Fight Back!

Is the bourgeoisie bombarding your mind? Are you surrounded by television, pulp fiction, reactionary movies, newspapers owned by multinational corporations and fascist radio stations?

It's time to Fight Back! Equip yourself with the tools to struggle and win. The voice of the anti-imperialist movement from Under Lock & Key.

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Black Panther Newspaper Collection
http://www.prisoncensorship.info/archive/etext/bpp/ (available to prisoners for $8)
to write to the Governor or the defense committee of each individual prisoner.

Further, their inadequate analysis of history is revealed in the arena of world politics by their support for the Cuban regime today. In their solidarity statement they say that the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are just now "retreating from socialism." MIM believes that the Soviet Union has been implementing capitalism since the death of Stalin and that Eastern Europe has no socialism to retreat from.

The statement goes on to complain about the loss of support from these regimes for Third World revolutions. But it is just this "support" that led the Cuban revolution into economic dependence on the Soviet Union, a dependence that forced Cuba to adopt a bureaucratic and authoritarian political and economic structure, ultimately adopting the USSR's form of "socialism," otherwise known as state capitalism.

Supporting Cuba without an analysis of their revolution and resultant retreat from revolutionary principles is an ahistorical view of liberation that ignores the plight of the Cuban people today.

MIM does not want people to forget the history of the Black Panther Party, a revolutionary Maoist party that was destroyed by state repression (specifically the FBI) in the 1960s. From this history there is much to be learned about effective revolutionary work. One lesson MIM takes from the destruction of the BPP is the need to organize underground, safer from government infiltration and repression.

The newspaper committee states that they are organized around democratic centralism. (see MIM Notes 52 for a theory piece on democratic centralism). But it is unclear what democratic centralism means to a newspaper staff that prints a wide spectrum of political views and does not claim to have any uniform basis of political agreement.

MIM does not agree that reforming the existing power structure is an effective strategy for eliminating the oppression of capitalism, a conclusion that these former Black Panthers are now advocating.

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Black Panther Party paved the Way

"In February, 1970, Kathleen Cleaver, Communication Secretary of the Black Panther Party, living in exile in Algiers with her husband, Eldridge, was asked by a reporter from the Women's Page of the Washington Post what was a woman's role in the revolution. 'No one ever asks what a man's place in the Revolution is,' she replied in part.

Very early in the history of the Black Panther Party, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale and others moved to eliminate male chauvinism from the Party. From the early period, too, Black women were important in the work of the Party. Nor was their activity confined to the typewriter and mimeograph machine. Panther women spoke at rallies and meetings and were interviewed in the underground press." (1)

by MC42 & MC86

The Black Panther Party (BPP) was the Maoist party of the late 1960s in the United States. Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale wrote the 10-point platform in October of 1966 in Oakland, California. Suddenly, the Black community had a revolutionary party for organization and protection.

MIM learns from the work and the ideology of the BPP. They were the best revolutionary party in U.S. history. We must also learn from their mistakes. The BPP had faults. They exposed themselves too much above-ground to the enemy. They picked up the gun too soon and leaned towards focoist (adventurist) strategies. They supported a cult of personality and downplayed the evils of gender oppression. They failed to recognize the Patriarchy as part of the "power structure," which needs to be destroyed.

One the other hand, the Panthers were Maoists. They created a strong internal Party discipline. They criticized cultural nationalism and Black capitalist reforms. They built coalitions. They used their newspaper, The Black Panther, as an organizing tool. They carried out programs to improve material conditions in the Black community. They built a mass base of support and unity. They struggled, with limited success, to combat gender oppression.

Community Work

The BPP began as "The Black Panther Party for Self Defense," and that is what it was. Under Newton's instruction, Panthers learned some criminal law and the Bill of Rights and carried guns to help the Black community defend itself against daily police brutality.
Above Ground: FPL Initiative

\( \frac{1}{2} \) of the world's surface is covered with water. The longest river in the world is the Nile, which flows through Africa. It is 6,650 km long. The longest river in North America is the Mississippi, which is 6,275 km long.

The Black Panther is a newspaper published by the Black Panther Party. This paper was often critical of the government and its policies.

The Black Panther Party has been active since the 1960s. Its members have engaged in civil rights activism and have advocated for social and economic justice.

Community Group

The Black Panthers were a radical political organization in the United States. They were founded in 1966 by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Black Panthers were known for their enthusiastic and sometimes violent demonstrations against police brutality and discrimination.

The Black Panthers were involved in many different activities, including running community centers, publishing newspapers, and providing legal assistance to the poor.

