

Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Convention
September 1970, Philadelphia
Workshop Reports¹

WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONALISM AND RELATIONS
WITH LIBERATION STRUGGLES AROUND THE WORLD

The Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Convention supports the demand of the Chinese people for the liberation of Taiwan. We demand the liberation of Okinawa and the Pacific Territories occupied by U.S. and European imperialist countries. The Revolutionary Peoples' Constitutional Convention supports the struggles and endorses the government of the provisional revolutionary government of South Vietnam, the royal government of National Union of Cambodia, and the Pathet Lao.

Huey P. Newton
Minister of Defense
Black Panther Party

In order to insure our international constitution, we, the people of Babylon, declare an international bill of rights: that all people are guaranteed the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that all people of the world be free from dehumanization and intervention in their internal affairs by a foreign power. Therefore, if fascist actions in the world attempt to achieve imperialist goals, they will be in violation of the law and dealt with as criminals.

We are in full support with the struggle of the Palestinian people for liberation of Palestine from Zionist colonialism, and their goals of creating a democratic state where all Palestinians, Jews, Christians and Moslems are equal.

We propose solidarity with the liberation struggle of the Puerto Rican people, who now exist as a colony of the United States and have many groups who are fighting for liberation, such as C.A.L. (Armed Commandos for Liberation), M.I.R.A. and the Young Lords Party.

We propose that, whereas the universities in the United States are used by the imperialist system to provide the knowledge that that system uses to perpetrate the exploitation of the Third World and repression against national liberation struggles, we propose that the universities and their resources be turned over to use for, by, and of the peoples of the world so that they may implement their vision of a new socialist world.

1. The United States is an international federation of bandits and we denounce its rights to nationhood.
2. We should provoke the destruction of all racists and fascists in capitalistic countries and the world over. We should not rest until all of them are wiped off the face of the earth.
3. We support all liberation struggles throughout the world and we oppose all reactionary struggles throughout the world.

¹ Mimeographed originals in the collection of George Katsiaficas.

4. Our constitution will guarantee the right of all people to travel and communicate with all peoples throughout the world.
5. We stand resolute in our unrelenting convictions to destroy Pig Amerikka.
6. Wherever the word "men" appears it should be replaced with the word "people" to express solidarity with the self-determination of woman and to do away with all remnants of male supremacy, once and for all.
7. We propose that we declare a just peoples' war against capitalism and remain in that state until capitalism is abolished from the face of the Earth.
8. We should have an organization or army to defend the kidnapping and terror of pigs as a means of freeing political prisoners of war.
9. We oppose such organizations as NATO and SEATO and all lackeys of U.S. imperialism.
10. We demand immediate withdrawal of all American forces around the world.
11. Reparations should be made to oppressed people throughout the world, and we pledge ourselves to take the wealth of this country and make it available as reparations.
12. We will not allow or accept this country going into other countries and utilizing their wealth.
13. We will administer all foreign aid given by the U.S. by an international body composed of representatives from revolutionary people.
14. We will use our more advanced revolutionary brothers and sisters to better the struggle.
15. We demand an end to the genocide caused by sterilization programs in different forms-nationally and international.

All Power to the People

SELF-DETERMINATION OF STREET PEOPLE

What we want:

We want an immediate end to the crimes of pimping, prostitution, number rackets, gambling, dope pushing, fencing, loan sharking, sexism, rape, theft, pick pockets, bribery, extortion, union corruption, etc., committed on the people by organized crime syndicates which work hand in hand with the pig power structure and those lackeys within our communities who refuse to deal with these problems.

1. Creation of investigative councils run by the people.
2. Encourage informers to turn over information to these councils.
3. Remove by force those elements which have been exposed.
4. Confiscation or destruction of property controlled by organized crime syndicates.
5. The encouragement of all progressive forces and elements to change corruption in government and enforce revolutionary justice.

