

THE NATIONAL QUESTION: The role national minorities in advanced capitalist-imperialist countries will play in the revolutionary upsurge that is leading to the liberation of mankind from exploitation and racism.

ASIANS AS A NATIONAL MINORITY IN AMERIKA

The social reality of Asians in Amerika has a dual character. On the one hand, we share a common and unique experience in white racist Amerika which is qualitatively different from that of other Third World people in this country.

Roots in Asia: Children of Imperialism

We are immigrants--a new breed of people who essentially came of our own accord to this country. The pattern that emerges for our reasons for coming, however, must be seen in the light of the expansion of Western imperialism.

As Western imperialism expanded its economic foothold in Asia, it destroyed and uprooted countless millions of people from their agrarian life, thus creating a mobile working force which could be used in the developing industries of those countries. However, since all of these workers could not be absorbed into the industries within their own country, many were forced to leave in search of other means of survival. At the same time, within the imperialist mother countries, the capitalists found that they needed cheap labor for their own expanding industries. When their own labor forces would/could not do the work or became organized, the capitalists brought in (imported) cheap labor to maintain competition and low wages among their own workers. These two factors resulted in the influx of Asian laborers into Amerika: Chinese to build the railroads, work in the mines; Japanese to develop the swamps of the West into farmland, etc.

In Amerika

In this country, Asians were faced with the reality that the same white racism which was used to justify Western imperialism against their homelands was being used here to systematically deny our full participation in this society. Asians were denied land ownership and forced to play certain defined economic roles in this society (farmer, gardener, laundryman, secretary, etc.) such that today, we remain an extremely mobile labor force with no roots in the land.

Taking these two factors of economics and race, we find that Amerika is not a true melting pot but rather a white country within which exist enclaves of Third World people--internal colonies in the belly of the monster. The reality for most Asians in Amerika today, then, is that we still live within ethnically identifiable communities--pockets of Asian population concentrating usually within or on the fringes of racial minority communities (Westside, Boyle Heights, Little Tokyo, Chinatown, Temple area, Gardena, etc.)

Furthermore, Asians, constantly subjected to white racism stereotypes (we all look alike) and other forms of institutional racism (in schools, employment, social relationships) have become the victims of cultural genocide and colonized mentality. Many of us want to be something we're not - white - and believe that we are inherently quiet, passive, unimportant, uncreative, ugly. We begin hating ourselves, forgetting or putting down our own culture, and defending the oppressor through words and deeds. We feel we have no identity, no real feeling of belonging anywhere, and become envious of other people's identity, energy, and soul (be it blacks', browns', and even white freak culture.)

And yet, despite all of these oppressive forces, we, as a people have survived in white racist Amerika... We have built, through mutual support and a collective spirit, gained from our communal/peasant origins, viable communities which have a great effect on our lives today. These communities are linked by institutions such as the family, food stores, dental and medical care, social groups, churches, etc. Skills, institutions (such as the family), and the rich cultural heritage that we brought from Asia... as well as qualities of hard work, perseverance, endurance, fighting spirit, tremendous resilience and ability to unite in times of crisis were all factors which enabled us to survive in Amerika.

Diversity

Given our common experience, however, we also recognize that there are many differences too. We are women, we are men. We range from fifth-generation descendants of the earliest immigrants to Hawaii, to recent arrivals from Hong Kong; we are old, middle-aged, young; rich, middle-class, solid working-class, poor; college kids, freaks and street people inside of prison; we can count among ourselves super-macho Sansei Samurai, and sisters struggling against male chauvinism; the most tight-assed scholastic who spends 80% of his waking hours reading Mao, to totally spaced-out freaks; loyal Americans and revolutionaries.

Historically the differences have been greater than the unity. So much that for most of the 150 year-long history of our people in Amerika, it would not have made much sense to call ourselves 'Asian Americans.' Because of the denial of access to the American mainstream and the divide and rule tactics used by the ruling class (ie separate labor camps for Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, etc.) along with our own diversity of languages that made communication extremely difficult, we were in fact divided and ruled. Because of the denial to access, we had to identify with someplace, that someplace was the mother countries. Because of the imperialist role of Japan and the national chauvinism of our separate mother countries, we could not get together. A consciousness of the common experiences we shared was almost completely lacking. Today, the situation has changed, but the differences are still real, and are something we must bring out and analyze. Then we can begin to build, to develop a common identity of shared experiences - to feel a common destiny with each other - to make that identity a day-to-day reality.

