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"The phenomenon of women within the Revolution is a revolution within another revolution," Fidel said in December, 1966.

This special section of New Left Notes celebrates March 8, International Women's Day. The day commemorates a demonstration of socialist working-class women in New York City in 1908; the International Socialist Congress in 1910 declared March 8 a holiday of the world proletariat, in honor of women's struggles.

Students for a Democratic Society

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# SDS NEW LEFT NOTES

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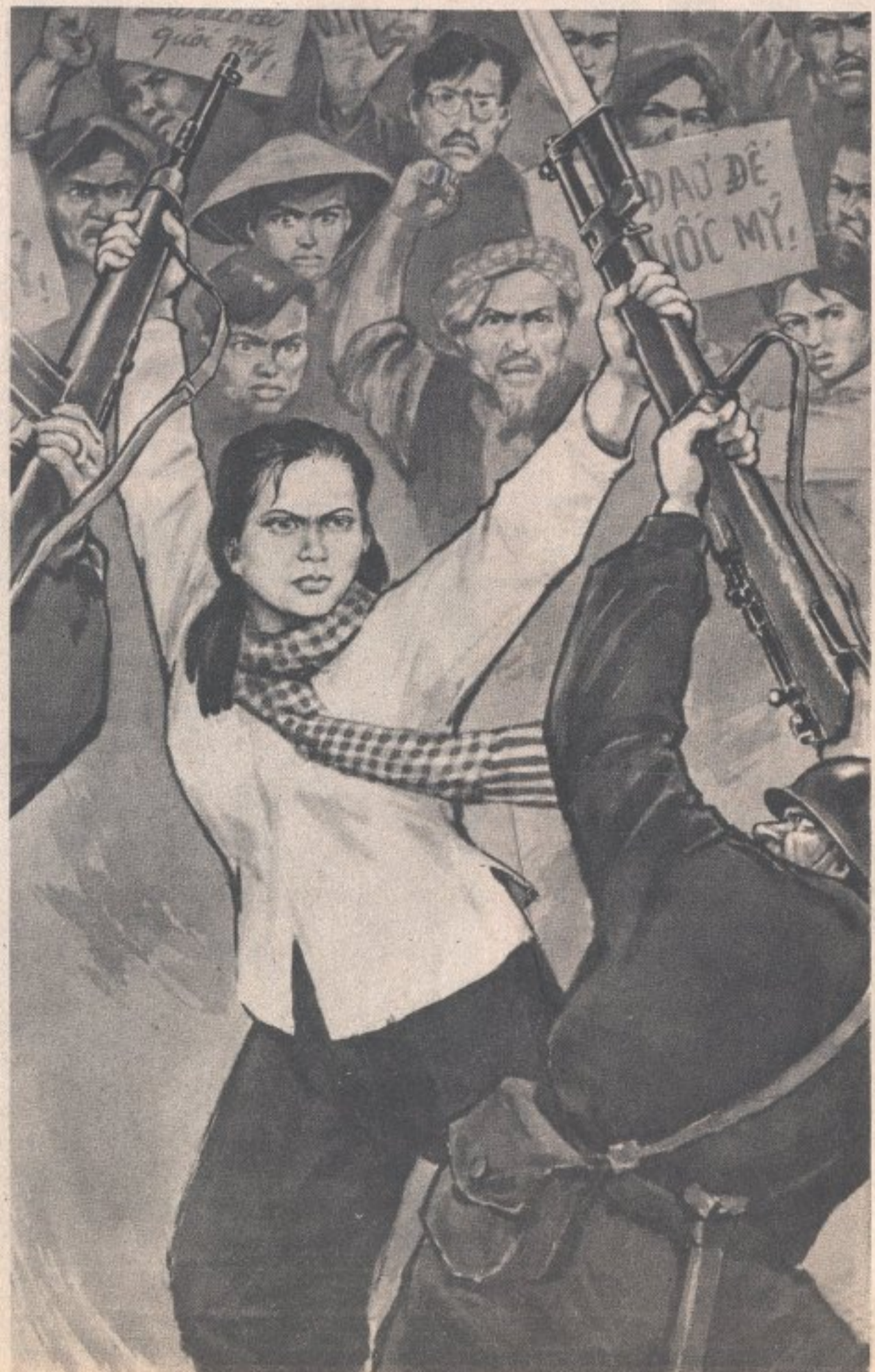
LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE

Special Issue

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



"The proletariat cannot achieve complete freedom, unless it achieves complete freedom for women." --Lenin



The Mud of Vietnam  
by Julius Lester

The mud of Vietnam is woman-thigh deep with back spent, for muddiness is next to godliness, woman-thigh deep in river mud at low tide, woman-hands scooping mud to build new dikes and repair bombed ones: woman-thigh deep in the fields of Hung Yen province carving slabs of mud that will be cut to brick size and baked in kilns... woman-thigh high in water, feet deep in the mud, planting rice—(with a quick turn of the wrist green stocks are thrust into the mud): woman-thigh high midst the delicate rice hair (tied loosely at the back of the head) falling below the hips and brushing the tops of the green rice stocks.

Their woman-ness seems to grow from the mud of Vietnam where they stand, woman-thigh high, woman-thigh deep.

I would like to make love

woman-thigh high woman-thigh deep

in the mud of Vietnam.



# Women's struggle in U.S. history

by Marilyn Katz

"There has not been a single great movement of the oppressed in history in which working women have not played a part. Working women, who are the most oppressed of the oppressed, have never stood aloof and could not stand aloof from the great march of emancipation."

J. Stalin

American women have struggled against their own oppression and against the oppression of all working people throughout U.S. history. Their struggles have always been integrally related to the black liberation and labor struggles.

