

# The Five Core Guiding Principles of Nobody Owns Land

By: Nobody Owns Land Core Group

We are a Revolutionary Communist (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) publication that seeks to uplift the voices and conversations of nationally oppressed<sup>1</sup> and Queer workers<sup>2</sup> everywhere, but particularly in our local area of work: Louisville, KY. To that end, we set out these guiding principles in order to move forward with a well-defined internal collective vision and a clear statement of intent to the masses:

1. **The core interest of Nobody Owns Land is that of the working class.** This means that though we are invested in the ultimate interests of all nationally oppressed, Queer folks, we are not here to publish and promote the interests of nationally oppressed and Queer misleaders who act in the interests of the bourgeoisie and imperialism.<sup>3</sup> **In Louisville and the US more generally, nationally oppressed and Queer workers have no real outlet that is genuinely theirs to promote their interests.** Mainstream news, academic outlets, and social media are wholly owned by the bourgeois class and can only ever truly act towards those interests, the token inclusion of nationally oppressed and Queer folks serving primarily as a smokescreen. This creates a reality of apartheid in our artistic media, academia, and news where nationally oppressed and Queer workers' voices are systematically erased in and sectioned-off from the mainstream, and what little we have left is forced to cater to ruling class narratives and interests to survive.

Nobody Owns Land alone cannot change this; **we believe that within capitalism, a system which is premised on the private ownership of production and land, it's impossible to change without a working class revolution.** We are also uninterested in throwing ourselves against the same stone wall many others have, trying to uproot mainstream media by creating a "separate but equal" equivalent. Instead, we believe our time is better served by uplifting the experiences, ideas, and creativity of nationally oppressed and Queer workers that have been generated through our shared struggle and primarily distributing our publication through physical distribution by guerilla printers. By doing this, **by fostering a healthy in-person environment of discussion, criticism/self-criticism, and creative expression, we hope to empower nationally oppressed, Queer folks to take an active role in revolutionary struggle and generate a new wave of revolutionary theory and practice following in the footsteps of the revolutionaries of Stonewall, the Black Power Movement, and worldwide Communist revolutions and uprisings of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.**

2. **Uplifting the interests of nationally oppressed and Queer people does not divide the working class.** Quite the opposite in fact! It's true that the class contradiction is the principal one, but contrary to TERF and white chauvinist claims, there is no coherent view of the working class that doesn't center the non-white global majority and Queer people and no working class liberation that doesn't directly topple patriarchy and white supremacy. What is willfully forgotten is that Queer and racial issues don't happen in some vacuum devoid of class struggle. **These issues emerge from the class struggle organically.** Nationally oppressed and Queer workers face derision, manipulation, tokenization, and violence of every type in addition to and because of the exploitation and oppression that the working majority of the world faces.

**It is our analysis that these sites of special oppression and exploitation necessitate a proactive approach**, rather than reaction or dismissal, towards locating, uplifting, and developing revolutionary working class voices in these communities. We exist in possibly the most thoroughly reactionary society in history up to this point, powered by the benefits of imperialism. Special oppression (being subjected to patriarchy creates pockets where the flow of these spoils is somewhat disrupted, and presents an opportunity that must be grasped if revolutionary forces are to be built up here. It's not enough to simply "keep our eyes and ears open" for talent or genius, and it's certainly not enough to tell nationally oppressed and Queer people to "fight for socialism" and assume that fight will automatically uphold their interests. History shamefully shows that this isn't the case. **Struggle has to happen now, and it has to happen in explicitly communist spaces.** This is how a revolutionary understanding of our struggle will be produced and refined.