We are beginning to share the feeling of identity as Asian people, following our roots back across the Pacific, and finding that the people there are carrying out a fierce and valiant struggle against the same white, imperial Amerika. These two things - white racism and an identity with each other and our brothers and sisters across the Pacific give us a historical potential for unity.

REVOLUTION IN AMERIKA

It is for these reasons that we feel it is necessary, at this stage of the revolutionary struggle in Amerika, for Asian-American revolutionaries to focus their energy primarily on working with Asian-American people to build a mass revolutionary movement which is national in form and international in terms of the politics we apply and the goals we work towards.

Our adoption of certain national forms of organizing is necessary today because of the historical and objective conditions that have shaped both our social existence and social consciousness as a people--which will call for specific modes of analysis, organizing, and struggle that will relate to the innermost strivings and contradictions that our people experience and live, day to day.

Three

We feel that, it is not only necessary, but strategic to organize Asian in Amerika because:

1. Asian-Americans, while relatively small in number, are concentrated in areas that are strategic, economically and militarily (San Francisco/Bay area; Southern California; Hawaii; New York; Portland-Seattle-Vancouver).
2. Asian-American movement can be the ideological, political, cultural, and military outpost of the Asian Revolution that is today the forefront of the world revolutionary war and the chief enemy of US imperialism. (To educate the rest of the movement and the entire society.)
3. A high proportion of our people have skills and expertise that could be tremendously useful to the struggle of the whole Third World movement in the US.
4. As peoples who've gone through the historical experience of highly organized feudal society and of large nation-state, we possess a sense of organization and of discipline that's badly needed in the revolutionary struggle.
5. Individually and collectively, we need to survive not merely physically, but as ourselves, with historical and cultural uniqueness of our own.
6. The idea that in this racist society, we could go out and organize (white or) black production workers when we are neither production workers nor black (or white) ignores some basic tenets of mass-line. That the organizer and cadre must be able to identify with the innermost strivings and motivations of the masses whom they strive to educate and organize.

In our struggle toward liberation, we see the progression in organizational forms as: ethnic communities → Asian Movement (Nation) → Unified Third World Movement → Anti-imperialist United Front (that includes revolutionary whites).

Recognizing that 1) objective differences based on historical experience, language, culture, etc. still exist between the various Asian ethnic groups such that much of our work will still be on an ethnic basis 2) in order to build a real Asian unity, each ethnic community will have to build its own strength based on its own unique problems and contributions so that all Asians can come together from a point of strength rather than weakness...we still feel that we have already begun to move into the stage of Asian movement. Through the work of many mass based programs, especially among the youth, which deal on an Asian basis as well as many points in which various Asian ethnic groups saw the necessity to unite when dealing with the system (in government funding, antiwar movement, penal institutions, schools, social services, etc.) we have begun to build our forces as Asians in Amerika.

ASIAN NATION

In order to further build our strength as Asians in Amerika, we put forward the concept of an Asian Nation here in Amerika. The concept of "nation" as used here does not necessarily imply a complete separation of our people from the other Third World and white revolutionary peoples, geographically or politically. What we suggest as our intermediate goal is the idea of an Asian Nation as a complex of social relationships, shared attitudes, and community institutions, with a shared culture (both the shared experience of cultural genocide and the shared struggle to build a new culture of survival and resistance) as its core. The idea is a simple one: to build a power base as Asians--culturally, geo-politically, economically, and as it becomes necessary, militarily.

Culture

It's so important that we begin right now to create our culture, our way of life. This doesn't mean necessarily to turn blindly towards our traditional Asian culture. Although there are things of value in those cultures, much of it is as confining as what we are rejecting. We must pick and choose from the rich heritage of our Asian cultures as we feel the need to. But much of it will be very new -- songs, poems, literature, music, films, paintings that truly expresses our own life experience; whatever that helps us to survive through this nightmare, whatever that makes us strong enough to destroy this monster around and within us, so we can create something more human and real.

Alternative Institutions

As we begin to build our culture, we will feel the necessity more and more to start building our own parallel institutions within and for our communities; For instance:

Legal, medical and social service clinics in and for our communities, manned and serviced by us.

Day-care centers, liberation schools where we learn to be strong and proud and sure of ourselves; food co-ops, garages, dress and garment shops that really serve our needs.

Churches - both Buddhist and Christian - transforming themselves into total community centers, as well as places to gain a spiritual perception of ourselves.

Pioneer centers where our grandparents can share their experiences and skills with the rest of us.

A network of our own media (community newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, films, art centers and theaters.

