. Also oppression of women (division of labor) as a way of using women as temporary work force when expedient, and forcing women back home when expedient.

Breakdown of nuclear family as direct result of women's liberation and increase number of women in work force.

Losing emotional support of nuclear family in a socialist society.

(Relationship between production and reproduction workshop)

"...But we asked why was knowing about patriarchy important?

We thought it was a good example of dialectical materialism's analysis of big social changes. And it provides validation for our experiences as faggots. But then there are limits to it cause it is so distant in the past and we don't need to know it now.

(from Material Basis for Family Structure and changes in it workshop)

"...What we realized was that our fathers were emotional cripples. Their quietness and loneliness of being male without being able to express emotion was bad for them and for us. That the nuclear family is not supportive enough to provide for children's needs. Fathers were of many different sorts from domineering as their role, to being domineered by their mother but usually with men having the illusion of authority. None of us wanted to be like our fathers but saw them in ourselves as our being quiet, alone and afraid of our emotions. -

(from Father-Sons Relationships/History workshop)

On Capitalism and Third World People

"...We talked quite a bit about the way we internalize capitalist oppression, how we learn to oppress and manipulate one another as a result.

People seemed really struck by the power with which capitalism entered into every sphere of our lives...We also spent time talking about how a system based on personal competition and domination made it extremely difficult for men to work together, - even gay men, in work and political situations.

(from a workshop on Socialist Feminism)

"... By talking about what some of us have seen of gay life in Third World colonized nations, we were able to begin to see that economic, class, racial, and national oppression are very much the factors that determine social relations between people. This is clearest and easiest to see in situations like Puerto Rico and the Philippines, but we spent much of the time in the workshop trying to see how this same system of imperialism affects us and our faggot relationships here. We mentioned the frustration caused in our lives by working a 40 hour work week, and began to explore how promiscuous sexuality was one of the few 'releases' to these frustrations (like alcohol) allowed to workers. This was not to either describe promiscuity as good or bad, but to begin to see the material causes of our oppression.

(from how Imperialism affects Personal Relationships workshop)



Murdered child, victim of vicious South African police.

"...In our view, minority women, who face oppression as women, workers, and minorities, offer the greatest hope and potential for leadership in the American revolution.

(from Men and Socialist Feminism workshop)

"...We need organizations that deal directly with our oppression as faggots and dykes, but we need to be careful they don't develop a reformist bourgeois focus. One way to integrate civil rights issues into a non-reformist anti-imperialist focus is to develop civil rights issues that build solidarity with other movements- for instance around police, abortion and sterilization, jobs, ect.

"...We should try to achieve unity around issues that affect the most oppressed gay people- Third World, working class, lesbians, drag queens, and sissies.

(notes from the Mass Organizing workshop)

For many people workshops and presentations that were abstract and intellectual were hard to focus on. One suggestion for the next conference is to start talking about our practice and then work toward theory.

Jewish Caucus

Jews throughout the world have been parts of both the working class and the petite-bourgeoisie.

We feel it is anti-semitic to stereotype all Jews as petite-bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie.

Jewish history is a history of many years of repression, resistance and participation in working class struggle.

It has also been, more recently, a history of assimilation, class rule based on white skin privilege, racism against non-white peoples, and zionism as a tool of imperialism.

We recognize that our history has both positive and negative aspects. Some of us as Jews want space, support, and dialogue for working out our self-image and our place in the general working class struggle.

We expect non-Jewish radicals to take a similarly analytical and two-sided approach.

Anarchist Caucus

We are a caucus of anarchists and pro-anarchists who support and respect the work and continuing efforts of all the people who've made this conference happen.

We as faggots feel that one of our roles in the revolution is to re-incorporate our dreams and visions in the struggle, and we feel that our intuition/feelings have been suppressed here by the heavy intellectual tone made obvious by the reading list.

Although we support Marx's analysis and the tools he developed to analyze society, we don't necessarily support the conclusions that Marxist-Leninists have arrived at, especially the authoritarian approach, as we have seen here. We sense the assumption that everyone here is a Marxist-Leninist, and we resent the jokes and arrogant attitudes shown here towards anarchism.

Our major criticism is that we feel a need for the conference to provide a means for exploring multiple ways of social change, and we feel alienated that this has not happened.



Older Faggots Caucus

Because of tight scheduling there was little "real" time for oppressed people to come together and share their gain. Thus it was not until the last day of the conference that the older faggots caucused together over lunch and later addressed the assembly during the final criticism/self-criticism.

Sandy spoke particularly of the sexual alienation he had felt during the conference. Dan spoke of how his life experience had been invalidated by younger faggots because of his age. It is easy, he pointed out, to dismiss an older faggot's pain by either viewing him as a hated authority figure or - perhaps worse - placing him on the guru pedestal. Thurston, a beautiful silver-haired faggot who had been a Communist during the thirties and suffered considerably during the McCarthy era in the fifties, movingly urged the younger Marxist-Leninists to read more of their faggot history, particularly those books now being published about the movement in the thirties.

The question that gay liberationists seems resolutely incapable of facing is that of ageism. No conference I have ever attended nor any gay publication in my experience has addressed itself to this issue. What alternatives have we to offer an older working class third world faggot? Surely radical faggots dedicated to ending worldwide capitalist oppression can come up with a better solution than the alienating old-age concentration homes of the heterofascists.

old arkansas

Working Class Caucus

Working class faggots felt oppressed by the constant use of "petite-bourgeois" words during this conference. These words should have been explained for those of us who don't know or aren't sure of their meaning. It is a rip-off of our energy to have to ask for their definitions.

Some of the presentations felt like lectures to us where we were talked down to. There were feelings of intimidation about "stopping" the presentations to ask questions or to voice feelings. We felt that the information at these presentations could have been shared in a more revolutionary way, such as guerrilla theater, songs, and maybe film. Also during many of the presentations the working class was talked about in a very abstract way as if there were no working class faggots here. We were sitting at your feet.

We are especially critical of the Lavendar & Red Union's attitude. Their statement to the effect that the working class has no culture is outrageous.

We want to remind people that ultimately a socialist revolution will happen because of working class people. It's a weird contradiction then that the majority of the people here aren't from working class backgrounds.

We want to support the struggles of third world working class people and advance the process of working class white people gaining solidarity with third world peoples.

We want to work toward a solidarity with faggots from petite-bourgeois backgrounds who are giving up their privileges.

Sissy Caucus

To promote class unity within the conference we sissies feel it is necessary to present these criticisms. We don't want to leave this conference feeling separated from our brothers.

In this conference that labels itself 'Faggots and Class Struggle,' the sissies protest that the STIFS (straight-identified faggots) refuse to deal with their class attitudes toward feminine identified faggots. It is taken for granted that drag queens and sissies are petite-bourgeois and that cross-gender dressing comes from a bourgeois state of mind. In fact, sissies, like women, are forced into low-paying jobs because of their feminine identification while STIFS can visually hide behind their straight-man drag. We recognize that many STIFS suffer oppression in the job market because they are Third World and/or working class.

However butchness gives power that only allows STIFS to patronize drag queens by saying that they look nice, or other idle compliments, rather than giving us real support.

Drag queens have carried the brunt of straight men's terror on the street and then are forsaken as tired stereotypes by gay liberation. And if your memory fails you, it was drag queens and bull dykes who instigated the riots at the Stonewall Inn which gave birth to the present-day Gay Liberation movement in the United States. We reaffirm our support of our sisters and brothers who live in full drag daily and want to find better ways to let them know that gay liberation is not solely a STIF movement.

We sissies also protest that the heavy Marxist-Leninist analysis of this conference has come from the STIFS, while the burden of labor here - cooking, child-care, and culture - has clearly fallen on the "dizzy, irrational" sissies, leaving the heavy intellectual work to the STIFS. Once more, the straight-identified men are the consumers, feeding off feminine energy while suppressing that power in themselves. It is exactly that kind of forced role playing that robs us of the possible joy we can find in these so-called feminine activities.