As the colonies developed economically they developed a rigid class structure based on the enslavement of blacks and the iron control of all other sectors of available labor.

This exploitation and control was of course the worst for black women. For over two hundred years, traders had provided black labor for Southern cotton and tobacco plantations and large profits for the New York, London, Boston, and Liverpool banks. These

women were not only exploited as workers, but specifically as a race and sex as well. In the field they picked cotton for their owners' profit; in the house they were made breeders of children to be sold or put to work in the fields, and made sources of sexual pleasure for their enslavers.

For white women, this early stage of capitalism made them legal property of first their fathers, then their husbands. They had no form of legal existence outside their marriage. As a sex they were denied the right to control any earnings they received, denied the right to sign contracts, denied the right to sue for divorce, and denied the right to participate in any of the church or civil governing procedures of the colonies.

This legal, social, political, and economic enslavement was of course reinforced and legitimized by the Church. It taught that women's subjugated role was based on a physical and mental limitation which arose from the original sin of Eve.

The question of legal status for women was first raised in the Puritan theocracy of Boston. Anne Hutchinson claimed that she had a right to voice her political

and theological opinion in church affairs and doctrines and to participate in the political life of the community governed by the male hierarchy of the Church. All men and women, she said, could govern themselves, because all had the ability to communicate with God. The political implications of her stand resulted in her banishment from Boston on charges of heresy and treason.

### Developing Politics

Women took unified political action during the Revolutionary War years. They organized anti-tee leagues and boycotts of all English goods, stopped the hoarding of goods by profiteers by expropriating property, and took part in the production of goods necessary for the war.

The war, however, did not change their legal, political, or economic status. They were isolated and exploited in their homes and would not be able to act collectively until the industrial development and Western expansion of American capitalism pulled many of them out of their homes and into the factories.

The rise of spinning and weaving as profitable industries, through the

development of the power loom and the expansion of the country with the Louisiana Purchase produced a greater demand for labor. Women were being pulled into the labor force rapidly as textile workers and teachers. This necessitated their being treated as free labor, a need in contradiction to their existing legal status as the slave property of their husbands. At the same time, the general contradiction between the free labor of the North and the slave labor of the South was sharpening, aiming the country toward the Civil War. The conjunction of these two battles of the slave against the free produced a movement for women's right in which the issue of black freedom was a critical focus.

### Collective Action

The abolitionist movement brought women into the struggle against slavery, and in the process gave them the impetus to fight for their own freedom. Women's activity in the movement taught them the necessity for collective action, and won for them the right to speak in public. More importantly, in confronting and countering the male

(continued on back page)

# Women's liberation in revolutionary China

(This is an excerpt from William Hinton's book, Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966). The selection comes from Chapter 16, "Half of China." Hinton spent six months in 1948 in China, in Long Bow Village, three years after the village had been liberated by the Red Army from the Japanese occupying forces. His book is an exciting history of the Chinese Revolution and its effect on one village, specifically around the question of land reform.)

While the dramatic, violent, and often macabre scenes of the "settlement of accounts" and the exuberant, lively, often humorous incidents of the "distribution of the fruits" unfolded like the intricate plot of some day-long Chinese opera, another struggle began whose object was the liberation of women from the oppression of their husbands and from domestic seclusion.

A few poor peasant women in Long Bow, the wives of leading revolutionary cadres, early organized a Women's Association where brave wives and daughters-in-law, untrammelled by the presence of their menfolk, could voice their own bitterness against their traitors, encourage their poor sisters to do likewise, and thus eventually bring to the village-wide gatherings the strength of "half of China," as the more enlightened women, very much in earnest, liked to call themselves. By "speaking pains to recall pains," the women found that they had as many if not more grievances than the men, and that once given a chance to speak in public they were as good at it as their fathers and husbands, as had

been proven by Chin Mao's mother in that first district-wide anti-traitor meeting.

But the women found as they organized among themselves, attended meetings and entered into public life, that they met more and more opposition from the men, particularly from the men of their own households, most of whom regarded any activity by wives or daughters-in-law outside the home as "steps leading directly to adultery." Family heads, having paid sound grain for their women, regarded them as their private property, expected them to work hard, bear children, serve their fathers, husbands, and mothers-in-law, and speak only when spoken to. In this atmosphere the activities of the Women's Association created a domestic crisis in many a family. Not only did the husbands object to their wives going out; the mothers-in-law and fathers-in-law objected to it even more strenuously. Many young wives who nevertheless insisted on going to meetings were badly beaten when they got home.

Among those who were beaten was poor peasant Man-ts'ang's wife. When she came home from a Women's Association meeting, her husband beat her as a matter of course, shouting, "I'll teach you to stay home. I'll mend your rascal ways." But Man-ts'ang's wife surprised her lord and master. Instead of staying home thereafter as a dutiful chattel, she went the very next day to the secretary of the Women's Association, militiaman Ta-hung's wife, and registered a complaint against her husband. After a discussion with the members of the executive committee, the secretary called a meeting of the women of the whole village. At least a third, perhaps

even half of them, showed up. In front of this unprecedented gathering of determined women a demand was made that Man-ts'ang explain his actions. Man-ts'ang, arrogant and unbowed, readily complied. He said that he beat his wife because she went to meetings, and "the only reason women go to meetings is to gain a free hand for flirtation and seduction."

### Fighting Back

This remark aroused a furious protest from the women assembled before him. Words soon led to deeds. They rushed at him from all sides, knocked him down, kicked him, tore his clothes, scratched his face, pulled his hair, and pummelled him until he could no longer breathe.

"Beat her, will you? Beat her and slander us all, will you? Well, rape your mother. Maybe this will teach you."

"Stop, I'll never beat her again," gasped the panic-stricken husband who was on the verge of fainting under their blows.

