

August, 1971

Dear sisters,

This new article was inspired by the thinking and work of and with many beautiful sisters in the past three years. Though I wrote it up, I believe it reflects a collective consciousness.

Along with the new article, I am reprinting some articles I wrote which were published between October, 1968, and November, 1969, in the three issues of NO MORE FUN AND GAMES*, plus a later article. I hope these provide a background and context for this new statement.

Finally I have included a statement by Clyde Warrior on our powerlessness in this country. This young man died "mysteriously" in 1967.

If you find this booklet worthwhile, please pass it on to other sisters. I am sending copies to all the groups I know about to do with what they wish. I am not selling or distributing it, and there is no copyright and no reprint permission is required.

A sister in struggle,

Roxanne Dunbar

*This booklet is not connected with Cell 16, Female Liberation in Cambridge, Mass, though they are welcome to claim it. It is a single issue and not a regular publication.

I am a revolutionary. I am a feminist. I don't know if I am a revolutionary feminist or a feminist revolutionary. I think I am a female revolutionary and a feminist. It is arbitrary whether I say first I am a revolutionary or first I am a feminist. The fact is that I am a woman, greatly limited by that fact and conscious of my position as woman, committed to the liberation of all women. There is no possibility for me to be liberated except that all women be liberated, and that means power and control on a political-economic level, not some personal, individual freedom from restrictions or personal fame. Having had nothing, I will not settle for crumbs. The totality of women's historical oppression must be understood, and we must implement our knowledge, restructuring society according to that perspective.

I am, inseparable from being a woman, a human being who has suffered extreme physical and cultural deprivation due to my class position. I am committed to the liberation of people from political-economic subjugation and its side effects--extremes of wealth and poverty; power and powerlessness; disease; ignorance; terror; weakness; racism, etc. But even had I never personally suffered from my class position I could not imagine struggling for female power out of context of the struggles of all oppressed peoples. I will not be free; women will not be free until all humanity is free. We women should be in the front of the struggle.

Though the struggles of oppressed peoples are intimately connected and inseparable, I do not believe that sexism grew directly from the political-economic subjugation of people in general.

Capitalism is not the root cause of all the ills of the world, and has a relatively short history. We human beings are products of a whole evolutionary development, biological and cultural. In fact looking at its development dialectically the advent of capitalism historically has advanced the power potential of women to begin the struggle for liberation from biological and cultural evolution. Sexism is older than capitalism, and has developed from the biological difference between male and female which itself created a division of labor with value differences.

Men produce and fight; women reproduce and support. I do not believe that the reproductive and supportive role of the female has ever in any society been considered as valuable as the productive, and particularly the fighting role of the male. Any exceptions only prove that there is not a predetermined nature to the division. It is not natural law, but an evolutionary development. Of course, the necessity and possibility of "separate but equal" made more sense in pre-industrial societies, and women were needed. There was probably little antagonism between male and female. With industrialization and the breakdown of former "natural" patterns, the contradiction between male and female has become antagonistic. Anyone who abstractly denies the antagonism is simply not dealing with reality. Men despise women; women fear and despise men. Maybe it is a "contradiction among the people" in the working class, but it is antagonistic in a descriptive sense.

Whatever the source of the oppression, exploitation, and contempt of women, we now have a situation of economic, political and cultural deprivation and a dependency on men and the state and that should be our field of battle, which puts us, objectively, into a revolutionary struggle that is being waged against colonial and class domination of the people in general. This struggle is over a century old as is the parallel, autonomous, conscious struggle of women for female liberation. I do not believe we have to make of this some grand, logical system of interconnections and cause and effect relations, or decide who is "most oppressed." In our revolutionary movements, due to the class composition of the leadership, ideological development has alternated between anti-intellectualism (pragmatism and mysticism) and idealism (logical systems of thought out of context of social experience or social practice). Let's get out of the rut.

More than is generally true of other movements, the women's movement has had a tendency toward what I will call "science fictionism." The tendency is not absent in some theorists of class struggle: The dream of cybernation making work archaic ("The New Working Class"), for instance. Among women there is the trip of artificial reproduction (not needing a man or even sperm! Wow! what power!) which will "free" women biologically. Whole systems of utopian dreams are created which do not deal whatever with current misery and the means of taking power in order to control the implementation of scientific discovery. Therefore,

such images of the future (FUTURE SHOCK) are opportunistic and futuristic and serve, really, to demoralize and depress those who are in the morass of oppression and in struggle, who need means of strength to fight. (I refer to theories such as in Valerie Solanis' SCUM MANIFESTO; S. Firestone, DIALECTICS OF SEX, p. 48 for example; and Ti-Grace Atkinson's views of sexual intercourse and reproduction.). I, too, have contributed to the tendency at times though the tendency has always disturbed me and I have tried to struggle against it with other sisters, and guard against it in my own thinking. Still in rereading what I have written I detect a sin of omission, which could lead to fantasy if not science fiction, rather than struggle.