We sissies strongly protest the type of sexual vibrations set up by STIFS at this conference, namely the heavy cruising, which alienates us from each other, and the way that we are used in sexual relationships as a means of getting their rocks off without any regard to our feelings or needs.

We sissies want to express our solidarity and support for each other in fighting the oppression forced on us by the larger heterofascist society and against those gay men who identify with it. We are learning to look to ourselves for the emotional and sexual support we need. We are getting strong around our feminine power that comes from our Mother Earth.

L and RU Statement

Comrades we welcome the opportunity this conference brings to make connections with many people from other areas. We also welcome the chance for political discussion with people interested in the class struggle. We are attending the conference for two basic reasons. First, the Lavender and Red Union has been struggling for almost three years in the development of its politics—we wish to share that experience and to help advance theoretical questions at the conference. The second reason flows from the first. It revolves around what we see as our primary task in the current period—the construction of a communist vanguard party to lead the proletariat to power. Our work at this conference will be towards that end; to the winning of people towards that fundamental task.

We are not attending the conference because we have agreement with its basic trust, quite the contrary. Although our knowledge of the basis for the conference is limited (newsletter, statement of purpose, etc.) we feel they are enough to put forward some basic differences that we hope to discuss further at the conference.

BASIC UNITY OF THE CONFERENCE

The basic unity of the conference boils down to one's "faggotry". We see several problems stemming from this. We first of all do not agree there is a need for Gay men to separate from Gay women in the struggle for Gay liberation. The statement of purpose talks of "gay men's oppression"; we ask, is it a separate entity? Does it have a distinct base from the oppression of Gay women? It does not. Gay oppression has a common base in the sexual repression of class society and a main pillar the bourgeois nuclear family.

To the extent that Lesbians are oppressed by virtue of their Gayness they share this oppression with Gay men and to the extent that they suffer oppression as women they share that oppression with all women. The Gay male separatism of the conference planners is a tailing after the equally backward politic of Lesbian separatism.

In addition, what is the need at a conference of this type to separate ourselves from non-gay revolutionaries who support a revolutionary perspective of Gay liberation? There is none. This position leads to a situation of seeing ones sexuality as more important than a correct world outlook. Beyond this there is nothing inherently revolutionary or even progressive about being Gay. It is true that a person's special oppression may lead them to a commitment to overturning the capitalist system but this commitment must lead the understanding that the proletariat is the vanguard in the revolution and the only social grouping capable of overthrowing the capitalists.

The L&RU is an autonomous Gay liberation/communist organization. We are not a Gay men's organization even though all the members of the central collective are men. We have never held the position that we need to organize separately from Gay women and we are open to the fullest participation by women.

Our autonomy is not abstract. We do not uphold any fundamental necessity for autonomy but see it as a transitory—historic tactic. Separatism is a

backward politic that needs to be fought. We declare our autonomy from the prevailing counter-revolutionary position of the left on Gay liberation and not from genuine revolutionaries.

We cannot idealize our situation. The L&RU and all other left-wing Gay groups and many other of the organizations of the specially oppressed are in political exile. This must end. The party of the whole class must be built.

SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

There is definitely a trend toward socialist revolution in the world today. Some of us believe it is inevitable. The same ruling class that oppresses faggots is also responsible for the oppression of women and millions of people in the third world. We should understand that our oppression will not end unless we support the struggles of women and third world peoples as well as those of the working class in the United States. All of us see a socialist revolution as a necessary but not a sufficient condition for our liberation. . . .

It is easy to see that great masses of people in countries like China and Cuba have gained tremendous advantages through socialism. Even though faggots share these advantages, they still suffer a heavy burden of oppression. We are angry that some Marxist-Leninists in the United States have mechanically applied the model of existing socialist countries, assuming that their line on sexual politics is correct for OUR situation.

— Statement of Purpose

We would agree that a socialist revolution, in and of itself, is not enough to guarantee liberation, because that revolution may not lead to socialism e.g. the Soviet Union. But a socialist revolution is a precondition. The ending of special forms of oppression amongst the people will end only when classes are abolished. We say this because all forms of oppression arose out of class society and are maintained by it. After the overthrow of capitalism there will be a necessity to tackle the practical problems presented by special divisions among the people—aided by the science of Marxism.

By asserting that marxist-leninists are mechanically applying the model of sexual politics in "existing socialist countries" to OUR situation implies the idea that their sexual politics are correct for THEIR situation. The sexual politics in these countries are backward and are definitely not revolutionary. To arrive at a revolutionary position on sexuality the vanguard of the working class, the communist party, must base itself on an historical and scientific analysis of human sexuality—which is lacking in all of these countries.

SEXISM AND SOCIALIST FEMINISM

As marxists we understand the need for a further analysis of women's oppression and sexual oppression. This must be done from the dialectical-materialist, or marxist method. A large part of the communist movement has not understood the importance of these problems in relationship to the class struggle.

This fact has led many women and Gay people away from communism and towards other ideologies. There is a great danger in this. If these questions are not understood in their relationship to the class struggle the final result will be reformism and defeat. The questions to be continually asked are what are the actual relationships of the women's and Gay movement to the class struggle and what will

lead to our liberation.

Socialist-feminism is an ideology in contradiction to Marxism. Women's oppression is not the primary contradiction in society nor is the combination of women's and class oppression or any other configuration. Class oppression is the primary contradiction with no other contradictions holding anything like an equivalent social weight. We are all too ready to declare marxism obsolete and altogether too lazy and indifferent in grasping it.

It is an irrefutable fact that the importance of the woman and Gay questions need more attention and understanding. It is an equally irrefutable fact that this knowledge will come about from a marxist, i.e. scientific, and not any other ideological, point of view.

In the final analysis there is only one road to liberation and that lies through socialist revolution leading to socialism. Only communism has the program to practically deal with women's and Gay oppression. This centers around replacing the bourgeois nuclear family (which is incorrectly called the father-dominated family by the conference planners) as the basic social unit of society and freeing sexuality from the current mode of "harnessed reproduction". Under a true socialist society socialization will take on a liberating and not a deforming character.

We feel this conference would have been a good place to theoretically analyze the relationship of the Gay struggle to the class struggle. Given the title of the conference we ask why was this not the subject of at least one major conference workshop?

THE PROLETARIAT AS A REVOLUTIONARY CLASS VS. WORKERISM

The marxist understanding of why the proletariat is an objectively revolutionary class stems from that class' relationship to the means of production and nothing else. The working class is the most advanced class because it works, in a socialized manner, the technology of capitalism and makes society move. It is the only class that can overthrow the capitalist system, operate the means of production without the bourgeoisie and build socialism. Its historic task is to do away with classes--to do away with itself as a class. Its role is to move humanity from class society to "human" society.

There has been a real tendency in the left (and we see it reflected to a great extent in the conference material) towards workerism. Briefly described workerism revolves around a worship of the present condition and consciousness of the class--basically its backwardness. The role of communists is to fight this backwardness and tell the working class the truth.

We strenuously object to the primary emphasis placed on one's class background in the first workshop. The whole of the class struggle is to be reduced to the pitiful subjectivism of the insensitivity of certain middle class people. Are we more interested in overthrowing the bourgeoisie, after all they do own the means of production, or discussing "how our background affects our feelings, thinking and experience."

Workerism extends itself to a form of class nationalism. Class nationalism basically says that individual working class people are "better" than "middle class" people because of their background. It fetishizes the cultural level and lifestyle that the working class is forced into. Class nationalism starts with the analysis of the working class as the vanguard class and ends up positing that the class is "pure" and "holy". Quite the contrary is true,



Karl Marx

the working class must transform itself from being the exploitable instrument of bourgeois society. After all, if the class had already attained revolutionary consciousness we would be in the midst of a revolutionary struggle for power at this moment.

