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Authoritarian Leftists

Kill the Cop in Your Head

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin

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It's difficult to know where to begin with this open letter to the various European-american leftist (Marxist-Leninist and Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, in particular) groups within the United States. I have many issues with many groups; some general, some very specific. The way in which this is presented may seem scattered at first, but I encourage all of you to read and consider carefully what I have written in its entirety before you pass any judgments.

It was V.I. Lenin who said, "take from each national culture only its democratic and socialist elements; we take them only and absolutely in opposition to the bourgeois culture and bourgeois nationalism of each nation". It could be argued that Lenin's statement in the current Amerikkkan context is in fact a racialist position; who is he (or the Bolsheviks themselves) to "take" anyone or pass judgment on anyone; particularly since the privileges of having white skin are a predominant factor within the context of amerikkkan-style oppression. This limited privilege in capitalist society is a prime factor in the creation and maintenance of bourgeois ideology in the minds of many whites of various classes in the US and elsewhere on the globe.

When have legitimate struggles or movements for national and class liberation had to "ask permission" from some eurocentric intellectual "authority" who may have seen starvation and brutality, but has never experienced it himself? Where there is repression, there is resistance... period. Self-defense is a basic human right that we as Black people have exercised time and time again, both violent and non-violent; a dialectical and historical reality that has kept many of us alive up to this point.

Assuming that this was not Lenin's intent, and assuming that you all truly uphold worldwide socialism/communism, then the question must be asked: **Why is it that each and every white dominated/white-led "vanguard" in the United States has in fact done the exact opposite of what Lenin Proclaims/recommends when it comes to interacting with blacks and other people of color?**

Have any of you actually sat down and seriously thought about why there are so few of us in your organizations; and at the same time why non-white socialist/communist formations, particularly in the Black community, are so small and isolated? I have a few ideas...

I. A fundamentally incorrect analysis of the role of the white left in the last thirty years of civil rights to Black liberation struggle...

By most accounts, groups such as the Black Panther Party, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, American Indian Movement, and the Puerto Rican Independence Movement “set the standard” for not only communities of color but also for revolutionary elements in the white community.

All of the above groups were ruthlessly crushed; their members imprisoned or killed. Very few white left groups at the time fought back against the onslaught of COINTELPRO by supporting these groups, with the exception of the smaller, armed underground cells. In fact, many groups such as the Progressive Labor Party and the Revolutionary Union (now known as the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA) saw the repression of groups they admired, and at the same time despised, as an opportunity to assert their own version of “vanguard leadership” on our population.

What they failed to recognize (and what many of you generally still fail to recognize) is that “vanguard leadership” is developed, it doesn’t just “magically” happen through preachy, dogmatic assertions, nor does it fall from the sky. Instead of working with the smaller autonomous formations, to help facilitate the growth of Black (and white) self-organization (the “vanguard” leadership of the Black masses themselves and all others, nurtured through grassroots social/political alliances rooted in principle), they in-

tionary leaders” and a Left-wing [white supremacist] government, then we will make another revolution until any and all perpetrators and supporters of that type of social-political relationship are defeated or dead! Any and all means are completely justifiable in order to prevent the defeat of our revolution and the re-introduction of white supremacy. We will not put up with another 400+ years of oppression; and I’m sure our Native and Hispanic brothers and sisters won’t tolerate another 500+ years of the same ol’ shit.

Ultimately, “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”; that’s the main reason I decided to publish this, as yet another humble contribution to the self-education of our people. The second reason is to, hopefully, inspire the white left to re-examine your current practices and beliefs as part of your process of self-education; assuming that you all in fact practice self-education.

Reject the traditions of your ancestors and learn from their mistakes; or reject your potential allies in communities of color. The choice is yours...

“It is a commentary on the fundamentally racist nature of this society that the concept of group strength for black people must be articulated, not to mention defended. No other group would submit to being led by others. Italians do not run the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith. Irish do not chair Christopher Columbus Societies. Yet when black people call for black-run and all-black organizations, they are immediately classed in a category with the Ku Klux Klan.”
-Kwame Toure (Stokely Carmichael), *Black Power*; Vintage Press, 1965.