They stopped, let him up, and sent him home with a warning—let him so much as lay a finger on his wife again and he would receive more of the same "cure."

From that day onward Man-ts'ang never dared beat his wife and from that day onward his wife became known to the whole village by her maiden name, Ch'eng Ai-lin, instead of simply by the title of Man-ts'ang's wife, as had been the custom since time began.

A few similar incidents, one of which resulted in an errant husband spending two days in the village lockup, soon taught the poor peasant men to be more circumspect in their treatment of their wives, even if it did not teach them to appreciate women in public life any more than they had before.

The institution of wife beating was, of course, not ended in a few weeks by such means. But having once shown their power the women did not have to beat every man in order to make progress on this question. Thereafter, a serious talk with a strong-armed husband was often enough to make him change his ways, at least for the time being.

### Equality for Women

When asked if, as a result of these actions, women had yet won equality, one of the leaders of the Association said, "No, not yet. Things are a little better than before. Still, there are beating cases and most men still despise women's words and think women are no use. We have to struggle for a long time to win equality. When we have land of our own it will help a lot. In the past men always said, 'You depend on me for a living. You just stay home and eat the things I earn.' But after women get their share they can say, 'I got this grain from my own land and I can live without you by my own labor.' When it comes to labor on the land, women can work just as hard as men even if they are weaker. They can do everything except plowing. They can even hoe if they can't hoe so fast. But they cannot drive carts. Well, even this they can do, but some of the animals are pretty hard to handle."

It was not long before the Women's Association in some parts of the country set up plowing classes for women, and the fame of those who mastered



—photo by Rewi Alley

agricultural labor spread far and wide. A widow in Shen Settlement startled everyone with her strength and skill. She could do everything a man could do and more. She could even push a loaded wheelbarrow on the highway and earn \$12 a day, Border Region currency, transporting bricks. She was so skilled at planting that in the spring all the peasants in Shen Settlement wanted her, and no one else, to plant their millet.

In another village, only five miles from Long Bow, a woman was elected as village head.

Women such as these were rare, but as news of their exploits spread, others were greatly encouraged.

### Revolutionary Power of Women

It would be very one-sided to imply that the only goal of the Women's Association was equality for women. Without the successful transformation of society, without the completion of land reform, without a victorious defense of the Liberated Areas against the probing attacks of the Nationalist armies, it was impossible to talk of liberation for women. Many women realized this as if by intuition, and they made the Women's Association an instrument for mobilizing the power of women behind the revolution in all its aspects—behind the "settling of accounts," behind the drive for production, and behind the defense effort. Through the Association, classes were organized for literacy and for the study of politics, cotton loans were made to stimulate spinning and weaving, the women were brought together to make uniforms and shoes for the soldiers, and wives and mothers were urged to encourage their husbands, sons, and brothers to enlist in the army.

All of these activities were intimately linked up with the struggle for equality, with the demand on the part of women that they should no longer be treated as chattels. If this demand alarmed the men, the all-out support which the women gave to over-all revolutionary goals disarmed them and won from them a grudging admiration. In their hearts they had to admit that they could not win without the help of "half of China."

# Facts of exploitation

Exploitation and oppression of women is not simply that of a consumer, or a psychologically-repressed group. The statistics below illustrate the definite economic subjugation of working women in the United States.

In 1966, 39 out of every 100 women over 14 years old was in the labor force, accounting for 27.8 million or 36% of all workers. These figures have increased steadily since 1946. More than one out of three married women is in the labor force; of these, 60% are also mothers.

The median wages for year-round full-time employed women workers was \$3,923, only 60% that of men (\$6,375). See Background Facts on Women Workers in the United States, U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, May, 1967.

Women comprise 75% of all workers in the textile and garment industry. New York City's garment trade employs 40,150 women, whose median wage in 1963 was \$2.24 an hour, compared to men's \$3.27 an hour. In Philadelphia, the garment industry pays women a median wage of \$1.87 an hour; in Dallas, the wages are \$1.47. Many Puerto Rican and black women working in this industry earn as little as \$45 a week. In non-union shops they work overtime for no extra pay, not knowing that they are entitled to overtime pay and provisions of the minimum wage laws.

Furthermore, many garment shops are moving south to take advantage of mass unemployment and the almost-non-existent minimum wage laws and trade unions. For example, Levi Strauss and Co. moved to Blue Ridge, Georgia, in 1960. Within seven years, it had sifted through 3,800 employees to select 560 highly-skilled workers, 500 of them women. Workers struck in 1967 for better job conditions, but pay was also a grievance. One woman, on the job for six years, reported her wages at \$1,531 a year, for a 54-hour week.

In clerical jobs, women's wages are only two-thirds those of men. In addition, as new office machines are introduced, the percentage of women office workers is declining.

The average pay for black working women is \$2,642 a year. The largest group of black women workers is found in domestic service: some 30% work here, compared to 5.6% of white women workers in this field. The median domestic service income for these women is \$1,200 a year.

The 1968 Manpower Report shows that in families receiving ADC funds (Aid to Dependent Children), 40% of the mothers in black families were working, compared to 26% of the mothers in white families.

## Breakdown of Occupation and Incomes by Sex, 1960

Occupation	Male		Female	
	Number in Thousands	\$ per Year	Number in Thousands	\$ per Year
Professional*	4,542	6,619	2,792	3,625
Managerial*	4,695	6,664	794	3,355
Clerical	3,120	4,785	6,497	3,017
Sales	3,054	4,987	1,746	1,498
Craft*	8,972	5,240	268	2,927
Operative	9,223	4,299	3,612	2,319
Household*	65	1,078	1,759	684
Service*	2,745	3,310	3,020	1,385
Farm*	1,289	1,066	269	602
Laborer*	3,404	2,948	125	1,872

\* Professional: professional and technical; Managerial: managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm; Craft: craftsmen and foremen; Household: private household employees; Service: except private house; Farm: farm laborers and foremen; Laborer: except farm and mine.

