

THE GUARDIAN SUSTAINER

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Guardian
Sustainer
program

FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR:

Guardian making organizational plans for Clubs

By JACK A. SMITH

Guardian Clubs will exist in about 10 cities by the end of the year. Work is beginning now to meet this deadline.

During July and August we're concentrating on investigation and planning work, contacting our closest allies in various cities, looking for leadership people and doing the groundwork necessary to establish a modest nationwide organization.

In September and October, Guardian representatives will visit the various cities and hold meetings with interested Sustainers and readers in order to set up the Clubs.

At this stage we've definitely selected five cities: New York, Boston, San Francisco-Bay Area, Chicago and Los Angeles. The other five will be picked in a few weeks.

We have decided that during their first year, each Club will be limited in size to between six and 25 people. This means that for a period of time a lot of good friends will not be eligible for membership but this will change as soon as the various Clubs become stabilized and active in the community.

Here is some of our thinking about the structure and organization of the Clubs:

- During the first year at least, it's going to be a very centralized operation, with most of the guidance coming directly from the Guardian. The Guardian will issue the charters for each Club, select regional coordinators and have the final say on membership, activities and program. As the Clubs develop so will the democratic aspects of organization, but during the initial period it is essential that we keep tight control.

- It is important that the Clubs be more than just paper organizations. Meetings should be held regularly, every two or three weeks. Club members will have real work to do—organized study, local action and Guardian-building. Each member will have specific tasks to handle. Dues will be collected from non-Sustainers (Sustainer contributions will be considered dues).

- The Guardian will undertake to produce and provide study courses for the Clubs as well as information sheets on everything from how to organize a demonstration to distributing the paper at bookshops. We are naming a Guardian staffer to handle coordi-

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Clubs' principles of unity

The Guardian has put forward in its party-building supplement 29 principles which we believe constitute a sound basis for the ideological unity of Marxist-Leninists today in building a new communist party. We believe that those principles should be fought for within the party-building movement. In our view, the principles of unity for Guardian Clubs do not have to encompass all of the 29 principles. We have therefore concentrated the political essence of those principles in the following 10 points which provide the basis for the political unity of Guardian Clubs.

1. Guardian Clubs take the theoretical principles of scientific socialism as the ideological foundation for their unity.

2. Guardian Clubs are organized to take part in and help give leadership to the struggle against U.S. imperialism, the system of monopoly capitalism which rules in the U.S. and is the principal enemy of the working class and oppressed peoples and nations throughout the world.

3. Guardian Clubs hold that the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and its imperialist allies on the one hand, and the oppressed and exploited peoples and nations on the other, is the principal contradiction in the world at the present time.

4. Guardian Clubs hold that the multinational U.S. working class is the only revolutionary class in U.S. society and that the struggle to overthrow monopoly capitalism and establish socialism must proceed on the basis of its own emancipation and under working class leadership.

5. Guardian Clubs believe that U.S. Marxist-Leninists have the following strategic tasks:

- The building of a new, multinational, antirevisionist vanguard communist party.

- Making Marxist-Leninist theory into a material force in the class and political struggles of the present period by fusing that theory with the already existing spontaneous struggle of the working class and thereby developing the revolutionary class consciousness of the working class.

- Working to build the revolutionary alliance between the multinational U.S. working class and its firmest, most reliable allies, the oppressed nationalities and national minorities of the U.S.

- Working in and giving leadership to mass movements of the people in defense of democratic rights, against imperialist war, in solidarity with national liberation movements throughout the world.

6. Guardian Clubs see the struggle against racism, national oppression, white supremacy, great nation chauvinism as the foremost democratic task confronting the working class. The key to working-class unity rests in winning white workers to take up the special democratic demands of the workers of the oppressed nationalities. Guardian Clubs work with—and give support to the democratic struggles of the Afro-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Latino, Native American and Asian-American peoples in the U.S.

7. Guardian Clubs see the emancipation of women from the superexploitation of capitalism and the institutionalized system of male supremacy as completely bound up with the cause of proletarian revolution; the working class will not be able to defeat monopoly capitalism unless it becomes the foremost champion of women's emancipation.

8. Guardian Clubs are firmly committed to the struggle against revisionism as the chief form of opportunism within the working class and progressive movement in our own country and internationally. The Soviet Union is today a hegemonist superpower and the chief ideological

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR:

Outline of Clubs' political activities

By IRWIN SILBER

What are Guardian Clubs? (Or organizing committees, or associations, or some other term? We're still considering a number of suggestions.)