What I have failed to deal with, and I believe this is true of the movement at every level (among youth theorists, third-world theorists, labor theorists, female liberation theorists), is a general strategy for the taking of power; how to win. Like love scenes in the movies of the 50's, the scene fades out when we get to that question. Again, the class composition of the movement means that there is a tendency toward building a sub-culture rather than a revolutionary struggle for the seizing of power. By sub-culture I do not refer to the "youth" culture (hippies) necessarily, but to the political sub-culture: ideological debates in living rooms and movement centers; experimentation with different theories by building elaborate paper organizations supposedly based on "democratic centralism," Marxism-Leninism and Maoism. The dream of building the perfect ideology and the perfect organization to make the revolution, and presumably to govern after "the revolution." The by-product is in-fighting and endless divisions, under the guise of ideological struggle. The most annoying behavior being an incredible arrogance and absolute sureness of a direct pipeline to the fathers of revolution.

That is one side of the sub-culture of the New Left, a growing side. The other side is the "pragmatic," anti-ideology, action-oriented side. The tendency there has been toward a sub-culture of confrontation and demonstration as the style. A by-product is elitism, for behind the scenes are the puppeteers pulling the strings that move the faceless masses of young people. Another tendency is toward mysticism, the "drug culture," which if you want to speak straight is decadence, the casualties of a dying empire. A tragedy of lost lives which is actually analysed

by some as progressive. The decadence of the culture can not be ignored, but it must be treated as a problem not a salvation.

These tendencies exist in the whole movement, but they are more easily neutralized in the third-world struggles, due to the fact that third-world people are involved internationally in revolutionary struggle at this point in history, and the reality of mass struggle transforms the movement to some extent at every point. That is not to say that there are no problems with pragmatism, opportunism, mysticism, idealism, and decadence. These are major pitfalls for cadres of the third-world movement, and only intense struggle corrects them.

The women's movement has attacked the two major tendencies of the white, male new left: abstraction and elitism, which perhaps approximate what Lenin described as "economism" and "adventurism." So there has been a transformation of the left due to the rise of the women's liberation movement. Again I am speaking of the effects on the whites of the left. Given those tendencies, and the nature of the criticisms from women, and the class composition of the women's movement, the resulting dialectic has been a tendency toward pacifism (anti male-violence), small talk groups dealing with the psychological, and a virulent form of anti-leadership, male or female. The latter was partially in reaction to the puppeteers and partially an outgrowth of middle-class women's programmed competitiveness with each other. These new tendencies have in turn affected the entire white new left, and have been instrumental in practically wiping out the "action-oriented" groupings and the puppeteers, leaving the "Marxist-Leninist" theorists somewhat morally justified and appearing more together and effective than they actually are.

Though the drop-out rate of women was great from these M-L organizations at the beginning and toward the middle of the women's liberation movement in the last three years, political women, now seeking refuge from what appears to be a dying women's movement, are moving toward these very male-dominated, highly-centralized, heavily ideological, and ineffective organizations: the "pre-party" formations. (I did this myself last fall, joining the REVOLUTIONARY UNION.) These organizations, basically white and middle class in perspective, are

entering third-world communities and work-places to test their "proletarian" ideology. This tendency of the new left is similar to the old left. In fact many of the new left leaders in these organizations are sons and daughters of old leftists.

We are victims of many fads in North America, and the movement has its own brand of fads. For awhile "violence" and guns were a fad. Still some people wear buttons with guns (why don't they carry guns?). There was a period of great enthusiasm for Weatherman, and then a sudden desertion of the group and their politics, their model. Among women, there has been the "anti-imperialism" fad (I have met the Vietnamese women and they are me). I believe lesbianism is a fad right now. On the left, "building the party" is still with us. Now there is a strong Asian trend from Maoism to contemplation and body-building through health food and karate. It looks like acupuncture will be the newest trip of the jet-set left.

