

CONFERENCE CRITIQUE

TO: ALL PARTICIPANTS OF AUGUST 1-3 15ADM NAWO CONFERENCE
FROM: NEW AFRIKAN WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION - NEW YORK
SUBJ: CONFERENCE CRITIQUE
DATE: OCTOBER 1, 15ADM

FREE THE LAND!!

On August 1-3 15ADM, seven women representing Tallahassee Fla., Jackson Miss., New Orleans La., and the metropolitan area of New York met in Hazelhurst Mississippi for what can be described as a mini conference to deal with the coordination of the New Afrikan Womens Organization across the United States.

Outlined to be discussed in the initial memorandum (calling for the conference) from New Afrikans Womens Organization (NAWO) in the National Territory were the following; Principles, Goals & Focus, Policies, Strategy and Discipline of NAWO, and working papers for the first national conference of NAWO personel. In a second memorandum sent from New York it was suggested that the participants submit the following paper; "The Need for a New Afrikan Womens Organization and its Relationship to the Black Liberation Movement." This paper was to include a historical perspective of how Afrikan/New Afrikan women have contributed to their respective liberation struggles. The purpose of such a paper was to hopefully have a document (from combined papers) that could be used for national dissemination to inform and organize Black revolutionary women in the United States.

Although this conference had a great deal of merit the authors of this critique are of the opinion that what was decided on by the group, as NAWO's national posture was premature, and in some instances incorrect given the limited number of women that participated.

In this paper We will attempt to give an objective critique of the final document and the conference as a whole.

DOCUMENT - It should be noted that this document is not for national dissemination, and only for the use of the participants of the conference. It (document) is to be used as a referral and guide when organizing, and speaks to NAWO's discipline, goals, code and some historical background. I will take each section of the document and discuss what i feel is incorrect and/or what is needed to be changed.

A. Historical Background - This part of the document speaks very well to the contributions of Afrikan women but is somewhat devoid of the contributions of New Afrikan women especially revolutionary Black women in this country. It is incumbent upon us that We include the likes of Sandra Pratt, Alicia Olawo, Nanny Prosser, Queen Mother Moore, and Sister Dara Abubakari, since it is infact a New Afrikan Womens Organization We are attempting to build. Although We must not negate or ignore the contributions of our Afrikan sisters on the continent, We must begin to propagate the great contributions of our revolutionary sisters here in the United States. Especially since Afrikan women organizations and formations never include in their documents the contributions of New Afrikan women.

B. Introductory Statement - I find this statement to be extremely arrogant, and untire. NAWO IS NOT a national coordinating body of revolutionary nationalist women. Presently NAWO is no more than groupings of revolutionary nationalist women in four cities committed to the national liberation of New Afrikan people within the borders of the United States. Seven women representing four cities cannot honestly state that they are a national body unless they have been designated to be such by a larger national body of revolutionary women. One of the primary contridictions raised by various individuals was that NAWO New York had assumed the responsibilitiy as the

national coordinating body of NAWO. To maintain this statement in our document and/or posture will be a duplication of what NAWO New York was criticized for.

C. Need For A New Afrikan Womens Organization - This part should be expanded and more defined. It should speak more to why a NAWO is needed for the liberation of our people, and how it works in direct concert with the larger Black Liberation Movement even though it a womens organization.

D. Goal Statement - The goals outlined are good for general purposes however the strategy to achieve the goals leaves no room for selectivity, ie., given the present number of working NAWO cadre in New York, it is physically impossible for us to actively and effectively work at all that is outlined in this statement, and it leaves us little time to pursue already existing strategies, goals and programs such as our program to exonerate Sister Assata Shakur. Again We (NAWO N.Y.) would like to suggest that NAWO personnel be able to tap into existing programs, and institutions such as BAAANA, Mapinduzi, New Life, etc. as well as creating new formations where there is a void.

E. Code - Number 2 of the code should be reworded. As it reads now it gives the illusion of NAWO being a Provisional Government formation. It's present wording makes it difficult to recruit and develop a working alliance with women not under the discipline of the Provisional Government. There are many viable Black revolutionary nationalist women who do not fully agree with the Provisional Government's ideology but are NAWO material.

