

Constitution of the Third World Peoples' Alliance

Preamble

The Third World Peoples' Alliance (TWPA) is an international coalition of autonomous organizations that is committed to the total liberation of the oppressed people of the Third World in every aspect--economic, political, cultural, and social. We base our activism on the theory that the ongoing freedom struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean can be greatly assisted by the strategic position of people of color within the neo-colonial 'metropolises,' the developed countries of Europe and North America that have grown fat on wealth stolen from the darker nations. Our purpose is through local activism and political education, to raise the consciousness of Third World peoples in their homelands and within the imperial belly of the beast, to the need for revolutionary struggle against neocolonialism. We aim to foster stronger political and ideological ties between the Third World and its diasporas, which are strategically located in the very nerve-centers of Western imperialism to help defeat the capitalist sponsors of overseas puppet governments.

Our major enemy is monopoly capitalism, the enemy of all oppressed and exploited people in the era of US hegemony, regardless of racial-geographic origin. This gives us common cause with anti-capitalists/socialists from all backgrounds; for this reason, we can and will form strategic and tactical fronts with multi-national parties on the Left. However, given the historical lessons on US race politics from such movements as the Old and New Left; SNCC and the Black Panthers; and the New Communist Movement, we believe that people of color should lead and staff the organizations that will help lead our communities to freedom. Therefore, prospective white comrades are excluded from formal membership within the Alliance, and are encouraged to join the Marilyn Buck Solidarity Group, which plays a supportive role in our campaigns under Alliance leadership.

While considering ourselves revolutionary socialists and Third Worldists (broadly defined), as a collective we do not adhere to any one particular ideology. We are a multi-tendency organization, and our ranks include Nkrumahists, Cabralists, anarchists, Marxist-Leninists, Maoists, and Marxist-Humanists. However, we do observe principles of unity that form the baseline for membership in our group. We further believe that the radical critique of capitalism should be adapted to the national histories and current conditions of oppressed peoples, and we soundly reject Eurocentric and hetero-masculinist visions of Marxist theory and practice. Some of the theoretical and practical influences on our founding members include: Frantz Fanon; Assata Shakur; Jose Mariategui; Mao Zedong; MN Roy; Kwame Nkrumah; Che

Guevara; WEB Du Bois; VI Lenin; Claudia Jones; Cedric Robinson; the Johnson-Forest Tendency; Marcus Garvey; Audre Lorde; Maria Lugones; Enrique Dussel; Amilcar Cabral; Don Pedro Albizu Campos; the Black Panthers; the Young Lords Party; the Brown Berets; the American Indian Movement; the Combahee River Collective; the All-African People's Revolutionary Party, and like-minded theorists and political formations. No one political tendency will be given priority over the others. Disagreements concerning theory and practice will be deliberated and resolved along genuinely democratic lines during our monthly Alliance meetings. We believe that collective study and struggle within contemporary conditions are the best test of our ideas.

Articles of the TWPA Constitution

Organizational Structure

Article 1. The Third World Peoples' Alliance shall be composed of organizations and individuals from the colonized and segregated world—Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand, and the inhabitants of the domestic colonies of the First World (Afro-Americans, First Nations, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, etc.). TWPA officials, cadre, org and Alliance-wide members will be drawn exclusively from this constituency. We are to meet on a monthly basis to discuss community and campus activist efforts; to vote on shared agenda items and emendations to the Constitution and Alliance procedure and educational materials; and to conduct political education sessions around shared areas of struggle, social and political theory, socialist economics, and all other material relevant to the coordination of a socialist formation. Prospective members are strongly encouraged to join an existing organization or to form one of their own, as the autonomy of these groups is the chief safeguard of the national interests of the diverse peoples within the Alliance.

Article 2. The Marilyn Buck Solidarity Group will play a supportive role in the struggles of the TWPA. This will include generating support for our ideas and campaigns throughout the settler-colonial community, supporting us physically in programs, campaigns, and demonstrations, and conducting political education relevant to the White radical critique of colonialism, settler-colonialism, class-reductive leftism, and other historical barriers to White leftist involvement in good faith in the liberation struggles of the Third World. In addition to developing their own officer structure, the Solidarity Group will also have at least one official consultant, who is allowed to participate in discussion during our bi-weekly meetings and deliver a report back to the Group on Alliance imperatives.