PRACTICE - WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

As we said in the beginning of the paper we see the task for the current period as the building

of a vanguard party. The party is an essential element of the revolutionary process. It must be guided by the most advanced theory because only through a revolutionary theory can we build the revolutionary movement.

The role of the party is basically to lead and educate the proletariat to its historic role and guide it to victory over the capitalists. We must educate the class to the fact that it is an international class. As Marx said working people have no country.

In contrast to the conference planners who call imperialism a "Third World Struggle" we must understand that imperialism is monopoly capitalism. It is not the political or economic system that affects the "Third World." It is the world wide economic system that affects the entire world. The European and American working class is exploited and oppressed by imperialism as well as the Chilean, Puerto Rican and the rest of the less developed nations. The imperialist system must be overthrown in its entirety.

A party is a precondition for the uniting of the class and the mass movement struggles to make a revolutionary change. It is toward the construction of the vanguard that the L&RU directs its energy. A party can only be built through study, struggle and work. We urge other comrades to take up this task.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
GAY LIBERATION THROUGH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

A CRITICISM OF THE L&RU STATEMENT

This criticism is written by Charles, Garrett, and Kent, who are on the Conference Planning Group. We, specifically, are responding to the L&RU statement because: 1) our politics are close to those of L&RU, and we therefore feel we can show errors in thinking and analysis more clearly and powerfully; 2) we look to other Marxist-Leninists for leadership, and we are disappointed in L&RU's leadership; and 3) we feel it is important to show that Marxist-Leninists must take leadership in criticising other Marxist-Leninists. This is the way we will struggle towards a correct line. Further, it should be remembered that there is no correct line for all time. As material conditions change, and as people's needs change, the correct line changes. The use of criticism is to point out errors, to point out how analysis is not taking people's needs into account. This is the purpose of this criticism.

Overall, we appreciate the thinking and work that went into putting out a statement for the conference. We agree with the bulk of the analysis under "Socialist Revolution" and "Sexism and Socialist Feminism". We particularly agree with your criticism that "Given the title of the conference we ask why was this not the subject of at least one major conference workshop?", meaning the relationship of Gay struggle to the class struggle. We have discussed this in our sum-up, and we see this error coming principally from our lack of unity within the Conference Planning Group.

Although we do agree with a lot of your paper, we feel that in its main thrust it reflects left errors; and that these errors, in the main, make it fall short of a statement we all could learn from. Also, these errors were harmful to your main goal, "The construction of a communist vanguard party to lead the proletariat to power."

The principle error of the paper was idealism. Your criticisms are aimed at a group with a higher level of unity than was explicitly stated in the "Statement of Purpose" of the conference; and you never made it clear why you discounted the unity we did have. The result was arrogance of manner and left errors.

Discounting Unity

You said, "The basic unity of the conference boils down to one's 'faggotry'." Our Statement of Purpose said otherwise. You don't explain why our explicit statement of unity is false, and why it boils down to one's faggotry. The practice of the conference supported our statement. There WAS unity about exploring class politics.

We are also critical that you came to the conference explicitly NOT agreeing with the unity, with-

out adequate investigation and explanation of why. The conference leadership had specifically asked people with basic disagreements not to come, and we therefore feel discounted. Whether your disagreement is real or not is unclear in your statement. In the context of your statement it's easy to see you discounting the real unity of the conference, coming from idealistic notions of where people SHOULD be at (and what they should be talking about). Though you haven't said it, it's easy to assume that you see people's needs to "cooperatively talk about class politics" as so inconsequential that all we had in common was being gay men. If this is so, it's an example of ideas blinding you to reality rather than clarifying your practice.



Autonomy

You criticise our separatism again without investigation. You assume we see some "fundamental necessity for autonomy" rather than a "transitory historic tactic". You don't explain why you are correct in maintaining a transitory autonomous gay organization (and male in practice) and we are incorrect in holding a transitory autonomous conference for gay males with a limited scope and purpose.

You ask "what is the need at a conference of this type to separate ourselves from non-gay revolutionaries...?" Again it is idealistic to think that all gay men right now could or would want to productively meet with the straight left or with lesbians about class. Our investigation told us that there is a considerable force of gay men in varying degrees sharing past involvement in gay activism, anti-sexism/pro-feminism, and with a rising interest in socialism and a Marxist-Leninist outlook. Our practice bore this out. Our investigation also told us that gay/straight hassles would arise in a mixed conference and would hold us back from our goal of exploring class struggle. There's little practice we know of yet to show us otherwise. Similarly, for most of us there is not yet a clear enough basis for working on a one-shot intensive basis with lesbians. The safety needed to explore class in a cooperative, risk-taking way does not exist. On both points this has to change; but we can't wish these contradictions away. Again the success of the conference showed us that our investigation was correct.

Discussion of Workerism

We agree with your criticism of a tendency toward workerism, and we see class stand as ultimately most important. But it is idealistic to think we can change and develop without taking into account our material conditions. You lay out a

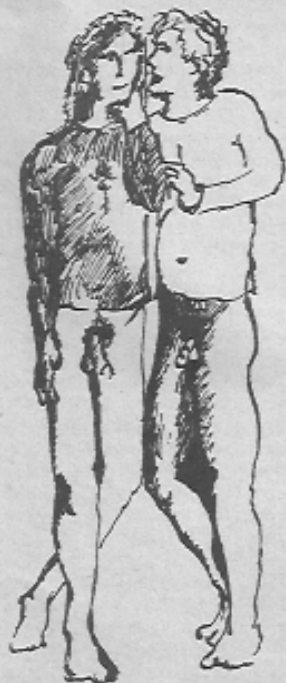


black and white false choice that is again idealistic: "Are we more interested in overthrowing the bourgeoisie...or discussing how our background affects our feelings, thinking, and experience?" You say to us that "The whole of the class struggle is to be reduced to the pitiful subjectivism of the insensitivity of certain middle-class people." You discount the analysis of anyone at the conference; you discount that you might be able to learn from other people's work there unless that analysis is an easily digestible extension of where you happen to be coming from.

You totally discounted the thrust of the first presentation and workshop. Even at the conference you were not willing to give it any importance whatsoever. OUR analysis shows us very clearly that there are important differences between people of working class and petite-bourgeois backgrounds. These differences came out clearly at the conference. If your analysis shows you that these differences are not important enough to talk about and develop, you never say why. To us, it explains a lot of the left of the 60's and early 70's; and a large number of people at the conference were coming from a history of being alienated by people who called themselves Marxist-Leninists. By not validating these feelings, and by discounting our analysis of these feelings and not offering an alternative analysis, --this was the arrogance and the error.

In General

Your purpose in putting forward Marxist-Leninist and the importance of party building was held back. Your statement seems more a communique of where you're at rather than a statement geared to this specific conference. You didn't thoroughly identify the main contradiction you saw in the conference and develop this in a way we could learn from. The result was a string of comments and underdeveloped theoretical statements which are hard to make any sense out of. As Marxist-Leninists we're discouraged to see the important points you raised treated so hastily and so out of hand. If everyone



Fag Rag

at the conference had been studying and working with you, the shorthand would have made sense, but this was not the case.

And again, there is no indication anywhere in your statement that you could learn from people's thinking and practice at the conference. And your practice at the conference reinforced this arrogance. You refused to tell people what your class background was; and you never once clearly admitted that you might have made any errors whatsoever in the statement you passed out. People are righteously put off by anyone who is afraid to do a self-criticism. It's not something that's done only in closed session, or only after secret meetings.