For Further Reading

“Black Autonomy, A Newspaper of Anarchism and Black Revolution” Vol. #1, issues #1-#5; Vol. #2, issues #1-#3. 1994-1996.

within the SMDC and two coalition members (neither affiliated with any political party) were there. Make no mistake, I have no illusions about white people confronting their own racism; but I do support their honest attempts at doing so. Here we have a situation in which an ideological leap amongst the white left in Seattle may have been initiated; yet, the all-knowing, all-seeing “revolutionary vanguard(s)” of the white left were too busy spending that particular weekend picking the lent out of their belly buttons. Are we saving our belly-button lent for the potential shortages of food that occur during and shortly after the revolution [is corrupted by the mis-leadership of your particular rigid, dogmatic, authoritarian party]?

V. The bottom line is this: Self-determination!

For most white leftists, this means that we as Black people are demanding our own separate nation-state. Some of our revolutionary factions do advocate such a position. Black Autonomists, however, reject nation-statism [For more on that, refer to page 15 of any copy of Black Autonomy newspaper].

Regardless of whether or not the Black masses opt for a separate homeland on this continent or in Africa, we will be respected as subjects of history and not as objects that the state, its supporters, or the white left decides what to do with.

The answer to “the Black question” is simple: It is not a question; we are people, you will deal with us as such or we will fight you and the rest of the white settler nation...by any and all means necessary! We will not be cowed or dominated by anyone ever again!

Too many times in the course of American (and world) history have our people fought and died for the dream of true freedom, only to have it turn into the nightmare of continued oppression. If the end result of a working-class revolution in the United States is the continued domination of non-white people by white “revolu-

stead sought to either take them over or divide their memberships against each other until the group or groups were liquidated. These parasitic and paternalistic practices continue to this day.

The only reason any kind of principled unity existed prior to large-scale repression is because Black-led formations had no illusions about white radicals or their politics; and had no problems with kicking the living shit out of them if they started acting stupid. Notice also that the majority of white radicals who were down with real struggle and real organizations, and were actually trusted and respected by our people, are either still active... or still in prison!

II. The white left’s concept of “the vanguard party” ...

Such arrogance on the part of the white left is part and parcel to your vanguardist ideas and practice. Rather than seeking principled partnerships with non-white persons and groups, you instead seek converts to your party’s particular brand of rigid political theology under the guise of “unity”. It makes sense that most of you speak of “Black/white unity” and “sharp struggle against racism” in such vague terms, and with such uncertainty in your voices; or with an overexaggerated forcefulness that seems contrived.

Another argument against vanguardist tendencies in individuals or amongst groups is the creation of sectarianism and organizational cultism between groups and within groups. Karl Marx himself fought tirelessly against sectarianism within the working class movement of 19th century Europe. He was also a staunch fighter against those who attempted to push his persona to an almost god-like status, declaring once in frustration “I assure you, sir, I am no Marxist”. It could be argued from this viewpoint that the “vanguardist” white left in the US today is generally, by a definition rooted in the day to day practice of Marx himself, anti-Marx; and by proxy, anti-revolutionary.

Like your average small business, the various self-proclaimed “vanguards” compete against each other as well against the people themselves (both white and non-white); accusing each other of provacteurism, opportunism, and/or possessing “the incorrect line” when in fact most (if not all) are provacateurs, opportunists, and fundamentally incorrect.

The nature of capitalist competition demands that such methods and tactics be utilized to the fullest in order to “win” in the business world; the white left has in fact adapted these methods and tactics to their own brand of organizing, actively re-inventing and re-enforcing the very social, political, and economic relations you claim to be against; succeeding in undermining the very basic foundations of your overall theory and all variants of that theory.

Or is this phenomenon part and parcel to your theory? In volume four of the collected works of V.I. Lenin, Lenin himself states up front that “socialism is state-capitalism”. Are you all just blindly following a dated, foreign “blueprint” that is vastly out of context to begin with; with no real understanding of its workings?

At the same time, it could be observed that you folks are merely products of your environment; reflective of the alienated and hostile communities and families from which many of you emerge. American society has taught you the tenets of “survival of the fittest” and “rugged individualism”, and you swallowed those doctrines like your mother’s milk.

Because the white left refuses to combat and reject reactionary tendencies in their (your) own heads and amongst themselves (yourselves), and because they (you) refuse to see how white culture is rooted firmly in capitalism and imperialism; refusing to reject it beyond superficial culture appropriations (i.e.-Native American “dream catchers” hanging from the rear-view mirrors of your vehicles, wearing Adidas or Nikes with fat laces and over-sized Levis jeans or Dickies slacks worn “LA sag” style, crude attempts to “fit-in” by exaggerated, insulting over-use of the latest slang term(s) from “da hood”, etc), you in fact re-invent racist and authoritarian

prisoner and Black/Puerto Rican anarchist Martin Sostre. And then there’s the attacks on a prisoners’ right to sue a prison official, employee, or institution being made by the House and Senate. Give us one good reason to believe that you people will be any different than these previous and current “benevolent” leaders and political institutions if by some fluke or miracle you folks stumble into state power?