More and more it seems that women's liberation itself was a fad to many on the left. So as women withdraw from the women's movement in boredom or seeking a new thing, the most reactionary and opportunist sectors of the women's movement (professional women and Trotskyists) spreading their professionalism, opportunism, and science fictionism. Though the women's movement may have been experienced by many young, hip women as a fad and used as power against men, and used by new left women as a refuge from struggle and an opportunity for power in the left movement, the majority of women who have been struggling for the past 3 years to create a woman's consciousness in the movement and in the society have been honest and serious in their efforts, and are at this point somewhat isolated and not knowing whereto go next or what to do. Also thousands of women were politicized and radicalized through the women's liberation movement and are now dangling and demoralized.

Perhaps we may begin to see a second surge of feminism from very serious political women that will not be trippy, fadish, and opportunist as we have seen in the past. Mixed with the teachings that many of these women have been exposed to by meeting the Cubans, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Chinese, they will want to "go to the people" and will go to women in the community and in work places. But still demoralization will set in if there is not an overview, a strategy within which ones work can be measured and analyzed, and true criticism can be made.

There seems to be considerable disagreement as to what constitutes a revolutionary struggle. The whole system's vast brainwashing mechanism (the "combine") has confused people even in the movement. Such truisms as "America is different; we must develop a strategy that fits our circumstances" and "There has never been a successful revolution in a highly industrialized country" are used by many left theorists to actually question whether we will have to make war on the powers that be in order to take power. Some women say that "woman power" will be a revolution in itself and will change everything. But how do we take Power ?

It seems to me that no matter how unique America is or whether something has happened before, there are certain principles that are unchangeable in planning an overthrow of a political-economic power class based on violence, profit, and exploitation, no matter how "well-off" the population is. The first principle is that it must be done--whether it has been done before or not, and no matter how long it takes, or what sacrifices. And the other principle is that the overthrow of a ruling class is by definition a military venture requiring armed struggle, simply because the response you will get from that ruling class will be military in nature. So what we need is not self-defense, but military strategy. We need to develop a military offensive. We need to develop tactics so that we can free political prisoners, for instance, not organize around their "repression," thereby calling for the system to give us the legal right to make a revolution against it.

What is needed is revolutionary military organization which will be primarily military but, through already existing forces in the community, will develop a struggle at every level in the society--in the schools, colleges, among workers, among women in the communities--to support the military struggle which will be primary.

The liberal civil rights movement, the student free speech movement, the anti-war movement, the female liberation movement were very successful in mobilizing mass consciousness. They set the stage for revolutionary struggle. But, as James Forman has pointed out, the organizers tend to desert the bases they organize. This is understandable given the lack of revolutionary political experience of those who have lead,

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and given the conscious manipulations by the counter-revolutionary forces of the government and industry in buying off a great many organizers. We must return to our bases and organize militarily, not around the issue of armed struggle, but in fact initiate armed struggle which will speak, and can be organized around on a mass basis.

It seems to me that it is the duty of every conscious revolutionary group to understand and develop military strategy (not just learn martial art or how to shoot or make bombs or any other technical skill alone) while implementing the strategy tactically. Beyond confrontation with the pigs (usually defensively or in a planned confrontation) and scattered acts of sabotage, apparently out of any strategic context, there has been little military practice in North America. And those acts are better termed militant than military. This has been largely a failure in leadership in the movement and the absence of responsible leadership due to assassinations of our most outstanding leaders by counter-revolutionary forces (Malcolm X, Fred Hampton, Clyde Warrior (Ponca), Jonathan Jackson, and many others).

The most powerful force among white young people on the left has been the underground movement of Weatherman. Hopefully, the cadres of Weatherman are not giving up their basic position as a revolutionary military grouping, but are developing even more effectively, and most of all are developing military strategy, not just doing actions. The New Morning statement had a bad influence on the movement, because it released and relaxed whites on the left from emulating Weatherman. What is needed is more Weathermen working under a more developed military strategy. Also military units must organize propaganda so that it reaches the masses of people, not just the movement. Weatherman, coming from SDS, like other factions was hung up on organizing and directing the left itself, rather than developing masses of people, and standing as a model for the rest of the left to emulate.

What holds revolutionaries in North America back from dealing with the military nature of revolution? Again, the class background or perspective of most new leftists from the student movement, anti-war movement, women's movement is middle or even upper class. The tendency then is toward fear or mystification of violence, idealism, debate, sporadic action,

fun and games, fads, travel, and eventual demoralization. What is needed is the maternal and proletarian attitude of long-sustained effort, physical sacrifice, fortitude, mental strength, material application of ideas. There is also a strong tendency on the left toward opportunism. The power group in North America offers more opportunities to sell-out, give up, and get off the track than has any government ever. And of course if you don't take the deal, they kill you if you are available.