We set up a conference to cooperatively talk about class politics, taking into account that it's a scary subject, especially for gay people. We asked what the needs were of a large group of people and how we could meet those needs, and we worked for months to make the conference happen. Your criticisms discount a lot of our work; and while we agree with a good deal of your politics, we still don't know why you think our work was not important, or why you can't change your thinking and feelings about the conference. Because the work was important. Our investigation was correct as the practice of the conference overwhelmingly showed us.

Culture

Our Culture Is More than a Tea Party

by Dee Rag Queen

I was a participant at the Faggots and Class Struggle Conference. I found that all the learning, sharing and conflict I was involved in had a very profound effect on the way I view my role in political struggle. As coordinator of the cultural focus, my work led me to register some observations that I'd like to share with people.

The time set aside for cultural work by the conference planners was evenings, so I lined up two nights of events. There were three theatre groups, three singers, a prose writer and poets. The performances were generally well received by folks there. I missed most of Sunday's presentation because I was getting myself together to perform that evening with the Lavendar Star Players.

In this article, I'm going to write about views that we as cultural workers have of ourselves and of our work; views that many radical gay men seem to share, and I also what I want to see be some of the purpose of this work. I feel this criticism can and does apply to cultural work in and out of the gay community.

Previous to the conference, I felt a lack of support coming from the body of organizers. After making requests to have contact with culture from the Northwest, cooperation was minimal. I didn't know that many people up north. I live in San Francisco, and I didn't want the events to be dominated by Bay Area artists. By sheer numbers, there was going to be a large proportion of Bay Area faggots at the conference. I felt cooperation was vital to enable us to share with others away from our geographic local.

A lot of work time at the conference was spent in setting up the performance schedule. When I arrived, there was another schedule written upon the barn that was different than mine. Much of this was due to bad communication prior to the Labor Day weekend. I'm sure the communication gap was because the organizers had taken on too heavy a workload in planning for this weekend. In many ways, I think then had no way of knowing the enormity of their task, and I feel they did a remarkable job in general. They created a space where many of us could come together. But because of these two schedules, I had to balance performers at the last minute. I had to fit new people in, trying to be representative of geographic areas, third world men and working class culture. The miserable lack of outreach done to third world gay men until the last minute was reflected in the two evenings, just like the conference as a whole. Our culture has to reflect our diversity.

On Saturday, I set about the task of turning the barn into a theatre. Our Wolf Creek friends had shoveled a lot of dried cow shit out already. (Blessed Be!) The barn was a beautiful space. We had brought colorful banners with us to decorate. There was a good sound system and we rigged up two spotlights. We swept and figured out the placement of the stage. A couple of friends helped, but generally, things were spaced out, and I had to spend half of my time running around begging people to help out. We had to work during dinner to be ready for that evening, and no one wanted to bring us any dinner. Finally, the stage crew got half a bowl of soup.

Most people who performed had the expectation that a stage would be set up for them when it was their time to go on. A major error of many performers is that they fail to view stage crews, technicians and planners as cultural workers. I know from personal experience that performers can easily fall into an elitist trap, thereby undermining the potential trust and cooperation that should exist between all persons involved in cultural endeavors. I feel that performers should check with crews to make sure things are being attended to. One concrete example of disrespect shown the cultural planner was how certain people's stage time far exceeded the time that they requested. This left a big burden on my shoulders to shuffle the remaining people around. It wasn't fair to the other performers who had to cut what they had prepared. Some dropped off the program because of time. Also, it wasn't fair to people sitting on a barn floor, expecting them to be involved in a program that was too long in places. All cultural workers should be treated with respect. We, as people involved in struggle, should push the understanding of culture and relentlessly develop our theories and actions that result from our ideas and interactions. It is our responsibility to further our art in both the political content and its form. Both these aspects are vitally important if our work is to communicate, inform and inspire.

Many of our political brothers at the conference exhibited incorrect thinking concerning the role of our work. In many of the more theatrical, dry or intellectual presentations, a cultural input would have served to inspire more interest and deepen understanding. I found the charts and illustrations used in the basic Class and the Socialist-Feminist presentations enhanced the content for me. One would think by some attitudes at the conference (and in certain leftist circles) that the working class has no culture. This bias exists. It is an illustration of how shallow the understanding of

out culture in the minds of many activists. There is a pressure

has no culture. This bias exists. It is an illustration of how shallow the understanding of our culture is in the minds of many activists. There's a pressure to bury the old gay culture, and mimic the socialist realism of the heterosexual left. It has its roots. Revolutionary third world or women's culture are very aware of their roots. We have to redefine the old gay culture. See what is bourgeois and what is the roots of our quest for liberation. This will aid us in creating a vision of culture that serves the needs of gay people.

Many activists don't see cultural work as "real" political work. Not sharing the same status as workplace organizing, demonstrations, strikes, study groups, etc. There have been so many demos I've attended that hungered for cultural input. The road to freedom shouldn't be boring. Theatre, song, dance, poetry, film can be tools to put across the ideas, ideals, passion and pain of the masses in a way that a political speech cannot. It goes to the gut. And people who are turned off by the dogmatism can relate to the common human thread running through all of our cultural manifestations. To ignore this valuable resource is to deal a deadly blow to any movement. The best way to keep culture responsive to people's needs is through study and dialogue - criticism and self criticism.

Much of the cultural work at the conference portrayed our daily struggle as faggots living under this phase of capitalist patriarchy. How we are dealing with our oppression as workers, sissies, non-white people and as passionate, erotic beings in a love denying culture. Some of the presentations also attempted to make ties with and show solidarity for other oppressed peoples here and abroad.

I learned so much that weekend from other faggot cultural workers. How we can support each other and things we must do. Also, our role in the class struggle as well as our role in the gay struggle. I saw more blatantly than usual what needs to be done in means of education around these roles. Also, what the roles of our comrades is to us; how they need to improve the ways they support us and their culture.

"I do not play my guitar for applause, I sing for the difference between what is true and what is false; otherwise, I do not sing." Violeta Parra

"An army without culture is a dull witted army,
and a dull witted army cannot defeat the enemy."
Mao Tse-Tung



Orgy Report

In the afternoon of the first day of the conference (Saturday), a couple men announced at dinner that they were feeling a lot of sexual tension that wasn't being resolved and dealt with and that they wanted to meet with other people who were feeling the same tension and who might want to discuss ways to deal with it. At that meeting (which I wasn't at) people decided that they would announce a gathering for later in the evening after the cultural presentations that would be held in the tipi for people who wanted to do something about their sexual frustrations. Later that announcement got translated into "there's going to be an orgy in the tipi after the cultural presentation."

There were about 15 people who initially showed up in the tipi and some magic herbs were passed around to neutralize some of the tension that was in the air. People were very talkative trying to be conscious about what was sort of a scary thing for all of us in some ways and trying to make sure a safe space was created for everyone. We talked a little about how at conferences there is an over-emphasis on the mental and intellectual and an under-emphasis on physical and emotional needs and how many of us were seeing sexual energies and needs being suppressed and translated into heavy intellectual trips. We talked also about coupling and group sex with some people wanting to make sure that the group thing would not change into lots of couples that would result in some people feeling left out or rejected. Other people said that they understood the dangers of that kind of relating but that also they functioned better sexually when not relating to a group or mass of people but instead focused their sexual energies into one or two other people. At this point things started getting real heady and intellectual which we identified as a way to postpone getting physical and sexual. Gradually people started getting naked and little groups of four and five people were happening with people getting into light sex. From then on out it was a progression of different combinations of people (groups) and some coupling that lasted for about 3 1/2 hours. The atmosphere was generally pretty light and non-intimidating, very free and supportive.

