



## Coming to grips with the **LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

**'At the expense of the plundered colonial peoples capital corrupted its wage slaves, created a community of interest between the exploited and the exploiters as against the oppressed colonies — the yellow, black, and red colonial peoples — and chained the European and American working class to the imperialist 'fatherland.'**

**— Comintern statement, March 1919**

**IN THIS  
ISSUE**

Lessons from Comintern • White Working Class Now  
Black Panther Party 1968-69 • DuBois in History

*Plus: Fallout from Previous Issues, Reviews, and Much More*

# MIM Theory

1996

Number 4 Volume 1

## Maoist Internationalist Movement

Editor: MC12

MIM Theory is the official theoretical journal of the Maoist Internationalist Movement (MIM). Subscriptions are \$18 per year/four issues. Overseas airmail subscriptions are \$36.

MIM also publishes MIM Notes, the party's official voice on current news (\$12/12 issues or \$1 each); Notas Rojas, the newspaper of emerging Spanish-speaking parties of MIM (\$4/year); and, Maoist Sojourner, by and for Third World Maoist exiles led by MIM (\$12/year 12 issues). International subscriptions cost more.

MIM is an underground party that does not publish the names of its comrades in order to avoid state surveillance and repression that has been historically directed at communist parties and anti-imperialist movements. In the text, "MC" means a MIM Comrade, "RC" means RAIL Comrade, a member of the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist League, which is led by MIM.

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# What is MIM?



The Maoist Internationalist Movement is a revolutionary communist party that upholds Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. MIM is an internationalist organization that works from the vantage point of the Third World proletariat; its members are not Amerikans, but world citizens.

MIM struggles to end the oppression of all groups over groups: classes, genders, nations. MIM knows this is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle.

Revolution is a reality as the U.S. military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

MIM differs from other communist groups on three main questions: (1) MIM holds that after the proletariat seizes power in socialist revolution, the potential exists for capitalist restoration under the leadership of a new bourgeoisie within the party itself. In the case of the USSR, the bourgeoisie seized power after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China, it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. (2) MIM upholds the Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976, as the farthest advance of communism in human history. (3) MIM believes the North American white working class is primarily a non-revolutionary worker-elite at this time; thus, it is not the principal vehicle to advance Maoism in this country.

MIM accepts people as members who agree on these basic principals and accept democratic centralism, the system of majority rule, on other questions of party line.

*The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should regard it not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution.*

— Mao Zedong, *Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 208.*

# MIM Theory

Number 10 • 1996

*coming to grips with the*

## LABOR ARISTOCRACY

### CONTENTS

What We Want, What We Believe .....	2
Editor's Introduction.....	3
Letters to MIM Theory .....	4
The Labor Aristocracy .....	21
Lessons from the Comintern.....	21
Comintern Excerpts.....	45
'The Comintern Has Long Ceased...' .....	46
'We Are Not Going to Turn the Country Over to Moscow!' .....	47
The White Working Class: Gross Parasitism .....	48
In Black & White: Economy Update .....	51
More Accounting on the Labor Aristocracy.....	54
Pulse of Capitalism Opposes MIM Thesis .....	59
The Black Nation Speaks .....	60
Maoism Restored: The Black Panther Party 1968-69.....	60
Biography Calls up Appreciation for Du Bois .....	66
National Liberation: Who's Lumpen? .....	72
Reviews & Briefs .....	76
On the Origins of DSA.....	76
MIM Strengthens Line on First Nations.....	76
Agricultural Work Debates .....	76
Review: 1981 <i>Prisoners of Liberation</i> .....	78
Comment: On Zionism .....	78
Cashing in on Oppression .....	79
Review: <i>Away With All Pests</i> .....	80
Review: <i>Discussion</i> .....	80
Rejecting the 'Emerging Center' .....	81
Review: Winona LaDuke .....	81
Review: <i>Communism</i> .....	84
ex-Scottish Workers Party Interview .....	85
Poem: What I See A Fascist .....	86
Poem: Winnable Battles .....	87
Poem: Oh Henry.....	87
1996 MIM Literature List .....	88

# WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

MAOIST INTERNATIONALIST MOVEMENT PROGRAM, OCTOBER 1995

## 1. WE WANT COMMUNISM.

We believe that anyone who opposes all oppression—power of groups over groups—is a communist. This includes opposition to national oppression, class oppression and gender oppression.

## 2. WE WANT SOCIALISM.

We believe that socialism is the path to communism. We believe that the current dictatorship of the bourgeoisie oppresses the world's majority. We believe that socialism—the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry—is a necessary step towards a world without inequality or dictatorship—a communist world. We uphold the USSR under Lenin and Stalin (1917-1953) and China under Mao (1949-1976) as models in this regard.

## 3. WE WANT REVOLUTIONARY ARMED STRUGGLE.

We believe that the oppressors will not give up their power without a fight. Ending oppression is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. We believe, however, that armed struggle in the imperialist countries is a serious strategic mistake until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless. Revolution will become a reality for North America as the U.S. military becomes over-extended in the government's attempts to maintain world hegemony.

*"We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun."*—Mao Zedong

## 4. WE WANT ORGANIZATION.

We believe that democratic-centralism, the system of unified application of majority decisions, is necessary to defeat the oppressors. This system includes organization, leadership, discipline and hierarchy. The oppressors use these weapons, and we should, too. By building a disciplined revolutionary communist vanguard party, we follow in the tradition of comrades Lenin, Mao and Huey Newton.

## 5. WE WANT INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS OF AND FOR THE OPPRESSED.

We believe that the oppressed need independent media to build public opinion for socialist revolution. We believe that the oppressed need independent institutions to provide land, bread, housing, education, medical care, clothing, justice and peace. We believe that the best independent institution of all is a self-reliant socialist government.

## 6. WE WANT CONTINUOUS REVOLUTION.

We believe that class struggle continues under socialism. We believe that under socialism, the danger exists for a new bourgeoisie to arise within the communist party itself. We believe that these new oppressors will restore capitalism unless they are stopped. We believe that the bourgeoisie seized power in the USSR after the death of Stalin in 1953; in China it was after Mao's death and the overthrow of the "Gang of Four" in 1976. We believe that China's Great Proletarian Cultural

Revolution (1966-1976) is the farthest advance towards communism in human history, because it mobilized millions of people against the restoration of capitalism.

## 7. WE WANT A UNITED FRONT AGAINST IMPERIALISM.

We believe that the imperialists are currently waging a hot war—a World War III—against the world's oppressed nations, including the U.S. empire's internal colonies. We seek to unite all who can be united under proletarian and feminist leadership against imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy.

We believe that the imperialist-country working classes are primarily a pro-imperialist labor aristocracy at this time. Likewise, we believe that the biological-women of the imperialist countries are primarily a gender aristocracy. Thus, while we recruit individuals from these and other reactionary groups to work against their class, national and gender interests, we do not seek strategic unity with them. In fact, we believe that the imperialist-country working-classes and imperialist-country biological-women, like the bourgeoisies and petit-bourgeoisies, owe reparations to the international proletariat and peasantry. As such, one of the first strategic steps MIM will take upon winning state power will be to open the borders.

We believe that socialism in the imperialist countries will require the dictatorship of the *international* proletariat and that the imperialist-country working-classes will need to be on the receiving end of this dictatorship.

## 8. WE WANT NEW DEMOCRACY FOR THE OPPRESSED NATIONS. WE WANT POWER FOR THE OPPRESSED NATIONS TO DETERMINE THEIR DESTINIES.

We believe that oppressed people will not be free until they are able to determine their destinies. We look forward to the day when oppressed people will live without imperialist police terror and will learn to speak their mind without fear of the consequences from the oppressor. When this day comes, meaningful plebiscites can be held in which the peoples will decide for themselves if they want their own separate nation-states or some other arrangement.

## 9. WE WANT WORLD REVOLUTION.

We believe it is our duty to support Marxism-Leninism-Maoism everywhere, though our principal task is to build public opinion and independent institutions in preparation for Maoist revolution in North America. The imperialists think and act globally—we must do the same.

## 10. WE WANT POLITICS IN COMMAND.

We believe that correct tactics flow from correct strategies, which flow from a correct ideological and political line. We believe that the fight against imperialism, capitalism and patriarchy goes hand-in-hand with the fight against revisionism, chauvinism, and opportunism.

*"The correctness or otherwise of the ideological and political line decides everything. When the Party's line is correct, then everything will come its way. If it has no followers, then it can have followers; if it has no guns, then it can have guns; if it has no political power, then it can have political power."*—Mao Zedong

# Editor's Introduction

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**D**uring our 1995 Congress, MIM adopted an important new resolution, reprinted below. Some of the work leading up to this decision appears in this issue of MIM Theory, especially the long review of the Comintern's work on the question of the labor aristocracy. Here MIM advances our developing line on the international communist movement. And we take responsibility for pressing the world's imperialist-country communists in particular to come to grips with the sweeping international implications of labor aristocracy parasitism.

## **RESOLUTION: THE QUESTION OF THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY IS AN INTERNATIONAL LINE OF DEMARCTION**

No International that has respect for national conditions in the spirit of Mao, or joint declaration involving imperialist country Maoists, will gain MIM's adherence without the following preconditions of membership by imperialist country parties if other imperialist country parties are involved:

- 1) The recognition of superprofits extracted from the oppressed nations as a central fact of economic life in the imperialist countries.
- 2) Upholding Lenin's distinction between labor bureaucrats and labor aristocrats.
- 3) Upholding Lenin's distinction between the labor aristocracy and the proletariat.
- 4) Seeking the dictatorship of the proletariat where that is defined as excluding the labor aristocracy.

In addition, MIM will not adhere to any international organization of communists or joint declaration or communique involving imperialist country parties that does not recognize that the imperialist country or "white" proletariat is either non-existent or a tiny minority as indicated in the conditions of white-collar work and the pay of those workers. This has become a matter of applying the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the imperialist countries and continuing with the methods and definitions of "proletarian" and "labor aristocracy" laid down since Lenin.

We encourage all imperialist-country parties, and all other revolutionaries, to seriously consider the arguments put forward on these pages and debate them with us. We will devote space in future issues of MIM Theory to such exchanges.

This issue also includes in-depth reviews of the early Black Panther Party, which brings to light the powerful Maoism of the 1968-69 period, and of a recent biography of W. E. B. Du Bois. With the Comintern pieces, the further empirical investigations into the labor aristocracy, and the collection of reviews and correspondence, this issue serves to focus Maoists on the theoretical and strategic tasks we urgently confront.

—MC12

# Letters to MIM Theory

## MT8 offends IWW

One of our members recently showed me a copy #8 of your journal (MT8, "The Anarchist Ideal and Communist Revolution"), including a rather curious review of the newspaper which I edit, the Industrial Worker.

I find your decision to reprint a five-year-old review (with long-obsolete subscription rates and addresses) odd, though I suppose it is unreasonable, or at least fruitless, to expect you to take the time to actually familiarize yourself with the tendencies and organizations you criticize.

As a wage slave, I am accustomed to opening letters with the salutation "Fellow Workers." I refrain in this instance because it is evident from your journal that your outfit is not in fact a working-class organization. Why you choose to characterize your anti-working class views as "socialist" or "Marxist" is beyond me, given your repudiation of the struggle for working-class self emancipation in favor of a putchist approach in which you openly proclaim the dictatorship over the working class previously relegated to actual historical practice vigorously denied in public statements by the butchers Lenin, Mao, Stalin, Trotsky, et al.

I enclose a copy of the current issue of the Industrial Worker, which I suspect you will find even more distasteful now (as editor I have brought a more consistently revolutionary unionist thrust to the newspaper's pages). Since it appears that none of you have seen the paper in the last five years, I checked our archives for the April 1990 issue. I am not entirely certain whether MC0 (could this be the founder?) actually read it, although perhaps he (?) [sic] was simply disabled by your anti-worker blinders. Your reviewer is clearly unfamiliar with the meaning of the word "industry," believing, for example, that "service workers" do not work in industry — and, indeed, that the capitalists employ significant numbers of economically non-productive workers. (I leave this point aside, not having time for an introductory course in economics, Marxist or otherwise.) Nor does your reviewer grasp the fundamentally constructive and revolutionary nature of the IWW program, seeking to strengthen and improve conditions of the working class here and now while simultaneously organizing our class to take possession of the earth and the means of production.

While ignoring the bulk of the labor news in our newspaper, your reviewer is perceptive enough to recognize that we talk "solely in terms of workers' struggles." Actually, our paper does discuss and support broader struggles, but as socialists and revolutionaries we do recognize the class divide as fundamental and focus our efforts on organizing our fellow wage slaves to make revolution. But we take a broad view of working-class struggles, as in an article ignored by your reviewer, "The INS: Terrorists of the Border," where we detail the oppression of Mexican and Central American workers in



the U.S. and call for struggles to tear down the physically and legal walls erected against our fellow workers. The IWW has always insisted that workers should be free to live where they choose, regardless of national borders.

MC0 claims that "the IWW proposes no mechanisms to break the economic and legal chains" imposed on our class — presumably because we do not argue for suicidal military strategies favored in the MIM bunkers, instead calling for the working class to organize at the point of production and use direct action to secure our emancipation. You correctly note the need for "concrete actions" to secure our emancipation, but utterly ignore the many reports of efforts to build revolutionary unions and mobilize working-class solidarity that filled that and every issue of our newspaper.

Frankly, I find it somewhat ironic that you criticize us for focusing our efforts on the vast majority of the population — the working class (not the "white working class" as you allege, I am confident that the IWW has more "Black" and "Latino" workers — terms I put in quotes because I do not believe in the material existence of discrete racial or ethnic categories; rather these are abstract categories imposed upon the working class in an effort to divide us — in our membership than does MIM) — on the grounds that most workers are not presently revolutionary, but have no compunction urging us to refocus our efforts on "more revolutionary groups" (apparently based on your misperceptions of their subjective consciousness, rather than on a materialist analysis of their class position), prisoners, etc. Of course, anyone with a firmer grasp of the actual world in which we live knows that these groups are also non-revolutionary. The working class is presently not organized to defend its own interests, nor it is presently conscious of those interests (your claim that the working class has common interests with the exploiting class is not only un-Marxist and anti-socialist, it is also patent nonsense). This is why we are working to educate our fellow workers to build one big union capable of winning our emancipation from wage slavery.

This sort of confusion continues throughout your entire issue. It is clear, for example, that you use terms such as "anarchist" without regard for whether those so labeled have anything in common with anarchist ideas — let alone consider themselves part of the anarchist movement. Your discussion of Spain and Kronstadt is ahistorical. MC12 praises the Stalinist butcher Enrique Lister, one of the chief organizers of the Stalinist counter-revolution in Spain. (Many of us believe that when Franco spoke of a fifth column, he referred to the Spanish Communist Party — overwhelmingly a party of small shopkeepers, factory owners and landlords, in contrast to the working-class CNT and FAI.) You claim that accommodation to international and national capital was necessary to defeat the fascists, ignoring the fact that where these ideas were put into practice they uniformly led to defeat. After the fifth columnists forcibly dismantled the agricultural collectives, the government was quickly forced to allow them to reorganize in order to restore food production. It was the collectives — not the communists — who armed and fed the militia which were the

only force that effectively fought Franco's forces (militarization was an unmitigated failure).

As the anarchists swallowed compromise after compromise in the interests of unity in the struggle against the fascists, the Stalinists and the government seized every opportunity to attack workers in the rear — seriously undermining morale and wasting troops and ammunition badly needed on the front. Had the anarchists held to your organizational concepts, they would simply have lined the Stalinists up against the wall and shot them (indeed, in retrospect it seems clear that the successful defense of the Revolution required that the Stalinists be treated as counter-revolutionaries at least as dangerous as the fascists). So no one would deny that our Spanish comrades made mistakes. But only in Spain, where the anarcho-syndicalists were more powerful than the Stalinists and Social Democrats, did any serious resistance meet the fascists. And that resistance continued long after our fellow workers' defeat in the war. While Stalin was signing pacts with Hitler and the German Communists were fingering IWW dockworkers for the Nazis, the anarcho-syndicalists were organizing guerrilla warfare in Spain and trying to rebuild shop-floor organizations.

It is clear from the very limited sources cited in your articles that you are largely unfamiliar with the actual events in Spain, and with the vigorous debates conducted within the anarchist movement at the time and afterwards. It is similarly clear from the way you casually toss around terms like Marxist, Anarchist, etc., that you are unfamiliar with the traditions of these ideological currents as well. Before you inflict your ignorance on the rest of us, some intense study and reflection might be in order.

One final note... you repeatedly attack anarchists for having failed to carry out an ultimately successful revolution, at least implicitly asserting that such revolutions did take place under Leninist, Stalinist and Maoist leaderships in countries such as the USSR and China. Indeed, you assert that the Soviet Union remained a socialist regime through Stalin's death. As the IWW noted in our 1921 pamphlet, "The Workers and Peasants of Soviet Russia: How They Live," workers and peasants had no control over Russian society by 1920. They did not control their unions, workplace collectives, or soviets. They were not permitted to discuss issues freely, to criticize the party, to organize unions or other organizations to defend their interests, or to take charge of the means of production. The consequences were not only political oppression, but also a system of despotic central mismanagement that left many workers literally starving even while the means of meeting their needs were readily at hand. The situation in China under Mao's dictatorship over the proletariat was similar. We are indeed fortunate not to live in China, where you and your comrads in arms would have us shot for defacing the likeness of your maximum leader, and so are merely subjected to your ranting and raving (might I suggest, however, that you take a closer look at the image in question, so that your denunciations might accurately describe what you denounce).

Evidently, then, your idea of "revolution" does not

encompass the workers taking possession of the means of production, nor of the state apparatuses, nor even having the right to speak their minds. This would seem a rather impoverished idea of "revolution," one which quite naturally cannot be expected to appeal to workers in the U.S. (or anywhere else). Given this anti-working class approach, it is no wonder that you have despaired of ever gaining the support of the working class and instead wish to impose your despotic rule on us wage slaves by military force.

For a world without bosses,

—John Bekken  
Editor,  
Industrial Worker

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**MC12 responds:** We regret the error in subscription rates and information we gave in MIM Theory 8, and we are glad to correct that here. However, we have no problem reprinting an old review as long as it is clearly dated. And if that is what prompted the editor of the Industrial Worker to write, we are glad to have done it.

Briefly on the question of numbers of members from different origins, MIM can recommend many political parties, including the Democrats and Republicans, for those interested in joining organizations with the greatest sheer numbers of any particular group in the imperialist countries. For overall strength in numbers, MIM recommends religious groups.

Second, the writer believes that capitalists do not employ significant numbers of "economically non-productive workers," which is apparently clear to all those familiar with economics, "Marxist or otherwise." MIM's question is: Which will it be, Marxist or otherwise? The phrase "economically non-productive" is misleading. Our review referred to jobs that are "non-productive (in the Marxist sense) and non-exploitative." So, let us drop the "otherwise" economics and talk about what me mean here. To choose obvious examples, in 1993 there were 1.4 million "adjusters and investigators," 923,000 cops, 583,000 people who sell insurance, and 161,000 people who sell advertising.(1) Are these 3 million people "productive" workers? And that's just the tip of the iceberg. The great majority of white collar workers are not engaged in useful production, but rather in the apportionment and distribution of the products of others' labor. Sure, at any level capitalism has to employ some service workers, like people who work at McDonald's, and some of these people are necessary; although even their work is not directly productive although they may be exploited. And when these occupations dominate in the economy, and when they dominate among white-nation workers and the white nation as a whole, they have a strong reactionary effect on consciousness. For more on this important question, we recommend J. Sakai's *Settlers: The Mythology of*

*the White Proletariat.* We would also argue that even those engaged in productive labor may be paid more than the value of their labor power and labor; therefore, being productive does not also define one's exploitation.

Third, MIM explicitly and routinely rejects "suicidal military strategies" that the writer alleges thrive in "MIM bunkers." See MIM Theory 5 for in-depth theoretical treatment of focoism. Our program itself is clear on this point: "We believe that the oppressors will not give up their power without a fight. Ending oppression is only possible by building public opinion to seize power through armed struggle. We believe, however, that armed struggle in the imperialist countries is a serious strategic mistake until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless."

### **WHAT "WORKERS"?**

Our criticism of the IWW speaking "solely in terms of workers' struggles" is a reference to the First World chauvinism implicit in the paper's search for "workers" struggles in oppressed nations where the majority are peasants and the principal contradiction is national oppression rather than simply class oppression of the "working class." This chauvinism is apparent still in the current letter, where the writer says "the working class" are "the vast majority of the population." Even if you count all those non-productive white collar parasitic "workers" and overpaid blue-collar workers in the United Snakes as among the "working class," you will not have a "vast" majority of U.S. population in the "working class." But more to the point, the majority of the world's population are peasants, and to internationalists "the population" is the world population.

We agree with the IWW that national borders should be torn down. However, we do not harbor any illusions that this will mean an increase in living standards for the white working class "wage slaves" whom the IWW is so hell-bent on defending. The writer says that "The IWW has always insisted that workers should be free to live where they choose, regardless of national borders," and exposes the terror of the INS. And, the IWW's credit, as Sakai reports, "Just as the IWW was the last white union to be socialist, it also represented the last stratum of white workers to be in any way internationalist."(2)

But even as the writer claims the IWW leads "efforts to build revolutionary unions and mobilize working-class solidarity," we have to look carefully at the conception of "revolutionary" when we're dealing with workers in the rich countries — those who stand to lose a lot more than their chains under a system of world-wide equality.

Look back at World War I. The line expressed here is consistent with an IWW editorial in 1915 during WWI, which represented "the essence of settler degeneracy," in Sakai's view. While the Bolsheviks (whom the IWW writer decries as "butchers") were urging workers to "Turn the Imperialist War into a Revolutionary War," the IWW said of a munitions plant strike: "The owners of these factories are making millions out of the murderfest in Europe — their slaves should likewise improve the opportunity to get a little something for themselves. ... [W]e should all be interested in stopping the produc-

tion of war munitions. Yes, of course, but that's only a dream ... so the only thing the workers in these factories can do is to try to improve their condition."(3) Under imperialism, we always have to ask who pays for improvements in a given groups conditions.

Sakai concludes, and MIM agrees completely, that while the IWW contained many progressive elements, "insofar as it tried to convince everyone that there was a solution for the problems of colonial workers *separate* from liberation for their oppressed nations, it did a positive disservice."(5)

This goes on in the present day, as this writer claims that all distinctions between "races" or "ethnicities" of "workers" are misleading labels imposed from the outside with no basis in material fact. That is just as hard for revolutionaries to swallow now — with white workers clamoring for more repression of immigrants — as it was in 1919 when white workers went on murderous anti-Black rampages, and the IWW claimed that there was "... no race problem. There is only a class problem."(4)

While the IWW, then as now, opposed blatant "racism," they also warned then that "Leaving the Negro outside of your union makes him a potential, in not an actual, scab, dangerous to the organized workers..."(4) Or, as a Brotherhood of Timber Workers organizer wrote in trying to persuade poor white workers to join up with the IWW in 1910: "As far as the 'negro question' goes, it means simply this: Either the whites organize with the negroes, or the bosses will organize the negroes against the whites..." The anti-racism of the IWW was packaged as a self-interested appeal to whites rather than an anti-imperialist, anti-Amerikan call to destroy the fact of the white nation's domination. That meant white workers could see the IWW's anti-racism as a tactical necessity and it would prove unsustainable; thus the IWW declined dramatically, as Sakai explains in much greater detail.

The IWW now joins the chorus of critics who claim, without reference to the Marxist classics MIM routinely cites, that our assertions that "the working class has common interests with the exploiting class is not only un-Marxist and anti-socialist, it is also patent nonsense." (Of course we don't say this about "the" working class, but only about the non-exploited working class and other classes of the oppressor nations.) In reaction to MIM's argument that the white working class is not revolutionary, the IWW argues that no one is, so what's the difference? Well, MIM uses a materialist analysis. We understand the meaning of imperialist oppression as the principal contradiction, and because of that we can evaluate who is revolutionary and to what degree. We compare, for example on the one hand, Detroit newspaper workers who want higher wages and more job security without reference to imperialism, to on the other hand laboring prisoners working in slave-like conditions who want to destroy Amerika and liberate its colonies. And from this we determine the relative revolutionary character of these different groups. But to this IWW writer, such a materialist analysis just uses "abstract categories imposed upon the working class in an effort to divide us." MIM uses dialectical materialism to consider the relationship

between "subjective consciousness" and "a materialist analysis of their class position" in order to reach a conclusion. We do not choose *between* these categories of analysis, as the IWW writer would have us do.

On WWII, the writer criticizes communist actions in Spain but misses the forest for the trees. Stalin's strategy, and no other, defeated the Nazis and prevented the victory of fascism over the world. Despite the deaths of millions of Soviet citizens in the war against fascism, the writer claims that "only in Spain ... did any serious resistance meet the fascists." The writer sees the Spanish anarchists as the only hope against fascism while "Stalin was signing pacts with Hitler" — without acknowledging that Stalin's strategy was victorious while the Spanish anarchists, like anarchists everywhere at all times, failed. This is what MIM means by idealism. MIM is willing to take criticism of communists wherever they screw up as long as we can also take the credit for their achievements.

In this response we won't engage the unfounded general accusations against the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. In addition to our own published writings, we recommend many books on the subjects (send \$1 for a literature list). However, we should say that the characterization of our "idea of 'revolution'" is of course inaccurate, that worker and peasant control over the means of production and the state are both essential to revolution. This "idea" has also "appeal[ed]" to hundreds of millions of people, as any history that takes oppressed people seriously can show you. The insistence on the use of a general concept of "the working class" without differentiation according to nation or economic standing, in the era of imperialism, has proven itself to be a tool of the privileged and a weapon against the oppressed. And in this reactionary conception MIM has no stake whatsoever — the IWW and the Trotskyists can fight over who best represents it.

Notes:

1. *Statistical Abstract of the U.S. 1994*, table 637.
2. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, p. 66. Send \$10 to MIM for a copy.
3. *Settlers*, p. 68.
4. *Settlers*, p. 69.
5. *Settlers*, p. 71.

## I Hate Stalin

From INTERNET discussion:

I have been dutifully reading the MIM posts but have held my piece. There are enough Maoists here in Brisbane (two) to keep me diverted. But this [MIM defense of Stalin] is too much. What tradition of revolution did Uncle Joe establish?

He was nothing less than the grave digger of the revolution ...

But then one can hardly expect a Maoist to care much about that.

**MIM replies:** We had just read off a list of independent movements established in the legacy of Stalin and our critic

wrote the above brainwashed reply ignoring the successful revolutionary movements in Albania, Korea, the Black nation, the Philippines and Peru. There is in fact no alleged "alternative" with anything close to such a record of success. Our critic knows this is our point but remains silent on what he is *for*, instead of just knowing what he is against.

## Open letter to Solidarity

OR WHY MIM DOESN'T TELL MEMBERS' NAMES TO THE STATE

September 19, 1995

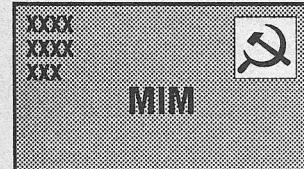
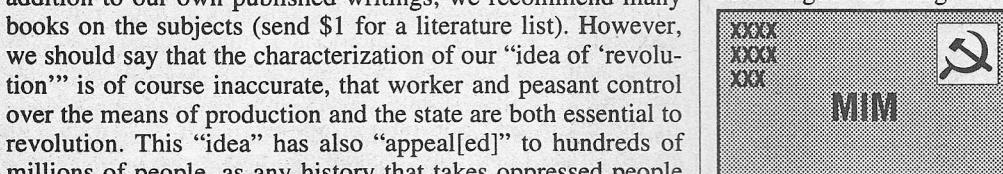
### Solidarity:

One of your supporters encountered a MIM supporter at a mid-August meeting about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in Ann Arbor, Mich. The MIM supporter attended the event and distributed flyers there criticizing the Amerikan anti-NAFTA movement as pro-labor aristocracy and anti-international proletariat. The Solidarity supporter accosted the supporter saying "oh, you're in MIM? I know so-and-so, who started MIM," spreading around the names of supposed Maoist comrades and publicly claiming that this individual is a member of MIM. In doing this, Solidarity was doing the work of the cops: identifying individuals with revolutionary communist politics and thereby exposing them to state repression. MIM is disappointed and angry, although not surprised, by this incident.