Last, but not least, our own farm-communes in the country where we can learn agricultural skills (from our parents and grandparents); where we can grow our own organic crops, flowers, fish and animals; craft workshops to train and produce; where we can establish rest and recreation centers for brothers and sisters working in the cities; where our children can dig on a righteous and real nature trip.

We can go on and on. Our imagination and our willingness to put our ideas into practice are our only limits; you can and will probable add to this list. Actually, none of these ideas are new. The only thing new about them is that they will be a part of one unified theme: our own nation-community. And there will be a totally different quality of experience for all involved. For the first time, we will be doing our own thing for and with each other.

Can this nation-community that we talk about exist within, and survive in Amerika as it is today?

Our historical experiences seem to say 'no'. Take the case of the Japanese Americans - were they any more 'hard-working' than they were in 1942 when they were put into concentration camps for being sneaky, subversive, and undesirable in the eyes of white Amerika. The people who run this country, who control it decide who is alright and who isn't very arbitrarily. It's what is convenient at the time. At that time it was convenient to down them because they needed the land they had developed; there needed to be a focus for the discontent that was brewing throughout Amerika, and especially in California. Today, they have found it convenient to patronize the Japanese Americans and set them up as 'model minority' to off-set the unrest among other Third World people here in Amerika.

With the heavy vibes between Amerika and the Peoples' Republic of China; with the trade hassles between Amerika and Japan; with the ass-kicking Amerika has and is suffering at the hands of the Vietnamese people, we should remember the 'we all look alike.'

In this context of Amerika today, our Asian nation-community seems a necessity for our physical and mental survival.

Is this nation-building a realistic goal?

Again, we must look at Amerika today; this time the answer seems to be 'yes'. The objective condition of today - attack from without and within by Third World people who feel the push the most, coupled with the fact that even within white Amerika, its children (trying to create their own counter-culture), its women (organizing on the side of other oppressed people), some of its professionals, and even its military (emerging into a strong movement also siding with other oppressed people) seems to indicate the slow, but steady crumble of the Amerika of today. With the victory of the Vietnamese people being a mere question of time now, and other Vietnams exploding all over the rest of Asia, throughout both Latin America and Africa - where people are valiantly determined to throw Amerika out of their countries, the immediate crisis for Amerika is pretty real. We must begin to build our nation-community now; to survive the crumble of Amerikan society.

UNIFIED THIRD WORLD MOVEMENT

Here again we must stress that the concept of Asian nation does not imply a narrow reactionary nationalism. The Asian nation-community we are building in North Amerika will be national in form but clearly international/third world in its politics and goals.

By this we mean that our day to day theory and practice will reflect the belief that the Asian nation-community is one unit of the total world community of Third World and oppressed people. Asians in Amerika, as people of color, share with other Third World people here and abroad a common enemy: this Sexist, Racist, Capitalist-Imperialist System.

We find that at this stage in world history, White Racism has become so integrally meshed with the actual development of the capitalist-imperialist system that the people who are facing the most acute class oppression in the world today are people of color. As a result, the primary class contradiction on the world wide scale is that between the imperialist system, led by the US, and the national liberation forces in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Within the US, within the imperialist mother country, we see then, that our relatively comfortable existence here (in terms of material environment: cars, TVs, electricity) is built on the rip off of the wealth and resources of Third World countries and the suppression and subjugation of Third World peoples.

And yet, in further analyzing our situation as Asians and Third World people here in the US, it is important for us to see how this S,R,C,I system affects us here and the price we have to pay for living in white racist Amerika (in terms of cultural genocide, powerlessness, alienation). We find that most Third World people in this country are still subject to overtly unequal opportunities in income, housing, and education; face family breakdown because of inhumane institutions such as welfare and prisons; and have their communities virtually occupied by the police. Although the level of material oppression faced by many Asians in this country is qualitatively less acute than that of other Third World people, we must remember that a sizable number of our people are also materially oppressed--the poor Isseis,

recent immigrants from Hong Kong, Filipino farm laborers, war brides, prisoners, the handicapped. We have to keep in mind that Asians as well as other Third World people still go to schools that do not teach us the dynamic input we had in building Amerika; our young people are still diving off of "ghetto drugs" that are manufactured for profit by huge drug corporations; young men of color, denied meaningful employment and opportunity here, are still drafted into the army and sent to Vietnam and other Third World countries to fight their brothers and sisters.

