

**PRINCIPLES  
OF  
LIBERATION SUPPORT  
MOVEMENTS  
ANTI-IMPERIALIST  
WORK**

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*INTERNATIONAL LIBERATION SERIES # 3*

The following Statement of Principles was presented by LSM Information Center Director, Don Barnett at the 1972 Easter Conference of European support groups together with African liberation movement representatives, held in Lund, Sweden, April 1-3.

The Statement was also translated into Italian and read at the Conference of the Movement for Liberation and Development in the Third World held in Milan, April 8 and 9, 1972.

The Appendix contains a resume of LSM's activities over the past 15 month period, from January 1971 to April 1972.

*The Liberation Support Movement, to the best of our ability to make it so, is a political organization whose understanding and practice flow from a Marxist-Leninist class analysis of contemporary imperialism. We believe, along with Marx and Lenin, that the character and scope of a social system must be empirically determined on the basis of existing techniques and relations of production and exchange. The division of labor, resting on a given technological base and according to which the different yet interdependent aspects of a production/exchange system are integrated, determines the geographic extent, population and class composition of any particular society.*

*A wide array of empirical data supports the proposition that contemporary capitalist relations of production and exchange delineate a society which is international in extent, covering vast areas of the earth's surface, and comprised of numerous unevenly developed and differentially privileged countries, nations, peoples and classes. This social system, the imperialist system, is the determinant society in which we live. The international division of labor which has developed over the past five centuries on the basis of capitalist property relations and an expanding industrial technology is the major determinant of the class, national and ideological forces and contradictions which characterize modern imperialist society.*

*In what we might call the "proletarian nations" or countryside of the imperialist system, there exist super-exploited and oppressed peoples and revolutionary classes - the latter fact being attested to by some sixty-five revolutions, at various stages of development, currently underway along the several fronts of anti-imperialist armed struggle in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Since their violent incorporation within an expanding imperialist system, the masses in these subjugated nations have suffered what can be called "forced retardation", both in the development of their productive capacity (technology and technological skills) and in the growth of historically acquired needs and their means of fulfillment. In brief, not only have their historically determined "minimal subsistence needs" been severely restricted by the imperialist process (and in several cases depressed to*

and below the minimal biologically determined level), thus reducing the exchange value of their labor power, but they have become increasingly less able to satisfy even this dwarfed set of needs within an imperialist system characterized by an oligopolistic concentration of capital and a glutted and ever-expanding "labor-reserve army" in the countryside.

While there has occurred an increasing concentration of capital and productive capacity in what we might call the "bourgeois nations" or metropolitan centers of imperialist society, the system's poor have indeed become poorer - both in absolute terms and in relation to their affluent metropolitan "cousins". Viewed in non-national terms, as a "proletarian" class within imperialist society, it is this increasingly numerous population of super-exploited peasants and workers in the countryside which stands in irreconcilably antagonistic relation to the ruling industrial/financial corporate bourgeoisie of the rich capitalist countries. Since World War I, and especially since World War II, this principal contradiction within imperialist society has become, despite zig-zags and momentary setbacks, increasingly sharp and violent. There has been a growth of internationalist collaboration among revolutionary classes and movements in the countryside, as reflected in such organizations as OSPAAAL and CONCP (a class-in-itself become a class-for-itself through such organized bodies and the development of a common consciousness and praxis), and progress is being made toward a scientific and widely shared theoretical understanding of imperialist society and its relation to such phenomena as progressive and reactionary forms and aspects of nationalism, uneven development among emergent and contemporary socialist countries, and the necessity of building a post-capitalist social formation along international socialist lines based upon the scientific utilization of world resources in the interest of man and the fashioning of non-exploitative and reciprocal relations of production and exchange among the world's peoples.

The "rich nations", the industrialized capitalist countries of Europe, North America and Asia (Japan), contain at present no revolutionary classes. Though individual members of particular classes (who must be considered as

"class eccentrics"), most commonly petty bourgeois intellectuals, endeavour and in some cases succeed in defecting from their class and throwing in their lot with revolutionary peasants and workers in the countryside, there exist no classes or significant strata (defined in terms of their role in the productive process) whose material interests would at this time be directly and effectively served by revolutionary armed struggle against the bourgeois state apparatus. We believe that a revolutionary ideology can only seize the imagination and galvanize the practice of a class whose objective and historically produced material interests are thereby served. Material conditions set definite limits on the range and qualitative nature of ideologies toward which any particular class will be receptive and according to which its praxis can be organized and directed.