Article 3. Within six months of the first annual conference, the Alliance must form both a judiciary structure to settle major disputes between participant groups and individual members, and to render verdicts and appropriate responses to offenders against the principles and procedures of the Alliance; as well as a union representing oppressed sexual and gender groups, to protect against incidents of sexual and gender discrimination, harassment, violence, sexist and gender-based divisions of labor, etc. The composition of the judiciary must also be determined by this time.

Responsibilities and Rights of Members

Article 4. All members must respect and uphold the four guiding principles of the Third World People's Alliance, and conduct their work within their organizations and the Alliance in good faith. The Alliance will consist of three tiers of membership: officers, cadre, and candidate members. Expected participation will depend on one's position, and consistent negligence or absenteeism (to be determined by the judiciary) can result in either dismissal from office, cadre probation, or failure of candidacy. In extreme cases (also to be decided by the judiciary) including, but not limited to physical or psychological violence against comrades; sexual harassment; collaboration with police or open class enemies (the big capitalists, racist and Zionist organizations); or serial non-contact with the Alliance that compromises important campaigns or phases of its organizations' development, expulsion from the Alliance is mandatory.

Article 5. Office of Lead Organizer (min. 5 hrs./wk.): Lead organizers will act as the executives of the Alliance, to be elected once yearly. Two Alliance members shall act as lead organizer, at least one of whom must be non-cis male. If no more than one suitable candidate is available during a given electoral cycle, the responsibilities of both organizers will devolve onto one, until such time as a second candidate becomes available. Officer responsibilities include: to plan and call Alliance meetings on a bi-weekly basis, for which they will draw up an agenda and serve as moderator; to conduct political education sessions at said meetings; to follow up with a point person on each joint Alliance committee at least once a week; to adjudicate minor disputes between groups and individuals on strategic and tactical questions; to develop contacts within, and general knowledge of, the communities in which the Alliance is conducting campaigns and programs; to serve as representative for the Alliance to the public.

Article 6. Field Coordinators (min. 3 hrs./wk.): Field coordinators will act as leaders for the various 'regions' of the Alliance (regions shall be divided according to borough in NYC and county on Long Island). They are to be elected once every six months (because of the regional character of their office). Responsibilities include: to ensure the communication and

follow-through of Alliance objectives to the member organizations in their respective region; to report back to the Alliance on progress or obstacles at Alliance meetings; to maintain an up-to-date list of Alliance candidates and ensure that they are progressing in their political education and participation within their respective groups and/or Alliance activity.

Article 7. Treasurer (min. 2 hrs./wk.): The treasurer will be elected once every year. Responsibilities include: keeping an accurate account of all Alliance moneys and expenditures; collecting monthly dues from the membership; responding to requests from lead organizers for project funds; maintaining a web-based fundraising tool for Alliance activity. The ability to set up a checking account for Alliance purposes is preferred, but not mandatory, as long as diligent records of the finances are available for review by the Alliance when determining the feasibility of our projects.

Article 8. Communications Director (min. 3 hrs./wk.): The communications director will be elected once every year. Responsibilities include: maintaining and regularly updating our private and public social media pages/accounts; keeping an up-to-date list of all organizational contacts; providing minutes for all Alliance-wide meetings. Communications directors will be provided with a staff from the org membership of the Alliance, who are expected to contribute a minimum of one hour per week to communications tasks.

Article 9. Cadre—comrades who have passed the cadre training process and who are able to promote and defend the ideas of the Alliance in the course of organizing work—are responsible for regular attendance at Alliance-wide and org meetings, and also provide candidates to the various offices of the Alliance.

Article 10. Candidates are new Alliance members who are still undergoing introductory political education and organizing training. Candidates shall be introduced to the Alliance through a candidacy package, which may also include the program of their respective organization. They will then be allotted a period of no more than one year to advance to cadre training. which will require a basic command of political education materials, an understanding of the principles and constitution of the TWPA, and a minimum of two weeks' active participation within a member organization or on joint Alliance committees. After ten weeks, a review of the candidate's progress will determine whether they will become full cadre or further work needs to be done.

Article 11. Unless they are under financial duress (to be clarified with the Treasury), all Alliance members are asked to contribute \$5 per month to the Alliance treasury, which will go toward collective campaign costs. Receipts must be provided for every contribution, and a full record of Alliance moneys and expenditures must be made available to the membership upon request.

Article 12. Should members require time away from Alliance work to resolve personal issues, they should speak with their field coordinator as well as any leadership within their respective organizations to specify the time they will be absent. Members may take up to six months' leave of absence without judicial review of their position within the Alliance.