First, perhaps, we should say what they are not.

Guardian Clubs are not a new pre-party organization. Nor are they a new mass organization.

Guardian Clubs represent an effort to give concrete expression to and help further develop a political line that can unite U.S. Marxist-Leninists in advancing the party-building process. They are also an attempt to build the influence of and support for the Guardian as a national newspaper which plays an important role in the broader anti-imperialist and progressive movement.

As we see it, Guardian Clubs will have three main areas of activity:

1. Organized study and discussion of Marxist-Leninist theory and contemporary political questions. The study of Marxist-Leninist theory should develop in the context of a critique of modern revisionism. This is the fundamental ideological preparation for party-building, since it is the consolidation of revisionism in the Communist Party of the U.S. which has made the task of building a new party the central concern of Marxist-Leninists today. Such study should be also

aimed at developing a critique of the new expressions of social democracy in the left and various manifestations of "spontaneity" as a path to socialism. Of particular importance in such study are: Marxist political economy, the theory of the state, analysis of imperialism and the role of the vanguard party.

In addition, Clubs will take up present-day questions, such as the nature and present state of the U.S. working class, international strategic aims of imperialism, relation between national liberation struggles and class struggles in the capitalist countries, oppressed nationalities in the U.S., the woman question and the modern women's movement, etc.

At the beginning, the Guardian will develop study outlines and recommended reading lists around these questions. In time, as Clubs begin to sum up their own work, various papers and theses emanating from these discussions will be circulated in all the Clubs with a view to developing a common theoretical practice and a higher degree of ideological unity.

Another form of ideological activity will be the holding of public forums and debates on particular questions—so that Guardian Clubs will become a center of left ideological activity in those areas where they are established.

2. Supporting and developing the Guardian. This will be one of the chief forms of practical activity for the Clubs. Particularly important are circulation, news gathering and fund raising.

To say that "Guardian-building" is a major form of practical activity is a political judgment that today this newspaper plays a unique role in our movement and that the process of expanding its influence and securing its material base is in the interest of all genuine Marxist-Leninist forces in our movement today. Building wide support for the Guardian helps to overcome localism in our movement—precisely because it is a national newspaper basing itself on Marxism-Leninism. It also helps to overcome narrow organizational sectarianism, for if our movement can unite in support of a newspaper serving the entire left—despite political differences over one or another question—this will reflect a new level of political maturity in our ranks.

We are convinced that the potential for doubling the Guardian's present circulation of approximately 25,000 already exists—but that it will take an organized effort by people throughout the country who are motivated politically to do so. In terms of news gathering, it is already apparent how much better a newspaper the Guardian has become, how much more nationally representative, since the development of Guardian bureaus. Guardian Clubs operating in areas where bureaus do not presently exist will further broaden and deepen the paper's news coverage. And finally fund raising is a special task these days, since the relative handful of large contributors who at one time helped support the Guardian have become even fewer in number. This means that only a broadly based network of supporters (our Sustainer program proves this) can help make up the financial deficit which is built into the operation of a radical newspaper.

3. Local political action. We do not see Guardian Clubs replacing existing mass organizations or trying to develop a strategic concept—as a party would—for fusing Marxism-Leninism with the working-class movement. But there are a number of areas in which immediate democratic questions take on an urgency to which all Marxist-Leninists should respond. Among these are solidarity with national liberation struggles (particularly southern Africa today), affirmative action, women's rights, strike support, environmental issues, war preparations, and others. Guardian Clubs should be prepared to play some role in supporting and developing these activities in their communities as an appropriate supplement to their other tasks.

This perspective will guide the Clubs during their first year—and should be the basis on which people undertake to become active in them.

Organizational plans for Guardian Clubs

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nation of the Clubs project and he (William Ryan) will be in close touch with each Club on a regular basis. We haven't decided yet whether to issue a separate newsletter for Clubs only or expand the Guardian Sustainer to include Club news. However we do it, communication will be frequent with plenty of opportunity for the Clubs to make their views known on a number of political and organizational subjects. We also plan to have various Guardian people, particularly from the leadership, make periodic visits to confer with Club members. At some point during the first year we anticipate holding a national meeting of the regional Club leaders to sum up our work, correct mistakes and plan for the second stage—expansion of the clubs in size and number, broadened local decision making, and new, more sophisticated tasks.