One of the most insidious tricks the counter-revolutionary forces play is the propaganda of "anti-puritanism." Leftists, like other North Americans, are hung up in ego-trips of all kinds from drugs to orgies to jet-setting to object consumption to life-style. So far the enemy has not had to use guns much against whites on the left because drugs, decadence, travel, things, and money have been far more efficient weapons. The "anti-puritanism" in the movement is bullshit. Whatever you call it, revolutionaries have to be extremely disciplined, conscious, controlled, and scientific. We can not be just groovy, relaxed, hip, hedonists digging on the idea of revolution--well-rounded beings, doing what comes naturally. If that is interpreted as coldness and puritanism and inhumanity by some then they are wrong. Still if we have to choose between being cold, whatever that means, or ineffective, I guess being cold wouldn't be the worst thing. What this tendency to life style really is, rather than something new, is a maintenance or the gaining in some cases of the relative freedom of the privileged, as the country singer says, "Having our fun in '71."

The question of security is important when discussing strategy, but it should not be prohibative. It is one thing to reveal a particular plan of action or a clandestine organization and another to analyze conditions and project a strategy and organization. What I will discuss here will be some principles of armed struggle of small organized political-military units against a superpowerful political-economic system. If some overall principles are developed in our movement, we will not pine for a large centralized organization to begin armed struggle. Such an organization is a fantasy as well as impractical and insecure to the extent it can exist. Rather the

existence of many autonomous units working from a set of strategic principles will be the beginning of a democratic centralist organization and the kernel of the new governmental structure. This kind of development is not "anarchic"--a term most often used to bate. Anarchy is an idealistic, principled opposition to organization, to democratic centralism, to leadership, and to the existence of the state in any form. There is certainly a good deal of anarchy in the movement, but autonomous revolutionary units do not need to be opposed in principle to organization or the state. Quite the contrary, they must be building toward the seizure of power and the establishment of a people's government. In North America, the new political order will surely be drastically different from what we have now in that there will be true people's government and a great de-centralization of political power. For what we have here is a giant empire, not exactly a state. The federal government has become a power unto itself in contradiction to the original concept of the United States. The central government wants to smash all local autonomy. If people in North America often seem anarchistic and provincial, it is no wonder given the abuses of the federal government. But in practice, in the armed struggle, people will learn what is necessary for survival and for winning.

Already there are some such revolutionary units operating and others in the stage of preparation throughout the Americas. Any group that begins preparation and training and action can be assured that they are not alone, and that communications will develop when that is possible.

I speak of the "Americas" as a unit. In the western hemisphere, the "New World," we have a particular situation--a historical development of four centuries based on conquest, immigration, and slavery. Our struggles in the Americas look very different from those of Africa or Asia or the European continent. We have been liberated from the institution of chattel slavery for just a century in most parts and for less in Cuba and Brazil. The quality and quantity of racism in the Americas, and the resulting nationalism is unique in the world. The natives of the two continents carried on armed struggle for centuries, and are moving again. People came and still come to the Americas from all over the world seeking a better

life and even riches.

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Though different parts of America were colonized and controlled by different European governments, and language and cultural ties still exist with those European countries, the Americas constitute a truly new world--a new breed of people; a multi-national world of mixed cultural and language patterns, the Native American and African influence very strongly present despite the systematic destruction of those cultural patterns by the Europeans.

There is a potential, a unique potential for the world and a necessity for America, for the dream of America to come true. Internationalism can be the very basis of our struggle in the Americas. Poor and working class white Americans speak of "saving America." They mean the dream not the reality. They do not know who has crushed this dream. They think perhaps it is the revolutionaries who seem to have no dream. They do not understand the concentration of power and how those in power have transformed the dream of America into personal fortune, commodities, escapes, national parks, and Apollo flights. Of course, the dream of America was created from the beginning by European governments and merchants, particularly English, to imperialize the 'new world'. It was a trick, propoganda to get people to immigrate. Yet the people who came did believe in the dream and there were valuable goals they came for: plenty for all; freedom for all; equality for all; work for all; freedom of choice; freedom of or from religion; freedom from prison. The people should not be blamed for their own ignorance of what they were being used for and still are.

