

From the Editors

In a note in the first issue of *Urgent Tasks*, the editors wrote, "In our opinion, no existing national communist organization embodies a workable revolutionary strategy. . . . The ideas and individuals which might make up such an organization exist, but only as a general trend, not as a clear political tendency."

We did not exclude the Sojourner Truth Organization from the above calculation. Consequently, from the beginning we have conceived *Urgent Tasks* not simply (or even mainly) as the voice of our "line" but as a vehicle to break new ground and advance the debate among revolutionaries which must lead to the emergence of a comprehensive strategy.

Toward this end, we are publishing in this issue a number of critiques of articles that have been published by STO, in *Urgent Tasks* and elsewhere. (Paradoxically, this commitment to open, public debate is an important part of our line.)

The article by Joel Jordan, a member of Workers Power, a group of comrades who have recently left the International Socialists, is a basic challenge to the prevailing positions of STO as they have been expressed in *Urgent Tasks* numbers one and two and in "White Supremacy and the Afro-American National Question" by Don Hamerquist, published as a pamphlet.

The article by Linda Phelps, a member of STO, is a critical response to a two-part article by Alison Edwards, also a member of STO, which was entitled "Women and Modern Capitalism" and which was published in numbers five and six of this journal.

The speech by Ashraf Dehghani is the viewpoint of an important sector of the armed revolutionary movement of Iran that contrasts sharply with views presented in the documents from Iran translated and published in our last issue. It is also implicitly critical of our last editorial, "In Defense of Iran," though we would not sharply counterpose our line to either fedayee position without further study of a political debate that is not yet available in English translation.

The article by Martin Glaberman and the response by Ken Lawrence carry forward a debate on the character of U.S. slavery and the slaves which began with the publication by STO of Lawrence's pamphlet "Marx on American Slavery" in 1976, and which was continued in numbers one and six of *Urgent Tasks*.

In addition, we are publishing three letters from readers, one a criticism of Edwards' article mentioned above, the others critical of a review of theories of armed struggle, written by STO member Beth rienson and published in issue number five.

Rounding out the issue are STO member [name withheld at author's request] analysis of events in Afghanistan and a "guest editorial" on nuclear issues from Fight Back that we are pleased to present to our readers.

We have been criticized by several readers for the tone of *Urgent Tasks*, which has been described as "clubby" and accessible only to those on the inside, as well as for occasional lapses into snottiness toward our opponents. We think there is some validity to these criticisms. We recognize that to continue these errors will undermine our ability to carry out serious, reasoned debate among revolutionaries. In the future we shall try to avoid a style which opens us to such criticism.

In Place of an Editorial

RACISM AND NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

The following statement was written by Fight Back, an organization of Black workers based in New York City. It was presented to a meeting in Washington, D.C., of the Committee for a Non-Nuclear World and was rejected by that body. While we might draw slightly different programmatic conclusions from those contained in the paper, we are in total and unreserved agreement with the ideas presented in the body of the text, and express our solidarity with it by publishing it here, in place of an editorial.

Nuclear militarism and power are advanced forms of technology that embrace every facet of society. Highly advanced monopoly capitalism and big, politically powerful government have made real these forms of technology. All sectors of society are profoundly affected, directly and indirectly. The natural environment, air, water, and land, have already been altered and will be altered more as a result of nuclear technology. Humanity stands at the crossroads. Can nuclear technology be checked, contained, and controlled, or will it destroy human society? How has such a ques-

tion, an unprecedented challenge, been allowed to develop among an unquestioning and unsuspecting people? How, with the fate of humanity in the balance, has there not been an enormous and massive outcry to stop the drift toward nuclear annihilation? What has happened to our sense of human outrage threatened by nuclear war, waste disposal, accidents, and contamination? How explain this form of dehumanization in the face of this form of technology, with its accompanying human peril?

At the beginning of these United States the historic process of capital accumulation was initiated by "The Founding Fathers" in the decimation of the Indians and enslavement of Blacks. Thereafter the most fundamental division of the American working class has been racism, the systemic practice granted to whites over Blacks in every sphere of social life, in the interest of accumulating surplus value owned and controlled by the bourgeoisie. Not only in the objective world of economic relationships based on the capitalistic mode of production was racism structured, but also in the subjective realm of ideology, social and cultural values, religion and philosophic beliefs, education and attitudes related to the totality of institutions, racism has played a pervasive and determining role in shaping the social mentality of the American people. The decimation of the Indians and enslavement of Blacks laid the basis for the exploitation and dehumanization of the masses of whites. American humanity was betrayed at the inception of the United States. Thereafter, wave after wave of immigrants came to these shores, moved up the economic ladder by accepting racism already systemic—structured and operating throughout society. The ongoing price of this brutalization and dehumanization is embodied in one of the most highly developed forms of technology that threatens the very society out of which it developed.

The recent theft of Indian lands where uranium deposits have been discovered and bribing Native Americans to work in uranium mines provide further evidence of the meshing of racism and nuclear technology. These attacks on Native Americans demand the most forceful condemnation by anti-nuke activists and progressives in general. Such condemnation and active support for the Native American people has yet to emerge.

It is also important to take note of apartheid and nuclear militarism and power in South Africa, a country heavily supported by and invested in by the U.S. government and transnational corporations. South Africa is one of the main sources in the world of uranium. It provides imperialism with uranium mined by Blacks. South Africa itself is one of the major nuclear arsenals in the world. It poses a threat not only to Africa, but the world. Where in America do we hear an outcry?

In short, the highest development of technology motivated by the incentive for increased profits

contains within itself racism that contributed to its development and the social impact it has on society completes the historical process of dehumanizing most people trapped within a decaying social system. Nuclear militarism and technology are not only a clear expression of racism, they resolve the question of racism by dehumanizing the totality of human society. There is a completion of the American historical process of class exploitation. We are helpless, objectively and subjectively, to reverse the course of our own social perdition, since we can scarcely perceive the historical basis for our impotence. Racism is writ large in the greatest and most profound contradiction ever confronted by human society, but it is scarcely perceived.

How, then, given time, can those few who do perceive, carry forward a class resolution of the contradiction brought on by nuclear power?

Mired in racial bigotry, the American working class has never perceived itself as a class, has never been conscious of itself as a class exploited by a ruling class. Herein is the crux of our problem. How to make our class conscious, to infuse it with political awareness? To find the answer we must look to the long struggle waged by Black people in the U.S. Their inability to cope with their oppression and exploitation is explained by the ruling class's continuing use of the working class to maintain the oppression of Blacks while continuing the exploitation of whites. We remain a historically divided class unable to politically fend in our own interests at the most advanced stage of class society, the stage of state-monopoly capitalism.

With the American ruling class intensifying its exploitation of the American people, conditions are ripe for a massive educational and political campaign to combat racism and unite workers in their class interests. There is no issue more overwhelming and all-embracing than nuclear technology—militarism and power. Furthermore, the outcome of this struggle can well determine the future course of the human race.

What, then, must be done?

Anti-nuke forces must:

1. Give active and full support to the struggles of Blacks on all fronts.
2. Carry out educational programs to inform the workers how racism undermines their struggles for economic, political, social, and cultural betterment.
3. Give special attention to the encouragement of Blacks to play an active and leading role in the anti-nuke movement. The more whites see Blacks speaking out on this matter the better.
4. Enter into electoral politics with candidates who can express themselves on 1 and 2.
5. Begin to build an independent political party as an ongoing political organization that can fight for the necessary changes in American society around the slogan of "A Non-Nuke Future — The Only Path for Humanity!"