No “guarantees” against counter-revolution or revisionism within your “revolutionary” party/government you say? There are two: the guns, ammunition, organization, solidarity, political consciousness, and continuous vigilance of the masses of non-white people and the truly sympathetic, conscious anti-authoritarian few amongst your population; or a successful grassroots-based revolution that is rooted in anti-authoritarian political ideas that are culturally relevant to each ethnicity of the poor and working class population in the US. Judging by the general attitudes and theories expressed by your members and leadership, we can be rest assured that it is virtually guaranteed that the spirit of ‘Jim Crow’ can and will flourish within a white-led Marxist-Leninist “proletarian dictatorship” in the US. It’s clear to me why you all ramble on and on about the revolutions of China, Russia, Vietnam, Cuba, etc; they provide convenient cover for you all (read: escapism) to avoid a serious examination of the faults in your current analysis as well as in the historical analysis of the last thirty years of struggle in the US.

These are the only conclusions that can be drawn when you all are so obviously hostile to the idea of doing the hard work of confronting your own individual racist and reactionary tendencies. When your own fellow white activists attempted to put together an “Anti-Racism Workshop” for members of the Seattle Mumia Defense Committee, many of you pledged your support (in the form of the usual dogmatic, vague, and arguably baseless rhetorical proclamations of “solidarity” and “commitment to racial equality”) and then proceeded to not show up. Only the two initial organizers

in the context of this particular country and its notorious history. So far, all I have seen from you all is arrogance in coalitions, petty games of political one-upmanship, and ideological/tactical rigidity.

Let's pretend for a minute that one of the various wanna-be vanguards actually seizes political power. In everyone of your programs, from the program of the RCP, USA to even smaller, lesser known groups there is usually a line somewhere in there about your particular party holding the key levers of state power within a "dictatorship of the proletariat". Have any of you actually considered what that sounds like to a community without real power? Does this mean that we as Black people are going to have fight and die a second time under your dictatorship in order to have equal access to employment, housing, schools, colleges, public office, party status, our own personal lives generally?

Look at our history; over one hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation (the 1960's) we were still dying for the right to vote, for the right to protest peacefully, for the right to live in peace and prosperity within the context of white domination and capitalism. Today, after all of that, it is clear that the masses of our people are still largely powerless; we stayed powerless even as public schools were being desegregated and more of our elites were being elected to Congress and other positions. The same racist, authoritarian state that stripped us of our humanity was now asserting itself as our first line of defense of those hard-won concessions in the form of federal troops and FBI "observers" (who watched as we were beaten, raped, and/or killed) sent to enforce The Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

As we have seen since that time, what the white power structure grants, it can (and will) take away; we can point to recent US Supreme Court decisions around voter redistricting as one part of our evidence. We can also look to the problem of mail and publication censorship in the US prison system (state and federal) that has come back to haunt us since the landmark 1960's first amendment legal challenge to the state of New York that was won by political

social relations as the final product of your so-called "revolutionary theory"; what I call Left-wing white supremacy.

This tragic dilemma is compounded by, and finds some of its initial roots in, your generally ahistorical and wishful "analysis" of Black/white relations in the US; and rigid, dogmatic definitions of "scientific socialism" or "revolutionary communism", based in a eurocentric context. Thus, we are expected to embrace these "socialist" values of the settler/conqueror culture, rather than the "traditional amerikkkan values" of your reactionary opponents; as if we do not possess our own "socialist" values, rooted in our own daily and cultural realities! Wasn't the Black Panther Party "socialist"? What about the Underground Railroad; our ancestors (and yes, even some of yours) were practicing "mutual aid" back when most European revolutionary theorists were still talking about it like it was a lofty, far away ideal!

One extreme example of this previously mentioned wishful thinking in place of a true analysis on the historical and current political dynamics particular to this country is an article by Joseph Green entitled "Anarchism and the Market Place, which appeared in the newsletter "Communist Voice" (Vol #1, Issue #4, September 15, 1995).

In it he asserts that anarchism is nothing more than small-scale operations run by individuals that will inevitably lead to the re-introduction of economic exploitation. He also claims that "it fails because its failure to understand the relation of freedom to mass activity mirrors the capitalist ideology of each person for their self." He then offers up a vague "plan of action"; that the workers must rely on "class organization and all-round mass struggle". In addition, he argues for the centralization of all means of production.