When this government propoganda says it is trying to spread the "American Way" all over the world, people believe that to mean freedom from dictators; the right to vote; a better way of life. They do not know that oppressed peoples all over the world are struggling against giant corporate landlords, who are European, North American, Japanese, etc. That these people are not "hating" America, but American imperialism. They do not know that their own "prosperity" is at the cost of millions of lives.

As long as North Americans, particularly white working people, identify the US government and its economic system, "free enterprise", as the legitimate bearer of the American dream, they will not fight the system that exists here. They won't even fight when it affects them directly, like their sons dying in imperialist wars. And those sons will keep going to war, even against us, unless they understand. Because they have a dream and they believe, want to believe it is being fulfilled. They will die for that dream. Only new ideals can replace the old, not any appeals to the pocketbook alone. As revolutionaries in this country, we have not trusted or loved the people. Our actions and words have been evasive, cowardly, abstract, and manipulative on the whole. We have had no dream.

It is understandable why that has been so, but let us begin the transformation of ourselves and the revolutionary struggle. Let us begin the attack upon the imperialists, and not waste our energy on local or even state pigs. We must attack the imperialist corporations at the point of production. We must avoid attacking public or government institutions or small businesses, but attack what is behind it all. We must develop a movement that will be the legitimate bearer of the American dream. We need to stop making merely symbolic acts "against the empire," and begin actually cutting into its real power through attacks upon its ability to produce. We need to terrorize the ruling class, not the politicians, but the big boys--those grey, faceless men whose names we may know, but whose faces are unfamiliar because they put their automated lackeys like Nixon in the limelight so he will be hated, and if he gets out of line they will kill him like the Kennedy's. Let's put them in the limelight, turn the spotlight on them.

We need to free our revolutionaries in prisons by direct action by kidnapping a big boy for ransom or assault. We need to serve the people by making food and shelter and medicine available as the services begin breaking down. We must get drugs out of our communities, and expose the systematic drugging of the North American people by the powers that be. We must organize the communities for survival, AS WE CARRY ON THE ARMED STRUGGLE, not before we begin.

In building a military strategy, we need to think along the lines of guerrilla warfare though we must keep in mind that the basic principle of guerrilla warfare is to develop a strategy and tactics based upon the conditions in a particular country. So no specific strategy that has been developed can be lifted and applied. We must search out principles and apply them to existing conditions, considering all factors, including historical development. We must also develop a strategy which is flexible, because flexibility is the key to wearing down the enemy, and remaining intact. The enemy's forces are mechanical and bureaucratically controlled.

We must avoid our usual cause and effect way of thinking about things, not expecting immediate results of a dramatic nature. Revolutionary armed struggle is a science. If you follow certain principles certain results will occur, but not in a cause and effect fashion. We must abandon our present time scale. Revolutionary struggle has no time scale, though it is at all stages ARMED and military in nature. It must be carried on by any means necessary; won as fast as possible; fought as long as is necessary (the Vietnamese say: "We will fight from one generation to the next"). We cannot look for immediate rewards, instant success, or dramatic victories. Nor can we expect excitement and adventure. Most of the work is dull, monotonous, exhausting, nerve-wracking, unrewarded, and even unproductive much of the time since we make many errors because we are learning from scratch.

If you have worked in a factory, been in the armed forces, done construction work, worked on a farm, been a truck driver, done waitressing, been in jail, done clerical work, been a housewife and mother without help, you will have some preparation in tolerance for the kind of work you will do in the armed struggle. It is not like school or professional work or lovely movement sub-culture. People who are accustomed to the easy life will have a difficult time adjusting to the routine and discipline. What is most difficult for anyone is the necessity to be creative and think all the time, and not expect orders from above, their being no above. Only practice brings on the skill of creativity and it is slow in coming and hard to maintain.

Your group will want to develop a very simple, very attainable program of action that fits your potential resources, and not set out to bring the empire down all by yourselves. You should see your group as contributing to the whole of the armed struggle, not as the core or even the little motor (Debray) that starts the big motor. There will have to be many little motors. Yours is just one. Your group will be a "cog in the wheel!" Such an attitude does not lend itself to revolutionary adventurism. But your serious, sustained activity and development is what will bring trust from the people and their support and eventual participation. At first, you can only ask, as Marighelli put it, that the people will not OPPOSE the revolutionaries. Do not expect support at first, or even less some sort of uprising of the people. The people have been lied to many times and have a lot at stake; they are rightly suspicious and are not going to put themselves on the line for some nuts out for some fun and games, revolution for the hell of it. It will take a lot to overcome that image of revolution in this country, and it will take a while for people to know you are serious.