Education--

All people will be provided with the kind of schooling they desire and need. All levels of schooling will be provided free by the government. Schooling must be non-compulsory. The community will control the schools, education, curriculum, and educators. Education must be part and parcel of the political realities of the time. Education must always serve the people by teaching the true nature of this decadent society.

Dope--

We recognize that hard drugs (smack, speed, etc.) are counterrevolutionary, sapping the strength of the people in their struggle. This problem must be dealt with on two levels. The seller of hard drugs must be eradicated from the community by any means necessary. The user must be helped to rid himself of addiction by the people. We urge setting up of a People's Rehabilitation Center by the people.

We recognize that psychedelic drugs (acid, mescaline, grass) are important in developing the revolutionary consciousness of the people. However, after the revolutionary consciousness has been achieved, these drugs may become a burden. No revolutionary action should be attempted while under the influence of any drug. We urge that these drugs be made legal. Or rather than they should not be illegal, that is, there should be no law made against them.

Land--

We hold that private property is theft.

We demand that the use of parks, streets, rural areas, and unused land to carry on our revolutionary struggle for survival. We will seize the land we need by any means necessary. Streets and urban parks must be liberated to be used for people's needs such as: 1) mass meetings, 2) concerts and recreation, 3) sleeping area, and other everyday activities.

Rural land and large state parks must be liberated to be used for: military training in the techniques of self defense and urban guerilla warfare in order to fight a war of liberation, and land to be used for farming and other productive needs.

Grievance--

All private rural land has been stolen from the people. It originally belonged to the people. It is being used for capitalistic goals and is being destroyed ecologically.

Food, Housing, Clothing, Health--

We demand the right for all people to have free food, housing, free clothing, free medical care and all other rights established by the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention.

Recognizing our responsibility as revolutionary street people in this period of transition--

1. We call for free de-centralized medical care and the availability of medical information (curative and preventive) for all the people in the neighborhood to meet the daily situations in a revolutionary manner.
2. We call for the establishment of free inter-relative community food cooperatives to collect, exchange, store, distribute and provide food and cooking facilities for the community needs.
3. We demand community control of the means of production of clothing and adequate sharing and distributing of clothing to meet the needs of the people.
4. We demand the replacement of deteriorated housing with the construction of adequate low-income housing which is available for those people whose housing is replaced and the control of community removal programs by the people in those communities.

Finally, we call for the formation of Revolutionary People's Community Councils to be responsible for the implementation of all collective needs of the community.

WORKSHOP ON THE SELF DETERMINATION OF WOMEN

--We recognize the right of all women to be free.

--As women, we recognize that our struggle is against a racist, capitalist, sexist system that oppresses all minority people.

--This capitalistic country is run by a small ruling class who use the ideas and practices of chauvinism and racism to divide, control and oppress the masses of people for their own greedy gains and profit.

--We want equal status in a society that does not exploit or murder other people.

--We will fight for a socialist system that guarantees full, creative, non-exploitative life for all human beings.

--We will not be free until all oppressed people are free.

FAMILY:

Whereas in a capitalist culture, the institution of the family has been used as an economic tool or instrument, not serving the needs of the people. We declare that we will not relate to the private ownership of people. We encourage and support the continued growth of communal households and communal relationships and other alternatives to the patriarchal family.

We call for socialization of housework and child care with the sharing of work by men and women.

Women must have the right to decide when and if we want to have children. There should be free and safe birth control, including abortion, available upon demand. There should be no forced sterilization or mandatory birth control programs which are now used as genocide against third world sisters and against poor people.

Every woman has the right to decide whether she will be homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

EMPLOYMENT:

Whereas women in a class society have been continuously exploited, through their work, both in their home and outside their home, we call for:

1. guaranteed full, equal and non-exploitative employment, controlled collectively by the working people.
2. Guaranteed adequate income for all. This would entail the sharing of necessary, non-creative tasks and the maximum utilization of revolutionary technology to eliminate these tasks.
3. An end to the sexism which forces women into the lowest paying service jobs and the racism that insures that third world women will be the lowest paid of all.