I generally felt that the orgy was a real revolutionary part of the conference because it was a successful attempt to integrate our whole selves into the conference in a collective, supportive way. In essence what it was was taking collective responsibility for our sexual needs in as open a way as possible. Those of us who participated in the orgy had established some kind of bond between us by relating to each other physically and emotionally and that bond was felt among us throughout the rest of the conference. One brother taught us a neat little song that we sang earlier in the evening that sort of summed up the whole thing. It went: What's the point of a revolution without general; general copulation, copulation, copulation...

(from a brother in San Francisco)

THE ORGY: a sissy's tale

For the record: there was an experiment in group sexuality Saturday night after the cultural event in the tipi which was preceded earlier by a discussion of sexuality, but I felt this was insufficient as it focussed upon sexual tension. I now feel that there needed to be further discussion

about who we were and our individual needs--the ground rules to change us from a conglomerate of individual faggots to a collective sense of ourselves, for us to know what was possible and what wasn't given our material conditions. Well, the collectivity didn't happen. There was no group solidarity (the collective sense as opposed to the individual sense).

The contradiction of the group were manifold. Here we were faggots who for the most part were strangers. The principle contradiction was the basic anonymity of those of us involved, versus the desire to relate sexually. It was a large group of faggots, at least twenty. We sat and coughed or laughed and made jokes until one faggot stood up and complained about the situation, the inaction and started off with his clothes. Soon everyone was naked and even sooner the sexual petting and sex began. The anonymity led to an unwillingness to make a personal commitment to each other to be involved for the remainder of the conference emotionally and sexually. When in fact there were almost no contact between us the next day (only the stoney stares).

Also there was no explicit structure for us to take care of our feelings during the process. I didn't feel that I or anyone else could stop in the middle to say "I'm scared," or "I have this specific need," and be sure of the willingness of the group to stop their sexual activities. It is obvious to me if the experience of collective sexuality is to be meaningful, there must be a structure for individuals to express their scaredness, confusions, and fears. There must be a willingness of the group to take the necessary time to validate, talk about these feelings and needs in relation to the group to foster trust. This process will help establish a safe environment in which to be vulnerable, as well as group collectivity.

The basic problem is that the tip group lacked direction and effective leadership (as if our erect cocks could do it for us without our thinking about it). A self-criticism: Because I was busy being an individual then, I was frozen with my own fear not being able to free us all (by freeing myself and being collective). I didn't give the group the direction and leadership that I could have. Nor did any of the other sissies give much direction or leadership, which we were in a position to give. We could have given ourselves our strength and emotional insight based upon our common experience as sissies. (The unity, the collectivity, our femininity, our emotional strength, and power we discovered together later at the sissy caucus).

Given the real conditions of anonymity, left to their own devices, the faggots could only reproduce their most common experience of group sex-- the orgy room, hence the Wolf Creek baths. Male sexuality in its worse aspects tends to be impersonal, individualistic and instant orgasm oriented, vulgarly rutting, which can only be anonymous. I think sissie and queens are frequently victims of this, and from this experience we can be in a place to give leadership and change the alienating direction of oppressive sexual behavior. The situation could have been reversed even in the middle of the sexual activity. A scream would have been effective to break into our consciousness.

Before any experience of group sexuality can be productive to those involved, there must be a discussion on sexuality including personal experiences, fears and confusions about being sexual. Also sexual objectification needs to be talked about and re-

solved in some way. There has to be a movement to resolve sexual contradictions before any sexual activity can begin. Verbal agreement must occur first before sexual activity. We need to talk about why group sex among the general talk about sexuality. Then there has to be established ground rules and the practical limitations including a formal structure for dealing with feelings, for we won't be able to change old habits and vanquish old fears automatically. The above assumes that all members are known to each other at the very least with name familiarity.

The purpose of all talk is to engender mutual trust and collective solidarity to enable us to make a commitment to ourselves on an emotional and sexual level. The limits of this commitment depends upon the material conditions of our knowledge of each other and upon the material conditions of all of those involved. Remembering the larger our personal knowledge is of each other, the higher the commitment level.

The actual beginning of the group sexual involvement may need to be slow. A group massage or something nonsexual but sensual touching which will involve everyone. Then people should talk about it, about how each person is now feeling in terms of group trust and about feelings on the enlarging the group dynamic to being explicitly erotic and sexual.

There is a need for each individual faggot in a collective situation that is emotional and sexual to feel good about each member of the collective, meaning disagreements and bad feelings must be taken care of and resolved before any satisfactory experience can happen. I am not trying to imply there was no one who had positive sexual experiences. I wrote this from my experience of being confused, afraid, and freaked out. The point being that because one faggot's alienated experience didn't happen in isolation, and any satisfactory experience can only be a satisfactory individual experience, not a collective experience. Having a good collective sexual experience is no easy task. It will need lots of hard work....(a brother from Seattle)

THE MOON RITUAL

Sunday evening as the near-full moon rose in the misty sky, fairies from all corners of the land gathered in the tipi. The energy of the previous night's orgy still hung in the canvas cone, as one by one we entered the eastern door. A fire sparkled in the center, casting shadows on the wall, as ten, twenty, finally fifty of us snuggled in. Silence.

Raspberrry with guitar started us off-- "I can feel Her magic...everywhere"--a children's tune, he smiled. Over and over, feeling, hearing, seeing, touching Her magic with harmonies, chords and wails.

A chant. An invocation to the spirit of the land. Swaying as our queen spoke of the elements, the four. As we left to join the mist of the meadow, each cast water upon the fire. Joining hands, we were ghostly figures revolving, moving fast, faster around. Then in a loud, louder whoop we were sucked in toward the center, then pulled out to the edge, then with a whoop back to center. The line snaked in and out, a breathing bursting circle.

Breathless we collapsed in a heap, all fifty, to chant. Then silence. Fading into our bundle of arms, different souls spoke softly, spoke strongly--of solidarity with the earth, of connection to the trees, the goats, the chickens, the crickets. Some thanked us for our unity, some thanked the mother of us all--the Deliciously Dialectical, Mother History. The

force and power of the inevitable great changes, the changes growing within each of us.

We ended with the witches' spiral. A spiral turning back on itself to kiss each one as you passed him, sharing our passion, our tenderness, our saliva with each and every. Delicious. Fifty times fifty kisses.

The next day when Kent asked to hug us all, at the end of the Open Mike, we again were the fairy circle, at mid-afternoon. Singing and swaying, we kissed goodbye through the faggot-witches' spiral. Each end every.

Billie's Article - Sexual Politics and Bourgeois Ideology



I am angry at the emotional insensitivity we faggots show each other by not being honest about our emotional fear. Specifically, I am angry at faggots for not being honest about their emotional fears toward me.

To help myself and others get a perspective on this problem, an emotional history. I am a faggot who is proud of his effeminacy. I am emotionally open and vulnerable. By this I mean that my feelings are usually on the surface, that I allow myself to be in a place where I may be emotionally rejected by an individual. I have gotten some support for being open and vulnerable, and that it is strength, but it always comes from a distance which is non-threatening. I see being open as being sensitive to the emotional needs of others not only important, but vital to our survival. However, being nurturing is an isolating experience also, because I get so little of it myself.

From my sense of alienation and isolation, I feel pressure not to be different from other faggots, to be more readily accepted, to be self sacrificing. My reaction to these pressures and my feelings of powerlessness is anger. Real gut level anger. More angry feelings. Feelings of being trashed, of being laden with guilt, and that it's my problem, not ours. I solve it by not embarrassing them with my feelings.

Another way in which I feel discounted stems from the fact that I am affectionate. I like hugging, stroking, kissing and touching. I am immensely huggable--sweet huggable me. I find that oppressive. I often feel as if I am being treated as a roly-poly teddy bear without any other feeling or needs, which I resent. The need that comes to mind that I feel is being denied is sexual. It's when I feel erotic that I feel I can't ask around it. Certainly, I can't ask and expect it to be met.