Remember that all worthwhile things, life itself, begin very small and develop slowly. No matter how discouraging, how hopeless your situation may seem, do not give up the basic understanding that armed struggle must be built as the basis of our movement and figure out how to work better. Do not question the laws of revolution, only the tactics. Armed struggle as the road to liberation is a law, not an idea. It won't come easy and it won't be fun.

The technical aspects of preparation may seem vast and overwhelming at first. You shouldn't try to do everything or more than you can handle. Keep it as simple and effective as possible. Don't think you have to have machine guns and dynamite to begin. And always remember the safety of the people.

Who am I speaking to when I say we should form military units? Should everyone do this? I don't think we have to worry about everyone rushing to form armed units. What we have to worry about is to get enough people doing it, in the beginning when the way is not clear. Also not everyone should do the same thing. Some people in the movement are in good positions to work openly. That does not mean they

can't live double lives and do support work for an armed group. Every movement person should be available to at least do support work if called upon by an armed group. What I am calling for here is for the formation of groups whose full occupation would be to operate as armed units furthering the armed struggle systematically with a strategy in formulation. The members would probably also work on jobs, be "housewives," etc., but under false identities, not seeing old friends and family. They would be "underground." (It would be unlikely that anyone except someone very well known and identifiable and sought after by the law would ever have to "hide out.") They would probably have to be in a different place from where they did their movement work. Any revolutionary who has the choice of a trial or prison or going underground in this way should seriously consider going underground IN THIS COUNTRY with a small group to carry on armed struggle.

In the movement, there is an aura of romanticism and mystery around armed struggle, probably because there has been so little of it by revolutionaries in this country present or past. The myth of "underground" is not easily dispelled. Serious revolutionaries are actually often "turned off" of developing the armed struggle because they have been admonished by their left leadership to avoid "separating" themselves from the people. They have been warned against "adventurism" and "anarchy" and "elitism." They are told to be patient, that the people aren't ready, conditions are not right. It is often this same left leadership who promote a strategy of mass demonstrations and strikes and rallies and survival programs divorced from armed struggle or relating it only to struggle in another country. They believe we must have the people with us, or we will be picked off like sitting ducks. This could be called "Hiding behind the skirts of the people" or "Leading the sheep to slaughter." A milder form of organizing is around "political prisoners" such as Angela Davis. Instead of organizing SUPPORT for Jonathan Jackson's ACTION, the organizers hush the issue and organize around what is, they suppose, easier to swallow--Angela's legal right to

buy guns for revolutionaries. Do they think people are stupid? They may be ignorant, but they are not stupid. Certainly organizing could be done around Angela's moral right to buy guns for Jonathan, but only if it were clear how far out and right Jonathan's action was, and how wrong the system is, to justify illegal action. You can't manipulate people into being revolutionaries, or supporting revolutionaries.

There is plenty of support for revolutionary martyrdom, but little for the revolutionary deed. As the RAINBOW PEOPLE (American Indian group) say: We have had enough losers; what we need are some winners. This is another principle of the guerrilla; to survive and grow. The stress is not on personal survival, for one must be willing to take chances and die. But we don't need martyr types; only those who would "rather die on their feet than live on their knees" (Zapata) can be revolutionaries--not those who have nothing to live for or want a cause to die for. Survival of the fighting unit and its growth; taking the offensive; developing and sticking in an area; wearing down the enemy: that is winning. Being on the offensive is crucial--always in attack, not defense position, avoiding confrontation or self-defense whenever possible. No heroics, but rather sneaking, nighttime or daylight, clandestine movements, driving the enemy crazy, because he does not know where you will appear, even who you are.

Everything you do will require meticulous planning and thought. Nothing should be done spontaneously unless it is an emergency. Each action should be accompanied by demands, and your message should get to masses of people, not just the movement. That will not happen automatically even if you were to blow up the Pentagon. Your actions and program should be designed to expose the ruling class and the corporate structure. Careful research into the area will be necessary so that you can decide what to do and so you can give information to the people. It is not enough to just say someone is a pig imperialist who kills babies in Vietnam. That's your word against theirs. You have to prove your case. The people are brainwashed. You must be an advocate, a lawyer for

the revolution. Before the people can or should judge and support revolutionary action they must accept its legitimacy, not its legality.

It is obvious that I am taking for granted the vanguard role of these military action groups. As long as these groups are MILITARY in nature, and to survive they must gain the support of the people, I can not see how they can become "elitist" or separated from the people. If they do they die. When it comes to survival, very real changes occur very rapidly in people.