4. Guaranteed paid maternity leave.

EDUCATION:

Whereas women historically have been deprived of education, or only partially educated and mis-educated in those areas deemed appropriate for us by those ruling powers who would benefit by our ignorance; we call for:

1. the right to determine our own goals.
2. The end of sex roles regarding training or skills.
3. Self-knowledge: the history of women, our relation to society and the knowledge of our bodies.
4. Guaranteed technological and professional training and in the interim, special programs should be set up in every field in which women have been denied equality, such as child care.
5. Men to be trained in those areas in which they have been denied equality, such as child care.
6. Control of non-authoritarian education by the people it serves in the language and cultural style of the people.

SERVICES:

Whereas the services provided for the people have been inadequate, unavailable or too expensive, administered in a racist and sexist manner, we declare that:

1. All services-health care, housing, food, clothing, transportation and education-should be controlled by the people: and should be free.
2. Services for women should be controlled by the women of the community which they serve.

MEDIA:

The mass media is not permitted to exploit women's bodies in order to sell or promote products. Women must be treated with respect and dignity at all times by the peoples' media. The peoples' media will work to eliminate sexist terminology: he, man, mankind; when we mean person, people, humanity.

SELF DEFENSE:

Whereas the struggle of the people must be borne equally by all the people fighting for their liberation, we declare that women have the right to bear arms. Women should be fully trained and educated in the art of self-defense and the defense of the peoples' nation. We recognize that it is our duty to defend all oppressed people.

WOMEN IN OUR OWN RIGHT:

Whereas we do not believe that any person is the property of any other person, we declare that women have the right to bear their own surnames, not names determined by their husbands or

fathers. We demand that all organizations, ranging from health insurance to social security to banks, deal with women in our own right as people, rather than as the property of men.

EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT:

Whereas all revolutionary people must share equally in the decisions which effect them, we are dedicated to the national salvation of all humanity.

All Power to the People!!

STATEMENT OF DEMANDS FROM THE MALE REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL GAY LIBERATION

WE DEMAND:

1. The right to be gay anytime, anyplace.
2. The right to free physiological change and modification of sex upon demand.
3. The right of free dress and adornment.
4. That all modes of human sexual self-expression deserve protection of the law and social sanction.
5. Every child's right to develop in a non-sexist, non-possessive atmosphere, which is the responsibility of all people to create.
6. That a free educational system present the entire range of human sexuality, without advocating any form or style...that sex roles and sex determined skills not be fostered by the schools.
7. That language be modified so that no gender takes priority.
8. That the judicial system be run by the people through people's courts and that all people be tried by members of their peer group.
9. That gays be represented in all governmental and community institutions.
10. That organized religions be condemned for aiding in the genocide of gay people, and enjoined from teaching hatred and superstition.
11. That psychiatry and psychology be enjoined from advocating a preference for any form of sexuality, and the enforcement of that preference by shock treatment, brainwashing, imprisonment, etc.
12. The abolition of the nuclear family because it perpetuates the false categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality.
13. The immediate release and reparations for gay political prisoners from prisons and mental institutions; the support of gay political prisoners by all other political prisoners.
14. That gays determine the destiny of their own communities.
15. That all people share equally the labor and products of society, regardless of sex or sexual orientation.

16. That technology be used to liberate all peoples of the world from drudgery.
17. The full participation of gays in the Peoples' Revolutionary Army.
18. Finally, the end of domination of one person by another.