Gossip is the practice of pigs. That portion of the Amerikan left which believes and upholds the bourgeoisie's myth of free speech and freedom of information does the pigs' work for them by gossiping, name-dropping, and generally treating state repression like a joke. Solidarity can afford to have this practice because its pro-labor aristocracy politics support imperialism. To Solidarity, state repression is a joke, because Solidarity does not start with a line or a program that aims to overthrow the imperialist state.

By contrast, MIM policy is not to expose the names of its members and supporters because we know the bourgeoisie's support of free speech is limited to speech which supports bourgeois goals. Black Panther Party members and members of the American Indian Movement were murdered and imprisoned for speech which genuinely opposed U.S. imperialism and oppression of Amerika's internal and external colonies. MIM honors the memories of revolutionaries who went before us; our task is to rebuild the anti-imperialist movement the FBI destroyed, and to do this we must not laugh in the face of enemies who killed and jailed our predecessors.

If Solidarity wants to pretend that there is free speech in Amerika, that this a democracy with equal rights for all in



which we can all be equally public and proud about our political beliefs, that's Solidarity's business. MIM disagrees with this view and thinks it is both naive and ahistorical, but we are not going to insist that Solidarity change this practice for its own organization. Solidarity would first need to adopt an anti-imperialist perspective to understand the importance of underground organizing and to understand what an enemy of freedom the U.S. government is.

But MIM is not willing to sit by while Solidarity gossips about supposed MIM members and supporters and does the pigs' jobs for them in exposing MIM to state repression. The masses know that it is not necessary to know the names of individuals in a movement to understand the correctness of its politics. They also know that any movement which the U.S. government knows about and fully tolerates without surveillance, repression and infiltration, is not a revolutionary movement and will not be a vehicle for true peace or justice.

The Solidarity supporter also said that s/he thought MIM was "silly" back when s/he was in school and s/he thinks we are "silly" now. S/he also asked if we still use numbers to identify ourselves in our publications. Referring to an organization as "silly" or "dumb" rather than engaging in political struggle is a waste of the masses' time. The masses are not interested in frivolous name-calling, they want to hear principled debate between parties and other political organizations so that they can struggle over the correct line and work to understand whose work is most advanced, and what organization is most progressive to work with.

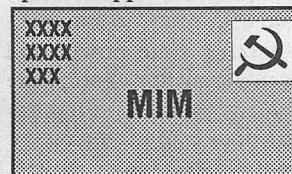
As for identifying ourselves with numbers rather than names, yes, MIM continues and upholds this practice. To people who are genuinely curious about this practice, we explain the history of the FBI's repression of the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement. To people who ask us this question as if refusing to publish our names were the silliest thing in the world we ask: Why do you want to know our names? Are you cops? Do you have some need to identify us as individuals? Why can't you just engage in principled debate over line rather than having to attach a face to the discussion?

MIM calls on Solidarity to renounce the practice of publicizing anti-imperialist activists' and suspected anti-imperialist activists' names in public, and to make a public statement on why this practice is dangerous and objectively counter-revolutionary. MIM calls on people who support anti-imperialist politics to support our efforts to protect our activities and activists from the state, and to work with us to propagate politics which can make it safe for the masses to express their thoughts and oppose their own oppression.

MIM invites comments, questions and criticism on this letter or any other topic of anti-imperialism or Maoism. Please write to us via snail or e-mail.

## A Fourth Strand For Animals?

In MIM Theory 4, MA343 proposes that MIM accept species oppression as a fourth component to the "connected



but non-reducible sources of unequal power relations leading to the injustice and violence in our world (p. 9)." MC5's response to the proposal is ambivalent, pointing out that U.S. imperialism and not species oppression is the principal contradiction facing the international proletariat today and rebutting MA343's assertion that animal liberationists "have dealt the most spectacular and costly blows of any organized liberation struggle inside Amerika's borders in recent years."

These two points are well taken and, in fact, reinforce each other: insofar as the humyn-non humyn contradiction is not principal at this time, any attempts to liberate animals first will end in fiasco tragedy. That is not, however, a refutation of the claim that non-humyn oppression is an irreducible fourth strand [after class, gender and nation -ed.]. Nor does it indicate that non-humyn oppression will never be the principal contradiction.

This point is more difficult to argue than issues of revolutionary strategy because it asks, "What should communism look like?" Will people eat meat under communism? Are animals "people" too in the sense that we should try to stop the oppression of non-humyn "people" by humyn "people." Is killing an animal analogous to killing a Black or raping a womyn (both of which were at one point acceptable because Blacks and womyn were considered non-people).

As a dialectical materialist and atheist, who denies the existence of any divine Judge that decides moral issues, I recognize that it is the interplay of the stories we tell and the material conditions of society which generate morality. It is manifestly clear to me that "meat is murder" even more than "all sex is rape" (and this is undoubtedly affected by my place in the gender aristocracy). However, the denial of essential truth in the claim that meat is murder no more detracts from my commitment to ending nonhumyn oppression than it does from ending patriarchy, national oppression, or capitalism. Neither does the fact that non-humyn oppression is probably last on the list of contradictions mean that meat is not murder (anymore than it is okay to rape someone because the gender contradiction is not principal). The harvesting of trees, animals, and earth requires a class stand in exactly the same way the harvesting of Third Worlders, womyn, and wage slaves does: not taking a class stand is bourgeois.

In the attached essay I support the thesis that U.S. imperialism is the principal contradiction and defeating U.S. imperialism is the best way to defend the Earth (as such I think its okay to call cops "pigs"). However, it is economism to reduce

the environmental question to merely the anarchy of production under capitalism while remaining blind to the construction of non-human oppression, exploitation, and parasitism that crosses both capitalism and socialism. Perhaps Huey P. Newton, Maoist revolutionary in the BPP, foreshadowed the coming of age of green revolution when he offered up pollution as his chief criticism of Maoist China (from Foner's *Black Panthers Speak*).

Communists are committed to ending the oppression of groups over other groups. MLMers are committed to summing up the proletariat's experience at seizing state power and building socialism. After we defeat imperialism, expropriate the capitalists and smash male supremacy, humanism has got to go and the meat-eaters (whether they took part in the revolution or not) will be sent off to reeducation camp. On da move!

**MC12 responds:** The writer raises interesting arguments that are reasonable as long as we begin by acknowledging agreement over the principal contradiction: the contradiction between imperialism and the oppressed nations. Whether communism will include oppression of animals by humans is impossible to say at this moment. The writer makes a bad mistake, however, in the analogy to killing Black people or rape, which the writer says "at one point acceptable because Blacks and womyn were considered non-people." MIM asks, "Considered by whom?" The Black nation and women have resisted murder and rape as long as they have been practiced. They did not consider these practices "acceptable," and they knew that Blacks and women are "people." Animals, to our knowledge, lack the ability to organize collectively to resist their own oppression, with the possible exception of a very few species.

In human revolutions, there are no liberations by outside groups, ultimately. Therefore, if the oppression of animals is to be ended under communism, it will have to be under different principles than ending the oppression of humans, which humans undertake for themselves. People may choose to end the use of animals for their benefit under communism, but this form of oppression does not constitute a parallel fourth strand because of the qualitative difference in the agency of humans and animals. This means that animal liberationists, like environmentalists, need to work now to defeat imperialism and get to communism, so that the eventual potential liberators of animals can be themselves liberated, allowing them to free animals. If the writer thinks that humans should eventually adopt the higher morality of cooperative relations with animals, there is room for that argument within the human communist movement, but it cannot become a dividing-line principle at this stage.

## Ireland Correspondence I Explain MIM View Of Amerika

*The following comrade was arrested in Ireland shortly after writing to MIM. We hope s/he is well and await further information as to whether a campaign of exposure is necessary. MIM is actively seeking out struggle with regard to the formation of fraternal MIM sections in England and Ireland. - ed.*

**Dear MIM:**

Can you provide us with the answers to these questions?

1. Do you see the European Union (E.U.) as most likely to supplant the U.S.A. as the world's leading capitalist superpower? What are MIM's views of the E.U.?

2. When MIM says "Amerika" does this mean the "U.S.A." solely? When MIM says "North Amerika" does this include the entire continent (and obviously, include Canada, Mexico, etc.)?

3. Does MIM's support for Black nationalism and other national liberation struggles go so far as the physical dismemberment of the U.S.A. (e.g. with separate Black and Hispanic states, and the return to Mexico of conquered territories, and so on)? And what of Canada? Are white Anglos in Canada in a similar position to settlers in the U.S.A.?

We found MIM Theory and MIM Notes exciting and inspirational. (MIM Theory 1 and MIM Notes nos. 88 and 99 are all we've seen.)

— A leading Irish comrade

July 1995

**MIM replies:** With regard to the E.U.'s future as possibly supplanting the U.S. imperialists as top dog, we do not have a position. The situation of inter-imperialist rivalry up until the dissolution of the Soviet Union was clear. It was headed by Soviet social-imperialism on the one hand and U.S. imperialism on the other.

Now, it is certainly within the imagination that the E.U. could supplant the U.S. imperialists in many respects, and within a decade. We have read the COMINTERN documents from after World War I and the death of Lenin in 1924, and we notice that Stalin saw Anglo-American rivalry as the key dynamic in inter-imperialist rivalry and expected a war between English and U.S. imperialism. Likewise, we may be in a period where our predictions are not so good with regard to how inter-imperialist rivalry will shape up. The contention in new spots open to imperialist penetration under new rules such as the former Yugoslavia and China may provide some

answers. It appears that within former Yugoslavia, the European imperialists still have some conflicting interests, but whether those interests override the European imperialist unity vis-a-vis other imperialists is not clear. MIM would like to hear from others on these subjects.

There are two things we can say with regard to inter-imperialist rivalry for sure in addition to the historical fact that as long as there is imperialism there will be world war. One is that the U.S.-Japanese rivalry already has a very ugly racial side to it, readily used by the imperialists. President Clinton has shown a willingness to use this sort of chauvinism to his political benefit and we can well imagine a popular fascist nationalization movement against Japanese assets here. The settlers would jump at such a chance in a way they would not with regard to E.U. assets. It is our communist duty to stop Japan-bashing here.

Second, the E.U. is based on a myth of free trade and borders only possible under communism. For hundreds of years the capitalists have been talking about establishing free trade, which of course requires open borders for free trade in labor. The capitalists have never achieved this, and most don't really want it. The conveniences in Europe of having relatively open borders amongst Europeans, having a common currency and relative ease of obtaining jobs across borders are all bribes thrown to the labor aristocracy of Europe to give it a sense of why it should permit a European imperialist bloc to form and obtain advantages in competition against other imperialists.

We believe it is important not to oppose open borders and unified currencies per se as long-run goals. Instead we should hoist the bourgeoisie on its own petard. The internationalism promised by the imperialists is a mirage.

We say the same thing with regard to NAFTA here. We support the ideal of open borders, but it is precisely this ideal of the bourgeoisie which demonstrates its hypocrisy and historical weakness. While expanding its NAFTA alliance, the United Snakes is attempting to disrupt EEC unity, through currency speculation and the like. At the same time, the United Snakes would like to leave open the option of joining the E.U. itself. Such a move may have particularly aggressive overtones with regard to the Asian capitalists.

On the second question, with regard to "Amerika," it is a drawback of this term that many will read it as referring only to the "United States." Wherever we use the "k" in a spelling, we are referring to a political entity tainted with imperialist parasitism: the settler Euro-American nation and the state it controls.

We say "North America" to refer to the geographic area that includes Mexico, the United Snakes and Canada. Any reference to "Amerika" with a "k" is used to delegitimize the settler nation and its state.

Finally, we are advocating the dismemberment of the U.S.A. by territory for the medium-run while the Euro-American nation is cleansed of imperialist parasitic material influences, but we plan to abide by the will of the oppressed nations as expressed in plebiscites of self-determination to be carried out under a joint dictatorship of the proletariat of the

oppressed nations over U.S. imperialism. We explain this concept in greater detail in MIM Theory 7, "Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism on the Communist Road."

According to our comrades in Canada, the situation is very similar to the one in the United Snakes. Even those who disagree with us would say whatever is true here is also true in Canada with regard to questions of the white working class. In Israel, Canada, Australia and South Africa the settler edge to imperialism is still important, as it is in the United Snakes. In addition, though the settler dynamics are not present in England except in occupied Ireland, we believe that even within England proper, the position of the white working class is fundamentally the same as in North Amerika. For this reason, we expect to see Maoist Internationalist Parties arise in England that share our cardinal principles.

## Ireland Correspondence II On Republican Sinn Fein and Terminology

**Dear MIM:**

I saw your article in the July (1995) MIM Notes and although I am quite impressed with MIM's grasp of the situation, I think it looks bad politically to have leaned so heavily on Saoinse for sources. Republican Sinn Fein (RSF) plays an important role in the current situation (peace process) as a militant voice within the increasingly respectable republican movement. Other than this RSF has remained relatively minor in the political field. The peace process, did not lead, as the Brits hoped, to a split within the IRA or Provisional Sinn Fein which RSF could capitalise on. RSF could still perhaps grow to a vanguard position, but not yet. At this moment in time, it remains a small organization that has organised adequately in the 26 counties only.

Other points about the article are: "Northern Ireland" is the British imperialist name for what Republicans call the "occupied six counties." The name you use with regard to the North decides (usually) which side you are on. The neo-colonial South, which, incidentally has no multinational corporations, is referred to by Republicans as the "26 counties" and sarcastically as "the Free State."

One other point concerns the INLA. When the chief-of-staff and his comrades' case came to court, they dropped a bit of a bombshell when they announced that the INLA had declared a ceasefire in June, several weeks before the IRA. However, in a more recent statement on May Day of this year, they confirmed that this ceasefire is not permanent:

"The past few months has shown with great clarity the

obvious disdain in which the British hold for Republicans adopting a non-violent approach to conflict resolution."

However, as soon as I can, I'll draft an update for you.

— An Irish comrade

**August 1995**

**MIM replies:** We apologize for referring to "Northern Ireland" when we meant the occupied six counties. We made the same mistake with "Eritrea" vs. "Ethiopia" and hope we haven't made the mistake since being straightened out by our Eritrean comrades.

We are working to extend our work in Ireland and England and we believe that letters like yours have contributed to our understanding and contact with the masses there. We aim toward having our Maoist comrades on the ground there write all our articles for MIM Notes and MIM Theory. A certain narrowness in our sources will decline as the struggle progresses. Until that time, we will certainly make many errors as we get our feet wet.

## Ireland Correspondence III Careful with Focoism

**Dear MIM:**

Branding the IRA as focoist can be quite misleading. You see, aside from the adoption of cellular active service units, in the Republican areas of Derry's Bogside and those of West Belfast among others, the IRA are the people's police force.

XXXX  
XXXX  
XXX



MIM

The Royal Ulster Constabulary, formed out of the Protestant working class and steeped in anti-Catholic sectarian tradition, is not acceptable to the Catholic people. Much propaganda has been gleaned from the IRA "punishment beatings" of anti-social elements along with the executions of informers and collaborators and the enforced exiles from Ireland for lesser criminals. This is, of course, merely a state attempt to discredit the IRA at a community level.

On the question of "mainland Britain," I would argue that armed struggle in Scotland at this stage is premature. Comparing Scotland to Ireland, it has to be pointed out that the former country is lacking many of the historical ingredients that built the revolutionary situation in Ireland.

The civil rights campaigns that were peacefully reformist, meeting oppression firstly from Loyalist shock troops, then directly from the state, as in Bloody Sunday, starkly brought the nationalist people into direct contradiction with the British state. My point is that the shooting down of 15 unarmed Catholics on the streets of Derry, in many ways, drove a high degree of Irish away from constitutional nationalism towards active support for the national liberation struggle. The British Government's imposition of internment also helped breathe life into the emergent Provisional IRA.

Now, in Scotland I would argue that for an armed struggle to take off, we would first need to progress through a civil disobedience phase as part of the National Liberation process.

Although I believe that the lever must be applied in the oppressed nations, the Irish Resistance has shown that it is possible to wage war directly and successfully against a stable imperialist power. This has the positive advantage of making it difficult for imperialist nations to invade newly liberated neocolonies.

Imperialist Britain could not by anyone's definition, be considered "truly helpless" in the early 1970s. However, the Provos were able to grow in strength, adapting to the increasingly terroristic Thatcherite Government years of the 1980s. Finally, on the eve of Britain attempting to integrate into Europe, the IRA bombing of London's economic heartland forced the government to the negotiating table, something the hardline Thatcher government claimed it would never submit to.

— A correspondent on Ireland

**August 1995**

**MIM replies:** We should start out by saying that Ireland fits neither the classic urban nor the classic rural conditions of Maoist military strategy as discussed by Mao or MIM. What a Maoist military strategy would be in Ireland or just the occupied counties requires further study.

Nonetheless, the concluding paragraph above is an example of the kind of reasoning MIM seeks to avoid. The military theory of the Cuban Revolution has had too much influence, which is why we oppose "focoism," which was partly premised on using armed struggle to spark the masses without political education work. We have reviewed George and Jonathan Jackson on this elsewhere.

Such focoist thoughts are more or less common in non-Maoist military theory among the oppressed. The above also has the added spin common in the Cold War when Soviet revisionist military theory was more popular — that arms are for driving people to the negotiating table.

The bombings in England itself were indeed spectacular, but in themselves they did not liberate Ireland. People's War is still necessary.

As the author pointed out, there are good reasons for saying such a People's War could be carried out in Ireland, because the masses on that territory may support it for what are now historical reasons. In Scotland and England, the question is only one of whether to commit spectacular bombings and other isolated military actions. As MIM said with regard to the World Trade Center bombing, we do not agree with that strategy. Of course, the bombings are just, not unjust. Imperialism has no right to talk about "crime" or "terrorism" given its own record. Nonetheless, the masses pay the costs of incorrect military strategies. If the Scots and Irish would like to intervene in England, they should help MIM to establish a Maoist vanguard party there. That will do the most possible to speed the military defeat of British and other imperialists.

With regard to the peace process that the letter writer refers to and which is ongoing as we speak, we believe the

Communist Party of the Philippines provides an excellent example. That party struggles tirelessly to lead the masses and neither get too far ahead of the masses nor let the masses harbor too many illusions about peace negotiations.

We must respect the just sentiments of the masses everywhere for peace. These sentiments are part of the class hatred for imperialism by proletarian and allied classes everywhere. The imperialists have shown a continued willingness to engage in war across the globe in order to preserve their system of starvation and poverty. Every time the masses claim their right to live as a higher priority than the right to private property, the imperialists make war on the masses— civil war, world war or other forms of war. The job of the vanguard party is to put forward this analysis and the related history so that the masses may achieve their goals of liberation most efficiently when the opportunity arises for all of us to strike militarily.

We do not disagree that forcing England to recognize the republican movement is in some sense a step forward. Such a good thing can turn into a bad thing if it fosters illusions or corrupts scientific military theory.

## Ireland Correspondence IV Red Action Responds Again

Join Red Action  
for a socialist republic  
PO Box 3355, Dublin 7

For the IRA!  
Against the Common Enemy

Dear MIM:

Regarding MIM's response to our letter in a recent MIM Theory (see MIM Theory 8 -ed.), Red Action in Ireland would like to submit the following points to further the debate.

To begin with, Red Action, has not, nor has any need, to renounce anarchism, having never believed in such an ideology. As James Connolly so accurately pointed out, the anarchists are "Men whose sole philosophy of life is but an exaggerated form of the individualism we are in revolt against."(1) MIM appears to have misunderstood "The Missing Link" article it refers to (R.A. No. 59). Red Action is not at this time waging, or indeed, attempting to wage a social revolution against the British state nor is it advocating such actions. The article in question concerned the anti-colonial war being waged at that time in Ireland and more specifically British working class solidarity. As the article states, quoting Lenin: "The whole art of

politics lies in finding and taking as firm a grip as we can of the link that is most likely to be struck from our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that most of all, guarantees the possessor, the possession of the whole chain."(2)

Revolutionaries in Scotland, Wales and England, contrary to what anarchists and Trotskyites might think, will never progress against the bourgeois state until Ireland is free of British imperialism. As Engels observed in 1869, "All the abominations of the English have their origins in the Irish Pale."(3)

Ireland being England's first colony and now, as one of Britain's last colonies, it is the duty of revolutionaries in Britain to see to it that the imperialists suffer a defeat in this country. With regard to the Irish question, despite the march of history, Marx's analysis remains relevant today:

"You will be aware of the great antagonism which has existed for a long time between the English and Irish workers, the cause of which are easy to enumerate ... it constitutes an obstacle to revolution in England, and it is, consequently, skillfully exploited by the government and the upper classes, who are convinced that no bonds are capable of uniting the English Workers with the Irish."(4)

Existing Anti-Imperialist organisations in Britain as far as Red Action is concerned leave a lot to be desired. The Troops Out Movement (TOM) campaigns purely for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, having a high degree of social-democrat and parliamentary support.

The other organisation mentioned in this article, the Irish Freedom Movement is a front group for the Revolutionary Communist Party, and while it is more radical than TOM, has shown a reluctance to collaborate with other similar anti-British occupation organisations.(5)

Red Action was in fact attempting to draw as many of these groups together in a workable coalition that would attempt not just to organise the large Irish communities in British cities, but also reach out for British working class support, something Sinn Fein has made little or no effort to accomplish.

As MIM correctly states, the Irish struggle for independence is a righteous one. However, Red Action questions MIM's problems with increased State oppression of the British people due to the IRA bombing campaign in England. Such oppression is obviously an occupational hazard to any revolutionary and would have the positive effect of increasing contradictions between the British working classes and the state.

Perhaps an example that best illustrates this point can be found in Ireland's own history. The year 1916 symbolised a turning point for Irish Revolutionary struggle. When Padraig Pearse stepped out between the iconic columns of Dublin's General Post Office, headquarters of the Irish Republican Army, to read the recently printed proclamation of the Irish Republic, only a small crowd had gathered out of curiosity.

The 1916 Rising, beginning on April 24, took the British Government completely by surprise, appearing as it did both



MIM

foolish and illogical to rebel without the support of the country. Confined to Dublin, the rebels put on an impressive struggle until their unconditional surrender on 29th of that month. As the surviving Rebels were led away under guard they were spat on and reviled by most of the bystanders.

They left behind them a city with large areas gutted by fire and British heavy artillery. In all, Dublin was reckoned to have suffered over 2,500,000 pounds worth of damage. General Sir John Maxwell, given supreme command in Ireland, in handling the situation had decided, in view of the war in Europe, to quickly crush all dissent with the utmost ruthlessness. The Rising's leaders were singled out for execution, while the volunteers were interned. Widespread arrests followed and when news of the executions reached the public, outrage followed.

Internment camps like Frongach in Wales, where some 1,800 Irishmen were incarcerated, became centres of Republicanism. New recruits, stirred on by the Rising's legacy and the latent Irish Revolutionary tradition, began joining the Irish Republican Brotherhood, long seminars on Republicanism were held and battle tactics discussed. The prisoners disrupted the prison system by demanding political treatment and prepared for a new day. While the 1916 Rising was an all-or-nothing single daring blow against the British Empire, Irish volunteers began, slowly and often spontaneously, preparing for a more protracted form of struggle. In contrast, with the Rising's aftermath, volunteers returning to Ireland were treated as heroes by their compatriots.

In September 1916 the National League called a meeting in Phoenix Park to oppose Lloyd George's partition of Ireland plan. At this time General Maxwell commanded a force of 40,000 troops, making Ireland a garrison state and ensuring that dissent in public was almost impossible.

However, newly written songs of the April Martyrs were sung and uniformed volunteers stood in the crowd. The slumbering forces of revolutionary Ireland had been tapped, leading inexorably towards the IRA victory in the Tan War in July 1921.(6)

What this shows is that the 1916 rebels understood that, although conditions were not good, that they were living in revolutionary times with the great war raging in Europe. Although the rebels suffered a military defeat, they won a resounding political victory.

Bringing the argument up to date, the IRA bombings in London, coming at the time of Britain's attempted integration into the Western European imperialist bloc, were strategic to the Irish war, finally forcing the British to the negotiating table. By concentrating its bombing campaign on the centre of London, the so-called "square-mile," the IRA, at a great risk to its volunteers, was able to wage war directly against the state. The Irish struggle rather than, as MIM advises, waiting until Britain is "really helpless" before launching attacks on the capital, could not allow itself to be harnessed by such dogma, preferring to launch attacks on the enemy's economic heartland.

For the record it should be noted that the British proletariat does not benefit from the occupation of the six counties. On the other hand due to state discrimination against the Catholic

population, the Protestant working class community, with its improved standard of living in the six counties, is strongly tied both historically and economically to its pro-British ruling class. It has often been observed that the loyalists are far more British than the British themselves.

At a time when British industry has been greatly eroded, creating increasing hardship for the British proletariat, with an almost constant three million out of work, employment of the Protestant working class is to some degree buffered by the much discriminated Catholic population.

The British state persists, however, in fomenting anti-Irish feelings within the British working class, through intensive propaganda aimed primarily at the IRA guerrilla campaign.

Intimate details of civilian victims (the younger the better) of IRA bombs gone wrong were widespread. Two children caught in the IRA bomb in Warrington in 1993 was a much used example of his, coming as it did in the aftermath of the blanket bombing in Iraq, in which tens of thousands of Arab children, among others, died.

Red Action members do not need to be lectured on the racial make-up of the Black Panther Party. We, however, believe community organisation to be class- rather than racially-based and therefore our analogy holds.

On the question of Leninism, we perceive that the subordination of working class interests to the will of the revolutionary party runs contrary to the theory and practice of Marx and Engels. This inevitably leads to the suspension of any independent working class initiative. In Britain and Ireland the many Leninist and Trotskyite parties view themselves arrogantly as the vanguard-in-waiting. Operating from college and university campuses, having only token working class membership, these sects turn Marxist theory into lifeless dogma. Red Action, on the other hand, is a practice-based organisation and it is from this practice that Red Action theory emerges.

MIM's theory of the white proletariat is nothing more than Third-Worldist chauvinism, having no relevance to the politics of Red Action. The theory itself, among other things, fails to take the question of unemployment into consideration. While the 26 counties national bourgeoisie is quite capable of maintaining its own industrial base economically, its class character ensures that the welfare of the indigenous proletariat has in recent months been seriously hit by unemployment with no prospect of work in the future. One reason for this situation being the influx of cheap steel from such countries as Romania.

The trade union movement, supposedly the guarantor of proletarian rights and welfare in Ireland, has become very much a component of the bourgeoisie state apparatus. At a recent management conference, a speaker from the employers organisation Irish Business and Employers Confederation called for an increase in the Irish Congress of Trade Unions' powers over its member unions. The institutionalized representatives of the Irish working classes are no longer a threat to the management but increasingly party to imposing conformity upon the workforce.

Production workers in the 26 counties are for the most

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

part represented by such unions as SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional Technical Union), and ATGWU (Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union), among others. Both the above unions represent 40% and 60% respectively of the 1,000 workers at the Packard Electric Company (Renamed Delphi) in Tallaght, Dublin. Packard has been hit by massive job losses. The ATGWU and SIPTU proved powerless to save the 600 jobs, that have to date been lost.

Packard Electric, owned by the General Motors Company (11th largest company in the U.S.), has been undergoing much upheaval since January of 1995, when a longer working week was introduced. In May the workforce attempted to revert from the 41-hour to the 39-hour week, threatening industrial action if this demand was not met. This was used by the management as a convenient excuse for the lay-offs, claiming the disruption has caused the company failure to secure necessary contracts.

This left the parent company free to expand more effectively into Eastern Europe, which following the collapse of the regimes there made the area ripe for multinational exploitation. A workforce of around one billion [factual error -ed.] people, many of them skilled labourers, is a lucrative area for investment. Irish proletarians, in comparison, have wage costs of more than 10-times those of countries like Poland and Romania.

The cost of further training for this new workforce is also seen as a worth-while investment.(7) SIPTU's current stated aim, it should be pointed out, is primarily to secure existing jobs rather than pressurising management to create more. This appears to be as far as most trade unions are prepared to go. Unemployment groups funded by SIPTU are prevented from making any militant statements by the threat of withdrawal of resources and funding. This ensures that Ireland's proletariat is deprived of any independent working class organisation. A small consolation perhaps is the fact that the fast food industry continues to offer employment to an increasingly unskilled workforce.