The Black Panthers were disbanded in 1971, but their legacy lives on as a symbol of resistance against oppression and injustice.
want to fight is the civil war...but this...should not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless.”(3)

The Black Panthers and focolari after them also missed this from Mao:

“The question of China’s cities and countryside today is qualitatively different from that of the cities and the countryside in capitalist countries abroad.... It is impossible to conceive of a protracted guerrilla war carried on by the peasants in the countryside against the cities in a country such as England, America, France....”(4)

Later period of Panthers

As late as April 1971, Newton was still quoting Mao on how to look at picking up the gun for struggle.(5) In January 1970, Newton put it this way in response to the question: “What has been the most important inspiration for the Black Panthers?”

“I think that not only Fidel and Che, Ho Chi Minh and Mao and Kim Il Sung, but also all the guerrilla bands that have been operating in Mozambique and Angola, and the Palestinian guerrillas who are fighting for a socialist world.”

In 1970, when the Panthers were already past their peak, it was not such a great contradiction to say what Newton did. The differences of Mao with the Soviet Union had only been public since 1962. The differences with other countries and leaders in the socialist world were much murkier and did not become apparent right away. Mao agreed with Newton at the time in the generally rosy outlook supporting armed struggles of oppressed nationalities throughout the world.

When Nixon announced his plans to visit China, the Black Panthers called on China to negotiate for the oppressed of the world, including the Attica rebellion. While denouncing Nixon, Newton said about the Attica uprising, “This is why we approached Chairman Mao Tse-tung, because we know of his peace-and-freedom loving nature.”(6)

fewer jobs at lesser wages. Often these wages are not enough to feed a family. Capitalist Patriarchy forces women, teenagers and children to work for survival at pay rates even lower than men’s wages. People are driven out of work and forced to compete with each other for ever lower real money. Huge armies of unemployed men and women and teenagers hit the streets all fighting for the McDonalds wage or black-market turf: and the family falls apart.

This happens all over the world. Its worse in Third World countries than here. And even though the pay falls, men, as a group, still get more money than women, teenagers and children as a group. That is a suspect privilege that capitalist Patriarchy gives to men: so men and women will remain on unequal terms. Under stress, the family members go their separate ways.

The phoney Eight Is Enough nuclear family is not the reality in most neighborhoods around the planet. But some sort of “family” is required for survival when wages are below survival levels. Many people try to hold onto the extended family network—so that the burden of survival is more evenly distributed. In Amerika, people are forced to sneak in and out of their own homes so that the welfare-policing won’t catch them.

The Black Panther Party developed a communal living strategy. They formed a “fighting family” living together for a common purpose to fight for their existence and their goals. (6)

Women held back—the revolution suffers

Kathleen Cleaver was held back in her revolutionary work by her husband, Eldridge, who was Minister Of Information for the Party. In 1970, rallies—at which Kathleen was scheduled to speak—were set back, because “Eldridge changed his mind and refused to let her come.” (7) Although Newton, Seale and Eldridge Cleaver himself all spoke out against “male chauvinism” in the Party, women Panthers were in fact held back. The revolutionary movement as a whole cannot succeed without the full participation of all fighters.

This points to another problem in the BPP: a heavy reliance on individual leaders and personalities to keep the ball rolling. The “cult of personality” built up around some of the BPP leaders, like Newton or Seale, created a dependence on individuals and damaged the self-reliance of the revolutionary movement as a whole. The revolution in China also suffered from the cult of personality around Mao. MIM criticizes and avoids this tendency.

The BPP and lesbian/gay movements

In the August 15, 1970 issue of the BPP’s newspaper, The Black Panther, Newton wrote a letter to “the Revolutionary Brothers and Sisters about the Women’s Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements.” This letter attempted to open the dialogue between the BPP and these (mostly white) movements. “This was the first time any non-gay black organization ... recognized the oppression of homophobia; connected that oppression to the plight of Black people; and attempted—based on that connection—to build coalitions openly with lesbians and gay men.” (8)

It must have been a hard letter for Newton to write. Both Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver had expressed their homophobia in their books, (Seize The Time and Soul On Ice). Although there are many problems with Newton’s let-
China in the Revolution in 1949.


Going too far with Mao

The concept of a world revolution is a political and ideological idea that is based on the belief that one country's revolution can inspire and eventually lead to similar revolutions in other countries. In the context of the Chinese Revolution, this idea was popularized by Mao Zedong and his followers, who believed that the success of the Chinese revolution would inspire other countries to follow suit.

Mao's vision of world revolution was based on the idea of creating a socialist society in China and then spreading this model to other countries. He believed that the Chinese revolution would be a model for other countries to follow, and that it would eventually lead to the creation of a world socialist society.

This idea of world revolution was not limited to China. It was also a central part of the ideology of other communist movements around the world. In the context of the Cold War, the idea of world revolution was often used as a justification for the expansion of communist ideology and influence.

To implement this vision, Mao Zedong and his followers implemented a number of social and economic reforms in China, such as land redistribution and the nationalization of industry. These reforms were intended to create a more equal and just society, and to prepare China for the world revolution.

However, the implementation of Mao's vision was met with resistance and opposition from both within China and from other countries. This led to a number of conflicts and tensions, which ultimately contributed to the end of the Chinese Revolution.