Clearly, Green's political ideology is in fact a theology. First, anarchism was practiced in mass scale most recently in Spain from 1936-39. By most accounts (including Marxist-Leninist), the Spanish working class organizations such as the CNT (National Confederation of Labor) and the FAI (Federation of Anarchists of Iberia)

seized true direct workers power and in fact kept people alive during a massive civil war.

Their main failure was on a military, and partially on an ideological level: (1.) They didn't carry out a protracted fight against the fascist Falange with the attitude of driving them off the face of the planet. (2.) They underestimated the treachery of their Marxist-Leninist "allies" (and even some of their anarchist "allies"), who later sided with the liberal government to destroy the anarchist collectives. Some CNT members even joined the government in the name of a "united front against fascism". And (3.), they hadn't spent enough time really developing their networks outside the country in the event they needed weapons, supplies, or a place to seek refuge quickly.

Besides leaving out those important facts, Green also omits that today the majority of prisoner support groups in the US are anarchist run or influenced. He also leaves out that anarchists are generally the most supportive and involved in grassroots issues such as homelessness, police brutality, Klan/Nazi activity, Native sovereignty issues, [physical] defense of womens health clinics, sexual assault prevention, animal rights, environmentalism, and free speech issues.

Green later attacks "supporters of capitalist realism on one hand and anarchist dreamers on the other". What he fails to understand is that the movement will be influenced mostly by those who do practical work around day to day struggles, not by those who spout empty rhetoric with no basis in reality because they themselves (like Green) are fundamentally incapable of practicing what they preach. Any theory which cannot, at the very least, be demonstrated in miniature scale (with the current reality of the economically, socially, and militarily imposed limitations of capitalist/white supremacist society taken in to consideration) in daily life is not even worth serious discussion because it is rigid dogma of the worst kind.

"Yes, the average citizen of England, France, Germany, the United States, had a higher standard of living than before. But: 'Whence comes this new wealth?'...It comes primarily from the darker nations of the world-Asia and Africa, South and Central America, the West Indies, and the islands of the South Seas. It is no longer simply the merchant prince, or the aristocratic monopoly, or even the employing class that is exploiting the world: it is the nation, a new democratic nation composed of united capital and labor." (Zinn)

Yet, the self-titled "anti-racists" of the left continue on with their infantile fixation on the Klan, Nazis, and right-wing militias. Groups that they say they are against, but in fact demonstrate a tolerance for in practice. Standing around chanting empty slogans in front of a line of police separating demonstrators from the nazis in a "peaceful demonstration" is contradiction in its purest form; both the police and the fascists must be mercilessly destroyed! As the Spanish anarchist Buenaventura Durruti proclaimed back in 1936 "Fascism is not to be debated, it is to be smashed!" There is no room for compromise or dialogue, except for asking them for a last meal request and choice of execution method before we pass sentence; and even that is arbitrary!

True, tactical considerations must be examined, but if we can't get at them then and there, there is no "rule" that says we can't follow them and hit them when they least expect it; except for the "rule" of the wanna-be rulers of the Marxist-Leninist white left "vanguard(s)" who only see the fascists as competition in their struggle to see which set of "empire builders" will lord over us; the "good" whites who regulate us to the amerikkkan left plantation of "the glorious workers state", or the "bad" whites who work us as slaves until half-dead and then laugh as our worn out carcasses are thrown into ovens, cut up for "scientific purposes", or hung from lamp posts and trees. You people have yet to show me the qualitative difference(s) between a Klan/Nazi- style white supremacist dictatorship and your concept of a "dictatorship of the proletariat"

ment. Thus, Beard found that most of the makers of the Constitution had some direct economic interest in establishing a strong federal government: the manufacturers needed protective tariffs; the moneylenders wanted to stop the use of paper money to pay off debts; the land speculators wanted protection as they invaded Indian lands; slave-owners needed federal security against slave revolts and runaways; bondholders wanted a government able to raise money by nationwide taxation, to pay off those bonds.