## Women Employees in Selected Industries in 1966

Industry	Women in Thousands	Women as % of Total	Hourly Wages
Retail Trade	4,380	44	1.91
Durable Manufacture	2,303	20	2.89
Non-durable Manufacture	3,314	39	2.45
Finance, Real Estate	1,563	50	2.48
Transportation, Utilities	800	19	NA*
Wholesale Trade	805	23	2.13
Mining	34	5	3.05

\* NA: not available.



# Toward a revolutionary women's movement

by Bernardine Dohrn  
Inter-Organizational Secretary

Women radicals are split; there are the politicians (those women who are full time movement organizers, who are conscious of the oppression of women who raise the question as part of their work, and help other movement women to that consciousness, and who discount the revolutionary potential of a women's movement) and there are the "professional women" (those women who are full time women, who feel the priority of developing a women's liberation movement, often separatist, and who are generally cynical about the movement, any ideology, and SDS).

At the same time, women's liberation groups are dividing and multiplying, generally in isolation not only from men but from the rest of the movement. Popular articles on the women's movement, such as the NY Times Magazine horror, promote a pop personality, individualistic view of the

struggle and are based on an unstated white middle class consciousness and perspective.

Most of the existing women's groups are mired. Their legitimate function has been to turn on "new" women to understanding the collective oppression of women, to studying its economic and social basis, and to identifying the ramifications of that oppressed status. Their program is only a cycle which produces more women's groups, mostly devoted to a personal liberation/therapy function and promises of study which are an evasion of practice.

Most of the women's groups are bourgeois, unconscious or unconcerned with class struggle and the exploitation of working class women, and chauvinists concerning the oppression of black and brown women. They practice a false communalism, reminiscent of the early days of SDS p.d. (participatory democracy), where struggle is not allowed under the guise of "respect for

one another" and anti-authoritarianism.

In addition to these woes, the tendency represented by the separatists, the men-haters, the fanatical feminists share many of the reactionary dangers of cultural nationalism. These women begin with the correct assumption that people do not obtain their liberation except through struggle. They convincingly show how the woman question has always been submerged in favor of "more important issues." But their direction leads to a middle class single issue movement—and this at a time when the black liberation movement is polarizing the country, when national wars of liberation are waging the most advanced assaults on U.S. imperialism, when the growth of the movement is at a critical stage.

Instead of integrating (not submerging) the struggles of women into the broader revolutionary movement, these women are flailing at their own middle class images. To focus only on sexual

exploitation and the tyranny of consumption does not develop a mass understanding of the causes of oppression, and it does not accurately point at the enemy.

## Class Base

A revolutionary women's movement must be politically based on the most oppressed sectors—black, brown and white working-class women. This does not mean that movement women are not a significant part of that movement, or that we must wait until there is a working class women's movement to support. It does mean that we must be conscious of our perspective and the class interests which our demands represent. It means that our immediate job is to organize masses of women around the full scope of radical demands—including the destruction of male supremacy.

Until now, program has been discussed as if a demand must be found which in itself defines the nature of the oppression of women. This assumption—that we must organize women only around an issue which specifically fights their oppression as women—is wrong. Particularly given the student base in which we work. In addition, single issue movements, whether they be women's vote, the issue of abortions, or the anti-draft movement, are most easily cut off from the masses of people and directed into privileged, dead-end reforms. Everywhere around us there are concentrations of women: dorms, women's schools, education and home ec departments, high schools, jobs—women can be mobilized to fight against imperialism and racism.

## Institutionalized Subjugation

For example, it's easy to think of the many ways in which the subjugation of women is institutionalized in education departments and teachers' schools: low wages, male monopoly on advancement, women isolated from other adults to care for (be cops for) children. But to organize there without attacking the racist functions of education is counter-revolutionary—and it also obscures an understanding of the roots and functions of male supremacy. Similarly, there are many corporations, such as DuPont, which particularly exploit women in textile plants and through the garment industry. DuPont recruiters would be good agitational targets for women. But DuPont also happens to be one of the six largest international corporations (racist here and abroad) and the major manufacturer of munitions. Exposing all of the ways in which DuPont functions strengthens the general understanding of each of those "issues", for the issue is the destruction of capitalism.

When we actively start to organize women around the totality of their oppression—when we build struggles within institutions, which are related to other parts of the movement—then many of the current activities of women's groups will exist in a context which gives them purpose. Women's liberation groups can be study groups and a place to learn, with other women, how male chauvinism oppresses women. Guerrilla theatre actions will highlight ongoing education and program. And by organizing masses of radical women, we will be in a much stronger position to destroy male supremacy within the movement, and to build the basis for the future society.

## History

(continued from center pages)

supremacy within the abolitionist movement, the active women saw that the woman question had to be confronted and deal with explicitly. There was no other way for them to make themselves heard. They had to begin to develop an explicit ideology for women's rights, one which recognized clearly that their freedom could not be accomplished so long as slavery existed.

The two movements—to liberate black people and women—grew simultaneously in their fight against the exploitation of their labor and the special oppressions of women and black people.

Women of great courage and political skill emerged from the abolitionist movement. These included Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Susan Anthony, the Grimke sisters, and Lucretia Mott, who risked their lives many times to speak out against racism and the oppression in the North and South and who led in the exodus of black people from the South by the Underground Railroad.

In 1833, when the abolitionists met in Philadelphia, to form the American Anti-Slavery Society, women were allowed to sit in on the meeting but were not allowed to vote or join. The twenty women there, in response to this exclusion, started the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which by 1837 had spread cross-country into the National Female Anti-Slavery Society.