The super-profits historically derived by metropolitan ruling classes through the forceful imposition of a highly exploitative imperialist division of labor upon the colonized and neocolonized peoples, from the early days of looting and the slave-trade to the modern monopoly controlled terms-of-trade inequities, have enabled these ruling classes to shape and co-opt increasingly large metropolitan "labor aristocracies". In fact, from the emergence of a "bourgeois proletariat" noted by Engels in the England of 1858, to the "social chauvinists" of the "bourgeois labor movement" inveighed against by Lenin in the Europe of 1916 (which "represent a stratum, or groups, or sections of the working class which objectively have been bribed by the bourgeoisie - by better wages, positions of honour, etc. - and which help their bourgeoisie to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and to fight for the division of the capitalist spoils"), we have arrived at a condition within the metropolitan centers described by Oscar Lange and later by Paul Baran (1957) as a form of "people's imperialism", wherein there has evolved "a far-reaching harmony between the interests of monopolistic business on the one side and those of the underlying (metropolitan) population on the other".

In short, one aspect of the uneven development of nations and peoples within the imperializing process is the growth in the metropolitan centers of objectively corrupted and bribed nationwide labor aristocracies and,

through the formation of various kinds of state and local "welfare" institutions granting stipends in both cash and kind, a veritable lumpen middle class of moderately affluent non-producers. Engels, in describing the condition of the English working class in 1844, observed that "Every workingman, even the best, is . . . constantly exposed to loss of work and food, that is to death by starvation . . ." In the metropoles of today, only small pockets within the population face this harsh alternative of "Work or starve!" For the vast majority the dictum now reads: "Work or collect welfare!" The conditions which Engels, Marx and others described among the working class of 19th Century Europe have, in the period of modern imperialist development, been "exported" to the countryside.

To say this, however, is not to say that there exist at present no potentially progressive strata or elements in the metropolitan centers. By "progressive" in this context we refer to those sectors of the metropolitan population which, in serving and satisfying some of their non-revolutionary interests and acquired needs, can be and sometimes are moved to act in ways which objectively advance the practice and interests of revolutionary classes in motion within imperialist society. These sectors can and should be mobilized to contribute material and propagandistic support for genuine liberation movements and revolutionary classes in the countryside.

Again, we believe that certain actions - legal and illegal, peaceful and violent - can be carried out in the metropolitan centers which weaken (however slightly in the present stage) the power of the corporate ruling class and its military apparatus. Particular local tactics must, of course, be worked out by revolutionary groups in the light of concrete conditions prevailing in each metropolitan area.

Given the above position, LSM's principles of anti-imperialist work can be summarized as follows:

- (1) To accelerate, through various concrete forms of material support, political education and ideological struggle, that revolutionary process whereby vanguard subjugated classes and peoples in the countryside are

*fighting their way out of the imperialist system and contributing significantly to the emergence of post-capitalist socialist internationalism;*

(2) *To unceasingly strive to achieve an international socialist content and direction to the various struggles emerging within the metropolitan centers as contradictions there sharpen due to revolutionary successes in the countryside and the resulting decline in imperialist super-profits and ruling-class capacity to sustain "peoples imperialism";*

(3) *To work toward the formation of revolutionary internationalist structures and forms of effective collaboration across national lines, and at the same time fight against those tendencies which, if not checked, might well lead to a post-capitalist world of unevenly developed, internally stratified and competitive (if not warring) "socialist" countries.*

APPENDIX

**RESUME OF LIBERATION SUPPORT MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

*January 1971 - April 1972*

*During 1971 LSM continued to develop its support programs and to expand the production and distribution of Information Center publications and other materials.*

*Between January and July, 1971, three shipments (6 tons) of clothing, technical books, uniforms and \$10,000 worth of medicines and medical supplies were sent to the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). These goods were shipped to Dar es Salaam, then trucked by MPLA militants first to Lusaka, Zambia and then to the border areas for transport into liberated Angola by MPLA carriers. More recently, in March 1972, two additional shipments of clothing, tents and medicines left Vancouver and San Francisco for MPLA.*

*In February of last year we completed the printing of a first-aid manual and a medical text, in Portuguese, for the MPLA Medical Aid Services (SAM) to be used in Angola. These were air freighted to Lusaka for use in SAM courses beginning March 1971. Major financial contributors to this project, in addition to LSM, were the Angolan Medical Committee (Holland), the United Church of Canada and the Fraser Group of Vancouver. These texts were also offered to the Portuguese-speaking Mozambican, Guinean and Brazilian Liberation forces. The African Party for the Independence of Guiné and Cape Verde (PAIGC) requested a number of copies of these medical books, which were sent in January 1972 along with fifty LSM 1972 Liberation Calendars.*