Four groups, Beard noted, were not represented in the Constitutional Convention: slaves, indentured servants, women, men without property. And so the Constitution did not reflect the interests of those groups.” (Zinn, pg.90)

Come to terms with your white skin privilege (and the ideology and attitude(s) this privilege breeds) and then figure out how to combat that dynamic as part of your fight against the state and its supporters. Your continued backwardness is a sad commentary when we uncover historical evidence which shows that even before the turn of the century some of your own ancestors within the white working class were beginning to take the first small steps towards a greater understanding of their social role as the white servants of capital. A white shoemaker in 1848 wrote:

“...we are nothing but a standing army that keeps three million of our brethren in bondage... Living under the shade of Bunker Hill monument, demanding in the name of humanity, our right, and withholding those rights from others because their skin is black! Is it any wonder that God in his righteous anger has punished us by forcing us to drink the bitter cup of degradation.” (Zinn, pg.222)

We can even look to the historical evidence of Lenin’s time. Prior to the publishing of Lenin’s “On Imperialism”, W.E.B. DuBois wrote an article for the May, 1915 edition of the Atlantic Monthly titled “The African Roots of War” in which he vividly describes how both rich and poor whites benefit from the super-exploitation of non-white people:

Even if he could “show and prove”, his proposed system is doomed to repeat the cannibalistic practices of Josef Stalin or Pol Pot. While state planning can accelerate economic growth no one from Lenin, to Mao, to Green himself has truly dealt with the power relationship between the working class and the middle-class “revolutionaries” who seize state power “on the behalf” of the latter. How can one use the organizing methods of the European bourgeoisie, “[hierarchal] party building” and “seizing state power” and not expect this method of organizing people to not take on the reactionary characteristics of what it supposedly seeks to eliminate? Then there’s the question of asserting ones authoritarian will upon others (the usual recruitment tactics of the white left attempting to attract Black members).

At one point in the article Green claims that anarchistic social relations take on the oppressive characteristics of the capitalist ideology their rooted in. Really? What about the capitalist characteristics of know-it-all ahistorical white “radicals” who can just as effectively assert capitalistic, oppressive social relations when utilizing a top-down party structure (especially when it’s utilized against minority populations)? What about the re-assertion of patriarchy (or actual physical and mental abuse) in interpersonal relationships; especially when an organizational structure allows for, and in fact rewards, oppressive social relationships?

What is the qualitative difference between a party bureaucrat who uses his position to steal from the people (in addition to living a neo-bourgeois lifestyle; privilege derived from one’s official position and justified by other party members who do the same. And, potentially, derived from the color of his skin in the amerikkan context) and a collective member who steals from the local community? One major difference is that the bureaucrat can only be removed by the party, the people (once again) have no real voice in the matter (unless the people themselves take up arms and dislodge the bureaucrat and his party); the collective member can receive a swift punishment rooted in the true working class traditions, cul-

ture, and values of the working class themselves, rather than that which is interpreted for them by so-called “professional revolutionaries” with no real ties to that particular community. This is a very important, yet very basic, concept for the white left to consider when working with non-white workers (who, by the way, are the true “vanguard” in the US; Black workers in particular. Check the your history, especially the last thirty years of it.); i.e.- direct community control.

This demand has become more central over the last thirty years as we have seen the creation of a Black elite of liberal and conservative (negrosie) puppets for the white power structure to speak through to the people, the few who were allowed to succeed because they took up the ideology of the oppressor. But, they too have become increasingly powerless as the shift to the right in the various branches of the state and federal government has quickly, and easily, “checked” what little political power they had. Also, we do not have direct control over neighborhood institutions as capitalists, let alone as workers; at least white workers have a means of production they could potentially seize. Small “mom and pop” restaurants and stores or federally funded health clinics and social services in the ‘hood hardly count as “Black capitalist” enterprises, nor are any of these things particularly “liberating” in and of themselves.

But white radicals, the white left of the US in particular, have a hard time dealing with the reality that Black people have always managed to survive, despite the worst or best intentions of the majority population. We will continue to survive without you and can make our revolution without you (or against you) if necessary; don’t tell us about “protracted struggle”, the daily lives of non-white workers are testimony to the true meaning of protracted struggle, both in the US and globally. Your inability or unwillingness to accept the fact that our struggle is parallel to yours, but at the same time very specific, and will be finished successfully when we as a people, as working-class Blacks on the North American

and since the principle manifestation and weapon of the workers’ economic struggle, the strike, is regarded as a criminal (and sometimes even as a political) offense.”

In this country, the distinction between the trade unions and revolutionary organizations is abundantly clear (even if some groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) still fail to make the distinction themselves) and the primary contradiction within the working class is that of racial stratification as a class weapon of the bourgeoisie and capitalists against the working class as a whole.