While MIM would claim that the Irish working class is united with its bourgeoisie, the reality of the situation is that contradictions not only exist between the employers and workforce, but within the workforce itself.

It is an objective reality that in the South of Ireland, the white proletariat are made redundant, find themselves unable to gain employment and reach a stage where they cannot pay their way in a society, in which the cost of living is very high. Ultimately they face such experiences as having their front doors kicked in, furniture repossessed and basic amenities such as gas and electricity cut off. Those who retain employment have their income held down by the threat of redundancy. The huge employment figures ensure that a steady "labour pool" is maintained.

The benefits reaped by the white working class in the West of Europe are based fundamentally on the social-democratic nature of their governments. These benefits are controlled absolutely by the nation's bourgeoisie and may be withdrawn at any time. The purges most often beginning with the weakest sections of society, such as single parents or the aged. The

Thatcher-Major governments in Britain provide a fine example of this process.

It is a basic Marxist principle that under socialism a proletarian may participate in labour, have adequate rest time, sufficient nutrition and be allowed the freedom to express her/himself artistically. In Dublin alone, for over 8,000 of its urban ghetto population, this ideal lifestyle is superseded by intravenous drug use, for many, the only way to escape West European poverty.

Notes:

1. "Justice," July 22, 1993.
2. Lenin Collected Works, Quoted in Red Action, No. 59.
3. *Ireland and the Irish Question*, Marx & Engels p.281
4. Ibid., Marx & Engels p.293
5. Red Action, Number 59.
6. *The Secret Army*, J. Bowyer Bell.
7. The Sunday Tribune, May 14, 1995.

**MC5 replies:** Red Action claims to oppose "individualism," but at the same time it claims party organization stifles individual or independent initiative. There is no difference with the anarchists on that point; although the Red Action might also be taking cues from Rosa Luxemburg, who claimed to be Marxist and held a similar line on the stifling role of party organization. (At least in Luxemburg's case, we can say she didn't live to see all the successful revolutions and resistance movements this century led by parties. Red Action seems unmoved by history.)

Red Action makes these criticisms of party-building, but it doesn't point to any successful socialist revolutions without them. In fact, it doesn't point to anything successful that didn't have that kernel of organization. Red Action prefers its own spontaneous prejudices to reality.

Not surprisingly then, Red Action stands behind the spectacular bombing strategy. It does not suffice for Red Action to refer to the London bombings as "righteous" or to criticize the bourgeois critics who saw it as "terrorism." MIM has done that in the past, but Red Action wants us to buy the strategy as well.

This strategy allows a heroic role for a few individuals, who don't even need a party, much to Red Action's preference. At the same time, it makes the success of bringing the imperialists to the bargaining table the work of a few individuals. Red Action should tell that to the masses of Ireland who have struggled for centuries that it was really a few individuals who brought the imperialists to the bargaining table! That will do a lot to solidify the unity of the people against imperialism — because the masses will reject that idea and point toward a better strategy.

First things have to be first. The building of a party for socialist revolution must precede or evolve simultaneously with the just war against the British. Since there seems to be a ceasefire at the moment widely respected by the masses, it seems that getting party organization correct should come first. It's absurd for the Red Action to be criticizing Sinn Fein while it seeks to deny any difference on military strategy. Military strategy flows from the revolutionary science of class warfare.

If Red Action agrees with the IRA's military strategy, then we simply doubt Red Action's ideas of class struggle.

There are some points we shall agree with in the Red Action analysis — the passivity and self-satisfied nature of the unions and the political economy of the loyalists. However, as we point out elsewhere, the only place where there is a class of people that can be identified as proletarian is in the Six Counties themselves. Because they have maintained a reality and an identity as a class they exert an influence on other classes throughout Ireland, partly through nationalism.

The loyalists, as Red Action seems to realize vaguely, are settlers and labor aristocrats. They are paid better than their pro-republican counterparts in the occupied Six Counties. The split in the working class that Lenin explained is rarely so clear as in what Britain calls its Northern Ireland. The same situation is seen with English people who move into Scotland and get the "good jobs." It is the fact of their being labor aristocrats and settlers that makes the loyalists more British than the British. The heart of whiteness is white-collar work.

When organizations (including for instance the Amerikan Committees of Correspondence) yell at the true Irish proletariat for "sectarianism," they are really calling for a false unity of "the" working class, so that the labor aristocracy can use the proletariat for its ends and to stabilize its deal with imperialism. We say let the settlers and labor aristocrats move back to England proper. If there is any meaning to Irish nationalism it is the underlying split in the working class.

If we wonder why the Irish government seems weak, we need look no further than to see that the working class in the South compares favorably with imperialist working classes in France and Italy for instance as we show in another response in this issue. Despite centuries of history and the all-class nature of nationalism, the stomach for national liberation has weakened somewhat from a combination of carrots and sticks applied by the Anglo-imperialists.

Red Action's criticisms of the IRA are from a contradictory perspective, but like those from many other organizations claiming Marx, Red Action's criticisms would have the IRA wait for the English working class for the correct strategic moment. We at MIM do not blame the IRA or any revolutionary nationalist for leaving the English working class out of the equation — not because the nationalists should be afraid of offending British capital, but because the English working class is basically a labor aristocracy truthfully represented by the Labour Party. Waiting for the English labor aristocracy could mean waiting a long time.

The unemployed that Red Action speaks of are not sufficient to form a class and in fact drug-takers and various unemployed people were often counted as lumpenproletariat by Marx. In any case, our goal is to have the lumpenproletariat identify with the proletariat's goals and not for us to take up demands of free drugs on demand or legalized prostitution as the main things for our movement. The hard-core unemployed become lumpen and the rest who only experience temporary unemployment in their experience and their peers' experiences, will identify with the labor aristocracy.

In practice we agree with Red Action on recruiting the youth to fight fascism in the streets and to learn from that. Likewise, as we demonstrate in our work as well, there is a lot to be done with the lumpen. The Six Counties' oppressed nationality proletariat, the youth, the lumpen — that's a good start for a revolutionary movement — but the only guarantee of the Irish revolution is alliance with the Third World proletariat. Red Action calls us "Third World chauvinist," which is really a contradiction in terms that means "vast-majority-advocate."

The alternative road being offered by the Anglo-imperialists is the continual buying off of the remaining Irish proletariat and a gradual suffocation of the national question through those means and Walt Disney-style museums of cultural difference. In this difficult struggle, the proletariat can only retain its confidence in revolutionary strategy if it is made aware of the overwhelming strength of its class allies outside the so-called United Kingdom.

Organizing for the class demands of the English workers will lead to support for anti-immigrant policies, de-politicization of all class struggle and support for war on the super-exploited workers of the world — whether the Red Action realizes it or not. Adopting the view of the English workers against "sectarianism" is a good basis for pacifism and for imperialism's cross-class alliances. It won't do anything for the proletarian class struggle except sell it out and it certainly cannot lead to national liberation.

When Red Action says it is a "practice-based organization," it means to seek a justification to ignore the practices both now and in the past of the Irish masses, the Irish proletariat in particular and also the Third World proletariat. Red Action doesn't want to hear about the world's successful red actions, only its own practice, which like our own, is minuscule in historical terms. It imagines itself to be mobilizing "the" working class, and is not currently understanding the successes it does have in practice. Youth, lumpen, the oppressed nationalities — those are the basis of a revolutionary practice in the imperialist countries. If Red Action is really looking at practice, and not its dogmas, then from decades of practice of the English working class toward Ireland and the rest of the world, we can get a clue that it is a labor aristocracy.

## **Ireland Correspondence V MIM on Ireland's Imperialism Tangle**

**MIM Responds:** A prisoner recently wrote to us about a polemic Red Action engaged him in about MIM on the topic of Ireland. According to Red Action over in England and now operating in Dublin, the MIM opposes armed struggle against the British imperialists. Furthermore, according to Red Action (see above), MIM is guilty of "Third-Worldist chauvinism" —

to which MIM replies that to be biased toward the world's vast majority of people is not a bad thing at all. For a quick shorthand way of representing humanity's interests, upholding Third World interests is a good way to go. (see MIM's original review of Red Action in MIM Theory 5, and the follow-up in MIM Theory 8 and this issue -ed.)

MIM has consistently publicized its support for Irish national liberation and self-determination. Because Red Action does not cite any publication of ours, we have no way of assessing where Red Action got this idea that MIM does not support the war against England in Ireland. Red Action should either show where it gets this idea or drop this preposterous assertion about our line.

MIM takes the opportunity Red Action has offered to look more deeply at Ireland's position in the international imperialist structure. We take this responsibility heavily, because we must understand where Ireland does business, who the Irish people have commerce with and what opportunities are available to them to determine how they are situated in the world economy. The historic Irish people giving blood in valiant armed struggle against British imperialism want and deserve nothing less than a realistic analysis and like people everywhere they turn away from so-called Marxists with no sense of reality; hence we must confront the question of imperialism and the bought-off labor aristocracy workers head on.

#### **EMIGRATION OUT OF IRELAND AND IRISH POPULATION**

The population of Ireland is approximately 3.5 million people. There are another 1.5 million in the Six Counties occupied by Britain.(1)

In contrast, there are ten-times as many people who are Irish-descended residents of the United Snakes, 38.7 million. The Irish-descended people are the second leading ethnicity after the Germans in the United Snakes. In Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New England overall, Delaware, Tennessee and Arkansas, the Irish are the leading ethnicity. In the South, when composed of 17 states, the Irish-descended are the second leading ethnicity and in the Deep South, construed as Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, the Irish are even more important, as the leading white ethnicity.(2) To this day there is a net negative outflow of population from Ireland. 10,300 left Ireland for the United Snakes in 1990 alone.(3)

Any attempt to detach the history of Ireland from the history of the United Snakes is therefore foolish. The people both in Ireland and the United Snakes will not forget these facts even if some cheerleading politicians do.

Hence, the United Snakes has served as an historical safety valve for English imperialism threatened by Irish nationalism. According to Noel Ignatiev though, it wasn't instantly clear that North America would be so attractive to the Irish. The problem was that it was common to think of Irish people as the "Negroes of Europe." (4) North American whites eventually welcomed the Irish to help keep better control over the various nonwhites. By siphoning off the starving and lower middle classes of Ireland, the white nation stabilized both Ireland and the white rule in North America.

#### **IRISH IMPERIALISTS**

Like some other countries, Ireland would appear to be a borderline imperialist country. By the measure of major multinational corporations headquartered there, Ireland is not an imperialist country; there aren't any.

We looked into both the Fortune 500 of the world and the Forbes foreign 500. The Fortune 500 includes 151 U.S.-based companies. Japan has another 149. The Forbes list includes just companies based outside the United Snakes and Ireland did not make the list. If we divide the number of companies by the population we get less than 1 Fortune 500 company per 1 million population for the United Snakes. If Ireland were like Japan though, it might have four or five in the top 500.

Country	Fortune 500	Forbes 500
Ireland	0	0
Australia	3	11
Belgium	4	12
Canada	5	19
Finland	1	3
Israel	0	0
Italy	11	14
Netherlands	10*	17
U.S.-recognized Korea	8	15
Spain	6	9
Sweden	3	10
Switzerland	14	22

\*Counting Netherlands Antilles and two shares of two companies co-owned with England as two companies.(5)

According to Lenin, the imperialist stage of capitalism is characterized by monopolies, interlocking boards of directors, the command of finance capital and the export of capital. In this sense Switzerland is easily counted as imperialist, because it has at least three insurance companies and two banks in the global 500. Switzerland is directly assured of a cut in the international surplus-value extracted by the imperialists from the oppressed nations.

Austria on the other hand only gets on the Fortune list because of its postal service. Hence, we would need more information to argue that Austria is imperialist. Just from the list of the Fortune 500 we can argue that Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland are imperialist countries. We suspect there are many more junior imperialists, though not likely India (1), Taiwan (2) or Hong Kong (1).

In addition to the Forbes 500, there is also the Forbes 400 list of the richest people in the United Snakes. On that list the Irish figure much more prominently. In fact, one of the Forbes 400 who has a net worth of \$1.3 billion just moved back to Ireland, John T. Dorrance III. His family superexploited undocumented laborers to make billions through Campbell Soup.(6) The billionaires in his family make it one of the richest in the world.

Also mentioned in the Forbes 400, James Campbell left Ireland in 1839. However, Thomas Flatley arrived in the

United Snakes in 1950. Some other rich Irish-descended families mentioned all worth at least \$500 million each include James McClatchy's (newspapers), Thomas O'Connor who arrived in the 1830s and struck it rich in oil, and Richard O'Neill (rancher) born in Ireland in 1825. Some other names we suspect as Irish but can't be sure of are Charles Feeney, Patrick J. McGovern, Reese McIntosh and Murphy of Murphy Oil. And let's not forget the ultra-reactionary, raised in a Catholic orphanage, Tom Monaghan.(6)

The point that there are wealthy people in the United Snakes of Irish heritage proves that they were accepted into Amerika. We also had John Kennedy as president and we have seen both Reagan and Clinton play Irish cards for votes. Nor is there any barrier on the return to Ireland of Irish-descended millionaires to influence society there.

#### **IMPERIALIST BUY-OUT OF IRELAND**

The attempt to buy-out Ireland as a means of creating peace continues into the present day. According to the U.S. Department of State in 1988, the United States government allocated \$120 million to the "International Fund for Ireland" for the purposes of promoting peace and reconciliation.(1)

This year, President Clinton and the Kennedy family have also attempted to round up business to deposit itself in Northern Ireland. This went hand-in-hand with Clinton's effort to deal with the IRA ever so grudgingly in what is seen as a "historical breakthrough."

More recently, the British themselves continue to throw bribery at the Irish in the Six Counties. The British government is giving \$65,000 cash to every foreign businessperson who sets up there. They also offer an additional \$6,500 per employee hired in order get at the 12% official unemployment rate and focus their recruiting of businesspeople on Irish expatriates.(7) So we see that both Anglo imperialisms have set about very consciously to buy off the tiny minority of all Irish who remain in the Six Counties referred to as "Northern Ireland."

The imperialists have succeeded to the extent that the Irish working class is on the lower end of European wages, but still within European norms. In 1991, Irish manual workers earned more than their counterparts in the major imperialist countries of France and Italy, and also more than their counterparts in Spain and Portugal.(8) The pro-republican workers of the Six Counties on the other hand, are in worse economic condition generated by war and national oppression and constitute a real proletariat.

The final indignity is the settlement of British peoples themselves in Scottish and Irish territories. The role of the English economy in Scotland and Ireland is a force of assimilation. White-collar settlers are just one more means in which the superprofits of English imperialism are brought to the commerce of Scotland and Ireland. In actuality, the North American imperialists have offered more of the booty of superexploiting the Third World to the Irish than the English capitalists have. While the North American imperialists use the carrot to draw away the majority of Irish, the English get most of the rap, because they are the local users of the stick.

Progressive Irish people already target both the obvious carrot-mongers and the stick-mongers, which means opposing both Anglo imperialisms.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Irish people have been welcomed into the family of imperialism. At the same time, the Irish nation is an oppressed nation needing a Maoist-led People's War developed out of the current just war being negotiated away. The Irish people are at a crossroads: should the Irish people join a truly merged European Economic Community and give up the war in the Six Counties, they will in many respects become like the Swiss or Swedes, as assimilated junior partners in imperialism. For those of us outside Ireland, this will make the political situation more clear-cut, at the same time that the Irish national question recedes into the background.

Aware of the Irish contradictions, the Anglo-Amerikan ruling classes have steadily sought to buy off the Irish nationalist struggle. Those claiming to seek liberation of Ireland must admit the truth that bribery has affected both North American and Irish history. There is a difference between seeking independence from imperialism and seeking a better deal from imperialism. A long history shows that imperialism is capable of offering the Irish a better deal, so we must distinguish between politicians seeking to use nationalism for such a better deal on the one hand and revolutionary nationalists on the other hand. Those who deny the bribery all around them are the ones seeking the better deal with the British and Amerikan imperialists. Those who openly recognize that the nothing-to-lose Third World proletariat is the principal ally of Irish nationalism are true revolutionary nationalists. While it is fine to ask British and Amerikan workers for support, any strategy premised on their economic interests is not a serious strategy of revolutionary nationalism.

#### Notes:

1. CIA *World Factbook*; "Ireland: History," Time Almanac 1990s.
2. *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*, p. 54.
3. George Thomas Kurian, *Datapedia of the United States 1790-2000: America Year by Year* (Lanham, MD: Bernan Press, 1994), p. 61.
4. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (NY: Routledge, 1994).
5. Fortune August 7, 1995, pp. F-.
6. Forbes July 17, 1995.
7. AP in Boston Globe October 11, 1995, p. 5.
8. Eurostat, *Basic Statistics of the Community*, 30th edition, p. 24.

**MIM Theory is committed to  
publishing debate over  
revolutionary theory and practice. If  
you're reading MIM Theory, shouldn't  
you either be working with MIM or  
writing us with your criticisms?**

## Norway update

Dear MIM:

You asked me about the movement in Norway. The Internasjonale Sosialister are a blueprint-copy of the British SWP and US-ISO. A general nuisance!

We had a visit here in Norway from Dhoruba Bin-Wahad, and on the meeting in Nidaros (Trondheim) they really made fools of themselves. After Dhoruba had spoken about white racism, and racism in all Western ideologies and ways of thinking, stressing the need for individual organisation among the oppressed nationalities, an I.S. spokesman forwarded Black & white, unite and fight as a slogan to be approved by the meeting. Dhoruba replied along the lines of: "Haven't you heard a word I've been saying?"

We have a daily newspaper called Klassekampen. It was the party organ of the Workers' Communist Party (m-l). In the early 1990s, AKP (m-l) became AKP, and the newspaper became independent, a revolutionary socialist paper for the left. I regret both of these developments. The AKP (m-l) grew out of the revolutionary youth movement in late 1960s, and became a party in 1973. The party organized an electoral front, Red Electoral Alliance, which participated in elections in order to reveal the true character of the parliamentary charade. This front is now a faction-filled independent party, in which there are some Trotskyists, revisionists, reformists, revolutionaries. The R.V. has about 60 reps in local councils, and one M.P. The AKP initially supported Deng Xiaoping, but later renounced him and broke with China. Their student league broke with the party as a result of the flirting with Dengism, and it still supports MLMZT. There is a fast-growing youth movement called the Red Youth. It is the youth organisation of both the R.V. and AKP. I'm a member of the AKP, R.V., student league and youth organisation. Well this seems very opportunist and unprincipled, I'm sure.

— A Norwegian comrade studying MIM line

September 1995

**MIM replies:** Thank you for updating us on the situation. Since we cannot read Norwegian, we have always been disappointed not to be able to understand Klassekampen. We were hoping some Maoists had accomplished publishing of a daily paper.

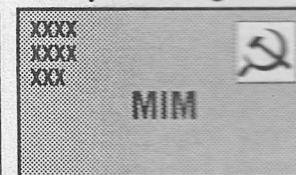
We hope to learn more about your organizations' ideas about cardinal principles in future issues. It is our thesis that the imperialist nation working classes no longer contain proletarian classes. As we point out in this issue, the early COM-INTERN of Lenin and Trotsky defined proletarian the same way we do, but in later years the imperialist nation Marxists lost track of the original principles and smuggled parasitic labor activism into the proletarian movement and called it pro-

letarian. We hope to hear your reactions to this line, also what the youth think of the Communist Party of the Philippines and the Communist Party of Peru.

## Pornography in Prison

Dear Comrades,

Thank you for the free copy of MIM Notes and for placing me on your mailing list. I look forward to reading more.



I am currently being held captive here on Florida's death row. Every time I leave my cell I am strip-searched, hand-cuffed behind my back, and escorted to where I might be going at the time. Showers three times a week, oppressive heat in the summer and extreme cold in the winter, while "staff" operates in an environment controlled by air conditioning.

At present, the "administration" is banning adult magazines and while I'm not certain how you may feel about adult magazines, it only has me asking, what's next?

There is the "psychological torture," as when they play with the lights and the fire alarm, an ear piercing screech that goes off several times a day. A simple malfunction they say.

Don't misunderstand and think I'm crying or bitching about my conditions, no matter how bad it gets I will survive and will do so standing up and smiling. I just wanted you to get an idea of where I'm at. [...]

—Florida prisoner

September 1994

**MIM responds:** [...] Unfortunately, the horrible, oppressive conditions which you describe on death row are all too common in Amerika. [...]

You ask what we think about "adult magazines." As we discussed in MIM Theory 2/3 (enclosed), we oppose pornography as oppressive to women, and recognize that its production and consumption under capitalism should be eradicated. With the advent of socialism, and ultimately of communism, women will not be degraded or endangered as they are now by pornography. That said, however, we also oppose censorship under this capitalist system, and we know that along with the banning of pornography or "obscene" materials comes the censorship of radical political materials. So, we oppose pornography and its roots in gender oppression, but we will not engage in a censorship campaign; we want our literature to remain uncensored and allowed into prisons.

[...] Please continue to write and keep us informed of your situation and your conditions. [...]

**Florida prisoner responds:** It has been a while since I

last responded [...]. I have recently been released from disciplinary confinement, just over 60 days, which is a first for me. The past few months they have begun what they call a random urinalysis. If you test positive or refuse it's sixty days D.C. time. [...] False positives are not uncommon with this test [...] and because I'm appealing my conviction and sentence and the State would no doubt raise this test, especially a positive outcome, I have no desire to put myself in that position. Sixty days for refusing is nothing when you're fighting for your life.

Thank you for sending me your MIM Theory on Gender and Revolutionary Feminism. I found it interesting and am in the process of reading it again, sometimes I understand more if I read the material two or three times. It answered a lot of questions concerning the role of women, kind of gave me a lot to think about, really.

I am still have trouble receiving an adult magazine I subscribed to, not from censorship this time, however, I just wrote them and asked for my money back. I can't honestly say whether I was so influenced by your MIM Theory or just angry for the problem lasting so long. I have no plans to subscribe to another at this point, which probably says more than I can, as I mentioned you did, and have, given me a lot to think about.

I enjoyed the pamphlet on Maoism and the Black Panthers a great deal as well. I look forward to the time when the tree restores its roots and begins to grow once again. [...]

As for myself, I do try to discuss Maoism as well as articles I read in MIM Notes with others [...] sending my old MIM Notes to the library out there and saying a few words to those who pass by back here, mostly laundry personnel. Yet I feel even just a few words will give them something to think about [...].

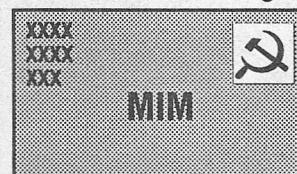
Well, my friends, that's the latest from Auschwitz [...].

Thank you for sending MIM Theory and Maoism and the Black Panther Party. I enjoy reading them and will see that they get around.

Take care. In struggle,  
—Florida prisoner  
March 1995

## **Young women Don't have choices**

I disagree with the statement on page 6 of MIM Theory 9 which states, "MIM argues that anorexia comes not so much



from an attempt by women to control the *only thing they can*, but from women attempting to re-confine their own concerns to the sphere of the body, the beauty myth, etc."

This statement would be true if it were referring to women who actually do have control over their lives. This would be women who are old enough to control conditions in their lives. However, for young women who don't have control over conditions in their lives, but are controlled by their parents, the situation is different. Although I have no statistical data on the tip of my tongue, I'm pretty confident that the majority of women who are anorexic are minors, and I'd go further to guess that many are in junior high school. In this case, I think it is accurate to say they are attempting to control not necessarily the only thing they can, but the only thing they may see they can and which someone else definitely can't — because of the situ-

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ation of youth under capitalism and patriarchy.

However, youth of this age are obviously capable of concerns beyond the superficial body/beauty myth realm. But they often do not have the information necessary to understand how their situation relates to society, or even if they can recognize this, what to do about it. Even if they have all the information necessary to make a critical analysis of society and their role in it, they are still faced with the reality that they are dependent upon their parents and the options other than their parents may suck just as much.

A possible response to this is that it's paternalist. Because youth may be able to see that there are more important things to worry about than their body weight, they should be able to recognize the superficiality of beauty concerns. The important question is how much we should expect from youth given their shitty circumstances, but considering the relative privilege and future power of this youth population — which is almost exclusively white. Also, is economic dependence a viable justification for obsessing on individuality?

—RC313

December 1995

**MC12 responds:** The comrade says the statement would be true if it were referring to women who can control their lives. That is what the article was referring to. The additional consideration of women who are young enough to be totally dependent on their parents is a good point, however (whatever their representation among all anorexics), and not something we were addressing in that response.

There are gradations of potential understanding and independence among white youth. Some 14- or even 12-year-olds may have the wherewithal to get away from their families and survive either independently or with others, although for most it is impossible or seems realistically impossible. Nevertheless,

these young women are still participating in the same behavior pattern as the older women anorexics. They may think their bodies are the only thing they can control, while older women can be said to choose to act within the sphere of the body; there is no clear line between one and the other.

In either case, we agree that revolutionary feminists have to struggle with these women to recognize their true potential contribution to humanity, and their own potential power beyond the shape of their own bodies. Women of any age can be revolutionaries and learn to direct their energies to the liberation of humanity. But it is up to revolutionaries to lead them in that direction.

## Corrections

In the review of *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* in MIM Theory 9 (p. 73), we inadvertently wrote that the author was "slandering the revisionists and the bourgeoisie," when we meant to say "siding with the revisionists and the bourgeoisie."

Also, in the same issue's review of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (p. 50), we quoted Kostas Mavrakis as saying "Man is mad in such a way that in general he does not permit himself to be exploited at will," when the quotation should read "made in such a way..."

Both were editing errors.

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PHILIPPINES?

**The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) is leading a revolution in the Philippines today, in alliance with anti-imperialist and nationalist forces throughout the country.**

Find out more about the Philippine revolution. MIM distributes these materials by the CPP and allied organizations:

- *Liberation International*. A publication of the International Office of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF). Bi-monthly news and analysis of the revolution, including international news. \$3 per issue.
- *The Philippine Revolution: The Leader's View*, by Jose Maria Sison. CPP founder's account of the revolution. \$15 post-paid.
- *Rebolusyon*. Theoretical journal of the CPP. \$4 per issue.

Send cash, check or m.o. made out to "MIM Distributors" to PO Box 3576, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3576.

# The Labor Aristocracy

## Lessons from the Comintern: *Continuities in Method and Theory, Changes in Theory and Conditions*

- I. The question of multi-“racial” organizing versus national liberation in the U.S. Empire
- II. The Comintern line on the labor aristocracy
- III. Comintern ultraleftism: temporary mistakes repeated ad nauseum by lazy dogmatists, opportunists and revisionists

by a comrade

**T**he Los Angeles rebellion in connection to the Rodney King verdict continues to be the most profound social explosion of a decade in imperialist North America. As the masses continue to assess this event, and as the Los Angeles cops to this day proclaim their innocence and organize with white supremacist groups to reverse public opinion, there is an imperative for a clear and active proletarian pole to present itself to the masses on the Los Angeles rebellion.

In the circles of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP-USA), MIM has heard some say that the beating of the white trucker named Reginald Denny by outraged Blacks saved the imperialists, who otherwise stood exposed on sheerly pacifist grounds. Trotskyists such as those in the Spartacist League are quick to chime in that Black workers saved Reginald Denny and provided a fine example of multi-“racial” working class unity. (Denny was attacked after shouting racial slurs out the window of his truck; his attackers were later acquitted of attempted murder charges.)

In a microcosm, this issue separates the social-chauvinist Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists (like the RCP-USA) and social-democrats on the one hand from the genuine communists on the other hand. Contrary to the pious wishes of those who

would straddle the issue, there is no middle ground: either we pursue multinational working class unity or we recognize in the Los Angeles rebellion yet again the nature of the real proletarian material that will make the revolution in imperialist North America.

If our critics are correct, if we counsel the youth not to be so impatient, we can build multi-“racial” unity of the exploited workers and line up a majority within U.S. borders for proletarian revolution. For this reason, the argument goes, we must disown those who beat Reginald Denny and patiently explain why it would be better not to make enemies of white workers. When the white workers do take up active chauvinism, these phony communists say we should make excuses about false consciousness and keep telling the oppressed nationality youth to turn the other cheek as part of their moral education — even though such alleged “false consciousness” is several qualitative levels beyond what is seen in oppressed countries’ working classes and indicative of bribery, not just a fogginess.