As for the internal structuring of the group, it is small enough and can be intimate enough for there to be collective decision making and a true equalitarianism. Criticism and self-criticism, in this setting, are not artifices or power tools. Collective leadership is not just a principle or a matter of justness; it is a reality and a necessity. These are tools of personal and group survival. When other groups form in the area, there will develop some communications between groups for more effective programming. Then, for the purposes of security, only one or two people from each group should know each other, and these would constitute a permanent co-ordinating group. These trusted individuals would be selected collectively for their abilities and experience and should not be regarded as "privileged." If they cannot handle the work or are irresponsible they should be replaced but only if necessary. Consistency in matters of security could mean life or death for the movement in an area.

Also, only one or two people in a group should have contact with the person or persons or network that is above ground, and the people above ground should not know who the people in the action group are, or how many or any details of plans or where they live. Good manners and social-type trust should be abandoned in this situation.

Where should these revolutionary action groups operate? We should develop an overall military strategy for revolution in this country based on what is already happening and the vulnerable points of the enemy. But we don't have to have an agreed strategy to begin. We need experience

in armed struggle and an experimental outlook (scientific). Groups should be willing to choose an area that is unfamiliar perhaps, go there "underground" under false identities, not all living together as a group, of course, but rather in pairs probably, everyone meeting together in a secure place as often as is necessary.

I speak of going to another area, because there are a great many movement people in areas that are not key areas tactically, and in universities, etc. Try to figure out where the enemy is weakest. Armed struggle does not mean militant actions in support of organizing or strikes, though there is nothing wrong with militant actions--it's just not guerrilla warfare. Armed struggle means building a functional guerrilla with a strategy, and it is primary, not supportive. Demonstrations and strikes should be formed around support for the guerrilla and its demands.

Some very important books to read to work on strategy: A general history of North America--Leo Huberman's WE THE PEOPLE (Monthly-Review Press) is good; Dee Brown's BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE, which describes the armed struggle of the Indians of the South-West and North West. The writings of James Forman are very important (Black Star Pbl., Detroit); Lundburgh's RICH AND THE SUPERRICH and Domhoff's WHO RULES AMERICA are useful; and the MINIMANUAL of Marighelli. These books, in addition to studying maps of the Western Hemisphere, are helpful in formulating a military strategy suited to this country. They are not put forward as constituting a political ideology or already formed strategy. All the writings of the revolutionaries should be studied in developing ideology.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS HAVE TO DO WITH FEMALE LIBERATION? Everything! We cannot be liberated exclusive of a total social revolution. It was very important for us to develop a women's consciousness and transform the consciousness of the revolutionary movements. Now we must not stop. We are talking about the taking of power, not just saying our piece, aren't we? Women must be in the heart and front of the armed struggle. Otherwise it

probably won't develop and to the extent that it does it will be riddled with "fun and games."

Some might ask if armed struggle is not a "male thing?" If that is so, what is the female alternative to taking power? There are not many ways to take power and gain liberation. In every revolutionary struggle women have been the strength and even the base; the problem has been the suppression of female consciousness and female leadership. We must see to it that the same does not happen here, for more than any place in the world male domination in North American struggle would be catastrophic.

The revolutionary units I describe could be all female or mixed. It is difficult for men to do this kind of work. There is no room for heavy ideology and ego-tripping; it is out of place and turns sour in a survival situation. However, a lot of problems that exist between women and men in a "normal" day to day life diminish in the new situation. The lines of struggle are much clearer, and the necessity for change is absolute.

The degree to which we see to it that we women are participating and developing the revolutionary struggle is the degree to which the female perspective will be dominant in our struggle and in the future society. We must not withdraw from the struggle, now that we have gotten to the point of actually raising female consciousness. We must be a vanguard if we are, and not say we should be. Let us not stop though we may be tired and discouraged and confused. Let us build an army of women who will be so strong, so humane that no one will have to ever "give" us power, and we will not have to "demand" equal rights.

In the farming community where I grew up, the distinction between male and female was absolute. But the women had none of the "privileges" given to middle-class women. Men had some of the privileges reserved for men only. For instance, women were expected to work in the fields doing heavy labor when needed, but men were never expected to do domestic work or care for the children. The care of the children was in the hands of women only. Women helped one another while pregnant and in labor and helped each other with the care of the babies and children. In that way children were raised "communally," but with women only sharing the labor. Also, nearly everyone in the community was related however distant.