Yet, the white Left (along with the rest of the white working class) fails to see its collaborationist role in this process. And this goes right back to what I said earlier in this writing about the need for a serious historical and cultural critique amongst all white people (and not just the settler nation’s left-wing factions) that goes beyond superficial culture appropriations or lofty, dogmatic proclamations of how committed you and your party is to “racial equality”. To even consider oneself “white” or to call oneself “white” is an argument FOR race and class oppression; look at the history of the US and see who first erected these terms “white” and “Black”, and why they were created in the first place.

I remember last summer, around the fourth of July, I had a member of the local SWP try to tell me that the American War of Independence was “progressive”. Progressive for whom? Tell us the truth, who were the primary beneficiaries of the American Revolution? You know the answer, we all do; only a total, unrepentant reactionary would lie to the people, especially on this point.

Howard Zinn, in his work “A People’s History of the United States”, points out how early 20th century historian Charles Beard found that of the fifty-five men who gathered in Philadelphia in 1787 to draw up the US Constitution “a majority of them were lawyers by profession, that most were men of wealth, in land, in slaves, manufacturing, or shipping; that half of them had money loaned out at interest, and that forty of the fifty-five held government bonds, according to records of the [US] Treasury Depart-

is watching us even more closely than other workers, while at the same time fueling petty squabbles and competition between us and other non-white workers. Those of us who are fortunate enough to land a union job soon find out that the unions are soft on racism in the workplace. This only makes sense as we learn later on that unions in the US are running dogs of capitalism and apologists for management, despite their “militant” rhetoric.

Most unionized workers are white, reflective of the majority of unionized labor in the US; who constitute a mere 13% of the total labor force. This is why it is silly for the white left to prattle on and on about the labor “movement” and about how so many of our people are joining unions. That’s no consolation to us when Black unemployment hovers at 35% nationally; many of those brothers and sisters living in places where “permanent unemployment” is the rule rather than the exception, and many more who find work at non-union “dead end” service industry jobs. One out of three of our people is caught up somewhere within the US criminal “justice” system: in jail, in prison, on parole, on work-release, awaiting trial, etc as a direct result.

In addition, many white workers are supportive of racist Republican politicians, such as presidential candidate Pat Buchanan, who promises to protect their jobs at the expense of non-white workers and immigrants. What is the white left or the union movement doing about all of that?

It shouldn’t be surprising that the white left still preaches a largely economist viewpoint when it comes to workers generally, and workers of color in particular. This view is further evidence of not only your own deviation from Marx, but also from Lenin, by your own varied (yet similar) definitions.

Lenin recognized why the majority of Russian revolutionaries of his time put forward an economist position: “In Russia,...the yoke of autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinction between the Social Democrats organization and workers’ association, since all workers associations and all study circles are prohibited;

continent, decide that we have achieved full freedom (as defined by our history, our culture, our needs, our desires, our personal experiences, and our political idea(s)) is by far the primary reason why the white left is so weak in this country.

In addition, this sinking garbage scow of American leftism is dragging other liberating political vessels down with it, particularly the smaller, anti-authoritarian factions within the white settler nation itself and the few [non-dogmatic and non-ritualistic] individuals within today’s Marxist-Leninist parties who sincerely wish to get away from the old, tired historical revisionism of their particular “revolutionary” party.

This seemingly “fixed position”, along with many other fixed positions in their “thought”, help to reveal the white left’s profound isolation and alienation from the Black community as a whole and its activists. Yet, many of them would continue to wholeheartedly, and retardedly, assert that they’re part of the community simply because they live in a Black neighborhood or their party headquarters is located there.

The white left’s isolation and alienation was revealed even more profoundly in the criticisms of the Million Man March on Washington. In the end, the majority of the white leftist critics wound up tailing the most backward elements of the Republican Party; some going as far as to echo the very same words of Senate majority leader Bob Dole, who commented on the day after the march that “You can’t separate the message from the messenger.” Others parroted the words of House majority leader Newt Gingrich, who had the nerve to ask “where did our leadership go wrong?”

Since when were we expected to follow the “leadership” of white America; the right, left, or center without some type of brutal coercion? Where is the advantage for us in “following” any of them anywhere? What have any of them done for us lately? Where is the “better” leadership example of any of the hierarchical political tendencies (of any class or ideology) in the US and who do they benefit exclusively and explicitly? None of you were particularly

interested in us before we rebelled violently in 1992, why the sudden interest? What do you want from us this time?