In contrast with those making excuses so that oppressed-nation youth will not avenge Rodney King, MIM would say we do not support immediate armed struggle as a strategic decision right now. That is the only reason we oppose the beating of Reginald Denny, not to preserve the unity of the allegedly exploited. No occupation by an oppressor nation is ever defeated without at least some violence against the occupiers of all classes. The errors of the youth and rebels in Los Angeles were our errors, the errors of the proletariat. Even in a moment of “error” the people who beat Reginald Denny reveal clearly, to any but the most blinded social-chauvinists, the social basis for revolution in the U.S. Empire.

We can ask ourselves: What kind of errors? The errors of the rebellion were the errors of desperate people — proletarians. The error was fundamentally different from the error of

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excluding immigrant or foreign workers from a union or from the passive acceptance of injustice so often seen in the labor aristocracy. No, the proletarians who beat Reginald Denny were not individualists with the wrong class feelings. They had the right sentiments and they had a group analysis. They were beating Reginald Denny to send a message to Euro-American workers that only so much oppression could be taken before all-out war. It wasn't that these people were personally affronted by Reginald Denny or the Los Angeles cops. The rebels were clearly thinking in terms of social groups and that is the excellent thing about what they did.

This kind of rebel is the hope of proletarian revolution. With that kind correctly channeled anger, we can make a big contribution to bringing down Amerikan imperialism.

Since many supposed communists still do not see beyond the borders of Europe and North America, they do not see that the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism is the principal contradiction in the world. Then it goes without saying that the pacifists, socialists and phony communists do not recognize the scientific truth that the national question is also the principal contradiction within U.S. borders. That means national liberation will do the most to bring about the fall of the capitalist system. Presently, the multi-“racial” class approach will only mislead the oppressed nationalities and the youth onto the road of political paralysis.

The oppressed nationalities must have the Menshevik obstacles placed in front of them by the multi-“racial” pacifists removed. Only the MIM line on the Euro-American working class puts the proper stress on self-reliance in national struggle and avoids the Menshevik trap of waiting for the white knight. Furthermore, it is only the MIM line that makes any sense to the oppressed. The oppressed cannot be told fairy-tales about white knights forever. Their scientific discernment is greater than that of dogmatists who understand very little of Lenin, Stalin and Mao and are fundamentally too lazy to study their own conditions the way Lenin and Palme Dutt did with great attention to both historical and statistical detail.(1)

Like the oppressed nationalities, the Euro-American youth cannot be told lies forever either. It is 1996, and they know that revolution did not happen as quickly as the general crisis theorists said. They know that decades of the multi-“racial” working class approach have produced nothing. If the Euro-American youth are counseled to continue a century of waiting for white working-class upheaval, their own ideological bearings will be lost the same way those of religious fanatics are disoriented when the apocalypse does not arrive at the appointed hour. It is fine to put off justice if God is about to appear. Unfortunately, the oppressed nationalities within the U.S. Empire have risen several times to lift the mountain of imperialism off their backs, but the white working class has shown no “signs” this century.(2)

The lazy dogmatists and social-chauvinists believe that

this is an issue of ideology, and so — why not lie about the labor aristocracy? Maybe some will be flattered into joining the proletarian movement, they reason. The lazy dogmatists actually see no real role for science in agitation. In response to Mao's proof that line is decisive, they accept at face value the revisionist slander that calls Mao idealist. By downplaying science, they pave the way for fascism, which consciously relies on mysticism for victory in the people's hearts.(3) They imagine that being good Maoists means being idealist, not practitioners of the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. Yet in reality we must put forward a line on the Reginald Denny case and all similar situations. There are concrete choices to be made. Here is what the Comintern of Lenin had to say about those choices:

“The Communist Party, as the representative of the interests of the working class as a whole, cannot merely recognize these common interests verbally and argue for them in propaganda. It can only effectively represent these interests if it disregards the opposition of the labor aristocracy and, when opportunities arise, leads the most oppressed and downtrodden workers into action.”(4)

This is what MIM is doing with regard to the Los Angeles rebellion. That rebellion poses questions sharply — and as only reality can. Clearly we must understand the political economy of the friends and enemies of the proletariat, the national question and the principal contradiction and how errors on these questions show up in political work. For this purpose, we now turn to some of our legacy gathered from the Comintern.

## **II. THE COMINTERN LINE ON THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

### **LENIN AND WORLD WAR I**

MIM has already shown the basis for its view of the principal contradiction in the imperialist countries in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao. (See the MIM Theory 7 for an article on Lenin and Zinoviev on the labor aristocracy.)

Our critics have argued that we should not quote Zinoviev from 1916, because Zinoviev disgraced himself 10 years later and turned around to support Trotsky. But even with Zinoviev purged from the party the Soviet Communist Party, with no Lenin, still said the same things on the labor aristocracy, if not as often or as well as Lenin and Zinoviev did in 1916 as imperialist world war revealed its ugliness for the first time.

Attacking Zinoviev in 1916 is just a covert attack on Lenin, because it was Zinoviev representing Lenin's party in many conferences and speeches on the imperialist world war, international relations and the labor aristocracy. In Lenin's criticisms till his death in 1924, he never said Zinoviev was wrong on the labor aristocracy. So to attack the Zinoviev of 1916 on the labor aristocracy is to claim that Lenin was an ordinary liberal blocking with Zinoviev in the same party for

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

no reason of principle. For that matter, Stalin never said Zinoviev went too far on the labor aristocracy either, despite all the other criticisms he made of Zinoviev. On the contrary, as we shall see, the Trotskyist form of Menshevism showed the most interest in destroying Lenin's work on superprofits and the labor aristocracy; even though it was obliged to pay brief lip-service to Leninism from time to time.

Criticizing Zinoviev's whole political career just because he degenerated in 1926 also creates the problem of not being able to quote Zinoviev against Zinoviev, as Stalin and his allies in the party did. This tactic was built right into the Comintern literature. After Zinoviev disgraced himself and had himself forced out of the Comintern presidency in November, 1926, the Comintern quoted from his documents in the past.(5) Attacking "social-democratic, reformist sentiments on the Levi pattern, which threatens to turn into direct treachery to the international working class," the Comintern of September 1927 said, "This appraisal by the Communist International, which was then still under comrade Zinoviev's leadership, has been completely confirmed."(6)

There would be no basis for Lenin or Stalin to criticize Zinoviev on the labor aristocracy, because they agreed with him back in 1916. As we have pointed out, whenever Engels or Lenin spoke of the future, they seemed to anticipate MIM's line in the future. Here is what Lenin said in his crucial struggle against the Second International:

"On the one hand, there is the tendency of the bourgeoisie and the opportunists to convert a handful of very rich and privileged nations into 'eternal' parasites on the body of the rest of mankind, to 'rest on the laurels' of the exploitation of Negroes, Indians, etc., keeping them in subjection with the aid of excellent weapons of extermination provided by modern militarism. On the other hand, there is the tendency of the *masses*, who are more oppressed than before and who bear the whole brunt of imperialist wars, to cast off this yoke and to overthrow the bourgeoisie. It is in the struggle between these two tendencies that the history of the labour movement will now inevitably develop."(7)

It is now 1996 and our critics simply cannot face Lenin's predictions for the future written in 1916. No, Lenin did not say the labor aristocracy was always a tiny minority within nations. It is only a minority on the international plane and in certain countries at certain times, not necessarily within any imperialist entity for all time. From the above quote, it is quite clear that Lenin said there was a tendency for entire nations to be bought off — and he gives precise conditions under which that will happen: the lack of proletarian revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie. Well, there has been no proletarian revolution to rid us of the bourgeoisie, so it is not the tendency of the masses that has won out. It is the former tendency — for entire nations to be bought out and use militarism — that has won out. That tendency is "the tendency of the bourgeoisie and

the opportunists." In the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement (RIM), which proposes itself as the new Comintern, there is not a single party from the imperialist countries that recognizes this truth. And so we are still in the process of separating from the Second International, which is not surprising given the revival of social-democracy that has occurred in the absence of proletarian revolution. The establishment of the RIM without a correct analysis of the labor aristocracy and superprofits in the imperialist countries is simply part of the victory of the "bourgeoisie and the opportunists" so far this century.

#### **LENIN AND THE COMINTERN: 1919-1922**

Now we turn to some of the documents most embarrassing to our critics. In the period from 1919-1922, the Comintern published many documents that we know were drafted under Lenin's watchful eye because he attended the meetings. For that matter Trotsky did too, so there is no way for Trotskyists to disown the work of the Comintern from 1919-1922 unless they disown Trotsky and Lenin. Since Trotskyism has developed so extensively along Menshevik lines since 1922, the Comintern works that Trotsky upheld at one time will now seem quite distant to today's Trotskyists.

Already in March 1919 — with the carnage of World War I still fresh before it — the Comintern was hacking away at the Second International and the labor aristocracy:

"At the expense of the plundered colonial peoples capital corrupted its wage slaves, created a community of interest between the exploited and the exploiters as against the oppressed colonies — the yellow, black, and red colonial peoples — and chained the European and American working class to the imperialist 'fatherland.'"(8)

Nowhere does this statement say that the workers in the Amerikan working class, so corrupted, are a tiny minority, the way most of our critics talk about it today — if they talk about it at all. Quite the contrary, Lenin's Comintern said, "the same method of steady corruption which created the patriotism of the working class and its moral submission was changed by the war into its opposite. Physical annihilation, the complete enslavement of the proletariat, tremendous oppression, impoverishment and deterioration, world famine — these were the final fruits of civil peace."(9) The Leninists explained under what conditions the "steady corruption" was interrupted. During the Vietnam War, we saw a small-scale re-enactment of these conditions, but since that time, we must say that the physical annihilation of the corrupted workers, an absolute decline in living standards and famine have not occurred. Hence, the corruption of the Amerikan workers continues unabated. Indeed, the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China has added impetus to that corruption.

In 1920, Lenin and the Comintern were talking about what the conditions of membership in the Comintern ought to be.

One statement, approved in February 1920, clearly showed that workers who were previously proletarian could no longer be counted as part of the basis for the dictatorship of the proletariat once they were bribed by the imperialists. Furthermore, the statement distinguished between the labor bureaucracy and the labor aristocracy, something that the vast majority of imperialist country phony communists refuse to do. Most inconvenient for today's Trotskyists, Trotsky signed off on this statement:

"The right Independents and the followers of Longuet do not understand and explain to the masses that the imperialist super-profits of the advanced countries enabled and enable them to bribe the upper strata of the proletariat, to throw them crumbs of these super-profits drawn from the colonies and from the financial exploitation of weak countries, to create a privileged section of skilled workers, etc.

"Without exposing this evil, without fighting not only against the trade union bureaucracy but also against all petty-bourgeois manifestations of the craft and labour aristocracy, without the ruthless expulsion of the representatives of this attitude from the revolutionary party, without calling in the lower strata, the broad masses, the real majority of the exploited, there can be no talk of the dictatorship of the proletariat."(10)

The statement went on to castigate social-chauvinists for not supporting armed struggles in the colonies. Connected with this, MIM does not believe a dictatorship of the proletariat will sustain itself unless it gains the crucial power to open the borders of the United Snakes. Then we can talk about the "real majority of the exploited."

Although he signed this statement, Trotsky nonetheless gutted it in July 1920, when he wrote the conditions for membership in the Comintern. These conditions did not speak a word of putting forward the analysis of super-profits or combating the labor aristocracy.(11) Against MIM, on the other hand, it could be said that Lenin allowed this to happen.

In other documents from July 1920, the Comintern again very clearly stated a position for future readers like ourselves, and there was one written by Lenin himself as if to make up for Trotsky's the same month. In 1916, Lenin had explained that new labor aristocracies had formed in countries that did not have them when Engels was alive. Now he explained what the future hardening of the arteries would look like in the labor movement:

"The longer bourgeois democracy has prevailed in a country, the more complete and well established it is, the more successful have the bourgeoisie of that country been in getting into those leading positions people who are reared in bourgeois democracy, saturated in its attitudes and prejudices, and very frequently bribed by it, whether directly or indirectly. These representatives of the labour aristocracy, or of workers who have become bourgeois in outlook, must

be pushed out of all their positions a hundred times more boldly than ever before, and replaced even by inexperienced workers, so long as they are closely tied to the exploited masses."(12)

According to Lenin, then, since we have so long been immersed in successful bourgeois democracy, we will have to push a hundred times harder on this question than in countries where bourgeois democracy has been new or undeveloped.

We must distinguish between the bribed and the exploited and be ruthless in casting out the bribed. It is MIM's duty to assert that the organizations of the international communist movement connected to imperialist countries have thus far failed to take Lenin's advice. One way the "representatives of the labor aristocracy" take leadership is by denying the existence of the bourgeoisified workers they represent, blithely referring to them as "exploited" even though that is a very precise Marxist term. Another means is to point to other leaders and call them the whole the labor aristocracy. The quote above again very clearly distinguishes between the leaders and the class they "represent" — so there is no way to say Lenin thought that a few leaders were the labor aristocracy. The thing that the labor aristocracy leaders or labor bureaucrats hate most is the material we have cited that shows entire nations can be bought off; these labor bureaucrats want to organize for scraps off the imperialist plate without being disturbed by the proletarians of the countries oppressed by imperialism.

In the same month of July 1920, Zinoviev wrote another statement on this for the Comintern, so important was the topic still, and it caused a reaction from the floor which led Lenin to rise to Zinoviev's defense. The gist of the criticism from the floor was that the Leninists had an overly narrow and monolithic view of the proletariat and should be more pluralist and syndicalist — that is, accept the petty-bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy as proletarian.

As did Lenin, Zinoviev clearly distinguished between the proletariat and the working class, which made it clear that the role of party leadership is critical:

"Thus, on the outbreak of the imperialist war in 1914 the parties of the social-traitors in all countries, when they supported the bourgeoisie of their 'own' countries, always and consistently explained that they were acting in accordance with the will of the working class. But they forgot that, even if that were true, it must be the task of the proletarian party in such a state of affairs to come out against the sentiments of the majority of the workers and, in defiance of them, to represent the historical interests of the proletariat."(13)

Lenin and Zinoviev had good grounds from Marx to distinguish between the working class and the proletariat. The proletariat by definition is the revolutionary vehicle, the social group which has a destiny of bringing historical progress. Marx sought to find the proletariat of his day before he knew it

was the industrial working class. He said:

"Where is there, then, a *real* possibility of emancipation in Germany? *This is our reply.* A class must be formed which has *radical chains*, a class in civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal, and which does not claim a *particular redress* because the wrong which is done to it is not a *particular wrong* but *wrong in general*. ... a sphere, finally, which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from all the other spheres of society, without, therefore, emancipating all these other spheres, which is, in short, a *total loss* of humanity and which can only redeem itself by a *total redemption of humanity*. This dissolution of society, as a particular class, is the *proletariat*."(14)

Some might object that we quote Marx as a young man before he was fully a scientist; although the quote above shows what order Marx did things in his life. Later he wrote *Capital*. Nonetheless, Lenin himself returned to the history of the word "proletarian" — and it cannot be said Lenin did not benefit from Marx as the mature scientist. "The Roman proletarian lived at the expense of society. Modern society lives at the expense of the modern proletarian. Marx specially stressed this profound observation of Sismondi. Imperialism somewhat changes the situation."(15)

The most accurate definition of *proletariat* outside of a very concretely defined context is, "social group that is the revolutionary vehicle." Proletarian is not to be equated with industrial worker for all times and contexts, because "proletarian" is a word that does not even pertain to merely one mode of production. There is no other way that Marx and Lenin could be talking about Roman proletarians, although in both cases the group in question was also propertyless (unlike the labor aristocracy).

Returning to the Comintern documents, Lenin found it necessary to write another document relating to these questions in July 1920, approved by the Comintern with three abstentions. In that document he warned against failure to do concrete analyses of specific conditions. But most of our critics continue to quote Marx and Lenin out of context of the conditions of the time and only when it appears that the labor aristocracy could be just a tiny minority. Lenin said the communist party,

"should not advance abstract and formal principles on the national question, but should undertake first of all a precise analysis of the given environment, historical and above all economic; secondly, it should specifically distinguish the interests of the oppressed classes, of the workers and the exploited, from the general concept of so-called national interests, which signify in fact the interests of the ruling class; thirdly, it should as precisely distinguish the

oppressed, dependent nations, unequal in rights, from the oppressing, exploiting nations with full rights, to offset the bourgeois-democratic lies which conceal the colonial and financial enslavement of the vast majority of the world's population by a small minority of the wealthiest and most advanced capitalist countries that is characteristic of the epoch of finance-capital and imperialism."(16)

Again, we point out that Lenin spoke of countries, not a small minority of people or a class of imperialists, who enslave the world's majority.

Later in the same document, Lenin said it was impossible to eliminate nationalist distrust of the proletariat in the imperialist countries by the peoples of the colonies until "after the destruction of imperialism in the advanced countries and after the radical transformation of the entire foundations of economic life in the backward countries."(17) He also said progress toward trust could only be made "very slowly," and concessions would have to be made to the peoples of the colonized countries to assuage their feelings on this point; even though such national distrust of other proletarians was out of date already. Hence, we find here complete justification for Huey Newton, when he said that he did not see the Black Panther Party as being only Black for all time, but that it was necessary not to get too far ahead of the masses (see MIM Theory 7 on this.)

In another July 1920 document, the English and U.S. delegates to the Comintern caused a ruckus, apparently along the lines that MIM does today and apparently as depicted in the movie *Reds*. Basically, Radek, backed by Zinoviev — both of whom later became Trotskyists — put forward that the English and U.S. communists should work within existing trade unions. The English and U.S. comrades said to form entirely new unions, because the existing ones were hopelessly corrupted. The votes connected to these motions were amongst the closest in the Comintern history with the U.S. and British delegates abstaining.

Reading the resolution, one might have thought that the British and U.S. comrades came away with victory:

"The trade unions, which catered primarily for the skilled and best-paid workers, who were limited by their craft narrowness, bound by the bureaucratic machinery which cut them off from the masses, and misled by their opportunist leaders, have betrayed not only the cause of social revolution, but even the cause of the struggle for an improvement in the conditions of life of their own members."(18)

Even in this document criticizing those who abstain from trade union work, the Comintern mentions two conditions under which it is fine to stay away from the unions. "Unless compelled thereto either by extraordinary acts of violence on the part of the trade union bureaucracy ... or by their narrow policy of serving only the labour aristocracy which makes it

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

impossible for the masses of less skilled workers to join the union."(19) Readers will recall that at the time that women and oppressed nationalities, and some immigrants, could not gain entrance to most trade unions under discussion in the U.S. Empire, so the Comintern was trying to point out a contradiction.

To address this two years later, the Comintern in November 1922 stated that the communists should fight for the rights of workers to enter the yellow trade unions:

"This induces the workers in the imperialist countries to demand legislation prohibiting immigration and hostile to the coloured workers, both in America and Australia. Such legislation deepens the antagonism between the coloured and white workers, and splits and weakens the workers' movement.

"The communist parties of America, Canada, and Australia must conduct an energetic campaign against laws prohibiting immigration and must explain to the proletarian masses of these countries that such laws, by stirring up race hatred, will in the end bring injury to themselves.

"The capitalists on the other hand are prepared to dispense with the laws against immigration, in order to facilitate the free entry of cheap coloured labour power and thus lower the wages of white workers. Their intentions can only be successfully frustrated by one thing — the immigrant workers must be enrolled in the existing trade unions of white workers."(20)

Hence, the Comintern took a position like that of the Progressive Labor Party today. We sympathize more with the Comintern, because the length of bourgeois democratic stabilisation in the U.S. Empire was more at issue then. Today it is clear that the conditions are not the same as the Comintern thought they would be then and in the future.

In August 1920, the Comintern used terminology that MIM often uses, to the consternation of our critics. MIM often uses the phrase "white working class" or "white nation." Some correctly object that this is a racial description while we maintain that our readers are more likely to understand us if we say "white" sometimes instead of just "Amerikan" or "settler." Noting that the liberation of workers is "an international problem," the Comintern went on to criticize its enemies in "the tradition of the Second International, for whom in fact only white-skinned people existed."(21) Later, with prodding from Stalin, the Communist Party, USA (CPUSA) frequently used the term "white working class" to help it overcome chauvinism in connection to the Black nation.(22)

Almost a year later, the Comintern spelled out precise attitudes toward the middle classes and the conditions that created their political attitudes.

"In Western Europe there is no class other than the proletariat which is capable of playing the significant role in the world revolution that, as a consequence of the war and the

land hunger, the peasants did in Russia. But, even so, a section of the Western-European peasantry and a considerable part of the urban petty bourgeoisie and broad layers of the so-called middle class, of office workers etc., are facing deteriorating standards of living and, under the pressure of rising prices, the housing problems and insecurity, are being shaken out of their political apathy and drawn into the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution."(23)

Studying this quote, we see that, as explained in MIM Theory 1, these conditions do not apply to our so-called middle classes. Standards of living have risen since World War II. Moreover, prices have risen but not faster than wages and salaries for the middle classes in the past several decades. Of course, there is no ruinous war in Western Europe anymore either. That is thrust upon the Third World principally. Hence, these conditions no longer apply.

Even more important than the particular conditions of Western Europe today is the theoretical approach in the quote above to the "office workers." This section of the Comintern essay is titled, "Our Attitude to the Semi-Proletarian Strata." Today's opportunist, social-chauvinist or lazy dogmatist counts anyone who makes a wage or salary as a member of the "working class," and then counsels us to unite the working class. But MIM is the party counting the office workers as part of the labor aristocracy and upholding the letter and spirit of Lenin's Comintern. What these social-patriots won't tell the proletariat, and what they hope no one will notice, is that office-workers became a majority of the white working class in the U.S. Empire as of the 1980 Census.(24) Hence the majority of Euro-American workers belongs to "semi-proletarian strata" even by the old Comintern definition of 1921. That is just by one measure and one aspect of the definition of semi-proletarian. We do not even mention the pay these workers receive, only the conditions of work of the office workers. This definition of semi-proletarian by the Comintern alone is enough to justify MIM's line on the white working class.

In the same essay, the Comintern makes it clear that all the people our critics call "workers" were regarded as "petty-bourgeois" or "semi-proletarian" in the days of the Comintern:

"It is also important to win the sympathy of technicians, white-collar workers, the middle- and lower-ranking civil servants and the intelligentsia, who can assist the proletarian dictatorship in the period of transition from capitalism to Communism by helping with the problems of state and economic administration. If such layers identify with the revolution, the enemy will be demoralized and the popular view of the proletariat as an isolated group will be discredited."(25)

Here there is no question of counting the majority of today's white working class as proletarian, only a question of possibly allying with them, and even then under conditions

less favorable than the alliance with peasants in China or Russia. Whether it is the CPUSA, RCP-USA, Workers World Party, the Trotskyists, the PT Belgium, the MLPD (Germany) or the Progressive Labor Party — none are talking about setting up a dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead they are talking about letting "petty-bourgeois masses" — as the Comintern calls them — worm their way into the dictatorship of the proletariat from the very beginning and hence killing the dictatorship of the proletariat before it is born. While organizations such as the MLPD may be the vanguard in their countries, it is difficult to say that they are fully communist, because they are only aiming at the dictatorship of the proletariat in words, and fall short of Comintern standards.

We stress again that every quote in this section was approved by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. The last point we will make on the Comintern of Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and Stalin is that it carefully distinguished between proletarians and workers.

"The communist parties must bear in mind that while every bourgeois government is a capitalist government, not every workers' government is a really proletarian government, that is, a revolutionary instrument of power. The Communist International must consider the following possibilities:

"1. Liberal workers' governments, such as there was in Australia; this is also possible in England in the near future.

"2. Social-democratic workers' governments (Germany).

"3. A government of workers and the poorer peasants. This is possible in the Balkans, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc.

"4. Workers' governments in which communists participate.

"5. Genuine proletarian workers' governments, which in their pure form can be created only by the communist party.

"The first two types are not revolutionary workers' governments, but in fact coalition governments of the bourgeoisie and anti-revolutionary labour leaders."(26)

#### **LENIN'S DEATH AND THE ATTEMPT TO REWRITE LENINISM**

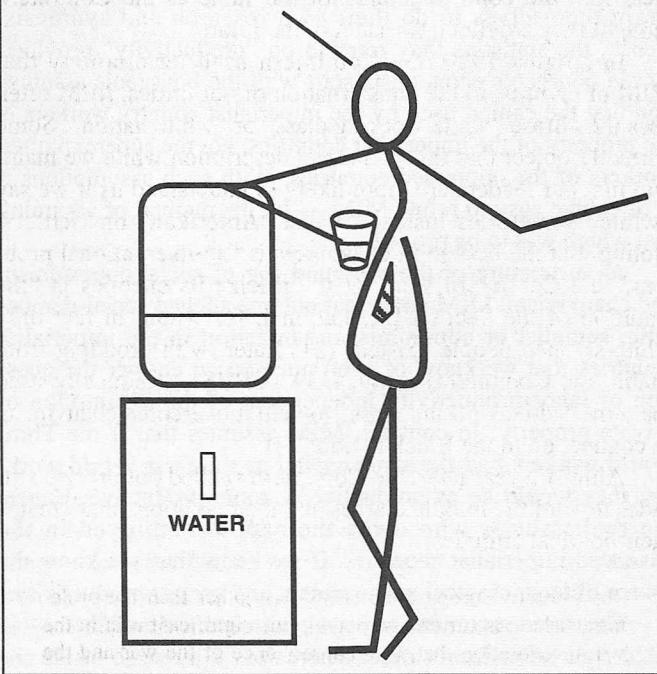
Lenin's precise and timely analysis of the Second International's opportunism cut international Menshevism to the quick. But not surprisingly, the bourgeoisie wormed its way into the Third International, trying to gut Lenin's teachings once he was dead. These opportunists baldly repeated the imperialists' flattering of the imperialist country working classes. According to the opportunists, superprofits do not exist; the reason for higher wages in the imperialist countries is the higher level of productivity resulting from a higher level of technology and from a superior approach to class struggle. To corrupt Leninism, the opportunists also had to revise Marx and Engels, who also wrote on super-profits. Volume three of *Capital*, edited by Engels after Marx died, said,

"He thus secures a surplus-profit. As concerns capitals invested in colonies, etc., on the other hand, they may yield higher rates of profit for the simple reason that the rate of profit is higher there due to backward development, and likewise the exploitation of labour, because of the use of slaves, coolies, etc."(27)

In the same section, Marx said he would not address whether such surplus-profits drawn from activities in foreign countries could permanently raise the rate of profit of the home country; he thus put off the question of how much surplus-profits could cause stabilization in the home country.(28)

On the other hand, according to Marx, it was a law of human history that the portion of society that lives on the labor of others grows. Quoting someone else with approval, Marx said, "If each man's labour were but enough to produce his own food, there could be no property."(29) Furthermore, "at that early period, the portion of society that lives on the labour of others is infinitely small compared with the mass of direct producers. Along with the progress in the productiveness of labour, that small portion of society increases both absolutely and relatively."(30) Our critics are stuck between a rock and a hard place with this quote. Bolsheviks know that since there is no socialism the portion of the world that "lives on the labour of others" is even larger now than in 1917 — and the only possible candidates for that group are imperialists, bourgeoisie and labor-aristocracy. The social-democrats will say that their great reforms have apportioned more labor of society to tending to the needy, but the Bolsheviks realize that in countries like the United States the only possibility is that the parasitic

**Hey, it's not as easy as it looks...**



strata have grown. The share of the live and dead labor consumed in the imperialist countries which originates in the superexploited workers of the oppressed nations must be even higher. For our Trotskyist critics to dispute this, ironically they must let go of another of their tenets, that decolonization of the Third World brought no progress. They must argue in fact that it brought tremendous progress — so that it cut back on the superprofits extracted from the colonies. MIM would argue instead that imperialism has extended and deepened its grip. That is why we can see such extensive growth of what the Comintern called "semi-proletarian" strata who are less favorable to revolution than peasants.

Of course, by the reasoning of the Comintern comrades who wanted to gut Leninism, the workers who had the highest wages had by definition engaged in the best class struggle, so it was the American and British workers at the time who were the model to follow. Hence, these Mensheviks paved the way for organizing on the model of the American Federation of Labor around the world.

Today, some critics of MIM put forward the same line. The Spartacist League has argued that the Amerikan working class to this day is "the most advanced" or "among the most advanced" in the world. They argue that because white workers have greater productivity than workers in the colonial countries, their higher wages are justified. Likewise, the Montreal publication Socialist Action attacked MIM along the same lines.