At some point during the later summer we will publish an article about the Clubs in the Guardian, inviting interested people to contact us about membership in a local Club. Priority for membership will generally go to members of the Sustainer system but you should let us know as soon as possible before September whether you wish to be considered for the Clubs. Once each Club reaches its upper limit of members, the lists will be

closed until we decide to move on to the second stage.

Who are Guardian Clubs looking for as members? First, people who specifically agree with the 10 political points included in this newsletter and agree with the Guardian's general political line. Second, activists who are serious about working hard for the Clubs and the independent Marxist-Leninist political tendency they represent. Third, militants who are into revolutionary politics for the long haul, recognize the central importance of party-building and the struggle against revisionism and dogmatism, and who are dedicated to uniting all who can be united against the common enemy.

Our September newsletter will contain more specific information about the Clubs. Until then, we want you to understand we are completely dedicated to building the Clubs, that we wouldn't launch such a project unless we felt optimistic about its chances, and that we believe the Clubs will eventually be an important influence upon revolutionary politics in our country.

The Clubs will not be an overnight miracle. It's going to take a lot of work and the process will be slow. But for serious independent Marxists, this just might be what you have been waiting for. Much of the rest, of course, is up to you.

Views heroic independence struggle

Gellen returns from visit to Polisario camps

Traveling under the auspices of the Polisario Front, Guardian foreign editor Karen Gellen recently visited the front's camps near Tindouf, Algeria—one of the handful of U.S. journalists to do so.

Her 10-day trip to Africa also included a July 2-3 meeting of the International Liaison Committee of the first World Conference for the Peaceful and Independent Reunification of Korea. Representing the Guardian, Gellen is one of 12 delegates on the committee.

Following the committee meeting in Algiers, Gellen flew to Tindouf—a 6-hour trip. She was met there by Polisario representatives, who then took her by Land Rover to the camps.

"For a long time the Guardian has been a staunch supporter of the Saharans," explained Gellen about her visit. "We're one of their best friends in the U.S. and we'd been invited to go to [the front's] anniversary celebration in February but weren't able to go."

In February, the Polisario Front commemorated the 1976 founding of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (RASD). Despite the RASD's legitimate claims to self-determination when the Spanish colonialists withdrew from the phosphate-rich territory in 1976, Morocco and Mauritania annexed the Sahara. The front, however, has successfully defended the territory in spite of widespread napalm bombing which has forced the vast majority of the civilian population into the camps.

"The camps are seen as a front in the war," said Gellen. "There's total political mobilization from young to old. There's no sense of despair, even though conditions are extremely hard. For example there is the harsh barren desert, little food or adequate shelter, and much resulting illness, especially among the youngest children.

"But people are busy—constructing school and health facilities, holding literacy and political classes, making handicrafts with patriotic motifs, and so forth. Also, people have extreme confidence that they're going back. It's not at all a refugee camp in the usual sense. The camps are run by a progressive government—the legitimate government of the Western Sahara. The only reason the people are there is for safety from the saturation bombing."

There are nearly 100,000 people in the camps—mostly women, children and older people. "And people are still arriving every day," said Gellen. "They walk across hundreds of miles of desert to reach the camps or find Polisario. Most are leaving behind far better material conditions. But they refuse to live under Moroccan rule.

"Everything is focused on independence," continued Gellen. "For example, children sing songs like 'Our country is not for sale.' When I visited an adult literacy

class, the slogan on the blackboard was: 'No peace, no stability in the region, until total national independence.' You see and hear such political slogans everywhere."

In her three days in the camps, Gellen talked with Polisario fighters, visited hospitals, literacy classes, craft centers, construction sites and attended a military training session for women and one of the front's many cultural performances.

"There's been a total changeover in the condition of women," explained Gellen. "Before, under Spanish colonialism, they couldn't even work. Now they basically run the camps. Nor do the women wear the veils seen in typical Arab society.

"It was very moving to see the women do military training," continued Gellen. "They were planting mines, drilling and practicing their shooting. The women have been basically used for defense but now they're also joining the offensive."

During "la chaleur" (11 am to 5 pm in the hot summer months) everyone stays in the tents because the heat is unsupportable—about 140°. Gellen was able to have extensive talks with Polisario militants and other residents of the camp at this time.