Few, if any, of the major pro-revolution left-wing newspapers in the US gave an accurate account of the march. Many of them claimed that only the Black petit-bourgeoisie were in attendance. All of them claimed that women were “forbidden” to be there, despite the widely reported fact that our sisters were there in large numbers.

“MIM Notes” (and the Maoist Internationalist Movement itself) to their credit recognize that white workers are NOT the “vanguard” class: yet because they themselves are so profoundly alienated from the Black community on this side of the prison walls they had to rely on information from mainstream press accounts courtesy of the Washington Post. And rightfully alienated they are; who in their right mind actually believes that a small, “secret” cult of white campus radicals can (or should) “lead” the masses of non-white people to their/our freedom? Whatever those people are smoking, I don’t want any! I do have to say, however, that MIM is indeed the least dogma addicted of the entire white left milieu that I’ve encountered; but dogma addicted nonetheless.

I helped organize in the Seattle area for the Million Man March. The strong, Black women I met had every intention of going. None of the men even considered stopping them, let alone suggesting that they not go. Sure, the NOI passed on Minister Farrakhan’s message that it was a “men only” march, but it was barely discussed and generally ignored.

The Million Man March local organizing committees (l.o.c.’s) gave the various Black left factions a forum to present ideas and concepts to entire sections of our population who were not familiar with “Marxism”, “anarchism”, “Kwame Nkrumah”, “George Jackson”, “The Ten-Point Program”, “class struggle”, etc.

It also afforded us the opportunity to begin engaging the some of the members of the local NOI chapter in class-based ideological struggle along with participating community people. Of course, it

IV. Bourgeois pseudo-analysis of race and class.

It only makes sense that the white left’s analysis of race and class in amerikkka would be so erroneous when you’re so quick to jump up and pass judgment on everyone else about this or that, but deathly afraid of real self-criticism at the individual or collective level; opting instead to use tool(s) of self-criticism as a means to reaffirm old, tired ideas that were barely thought out to begin with or by dodging real self-criticism altogether by dogmatically accusing your critics of “red-baiting”. Clearly, it is you who “red-bait” yourselves; as the old saying goes, “Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones!” Action talks, bullshit walks!

Some of the more backward sections of the white left still push that old tired line “gay, straight, Black, white, same struggle-same fight!” Nothing can be further from the truth. Sure, we are all faced with the same “main enemy”: the racist, authoritarian state and its supporters; but unlike white males (straight or gay) and with some minor parallels to the experiences of white women, our oppression begins at birth. This is a commonality that we share with Native people, Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, and Asians.

As we grow up, we go from being “cute” in the eyes of the larger society, to being considered “dangerous” by the time we’re teenagers. As this point is driven home to us day in and day out in various social settings and circumstances some of us decide, in frustration to give the white folks what they want to believe; we become predatory. This dynamic is played out in ghettos, barrios, chinatowns, and reservations across the country. Even those of us who choose not to engage in criminal activity, or aren’t forced into it, have to live under this stigma. In addition, we as individuals are still viewed as “objects” and our community as a “monolith”.

We then enter the work force...that is, if there are any jobs available. It is there that we learn that our people and other non-whites are “last hired, first fired”, that our white co-workers are generally afraid of us or view as “competition”, and that management

“marxist missionaries” insist on coming into our neighborhoods preaching the “gospel” of Marx, Lenin, Mao, etc, the least you could do is “pay” us for our trouble. You certainly haven’t offered us much else that’s useful.

To their credit, the white anarchists and anti-authoritarian leftists have been generally supportive of the Black struggle by comparison; *Black Autonomy* and related projects in particular. Matter of fact, back in October of 1994 in an act of mutual aid and solidarity the Philadelphia branch of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) printed the very first issue of *Black Autonomy* (1,000 copies) for free. One of their members actually got a little upset when I asked how much we owed them for the print job. In return (and in line with our class interests), we allied ourselves with the Philly branch and others in a struggle within the IWW against the more conservative “armchair revolutionary/historical society” elements within its national administrative body.

Former political prisoner, SNCC member, Black Panther, and Black autonomist (anarchist) Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin credits the hard work of anarchist groups in Europe and non-vanguardist Marxist and anarchist factions in the US for assisting him in a successful campaign for early release from prison after 13 years of incarceration.

