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Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation
Building a Multi-Racial/Multi-National Revolutionary Anarchist Organization
1997

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We cannot imagine an anarchist revolution in the United States that is not multi-racial and multi-national. White supremacy is so central to the workings of US society that a movement that does not involve the full participation of the masses of Black, Latino, Asian, and Native peoples cannot realize our vision of a free society. Accordingly, if Love and Rage is to carry out the tasks that we believe are required of a revolutionary anarchist organization, we must become a multi-racial/multi-national organization

An organization that does not have deep roots in the communities of all oppressed peoples cannot hope to develop a revolutionary theory and practice that can win real freedom for all people. Only a multi-racial/multi-national organization can hope to develop the collective political perspective necessary to take on the

system we are up against. We do not want to be a multi-racial/multi-national organization just to make ourselves feel good, but rather because we believe this is a prerequisite for making revolution in this country. Building such an organization is profoundly different and more difficult than just participating in or building multi-racial or multi-national mass movements. To do so we must confront a number of difficult issues.

With a few exceptions, the experiences of predominantly white organizations seeking to transform themselves into multi-racial and multi-national organizations has not been a good one. The recurrent spectacle of self-appointed white vanguards bringing the "correct line" to people of color has given rise to a legitimate skepticism on the part of many activists of color about the project of building multi-racial/multi-national formations. If our efforts are to succeed, we must be willing to learn as well as teach.

An alternative to building multi-racial/multi-national organizations is the idea of an alliance of organizations, each based among different racial or national groups. While we uphold the right and necessity of oppressed peoples to form their own organizations, we do not think these should be the only type of organizations that should be built. We believe that large numbers of white people will need to participate in any successful social revolution in this country. This can only happen if the deeply-held loyalties to white power and privilege are broken. As history has taught us, it's been the struggles of people of color that have fractured the allegiances of whites to the system of white supremacy. It has been in multi-racial/multi-national organizations that the best fighters against white supremacy among white people have been schooled.

While we recognize the deep roots white supremacy has in the consciousness of most white people, we do not believe that only a handful of exemplary white people can be won to fighting white supremacy. We believe an end to this whole rotten system is in the ultimate interests of the vast majority of humanity, including the majority of white people. Accordingly, we reject the notion

of the "white solidarity organization" that acts under the leadership of this or that people of color organiza tion. The abdication of white people of the responsibility of thinking for themselves does not magically erase the colonial dynamic that exists between white people and people of color. The evasion of struggle over questions of principle for fear of being unpopular or criticized by people of color can only be called the politics of guilt. Moreover, the decision to take leadership from a particular organization is itself an intervention in the internal affairs of the community in which the organization is based. There is no escape from the logic of this society other than a revolutionary commitment to change it.

Since its founding, Love and Rage has had a number of experiences that have taught us valuable lessons about what it means to try to become a truly multi-national organization. We have committed both of the kinds of mistakes discussed above, and we are still not the kind of organization we want to be. With the notable excep tion of our Mexican section, we remain a mostly white and middle-class organization.

While we recognize that we still have much to learn from many different struggles, we do not think the main obstacle to winning people of color to Love and Rage is our internationalism, our anarchism, or our criticisms of any kind of nation alism. Our biggest obstacle is that Love and Rage is still culturally very white and therefore not the most immediately inviting place for people of color. Many Love and Rage members came to revolutionary anarchist politics through the punk and alternative music scenes, which, in the United States at least, are overwhelmingly white. People of color who join Love and Rage today will do so because of our politics and despite our perceived whiteness. Smashing this culture of whiteness is a major task in becoming the kind of truly inclusive organization we are committed to building.

We have been deeply influenced by many national liberation struggles in the Third World and the revolutionary nationalism of people of color organizations in North America. But we are not na-

tionalists, and we have criticisms of many people we respect and admire in struggle. To us the historical record is clear: nationalism does not offer an adequate program for human liberation and in too many instances, so-called revolutionary nationalism has provided justification for the maintenance of systems of oppression. And in an increasingly globalized culture and economy we question whether national liberation struggles will occupy the central place in the world-wide struggle for freedom that they have for the past century.

We support the right of all oppressed peoples to self-determination. This means the right to choose between full political separation or simply autonomous cultural and community organizations. We do not believe that building a multi-racial/multi-national organization is in contradiction with this principle. In practice, the freedom to fully exercise this right of self-determination can only be won through a revolution involving people of every race and nationality.

The people of all colors who are most likely to be drawn to Love and Rage will be those who have been influenced to one degree or another by revolutionary nationalism but who reject that nation-state and who have embraced a broader politics that doesn't subordinate questions of gender, sexuality, or class to those of race and nation.

Smashing white supremacy and white privilege is a priority for Love and Rage. We see the project of building a multi-racial and multi-national revolutionary, anarchist organization as a necessary part of that fight. We understand that in order to become such an organization, we will have to go through some serious changes. We know these changes will not all be easy. We are fighting 500 years of racist history. We know that our responsibility is not merely to diversify our membership but to transform ourselves as individuals and as an organization. Because we are revolutionaries, we have faith that this can be done.