### Fighting Slavery

This society was led by Angelina and Sarah Grimke, two Southern abolitionists who fought for freedom for all people through the abolitionist struggles as well as in the early labor and women's rights struggles. They were attacked by the Southern racists and the Church, who wanted to defeat the anti-slavery movement as being un-Christian and un-womanly in their activities. They replied by linking up the issues of slavery of black people and oppression of women and the necessity to end both. On the one hand, they constantly fought the notion that women were inferior to men, and on the other hand they stressed the fact that women had to have political and social freedom in order to fight against slavery and all the increased exploitation that was manifesting itself as capitalism developed. Without the right to speak and organize, they would be by their inactivity supporting the continuation of slavery. The attempt to attack abolition through the women question was not fought by the men in the movement. They feared that defending the women's cause would be "divisive" and "injure" the cause, and begged the women to drop it.

This pattern of reactionaries trying to divide men and women in their fight against oppression was to occur over and over again. It impeded the development of a unified movement that could define the capitalist class as its enemy clearly, due to the acceptance by men and many times women of the doctrine of male supremacy.

(continued next week)



## Arab women fight

"It is not a war waged with an active army and reserves. Revolutionary war, as the Algerian people is waging it, is a total war in which the woman does not merely knit for or mourn the soldier. The Algerian woman is at the heart of the combat. Arrested, tortured, raped, shot down, she testifies to the violence of the occupier and to his inhumanity. As a nurse, a liaison agent, a fighter she bears witness to the depth and density of the struggle."  
—Fanon, Studies in a Dying Colonialism

The requirements of total war, of resistance to the occupier, are again transforming traditional relationships. Arab women guerrillas and masses of Arab women and young girls have been leading fighters in the Palestine liberation movement, Al-Fatah. In mass demonstrations and in sabotage, the women have been prominent, particularly in Israeli-occupied areas.

Three young Arab women were seized by Israeli forces as suspects in a roundup of terrorists in late January. They were tried by a military court in Gaza, and two—Fatma Murtadjar, 17, and Fatma Afamat, 24, were sentenced to two years each for being couriers between terrorist cells. The third woman, Nahala Hafez el Baiyed, 19, received three years for various counts, including collecting information.

After the trial, 4,000 high school girls in Gaza rioted in the main streets, barricading the streets, and stoning cars, including the car carrying Brig. Gen. Mordecai Gur, the military governor of the region. The girls tore down mud and stone walls outside their schools to throw pieces at the Israeli soldiers. The demonstrators were attacked by Israeli troops with nightsticks: 90 teenage girls were injured, 40 were hospitalized.

Four days later, thousands of Arab women staged sit-in strikes in Iraq,

Jordan, and Lebanon in support of Arab women and liberation fighters in Israeli-occupied territory. A week later in Ramallah, in Israeli-occupied Jordan, 200 girls sat in at the Ramallah Teacher Training School. Under banners of Arab commandos and Palestinian flags, they brandished pictures of refugees and the Palestinian people.

On February 19 came the commando attack on the El-Al airliner in Zurich, by four refugees of the '67 war. The woman commando Ammah Ahmed Dabbor fled Gaza after the war when her brother was killed by Israelis; she was a teacher in a refugee camp. Further, the first woman martyr of Al-Fatah, Shadia Abu Ghazali, returned to her home, now occupied Nablus, and as a member of the Palestine Liberation Movement organized demonstrations against the occupying forces, and was killed defending her nation.

This on the fifth year of the Palestinian movement, whose position is: "Our insistence on carrying arms until we liberate our land accompanies our belief in peace, which is threatened by the Zionist structure in league with imperialism and colonialism. Our armed revolution and our people's struggle will continue until victory."

### SUBSCRIBE TO NEW LEFT NOTES—JOIN SDS

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The Mud of Vietnam  
by Julius Lester

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# Women's struggle in

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This exploitation and control was of course the worst for black women. For over two hundred years, traders had provided black labor for Southern cotton and tobacco plantations and large profits for the New York, London, Boston, and Liverpool banks. These

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Among those who were beaten was poor peasant Man-ts'ang's wife. When she came home from a Women's Association meeting, her husband beat her as a matter of course, shouting, "I'll teach you to stay home. I'll mend your rascal ways." But Man-ts'ang's wife surprised her lord and master. Instead of staying home thereafter as a dutiful chattel, she went the very next day to the secretary of the Women's Association, militiaman Ta-hung's wife, and registered a complaint against her husband. After a discussion with the members of the executive committee, the secretary called a meeting of the women of the whole village. At least a third, perhaps

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Fighting I

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It was not long before th... in some parts of the countr... for women, and the fame...



# Struggle in U.S. history

re not only exploited as specifically as a race and class. In the field they picked their owners' profit; in the home they were made breeders of slaves to be sold or put to work in the home and made sources of sexual pleasure for their enslavers.

women, this early stage of development made them legal property of their fathers, then their husbands. They had no form of legal rights outside their marriage. As women were denied the right to own property, they were denied the right to sue for divorce, and denied the right to participate in any of the legal governing procedures of the state.

social, political, and economic enslavement was of course legitimized by the religion that women's subjugated status was based on a physical and mental condition which arose from the original sin.

on of legal status for women was used in the Puritan theocracy. Anne Hutchinson claimed that she had the right to voice her political

and theological opinion in church affairs and doctrines and to participate in the political life of the community governed by the male hierarchy of the Church. All men and women, she said, could govern themselves, because all had the ability to communicate with God. The political implications of her stand resulted in her banishment from Boston on charges of heresy and treason.