- 3. To truly uplift the interests of the working class, we must remain grounded in the lowest and most oppressed peoples.** As an organization by and for the working class, our Core Group composed principally of nationally oppressed and Queer workers, the relationship of Nobody Owns Land with the workers it seeks to uplift works both ways. **Nobody Owns Land upholds Walter Rodney's conception of the "guerilla intellectual", which means studying not just to describe and explain — but to expose and destroy — always undermining the legitimacy of bourgeois "rights" and "common sense" not as a teacher, but as a fellow student among comrades. It means uplifting oneself by embedding within the lowest and most oppressed masses, from prisons to reservations.** It means living life in service to the people at all times up to and especially including class suicide — **sacrificing one's privileged class interests for the workers of the world.**

Along with this, **we uphold the method of "grounding" synthesized within the Rastafari movement and practiced by Rodney. This means that we have to go out among the oppressed and genuinely connect with folks and their struggles, exchanging ideas and analyses, and building up the confidence of the oppressed to think and speak for themselves on their own terms.** Everyone is shaped by their life experiences one way or another, but on the flip side no worker automatically becomes a revolutionary no matter the experience. **Without intentional development and connection, we all adopt the ideology and politics of the dominant class in this society: liberalism at best, fascism at worst.** It is only through the practice of grounding alongside and as part of revolutionary organizing that we can refine our ideology into good sense and revolutionary consciousness, producing a revolutionary working class that puts its **politics in command** of the movement.<sup>4</sup>

- 4. In our particular context, revolutionary transformation away from capitalism also requires a revolutionary transformation of society's thinking.** We believe that for capitalism to end, and be replaced with socialism which progresses further into communism, a cultural revolution of sorts is simultaneously required. We operate off of the understanding that there is a two-way relationship between the base of society (the mode of production, capitalism) and the superstructure (the ideologies produced by capitalist society: transphobia, racism, patriarchy, etc.). The base supports the superstructure, which reinforces the base. It creates a constant loop that can only

produce more oppression.

This loop must be interrupted and destroyed. **We cannot bring about socialism so long as the United white supremacist States is taken for granted as a legitimate entity. We cannot bring about socialism so long as US chauvinists and racists can get away with calling themselves “Communist”. We cannot bring about socialism so long as casual misogyny pervades the “Left”.** Therefore, it’s not possible to overthrow the capitalist order and replace it with socialism if we allow ourselves to cling to backward and bourgeois ways of thinking. Racism, sexism, transphobia, individualism, etc. cannot be totally ended within capitalism, but that doesn’t mean we push back concerns about the superstructure “til after the revolution”. **The direct confrontation of capitalist ideas and narratives must happen as part of building the revolutionary movement, setting the conditions for their ultimate destruction as part of the revolution itself.**

5. **We should lean-in to criticism, rather than avoid it.** Though we believe that nationally oppressed and Queer workers, sectioned-off and specially oppressed within the working class, are especially capable of forming the nucleus of a revolutionary working class movement, none of us are beyond reproach. We have all developed within a capitalist-imperialist world, and none of us can fully escape the ideological influences of such a context. **In order to fulfill the previous two Principles we must pursue, as Marx puts it, a “ruthless criticism of all that exists”.** It should be constructive and delivered in good faith, but we must never be afraid to present our analyses, even when it conflicts with or criticizes that of another nationally oppressed/or Queer person. **Criticism with the intent to protect and educate our comrades is how we root out backwards and unproductive thinking within the working class.**

**Criticism isn’t a punishment. Principled criticism is an opportunity for growth on all sides.** The criticized grow through the experience of either defending their position or changing it based on new information. The critic grows by exercising their skills in not only refining the content of their criticism, but in managing the form of the criticism to ensure that their perspective is understood. And lastly, the audience grows by witnessing the *2-line struggle*<sup>5</sup> within the movement in real time and forming their own analysis based on the presentations of both sides. **This struggle is how we generate real unity.** Real unity is not declared like the Democrats pretend to do, or a matter of bringing the maximum number of people into a “big tent” as DSA claims, unity is created when we aren’t afraid to challenge, struggle, clarify, and synthesize new roads amongst ourselves. Of course, there may come times where a dividing line is drawn between ourselves and others. So long as we maintain a principled stance against backwards and capitalist thinking, why would it be bad that they draw a line between themselves and us? Let them.

