

PRAIRIE FIRE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 40614 Station C San Francisco, CA 94110

This is a statement concerning the arrest of Clayton Van Lydegraf, a leading member of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC) and four alleged members of the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), and concerning the decision to disband the Seattle chapter of PFOC. Prairie Fire Organizing Committee is an organization dedicated to solidarity with national liberation struggles inside and outside the borders of the US empire, to women's liberation, lesbian and gay liberation, and to building a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement in the white oppressor nation. In order to build this movement, we have taken on the struggle against opportunism within the white oppressor nation, including the opportunism of the WUO and of The Guardian.

On November 19, 1977, a leading member of PFOC, Clayton Van Lydegraf, was arrested by the government and FBI in Houston, Texas during the International Women's Year Convention. Two women, Judith Bissel and Leslie Mullin, were also arrested in Houston. On the same day, two men, Michael Justesen and Mark Perry, were arrested in Los Angeles. Prairie Fire wants to state clearly that we see these arrests as an attack on revolutionary politics, and that this government and FBI attack is one part of a growing number of state attempts to repress a rising political movement at this time. PFOC is in solidarity with these 5, all of whom have histories in the anti-war and anti-imperialist movements in Seattle, and is committed to struggling to free them.

These arrests come at a time of intensifying struggle for national and women's liberation. It is significant that the comrades were arrested during the International Women's Year Convention. Thousands of women at IWY demonstrated decisively the strength and power of women's struggles and the women's movement. In spite of the government and right-wing forces like the KKK who are trying to coopt or wipe out this movement, women are uniting as never before to fight for the demands of Third World women, for the right of all women to control their own bodies, and for the rights of lesbians. Our presence at the IWY Convention was part of our commitment to build the struggles of women for their liberation. Because PFOC has been in the forefront of fighting in solidarity with the leading struggles of women's and national liberation, our existence poses a threat to the US imperialist state. This is the political significance of these attacks. We are dedicated to redoubling our efforts in international solidaritywork and in building an anti-imperialist women's movement. Our commitment has not been shaken.

In the last few months more and more information has come out about the state's use of counterintelligence programs like Cointelpro to attack revolutionary and progressive movements. The use of conspiracy charges has always been a state tool to smash and contain revolutionary anti-imperialist politics. The arrest of these five comrades is not an isolated event; it is a calculated political attack and conspiracy by the US government against our organization and other forces fighting for revolutionary change. They accuse our comrades of criminal "terrorist" activity, at the same time as Steven Biko in South Africa was accused

of being a terrorist and then murdered in his cell because he actively fought for the freedom of his people. In the US, the actions of Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano/Mexicano peoples against the oppressive state are also denounced as terrorist. It is the responsibility of white people not only to support the armed struggle of oppressed nations, but to commit ourselves to fight and overthrow US imperialism. The real criminal terrorists are those who make war on the peoples of Southern Africa, those who violently patrol and deport Mexican workers, those who use Grand Juries to repress and imprison Puerto Rican and Mexicano activists, those who condemn and attack abortion rights and the rights of lesbians and gay men. The US rulers who commit genocide against Third World peoples have gone too far to try to cop a plea of innocence and non-violence.

People in Seattle joined PFOC a year ago because we were in unity with its political line. Since that time we have published The Split of the Weather Underground Organization and done work in solidarity with Leonard Peltier and Yvonne Wanrow. We understand that it is not only essential to participate in these mass struggles, but also to build an anti-imperialist core of people in the white oppressor nation. This has proven difficult to do at this time due to our small numbers in Seattle and due to the arrest of our 5 comrades. We have decided that the best way to carry on these struggles is to consolidate our organization and disband the Seattle chapter. As an organization, we will continue to build the work we have done in solidarity with Leonard Peltier and Yvonne Wanrow. We're writing this to comrades in the Native American and Chicano/Mexicano communities, to the women's and lesbian communities, and to our comrades and friends in the left community in Seattle who we've worked and struggled in solidarity with over the past year. We intend to have discussions with people we are presently working with, however time does not permit us to be able to meet with everyone. This statement serves the purpose of putting forward what we think in a responsible manner, and reaching many people we won't get to talk to. National PFOC will be putting out a statement on the arrests in the near future, and we will make sure that this is available in Seattle along with our political journal, BREAKTHROUGH.

In Solidarity

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