## Developing Politics

Women took unified political action during the Revolutionary War years. They organized anti-tea leagues and boycotts of all English goods, stopped the hoarding of goods by profiteers by expropriating property, and took part in the production of goods necessary for the war.

The war, however, did not change their legal, political, or economic status. They were isolated and exploited in their homes and would not be able to act collectively until the industrial development and Western expansion of American capitalism pulled many of them out of their homes and into the factories.

The rise of spinning and weaving as profitable industries, through the

development of the power loom and the expansion of the country with the Louisiana Purchase produced a greater demand for labor. Women were being pulled into the labor force rapidly as textile workers and teachers. This necessitated their being treated as free labor, a need in contradiction to their existing legal status as the slave property of their husbands. At the same time, the general contradiction between the free labor of the North and the slave labor of the South was sharpening, aiming the country toward the Civil War. The conjunction of these two battles of the slave against the free produced a movement for women's right in which the issue of black freedom was a critical focus.

## Collective Action

The abolitionist movement brought women into the struggle against slavery, and in the process gave them the impetus to fight for their own freedom. Women's activity in the movement taught them the necessity for collective action, and won for them the right to speak in public. More importantly, in confronting and countering the male

(continued on back page)

# Revolutionary China

even half of them, showed up. In front of this unprecedented gathering of determined women a demand was made that Man-ts'ang explain his actions. Man-ts'ang, arrogant and unbowed, readily complied. He said that he beat his wife because she went to meetings, and "the only reason women go to meetings is to gain a free hand for flirtation and seduction."

## Fighting Back

This remark aroused a furious protest from the women assembled before him. Words soon led to deeds. They rushed at him from all sides, knocked him down, kicked him, tore his clothes, scratched his face, pulled his hair, and pummeled him until he could no longer breathe.

"Beat her, will you? Beat her and slander us all, will you? Well, rape your mother. Maybe this will teach you."

"Stop, I'll never beat her again," gasped the panic-stricken husband who was on the verge of fainting under their blows.

They stopped, let him up, and sent him home with a warning—let him so much as lay a finger on his wife again and he would receive more of the same "cure."

From that day onward Man-ts'ang never dared beat his wife and from that day onward his wife became known to the whole village by her maiden name, Ch'eng Ai-lien, instead of simply by the title of Man-ts'ang's wife, as had been the custom since time began.

A few similar incidents, one of which resulted in an errant husband spending two days in the village lockup, soon taught the poor peasant men to be more circumspect in their treatment of their wives, even if it did not teach them to appreciate women in public life any more than they had before.

The institution of wife beating was, of course, not ended in a few weeks by such means. But having once shown their power the women did not have to beat every man in order to make progress on this question. Thereafter, a serious talk with a strong-armed husband was often enough to make him change his ways, at least for the time being.

## Equality for Women

When asked if, as a result of these actions, women had yet won equality, one of the leaders of the Association said, "No, not yet. Things are a little better than before. Still, there are beating cases and most men still despise women's words and think women are no use. We have to struggle for a long time to win equality. When we have land of our own it will help a lot. In the past men always said, 'You depend on me for a living. You just stay home and eat the things I earn.' But after women get their share they can say, 'I got this grain from my own land and I can live without you by my own labor.' When it comes to labor on the land, women can work just as hard as men even if they are weaker. They can do everything except plowing. They can even hoe if they can't hoe so fast. But they cannot drive carts. Well, even this they can do, but some of the animals are pretty hard to handle."

It was not long before the Women's Association in some parts of the country set up plowing classes for women, and the fame of those who mastered



—photo by Rewi Alley

agricultural labor spread far and wide. A widow in Shen Settlement startled everyone with her strength and skill. She could do everything a man could do and more. She could even push a loaded wheelbarrow on the highway and earn \$12 a day, Border Region currency, transporting bricks. She was so skilled at planting that in the spring all the peasants in Shen Settlement wanted her, and no one else, to plant their millet.

In another village, only five miles from Long Bow, a woman was elected as village head.

Women such as these were rare, but as news of their exploits spread, others were greatly encouraged.

## Revolutionary Power of Women

It would be very one-sided to imply that the only goal of the Women's Association was equality for women. Without the successful transformation of society, without the completion of land reform, without a victorious defense of the Liberated Areas against the probing attacks of the Nationalist armies, it was impossible to talk of liberation for women. Many women realized this as if by intuition, and they made the Women's Association an instrument for mobilizing the power of women behind the revolution in all its aspects—behind the "settling of accounts," behind the drive for production, and behind the defense effort. Through the Association, classes were organized for literacy and for the study of politics, cotton loans were made to stimulate spinning and weaving, the women were brought together to make uniforms and shoes for the soldiers, and wives and mothers were urged to encourage their husbands, sons, and brothers to enlist in the army.

All of these activities were intimately linked up with the struggle for equality, with the demand on the part of women that they should no longer be treated as chattels. If this demand alarmed the men, the all-out support which the women gave to over-all revolutionary goals disarmed them and won from them a grudging admiration. In their hearts they had to admit that they could not win without the help of "half of China."

# Facts of exploitation

Exploitation and oppression of women is not simply that of a consumer, or a psychologically-repressed group. The statistics below illustrate the definite economic subjugation of working women in the United States.

In 1966, 39 out of every 100 women over 14 years old was in the labor force, accounting for 27.8 million or 36% of all workers. These figures have increased steadily since 1946. More than one out of three married women is in the labor force; of these, 60% are also mothers.

The median wages for year-round full-time employed women workers was \$3,923, only 60% that of men (\$6,375). See Background Facts on Women Workers in the United States, U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, May, 1967.