Article 13. All offices of the Alliance; all planning on joint committee work; all amendments to the Constitution or to Alliance materials; all major strategic and tactical questions, shall be submitted for vote. This may take place on the Alliance Facebook page over the course of one week from the formal proposal; but in emergency situations, a special vote may be held during Alliance meetings. Under both scenarios, 75% of votes will carry the motion, and adequate time will be allotted for deliberation. In the event of a tie, the matter will be tabled until further discussion is able to yield a majority opinion during the subsequent meeting/Facebook discussion. In the case of a stalemate for a time-sensitive campaign issue, the lead organizers and field officers will hold a special emergency vote among them to deal with the exigency at hand, before immediately returning electoral power to the Alliance as a whole.

Article 14. All members enjoy freedom of criticism in a broad sense: not only of particular strategies and tactics of the Alliance as a whole, but of the conduct of Alliance officers as well. No member of the Alliance, whether officer or cadre, may in their organizational capacity attempt to check the public speech of Alliance members on any subject, so long as such public speech does not fundamentally violate the four basic principles of Alliance membership. Members have the right to abstain from campaigns or dissent from lines with which they disagree; however, active sabotage of campaigns will not be tolerated, and is likely to be submitted for review to the judiciary.

Four Guiding Principles of the Third World Peoples' Alliance

Revolutionary Socialism

No contemporary project of human liberation can fail to address the irrational system of capitalism--the private ownership of the means of production and distribution, a system that yields massive profits for the small owning class and increasing poverty, economic and political crisis for the world's majority. The only alternative to capitalism and its imperialist offspring is socialism--the social ownership of the means of production for the benefit of all. Some groups on the left believe that socialism can simply be legislated into existence. Typically, these groups have a strong First-World orientation, largely reflecting the national and class background of their membership. But whereas the Socialist Party of France, the Labour Party of the UK, and the New Democratic Party of Canada have instilled in many leftists the belief that power flows from the ballot box, the peoples of the Third World have very different examples to draw upon: the suppression of the New Jewel Movement of Grenada, the assassination of Salvador Allende of Chile, and the economic starvation of Michael Manley's democratic-socialist experiment in Jamaica. We know that social-democracy is a *support* for finance capital in the era of imperialism; that social welfare policies for the workers of the First World are a small price for capitalism to pay out of the massive profits daily extracted from the darker nations. We also know that the legal political process under mature capitalism is thoroughly dominated by the capitalist class, and that this class will readily employ extra-legal methods to suppress fundamental challenges to their power within the legal sphere (as in Grenada, Chile, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the Black Colony of the US). Violence is the last—and often, the first—recourse of the colonizer. Therefore, we support the use of any means necessary in the freedom struggles of oppressed Third World peoples, up to and including the use of revolutionary violence, for the establishment of self-determining, socialist societies.

This principle applies equally in the First World context. While we recognize that at present, the masses of people within the United States are not prepared for a violent confrontation with the capitalist-controlled armed wing of the state, we believe that our present role is to promote public awareness of the need for a systemic alternative, a demand that will bring the contradiction between the capitalists and the working-class to a dramatic head. We will do this through community programs; legal struggles against labor exploitation, the police, the prison system, gentrification, the US military, and the various apparatuses for opinion-shaping and 'education' (inter alia); and, ultimately, an electoral alternative, representing the will of the

(increasingly dark, increasingly proletarian) majority of the United States. If, in contravention of all prior human history, a non-violent revolution is possible once a clear social alternative has emerged, then as good humanists we have to welcome this possibility. However, we will not be caught unprepared should the more likely outcome find us in the crosshairs of the US police, military and intelligence agencies. We are conscious revolutionaries who are preparing ourselves in every way to deal with a revolutionary confrontation. And though we urge our people in the internal colonies of the United States to struggle along these conscious lines, we will never denounce the spontaneous rebellions against police brutality and inhumane living conditions that are so predictable an outcome of de facto segregation. The people need no encouragement from ‘outside agitators’ to understand that it is right to rebel!