To support their argument, these misled comrades, Trotskyists and other Mensheviks rely on dogmatic faith in their own nation's workers, or occasionally, on the statistics provided by the imperialists on such questions. They never strain themselves to do their own research and synthesis. Hence, the statistics they refer to on "productivity" provided by the bourgeois economists start with the bourgeois assumption that the capital used by the imperialist country workers is the property of the imperialist countries, not the superexploited workers of the oppressed countries. With such assumptions it is of course easy to refute MIM — by the method of assuming that which was to be proved.

As a measure of the profound fog of social-opportunism and chauvinism, MIM notes that not one alleged social-democratic, socialist or communist organization in the imperialist countries that we know of even attempts to answer the question of labor productivity independent of the assumption of private property. In contrast, MIM assumes that if the Third World workers had the same capital as the First World workers, they would be as productive or more productive. Hence, the real issue is who owns the capital employed in the advanced imperialist countries. If we know that, we know the source of technological advancement and greater productivity.

The same argument arose — with more timeliness — in 1924 right after Lenin died. There was a move to strike the

concept of superprofits from Marxism-Leninism.(31) According to Jane Degas, a Trotsky-sympathizer and critic of Bukharin as Stalin's crucial ally of the time, Bukharin refuted this attack on Leninism. He pointed out that without the concept of super-profits there was no way to attack imperialism or the labor aristocracy. Furthermore, such an unencumbered view of labor productivity played into the hands of the imperialists and social-democrats who claimed that revolution interrupts the production process and contributes to the oppression of the people.(32) (It's also easy to see how this bourgeois view goes along with the revisionist "theory of the productive forces" as well.)

At the time of Lenin's death, the Comintern correctly institutionalized the study of theory. With Lenin dead, they feared that opportunists would arise to revise Leninism. Hence, the Comintern immediately undertook a systematic analysis of its defects in theoretical work and raised up as examples those parties that made all their members take courses in Marxism-Leninism. At that time, there were also some important comments on the different roads to communism taken by recruits.

"The overwhelming majority of the party masses came to the party because they became convinced of the treacherous character of opportunism and reformism, and of the purely proletarian class character of the communist parties; they reached this conclusion almost entirely by empirical means, in the midst of the daily economic and political struggle. This is an immense advantage to the parties and to the CI in comparison with the Second International, but it also means that the party proletarian masses may themselves be burdened with survivals of social-democratic ideology. This social-democratic heritage cannot be eliminated in a mechanical way; it must be tackled by systematic propaganda of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, by implanting in them at least its basic principles and methods."(33)

When reviewing publications of communist parties outside the Soviet Union at about the same time, Bukharin reportedly thought "the English party press was best at dealing with its own local problems; he could not say that the British or American party press showed deviations, because there was no theory at all in their journals."(34) According to the Comintern, theoretical work was "at a standstill in almost all sections of the CI" and so some unhealthy theories arose in the void.(35)

We communists can always count on conditions to generate some revolutionary ferment and some communists who arrive at their conclusions "almost entirely by empirical means." We would also like to accept Bukharin's criticism as valid for the entire U.S. Empire and England, where individualism is rampant due to the huge petty-bourgeois and labor aristocracy strata. Theory requires the ability to generalize and compare generalizations and their evidence, but the settlers and other classes inclined to individualism have difficulty con-

ceiving of classes, genders and nations, not to mention Marx's philosophy of dialectical materialism.

The intelligentsia produced by U.S. and English imperialisms are inclined to such nonsense as "history for its own sake," and even "economic theory for its own sake." Even compared with other intellectuals from Europe with a long history of class struggles, the intellectuals of England and especially the U.S. Empire do not connect theory with history or statistical information. Too often they study the two apart. This is seen in subjects that seem abstract to the layperson, because even in those subjects Amerikan academia is groping in the dark without the light of historical materialist method or theory. In the case of philosophy as a subject, the U.S. Empire is known for a philosopher like William James, whose bourgeois pragmatism encourages the Amerikans to be "practical" and make real-world choices without regard for goals or larger concepts. And in academic game theory, Amerikan scholars try to sell "methodological individualism." Hence, overarching intellectual consistency is not a major part of North American communism or the traditions of North American academia, and so we at MIM have to look out for resistance to method and theory as a particular cultural defect rooted in our political economy.

#### DR. PEPPER AND THE COMINTERN

MIM is what the Comintern called "the American representation" in the Comintern, including a one Dr. Pepper who was there at the beginning. Many of the issues that MIM has raised arose in the Comintern via the concerns of various factions in the British and U.S. communist parties. It was impossible for Dr. Pepper to raise these issues as well as we do today, because they were a recent development. MIM has the extensive benefit of hindsight, history and statistics not available then. England was the only country with a labor aristocracy in the mid-1800s, according to Lenin in his essay "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism." Not until the birth of imperialism as apart from earlier colonialism did all the imperialist countries develop a significant labor aristocracy.

Trotsky had this to say about Dr. Pepper in June, 1928:

"Pepper, the theoretician of this maneuver, one of those who ruined the Hungarian revolution because he overlooked the Hungarian peasantry, made a great effort (by way of compensation, no doubt) to ruin the Communist Party of America by dissolving it among the farmers. Pepper's theory was that the superprofit of American capitalism converts the American proletariat into a world labor aristocracy, while the agrarian crisis ruins the farmers and drives them onto the path of social revolution. According to Pepper's conception, a party of a few thousand members, consisting chiefly of immigrants, had to fuse with the farmers through the medium of a bourgeois party and by thus founding a 'two-class' party, insure the socialist revolution in the face of the passivity or neutrality of the proletariat corrupted by super-profits. This insane idea found support

ers and half-supporters among the leadership of the Comintern. For several weeks the issue swayed in the balance until finally a concession was made to the ABC of Marxism (the comment behind the scenes was: Trotskyist prejudices)."(36)

This still sounds fresh only because our dogmatist and opportunist enemies still attack us in the same language as the Comintern document to the CPUSA of 1929. Criticizing both Pepper's faction and its opponents, the Comintern said:

"This mistake lies in their wrong conception of the nature of the relationship between American and world economics and the underestimation of the increasing involving of American imperialism in the rapidly sharpening general crisis of capitalism.

"The rapid development of American capitalism does not exempt the United States, or any other capitalist country, from the crisis; on the contrary it accentuates the general crisis of capitalism as a result of the extreme sharpening of all contradictions which it leads to. On the other hand a sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism is to be expected, not because American imperialism ceases to develop, but on the contrary, it is to be expected because American imperialism is developing and surpasses the other capitalist countries in its development, which leads to an extreme accentuation of all antagonisms."(37)

From what Trotsky said against him, and from the general failure of Stalin's "general crisis" line, we conclude Pepper wasn't bad at all. He represented a concrete alternative to the line that arose in the Comintern with regard to England and the U.S. Empire. How would history have been different if his line had won out instead of that of the Trotskyists and Foster? Looking at the discontented farmers in the Depression era would have been helpful — and would have brought the party closer to the Black masses as well. What Pepper allegedly argued about farmers should not be contested by Trotsky, because Marx himself defined under what circumstances a proletariat forms:

"What constitutes the proletariat is not *naturally existing* poverty, but poverty *artificially produced*, is not the mass of people mechanically oppressed by the weight of society, but the mass resulting from the *disintegration* of society and above all from the disintegration of the middle class. Needless to say, however, the numbers of the proletariat are also increased by the victims of natural poverty and of Christian-Germanic serfdom."(38)

Along with the party majority, Pepper made self-criticism for lagging behind in work with Blacks. At the same time, according to Degas, Pepper took an active role in advocating the position that Blacks were a "compact mass of farmers on a contiguous territory" that constituted "a colony within the USA."(39) MIM holds that there is no one compact territory of the Black nation right now, but Blacks are a nation and should

not be addressed as a "race" within U.S. borders. This position has precedent in the Comintern as well, as it was the position of the "Negro Commission" in 1928. Only after some struggle among Black revolutionaries, people like Pepper and Stalin himself did the Comintern push the Black-belt hypothesis, which did have considerable relevance at the time. From what we can see, Pepper may have had his flaws, but he was on the front lines of the struggle against Trotsky. When it came to the internal struggle of the CPUSA, Pepper was on the side deemed extra—"rightist" but "majority" by the Comintern in 1928. Pepper's enemies included Bittelman, Foster and Cannon. Cannon and Schactman were members of the Central Committee who later left to take up Trotskyism and neo-Trotskyism. Pepper's ally Wicks was able to point this out about Cannon. Foster became the crucial leader of the whole group, but he had links to Trotskyists, which he had the good sense to denounce by the end of 1928.(40)

In defense of the majority, Stalin ended up picking Trotskyists to support, who naturally soon left him. In 1926, when Comintern veterans such as Trotsky and Zinoviev were under fire, Pepper spoke up against Trotsky and Zinoviev for trying to build new parties and disrupt the Comintern.(41)

Nonetheless, the Comintern under Stalin's leadership criticized Pepper's positions. It was probably thinking of Pepper and Bukharin when it said the following:

"The conception of the conciliators that the inner contradictions in the capitalist countries are weakening and that it is possible to organize the internal market while preserving anarchy exclusively on the world market is refuted by the entire development of capitalism in recent years, and in reality means capitulation before the reformist ideology."(42)

We must say that that was a pretty good position in July 1929, but it has proved more wrong than correct in the years since. The basis of internal contradiction in the U.S. Empire has since weakened, not least of all because the Depression drove it into another victorious world war that was not fought on its soil. Quite the contrary to what the Comintern said, what has led to reformism is chasing after the labor aristocracy as if it had a revolutionary character or was about to get one. Failing to recognize the reformist interests of the labor aristocracy, many communists have corrupted themselves unconsciously by labeling bourgeois reform part of the revolutionary movement. Immersing oneself in an objectively counter-revolutionary class can only lead one to counterrevolution.

The Comintern also encouraged a nationalist error when it attached the MIM-type line on the class structure of the U.S. Empire in the name of attacking Menshevism. The Comintern examined the prospects of revolution again only from a white-centered approach. They did not see what would later become Mao's international strategic conception, by which revolution

arrives in the imperialist citadels mostly after it has arrived in the Third World. MIM is not a Menshevik party, because MIM has full confidence that the Third World proletariat will land a decisive blow against Amerikan imperialism one way or another. Hence revolution is possible here and we are preparing for it. If material conditions were such that we ignored the possibilities for revolution in the imperialist countries, we would be Mensheviks for our line on the labor aristocracy, but since the conditions are not such, it is actually Menshevik to chase after the labor aristocracy its demands. In most countries the basis for revolution is principally internal, but in the leading imperialist countries the role played by external forces is principal. Marx spoke of such a scenario in his own days:

"After occupying myself with the Irish question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) *cannot* be delivered in England but *only in Ireland*." (43)

Who will deliver the decisive blow to the U.S. Empire — the youth and oppressed nationalities within U.S. borders or the oppressed nations outside U.S. borders? This question cannot be answered in advance. The nations outside U.S. borders will have to land some big blows before the activity of the internal oppressed nations and youth really come into play, however.

There is no need to cry wolf or "general crisis" forever in the imperialist countries. Doing so will only encourage practical-minded workers and youth without dogmatic preconceptions to think communists are like religious fools, and that in turn will tend to push them into the fascist camp. Instead, we must talk sense to the masses, starting from their own correct knowledge, that the Amerikan masses are not revolutionary and are not momentarily due to become revolutionary. When we do that, the masses will finally know we have both feet planted on the ground and that we actually listen to them. When we do this, we often learn that the masses think the MIM line on the bought-off white workers makes abundant sense. It allows the advanced masses to maintain their hatred for imperialism while making sense of the workers all around them. The labor aristocracy thesis makes sense of everything from the white "anti-crime" movement to the lack of revolution in the imperialist countries, and the advanced masses can see this.

Pepper's gut sense of the labor aristocracy seemed to be more on the mark than those of other Comintern leaders. In the case of Lenin in 1920, he said the Communist Party in Great Britain (CPGB) should support the Labour Party even though it was a bourgeois-imperialist party. In helping the Labour Party get into the government, the CPGB would have been able to show the workers that the Labour Party wasn't going to change anything.

If England had been in a revolutionary or near-revolutionary situation in 1920, then Lenin would have been correct. As it turns out, Pepper was more correct, because he believed a number of material conditions would have to change in the U.S. Empire and England before revolution was possible. He argued that the CPGB would win leadership of the workers "only over the dead body of the Labour Party" and so there was no point in supporting the Labour Party and concealing differences with it.(44) Lenin himself did not believe this dispute was a sufficient reason to split a communist party; although the issue attracted great attention, he thought it was relatively minor.(45)

What Lenin advocated for England amounted to fixating on the sentiments of the labor aristocracy. If the labor aristocracy were due for a major crisis, as everyone seemed to believe in 1920, then it would have been okay to make such an effort to teach it patiently through election of the Labour Party. While Pepper was more correct on this question, it was perfectly reasonable for Lenin to think what he did in 1920. Support for the Labour Party was a means of chasing after the labor aristocracy and consciously or not it exerted a corrupting influence on the CPGB. That is the danger in misassessing the balance of forces. If one counts on revolutionary forces that aren't there, one will only end up corrupting oneself by militantly pushing the demands of the bourgeoisified workers or petty-bourgeoisie. This intervention by Lenin in the Comintern's early, Eurocentric ultraleft days, when revolution in Europe seemed around the corner, helped lead the CPGB into revisionism; English communism has yet to recover. What started as a simple mistake has been repeated for decades to become revisionism.

This error also stemmed from another error that Mao summed up in his assessment of the Comintern — insufficient attention to national conditions. Mao eventually judged that the universals of Marxism-Leninism are not a sufficient basis for having a world party, because the world party ended up stifling the application of universal principles to local conditions (see Mao's statement in sidebar). In the case of England, if it had been Mao's way, Lenin would never have had such an impact on the question of parliament and the Labour Party. Mao had a line difference with Lenin. If the question is just an occasional mistake on the balance of forces, then it is simply a strategic error. If there is a consistent pattern to strategic errors, then that is a line error, or line deviation or revisionism. In this case, Mao identified the lack of attention paid to national conditions as a line error of the Comintern. Something similar we see today is a consistent strategic error with regard to how to count the labor aristocracy in the balance of forces. That is the root problem in why the English communists still can't come to grips with Lenin.

We should point out here that the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) is in error in its foreign policy when it supports the

RCP-USA for setting up the RIM, which the RCP sees as a Comintern. The Peruvian comrades claim to uphold "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism," but they have gone along with the RCP's back-to-Lenin bullshit on the question of having a world party. This is also related to the PCP's failure to see that the RCP line is a return to Euro-centered Menshevism based in the labor aristocracy. We are encouraged by the direction of PCP criticisms of the RCP, but there remain many issues and many more specifics of RCP literature distribution that remain unchallenged and unchanged despite the obvious effort of the RCP to appease the PCP with a few general pronouncements and press releases.

The British and Amerikan communists tried to tell the Comintern why they should not fixate on the labor aristocracy and the yellow trade unions, but the Comintern did not understand because it believed the British and the U.S. Empire were about to go to war against each other and destroy the labor aristocracy. Dr. Pepper came up with the political economy to back up his position, but he and his comrades did not have the seriousness that Mao did to stand up to the Comintern.

Apparently Stalin considered both factions in the CPUSA to be rightist (46) and supported the Foster-Trotskyist faction as the lesser evil eventually to the extent of seeing Dr. Pepper pulled from the Comintern. In retrospect it is clear that Stalin was briefly vindicated by the Depression of 1929, but on the whole expectations of Anglo-American war and the collapse of the labor aristocracy pushed the CPUSA in an ultraleft direction before it settled into a dogshit rightist-liquidationist position. For the years around 1929, the line on the labor aristocracy was not bad at all. Given that the labor aristocracy never did collapse and instead stabilized over decades, the real revisionism comes from tailing after it year in and year out. The irony of this is that what started as an ultraleft line of expecting revolution around the corner ended up being the basis for Gus Hall's reformism. The continuity between Foster and Gus Hall is the dogged pursuit of the labor aristocracy. Foster originally pursued it for ultraleft reasons connected to capitalist crisis, while Gus Hall's party chased after the labor aristocracy for reasons it didn't know itself, as attention to theory went out the window and the CPUSA fell for Soviet revisionism, Gorbachev and just about anything from the Democratic Party that had a pulse.

#### TROTSKY ON THE WAY OUT

With Lenin dead and Trotsky receiving public criticism in April 1925, we see that the Comintern occasionally put the correct focus on the labor aristocracy. In marching orders for the English communist party, the first two points of the "central task" were: "1. Work in the trade unions. Particular attention for the Minority Movement. ... 2. Agitation against the imperialist sentiments of the English labour aristocracy."(47) This undermines the view that Marxist-Leninists view the

labor aristocracy as a peripheral issue. In fact, once again categorical language about whole classes being bought-off came into use in the Comintern in 1926:

"English capitalism in its classic period gave rise to the classic type of English trade unionism. Its socio-economic basis was the surplus profit which the English bourgeoisie received from all quarters of the globe, part of which entered into the wages of the English proletariat, which thus steadily raised its living standards and improved its skill.

"Within the international labour army the English proletariat thus developed as a privileged group, occupying an exceptional position as a labour aristocracy."(48)

Continuing in the general crisis vein, however, the document went on to say that the decline of English capitalism "and the parallel decline in imperialist surplus profits have radically changed class relationships."(49)

### **STRUGGLE AGAINST BUKHARIN**

Although Bukharin initially defended Lenin's theses on superprofits, as time went on he turned to a more Menshevik position. Whereas he had refuted the productivity nonsense upon Lenin's death, by the end of 1928 Bukharin fell for a similar variant of the theory, that Amerikan and German wages were high because of rent or differential profits arising from advanced technology.(50) Again the issue of whose labor allowed the creation of that technology and the application of that technology in capital goods (dead labor form) and in the production process itself — Bukharin left that out.

At root, Bukharin like Trotsky fell for what became known in Mao's day as "the theory of the productive forces." In Marxism, there is no doubt that the growth of the productive forces is a central force affecting the whole society. Yet the revisionists like Trotsky and Bukharin tended to look at the productive forces in isolation from the class structure and wound up with the same kind of one-sided predestination thinking common to Protestantism and Menshevism.

In contrast, Lenin and Stalin considered the impact of class relations, including the relations among classes of different countries. By March 1929, the Comintern had taken a left turn against Bukharin, almost as if to prepare for the Depression. Here is what the Stalin-led Comintern had to say about the relationship between the wealth or productive forces of England and the colonies at that time. "The plundering of [India's] natural wealth is English imperialism's chief source of power. On the stability of English rule in India depends the strength of English imperialism on the world stage."(51) Treating the issue of class relations between countries goes a long way toward defeating the revisionist theory of the productive forces. The Trotskyists and other Mensheviks see Britain's working class as the most advanced because its productive forces are most advanced, while revolution is least likely in places like India because the productive forces are too back-

ward. Left out is the corrupting influence of super-profits on the imperialist-nation working classes, as well as the historical record.

In the 1920s, Trotsky also treated the issue of the productive forces and the impact of their accumulation on increasing labor productivity.

"The fundamental economic superiority of bourgeois states consists in the fact that capitalism, *for the present, still* produces cheaper and better goods than socialism. In other words *for the present*, productivity of labor is still considerably higher in the countries that are living in accordance with the law of inertia of the old capitalist civilization. ... We are acquainted with the fundamental law of history: victory *ultimately* goes to *that* system which raises human society onto a higher economic level. The historic dispute will be decided — *and of course not at once* — by the comparative coefficients of labor productivity."(52)

There is no mistaking the whole materialist feel to this and the whole first chapter of Trotsky's book, *The Revolution Betrayed*. The old- fashioned Mensheviks, unlike today's social-democrats, seek to protect themselves in Marx by looking at the role of the productive forces in the mode of production, which according to Marx are indeed generally decisive in the last instance. Yet, the mode of production is also composed of production relations or a class structure, which necessarily comes with some class struggle. Trotsky missed this and instead proposed that the workers of socialist countries make up the distance between themselves and those of the capitalist countries in labor productivity by taking up the military organization of industrial work.

From our perspective, the question becomes, will the Indian masses put up with colonial plunder and can England's superior technology prevent it from losing India as a colony? Historically the Indian masses have since answered, at least partly, "No."

Mao answered that technology and property is obtained by force and fraud, but in the end, this ill-gotten advantage is not decisive. People, not technology are decisive. Hence, People's War can and does defeat technologically superior opponents all the time.(53) This is what is missing from the theory of the productive forces. The masses ultimately will not put up with the extraction of super-profits. Plunder may raise the labor productivity of corrupted workers using stolen capital, but it will also provoke wars of national liberation. Hence, when Bukharin defended Lenin's theory of super-profits when Lenin died, he was more correct. But when he took to the Menshevik line in later years, he fell in with a long line of revisionists. There is a huge chasm between people who can see what happened subsequently in China and Vietnam against vastly superior enemies (technologically speaking), and the revisionists.

This difference is based in the theory of the productive forces. The capitalist means of technical and productive

advancement bears within it the seeds of its own destruction — of conflict. And so technological and production advantages do not accumulate forever in the hands of the same exploiters in a peaceful and harmonious system.

#### DUTT AND THE 1930S LINE ON THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY

Finally, we review R. Palme Dutt's examination of the labor aristocracy. His book *Fascism and Social Revolution* is an excellent book for exposing social-democracy, reviewing fascist ideology and detailing the concrete conditions underlying Comintern analyses.

"What is to happen to the 'superfluous' workers? For long, the old theory of 'alternative employment' was still endeavored to be put forward as applicable to this situation. The decline in the industrial and productive workers was to be 'compensated' by the increase in auxiliary 'services' and luxury occupations (clerical, distributive, advertising, commercial, and luxury services). Certainly, a very considerable increase in these auxiliary and in the main non-productive occupations is to be traced in the United States, Britain and other countries during the post-war period, thus providing the basis of the rapid expansion of the so-called 'new middle class,' which became one of the breeding-grounds of Fascism; just as the growth of the permanent unemployed army provided a further breeding-ground. The expansion of the rentier class on the one side, and of luxury services and endlessly multiplied 'salesmanship' services on the other, is a measure of the degeneration of capitalism ....

"Nevertheless, this supposed 'compensation' was soon revealed as a doubtful solution. In the first place, it was manifestly no solution for the millions of miners and heavy industry workers thrown out of work. In the second place, the extent of 'compensation' had obvious limits which were soon reached. For in these occupations, too, rationalisation begins to get to work and to repeat the process of throwing off the superfluous workers. Mechanisation transforms clerical work, and begins increasingly to replace clerks by more and more elaborate calculating and book-keeping machines; centralisation cuts down the number of competing businesses; staffs are reduced. The 'white-collar workers' also find themselves increasingly thrown on the market alongside their industrial brothers."(54)

In the same passage, Dutt quotes Marx and remains true to the definition of proletarian and the concept of "productive work." He doesn't try to smuggle parasitic "work" into the definition of "proletarian," the way our critics do today. Dutt spoke so precisely and with correct reference to Marxism-Leninism that we can now honor his work by showing where it no longer applies using his own yardsticks. The things that happened to the middle classes in the Depression(55) did not continue after World War II as MIM Theory 1 and Sakai's *Settlers* show, and the above quote from Dutt turned out to be wrong as a prediction about the imperialist countries.

As a measure of parasitism in the case of England, Dutt suggested that anyone salaried is likely holding a "non-produc-

tive" job. Also, according to Dutt, workers in "Commerce, Finance and Personal Service" constituted members of a class, "virtually unorganisable to the working-class movement."(56) Dutt volunteered that 15% were parasites amongst English workers on this basis alone.

In the United States, Dutt analyzed the 1930 Census and he found only 19 million of 49 million workers in manufacturing, industry and transport. Farmers alone were one-quarter and he admitted to a "very wide expansion of the salariat, salesmen, etc."(57) Even among farmers, not all were poor — and they could provide a basis for the fascist movement, Dutt said. Little did Dutt know that while 40% of workers in 1930 were in the productive sectors, by 1980 that figure was only 13%. Even within the sectors formerly thought of as productive, the percentage that engages in non-productive work (supervising, management, other paper-shuffling administration) has tripled to about one-third.(58) To Dutt's credit, had he seen the 1980 Census 50 years later and used his 1934 standards, he would have concluded the same thing as MIM. The conditions have changed, but the definition of proletarian has not under imperialism.

If we changed the names from the "United States" and "England" to the world as a whole in Dutt's quotes above, more would be true still. And if we changed the parts about imperialist-country workers to oppressed nation workers, again we would see much truth in Dutt's analysis. It remains true on the world scale that "The capitalist 'way out' is at each stage a way of increasing destruction, of mass-starvation, of violence, of war, of decay."(59)

#### III. COMINTERN ULTRALEFTISM: TEMPORARY MISTAKES REPEATED AD NAUSEUM BY LAZY DOGMATISTS, OPPORTUNISTS AND REVISIONISTS

"The party must guide the masses to a revolutionary position in such a way that they are convinced by their own experience of the correctness of the party's policy. If this rule is not observed, the party will inevitably be cut off from the masses and fall into putschism; communism will degenerate ideologically into 'left' dogmatism, petty-bourgeois 'revolutionary' adventurism. Equally ruinous is it if the party fails to act at the height of the revolutionary movement, when a bold and resolute attack on the enemy is called for. To allow such an opportunity to pass without going over to insurrection is to leave the initiative to the enemy and to condemn the revolution to defeat."(60)

MIM Theory 6 and MIM Theory 8 talk about ultraleftism. Ultraleftism is an overly optimistic assessment of the balance of forces that results in fighting losing battles which set back the revolution. The contrast is rightism, in which people do not recognize the power they have in their hands and hence demoralize the proletariat and its allies while giving the bourgeoisie a

reprieve. Rightism is the general problem most of the time. Occasionally we see a gloss of ultraleft rhetoric on top of rightism.

From the perspective of hindsight, which is in essence an idealist and hence mistaken approach, we see in the Comintern mostly ultraleft mistakes. From the perspective of the Comintern's time, there was still some ultraleftism because there was a range of views from the alleged right that the Comintern chose to ignore. As an extreme example, the right-wing of the German communist party, led by Maslow, believed the German revolution was decades away in 1926.(61) As it turns out, a revolutionary situation arose in the 1930s and 1940s in Germany, so Maslow's claims seem dubious if not entirely ridiculous.

On the other hand, in 1919 the Comintern was talking about England and the U.S. Empire's ability to survive without socialism a year or two longer than Europe as a whole, which they saw as on the brink of revolution. They also proclaimed the social-democracy of the Second International dead.(62) In 1919 no one claimed to see otherwise except the Mensheviks, who opposed revolution generally.

Given what happened in Germany in 1923, MIM has sympathy for Lenin and the other Bolsheviks who maintained a taut posture with regard to the possibility of revolution. The problem only emerges when decade after decade the lazy dogmatists utilize the same old formulas from 1922. In 1922, the Comintern was saying that material conditions for revolution abounded and it was even more important than in previous years to pay attention to the "subjective factor" — the boldness to create revolution out of existing possibilities. Not surprisingly, at the same time in the same document, the Comintern continued with its mistaken view that "to win the majority of the American and European working class — that is, now as before, the Comintern's cardinal task."(63)

It is easy to confuse dialectics with ultraleftism. Dialectics tells us that at all times what is possible through struggle is more than what is immediately apparent. Political analysis without dialectics is conservative and reflects at best pragmatism or formal or mechanical materialism. Dialectics is part of our philosophy or methodology and is always true for our purposes. Struggle and conflict are permanent for our lifetimes and longer.

On the other hand, dialectics does not mean that at all times going on the offensive — not to mention seizing state power — is possible. Such a view is not dialectics but ultraleftism. In its extreme form this view is idealism, a very common belief underlying much Trotskyism and anarchism. Trotskyist Isaac Deutscher elevated "overreaching" to a principle that made Trotsky a great man.(64) It was this kind of "overreaching," based on an overestimate of the capacity of Polish and German workers, that led Trotsky to ignore Lenin's order to negotiate the end of World War I sooner than he did. From

MIM's dialectical materialist perspective, this "overreaching" did not serve to advance the revolution, but ended up giving the German imperialists huge chunks of Soviet territory and thus setting back the revolution.