Gay Power to Gay People

All Power to the People

Seize the Time

WORKSHOP: THE FAMILY AND THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

1. The discussion was not truly representative of all oppressed groups, since, for example, there were no children present.
2. Some people felt that the traditional family was so oppressive that it must be abolished and replaced by a different family grouping. Others felt that there were positive things in the traditional family that should be perpetuated in the new world. It was also pointed out that we can't predict what the traditional family might be like under socialism.
3. It was agreed that children are not possessions and are not to be treated as possessions by parents, collectives or the state.
4. General agreement was that children are entitled to the broadest possible education.
5. Children are entitled to be brought up to have the greatest trust, confidence and sense of sharing with the other people in their society.
6. The responsibility for creating those conditions that would enable a child to be a whole human being rests with all of us.
7. We agreed that children's feelings and viewpoints should be respected.
8. It was agreed that children have the right to be breast fed.
9. A child must be reared to be sexually free and have his choices respected.
10. Children are essential to adults as teachers because children naturally resist oppression.
11. Children must be loved in a truly revolutionary manner. Children are people.
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!!!!

CONTROL AND USE OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM AND POLITICAL PRISONERS OF WAR

The present judicial system in the United States is nothing more than an instrument and tool of class rule, representing the will of the racist ruling class, made into a law for everyone. The laws themselves and the procedural aspects such as bail, cater to the customs and mores of the ruling class.

At this time, in the transitional stage prior to the post revolutionary society, the call for peoples' revolutionary tribunals will be made. The function of these tribunals will be as the peoples' tribunals for revolutionaries who might be at the same time, on trial in the existing legal system of the ruling class. These tribunals will be decentralized and arise out of the area where the incidents or alleged crimes themselves took place.

While the struggle is still being waged, the people must learn to manipulate and utilize the existing court system, through political trials, in order to develop a revolutionary political consciousness and illustrate the true nature of this corrupt legal system before the people.

The courts should serve the people and in this racist society that can only be done by a jury of one's peers. Understanding of the laws is a matter of interpretation which directly reflects one's social, economic and racial background. So if one is to be judged, he must be judged by a jury of his peers instead of by those with the standards and ideas of the racist ruling class.

If we are to talk of creating a legal system that has its foundation in man's human nature, we must talk of transforming the entire society. Therefore it becomes necessary to define for ourselves what is criminal.

Therefore:

Principles are the foundation by which the will of the people is insured. And if we are to talk of legality, criminals and crime, we must first talk of the ultimate crime. That is the crime of exploitation of man by man and the legal system that endorses and upholds it.

Since exploitation deprives people of the necessities of life and the fruits of their labor, it is the supreme crime and the exploiters are the supreme criminals.

We feel that all of the natural recourses of the earth belongs to, and any exploitation, usurpation of man's labors and of the natural resources of the earth is an attack on man's survival and a crime. Any lack of action that denies human beings their right to exist are crimes against the people. Therefore, if the people are to control their destiny and thereby assure their own survival, then we must have a legal system that insures the abolishment of all forms of exploitation.

We recognize the armed body of the state, the fascist police force, is the protector and perpetrator of criminal acts and crimes. Not because the police per se are criminal by nature or criminal men, but because the function of the police and the armed forces in a capitalist society is criminal by nature. So we feel that the police should come from the community in which they live and that there should be no distinction between the people and the police because of their function.

Every man was born and therefore he has a right to live, a right to share in the wealth. If he is denied the right to work then he is denied the right to live. If he can't work, he deserves a high standard of living, regardless of his education or skill. It should be up to the administrators of the economic system to design a program for providing work or a livelihood for the people. To deny him this is to deny him life.

Because the present constitution in words guarantees us the right to live, in practice we are denied this most basic human right, we list the following guidelines as essential to our continued survival and prosperity:

1. All juries must consist of one's peers.
2. All courts should be peoples' courts.
3. All decisions of the people should be implemented in a collective manner by the people.
4. No judge, no policeman, no advocate should serve more than one year in any position of administrative trust without being reviewed by the people.

These guidelines, we, the people feel, are the best pre-requisites needed to insure a just and humane system.

