

## Political outline of self-defense class

This is very rough, should be reorganized, but I'm going on the theory that it's better to start with something rough than to have something perfect and nonexistent.

### Internalizing women's oppression

We internalize a subordinate mentality of the victim, the helpless ones. When confronted many of us smile, excuse ourselves, apologize for hurting the aggressor's feelings, act like "good girls." This isn't our individual failure, any more than men's aggression is the result of individual inherent psychological deformation. This mentality is taught to us, drummed into us in a thousand ways.

- \* School
- \* Work--sexual harrassment, having to put up with junk
- \* Home--statistics about marital rape and acquaintance rape as opposed to the myth of the street attacker (typically Third world in the image)
- \* TV, media becoming like porn
- \* economic devaluation of women
- \* the military mass producing rapists
- \* the family--the original school of dominance/subordination; the "small

rape" of being used and humiliated. The government is a key part of these structures of male supremacy. The laws were written to protect a white man's private property ("his woman") from other men; and to give the nod to white men violating women of the colonized nations. The courts rape women mentally a second time (Terry F's story; Lucy's story.) Institutions like welfare ~~xxx~~ pressure women to stay in abusive situations because of economic dependence. The police ignore the pleas for help of women and children (our friend's story). The government is probably the controlling force in the web of violence that ensnares us.

More examples: The porn industry is built on violence and objectification of women, it is a completely legal capitalist industry which is regulated by the state, brings in taxes from the sale of women's bodies. The government's idea of "regulating" child porn in California is to keep a list of the wholesale distributors of child porn. Magazines like Hustler which promote and make a joke of incest are available on every street corner, are registered with the government etc.

We are committed to women recovering our dignity and demanding respect. It's necessary to do this on a personal and individual level, which is what we're working on in this self-defense class. But that isn't sufficient. To liberate our selves, we have to liberate this society, to change the daily real conditions that we live in. Only a movement, ultimately only a revolution can do this.

\*Have a consciousness-raising discussion of all this. Ask people to think a week before about what are the images of women these institutions drill into us. How do we internalize these? (Think of an example of a time you responded in a way that you didn't like.)

### Sub-discussion: porn

Discuss article Political Economy of Porn, have one person give a little summary in case everyone hasn't read it.

2.

Capitalism operates on the basis of what is profitable. A profit can always be made from porn, drugs, prostitution--so these things will always exist under capitalism/imperialism. Take the example of the porn industry in SF, 100 million dollars a year, and the 3rd biggest industry in the city. Our liberation requires the end of this system.

Male supremacist violence is a means of social control, not the result of some "male spirit" or psychological need to dominate as the root cause. A society's social relations, culture, will reflect the economic ~~structure~~ and political system of that country. Culture is built up that reinforces and justifies how that country lives.

The US is an imperialist country that lives on exploiting and dominating 80% of the people of the world. Define imperialism, how it isn't just empty rhetoric. Give a few statistics that indicate the reality of this--6% of the population consumes 60% of the world's resources...level of rip off of TW.

A society that lives by taking on a world scale will promote a culture of taking in its media, families, etc. A society living on conquering will have social relations built on conquering. When it's "OK to invade Grenada because we got away with it," you will see this attitude characterizing the inner personal life of that society. Families look like miniature military hierarchies.

we could read the paragraph by marx from Critique of Political Economy I think. (for ourselves, not for the class).

Pass out the article about the GIs and Grenada (bikini dream).

We'll come back again and again to the concept that violence against women isn't rooted in psychology, and it can't be solved by each of us liberating our own mind. Male supremacy is rooted in a whole system, and the system must be dismantled as a whole. You can't just solve violence against women as a problem separate from the entire system of imperialism. Women can't solve our part of the contradiction separate from Third World people, because the rape culture is the culture of an oppressor/imperialist nation, and Third World people are the leading force for overturning ~~the~~ this at its bottom.

What are the purposes of male supremacist violence? We said that anti-woman violence is a means of social control, but social control for what end? Rape/porn/abuse "keeps women in our place." But what is that place for those who rule this system?

1. They exploit us directly in the workforce.
2. They need women to transmit a racist/sexist/imperialist culture. In the oppressor nation, the ruling class rules very heavily through ideological control, thru culture, thru the control of ideas (always backed up by force where this fails), more so than in colonized countries where control rests more nakedly on force and terror. Women are the hub of communities; the transmitters of culture; the ones who socialize the children. An imperialist country VERY MUCH needs this to be done along imperialist lines, and uses violence to keep us in this place. (This needs tons of development--read the Conservative Digest article.)

3.

3. The system rips us off by getting out of us an incredible amount of unpaid household labor that otherwise they would have to pay for.
4. Individual men get lots of privilege from our oppression, and often they are the front-line enforcers of male supremacy.

(In pointing out that women's oppression isn't rooted in the screwed-up psychologies of individual men, we aren't saying that these screwed-up psychologies don't exist, and don't hurt women. But they are the reflection, not the cause of our problem fundamentally.)