Later, Trotsky would accuse Stalin of seeing "stabilisation" of capitalism more than it really existed and hence accused Stalin of rightist mistakes after Lenin died. Stalin and Bukharin replied in December 1926 by saying that Zinoviev and Trotsky were exaggerating the balance of forces and making ultraleft deviations. The Comintern published a list of reasons regarding conditions for its view.

"Notwithstanding certain statements by opposition leaders (Zinoviev, Trotsky, and others) capitalist stabilization is an indisputable fact (the growth of world production, of international trade, currency stabilization, etc.). Equally indisputable, however, is the partial and unstable character of this stabilization, as shown in the feverish fluctuations of the market, in the extreme unevenness of development, in the enormous contradiction between the capacity of the productive apparatus and the actual volume of output, in the magnitude of chronic unemployment. Among the most important factors disturbing the process of capitalist stabilization are the growth of socialism in the USSR, the decline of English capitalism, the unprecedented acuteness of class struggle in England, and the great national revolution in China."(65)

The above on the immediate prospects for revolution showed that Stalin and Bukharin were willing to stake out a position nominally to Trotsky's "right" — but in fact more correct. If we re-read the statement above in terms of conditions that can produce de-stabilization, we see that socialism is no longer growing anywhere, so this is a large factor for stability in the imperialist countries; British capitalism is still declining, so that remains the same as in Stalin's day; there is no huge class struggle in the U.S. Empire and only the Los Angeles rebellion approaches the struggles of the 1960s; and the national revolutions are not doing as well as they did in China, although that could easily change and be a factor for de-stabilization, as the cases of Peru and the Philippines show.

Neo-Trotskyist Max Shachtman admitted that Trotsky overestimated what was possible in the 1920s, and this cost him support from the communists at the time:

"The highest hopes had been placed in the prospects of a revolutionary victory in the convulsive social crisis of 1923 in Germany. ... But it did not come. The defeat marked the end of the first big post-war revolutionary wave in Europe and the ushering in of a period of relative capitalist stabilization. The bureaucracy rose on this leaven, too. The defeat of the Opposition was due in part to the repercussions of the defeats of the proletariat in the West."(66)

Shachtman should have added that Trotsky's Eurocentric ultraleftist theory of permanent revolution never had any relevance.

vance again after 1923.

#### **EUROCENTRIC ULTRALEFTISM AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

"It must be frankly said that the strength of the Hitlerites lies in the meekness of the German masses, and primarily the German workers."

— Comintern, May 1943 (67)

A great weakness of our movement has been its willingness to write propaganda unconnected to facts having to do with economic crises, usually as a matter of repeating old analyses that were once reasonably correct. The ultraleft "general crisis" line has been mostly incorrect for the imperialist countries, even as it mostly underestimated revolutionary potential in the Third World. While Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all admitted they were wrong about how soon the revolution in Europe would happen, they never broke with the idea entirely that revolution was imminent in Europe. This is clear already in the Comintern documents approved by Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. In August 1920, the Comintern was saying something we hear the RCP- USA and others say 75 years later: "The bourgeoisie have entirely abandoned the idea of conciliating the proletariat by means of reforms. They demoralize a small and dwindling upper group with a few gifts and force the great mass into obedience by blood and iron."(68)

The paragraph preceding was about World War I in which the carnage did reach Europeans, as it did in World War II. In this sense, it was true that imperialism was destroying the comfort of its own working classes. However, after World War II, we see that the imperialists made more use of the techniques of "modern militarism" that Lenin spoke of with regard to colonized peoples and not Europeans. In exceptional cases, as in the Vietnam War, we did see the rebirth of the revolutionary movement. For the times without those conditions it has been false to predict the use of blood and iron against the imperialist country workers. The use of violence against the workers in the imperialist countries has been the exception for quite some time, mostly because the workers do not make demands; they negotiate their alliance with the imperialists. The lack of violent conflict itself is a fundamental reason for the lack of political consciousness among the workers.

The practice of separating the economic conditions from the political demands of the proletariat was not rife in the Comintern meetings Lenin attended. Rather, there was a precise explanation of conditions that gave rise to various ideologies. For this reason, political demands were not merely a matter of cheerleading or writing militant poetry.

In July 1921, the Comintern clearly linked together the conditions of the labor aristocracy and the prospects of revolution based on the working class. "The majority of the working class is nevertheless outside the Communist sphere of influence. This is particularly true in countries such as Britain and

America where finance capital is so powerful that it has enabled imperialism to corrupt entire sections of the working class."(69) The solution they proposed was to enter the trade unions and transform them.

While the Comintern described conditions that led to corruption of the proletariat and formation of a labor aristocracy, it also explained under what conditions that labor aristocracy might break down. The simple line was often that capitalist crisis would bring about the fall of the labor aristocracy and the re-proletarianization of those workers. In 1928, the Comintern explained in more detail a list of such conditions. MIM agrees with these conditions, but they were largely ignored for the last 70 years. More communists should note how the labor aristocracy will truly fall:

"For the heightening of imperialist contradictions, the worsening of the position of large masses of workers and mass unemployment, the enormous costs of military conflicts, the loss by certain Powers of their monopoly position on world markets, and finally the loss of colonies, etc., undermine the foundation of social-imperialism among the masses."(70)

We can see that inter-imperialist rivalry has not been waged on imperialist soil since World War II. This is a central fact for our times and one reason why the labor aristocracy has not fallen. In the 1920s, Stalin and Trotsky both thought that Anglo-American conflicts would lead to world war — the rising Amerikan empire against the declining British one. In 1929, they thought this was the same contradiction as that which led up to World War I, except "more intensified than ever. ... The conditions for a new imperialist war are accumulating, particularly in connexion with the struggle between Great Britain and the United States for hegemony."(71) If WWII had pitted France and Germany against each other, as well as the United States and England against each other, with Japan siding with one or the other, the labor aristocracy indeed might have gone down the drain. It didn't. So we must not repeat an analysis designed for the 1920s as if it were good for all time.

Continuing with the list of conditions above, we can see the position of oppressed nationality workers has sometimes fallen, but the living standards of European and Amerikan workers has generally improved over time since World War II. Moreover, while there is chronic and Depression-level unemployment among the oppressed nationalities, the same is not true for the white masses; although it does sometimes reach double digits as in parts of Canada and in France today. Finally, the blows anti-colonial struggles have not been as decisive as we wished. This is in large part because the struggle was usually not able to advance to the socialist stage — and where it attempted to go further capitalist restoration followed. Hence, the imperialists have found ways to gain super-profits from puppet regimes in the Third World. Many have

referred to this as the development of neocolonialism and, along with the lack of war on imperialist soil, it is a crucial factor to evaluate in the conditions of the labor aristocracy.

As time went on, the Comintern leaders became more removed from political economy and settled into a "general crisis" school of thought which discouraged concrete analysis of the kind above. Trotsky took one step in this direction when he wrote a Comintern manifesto in July 1924. Here he claimed that World War I made all the imperialist countries poorer, even 10 years later. According to Trotsky, even the workers of the victor states were poorer.(72) From this of course Trotsky concluded that revolutionary conditions are hastened and there should be no underestimating the potential for a revolution. "There is not a single healthy spot in Europe," said Trotsky who went on to list each country as collapsing.(73) The only exception he made was that of the "economic boom in North America, based largely on the home market."(74)

While Trotsky overestimated the situation in Europe, he continued to underestimate the revolutionary potential in the colonies. He managed to get the Comintern to publish this statement: "The workers in the colonies must be taught to regard white workers as their brothers, and to do that the white proletariat must learn to act as brothers to the coloured population of the colonies."(75) His article pits the proletariat of the world against the peoples of the colonies and sees the liberation of the colonies as a matter of extending imperialist country communist help into the colonies. This was a common attitude at the time, but Trotsky was its most consistent proponent: "Proletarians of Europe! Pay more attention to the colonial question, devote more of your forces to revolutionary work in the colonies. There, where the bourgeoisie would wish to find their most reliable supporters, they must instead be dealt a damaging blow."(76) Here Trotsky has continued with the white worker view of colonial workers that they work for too little money and are not even proletarian, just scabs who have to be corrected by European guidance.

Yet it was not just Trotsky introducing Eurocentric ultraleftism. It was also Stalin and his supporters:

"Relations between the capitalist States and the Soviet Union, between imperialism and China, between Europe (primarily England) and the United States are at the basis of all international relations today. Germany's development and the consequent regrouping of powers are one of the main factors in the change in the relations between European States.

"8. The most important factor in capitalist development as a whole today is the shift of the economic centre of gravity to the United States."(77)

Although Lenin and Stalin had turned the party's attention to the colonies, especially in the East, they did not succeed in getting the comrades to make a clean break with Eurocentrism right away. As with many profound ideas, it had to germinate

for a period before it made its full weight felt.

Right into 1935, the Comintern could not resist the idea that the white labor aristocracy was going to return to the proletariat, even in the United States. As Manuilsky said, "The American worker is sinking to the level of the majority of the European workers, as the bolsheviks foresaw. The colonial workers are not becoming decolonized ... the European white worker is sinking more and more to the level of the colonial coolie."(78) Dimitrov, who approved Manuilsky's somewhat wishful thinking, said such an economic situation forced the social-democratic parties to be more open to a united front and not just be the main bulwarks for capitalism. Strangely, while Dimitrov maintained an underlying ultraleft view of political economy, his view of the political situation in Europe was known for being much more restrained. According to Dimitrov, the proletarian dictatorship was not on the agenda in Europe, only the choice between fascism and bourgeois democracy. The contradiction in Dimitrov's position was that he no longer saw social-democrats or labor aristocrats as props of capitalism, but at the same time he believed that new alliances were possible, not because of political economy but because the labor aristocrats wanted to side with the communists to defend bourgeois democracy. The change in political situation was so great that suddenly the Comintern saw social-democrats once again as "proletarians."(79) We do not see the distinction between workers and proletarians appear again until after the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, when exposing British and French war preparations became a concern of the Soviet Union.(80)

Failing to discern a revolutionary upsurge from an ebb period leads to strategies and tactics that would perfectly good in one situation but are abysmal in another. Lenin sounded a word of warning in this regard in 1922:

"We have given scarcely any thought to the possibility of retreat, and of securing this retreat. In view of the fundamental change that has taken place in the world ... we cannot absolutely ignore this question. We must not only know how to act when we are passing to the offensive and are victorious. ... If the enemy possesses sufficient power of endurance, he can rally his forces, and so forth; he can easily provoke us to attack him, and then throw us back for many years. That is why I think that the idea that we must prepare for the possibility of retreat is very important. ... Even from the practical point of view, all the parties which are preparing to pass to the direct onslaught upon capitalism in the near future must now also think of securing for themselves the possibility of retreat. ... I think that after five years of the Russian revolution the most important thing for all of us, Russian and foreign comrades alike, is to sit down and study. ... We must tell both the Russian and foreign comrades that the most important thing in the ensuing period is to study. ... If they do that, I am sure the prospects of the world revolution will be not only good, but excellent."(81)

This idea of Lenin's goes along with our idea of fighting "winnable battles," not just in military strategy, but in all strategy. Even more remarkable about this quote from Lenin is that, as Mao explains in "On Contradiction," things that are not ordinarily principal may become principal in certain circumstances thanks to the law of uneven development. In periods of retreat, Lenin is saying study is principal, even in a situation where the communists hold state power in at least one country. Times of success perhaps especially may drag comrades away from their duties to study. MIM has seen some of this in the period of the 1980s, where the successes of the 1960s and 1970s dialectically led to some looseness and pluralism in the proletarian movement — a lazy pluralism that made further advance difficult, because pluralism means unresolved contradictions and unresolved contradictions can mean paralysis. In the process of weeding out in the 1980s and 1990s, we are seeing the most hypocritical and contradictory ideologies decline or die outright, especially the hodgepodge connected to defending Soviet revisionism. We are now setting up a clear pole to lead the next upsurge, and it is our duty to prepare to have the correct analysis at hand and on the tip of our tongues the next time the masses initiate a revolutionary upsurge. The better our preparation, the further we will be able to take the next upsurge. If we do not in some sense surpass the theoretical understanding of the previous generation, the masses may not be able to push the revolutionary wave any higher than last time. All this is to say that in one situation the principal task may be training military regiments. In another it may be studying. Our central task at the moment is creating public opinion, which is perhaps only one step ahead of the task of study. And so there is still a great need for study, especially among today's youth, who must be tomorrow's leaders of the revolutionary upsurge.

An incorrect assessment of material conditions, and ultra-left dogmatism, also means people miss possibilities where they do exist. A good example of this is the Comintern's explanation that the communists always received millions of votes in Germany, but that this should not be mistaken to indicate significant influence among workers, where the social-democrats continued to dominate. For example, between 1928-1930, the communist vote increased from 3.3 million to 4.6 million while the Social-Democratic Party vote fell from 9.2 to 8.6 million, thus vindicating the communist strategy of equating social-democracy with fascism.(82) Between 1930-1932, Reichstag votes rose again for the communists, who went from 13.1% to 14.3%, while the Social-Democratic Party went from 24.5% to 21.6%.(83) The question arises, where did the votes come from between 1928 and 1932? Who supported the communist movement and how did the communists let the fascists seize a generation of youth from them to use in street battle? These questions did not arise because of the straight-

jacket imposed by an incorrect understanding of imperialist-country political economy.

Yet, compared with today's lazy dogmatist defenders of the prevalent "general crisis" line, even Comintern activist R. Palme Dutt was much more concerned with concrete conditions. He detailed those conditions to such an extent that we are able to compare his situation in the 1930s with ours today.

One key condition is the world's overall production level. In 1932, the communists were correct to think the downturn was more than an average cyclical downturn. Dutt pointed to figures that showed industrial production in 1932 was lower than in 1913. He concluded: "Thus the war and post-war period, taken as a whole, reveals the first large-scale absolute setback of capitalist production."(84) This only makes MIM wonder why our lazy dogmatists cannot look at the world production statistics like Dutt did and see that nothing of the sort has happened since World War II. We can understand how Dutt thought he was seeing the very end and needed to take a view toward going on the offensive in the imperialist countries, and take the view that the labor aristocracy was going to fall momentarily. We cannot understand how people persist in this error now that "modern militarism" has spread the world across thanks to the imperialists.

Of the conditions most important to the general crisis that Dutt saw, two of three definitely do not exist as he thought they would indefinitely. First, there are currently no wars in which imperialist country masses are killing each other. Second, the compensation of the imperialist country workers has increased, and in fact it is no longer linked to directly controlling colonies. The German and Japanese workers are not left out of the swag just because they lost their right to colonies in World War II. The imperialists allow each other great latitude in investing and operating in each other's spheres and have done more to equalize the rate of profit among them — all through an ideology of bourgeois internationalism. Because imperialists no longer directly administer their colonies they have no need to cut each other out in the manner of the past. The only condition that could arguably be the same as in the days of Dutt's "general crisis" theory is the difference between productive capacity and actual utilization.(85) This gap has declined since the Depression, but (as in Dutt's day) the decline in the gap is occurring partly through the destruction of productive capacity through war. Even so, the meaning of this contradiction is not the same under the condition of increasing overall world production.

Dutt specifically predicted that the conditions of U.S. workers would steadily deteriorate.(86) However, MIM has shown in MIM Theory 1 that this is not true. Even in the 1980s when liberals went bonkers with their lies about the conditions of the white workers, the decline in conditions was concentrated in the bottom 20 percent of workers, who were predominantly oppressed nationalities. The top 80 percent either held

its own or saw its living standards increase. Such a fact can be lost momentarily through figures using averages that mask the harsh realities of the bottom fifth. The liberals, social-democrats and various bearers of the Menshevik legacy continue in this way of lying about the workers' conditions so that they can use the oppressed nationality workers to struggle for better working conditions for the top half of workers. Because the state smashed the Black Panthers, and other genuine vanguards fell in the 1960s and 1970s, the Mensheviks and bourgeoisie have gotten away with this trick.

The same thing is happening as we speak. The advocates of multi-“racial” working class unity are preaching pacifism to Black youth. They are telling the youth to wait for the white working class and hence things like the beating of Rodney King did not justify a violent response against the white nation. The result is that another generation of youth may be lost to the revolution, as opportunists preach paralysis. Whatever the balance of forces in the class struggle, that cannot go on forever without generating fascist victory.

Our critics say we treat youth as a class to substitute it for the white working class. Our reply is that youth are not a class, but white youth are the white social group most in line with the interests of the international proletariat. The Comintern of Stalin (and yes, Trotsky, still though he was being criticized in the same article) went further and did not bother breaking youth down by class for some purposes: “One of the tasks of bolshevization is to win over the youth of the entire world without exception.”(87) It’s a remarkable statement, since one might think the Comintern would oppose recruiting bourgeois and petty-bourgeois youth.

#### COMINTERN ULTRALEFTISM AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

Despite the line on the labor aristocracy of the early Comintern, the Bolsheviks held a basically ultraleft line with regard to the decline of the labor aristocracy, based on the experience with World War I. They thought imperialist war would end the privileges of the labor aristocracy. When World War I ended, the majority of Bolsheviks continued to believe they would be handed sufficiently bad crises such that the labor aristocracy would be destroyed. As we have stressed, it’s one thing to make a mistake for a few years and it is another thing to repeat it out of lazy dogmatism. In the 1930s, revolution did not happen in Germany, but it had some probability of success, and likewise in the United States the labor aristocracy did not go down the drain as predicted, but the chance that World War II would have made that happen was real. It’s only when we look back at this over a period of decades, in which simple mistakes have been repeated over and over, that we can say we are looking at the root of revisionism in the labor aristocracy and the political tactics connected to it. Chasing after social-democratic workers is partly caused by the logical political expression of an ultraleft line on the labor aristocracy in

the imperialist countries.

In April, 1919, as a corollary to its Eurocentric ultraleftism, the Comintern wrote that the Second International and social-democracy were dead — killed by World War I.(88) In later years, all the Bolshevik leaders admitted they were wrong about 1919 and the whole immediacy of revolution. At the time, however, the Comintern argued that right opportunists missed opportunities in this period by failing to provide staunch leadership. In such periods, leadership has not only the duty to improve the position of the communist movement dialectically with respect to its past position, but also to improve it to such an extent that it goes all the way to state power. To do less is a rightist error that can easily usher in fascism as its price: that is the case the Comintern thought Europe was in during the 1920s.

Excerpts from a 1923 statement issued in January 1924 showed that the Comintern continued to have a rather immediate sense that social-democracy was going to collapse.

“The time will come when entire social-democratic parties, now still strong, will collapse or, if they continue their treachery, burst as soap-bubbles do, when entire strata of social-democratic workers will complete the turn to our side. United front tactics promote and accelerate this process.”(89)

While these views had considerable validity in the colonies, because the colonies were never fertile grounds for social-democracy, these theses were centered on a discussion of Europe and hence incorrect.

The obsession with winning over social-democratic workers continues to this day. Lazy dogmatists never realized that all their patient explanations and united front maneuvers hadn’t worked since World War II, because the imperialists had managed to stabilize themselves internally through the purchase of a labor aristocracy and petty-bourgeois majority.

Of course, every year there is a possibility for capitalist collapse into a depression. The lazy dogmatists do not consider that the question now has a history and even a temporary bubble burst is not going to change the historical and hence political perspective of the labor aristocracy overnight. The labor aristocracy has not faced a Depression situation or possibility for decades, even as the workers of the oppressed nations continue to do so. The trajectory of a class cannot be predicted by taking the lies and flattery of the lazy dogmatists as truth. The calculations of the labor aristocracy leave it little sympathy for communism.

Idiots in the British Labour Party and the Vienna section of the Second International proclaimed Hitlerism dead in 1932. These fools equated declining Nazi vote results with actual power.(90) Meanwhile, their own strategy of the “lesser-evil” handed Hitler state power, which they then had to uphold as legal, as the social-democrats always do in respecting bour-

geois democratic institutions.

Dutt goes over how the Communist and Social Democratic votes combined always surpassed those of the Nazis in each election except one. He then explains how then it was possible for the German workers to go along with the Hitler dictatorship without so much as a whimper.

"The question reveals a failure to understand the conditions. The control of the majority of the working class, and in particular of the overwhelming majority (nearly nine-tenths, according to the factory council elections) of the employed industrial workers, and of the entire trade union machine, lay with Social Democracy."(91)

From this, Dutt should have concluded that the question of social-democracy and the labor aristocracy were inextricably linked together. It is a case in which today's blind followers of Dutt "doth protest too much." One cannot complain year in and year out that the Social-Democrats are "treacherous" without appearing naive oneself. The masses learn sooner than the lazy dogmatists that the social-democrats are not treacherous: they perfectly represent the labor aristocracy and its interests of alliance with the imperialists. We cannot blame the failure of communism on the social-democrats, who are merely representing their class. We communists must focus on what we can do within our existing conditions to improve the situation through struggle.

For the youth communists must stop looking like religious fools by giving up the nervous habit of banging their heads against the labor aristocracy wall, ever thinking it is going to crack or even respond. For the oppressed nationalities, communists must stop with the part about waiting for the imperialist-country workers and for the advanced workers themselves; we explain why their peers are not interested in revolution. When we do these things, the advanced amongst the feminists, the lumpenproletarian organizers and others seeking progressive change take note with a sigh of relief that finally the communists are beginning to show some sense.

Dutt should have realized that if the communists enjoyed so little support from industrial workers but such high vote totals, that the support for a proletarian line was coming from somewhere else. If Dutt is correct that the social-democrats so dominated industrial labor, it was the duty of the communists to the international proletariat to find the bases for its own support apart from the industrial workers. The failure to do so turned the youth over to the fascists and meant losing the struggle in the streets. While not excusing the German youth for turning to fascism, we certainly understand that they didn't join the communists decisively, because it would have meant banging their heads up against the wall of the conservative labor aristocracy. While the communist leadership could not get over its obsession with the labor aristocracy, because of some well-written words in books, the youth kept moving

along and never looked back. The experience and vision of the movement was sidetracked while the energy and muscle-power went to the Nazis. Such a mistake may have been preventable and hence tens of millions dead in World War II may have been spared. It was questionable enough once to lose the youth while flirting with the social-democratic workers, but now after years of consolidated bourgeois democracy and imperialist bribery, it is a crime against the teachings of Marx and Lenin, and all the lessons of this history.

#### COMINTERN AND UNITED FRONT: OPPOSING CONGLOMERATION

Before we get into the issue of World War II again, we should also point out that there were a number of Comintern documents from 1919-1922 that Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin all supposedly agreed on. There is much in these documents that clears Stalin for later years when Trotsky started criticisms of Stalin's idea of the united front.

The subsequent criticism of Stalin for making defense of the Soviet Union so central in World War II — criticisms made by open Trotskyists as well as crypto-Trots like Bob Avakian of the RCP-USA — does not make sense in light of Comintern documents that existed long before World War II. In July 1921, the Comintern said, "Unconditional support of Soviet Russia remains as before the cardinal duty of the communists of all countries."(92) This was not something that Stalin invented in a fit of Russian-identified nationalism. This was something Lenin and Trotsky also approved. There are no holy principles with which Stalin can be criticized on this score.

For that matter, while Lenin was still attending Comintern meetings, Radek gave Stalin ample grounds for allying with imperialists or anyone else in World War II. A relatively independent but nonetheless prominent Trotskyist at crucial points, Radek said in 1922:

"Soviet Russia, its Government, and its masses, pursue a cool *realpolitik* ... The Soviet Government knows that the first wave of world revolution has subsided and that the next will mount only slowly. ... Therefore the Soviet Government declares: we need world capital and therefore we must give it profits.' ... Fools, who call themselves communists and even left communists, have accused us on this account of treachery to the proletariat. . . We answer: 'Then show us another way. ... Split into hostile camps, the capitalist world fears that we shall ally ourselves with the enemies of any State which tries to starve us out. We shall ally ourselves not only with Beelzebub but with his grandmother too if it is a question of defending the rights for which the Russian working class bled and starved.'"(93)

To which MIM says, "Right on!" Too bad the Trotskyists couldn't support Marxism-Leninism this way more steadily and changed their minds in later years to turn to counterrevolution. If Stalin were guilty of heresy to Marxism-Leninism in World War II (94), the Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists

should explain why Lenin didn't throw Radek out on his ass.

Similarly, ultraleft Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists say the Comintern did not put forward a principled concept of the united front, and this led among other things to the massacre in Shanghai in 1927. Yet all along, in the collection of documents edited by Jane Degras, we see that the Comintern clearly explained that the united front never means the surrender of the independent agitation of the communists.

"It is necessary for communists in all countries to get clearly into their minds what the united front tactics are, and what they are not; they are tactics of revolution, not evolution. Just as the workers' (and peasants') government cannot, for us, be a fixed democratic transitional stage, so united front tactics are not a democratic coalition, an alliance with social-democracy. They are only a method of revolutionary agitation and mobilization. We reject all other interpretations as opportunist."(95)

The united front was in no way thought of as a means of rightist opportunism. The tactic was to show the bankruptcy of social-democracy by showing what the social-democratic parties would not agree to negotiations. In this way the workers understood why the communists were separate from the social-democrats and could not always act in unity with them.

"United front tactics ... are the tactics of a revolutionary strategic maneuver of the communist vanguard, surrounded by enemies, in its struggle against the treacherous leaders of the counter-revolutionary social-democracy. ... United front tactics were and are a means of gradually drawing over to our side the social-democratic and the best non-party workers; they should in no circumstance be degraded to the tactics of lowering our ideals to the level of understanding reached by these workers."(96)

According to the Comintern, those in the U.S. Empire had particular problems in grasping this.

"The appearance of Trotskyism in the United States can be explained by the fact that the Trotskyist opportunist doctrines on the question of the party and its structure, at the basis of which lies the 'principle' of unprincipled alliance with all and sundry right and 'left' groups and organizations fighting against the Comintern, seems to fit perfectly into the scheme of political struggle in the United States where lack of principle was always the underlying principle in the activities of all bourgeois parties. Nowhere, in no other country in the world, have we witnessed so easy and rapid formation of a bloc of the Trotskyists and the out-and-out right-wingers as in the United States."(97)

This fits in with earlier statements from the Comintern about the general lack of attention to theory in the U.S. Empire. U.S. communists have a reputation for a general pragmatism.

In 1932, as a means of creating some basis for separating

his line from Stalin's, Trotsky argued that the Mensheviks of Germany should unite with the Bolsheviks as a united front to stop fascism, and he argued that Stalin was ultraleft for refusing an "alliance from above" with the Social Democratic Party of Germany.(98) Yet, in 1924, Trotsky belonged to the Comintern which said: "The leading strata of German socialism are at the present moment nothing but a fraction of German fascism wearing a socialist mask. ... This circumstance induces us to modify the united front tactics in Germany. There can be no dealings with the mercenaries of the white dictatorship."(99)

The Comintern also made all the same analyses of the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries that Stalin and Mao later did, while Lenin was still on hand. For Trotskyists to argue that proletarian alliance with the national bourgeoisie is incorrect is fine, but to say it is a deviation from Marxism-Leninism is a bald-faced lie.(100) Noting that the colonial bourgeoisie initially supports the revolutionary struggle, the Comintern referred to the indigenous bourgeoisie as a "vacillating" force with which the proletariat could enter into temporary alliances. For this reason Lenin's Comintern distinguished between the "proletarian united front" in the European countries and the "anti-imperialist united front" in the colonies.(101)

Foreshadowing what Mao systematized in "On Contradiction," the Comintern of Lenin argued that the class struggle takes the backseat to national struggle under certain conditions depending on which classes are allied with the imperialists.

"In the colonial countries with an oppressed native peasant population the national liberation movement is composed either of the entire population, as for example in Turkey, in which case the struggle of the oppressed peasantry against the landlords inevitably begins after the victory of the liberation struggle; or the feudal landlords are allied with the imperialist robbers, and in these countries, for example India, the social struggle of the oppressed peasants takes place at the same time as the struggle for national liberation."(102)

It goes without saying that if the "entire population" including the most backward class of feudal lords can be allied against colonialism, then there are certainly circumstances when the national bourgeoisie, representative of a more modern mode of production, is also an ally.