"Everyone has some story to tell," said Gellen. "One man told me how he had been gone and returned to the capital of El Aaiun after the Moroccans had invaded. He came back and thought he was in Morocco, there were soldiers everywhere. He grabbed his wife and brother and came to the camps, leaving behind a job as a radio broadcaster. Now he's a Polisario fighter, the wounded veteran of several battles. At one point he spit on the ground and said: 'Morocco, Mauritania.' He had just told me how he had lost his 2-month-old baby in May due to the severe conditions in the camps. There are hundreds of such stories.

"One day during the rest period, we were listening to Radio Morocco on the short wave," continued Gellen. "The radio said a Belgian journal had quoted [Morocco's King] Hassan as saying he was fighting the war to rescue 'his subjects' being held prisoner in the camps by Algeria. And here we were in the camps, with people totally united in the fight against Morocco. It was so ludicrous to hear this Moroccan propaganda while being there."

The Polisario Front was aware, Gellen explained, of the Guardian's long-standing support for their struggle. "Everybody was also well aware of the role of the U.S. in the war—as Morocco's principal military supplier—and thought it was of special importance for a U.S. journalist to be there. The American people don't realize that the Saharans are being bombed with U.S. napalm and U.S. and French bombers."

The Guardian, along with other Polisario supporters in this country, is helping form a Saharan People's Support Committee, ex-

plained Gellen. "All of the Saharans I met emphasized the importance of alerting the American people. It's an internationalist responsibility, and we plan to soon begin support work in several cities."

Gellen also explained the important link between her representation at the Korea meeting and her visit to the camps.

"Both countries are fighting U.S. imperialism," Gellen explained. "And South Korea, for example, is sending military advisers to Morocco.

"It's hard to relate the warmth of the Polisario Front for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It's the only non-African country to recognize the RASD and front activists repeatedly told me the DPRK is the most anti-imperialist country in the world.

"It was a very moving experience to be able to represent the paper at both the Korea meeting and at the camps," concluded Gellen. "And it made me realize even more the important role of the Guardian in supporting these struggles—both of them directed against U.S. imperialism."

...Principles of unity

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center for revisionism internationally.

9. Guardian Clubs are based on the principle of proletarian internationalism, understanding that the cause of the emancipation of the U.S. working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world is one. The following are particular expressions of proletarian internationalism which are paramount at this time:

- Active support and solidarity with the peoples of southern Africa in the struggle for majority rule and national liberation against colonialism, white supremacist regimes, apartheid, neocolonialism and U.S. imperialism.

- Independence and self-determination for Puerto Rico.

- Solidarity with the just cause of the Palestinian people.

- Support for the struggles of the people of Chile, Western Sahara, Oman, East Timor, Northern Ireland and other peoples and nations fighting for their democratic rights and national liberation.

- Solidarity with socialist and newly emancipated countries, such as Albania, Angola, Cambodia, China, Cuba, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Laos, Mozambique and Vietnam.

10. Guardian Clubs support the general political line and world view of the Guardian and work to build its influence through public forums, promoting circulation, fund raising and other activities.

Letters from our Sustainers

This spot in The Guardian Sustainer will be reserved for your letters every month. Try to keep them as brief as possible. All letters will be printed with the author's initials but you must send in the communication with your full name.

GUARDIAN CLUBS 1

R.V., Philadelphia: I was glad to see Jack Smith's piece in the June Sustainer newsletter. The Guardian should not become a sectarian organ of its own little organization. In addition, the Clubs themselves should not be sectarian. One of the best ways I see to avoid that is to put a heavy emphasis on practical activity which requires a fairly broad approach. I don't mean that political line should be made secondary, but that the Clubs should constantly be bringing that line to mass work.

Thus, I think the plan for the Clubs to help organize coalitions and demonstrations for anti-imperialist solidarity or local political work is very important. Support work and circulation building for the Guardian are also important. For as long as the paper continues to take a broad view of its responsibilities to the entire progressive forces, those promoting it will have to take a similarly broad view of their tasks in order to get the paper out to those who need it.

GUARDIAN CLUBS 2

R.R., New York: Congratulations on your long-awaited party-building supplement. I strongly agree with your 29 unity principles, and would very enthusiastically like to join your New York Club.

In terms of party-building, my major theoretical interest is in points 13, 14 and 15. The sex and race contradictions are such major disunifiers of the multinational working class and require so much additional clarification that I believe these areas will inevitably assume priority status in our near-future party-building considerations.