Women comprise 75% of all workers in the textile and garment industry. New York City's garment trade employs 40,150 women, whose median wage in 1963 was \$2.24 an hour, compared to men's \$3.27 an hour. In Philadelphia, the garment industry pays women a median wage of \$1.87 an hour; in Dallas, the wages are \$1.47. Many Puerto Rican and black women working in this industry earn as little as \$45 a week. In non-union shops they work overtime for no extra pay, not knowing that they are entitled to overtime pay and provisions of the minimum wage laws.

Furthermore, many garment shops are moving south to take advantage of mass unemployment and the almost-non-existent minimum wage laws and trade unions. For example, Levi Strauss and Co. moved to Blue Ridge, Georgia, in 1960. Within seven years, it had sifted through 3,800 employees to select 560 highly-skilled workers, 500 of them women. Workers struck in 1967 for better job conditions, but pay was also a grievance. One woman, on the job for six years, reported her wages at \$1,531 a year, for a 54-hour week.

In clerical jobs, women's wages are only two-thirds those of men. In addition, as new office machines are introduced, the percentage of women office workers is declining.

The average pay for black working women is \$2,642 a year. The largest group of black women workers is found in domestic service: some 30% work here, compared to 5.6% of white women workers in this field. The median domestic service income for these women is \$1,200 a year.

The 1968 Manpower Report shows that in families receiving ADC funds (Aid to Dependent Children), 40% of the mothers in black families were working, compared to 26% of the mothers in white families.

## Breakdown of Occupation and Incomes by Sex, 1960

Occupation	Male		Female	
	Number in Thousands	\$ per Year	Number in Thousands	\$ per Year
Professional*	4,542	6,619	2,792	3,625
Managerial*	4,695	6,664	794	3,355
Clerical	3,120	4,785	6,497	3,017
Sales	3,054	4,987	1,746	1,498
Craft*	8,972	5,240	268	2,927
Operative	9,223	4,299	3,612	2,319
Household*	65	1,078	1,759	684
Service*	2,745	3,310	3,020	1,385
Farm*	1,289	1,066	269	602
Laborer*	3,404	2,948	125	1,872

\* Professional: professional and technical; Managerial: managers, officials, and proprietors, except farm; Craft: craftsmen and foremen; Household: private household employees; Service: except private house; Farm: farm laborers and foremen; Laborer: except farm and mine.

## Women Employees in Selected Industries in 1966

Industry	Women in Thousands	Women as % of Total	Hourly Wages
Retail Trade	4,380	44	1.91
Durable Manufacture	2,303	20	2.89
Non-durable Manufacture	3,314	39	2.45
Finance, Real Estate	1,563	50	2.48
Transportation, Utilities	800	19	NA*
Wholesale Trade	805	23	2.13
Mining	34	5	3.05

\* NA: not available.

# Toward a revolutionary women's movement

by Bernardine Dohrn  
Inter-Organizational Secretary

Women radicals are split; there are the politicians (those women who are full time movement organizers, who are conscious of the oppression of women who raise the question as part of their work, and help other movement women to that consciousness, and who discount the revolutionary potential of a women's movement) and there are the "professional women" (those women who are full time women, who feel the priority of developing a women's liberation movement, often separatist, and who are generally cynical about the movement, any ideology, and SDS).

At the same time, women's liberation groups are dividing and multiplying, generally in isolation not only from men but from the rest of the movement. Popular articles on the women's movement, such as the NY Times Magazine horror, promote a pop personality, individualistic view of the

struggle and are based on an unstated white middle class consciousness and perspective.

Most of the existing women's groups are mired. Their legitimate function has been to turn on "new" women to understanding the collective oppression of women, to studying its economic and social basis, and to identifying the ramifications of that oppressed status. Their program is only a cycle which produces more women's groups, mostly devoted to a personal liberation/therapy function and promises of study which are an evasion of practice.

Most of the women's groups are bourgeois, unconscious or unconcerned with class struggle and the exploitation of working class women, and chauvinists concerning the oppression of black and brown women. They practice a false communalism, reminiscent of the early days of SDS p.d. (participatory democracy), where struggle is not allowed under the guise of "respect for

one another" and anti-authoritarianism.

In addition to these woes, the tendency represented by the separatists, the men-haters, the fanatical feminists share many of the reactionary dangers of cultural nationalism. These women begin with the correct assumption that people do not obtain their liberation except through struggle. They convincingly show how the woman question has always been submerged in favor of "more important issues." But their direction leads to a middle class single issue movement—and this at a time when the black liberation movement is polarizing the country, when national wars of liberation are waging the most advanced assaults on U.S. imperialism, when the growth of the movement is at a critical stage.

Instead of integrating (not submerging) the struggles of women into the broader revolutionary movement, these women are flailing at their own middle class images. To focus only on sexual

exploitation and the tyranny of consumption does not develop a mass understanding of the causes of oppression, and it does not accurately point at the enemy.

## Class Base

A revolutionary women's movement must be politically based on the most oppressed sectors—black, brown and white working-class women. This does not mean that movement women are not a significant part of that movement, or that we must wait until there is a working class women's movement to support. It does mean that we must be conscious of our perspective and the class interests which our demands represent. It means that our immediate job is to organize masses of women around the full scope of radical demands—including the destruction of male supremacy.

Until now, program has been discussed as if a demand must be found which in itself defines the nature of the oppression of women. This assumption—that we must organize women only around an issue which specifically fights their oppression as women—is wrong. Particularly given the student base in which we work. In addition, single issue movements, whether they be women's vote, the issue of abortions, or the anti-draft movement, are most easily cut off from the masses of people and directed into privileged, dead-end reforms. Everywhere around us there are concentrations of women: dorms, women's schools, education and home ec departments, high schools, jobs—women can be mobilized to fight against imperialism and racism.