#### THE UNITED FRONT AND MASS ORGANIZATIONS

The Comintern said that communists should not put forward minimum programs that help stabilize capitalism. On the other hand, we do have to take up partial demands to connect them to the broader picture. With regard to the mass organizations, the Comintern said:

"The bigger they are, the greater the potential reserves of

the party, the wider the audience to which it can turn. A policy of splitting the mass organization is therefore one which will diminish our reserves, narrow our radius of action, weaken our ties with the masses, and isolate us from them.”(103)

Combined with its policy on the trade unions, the Comintern policy appears at least superficially in contradiction with MIM line. MIM does not join trade unions in imperialist North America. We see no reason to strengthen organizations that have been used historically to attack foreign workers. On the other hand, if we had enough comrades we would send one to every trade union, church and other mass organization out there. The connection to the masses of whatever class background or ideology is indeed important.

It is only possible for a communist not to split a mass organization if the communist does not join or if the mass organization acts for anti-imperialist or anti-militarist causes. If a communist were in a labor aristocracy organization acting for labor aristocracy goals, then a communist could not remain a communist without disrupting the activity of the organization and splitting it. This has to do fundamentally with the definition of masses. If the masses are by definition our allies, then we don't have to worry. If the masses include enemy classes which are the majority in the U.S. Empire, then we have a duty not to build their organizations. Hence, what the Comintern thought was correct for the imperialist countries is no longer correct. The labor aristocracy has hardened and did not return to the proletariat in the crises predicted by the Comintern.

#### THE UNITED FRONT AND IMPERIALIST ALLIES

As scholar Robert Tucker has pointed out, Stalin did have a basis in Lenin for his management of alliances with imperialists during World War II. Already in 1925 the Comintern was pointing out that the social-traitors of Germany were looking toward an anti-Soviet foreign policy for Germany.(104) Another example of this idea appeared in 1931:

“The parties of social-fascism are sharing openly and directly in the policy of armaments, blockade, and intervention. The strongest party of the Second International, the German Social-Democratic Party ... is the most active of all German parties organizing the anti-Soviet front.”(105)

Hence, Stalin saw little reason to form a bloc with the party that was an accomplice to the German occupation of the Ukraine. The Social Democrats specialized in anti-communist treachery while the Nazis aimed their fire at a wider range of enemies.

Contrary to Bob Avakian and the Trotskyists, the Stalin-led Comintern did in fact continue to support the call for India to break away from England. After the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, the Soviet Union again took up its cudgel against British imperialism.(106) At that time, they again shifted toward support for united front from below in Europe. This

also meant criticism of social-democratic leaders in 1939.(107) Only after the German invasion of the USSR, and only for approximately two years, did the Comintern put any pressure on the comrades from India to focus fire on the Nazis.

In 1939, the Soviet Union continued to issue warnings about German imperialism as well. The Comintern explained that the English and French imperialists had tried to aim the Nazis eastward and failed. There was nothing “secret” about Comintern diplomacy in this sense. It explained each step of the way what the Soviet Union was trying to do to play the imperialists off each other. This included denouncing the “shock troops of international reaction against ‘world bolshevism’” that the Nazis were (108), and condemning “the much-noised ‘anti-Comintern’ Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan” right after the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Hitler.(109) At no time did the Soviets hide their criticisms of the Nazis or Anglo-French imperialists. It was only the ignorant and superstitious who claimed that Stalin did not prepare the people for battle. They never read any Comintern publications, but that didn't stop them from spreading all kinds of slander and libels about the Comintern's stance.

The idea that Stalin encouraged some kind of permanent policy of “popular front” that resulted in the deterioration of the European communist parties is also easily disproved by simply reading the Comintern documents. MIM addressed this issue in MIM Theory 6, but we reiterate that the ignorant, schematized view of the Comintern spread by Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists is easily refuted. On the question of the “popular front,” the Comintern said already by 1939 that such alliances were still possible in those countries like China where there was a role for the national bourgeoisie to play, because it could participate in the new democratic stage of revolution. On the other hand, the Comintern also made it clear that as the imperialists were going to war in a sheerly inter-imperialist war, there were no longer the correct conditions to ally with sections of the bourgeoisie represented in the leaders of social-democratic and “radical” parties:

“The tactics of the united people's front presupposed joint action by the communist parties and the social-democratic and petty-bourgeois ‘democratic’ and ‘radical’ parties against reaction and war. But the top sections of these parties are now openly supporting the imperialist war. The social-democratic, ‘democratic,’ and ‘radical’ flunkies of the bourgeoisie, are brazenly distorting the anti-fascist slogans of the Popular Front, and are using them to deceive the masses of the people and to cover up the imperialist character of the war.”(110)

This alone from the Comintern documents is enough to refute the nonsense propagated by Bob Avakian in “Conquer the World, the Proletariat Must and Will,” and by the ORU in its “Roots of Revisionism,” both of which sought to blame

Stalin for the collapse of the European communist parties into revisionism. When the Soviet Union was not being invaded, the Comintern clearly stated the workers had no interest in the war. "They must concentrate the fire against opportunism, expressed in slipping into the position of 'defending the Fatherland,' in support of the fairy-tale about the anti-fascist character of the war."(111) Again in April 1940, the Comintern said the working masses had no interest in the imperialist war: "In all capitalist countries the working people want to put an end to the imperialist war."(112) Almost all the criticisms of Stalin on the united front and World War II come from Trotskyists, anarchists and crypto-Trotskyists and almost all of these criticisms are not even relevant except for a two-year portion of World War II, during which the Soviet Union's fighters did the principal fighting — losing 22 million dead or more in four years.

For this reason, we see not one iota of truth to the criticism of Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists and anarchists on Stalin and World War II. These idealists did not distinguish between the criticism of words and weapons; had they succeeded in criticizing the imperialists with weapons before the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, the idealists would not have seen Stalin side with one imperialist bloc against another. As it turns out, the idealists and the rest of the world let the Soviet Union down, not the other way around.

## CONCLUSION

Our critics in the international communist movement say that our view is clear, but we need to prove it in practice, the way Mao proved that peasant rebellion and protracted warfare emanating from the countryside would be key.

What our critics miss is that history has already spoken. There is nothing to wait for. There is no reason to be putting up Trotskyist/Menshevik obstacles in front of the advancing masses such as those in the Los Angeles rebellion. Such rebellions have already proven that they show the most potential of any spontaneous outbreaks within U.S. borders — and the Black Panther Party has already proved that national liberation organizations will take the Maoist movement the furthest.

The issue of who will make the revolution and hence what kind of strategy is necessary in the U.S. Empire has engaged

the international communist movement since Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized state power in 1917. There is no lack of precedent for MIM's line in the works of Lenin, Stalin and Mao and indeed, in the 1960s the Chinese Communist Party and Mao had already pointed out to U.S. residents that the rebellions of the oppressed nationalities surpassed those of alleged "labor." Let the Mensheviks pretending to claim Mao read the following about the U.S. Empire from Mao after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968:

"This has taught the broad masses of the Black people in the United States a profound lesson. It has touched off a new storm in their struggle against violent repression sweeping well over a hundred cities in the United States, a storm such as has never taken place before in the history of that country. It shows that an extremely powerful revolutionary force is latent in the more than 20 million Black Americans."(113)

Can there be any doubt from reading this where Mao would have stood in the Reginald Denny case? Can't we just hear him criticizing the Mensheviks who thought the attack on white people during the Los Angeles rebellion was "terrible"? (114)

It is true that Mao somewhat reversed Stalin's view of Blacks as a nation and made a point of struggling with Blacks to view themselves as a race that needs to hook up with white workers. We see Mao wrong in this regard at that time and since that time as well. He summed up the relative revolutionary force of the Black masses compared with the white working class correctly, and so did Peking Review at the time. Those reading Mao's and Peking Review's accounts of the U.S. Empire at the time will see that we don't differ with Mao much on the facts. Our critics will strive in vain to find where Mao or Peking Review point to white labor struggles as more advanced than those national struggles that already existed. Mao also referred to the Black struggle as a "national struggle" twice, even though he spoke of "race" and the need to unite with white workers.(115) We are now in the position to say that Mao's predictions about the white workers' joining up with the revolutionary Black movement never came true. Mao had that part wrong, and his teachings on self-reliance, national struggles and youth are the more relevant ones.

### Notes:

1. Many have criticized MIM's use of statistics, usually percentages or numbers and nothing involving probabilities. However, Lenin used many more such statistics including Tsarist statistics and criticized those who would not make use of such statistics. See his "Statistics and Sociology," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23. Moscow:

Progress Publishers, 1964. pp. 271-. For Mao talking about dogmatist lazybones, see Mao Tse-Tung, "On Contradiction," *Four Essays on Philosophy*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1968. p. 37.

2. For Mao talking about how to remove mountains by hand, see "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains," *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tsetung*. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971. p. 320-.

3. R. Palme Dutt, who lived at the time, explained how the European fascist movement openly appealed to mysticism in the 1920s and 1930s. Today's New Age spiritualists should take note the consequences of not handling the realities of state power and oppression head on. R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution: How and Why Fascism Came to Power in Europe*. Chicago: Proletarian Publishers, 1974. pp. 206-7.

4. Alan Adler, ed., *Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International*. London: Ink Links, 1980 (hereafter Adler). p. 288.
5. Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International: 1919-1943 Documents*. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1971 (hereafter Degras). Vol. II, p. 310.
6. Degras, Vol. II, p. 403. German social-democracy was very hostile to the Soviet Union, more hostile than any other bourgeois ideology, which is what the Comintern is referring to.
7. V.I. Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International*, John Riddell, ed. New York: Monad Press, 1984. p. 501.
8. Degras, Vol. I, p. 18.
9. Ibid.
10. Degras, Vol. I, p. 78.
11. L. Trotsky, "Theses on the Conditions of Admission to the Communist International," in Adler, p. 92.
12. Degras, Vol. I, p. 119. Mao was consistent with this quote of Lenin while he criticized another quote of Lenin's. Mao said, "In the various nations of the West there is a great obstacle to carrying through any revolution and construction movement; i.e., the poisons of the bourgeoisie are so powerful that they have penetrated each and every corner. While our bourgeoisie has had, after all, only three generations, those of England and France have had a 250-300 year history of development, and their ideology and *modus operandi* have influenced all aspects and strata of their societies. Thus the English working class follows the Labour Party, not the Communist Party." Mao says, 'The transition from capitalism to socialism will be more difficult for a country the more backward it is.' This would seem incorrect today." Mao Tsetung, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977. p. 50. Originally MIM and the RCP-USA split over this question among others, with the RCP-USA favoring Lenin. Now the RCP-USA has been forced by the hand of the Peruvians to cover its tracks. As we detail elsewhere, we do not believe the Peruvians have succeeded in getting the RCP-USA to change. The Peruvians have only gotten the RCP-USA to put on a more Maoist veneer, to cover revisionism better.
13. Degras, Vol. I, p. 129.
14. Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., Robert C. Tucker, ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978. p. 64.
15. V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International: Documents: 1907-1916*, John Riddell, ed. New York: Monad Press, 1984. p. 497.
16. Degras, Vol. I, p. 140.
17. Degras, Vol. I, p. 144.
18. Degras, Vol. I, pp. 145-6.
19. Degras, Vol. I, p. 147.
20. Degras, Vol. I, p. 392.
21. Degras, Vol. I, p. 163.
22. For frequent use of these terms in the Stalin era, see the collection of documents edited by Philip S. Foner & Herbert Shapiro titled *American Communism and Black Americans: A Documentary History, 1930-1934*; there they have a whole chapter titled "Against White Chauvinism." These documents will also help the reader to understand that MIM's line on the Black nation has clear precedent in the Stalin era.
23. "On Tactics," in Adler, p. 293.
24. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, 3rd ed. Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1989. p. 138.
25. "On Tactics," in Adler, p. 294.
26. Degras, Vol. I, p. 427.
27. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959. p. 238.
28. Ibid., p. 236.
29. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959. p. 479.
30. Ibid., pp. 479-80.
31. Degras, Vol. II, p. 162.
32. Ibid.
33. Degras, Vol. II, p. 123.
34. Degras, Vol. II, p. 180.
35. Ibid.
36. Leon Trotsky, "The Chinese Revolution," *The Third International After Lenin*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970. pp. 219-20.
37. Degras, Vol. III, p. 11.
38. Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., Robert C. Tucker, ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1978. pp. 64-5.
39. Degras, Vol. II, p. 552.
40. Degras, Vol. II, p. 448.
41. Degras, Vol. II, p. 329.
42. Degras, Vol. III, p. 44. See also references to Pepper, Lovestone and Bukharin, Vol. III, p. 104.
43. Karl Marx, April 9, 1870, *On Colonialism*. New York: International Publishers, 1972. p. 335. Note that in both cases the basis for change is internal to the imperialist country's economic system, although outside of its physical borders.
44. Degras, Vol. II, p. 428.
45. Degras, Vol. I, p. 154.
46. Degras, Vol. III, p. 14.
47. Degras, Vol. II, p. 195.
48. Degras, Vol. II, pp. 302-3.
49. Ibid., p. 303. See also German situation, Vol. II, p. 288; see how Amerikan-style bribery politics would not be seen in Japan with its relatively smaller labor aristocracy, Vol. II, p. 399; American trade union methods as the latest in corrupting the working class and used by the international social-democratic movement, Vol. II, pp. 459, 514; general labor aristocracy, connection to social-democracy and World War I, Vol. II, p. 473; "This systematic bribery was and is practiced in the strongest imperialist countries on an extremely wide scale." Vol. II, p. 479, September, 1928, also, "Imperialism piles up untold wealth from the immense super-profits it squeezes out of the millions of colonial workers and peasants. In this process imperialism creates the type of decaying, parasitically degenerating rentier State and entire strata of parasites who live by coupon-clipping," also how war changes that, Vol. II, p. 481.
50. Degras, Vol. II, p. 446.
51. Degras, Vol. III, p. 22.
52. Leon Trotsky, "The Tasks of Soviet Reconstruction" in Isaac Deutscher, ed., *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*. New York: Dell, 1964. p. 134.
53. An example of Mao talking about technology and the People's War strategy is in Mao Tsetung, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977. p. 91.
54. R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution: How and Why Fascism Came to Power in Europe*. Chicago: Proletarian Publishers, 1974 (hereafter Dutt). p. 38-39.
55. Dutt, pp. 104-7.
56. Dutt, p. 257.
57. Dutt, pp. 259-60.
58. J. Sakai, *Settlers: The Mythology of the White Proletariat*, 3rd ed., (Chicago: Morningstar Press, 1989), p. 138.
59. Dutt, p. 63.
60. Degras, Vol. II, p. 523.
61. Degras, Vol. II, p. 290.
62. Degras, Vol. I, p. 51. See also July 1920, "the proletariat in every country" becoming more revolutionary "every day," Vol. I, p. 150.
63. Degras, op.cit., Vol. I, p. 424.
64. Isaac Deutscher, ed., *The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology*. New York: Dell, 1964 (hereafter Deutscher). p. 37. What did we expect of Deutscher who worshipped someone who said of the Soviet socialist

revolution: "The Soviet proletariat has achieved great successes, great — if we take into consideration the conditions under which they have been attained and the low cultural level inherited from the past. But these achievements weigh little on the scales of the socialist ideal." L. Trotsky, "Crisis of the Theory of 'Socialism in One Country,'" *Ibid.*, p. 150. Trotsky started by making intellectual comparisons of actual history before and after Soviet revolution, but could not resist ending up comparing a concrete situation with a pre-formed idea of socialism in his head. So it was that he fell into the Christian ethical pattern of coming up with absolutes, such as the Ten Commandments, and then holding human-beings up to those principles instead of finding those changes in material circumstances that would compel human beings to behave better.

65. Degas, Vol. II, p. 320.

66. Max Shachtman, *The Struggle for the New Course*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1965. p. 185.

67. Degas, Vol. III, p. 472. For every moment of such frankness, the Comintern had its moment of ultraleft cheer leading. For R. Palme Dutt, it was worth noting that opposition to Hitler in the plebiscites reached a whole 20% in August, 1934 in the large industrial cities. Dutt, p. 8. For MIM this just shows how limited the Comintern's horizons had become to have to strain to find some evidence of dialectics within the purview of its own narrow analysis.

68. Degas, Vol. I, p. 176.

69. "On Tactics," in Adler, p. 277.

70. Degas, Vol. II, p. 480.

71. Degas, Vol. III, p. 18. See also, "No negotiations or temporary agreements ... will avert the inevitable armed conflict between the United States and Great Britain" as a reason for chasing after the labor aristocracy with calls to revolutionary action, Vol. II, p. 46; "The chief contradiction in the capitalist world — the struggle between Britain and the United States for world hegemony," April 1931, Vol. III, p. 158.

72. Degas, Vol. II, p. 107.

73. Degas, Vol. II, p. 108.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

76. *Ibid.*

77. Degas, Vol. II, p. 457.

78. Degas, Vol. III, p. 358.

79. Degas, Vol. III, p. 382.

80. Degas, Vol. III, p. 445.

81. Degas, Vol. I, pp. 375-6.

82. Degas, Vol. III, p. 121.

83. Degas, Vol. III, p. 217.

84. Dutt, p. 32.

85. What Dutt considered the most important conditions of the "general crisis" are listed in Dutt, pp. 33-4.

86. Dutt, p. 37.

87. Degas, Vol. II, p. 193.

88. Degas, Vol. I, p. 51.

89. Degas, Vol. II, p. 72.

90. Dutt, pp. 143-4.

91. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 146. See also p. 150 for exact statistics on reformist influence.

92. Degas, Vol. I, p. 255.

93. Degas, Vol. I, pp. 342-3.

94. See for example Trotsky object to Stalin's attempt to ally with one faction of imperialists against another in Deutscher, p. 250.

95. Degas, Vol. II, p. 72; see also Vol. I, p. 341 on united front as a means to unite all workers of whatever ideology in struggle, without their social-democratic leaders

96. Degas, Vol. II, p. 152; see also Vol. II, p. 253; also Vol. I, p. 351, on how leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-half Internationals broke the united front of workers.

97. Degas, Vol. III, p. 14.

98. "It is absolute balderdash to identify social democracy with Fascism," said Trotsky, in Deutscher, p. 170. When Hitler came to power and outlawed social-democracy and Stalin turned to allying communists and social-democrats, especially in the rest of Europe, Trotsky said Stalin went to far. As a result, Trotsky made the incorrect prediction that Stalin's popular front would convert France to fascism by driving the French masses to fascism. Deutscher, p. 190. While a quisling regime did come to power it was only imposed after Nazi invasion. The French masses did not fall in for fascism of their own accord before that. See again his criticism of Stalin's "popular front" idea as too rightist in 1939, before the Non-Aggression Pact in Deutscher, p. 251.

99. Degas, Vol. II, p. 77. See also Vol. I, p. 347 on German social-democracy's hostility to the Soviet Union in foreign policy.

100. Trotsky himself said in 1924, "We approve of the Communist support to the Kuomintang Party in China, which we are endeavoring to revolutionize." Deutscher, p. 234. Subsequent Trotskyists talk as if Trotsky had made it into a sacred principle that working with the Kuomintang was an alliance with the national bourgeoisie and hence wrong. Thus the most Trotsky can claim is that he foresaw the balance of forces in China more correctly in 1927 (and Mavrakis and others have shown that he did not do that either especially relative to Mao). There is no way for him to make it a matter of principle set in stone that the alliance with the Chinese national bourgeoisie was wrong without contradicting himself.

101. Degas, Vol. I, pp. 388-90.

102. Degas, Vol. I, p. 396.

103. Degas, Vol. II, p. 400.

104. Degas, Vol. II, p. 403.

105. Degas, Vol. III, p. 166.

106. Degas, Vol. III, p. 446.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 447.

108. Degas, Vol. III, p. 451.

109. *Ibid.*

110. Degas, Vol. III, pp. 455-6.

111. Degas, Vol. III, p. 459.

112. *Ibid.*

113. Mao Tse-tung, April 16, 1968, "Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle against Violent Repression," *Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings*. K. Fan, ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1972. p. 300.

114. Mao explained that when communists in China first saw the peasant rebellion, even they had a hard time accepting it. His statement on seeing the revolutionary force in action is in "It's Terrible!" or 'It's Fine!'" in Vol. 1, *Selected Readings of Mao Tse-Tung*. Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1975. p. 26.

115. Mao Tse-tung, August 8, 1963, "Statement Supporting the American Negroes in Their Just Struggle against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism," *Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao: Post Revolutionary Writings*. K. Fan, ed. New York: Anchor Books, 1972. pp. 288-90.

# The Comintern on...

From Jane Degras' Comintern collection

## CULTS

"We know that making a cult of 'the leader' is no business for a communist." June, 1920 (Vol. I, p. 99)

## DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

"The communist party must be built on the basis of democratic centralism. The basic principles of democratic centralism are that the higher party bodies shall be elected by the lower, that all instructions of the higher bodies are categorically and necessarily binding on the lower; and that there shall be a strong party centre whose authority is universally and unquestioningly recognized for all leading party comrades in the period between congresses." (Vol. I, p. 134)

## WHEN NOT TO SPLIT, WHETHER TO USE PARLIAMENT IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

"The comparative unimportance of this question should always be borne in mind. Since the centre of gravity lies in the struggle for State power waged outside parliament, it is obvious that the question of the proletarian dictatorship and of the *mass struggle* for that dictatorship cannot be placed on the same footing as the question of the utilization of parliament.

"20. That is why the Communist International emphasizes most strongly that it considers any split or any attempt at a split within the communist party solely on this question a serious error." (Vol. I, p. 154)

## PACIFISM IN THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

"Pacifism is as incapable as bourgeois social reform of overcoming the contradictions, the evils, and the crimes of capitalism. But it will introduce dissension and uncertainty into the ranks of the bourgeoisie, the middle and petty bourgeoisie, and hence weaken the class enemy of the proletariat." (Vol. I, p. 332)

## AGITATION

"Agitation must, in practice, be concentrated on a few issues and be conducted with more energy. It must be capable of adapting to the changes in the political situation."

"Agitation must draw revolutionary lessons from each and every event, whether of major or minor importance, and see that they are learned by the most backward of the working masses." ("On Tactics," Adler, op.cit., p. 281)

## PROFESSIONALISM

"The communist cadres of organizers must be trained in the sense that their work in preparing the revolution should not be a spare-time job; all their time must be given to the revolutionary struggle; they must be wholly and completely at the disposal of the party. The communist organizer and cadre worker. . . must live and work among the masses in the factory, the shop or mine, always ready to be sent elsewhere by the party in the interests of the cause." (Vol. II, p. 198)

## ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

"It is quite obvious that comrade Trotsky refused to submit to the proletarian discipline which he condemned in these words. . . The world organization of the revolutionary proletariat, the Comintern, and its leading section, the CPSU, are described, in sweet harmony with the yellow bourgeois press, as a crowd of people without minds or wills of their own, following behind their leaders, comrades Stalin and Bukharin. 'No single organization,' says Trotsky, 'now discusses or makes decisions; they only carry them out. Even the ECCI presidium [Comintern executive -ed.] is no exception.'" (Vol. II, pp. 406-7)

## ON SLOGANEERING

"To be a good communist does not mean to propose strikes all the time, whatever the circumstances. This is particularly true of the general-strike slogan. The communist . . . should not limp behind the masses, nor should he run too far ahead: he should not play with strikes, but once a strike has been started, he must exploit every opportunity and prospect of struggle." (Vol. II, p. 433)

## ON NEWSPAPERS

"But the party will never succeed in becoming the mass leader of the workers, and the Minority Movement will never become a broad mass organization unless the party succeeds in establishing a daily paper." ("Letter to the Eleventh Congress of the CPGB," November, 1929, Vol. III, p. 94.)

## ON WHITE INTERNATIONALISM

"The white workers, must boldly jump at the throat of the 100 per cent bandits who strike a Negro in the face. This struggle will be the test of the real international solidarity of the American white workers." (Vol. III, p. 128)

# 'The Comintern Has Long Ceased to Meddle in Our Internal Affairs'

FROM A SPEECH IN CHIEF-FANG JIH-PAO, MAY 28, 1943

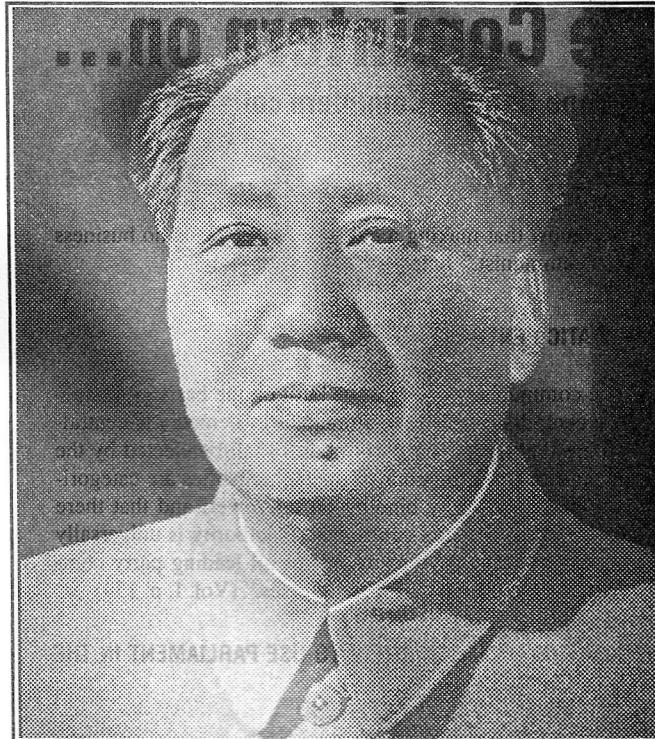
Comrade Mao Tse-tung first pointed out that the dissolution of the Communist International was, exactly as the American press agency had reported, "a great event marking the dividing line between two epochs."

Comrade Mao Tse-tung asked: "Why should the Communist International be disbanded? Did it not devote all its efforts to the emancipation of the working class of the whole world and to the war against fascism?"

Comrade Mao Tse-tung said: "It is true that the Communist International was created by Lenin himself. During its entire existence it has rendered the greatest services in helping each country to organize a truly revolutionary workers' party, and it has also contributed enormously to the great cause of organizing the anti-fascist war." Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed particularly to the great services of the Communist International in aiding the cause of the Chinese revolution...

Comrade Mao Tse-tung further pointed out: "Revolutionary movements can be neither exported nor imported. Despite the fact that aid was accorded by the Communist International, the birth and development of the Chinese Communist Party resulted from the fact that China herself had a conscious working class. The Chinese working class created its own party — the Chinese Communist Party. The Chinese Communist Party, although it has a history of only twenty-two years, has already undertaken three great revolutionary movements..."

Since the Communist International has rendered such great services to China and to various other countries, why should it be necessary to proclaim its dissolution? To this question Comrade Mao Tse-tung replied: "It is a principle of Marxism-Leninism that the forms of revolutionary organizations must be adapted to the necessities of the revolutionary struggle. If a form of organization is no longer adapted to the necessities of



the struggle, then this form of organization must be abolished." Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that at present the form of revolutionary organization known as the Communist International is no longer adapted to the necessities of the struggle. To continue this organizational form would, on the contrary, hinder the development of the revolutionary struggle in each country. What is needed now is the strengthening of the national Communist Party [min-tsü Kung-ch'an-tang] of each country, and we no longer need this international leading center. There are three main reasons for this: (1) The internal situation in each country and the relations between the different countries are more complicated than they have been in the past and are changing more rapidly. It is no longer possible for a unified international organization to adapt itself to these extremely complicated and rapidly changing circumstances. Correct leadership must grow out of a detailed analysis of these conditions, and this makes it even more necessary for the Communist Party of each country to undertake this itself. The Communist International, which is far removed from the concrete struggle in each country, was adapted to the relatively simple conditions of the past, when changes took place rather slowly, but now it is no longer a suitable instrument. ... (Stuart Schram, ed. *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*. NY: Frederick Praeger, 1963. pp. 288-89.)

# "We Are Not Going to Turn the Country Over to Moscow!"

Question [from Edgar Snow]: In actual practice, if the Chinese revolution were victorious, would the economic and political relationship between Soviet China and Soviet Russia be maintained within the Third International or a similar organization, or would there probably be some kind of actual merger of governments? Would the Chinese Soviet Government be comparable in its relation to Moscow to the present government of Outer Mongolia?

Answer [from Mao]: I assume this is a purely hypothetical question. As I have told you, the Red Army is not now seeking the hegemony of power, but a united China against Japanese imperialism.