I have a lot of general erotic feelings around faggots, and phantasies about being sexual with them. Yet, for all on my desires around faggots, the idea of being sexual with faggots scares me. I am afraid of not being able to communicate our needs; that we will assume that sexual functioning is automatic, like breathing, and we will not need to talk or explain things. I am also afraid of not being able to meet sexual expectations.

Of course, much of my sexual fears comes from the fact that I am sexually inexperienced with men, and that frightens me. Most of my sexual experiences are with myself. I am confident about being sexual with myself and writing about self sexual experiences, but my sexual confidence does not carry over

to being sexual with faggots. I have fears about not having orgasms with faggots because there are expectations to have them. I don't feel much support around that fear, neither to relieve me of my anxieties about them, nor encouragement to have them.

I do not wish to be locked into self sexuality. I need available to me accessibility to other faggots, an option I feel is denied me not totally by faggots, but by myself as well, because I feel insecure around my sexuality around faggots. I do not get much support from faggots for being sexual with them. I want that option as well as the option for faggots to be more self sexual. Self sexuality is important: that faggots should be more sexual with their own bodies to help free us from the rampant sexism of lookism. I want to be personally supportive of faggots who are attempting to be more self sexual, but also, I want and demand more support for being sexual with faggots. Certainly, I am obligated to be supportive of faggots and their sexuality, whether it's self sexual or with other faggots.

There are a few conclusions to draw from all this. I feel oppressed due to the emotional and sexual isolation from faggots who maintain their power and privilege over me; the same male power which oppresses women. I can only share power by being less feminine, less intense and vulnerable. In short, by denying who I am. I refuse to do so!

An examination of *After Dark* uncovers pages and pages of young, beautiful male models, not too 'butch' not too 'femme', wearing slick, fancy clothes, depicting the image of a slick, suave, professional, sell monied, driving Porsches and Jags, catering to the petit bourgeoisie aspirations of those too poor to be suave in expensive, casual clothes, i.e. the working class. Note also the subtle homoerotic quality of the magazine. The *Advocate* is similar to *After Dark* except it is not as Bloomsbury circle oriented. All models are young and beautiful ranging from the slight ambivalence of the adolescent to the extremely butch model and none are feminine. There is also an emphasis upon bulging codpieces with various states of undress suggesting the provocative, the lure of partially unzipped jeans, the image of the virile stud. And my proper response to this manifestation and vision is to have a sexual epileptic fit, that is to say void of all considerations other than age, looks, and size.

The sexual ideology of the bourgeoisie consists of an appeal to the impersonal sexual objectification of age, looks, and virileness whose purpose is to alienate us not only from our bodies but other faggots and friends. This alienation is affected and exploited by keeping us busy pursuing the ideal, fucking and being fucked by beautiful well-hung men. This ideal includes the pursuit of the economic means to maintain the image that sex is another commodity to be produced and sold by our labor. By trying to attain bigger and better lovers who are both young and beautiful, and hung and masculine can only maintain the contradiction.

To recap: the sexual bourgeois ideology consists of sexual objectification and the denial of femininity based on the saleability of sex related to the means of production, that is to say the ideology is sold by its products the clothes, apartments, cars, stereos, etc., and by sex itself as sold by fuck movies, baths, pay-a-fee sex, bars, and porn magazines.

The point being if we see the contradiction of other aspects of bourgeois ideology and that they are against our interests and can correctly point

out the rightist errors of bourgeois ideology when they appear in our analysis, then to buy the sexual aspect of the ideology also must be a right error and obviously against our interests. The economic base of the sexual bourgeois ideology becomes very clear when it is viewed in terms of the cost to maintain the image, the idea being if you're young, beautiful, masculine, virile then you sell it and if you're not then you buy it. Materially what is involved in the bourgeois ideology is the cost of the image, the cost of fancy clothes, cars, apartment, stereo--all of it.

One question I am proposing which will also indicate how much I am actually influenced by the bourgeois consciousness: what does the proletarian ideology look like. Although I am and most faggots are working class when I think of faggots and sex, I think of the petit-bourgeoisie. And I hate to admit it, but true.

This paper can only be read as a challenge and a call to action for faggots to give up both real and personal power and privilege, not just theoretical power. And honey just struggling with sexism as it relates to women is not enough. Let's not be just half-assed about it. I fully recognize that it is not easy to give up power, but cowards are everywhere. I cannot give support to those who recognize the problem of faggot sexism but refuse to do the courageous and leap into the void (remember you'll be with me). Support for struggle and change I have in abundance and give it willingly. Faggots can be and are sexually oppressed for their looks, femininity, and for their racial-ethnic background.

As I have already said it is difficult to change and to give up petit bourgeois privilege and power, but however change is what is needed. Nothing less will do and would be unpardonable. Not to give up our sexism, not to give up our power over other faggots by virtue of their femininity, etc., will prove us neither to be anti-sexist nor revolutionary but just revisionist and bourgeois, just another buyer of the bourgeois ideologists.



This is an abridged version of a paper presented at the conference. A complete article with charts and graphics appears in *Morning Due*, Vol. II, Issue 4 or can be obtained in mimeographed form from *Morning Due* for 25¢.

FACILITATING NOTES

Content

Clearly, this responsibility does not involve "having all the answers." Facilitators should arrange to work together with those planning the presentation preceding your workshops so as to have a clear sense of what will be presented and, if needed, to help develop ideas for the workshop. Generally, facilitators should be prepared to provide an initial focus for the workshop and to some extent be a resource for information or perspectives as needed. It will be helpful to prepare:

1. A clear statement of the planned purpose of the workshop. (This of course can be refined in the workshop, but a starting point saves lots of time and energy).
2. A list of questions, either to start discussion or to bring in to re-focus discussion.
3. Through anticipating questions, confusions, and disagreements likely to arise, some thoughts on how to deal with these.

Process

Experience is worth many outlines and lists of suggestions. If it is at all possible, in groups you work with, facilitate meetings between now and the conference. Also, ask for feedback in those groups. Without that feedback it's hard to learn from the experience.

Following are some suggestions about facilitating discussions in workshops:

1. Leadership. A facilitator does take leadership in a group, but it is limited. You are taking responsibility to serve the group's needs, to free the people in the group to focus on the content of the discussion. Since you are serving the group's needs, the group itself is one limit to your leadership, that is, what the group wants and is prepared to deal with in the workshop. The fact that none of us have all the answers is another limit. The group itself is the real source of information, direction, development. The facilitator is simply taking responsibility to help initiate, and structure the process of the meeting.

2. Safety. Because we will be meeting with many new people and do not have an on-going commitment to struggle together, there will be limits to the risks people can take and how much can be accomplished. You cannot see all these limits alone, and it is important to check them out with people. For example, a discussion gets heated, confusing. People seem tense or getting abstract and wordy. It is important to break in and check out if people want or feel safe with the discussion. This small breather often gives those who have been silent a chance to say their feelings about where the discussion is. It also provides a moment for people to

get a perspective on whether the group is getting where it wants to go. It is very easy to slide through these situations. Often people won't feel safe to contribute or respond or even say that things are getting confused, competitive, or abstract. This is a set up for frustration and an unproductive workshop.