### Rape as a Tool of Colonial Violence

The United States is a colonial country, by which we mean its borders were formed by violently taking over the land, labor and resources of Native American, Mexican, and Black people. To see how violence against women is completely tied in with colonialism, we can look at the history of US rape law.

Readings: Rape, Racism and Reality, by Deb Friedman (assign)  
Another interesting one is Rape, Racism, and the White Women's Movement, by STO  
Excerpt Diary of a Slave Girl

The rape laws originated as property laws, defining white men's rights and protection from other men.

Rape has always been used as a tool of colonial terror, as a way of demoralizing and breaking the colonized. Read: Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, the story of Sand River; Slave Girl. Talk about history of Dessie Woods, Yvonne Wanrow, etc.

The white supremacist use of the rape charge has been used to justify lynching and legal lynching (death penalty) against Black men. According to the Guardian of April 4, 1984, 405 out of 455 men executed for rape during the history of the US have been Black men. a sexual affront to a white woman was the excuse given in the case of 1/3-1/2 of all lynchings.

Those who are committing colonial violence portray themselves as "defenders." "Defenders of white womanhood." Today, tools of colonial violence like police, prisons, are also portrayed as "defense."

Outside the U.S. borders, the US military uses rape as a tool of colonial violence.

Read: Arlene's chapter on Women in Vietnam  
Covert Action article on US training rapist-interrogators  
Our video on the US-supplied Nicaraguan National Guard abusing Gladys Baez

The US military is a giant school for rapists. (Rate of rape of enlisted women is 4 times as high as on the street.) "This is my rifle, this is my gun, one is for killing, the other for fun."

### The Protection Racket: Police and Violence Against Women

There has been and continues to be a massive campaign to get the predominately-white women's movement to look to the police as our protectors from rape and violence. But--

1. The police are a tool of colonial violence, are one of the main sources of violence in the US today. Appx. 1% of all homicides in the US are committed by the police, incl. 400 Black and Mexican people every year murdered by police. A Black man has twenty times the chance of being killed by police as a white man. We can't look to these creeps as protectors.

Read from: The Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove: police in U.S.

2. They protect the very system that sets us up for attack. What's the relationship of the police to porn (arrest women who protest porn); to Broadway; to prostitution (the sex scandal), etc. etc.

3. the effect of women relying on the police is always white supremacy and male supremacy.

White supremacy: read "Leaa penetrates the women's movement" short paper about women's movement getting tied in to criminal justice system, depoliticized, and wrecked.

Male supremacy: talk about SF police anti-rape film.  
Rely on the white man for protection, and stay home.

Talk about people's experiences with the police and m.s. violence--  
Take Back the Night in Sacramento; in ~~Brooklyn~~ New York; etc.

Talk about Neighborhood Watch, another part of LEAA.

### So what's your solution? No Easy Answers.

Ultimately, the problem of m.s. violence can't be solved without a revolution. Let's look at how women in revolutionary societies have taken on the question--

Women in V.N.--women's associations as a base for power; using the new revolutionary state to back up the prohibition on violence.

Women in Mozambique--"the first cell" article. Helping women break out of economic dependency, women's confrontations.

Women in Nicaragua--abolishing porn; estab. women's ec. independence; waging a political struggle in society (read in Sweet Ramparts) What do people think about abolishing exploitation of women? --free speech issue.

Why is it a dead end to think we can abolish exploitation company by company, billboard by billboard.

Building a anti-imperialist women's movement that will build a highly visible struggle against m.s. violence, in the context of opposing white supremacy and supporting revolution.

Last point: Defending yourself is not violent.

Struggles about our willingness to hurt another person to defend ourselves. All violence is not the same. Violence for the purpose of dehumanizing is not the same as violence to stop dehumanization.

This is true for individual self-defense situations, and for nations, etc.

\*Stuff we've used or might use

Reading List About Violence Against Women

- \* Political Economy of Porn, article from Aegis
- Rape, Racism, and the White Women's Movement, STO
- Rape and Third World Women, Loretta Ross, Aegis, Summer 82
- \* homemade article on LEAA Penetrates the Women's Movement (xerox)
- \* Rape, Racism and Reality, Deb Friedman, Aegis Winter 81
- \* Arlene Eisen-Bergman's Women in Viet Nam, chapter on rape, and on resistance
- Goldflowers Story, about confrontations in China
- \* Covert Action torturer article (xerox)
- Torture and Resistance, about Iran (book)
- Mozambique: The family, first cell of the party
- Angela Davis, Black women in the Community of slaves, article.
- \* Narrative of a Slave Girl, paperback
- \* Sweet Ramparts, p 27-49
- AMNLAE magazine article
- \* Conservative Digest article about "feminism threatens capitalism"
- \* Bikini article about GIs and Grenada
- Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, attack on Sand River
- \* Iron Fist and the Velvet Glove, Police in America
- Leaflets from WAI anti-police work over the years...