In no way do we expect you or anyone else to bankroll us; what I am offering is one suggestion to those of you who sincerely want to help; and a challenge to those who in fact seek to “play god” with our lives while spouting empty, meaningless rhetoric about “freedom”, “justice”, “class struggle”, and “solidarity”. To those people I ask: Do you have ideas, or do ideas have you? Actually, a better question might be: do you think at all?

was impossible for the white left to know any of this; more proof of their profound isolation and alienation. At the time, despite our own minor ideological differences, we agreed on one point: it was none of your business or the business of the rest of the white population. When we organize amongst our own, we consider it a “family matter”. When we have conflicts, that is also a “family matter”. Again, it is none of your business unless we tell you differently. How would you like it if we butted in on a heated family argument you were having with a loved one and started telling you what to think and what to do?

This brings me to two issues that have bothered me since January, 1996. Both comments were made to me by a member of Radical Women at the International Socialist Organization’s conference at the University of Washington. The first statement was: “I don’t recognize Black people as a ‘nation’ like I do Native people.”

My first thought was “who the fuck are you to pass judgment upon a general self-definition that is rooted in our collective suffering throughout the history of this country?”

She might as well join up with the right-wing Holocaust revisionists; for this is precisely what she is practicing, the denial of the Black holocaust from 1555 to the present (along a parallel denial, by proxy, of the genocide against other non- white nations within the US). Our nationalism emerged as a defense against [your] white racism. The difference between revolutionary Black nationalists (like Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party) and cultural nationalists (like Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam) is that we see our nationalism as a specific tool to defend ourselves from groups and individuals like this ignorant person, not as an exclusive or single means for liberation.

We recognize that we will have to attack bourgeois elements amongst our people just as vigorously as we fight against white supremacists (“left”, “center”, or “right”). The difference is that our bourgeoisie (what I refer to as the “negrosie”) is only powerful within the community; they have no power against the white

power structure without us, nor do they have power generally without the blessing of the white power structure itself. Our task, then, is to unite them with us against a common enemy while at the same time explicitly undermining (and eventually eliminating) their inherently reactionary influence.

The second stupidity to pass her lips concerned our support of Black-owned businesses. I pointed out to her that if she had in fact studied her Marxism-Leninism, she would see that their existence goes hand-in-glove with Marx's theory that revolution could only ensue once capitalism was fully developed. She came back with the criticism, "Well, you'll be waiting a long time for that to happen".

Once again, had she actually studied Marxism-Leninism she would know that Lenin and the Bolsheviks also had to deal with this same question. Russia's economy was predominantly agricultural, and its bourgeois class was small. They decided to go with the mood and sentiments of the peasantry and industrial workers at that particular moment in history;...seize the means of production and distribution anyway!

Who says we wouldn't do the same? The participants of the LA rebellion (and others), despite their lack of training in "radical 'left-wing' political theory" (besides being predominantly Black, Latino, or poor white trash in Amerikkka), got it half right; they seized the means of distribution, distributed the products of their [collective] labor, and then burned the facilities to the ground. Yes, there were many problems with the events of 1992, but they did show our potential for future progress.

Black autonomists ultimately reject vanguardism because as the white left [as well as elements of the Black revolutionary movement] has demonstrated, it erodes and eventually destroys the fragile ties that hold together the necessary principled partnerships between groups and individuals that are needed to accomplish the numerous tasks associated with fighting back successfully and building a strong, diverse, and viable revolutionary movement.

The majority of the white left is largely disliked, disrespected, and not trusted by our people because they fail miserably on this point. How can you claim to be a "socialist" when you are in fact anti-social? How do you all distinguish yourselves from the majority of your people in concrete, practical, and principled terms?

III. Zero (0) support of non-white left factions by the white left.

I've always found this particularly disturbing; you all want our help, but do not want to help us. You want to march shoulder to shoulder with us against the government and its supporters, but do not want us to have a solid political or material foundation of our own to not only win the fight against the white supremacist state but to also re-build our communities on our own behalf in our own likeness(es).

Let white Marxists provide unconditional (no strings attached) material support for non-white factions whose ideology runs parallel to theirs, and let white anarchist factions provide unconditional (again, no strings attached) material support for factions in communities of color who have parallel ideologies and goals. Obviously, the one "string" that can never be avoided is that of harsh economic reality; if you don't have the funds, you can't do it. That's fair and logical, but if you're paying these exorbitant amounts for projects and events that amount to little more than ideological masturbation and organizational cultism while we do practical work out of pocket or on a tiny budget amongst our own, it seems to me that a healthy dose of criticism/self-criticism and reassessment of priorities is in order on the part of you "professional revolutionaries" of the white left.

If the white left "vanguards" are unwilling to materially support practical work by non-white revolutionary factions, then you have no business showing your faces in our neighborhoods. If you