3. Help Clarify Group Wants.

a) It's a good idea to briefly explain your role to the group and ask for what you need from the group to support your facilitating. For example, ask people to interrupt if things seem off the track and to check out if it's okay with whoever's talking. Say that you'll be checking out if people feel the need to move on, or sum-up discussion and that you'll want people to respond and help out doing this.

b) You should suggest some form of introduction, perhaps going around the group, each person saying their name, something brief about themselves that might connect them with the topic or any special interest in the topic.

c) Briefly present ideas for the workshop from conference, presentation, or workshop planners.

d) Check out if there are questions, confusion, or disagreement with those ideas. If needed, present straightforwardly the reasons for and process behind those ideas.

e) Check out what other things people want to do in the workshop.

f) Clarify an agenda. (This may be simple enough to not require a written one).

g) Set time limits on major parts of the discussion. Clearly, if the group doesn't see a need for time limits, they will not be used co-operatively. However, keeping to an overall time limit is vital to keep the conference schedule together. Also, setting time limits for each major discussion will ensure that the different things people want out of the workshop will be taken care of. People may not see this aspect of time, only that it 'restricts' the flow of things. This is true to a point, but it usually is outweighed by the benefits of setting time limits. Point this out if necessary. Naturally, if the group finds the agenda needs to change, it can do so; but this needs to be done in a conscious manner. Without taking these questions seriously, important items can be left until there's no time to deal with them. Give people the opportunity and responsibility to be checking out changes in the plan of discussion as they come up.

h) In some workshops it may make sense to allot a certain amount of time to each person (for example, in the "Personal Family History" workshop). In workshops of this kind it is important for the group to decide if it wants discussion beyond the individual raps, how to make the transition, what to be aiming towards in the individual raps, what the later discussion should accomplish. It is also important to leave room in each person's time for questions from the group.

4. Taking Responsibility.

a) Keep time. Five or ten minutes before time is up on one area of discussion and if there seems to be a need for more time, check out with the group if they feel that's true, what else needs to be covered, and how the group wants to change the agenda.

b) Try to bring closure to discussions if the group has done what it set out to do. If it's unclear to you, check it out with the group.

c) If it seems to be needed, check out if people are getting answers to their questions, or if people are feeling cut off or discounted. Let people know at the beginning that you may be interrupting to do this.

d) Raise process questions with the group. When a "heavy" discussion comes up, check out with the group if they want to get into it (how will it change the rest of the workshop), how they want to deal with it.

e) When things are confusing, try to re-focus. This might mean summarizing or pointing out what has been or needs to be covered. It's okay if you aren't in touch with that, but ask if someone else can. If you think it might be "interrupting," check out with the group if it would be helpful.

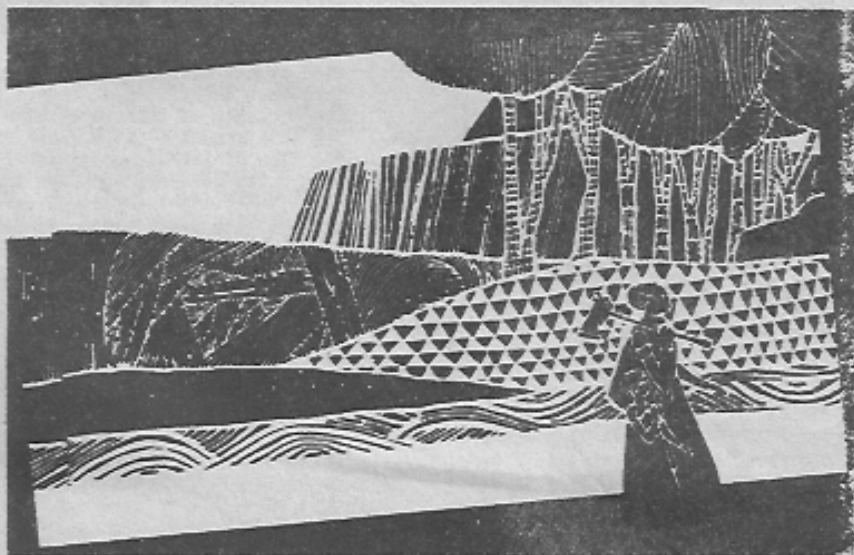
f) If discussion gets to a point where strong feelings are involved, it is important to ask people to express the feelings involved first and where they might be coming from in experiences outside of the workshop. This is helpful in avoiding abstractions. Often there is important criticism behind the feelings, but it will be much clearer and easier to deal with if the feelings are expressed openly first. When feelings or criticism about a person or the group come out it's helpful if people can respond by acknowledging what they can agree with first, sometimes by restating what they've heard in their own words.

5. Summing Up/Evaluation/C-SC. There may be specific suggestions at the conference for summing up. If not, check out if the group wants time at the end of the workshop to summarize what has happened or to give self-criticism or criticism. With

C/SC it's important to see (with a one-shot workshop group) the limits of criticism and the real basis for giving and getting it. Idealistic criticisms which discounts where a person is at and the real limits of struggle with that person can amount to trashing. Of course nurturing and straightforward criticism may be one of the things we all get out of the conference. If someone in the group is confused by this contradiction, they can check out if the person wants to hear the criticism. You might also suggest that people ask themselves if they are really saying the criticism to help the person advance. Criticism and self-criticism are tools for change. In the context of the conference criticism should be geared to advancing what people get out of the conference. Again, if people are in doubt, they can check it out. (For example, "I have some criticism about the way you've been looking at this discussion and how it might tie in with class bias. Do you want to hear it?") And, it's O.K. not to be in a place where you can hear criticism.

A Final Note

Your responsibility is not total. It's O.K. if you're not clear about what's going on (things SEEM off the track, someone SEEMS to be dominating), but DO say so to the group. Ask if others feel that way. Ask for suggestions on how to deal with it. If you don't have those wonderful, clear insights and suggestions, you can AND SHOULD at least raise it with the group. The group is the source of concrete information about what's happening and what needs to happen. There's no way you can know it all without checking it out.



Money Report

REGISTRATION		
income	expenses	balance
reg. fees (\$5 @) \$655	printing and stationery \$225	
	postage \$85	
	telephone calls \$100	
donation \$25	rentals and supplies \$120	
	land payment \$150	
	printing conference report \$90	
total \$680	total \$770	minus \$90

FOOD		
income	expenses	balance
food fee (\$5 @) \$670	food and kitchen supplies \$580	
total \$670	total \$580	plus \$90

1. With permission from the people at the conference the surplus in the food account was used to cover the deficit in the registration account.
2. Because of criticism that the conference brochure was very slick and therefore probably expensive, we would like to report that the total cost of the brochure was \$115 for 800 copies. (\$89 for printing and paper, \$21 for typesetting, \$5 misc. stationery supplies, layout labor was donated). These amounts are included in the above figures.

Food Report



There are two reasons why I (Carrrett) want to do a food report: 1) to demystify the whole food trip to show that if you are planning a conference it isn't impossible to centrally plan the food trip; and 2) to share some of the criticisms we got about food that we can all learn from.

I've been cooking in restaurants for about fifteen years, so I volunteered to organize the food trip. My main considerations were: a) what kind of food can be prepared the easiest; b) what will people want to eat given the weather (hot); and c) what are my available resources in the way of storage, stoves, large pots, and other utensils? The two biggest criticisms of the food trip were: 1) not enough nutrition planning (people complained of a lack of protein); and 2) not enough food.

In spite of these drawbacks, the food trip went very smoothly. At the conference there were three co-ordinators, one for each day, and they did a great job in getting people organized for preparation and clean-up. I had typed beforehand a complete meal-by-meal guide which told what had to be served, what had to be made (coffee, instant milk), and what had to be shopped up for the next meal.

I can certainly validate the criticisms about nutrition. Because of my extensive background in restaurant work I felt competent to organize a menu which would be easy to prepare and which everyone would like. Ease of preparation was a number one big priority; and it was that and storage which determined most of my choices. Commercial restaurants don't make nutrition a priority in training. People are doing in to eat one meal, not three days worth. So that was not the foremost thing in my head. I can see now that when I'm planning a menu for a given group of people for a longer period of time than one meal, nutrition has to be heavily taken into account.