Number 3 needs to be defined, exactly what is a conscious citizen of the Republic of New Afrika?

One of the primary contradictions with this document is that it cannot be used as a mass document. As stated before it is only for the use of those who participated in the conference. This is a grave error since

what is needed in this period is a unified statement from various revolutionary nationalist women speaking to the need of such an organization; a document that can begin to organize women into a predictable administrative entity. A document that will precipitate the organizing of an infra - structure that can professionally begin to plan both long and short range strategy for our movement.

Our present document can only be used in four cities, and basically can only organize that which is fundamentally already organized. In essence We are only speaking to ourselves and not reaching those women We would like to join our ranks.

CONFERENCE - Prior to attending the conference the New York cadre of NAWO communicated with Sister Fulani via telephone and mail asking for clarity regarding the nature of the conference. Some of the issues We questioned were; 1) if the conference was for Provisional Government cadre only 2) was the conference for national territory cadre, or was it in fact the mini conference previously discussed by NAWO and other sisters for the purpose of organizing for a larger conference, 3) who was to attend the conference, 4) where the conference was to take place and 5) who were the organizers and how the conference was going to be coordinated.

In our communications to the Sister We expressed clearly that We were interested in attending the conference, and helping with drawing up the agenda if in fact it was to be the previously discussed mini conference.

Our criticisms here is that the conference was not the mini conference. It was in fact a conference of primarily Provisional Government cadre and it lacked national representation. Some of the sisters who attended were not on the original list of participants. There was a lack of organ-

ization and clarity on the conference site, and no collective process in the planning of the agenda.

New York cadre was led to believe that the conference was to be the mini conference, it was in light of this belief that We attended the conference despite the prior contradictions between the Sisters in New York and New Orleans.

Agenda (see attached copy) - Our criticism of the agenda is that it didn't speak to the issues of organizing for a larger conference of revolutionary nationalist Black women involved in the national liberation struggle.

One particular topic on the agenda; "New York presentation on NAWO obstacles", warrents much criticism. The topic should have never been placed on the agenda. Certainly We have had obstacles in New York, however We have struggled principle and dilegently to overcome these obstacles and have moved forward with the work that has to be done. Those of us attending the conference came in comradely love and concern.

We took issue with this topic and asked that it be removed from the agenda, it was, however during the second day of the conference the topic was discussed. It was brought up at a time when the issue on the floor was unrelated to the New York - New Orleans contridictions. We are of the opinion that this contridiction had been principlly resolved in New York, and there was no principle reason for presenting it at the conference.

Training - This was an aspect of the conference in which We were totally unprepared for, unprepared in the sense that We didn't know that this was on the agenda until We arrived.

Criticism here is that such intense training should have occurred after a development process. One doesn't teach a baby to walk before he/she has developed the motor development techniques needed to reach that level.

Some participants in this training lack an assessment of their ability to perform on this level.

In making a criticism one should also suggest remedies to the errors. Here We would like to suggest that if such intense training should take place again a security profile of all participants should be made. This profile should include personal data, personal characteristics, participants ability to withstand stress, personal political history and other factors necessary to determine the participants readiness for such training. - This profile should be done by military advisors from respective areas.

In an analysis of our past mistakes We have experienced time and time again breaks in our security. Both Brothers and Sisters have been exposed to too much internal information before they were committed to the military level of our struggle and before they had been taken through any development process.

It is our understanding that a security check was made of participants based upon one or two people's knowledge of them. This system was faulty in that there was no concrete way of knowing who was going to attend the conference until the day of arrival.

As We stated before the conference had a great deal of merit, it provided the women that attended the conference with the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas on the various programs they were presently engaged in. Militarily it provided valuable acute training in weaponry. The persons that lead the various military classes should be commended for being both clear and thorough in their presentation.

The problem we have with this internal development is not with what was discussed and taught, but the process of selection for participation

and the proposed intentions of how such training would be used.

We hope that the criticism we have given in this critique be viewed objectively and hopefully we all can struggle around them.

It is our wish to move foward to build a strong and vital revolutionary nationalist women organization.

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