RIGHTS OF OPPRESSED PEOPLE AND POLITICAL PRISONERS

1. Because of the genocidal acts of the government of the United States, against the people of this country and the world:

Oppressed people (any class, ethnic group or social group that has its rights restricted by any means by any other group) have an absolute right and responsibility to defend themselves by any means necessary and effective against all forms of aggression, whether this aggression be by a direct act of violence or by the violation of their human rights, among which are the rights to food, clothing, shelter, adequate medical care, education and the inalienable right to self determination.

2. The people have not only the right to self-defense by any means necessary, but also the right to organize against all oppression and exploitation, to alter or abolish all existing legal structures, and to reorganize the society for the benefit of all the people.

3. Because the legal system of the U.S. exists to serve the ruling class and facilitate oppression and exploitation of the people, those people that are held in jails and prisons have not necessarily been incarcerated for crimes against the people; that therefore all prisoners be returned to their communities for trial by the peoples' court under a revolutionary process.

4. That all charges be dropped against the peoples' leaders so that they can return to leadership of their communities from jail and from exile because they have not committed any crimes against the people...Bobby Seale, the Conn. 9, N.Y. 21, L.A. 18, Angela Davis, Soledad Brothers, Ahmed Evans, Martin Sostre. We say that while held, all political prisoners of war must be treated under international agreements regarding humane treatment.

CONTROL AND USE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

1. Liberation schools set up for pre-school age children.
2. Entering school with a political consciousness.
3. Community control of schools:
 - a. Parents controlling curriculum
 - b. Community elected board officers
 - c. Power to hire and fire teachers belongs to community elected board.
4. Intellectual and cultural education shall be available to all persons:
 - a. Education will deal with the means of survival of the various portions of society
 - b. Education for students will deal with the student as an individual
 - c. The working of the system or political education should be taught for constant political consciousness
 - d. Schools and institutions will be free and make advanced study available to any person
 - e. The schools will encourage all persons to expand and realize their creative aspirations. it will especially encourage study in socialist society, human survival, and the truth and workings of the present society.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS

1. Students in any school will have the right of freedom of speech, dress and assembly
2. Student government should be controlled by the students
 - a. No rules set up for who runs for office, ex., grades, conduct, politics, participation in other actives
 - b. Student controlled press (paper), student board to decide what goes in paper and what does not go into it
 - c. Freedom to assembly whenever problems arise that the students feel should be solved collectively on a face to face basis
 - d. Student activities not mandatory
 - e. Assemblies left to student decision in accordance with what they feel should be solved relevant to those things that directly relate to them
 - f. No guards in schools for any reason. Community and students will deal with all problems, major and minor
 - g. Students decide their courses according to what they want and think they need. No set curriculum. Courses will be fit to students, not students to the courses.
 - h. New grading system established.

We the people believe that education should serve the people. It should expose the true nature of this society. Education should assist in teaching us our socialist ideas, and stand as a basis for our socialist practice.

The power of education should and will belong in the hands of the people. We believe that education plays a major role in this system of programming. So we the people must generate and seize this tool of the power structure and turn it into a weapon to be used against it.

All Power to the People

WORKSHOP: CONTROL & USE OF MILITARY AND POLICE

Proposals on the Military

1. National defense shall be provided by a system of peoples' militia, trained in guerilla warfare, on a voluntary basis and consisting of both men and women.
2. The U.S. shall not maintain a standing army, since historically a standing army has been used for offensive actions against the people of the United States and around the world.
3. No genocidal weapons shall be manufactured or used.
4. All presently existing offensive equipment and installations shall be made inoperable and unserviceable for its original purpose.
5. The people shall be educated and informed on the action of the militia, and all records shall be open to the public.
6. The government shall be prohibited from sending any personnel, funds, or equipment to any nation for military or police purposes. It should also be prohibited from spending more than 10% of the national budget for any military or police purposes. This can be overridden by a majority vote in a national referendum.
7. No person shall serve full-time in the militia; those serving in the militia shall be paid a fair wage.
8. Militia members shall be governed by the laws of the community in which they serve (or governed by the laws of the nation??)
9. National defense shall be provided by a system of peoples' militias.
10. There shall be no conscription for any armed forces.
11. No peoples' militias shall be stationed outside national boundaries.
12. Government people and military personnel should be defined as one and the same, and not as separate entities in or of the power structure.
13. The people shall have the right to bear arms.
 - a. No citizen shall be prohibited the possession, control or purchase of small arms without the due process of law.
 - b. Free programs shall be set up in the training and use of small arms.