In conclusion, the concept of world revolution is a complex and controversial idea that has played a significant role in the history of China and other countries. It is a reminder of the power of ideas and the importance of political and ideological struggles in shaping the course of history.
vision, practice, and struggle. Representative of this development is the change in Newton’s title: he is no longer the Minister of Defense, but the Servant of the People.”(6)

It’s not that Newton was a plagiarist. He pointed out his admiration for Mao Zedong as often as he could. It’s just that some people chose not to listen to him. “Huey made it a point that the revolutionary principles so concisely cited in the Red Book should be applied whenever they could…. Where the book said, ‘Chinese people of the Communist Party,’ Huey would say, ‘Change that to the Black Panther Party. Change the Chinese people to black people.’”(7)

Citing Mao Zedong in a country that still recognized the Taiwan government instead of Mao’s government as the government of China was quite courageous on Newton’s part. Many people supported Huey Newton as a Black leader. They liked his standing up to cops, racism and national oppression. But many people did not like to think of Newton’s ideas as coherently linked together in an ideology of communism, as they were in reality. Even Bobby Seale, the number two leader in the Black Panther Party was publicly and outspokenly opposed to communism for quite some time, even after meeting Huey Newton.(8)

However, while Scale seemed to follow Newton’s theoretical lead, other Panther leaders at their height had admiration for Mao as well. A white Students for Democratic Society (SDS) leader explains the lesson he learned from Eldridge Cleaver, the Panther’s third ranked leader:

“I was working with the Black Panther Party—this was 1967—and I was for revolution and I respected the Black Panther Party.... It took me two weeks to work up the nerve to finally ask Eldridge Cleaver why he had that poster in his house.... [H]e said, ‘We’ve got that picture of Mao Tsetung up on the wall because Mao Tsetung is the baddest motherfucker on the planet Earth!’

“I respected the Black Panther Party.... I thought they were pretty heavy, and if Eldridge Cleaver was saying this was the baddest motherfucker on the planet Earth, I better go look into it!”(9)

When SDS was at its peak and just about to split in 1969, the Black Panthers advocated resolving their conflicts this way: “pick up the telephone and call Chairman Mao Tse-tung” if they doubted that the Panthers were the vanguard organization in the U.S.”(10)

Seale had this to say about Huey and other people in his party: “Huey was ten motherfuckers. He would say, ‘Bobby, you and I know the principles in this Red Book are valid, but the brothers and the black folks don’t.... [S]o what we have to do is to get the white radicals who are intellectually interested in the book, sell the book, make the money, buy the guns ... and protect the community from the racist cops. And in turn we get brothers in the organization and they will in turn relate to the Red Book.”(11)

The anti-communist turned communist Bobby Seale further pointed out: “You couldn’t get around Huey. He knew the Red Book sideways, backwards and forwards. There are brothers in the Party that got to know the Red Book catty-corner…. The Red Book and what else? The gun! The Red Book and what else? The gun!” That’s what Huey would say.”(12) That’s what happened at the beginning of the Black Panther Party.

Strengthened our forces. MIM has a solid unity with the 13 beliefs and demands articulated in this Programme. The achievement of its goals would reflect the liberation of humanity from imperialism.

**FBI at it again**

But the Panthers’ above-ground practice and lack of unity in their gender analysis gave the FBI an opportunity to attack them. “The FBI used [Newton’s] open letter as an opportunity to discredit Newton’s leadership. The FBI wrote bogus letters purporting to be from Party members saying, ‘I have seen by last weeks paper that now Panthers are supposed to relate to cock-suckers. Huey is wrong, Something must have happened to him in prison. Panthers got enough things to do in 10 point program and fighting for niggers without taking up with mother fucking queers. All power to the people.’ Considering the FBI’s tactics, it is not far-fetched to assume that it worked to undermine the organization and more directly the Panther-gay liberation alliance.”(8) The possibility of such an alliance must have scared the capitalists pretty good.

MIM does not glorify the Panthers. Individual Panthers suffered from outright male chauvinism and the BPP’s undeveloped gender line fractured opportunities to build united fronts with other revolutionary groups.

However, MIM does not doubt that a revolutionary unity between the Panthers and revolutionary queers could have been built upon an analysis of modern gender relations as social inequalities of power imposed and maintained by the capitalist Patriarchy. With such a weapon, Kathleen might have inspired the masses while Eldridge stayed home and made the coffee.

Contact MIM for more analysis on gender, nation, class theory and practice.

Live long the Black Panther Party!

Notes:
5. See MIM Notes 47 for more on focoism.
8 Alyce J. Lane in BLK 3/91, pp. 11-15.
Chinese people's liberation army, here are the Panther's terms of action.

Outstanding example of anti-imperialism is the struggle between the Panthers and the Black Panthers Party.

The Black Panthers Party...