National Liberation

The peoples of the Third World--Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Pacific Islands, and the domestic colonies within the First World--must achieve self-determination as a matter of our survival. This means the right to determine our own destinies, according to our own collective processes of deliberation, rooted in the national experiences and theoretical-practical contributions of our peoples to world history. This has economic, social, political, and cultural implications. The pattern of revolution from one country cannot be casually imposed on another, especially where racial, religious, linguistic and other significant differences intervene. It is therefore imperative that oppressed nations express our *own* nationalism—not, as in bourgeois nationalism, to consolidate racial-linguistic groups for their better exploitation, but to liberate us from the nationalism of the West. *Our* national consciousness must be informed by the historic failures of the West to produce genuine concord across cultural-geographic differences. It must express universal human possibility in the idioms of our own nations, without falling captive to custom and to the mad desire for ethnic superiority. We maintain that the degeneration of the anti-colonial movements of the 20th century into religious fundamentalism, militarism, and genocidal tribalism is an effect of neo-colonialism—not the inevitable outcome of nationalism per se. We further maintain that it is only the psychological, economic, and social security afforded by the ‘successful’ nationalisms of the US, Britain, France, Canada, etc. that allow so-called ‘revolutionary internationalists’ to dismiss the goal of national independence for which oppressed peoples still fight and die.

In the First World context, neo-colonialism has assumed a very pernicious form. Where the re-settled and annexed peoples (such as Afro-Americans, Chicano-Mexicanos, Puerto Ricans, native Hawaiians etc.) occupy a contiguous land base, or form part of a dubious ‘commonwealth’, neo-colonialism has asserted that we all belong to one nation, and has tried to direct the course of our freedom movements along integrationist lines. This tacit White nationalism invites people of color to partake in the imperialist pie, even as it drains the wealth

of our motherlands and starves and murders our lost families. It offers Black and Brown presidents, politicians, and business ‘leaders’ in symbolic compensation for centuries of underdevelopment, robbery of land and other basic forms of capital, and the routine containment of our starving masses by the police and military. Under the social-imperialist guise of ‘revolutionary integrationism’, it even dons socialist red and promises us a seat in Congress, or a guaranteed slot on the Central Committee. But we Third Worldists know that the masses of our people do not want to become integrated into a decadent, rudderless society that despises us, and indeed despises itself; we know that they only want freedom from the hunger, squalor, and banal violence that settler-imposed segregation has imposed on them. Our task is to raise their consciousness to the need for transitioning from neo-colonies to independent nations, with territorial integrity, control over natural and human resources and political processes, and freedom to develop their cultural and social forms outside of the shadow of the hegemonic national group. As even Du Bois, that unreliable ‘integrationist,’ understood, equal relations between the races and nations cannot exist where one culture threatens to assimilate the other; and as the Black Panthers, Brown Berets, and Yellow Peril demonstrated, our true ‘integrationist’ work consists in coordinating the liberation struggles of colonized peoples—not in dissolving ourselves into a nation of lynchers and their passive (though still responsible) spectators.

Decolonial Feminism

Challenging liberal humanism—and the feminism derived from this tradition that equates race and gender as homologous socio-political identities—decolonial feminism reveals race as the condition of possibility for being recognized as human in a way that gender is not. That is, in the First World and the settler-colonies, White women are recognized *as human beings* in spite of their sexual oppression; nonwhite women are *not*. Their sexual oppression therefore assumes distinct forms, reflecting the dehumanizing myths surrounding their racial identity, and the subordinate economic roles forced upon their people. The so-called ‘hypersexuality’ of African people thus becomes the pretext for sexual violence by White males against Black women, a favorite myth of the slave-owner, the homeowner, the policeman in justification of their crime—“she was asking for it.” This racist anthropology also justifies the subjection of Black women to harsher working conditions and themselves and their families to heightened police and vigilante surveillance. Africans are historically assumed to be less sensitive to physical pain and the effects of hard labor than Europeans; their natural rebellion against their resulting brutalization is then blamed on a basic ‘irrationality’ that needs careful monitoring and harsh repression to preserve social order. The ‘mysteriousness’ of the Algerian or Iraqi Muslimah, represented by the *niqab* (veil), confirms the exploiting colonizer or invading imperialist troop in their Orientalist prejudices against the ‘medieval’ cultures of Arab and Islamic peoples, legitimizing their presence as ‘liberators’ and ‘modernizers’—and in their twisted minds,

‘inviting them to liberate’ the sexuality trapped beneath an Islamic garment. These are only two examples of the ways in which racist, colonialist ideology intersects with economic and sexual oppression to place Third World women’s liberation struggle on a qualitatively different plane from the oppression First World women face. Indeed, this contradiction—colonizer and colonized—confers material and cultural benefits of White womanhood that pose a fundamental challenge to the universality of ‘classical’ feminism.