In some poor country families, the women did dominate--perhaps more often than did the men. There was a division of labor based on sex, and totally separate spheres of responsibility. But since these poor country men had no power outside the family, and there was no town government even (there was landlord rule), there was no exteriorization of the patriarchal role. Many women ran farms, their husbands serving as sort of foremen. To have such independence or responsibility, though, the woman had to "have a man." "Old maids" and widows were powerless and often tragic.

In general, women talked as loudly and as much as men in mixed company. Any joke about women was met with a more biting joke about men, or the reverse. But most activities were segregated. The women were not passive, nor were they expected to be "soft" and "maternal." They whipped their children, yelled at them, demanded that children entertain themselves, and not bother adults. But the men were not abstract figures; they were constantly present, in and out, living in crowded quarters with the family.

The women basically considered the men as weaklings who must be kept in line to keep them from leaving, and from drinking. Generations of men moving off to the West leaving women in charge of farms and children made for very sturdy women, but also for meandering men. I know my mother feared that my "cowboy" father would on day wlk out on her, or take to drinking.

As it turned out she took to drinking in her fear of losing him.

To the women, equality could only mean equal bondage. If they were to be tied to farm and work, the men should be also. The men wanted the freedom to rove, but also they wanted to have a family and eventually land of their own. They could not have both, and the women kept them in line.

By the time I was born (1938), many of these patterns were beginning to change, so that by the time I had left home (1960), the tenuous cultural patterns had been shattered. I heard much in my childhood about the terrifying years of the depression, when there were no shoes for my brother and sister, barely any food, and how lucky I was. But still we were always poor. It was a poor community, and getting poorer. The city people were buying up the land for wheat and crop subsidies and houses in the country. It got harder and harder for a family like mine to find a farm to rent or sharecrop. We moved a half dozen times the first 6 years of my life, in the same county. There was always talk of going to California or New Mexico, mostly by my mother.

I am reminded of Merle Haggard's song, "Mama's Hungry Eyes." My mother wanted a better life. She had always lived in absolute poverty, her Indian mother dead, her Irish father a drunk, and she raised in the dirty streets of a river town, then in foster homes. She blamed my father for our poverty, and he blamed his bad luck, and the Roosevelts, the Easterners, the rich in general. Mostly though my mother and father fought with each other.

In the late 40's and early 50's, many of the dirt farmers went to work in the city at defense plants, and moved away. My mother wanted my father to do that, so she could have a refrigerator, stove, running water, a bathroom, closets, like all city folk seemed to have even when they were poor. My father refused to move to the city; he was afraid of starving if he could not raise his own food. But finally he did stop trying to make a living farming, and took a job driving a gas truck, and hundreds of odd jobs. Finally in the mid-60's he gave up and moved to the city, working as a roofer.

It was in the early fifties that movies and television invaded the

country culture, introducing new (urban, northern) patterns. The country folk were mystified by the city people on the screen, and they were humble in their ignorance and roughness. The women were embarrassed by the soft, white ladies in low cut gowns with their jewels and high-heeled shoes up against their own brown, leathery skin and muscles, and drab work clothes and heavy shoes. The men felt more "manly" toward the soft-voiced, tender ladies on the screen than toward their own unsightly women.

The image of the male which Hollywood created was not very different from the country man, especially the cowboy. The female image, however, was totally different from the country women's reality. They were to change completely--physically and psychologically, and continue working hard. It didn't work. The sight of country women in rhinestones and platform heels and soft dresses over their muscular bodies was a pitiful one. So the men left them, if not in reality then in fantasy for Hollywood or the big city. They began to spend more time in the city in bars, the barmaids looking pretty good through a drunken haze.

The women tried to create the glamour they could not attain in their daughters. "Pretty as a movie star" was a common way of describing a girl who fit the image. The image was Shirley Temple with curly blond hair, blue eyes, pink cheeks, and a soft round body. I was tall, very dark, thin, with very straight hair, brown eyes, and big feet. But mama tried: She took me to get permanents and bought me skin lightener and squeezed my feet into shoes too small, permanently deforming them.

Poverty is a reflection of bad character, of evil in America, where anyone with any brains and the desire and willing to work can not only make it but be rich--so they say. Poor people despise and blame themselves and they think the rich are smarter than they and deserve to be where they are.

A smart country girl lies about her humble background, when she goes to the city to work, so she can catch a city man. If she does not, she will have to live like her mother. Ashamed of her class and country status, she probably will not in her lifetime discover her position as a woman, though she is fully aware that she is subservient to men.