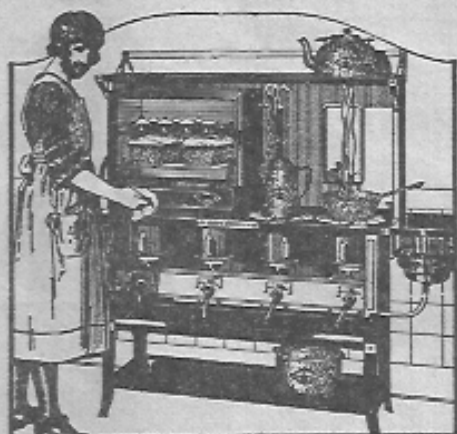
The other side of that is that the menu was not completely without food value. There was granola, a good hearty chili and soups, cheese, fresh fruits, and fruit juice. A whole lot of stuff that I know is inexpensive and nutritious was not an option because of both storage or the energy it would have taken to prepare. This includes beans, rice, and other whole grains. Either someone would have had to be in the kitchen constantly to cook those things (and miss workshops), or they would have had to be cooked during the week before and stored. So soups and a chili made mostly from canned ingredients, made the staple of the menu because the soups could be cooking unwatched while people were doing other things, and the chili could be made in an hour and left to slowly simmer.

A lot of preparation for each meal was done during the serving of the one before. In other

words, while people were eating breakfast, some other people were cutting up vegetables for the lunch soup and it cooked during the morning presentations and workshops, so nobody had to miss any of those. The same thing happened at lunch for dinner. The soups planned could not be cream or milk based because those would have burned.

Concerning criticisms about the amount of food. At some of the meals some people didn't get to eat the main dish because we ran out of food. This happened for two reasons: 1) because shopping was tight because we didn't know how much money we were going to have; and 2) because even knowing exactly how much food we did buy, I was liberal and let people take what they wanted rather than have servers give out a specified portion.

Before the conference the first reason was principle. One person loaned the conference \$600 to buy food; and we weren't ever sure, until the actual conference, that we'd be able to pay him back in full. This was because there were quite a few people who didn't pay for their registration because they didn't have the money and we didn't know if they would be able to pay for food. As it turned out



there was extra food money; but there was no way to know that beforehand.

During the conference the second reason was principle. I knew exactly how much food there was down to the last slice of cheese, and the last cup of granola. I could have taken more responsibility to insist that people serve all the food rather than just let people generally take portions. I accept a lot of responsibility for this because I do have the experience to know that a big pot of soup looks like a lot; and it's difficult for people to realize that it might easily not stretch to feed everybody if a lot of people take just one or two extra ounces in their bowl. Because I was liberal and afraid of being seen as "police-state-ish" about food portions, some people didn't get to eat at some of the meals, and that's bullshit. What should have been principle was that everyone did get enough to eat. I could easily have explained to everyone at one time that the food was being served and here's why. I did make announcements that people should watch how much they take, but I can see now that that probably didn't really give people enough information.

Criticism/ Self-criticism

General -- criticism is a means of finding the truth, it should be used in the sense of protecting and educating each other, not to win an argument
 -- one divides into two; everyone and everything has both good and bad aspects
 -- people can change their behavior and attitudes

4 Steps in Criticism and Self-Criticism

1. feelings and background
 - describe situation, check out hunches
 - how do I feel?
 - where are those feelings coming from: immediate situation, past experiences, internalized oppression (class messages, sex, race, age, faggotry)
2. offer positive criticism (appreciation)
offer negative criticism
3. ask for feedback/support/agreement and disagreement
 - decide good and bad aspects of the situation
 - decide what is primary (who does it serve--the group or the individual, gay liberation or gay oppression, the ruling class or the working class, etc.)
4. ask for specific change, and how to do it

DO's and DON'Ts

- DO say negative criticisms, don't hold them in, then 'cash in grievances.'
- DO be specific in your criticism
- DON'T forget to offer self-criticism, take responsibility for your past
- DO freely give and accept positive criticisms and appreciations
- DON'T invalidate others feelings, they are real whether they come from a good or bad place. Try to let the person know if you understand where the feelings are coming from.
- DO paraphrase what others say, let them know you hear them
- DON'T take positive and negative criticisms as the whole truth. Try to hear them as statements about the criticizers experience.
- DO say what you agree with in a criticism, before you say what you disagree with.
- DO be clear about what you want and ask for it
- DON'T expect people to change immediately; offer support and a program for change.
- DO ask for appreciation or support (strokes)



- DON'T offer a criticism or self-criticism when there's not time or energy to deal with it or not agreement to struggle to understanding. Pick the appropriate time and make sure you feel safe (trusting).
- DON'T be afraid of mistakes--welcome struggle!



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Book & Tea, Eugene - books to sell
Creek Land - hospitality and good weather
Gertrude's Restaurant, Eugene - kitchen equipment
Men's Resource Center, Portland
Mother Kali, Eugene - book table

Mountain Moving Cafe, Portland - Kitchen equipment
Ruth Schwartz Band (Cora Apple Plays Kazoo), Eugene - the sound system
Starflower, Eugene - donated food

RESOURCES

The following is a list of groups and organizations to be used as resources. Hopefully they will help increase communication between us and decrease isolation and alienation.

Organizations represented at the conference:

Bay Area Gay Liberation (BAGL) 32 Page, San Francisco, Cal. A mass-based, gay liberation group (see the Practice Panel for more details)

Brother, a forum for men against sexism; P.O. Box 4387, Berkeley, Cal. 94704. The latest issue of this magazine is on Men and Class.

Fruit Punch, c/o KPFA radio, 2207 Shattuck, Berkeley, Cal. 94704. A gay radio collective.

Freedom Socialist Party, Freeway Hall, 3815 5th Ave. N.E., Seattle, Wash. 98105. A seattle-based socialist organization that is Trotskyist and feminist.

Gay Males Together, 729 S.E. 33rd, Portland, OR 97214. An open radical rap/support group.

Join Hands, P.O. 42242 San Francisco, Cal. 94142; a Gay Prisoner Support Group and Newsletter.

June 28th Union, P.O. 8704 Oakland, Cal. White faggots developing strategies of anti-imperialist struggles from a socialist, profeminist perspective.

Lavender & Red Union, 6844 Sunset Blvd. Los Angeles, Cal. 90028. A gay liberation/communist organization which publishes Come Out Fighting

Lambda, 770 Eddy St. Missoula, Montana 59801. A Gay community organization which requests free publications and announcements of events.

Magnus, P.O. Box 40568 San Francisco, Cal. 94140. A journal of collective faggotry.

Morning Due, P.O. Box 22228 Seattle, Wash. 98122. A journal of men against sexism.

Mulberry House, 438 W. Lawson, Fayetteville, Ark. 72701. a living collective of faggots back on the land, growing.

N.W. Gay Peoples Alliance, Box 8758 Moscow, Idaho 83843. Information network. Please send announcements and any free publications.

R.F.D., 4525 Lower Wolf Creek Rd., Wolf Creek, OR 97497. A magazine for country faggots.

Stonewall Day Union, P.O. 10415 Eugene Oregon 97401. A socialist-oriented gay liberation, action group.

Union of Sexual Minorities, 1720 16th Ave. Seattle, Wash. 98122. A political action group for gay civil rights.

Groups not represented:

Gay Latinos Alliance (GALA) 180 Lexington St. San Francisco, Cal.

Black Gay Caucus (BGC), c/o Gay Community Center 32 Page, San Francisco, Cal.

Gay American Indians, c/o Gay Community Center 32 Page, San Francisco, Cal.

Cultural Groups:

Acting Workshop, 32 Page San Francisco, Cal.

Lavender Star Players, c/o Center for Creative Survival, 529 Casto St. San Francisco, Cal. 94114

Stonewall Guerrillas, P.O. 10405 Eugene, OR 97401

United Fruit Company, 729 S.E. 33rd Portland, OR 97214.

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