GUARDIAN CLUBS 3

R.D., Los Angeles: I am very interested in joining a Guardian Club and hope you could send me further information.

I'm hopeful that the Clubs will fill an appalling vacuum in the left here. There are a number of anti-imperialist groups; there are quite a few single-issue community

groups. And of course there are numerous sectarian groups or small collectives with a narrow perspective. But Marxist-Leninists interested in placing their work in a national context have nowhere to go.

I know a lot of people downplay the ability of a newspaper to organize—saying that it's backwards. Perhaps. But the reality is that when you look at the left's few strengths in this country, the Guardian is one of them. And there's nothing wrong with building from your strength. For that reason, I'm interested in the Clubs.

AFRICA COVERAGE

A.L., New York: Enclosed is my Sustainer pledge for the months of July and August.

I'm also enclosing a little extra as a special thanks for the Africa coverage—in particular the stories on the attempted coup in Angola. There's not a paper in the country that comes close to your Africa stories. In fact, I don't know of any other paper or magazine that even had firsthand reports on the effort to overthrow MPLA.

PARTY-BUILDING 1

W.O., Carbondale, Ill.: I've read the supplement on party-building and agree with all 29 points, although I would have articulated some differently. I feel, however, that the role of gays should have been addressed. Perhaps the Guardian has not yet formulated a complete position on this question, but it should even though it is not a matter of utmost urgency.

PARTY-BUILDING 2

G.B., Burlington, Vt.: The party-building supplement is an important contribution to the antirevisionist, antidogmatist Marxist-Leninist movement. It focuses the discussion on the need and the basis for a new communist party.

There are a few omissions, however. What is your position on the right of Native Americans to self-determination? What are the special demands of the nationally

Picnic and Burchett tour coming soon

We have some exciting events coming up this fall.

The Guardian Picnic is set for Sept. 18, at Arrow Park in Monroe, N.Y. We'll have workshops, food, entertainment, swimming and sports—guaranteed fun and a great way to meet the Guardian staff. Watch the paper or write for details.

Wilfred Burchett will be making his long-awaited tour of the U.S. from Oct. 21 to Nov. 30. We are working on his itinerary right now, and we'll have the details later.

We could use some help in arranging his speaking engagements (with a view toward fundraising). If you can help organize such an event in your area, or if you have any contacts who can, please get in touch with us immediately.

oppressed peoples in the U.S.? What is the relationship of gay oppression to male supremacy? What is the organizational form of the party? Besides discussing the supplement and forming Guardian Clubs, what are the organized forms to deepen the party-building movement?

NEW SUSTAINERS

A.B. & A.B., Watertown, Mass.: We were waiting for our finances to turn the corner, but they never seemed to. Lately it has become clear that the Guardian needs Sustainers more than ever, and so whether we can afford it or not seems increasingly unimportant. The real question seems to be: can we do without the Guardian?

The recent decision of the Guardian to increase its presence in the party-building movement makes the newspaper even more invaluable than before. But it is also a risky and time-consuming venture. And it comes at a time when the Guardian must continue to improve coverage, also a costly proposition. We hope that the Sustainer program will give you the financial support it takes to both put out an ever-improving paper as well as to help advance the process of building a new communist party.

GAY MOVEMENT

D.E.B., Austin, Tex.: The Guardian has finally improved coverage of the rights of gays. Though late, that is great. I am looking forward to news about the development of the gay movement in your pages.

Help us survive our summer cash crisis

This issue is for two months, July and August. There will be no newsletter published next month, although we will send pledge reminders.

The summer months are always a time when the Guardian's income goes into a slump. New subscriptions and renewals fall off, as do other income sources. We economize as best we can, by cutting the paper back to 20 pages, suspending publication for two weeks, etc., but our overhead expenses still need to be met.

So far this year your help has enabled us to cope with the financial crisis that resulted from the loss of our tours to China, but the summer months pose a special problem. So once again, we turn to you for help. An extra contribution, or an advance payment on your pledge now will go a long way in helping us to keep publishing and to bring you an even better paper come September. Thanks.

The Guardian Sustainer is published monthly for members of the Sustainer program of the Guardian Independent, radical newsweekly. All correspondence should be addressed to The Guardian Sustainer, 33 West 17th St., New York, N.Y. 10011.