*In the Spring of 1971, LSM expanded its practice to include agitational programs to expose the role of NATO countries in assisting Portugal's colonial wars. We also attacked the involvement of multinational corporations in colonies and neocolonies where national liberation struggles are taking place. Corporate targets included DOW Chemical (U.S.) a producer of chemical defoliants used in Angola and Indochina; ALCAN (Canada), a participant in*

the Caboia Bassa dam project in Mozambique;\* and Gulf Oil (U.S.), with large operations in Angola, Venezuela and many other oppressed nations. (Gulf threatened to take legal action against LSM for slander, but failed to follow through with its threats).

In response to Portugal's use of chemical defoliants - which is designed to cause starvation in the liberated regions and thus weaken the physical and moral strength of the civilian population and revolutionary forces, a "Food for Guerrillas" campaign was launched in July and by March 1972 we had sent MPLA and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) a ton of concentrated multi-purpose food in 5 pound containers.

Over the past 9 months the Information Center significantly increased its publication of pamphlets dealing with the armed struggles in the "countryside" of the Empire, and in June 1971 began the reprinting for North American distribution of Angola In Arms, Mozambique Revolution and PAIGC Actualités, the official organs of MPLA, FRELIMO and PAIGC. The latter is translated from the French and published quarterly. PAIGC has requested copies of this English edition to distribute at European conferences, etc., and we air freight 500 copies of each issue to Conakry.

In August 1971 we attended a conference of anti-imperialist groups and helped to found the North American Anti-imperialist Coalition (NAAIC). Several groups in the Coalition agreed to help LSM supply MPLA with printshop equipment. The Information Center is contributing proceeds from the sale of its 1972 Liberation Calendar to advance this project. The Calendar contains photographs and important dates from the revolutionary struggles in Africa. Both the dates and photos were chosen with the fraternal assistance of the liberation movements.

In October, MPLA/SAM requested that we reprint 2,500 copies of a pamphlet we had published for them in 1970, entitled: Medical Assistance Services, and add 14 pages on "SAM NEEDS FOR 1972". This publication documents Portu-

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\* See LSM's publication: "Getting Hip to Imperialism: Alcan, Jamaica and Caboia Bassa".

gal's use of chemical defoliants and is used by SAM in soliciting aid for its medical programs. Their list of needs includes a plan for the construction and equipping of three dispensaries on the eastern front. The pamphlet was completed in December and 800 have been sent by air to SAM. The remainder will be air shipped as soon as funds become available.

In January 1972 we began cadre-training classes within the Information Center in Vancouver. Eight members are gaining language and technical skills for work in the "countryside" with the aim of gathering up-to-date photographs, interviews and other materials dealing with the liberation struggles, and also of becoming more effective in mobilizing broader support within the "metropole".

LSM is working to establish fruitful forms of collaboration with other organizations, and progress in this area has already been made. In addition to the above-mentioned contributions to LSM projects, the Madison Area Committee on Southern Africa (MACSA) sent us \$500 for the purchase of antibiotics for MPLA. With this purchase we were able to obtain additional free drugs worth some \$3,000, and on 23 March 1972, 520 pounds of medicines (mostly Tetracycline) were air freighted to MPLA and FRELIMO. Further concrete collaborative relationships are being worked out with the Communist Working Circle (KAF/KUF) in Denmark. We hope, through such collaboration, to build a genuinely international organization in the not too distant future.

Recently the Information Center put together an audio-visual program on revolution in the Portuguese colonies, consisting of two films, two I.C. tape-slide presentations, photos, maps, literature and movement publications. Two LSM members toured the US West Coast with the program for two weeks in March. From April through June the materials will be used by other NAAIC groups in the San Francisco, Midwest and East Coast areas. The films used are "Behind the Lines" (Contemporary Films, London 1971) and "Armed Struggle in Angola" (LSM, 1969).

We hope to use these and additional audio-visual materials widely in the coming months in order to mobilize

funds for material support, increase the number and expand the distribution of LSM publications and movement reprints, raise consciousness regarding the African liberation struggles among North Americans, and advance the Liberation Support Movement's internationalist theoretical position and strategy.

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