Organization, Use of, and Control of the Police

1. The police force shall be a rotating volunteer non-professional body coordinated by the Police Control Board from a (weekly) list of volunteers from each community section. The Police

Control Board, its policies, as well as the police leadership, shall be chosen by direct popular majority vote of the community.

2. There shall not be set up, or permitted to exist, a national body of police, or secret body of police, nor shall un-uniformed police be permitted to exist.
3. Any citizen can bring charges against any member or officer of the police force before the Control Board, and the Control Board shall have the power to relieve that member or officer of the police force of his or her duty.
4. Community Police Councils may set up working relations and exchange information with police forces in other communities.
5. The purpose of the people's police force shall be to serve and protect the community.
6. No person can serve on both the police force and the Control Board at the same time.
7. Any member of the Control Board can be removed by direct, popular vote of the people.
8. Funds for community police and for the community's Control Board shall be provided for by national government under direction of the local Control Board.

HEALTH

Health care is a right, not a privilege. We say that comprehensive medical care should not be sold as a commodity by a class of exploiters, interested in profit only. We recognize this profit motive is the outgrowth of a capitalist system which thrives on the exploitation of people and divides them on racist, sexist and class lines. Our solution is to make all aspects of health care meet the demands of all people through prevention, education and community control of health services.

1. Prevention (health checkups)
 - a. nutrition (educating people with regard to eating the right diets)
 - b. Maternal and child care to put an end to:
 1. genocide
 2. experimentation in the hospitals of oppressed people
 3. experimentation in the public school system as a so-called mental health program
 4. exploitation of children's behavior; children are given tranquilizers and put in a category as threats to the capitalist system.
 - c. Senior citizens services (the right to be able to work as long as they can function)
 - d. Regular examinations for all people
 - e. Better detection facilities (more emphasis should be placed on diseases that are more prevalent in minority group areas, e.g. sickle cell anemia)
 - f. Medical teams should be sent out into the communities to seek out diseases and illnesses.
2. Education
 - a. health education of the masses (symptoms of diseases in the home, first aid in the home)
 - b. training and retraining of present health workers
 - c. ending professionalism (titles, etc.)
 - d. open admissions to all who want medical training
3. Community Control
 - a. right of self determination to have children (not to be told by the capitalist system how many to have)
 - b. right to adequate economic means
 - c. community boards should run all medical institutions

4. Mental Health

We consider mental health to include both physical and mental well being. We recognize that much of the mental illness in our society is caused by the oppression of the capitalist system where psychiatry is used as a tool of fascism. It has also been used against homosexuals.

WE ARE OPPOSED TO THE MEDICAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX OF MEDICINE. WE BELIEVE IN SOCIALIZED MEDICINE. INHERENT IN THIS CONCEPT IS PREVENTION AND FREE COMPREHENSIVE, COMMUNITY CONTROLLED MEDICINE. THE ONLY WAY TO SOCIALIZED MEDICINE IS THROUGH REVOLUTION.

REVOLUTIONARY ART

The workshop on the Revolutionary Arts and Artists hereby submit the following declaration to the Plenary Session of the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention:

We Recognize:

1. That all people are born with a creative potential and that the society must guarantee that every person has the opportunity to develop and express that potential.
2. That art is a creative expression of a people's culture or way of life.
3. We recognize the right of every people's culture to its form of expression and that those forms of expressions should be preserved, encouraged and developed.
4. We recognize that art should be related to the interest, needs and aspirations of the people.