However, this is not a “race first” analysis—that is, we are clear that within their own nations/communities, Third World women suffer patriarchal oppression that is often reinforced by narratives of racial-national solidarity in the face of a hostile, colonizing force. We recognize that the forms of sexual violence, gender norms and social expectations, gender-based rewards and punishments within Third World communities must be relentlessly struggled against as impediments to collective liberation. However, we believe that for the peoples of the Third World to rediscover our own agency, we must build upon indigenous forms of resistance to patriarchal oppression that have always existed within our communities. We strive to recover the independent movement of our cultures toward more egalitarian social forms that was arrested by the colonizer—who forcefully constructs us as ‘premodern’ to justify his (and her) presence as our stewards in ‘civilization’. For this reason, we reject the liberal-feminist project of ‘liberating’ women from cultures constructed as ‘backward’: not only as hypocritical (is the Western White woman truly free?), but more importantly, as an ideological instrument for Western imperialism, the great enemy of women and their families across the world of color.

Finally, in keeping with this analysis, we unite with Maria Lugones’ concept of the ‘coloniality of gender’, the idea that contemporary binary gender relations are the result of Western-bourgeois social and economic imperatives, not products of nature or trans-historical truths. This concept specifies that the hegemonic norms around ‘men’ and ‘women’ today are impositions of the colonial metropolises that have persisted because they are successful at controlling economic, social, and political actions in support of capitalism and imperialism; that the bourgeois ‘nuclear family’ with its rigid restrictions on sexual and gender behavior has tried to remake our more gender-fluid precolonial nations in the image of the neurotic West. We soundly reject the cultural-nationalist line that makes the male head of the household and the baby-rearing mother the touchstones of dignity and progress for oppressed peoples. To the contrary: this ideal is a mark of our subjection by Protestantism, Catholicism, and the European cults of productivity and sexual-instinctual repression. Our movements for liberation will develop new forms of social, familial, and sexual relations that will no longer tie the concept of ‘woman’ to a doubly-oppressive position in the capitalist division of labor.

LGBTQ Liberation

Queer liberation is a form of decolonization. It challenges the current ideas about our precolonial history, revealing the colonial origin behind the so-called necessity of heteronormativity and the binary gender system. It shows heteronormativity to be historically specific to colonial and capitalist modernity—the idea that sexuality is exclusively about reproduction, which turns out to be the reproduction of an oppressed work force for the capitalist class. It shows the binary division of gender and gendered forms of social and political control to be falsely naturalized and fundamentally dehumanizing, by identifying these phenomena with the historical interests of wealthy White males—the virile Great Fathers, whose ‘rational’ mastery of nature consigns ciswomen to a supporting role as useful tools for the propagation of the master race. A sexual-economic logic that casts queer ciswomen and men, trans women and men, and non-binary persons into a shadow realm of ‘useless’ and even dangerous sexuality and gender behavior. Any violations of rigid bourgeois roles, especially coming from the ‘inessential’ world of color, are seen as irruptions of an irrational, miasmatic prehistory of ‘Man’, and are to be suppressed with laws and sermons, fists, knives and guns, if Judeo-Christian civilization would be saved. From a queer standpoint, it is not hard to see how capitalism, racism, and heterosexism are mutually supporting systemic and psychological phenomena.

On the other side of this nightmare, queer liberation helps us imagine new relationships with one another, with ourselves, and to our larger communities. It will allow us to take space in this world however we choose without fear of repercussions and harm, either from the dominant racial group or from those within our communities/nations who have internalized their petrified ideas about sex and gender. Queer liberation is about feeling wholeness, dignity, and worth against the dehumanizing tropes and overdeterminations of hegemonic gender norms. And it is an essential front in our collective struggle against racial-colonial and capitalist oppression, because genuine queer liberation cannot take place without deconstruction of the bourgeois ideologies and socio-economic systems currently in place. Furthermore, queer liberation recognizes that so-called “trans-exclusionary radical feminism” (aka TERFs) is fundamentally mistaken about what feminism is and what freedom with respect to gender and sexuality means. Quite apart from essentializing gender precisely along the sexually-reproductive lines drawn by Western colonialism, this so-called ‘radical’ position misses the point that trans freedom fighters have been on the front lines against capitalist, colonial, racist, sexist, and homophobic violence throughout our several histories. Marsha P. Johnson, Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major, and many others have fought bravely against racist and homophobic police violence, including violence against sex-workers; and we honor their legacy and continue their work. Queer liberation means liberation for us all; and with its anti-capitalist, anti-Victorian edge, it also means rejecting a respectability politics that denies the legitimacy of sex work as a means of survival in the capitalist system—labor performed by workers who have revolutionary potential, who are to be organized *as* sex workers, and whose very vulnerable lives must be defended with the same intensity as any other progressive segment of the working class.