## Institutionalized Subjugation

For example, it's easy to think of the many ways in which the subjugation of women is institutionalized in education departments and teachers' schools: low wages, male monopoly on advancement, women isolated from other adults to care for (be cops for) children. But to organize there without attacking the racist functions of education is counter-revolutionary—and it also obscures an understanding of the roots and functions of male supremacy. Similarly, there are many corporations, such as DuPont, which particularly exploit women in textile plants and through the garment industry. DuPont recruiters would be good agitational targets for women. But DuPont also happens to be one of the six largest international corporations (racist here and abroad) and the major manufacturer of munitions. Exposing all of the ways in which DuPont functions strengthens the general understanding of each of those "issues", for the issue is the destruction of capitalism.

When we actively start to organize women around the totality of their oppression—when we build struggles within institutions, which are related to other parts of the movement—then many of the current activities of women's groups will exist in a context which gives them purpose. Women's liberation groups can be study groups and a place to learn, with other women, how male chauvinism oppresses women. Guerrilla theatre actions will highlight ongoing education and program. And by organizing masses of radical women, we will be in a much stronger position to destroy male supremacy within the movement, and to build the basis for the future society.

## History

(continued from center pages)

supremacy within the abolitionist movement, the active women saw that the woman question had to be confronted and deal with explicitly. There was no other way for them to make themselves heard. They had to begin to develop an explicit ideology for women's rights, one which recognized clearly that their freedom could not be accomplished so long as slavery existed.

The two movements—to liberate black people and women—grew simultaneously in their fight against the exploitation of their labor and the special oppressions of women and black people.

Women of great courage and political skill emerged from the abolitionist movement. These included Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Susan Anthony, the Grimke sisters, and Lucretia Mott, who risked their lives many times to speak out against racism and the oppression in the North and South and who led in the exodus of black people from the South by the Underground Railroad.

In 1833, when the abolitionists met in Philadelphia, to form the American Anti-Slavery Society, women were allowed to sit in on the meeting but were not allowed to vote or join. The twenty women there, in response to this exclusion, started the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society, which by 1837 had spread cross-country into the National Female Anti-Slavery Society.

### Fighting Slavery

This society was led by Angelina and Sarah Grimke, two Southern abolitionists who fought for freedom for all people through the abolitionist struggles as well as in the early labor and women's rights struggles. They were attacked by the Southern racists and the Church, who wanted to defeat the anti-slavery movement as being un-Christian and un-womanly in their activities. They replied by linking up the issues of slavery of black people and oppression of women and the necessity to end both. On the one hand, they constantly fought the notion that women were inferior to men, and on the other hand they stressed the fact that women had to have political and social freedom in order to fight against slavery and all the increased exploitation that was manifesting itself as capitalism developed. Without the right to speak and organize, they would be by their inactivity supporting the continuation of slavery. The attempt to attack abolition through the women question was not fought by the men in the movement. They feared that defending the women's cause would be "divisive" and "injure" the cause, and begged the women to drop it.

This pattern of reactionaries trying to divide men and women in their fight against oppression was to occur over and over again. It impeded the development of a unified movement that could define the capitalist class as its enemy clearly, due to the acceptance by men and many times women of the doctrine of male supremacy.

(continued next week)



## Arab women fight

"It is not a war waged with an active army and reserves. Revolutionary war, as the Algerian people is waging it, is a total war in which the woman does not merely knit for or mourn the soldier. The Algerian woman is at the heart of the combat. Arrested, tortured, raped, shot down, she testifies to the violence of the occupier and to his inhumanity. As a nurse, a liaison agent, a fighter she bears witness to the depth and density of the struggle."  
—Fanon, Studies in a Dying Colonialism

The requirements of total war, of resistance to the occupier, are again transforming traditional relationships. Arab women guerrillas and masses of Arab women and young girls have been leading fighters in the Palestine liberation movement, Al-Fatah. In mass demonstrations and in sabotage, the women have been prominent, particularly in Israeli-occupied areas.

Three young Arab women were seized by Israeli forces as suspects in a roundup of terrorists in late January. They were tried by a military court in Gaza, and two—Fatma Murtadjar, 17, and Fatma Afamat, 24, were sentenced to two years each for being couriers between terrorist cells. The third woman, Nahala Hafez el Baiyed, 19, received three years for various counts, including collecting information.

After the trial, 4,000 high school girls in Gaza rioted in the main streets, barricading the streets, and stoning cars, including the car carrying Brig. Gen. Mordecai Gur, the military governor of the region. The girls tore down mud and stone walls outside their schools to throw pieces at the Israeli soldiers. The demonstrators were attacked by Israeli troops with nightsticks: 90 teenage girls were injured, 40 were hospitalized.

Four days later, thousands of Arab women staged sit-in strikes in Iraq,

Jordan, and Lebanon in support of Arab women and liberation fighters in Israeli-occupied territory. A week later in Ramallah, in Israeli-occupied Jordan, 200 girls sat in at the Ramallah Teacher Training School. Under banners of Arab commandos and Palestinian flags, they brandished pictures of refugees and the Palestinian people.

On February 19 came the commando attack on the El-Al airliner in Zurich, by four refugees of the '67 war. The woman commando Ammah Ahmed Dabbor fled Gaza after the war when her brother was killed by Israelis; she was a teacher in a refugee camp. Further, the first woman martyr of Al-Fatah, Shadia Abu Ghazali, returned to her home, now occupied Nablus, and as a member of the Palestine Liberation Movement organized demonstrations against the occupying forces, and was killed defending her nation.

This on the fifth year of the Palestinian movement, whose position is: "Our insistence on carrying arms until we liberate our land accompanies our belief in peace, which is threatened by the Zionist structure in league with imperialism and colonialism. Our armed revolution and our people's struggle will continue until victory."

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