**To be clear, this doesn’t mean we should engage with any and all sides of an issue at all times. Some topics, such as the validity of trans people, the personhood of Black and Indigenous people, and more are settled and are not up for “debate” in this publication. Such a thing would be in conflict with the first principle.**

Following these principles we at Nobody Owns Land hope to foster revolutionary growth within

working class nationally oppressed and Queer communities, raising collective consciousness and forging an ironclad revolutionary unity among workers more generally. We invite all working class nationally oppressed, Queer folks to submit their analyses of current events, philosophical interventions, and artistic contributions to this publication so we can lift ourselves together to a new stage of revolutionary consciousness!

Educate yourself, educate others, and always expand what is possible.

*Let a hundred, thousand, million flowers bloom!*

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<sup>1</sup> “**nationally oppressed**” refers to anyone who resides within the U\$ who (knowingly or not) belongs to a nation besides the dominant white settler nation which cemented its power in 1776, and is thus rendered a second-class citizen in the imperial core. In the U\$ this specifically refers to Black/New Afrikan people, Chican@s, and the remaining members of the countless Indian/Native American nations who were and are violently repressed by white supremacy every day.

<sup>2</sup> “**worker**” in this document is a diverse grouping of classes defined as those whose income is derived from selling their own labor for a wage, neither owning nor controlling productive forces. Due to imperialism, this is a class that has been rapidly declining in size within the imperial core (the U\$, Canada, EU, etc.), and most of us who remain have had our “quality of life” warped into one which parasitically relies on imperialism to survive, especially among white people. While the majority of (white) workers in the U\$ are part of the class of workers called the “labor aristocracy”, Nobody Owns Land believes that the special oppression many workers face (national oppression, Queerphobia, etc.) disrupts the normal “bribes” of imperialism and can lead an appreciable number of them to consciously reject these warped interests and act in alignment with the global majority of workers. Enough to act as a vanguard, a North Star, for the movement as struggle intensifies.

<sup>3</sup> “**bourgeoisie**”, which describes classes defined by ownership of productive forces or who are irrevocably tied to maintaining one’s right to private ownership of production and land. This includes but is not limited to landlords, “investors”, career politicians, corporate leadership, cops, the vast majority of U\$ farmers, etc. It’s important to note that not all people in these classes are the “ultra rich”, as some misleadingly phrase it. This includes the “ultra rich”, but the “somewhat rich” and small business owners (the “petty bourgeoisie”) aren’t our friends either. At times some members of the petty bourgeoisie can be pulled towards revolutionary politics and have a positive role in national liberation struggle, but they will always likewise struggle to pull revolutionary politics towards serving their ends, and potentially destroy the movement doing so. In this way, committing class suicide mentioned above is a necessary prerequisite for any petty bourgeois claiming to be in favor of revolution.

<sup>4</sup> Placing “**politics in command**” means to construct our revolutionary practice in a way that predicts the conflicts we’ll face in the class struggle that emerges from every action. We know that, as workers, our interests fundamentally clash with the capitalists, but even still capitalist logic and “common sense” can warp our thinking, and create the basis for counter-revolution down the line. “Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?” extends to our own ways of thinking which we might take for granted, because the default modes of thinking here are liberalism and revisionism. Staying on the revolutionary road means constantly challenging ourselves and our own logic as well as the logic of our enemies, staying accountable to the masses and rooting the tools of our enemies completely out of the movement.

<sup>5</sup> “**2-line struggle**” is a natural process that happens in any movement or organization, ours being no exception. Disagreements on line/direction will naturally occur, and in this struggle competing bourgeois and working class lines will form. These situations of line struggle can either be suppressed and hidden behind closed-off discussions, generating frustration and confusion among comrades, or they can be embraced and developed along principled lines, fostering a rich terrain bristling with new ideas to challenge dogmatic and eclectic thought alike. This process reinforces our understanding of our successes and allows us to weed out our failures in an organic and democratic way.