Third World people in Amerika must stop "fighting each other for the crumbs" (conflicts between Black and Asian high school youth, conflicts over funding, jobs, admittance into universities, etc.) and UNITE TO LEAD THE STRUGGLE, along with their brothers and sisters around the world, to defeat the US Capitalist-Imperialist system...and to build together the foundation for a Socialist-Communist system in Amerika: a society based on cooperation rather than competition; where the ownership of the means of production (factories, land, raw materials, etc.) is public rather than private; where basic human needs: food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education are rights rather than privileges; where human worth is valued more than material gain; and where there is self determination and self reliance for all people of color.

If we, Asian-Americans are to be a powerful and reliable ally of the leading force of the revolution in North Amerika: the Black Liberation struggle, the primary task for us Asian American revolutionaries is not to struggle with the anti-black racism among our own people (though we must take this as a priority), but to create a movement capable of drawing hundreds of thousands of masses in our community to grasp the need, and the power, to fight against the common oppressor side by side with the black people. We render them real support by the objective damage we do to the ruling class, and the anti-imperialist power-base we build in our community; for the racism of the Asian Americans towards the blacks and chicanos is not the primary contradiction facing them. And in order for all of us as Third World people to come together in strength, we will all need a historically organic ground of our own to stand on, and to fight from and our own sense of cultural and spiritual energy which we can gain from building our respective nation-community.

INTERNATIONALISM & COMMUNITY: INTERDEPENDENCY

With a common enemy and a common goal, the struggles of Third World people within the US and the struggles of Third World people around the world are INTERDEPENDENT parts of the SAME struggle--the struggles of the Asian nation-community are not separate from the struggles of the Vietnamese, Latin Americans, Africans.

The national liberation struggles going on all over the world directly strengthen and support our struggle here by kicking the US out of Third World countries which formerly provided raw materials, markets, and labor essential for the maintenance of this technological, industrialized, capitalist-imperialist system. The US, no longer able to rip off the wealth and resources of these Third World countries will fall from its present level of economic status...a fall which will create the material conditions for socialist revolution by clearly exposing and sharpening the contradictions between the capitalist oppressors (who own most of the wealth in this country) and the vast majority of the workers.

The courageous national liberation struggles of the peoples of Vietnam, Mozambique, Argentina, etc. have shown us that the unity and strength of people around the principles of self-determination, human dignity, and liberation CAN WIN VICTORIES against the cruelest, most massive military machine in man's history...a lesson which gives us more energy and sense of power to intensify our struggles here in Amerika.

Likewise, a strong fighting movement here which will fight not only on local issues but international issues as well will lend real support for people's struggles abroad by weakening the imperialist power base from within.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITED FRONT...REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE IN AMERIKA

We need each other for survival and victory, but we also realize that revolutions within each particular country stem from people within that country. fighting for their own freedom. In other words, even if the Vietnamese and other Third World people do win their freedom, there is no guarantee that we will win our freedom and build socialism in this country unless we ourselves make it happen here. People really only continue to fight when they realize and feel their own oppression in their own particular conditions.

If the Atticas and Vietnams are to be grasped as critical issues by the masses of the Asians in Amerika, it's not enough for the cadres to have an internationalist outlook; we must have a movement with a theory and analysis that links up concretely the Atticas and Vietnams with the specific contradictions that our people live day-to-day; a movement that reflects the historical experience and present reality of our people; that sees the most materially oppressed segments of our community as the foundation of our organizing efforts, so that we do not slide into politics centered around petty-bourgeois lifestyle or "my liberation" isolated from the survival of the community and the liberation of all the oppressed peoples.

On the Role of the White Working Class and White Revolutionary Movement

Although we recognize that at some future point in the revolutionary struggle, it will be necessary to form an Anti-Imperialist United Front made up of Blacks, Latinos, Red people, Asians, and progressive Whites--we feel that in order for it to be a principled alliance, the white revolutionary movement in Amerika will have to righteously deal with white racism within their own ranks (which manifests itself in tokenism and paternalism toward Third World people); 2) their identity rooted in White Western culture and white skin privilege in Amerika, and 3) the primary leadership role of Third World people in this country and around the world in the revolutionary struggle.

The faster we are able to move to a pan-asian and then to the third world forms as primary forms of organizing, the better it will be for the cause of all the oppressed people involved. The more we can maximize a pan-asian and third world kinds of joint actions and individual programs and alliances at each stage of this transitional process, including the present period, the faster we will be able to make this transition. But all our progress to higher, wider forms must be organic and real, firmly based on an objective assessment of the real differences that do exist, and not on wishful, mechanical idealism which confuses the desirable goal with the present reality out of which the goal has to be forged, the end-product with the necessary concrete steps to realize that end.