The Third International is an organization in which the vanguard of the world proletariat brings together its collective experience for the benefit of all revolutionary peoples through the world. It is not an administrative organization nor has it any political power beyond that of an advisory capacity. Structurally it is not very different from the Second International, though in content it is vastly different. But just as no one would say that in a country where the Cabinet is organized by the social-democrats the Second International is dictator, so it is ridiculous to say that the Third International is dictator in countries where there are Communist parties.

In the U.S.S.R., the Communist Party is in power, yet even there the Third International does not rule nor does it have any direct political power over the people at

all. Similarly, it can be said that although the Communist Party of China is a member of the Comintern, still this in no sense means that Soviet China is ruled by Moscow or by the Comintern. We are certainly not fighting for an emancipated China in order to turn the country over to Moscow!

The Chinese Communist Party is only one party in China, and in its victory it will have to speak for the whole nation. It cannot speak for the Russian people or rule for the Third International, but only in the interests of the Chinese masses. Only where the Chinese masses coincide with the interests of the Russian masses can it be said to be 'obeying the will' of Moscow. But of course this basis of common benefit will be tremendously broadened, once the masses of China are in democratic power and socially and economically emancipated, like their brothers in Russia.

When Soviet governments have been established in many countries, the problem of an international union of soviets may arise, and it will be interesting to see how it will be solved. But today I cannot suggest the formula; it is a problem which has not been and cannot be solved in advance. In the world of today, with increasingly close economic and cultural intimacies between different states and peoples, such a union would seem to be highly desirable, if achieved on a voluntary basis.

Clearly, however, the last point is of utmost importance; such a world union could be successful only if every nation had the right to enter or leave the union according to the will of the people, and with its sovereignty intact, and certainly never at the 'command' of Moscow. No Communist ever thought otherwise, and the myth of 'world domination from Moscow' is an invention of the Fascists and counterrevolutionaries. (Stuart Schram, ed. *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*. NY: Frederick Praeger, 1963. pp. 286-7.)

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*"It is a principle of Marxism-Leninism that the forms of revolutionary organizations must be adapted to the necessities of the revolutionary struggle. If a form of organization is no longer adapted to the necessities of the struggle, then this form of organization must be abolished."*

# The White Working Class: Gross Parasitism

by MC12

**M**arxist economics explained the secret of capitalist exploitation by showing that workers were paid not for the value of all that they produced (labor), but instead the cost of reproducing themselves (labor power). In Marx's analysis, the cost of reproducing the working class, or labor power, was less than the value of what the working class produced, and so the difference was exploitation, resulting in a profit for the capitalists and the extra capital needed to invest and grow the capitalists' companies.

## LABOR POWER

Defining the value of labor power is difficult. It has to be at least a subsistence wage in order to reproduce the working class so that the capitalists have more workers. But in the era of imperialism, things have changed. On the one hand, in many oppressed nations we find that the proletariat is paid less than the value of their labor power, measured as a bare subsistence. That is, in many countries the wages paid to workers are not enough to sustain them physically, so that they rely on other means of subsistence, such as family farming or other informal economic systems — and they die or are sick more. For that reason, imperialist multinational corporations never employ all the potential workers in a poor country. Those who are not employed by the imperialists need to work to supplement that wages of the paid workers. This is the system of superexploitation, and it generates superprofits, as Lenin described in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

On the other hand, in the imperialist nations we can clearly see that the working class is paid much more than they need to eke out their survival as a class. This is apparent from looking out most windows within U.S. borders. But it is often contested by supporters of the white working class. How? They cling to an idea from Marx, that the value of labor power is based on subsistence but that it also reflects historical and cultural factors. Apologists for the gross decadence of the labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries extend this principle so that any ridiculous luxury the working classes can afford becomes a necessity by definition. This is tautological, not scientific. A careful reading of Marx reveals the abuse of his idea by the perpetrators of this defense of parasitism. Here we will quote the relevant passage from chapter 6 of *Capital* at some length, and then offer our comment:

"Labour-power exists only as a capacity of the living individual. Its production consequently presupposes his existence. Given the existence of the individual, the production of labour-power consists in his reproduction of himself or his maintenance. For his maintenance he requires a certain quantity of the means of subsistence. ... in other words, the value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsis-

tence necessary for the maintenance of its owner. ... His natural needs, such as food, clothing, fuel and housing vary according to the climatic and other physical peculiarities of his country. On the other hand, the number and extent of his so-called necessary requirements, as also the manner in which they are satisfied, are themselves products of history, and depend therefore on the level of civilization attained by a country; in particular they depend on the conditions in which, and consequently on the habits and expectations with which, the class of free workers has been formed. In contrast, therefore, with the case of other commodities, the determination of the value of labour-power contains a historical and moral element. Nevertheless, in a given country at a given period, the average amount of the means of subsistence necessary for the workers is a known datum."(1)

Some people would take this passage to mean that having a color TV in every room, several cars, vacations, a good pension plan, and ultimately stock options are all "necessary" as determined by this "level of civilization," and these "habits and expectations." But Marx is here comparing industrializing Europe and North America with the colonies of his day, and his examples ("food, clothing, fuel and housing") would vary such that some countries had wooden huts and some had brick buildings, some people burned wood and some people coal, and so on. There is nothing to make us think he is talking about an infinite expansion upward and away from bare subsistence. In fact, a little bit later he goes on to say that:

"The ultimate or minimum limit of the value of labour-power is formed by the value of the commodities which have to be supplied every day to the bearer of the labour-power, the man, so that he can renew his life-process. That is to say, the limit is formed by the value of the physically indispensable means of subsistence."(2)

Here the reference is "physically indispensable," which itself does vary according to climate and other conditions, but cannot be construed to include multiple VCRs. Earlier in his career, in the *Grundisse*, Marx spoke of labor power in terms of what is needed "to keep alive as a worker," and "his immediate requirements for keeping himself alive," and even, "mere subsistence."(3)

This bare-subsistence sense of the value of labor power is more consistent with one of Marx's cardinal principles for the existence of labor power as a commodity: that the workers have nothing *but* labor power to sell. If the historical definition of "subsistence" rises continuously upward, at what point do the workers have the choice to start selling their stuff to get out of working? If they have that choice, they are no longer selling labor power, says Marx. Even owning a home, which 68.2% of white households did in 1990 (compared to 43.4% of Black

households and 42.4% of "Hispanic" households), pushes the boundaries of this definition, in our opinion.(4)

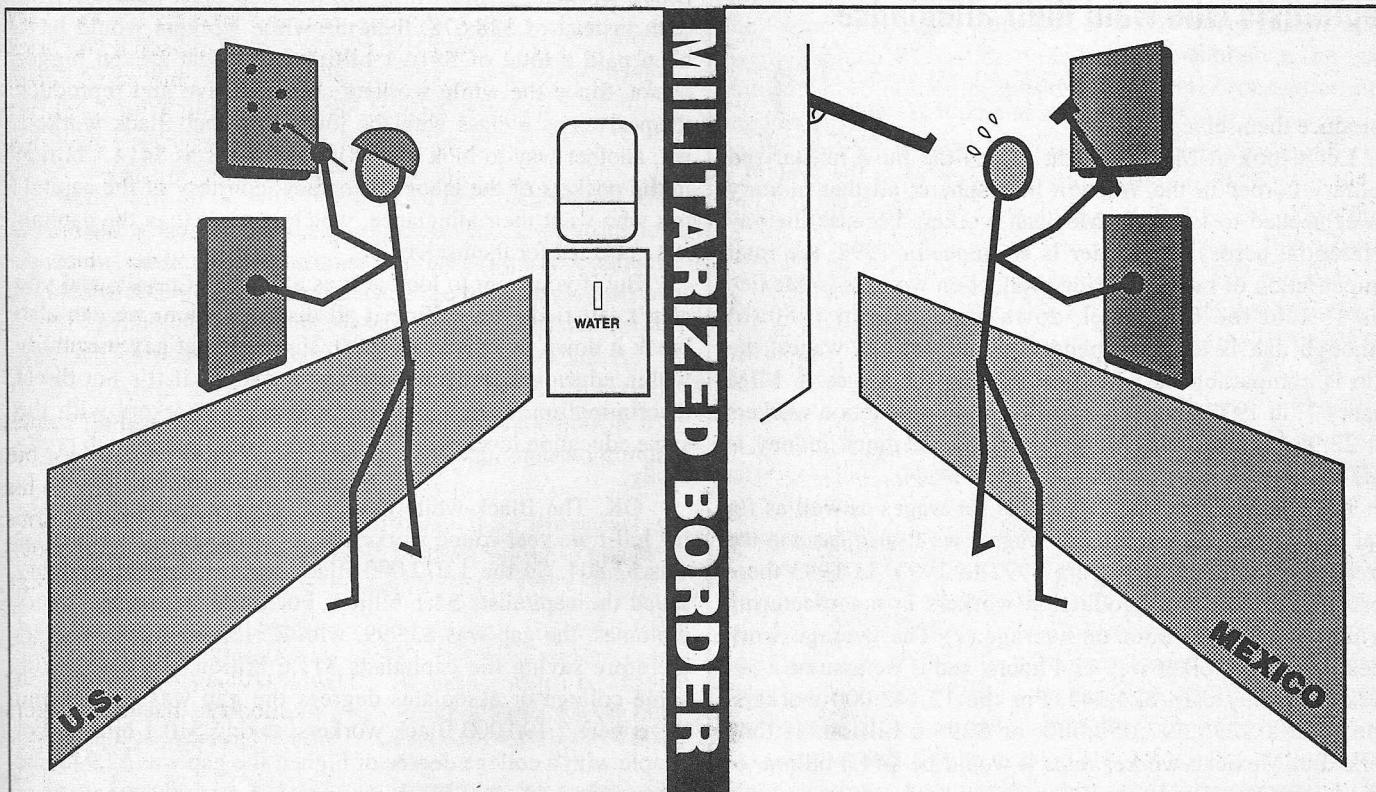
Marx tells us we should be able to measure the value of labor power, but in practice it is extremely difficult if not impossible in the era of imperialism, for several reasons. "Value" must ultimately reflect labor, but usually the only way we can measure it is in terms of its price, the paycheck. That works according to the law of value as an average, except that when products and labor are exchanged across arbitrary country borders, with arbitrary exchange rates, and often exchanged within one multinational company which manipulates the prices it charges itself to get the best tax deals, the relationship of value to price is completely muddled. Of particular concern with regard to the labor aristocracy is the movement of dead labor, embodied labor within products, across these borders. That means that oil or diamonds or electronic components produced under a system of superexploitation are shipped across borders to be worked on by much richer workers, they are carrying with them a tremendous amount of labor that has not been paid for. But since no one accounts for it we can't measure it directly. We argue that this labor turns into so much superprofits when the goods are finally sold that there is

enough money for the capitalists to turn a profit and pay the labor aristocracy more than the value of their labor in order to buy their allegiance. But we can tell when people are earning much more than bare subsistence.

#### **REALLY REALLY RAKING IT IN**

In MIM Theory 1, we started off trying to help the labor aristocracy advocates prove that white workers are exploited. If they are exploited, then the capitalists have to be making a profit from their labor. We found this claim was impossible to sustain. This time we'll look at the question from the angle of the labor aristocracy to see what benefits they gain from imperialism and national oppression. In this essay we will offer some evidence that the labor aristocracy is paid more than the value of their labor power. That is, we challenge the claim that the high rates of pay in the oppressor nations are the result of the value of labor power rising in line with cultural and historical factors. Even when the level of decadence is obvious, some people keep crying "exploitation!" So we'll just show that the workers could be paid less and still survive, despite increases in the expected standard of living.

We are talking about a lot of money here. Let's look at employee compensation in foreign affiliates (enterprises



**Why is the worker on the right earning just \$0.15 for every \$1.00 the worker on the left is earning? Because the worker on the left is an Amerikan, whose wages are protected by his big union and his big army. How could he make so much if the worker on the right didn't make so little?**

owned or controlled by U.S. parent companies) in the manufacturing industry alone. In 1991, these U.S. parent companies, multinational companies, employed 9,538,000 people in manufacturing within the U.S., paying \$411 billion for their total compensation, or \$43,091 each. That includes wages and salaries, as well as health insurance, pension plans and so on; and it includes all workers, not just production workers. At their foreign affiliates, they employed 4,270,000 people in 1991, and paid \$123 billion for their compensation, or \$28,806 each. The difference in the cost of foreign versus domestic employees in manufacturing for these multinationals was thus \$14,285 per employee. So, the labor aristocracy got \$136.25 billion by virtue of being in the U.S. That means the standard-of-living people have a lot of explaining to do if they are going to say Amerikan workers "need" that much more. Even if you want to argue that the U.S.-based employees are doing more "valuable" work: Why would they need more to survive and

## \$414.1 billion in the pockets of the labor aristocracy, courtesy of the capitalists who want their allegiance.

reproduce themselves?(5)

Let's look at Mexico, right across the most militarized arbitrary border in the Western hemisphere; all that military power needed to keep out Mexican workers because the pay differential across the border is so huge. In 1992, the total compensation of manufacturing production workers in Mexico was 15% of the U.S. level, down from 22% in 1980.(6) Although that is total compensation and not just wages, the ratio is comparable to what we reported for wages in MIM Theory 1: in 1977 Mexican manufacturing production workers got 23.9% of their U.S. counterparts. How much money is this?

Let's assume that the 15% holds for wages as well as for total compensation, and look at wages; we'll also assume the percentage didn't change from 1992 to 1993. In 1993 there were 12,143,000 U.S. production workers in manufacturing earning \$11.76 per hour on average.(7) The average work week of such a worker was 41.4 hours, and if we assume a 50-week year they earn \$24,343. For the 12,143,000 workers, then, that's \$295,597,050,000, or \$295.6 billion. If they worked at Mexican worker rates it would be \$44.3 billion, or \$251 billion less. Big bucks.

The labor aristocracy also gains from getting paid more than oppressed-nation workers within U.S. borders. In the passage above, Marx said there was one value for labor power within each country. Although MIM argues that the Black

nation is a separate nation with its own economy, the market that determines the price of commodities available to Blacks and whites is very similar (with Blacks more often being gouged, probably). So certainly whites could live on what Blacks earn, right?

Black full-time year round workers in 1992 earned a median of \$21,750 each, compared to \$28,678 for the 59,775,000 white workers.(8) The gap is \$6,928 per worker. For the 7,623,000 such Black workers, then, the capitalists saved \$52,812,144,000, or \$52.8 billion, which is 21.2% of the \$249.1 billion the capitalists claimed in profits. If they paid these workers the same amount as white workers, their profits would have been that much smaller.

You might say that not all of this pay gap is discrimination on the part of the capitalists. In fact, a lot of this inequality looks like it comes from unequal education and job opportunities in the first place, not on-the-job pay inequality. Maybe Blacks just have the lower-paying jobs, and if there were Black-white equality there would just be more whites in these worse jobs. That is partly true, but it's misleading. We know from these figures that the white workers could have "survived" and reproduced themselves on the lower pay of the Black workers. If the white workers had been paid \$21,750 each instead of \$28,678, then the white workers would have been paid a total of \$414.1 billion less. That's even bigger bucks. Since the white workers could survive and reproduce themselves as a class with the lower pay that Black workers get, another way to look at that is that this is as \$414.1 billion in the pockets of the labor aristocracy, courtesy of the capitalists who want their allegiance, which is more than the capitalists pocketed for themselves!

But if you want to look at it as a source of profits and you aren't satisfied with calling it all discrimination, we can also break it down by education level. If we look at pay inequality within education level, we can say that even if it's not direct discrimination, at least we know that two workers with the same education level could be trained to do the same job pretty easily.

OK. The Black-white pay gap between median earnings for full-time year-round workers without high school diplomas was \$3,804. So the 1,072,000 Black workers in that category saved the capitalists \$4.1 billion. For those with high school diplomas, the gap was \$3,999, with 2,913,000 Black workers therefore saving the capitalists \$11.6 billion. For those with some college or associates degrees the gap was \$4,607 and there were 2,190,000 Black workers, saving \$10.1 billion. For people with a college degree or higher, the gap was \$7,948 and there were 1,447,000 Black workers, for a capitalist benefit of \$11.5 billion. Together these add up to \$37.3 billion in savings for Mr. Moneybags. That's still 15% of all profits in 1992 from this one area of discrimination alone.

Or, look at how much the white workers got over what

they could have lived with, by multiplying the number of white workers in each category times the wage gap. The white workers got:

\$15.4 billion	(4,053,000 workers without high school diplomas * \$3,804)
+\$82.5 billion	(20,640,000 workers with high school diplomas * \$3,999)
+\$75.1 billion	(15,963,000 workers with some college or assoc. degrees * \$4,706)
<u>+\$151.6 billion</u>	(19,072,000 workers with a college degree or higher * \$7,948)
= \$324.6 billion	

\$324.6 billion in subsidies for being white, even by this restricted definition, and even limiting the analysis to full-time, year-round employed workers. This is still more than the capitalists kept for themselves.

This is not a final measure of the non-exploitation of the white working class. The point of this analysis is to show that the level of subsidy to the white working class is so great, as we can demonstrate so many different ways, that we can move on from the question of whether or not they get more than the value of their labor power to some more difficult questions. For example, we would like to delve more deeply into the Black economic situation and see how many Black workers are not exploited and what the consequences of that are for political consciousness. We would like to calculate reparations, to name another example.

MIM will go on with our work of documenting the gross parasitism of the white working class even as we struggle to figure out these other questions. We just urge the communist-minded people in North America and the rest of the imperialist world to finally, truly, accept the concept of the labor aristocracy and its major implications for revolutionary struggle all over the world today. Only then can the imperialist-country-based parties in the international communist movement truly regain their footing, break with revisionism, and put communist internationalism into practice.

Notes: 1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume I, New York: Vintage, 1977. pp. 274-5.

2. ibid. p. 276-7.

3. "The Grundisse," in Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition, NY: W.W. Norton 1978. p. 249.

4. *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 1994, p. 735.

5. Figures from *Ibid.*, pp. 560, 563.

6. ibid. p. 872.

7. ibid., p. 424.

8. Figures from Claudette Bennett, *The Black Population in the United States: March 1994 and*

1993, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P20-480, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1995. Table 28. This gives medians instead of means, which means that strictly speaking you can't multiply them to get the total figure. Median is usually used with income data because the mean is pulled upward by millionaires, so these calculations probably err on the side of being too low rather than too high.

# In Black And White: Economy Update

Reprinted from MIM Notes 99, April 1995.

by MC12

There is a common assumption that U.S. incomes are falling, that the gap between "rich" and "poor" is increasing, and that this is all bringing white Amerikans and oppressed nations closer together. This is the dream of the Amerikan pseudo-left, which is always trying to convince us that soon working class whites will become revolutionary. But a look at some economic trends over the last few years is not kind to this view.

The official poverty line in 1993 was \$14,763 for a family of four. The Census Bureau reports that there is a lot of movement in and out of poverty. Only half of all poverty by this definition lasts four months or more, while 13% lasts two years or more. Whites make up 70% of all those in poverty, but only 56% of those in long-term poverty. That means lots of the "poor" whites are only that way temporarily. Still, in an average month Blacks are three-times more likely to be poor. Altogether 46 million people were in poverty for two or more months in 1990.(1)

Some people make a lot out of the great raw numbers of whites in poverty. They usually do this to help gain public sympathy for the poor, which is just plain racist. Since there are more whites than other groups, it's always important to look at the rates, or proportions, rather than the raw numbers. Also, some people try the trick of using a rate that includes *all* people, then saying the Black rate is "even higher." That's just using the Black rate to boost the white rate.

In an average month in 1990, the Census Bureau now reports, 8% of whites received some sort of means-tested poverty relief, compared to more than 32% of Blacks, and 25% of "Hispanics." So there are more whites, but Blacks are four-times as likely to be on welfare.(2)

Another common yet false assumption is that recessions bring whites and nonwhites closer together economically. In the 1990-91 recession, 41% of whites saw their incomes drop, and 36% saw them go up. That compared to 43% of Blacks who made less, and 35% who made more.(3) Just looking at earnings is also deceiving, since they don't include all measures of wealth. For example, 21% of whites had no health insurance for at least one month in 1990-92, compared to 36% of Blacks and 48% of "Hispanics," according to the Census Bureau.(4)

The patterns of job displacement during recessions are complicated and subject to a lot of debate. But if all the mech-

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

isms are hard to figure out, there are some bottom-line results we can point to. For example, the General Accounting Office found that - in a study that controlled for age, gender and occupation - Blacks and "Hispanics" had a 15% greater chance of losing their jobs during the last recession than whites.(6) If you don't control for, or hold constant, those factors, you would find the differences were even greater.

Then, the results of losing a job were worse for Blacks than for whites. For example, of whites who lost their jobs during the recession, 56% had health insurance before they were fired, but 60% had health insurance at their next jobs! For Blacks, though, 50% had health insurance before they lost their jobs, but only 38% had health insurance after they found another job. So this tells us something about what kinds of jobs they are moving into. Those whites are not getting jobs at McDonald's.(6)

The Wall Street Journal did their own study of the recession, looking at the hiring and firing disclosures of 35,242 companies that filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. They found that, among those companies, Blacks had a net loss of 59,479 jobs, while "Hispanics" gained 50,040, Asians (including all subgroups, presumably) gained 55,104, and whites gained 71,144.(6)

Finally, a look at long-term trends. It's common knowl-

edge that the gap between rich and poor is growing in the United States. But a closer look at the breakdowns shows that the trend is different for Blacks and whites.

From 1970 to 1992 (controlling for inflation), the percentage of white families in every income group declined except those making more than \$50,000. The greatest change was a 7.6% increase in white families making more than \$75,000.

By contrast, the biggest change for Black families was a 5.5% increase in those making less than \$10,000 per year. Also, 9.7% of Black families moved out of the \$15-35,000 per year range, a much bigger decline of the "middle class" than whites saw. Blacks also had an increase, though smaller than whites', of those making more than \$50,000 (see chart).

So the overall trend in the last two decades among Blacks is a greater division between rich and poor, with the poor increasing faster than the rich. Among whites, however, there is an overall growth of the rich, and a slight decline of the poor.

Notes:

1. United States Census Bureau, Feb. 3, 1995.
2. USCB, Feb. 7, 1995.
3. USCB, Jan. 1, 1995.
4. USCB, Oct. 31, 1994.
5. USCB, Oct. 6, 1995.
6. Wall Street Journal, Sept. 19, 1994, p. A2.

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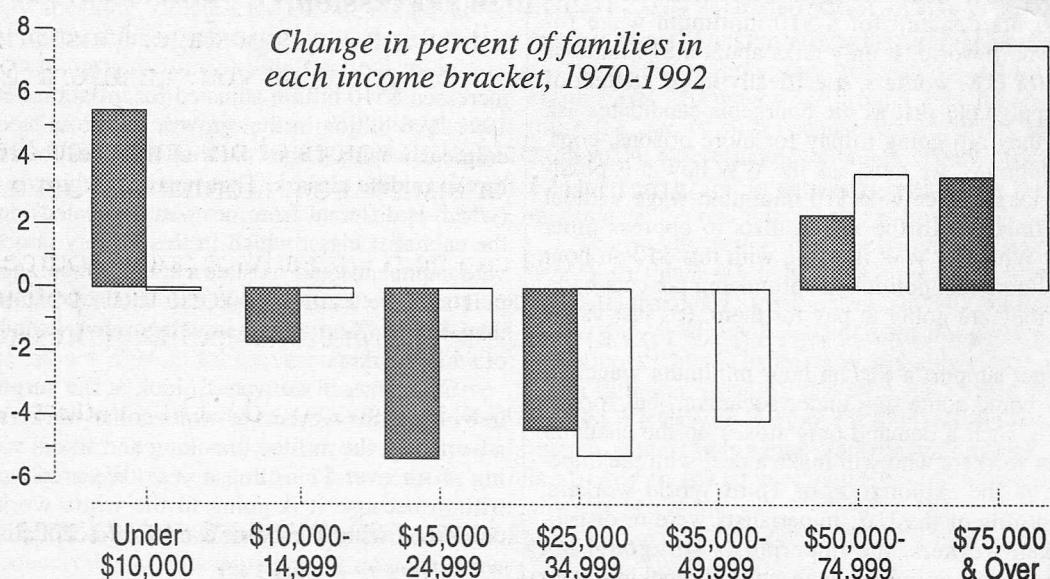
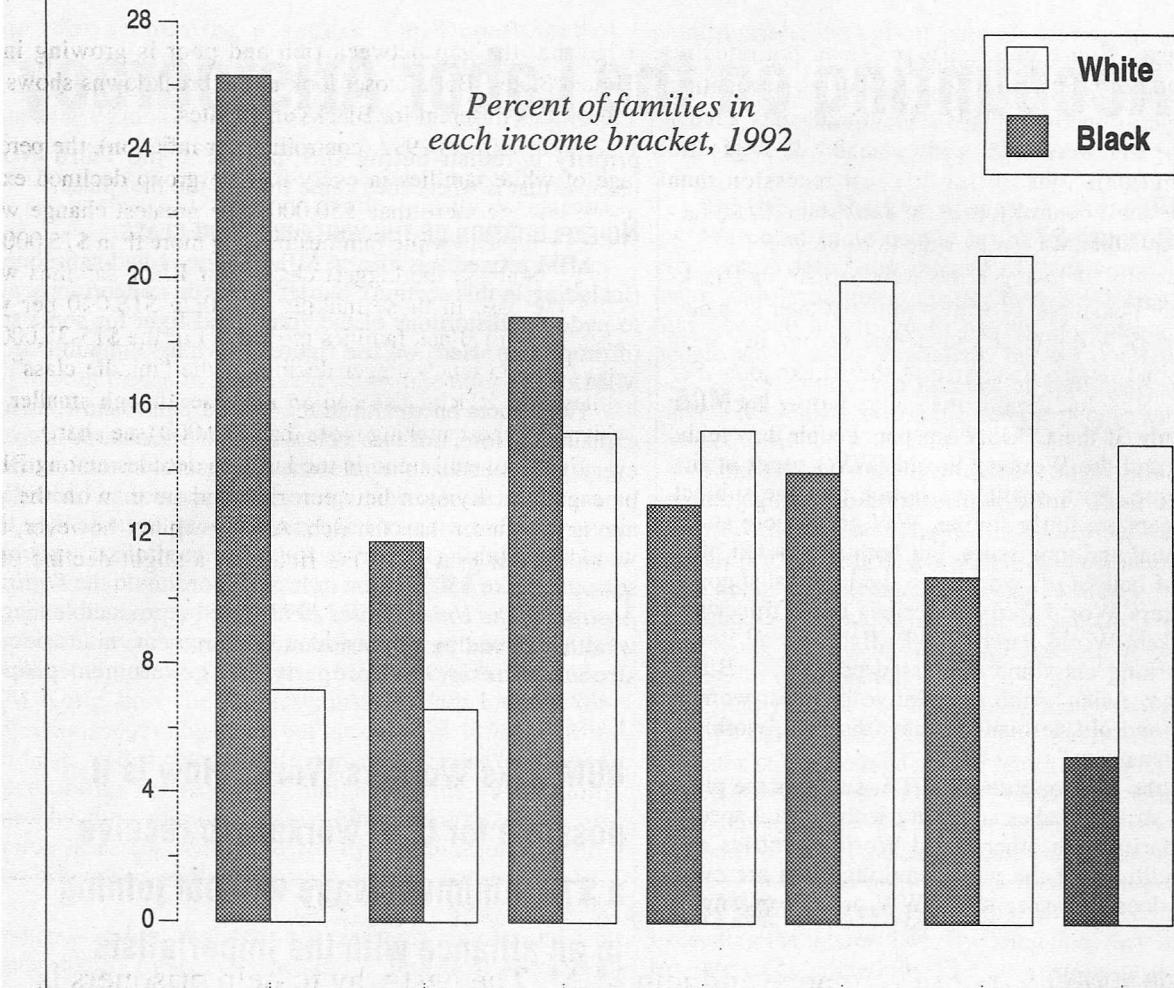
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# Money Income of Black & White Families



Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994, U.S. Department of Commerce, p. 469.

# More Accounting on the Labor Aristocracy

REVIEW:

WORKERS WORLD

OCTOBER 20 & OCTOBER 27

Workers World Party  
55 W. 17 St.  
NY, NY 10011

by MC5

**M**IM reviewed the CPUSA's paper, People's Weekly World, and the Workers World (WW) paper at the same time. As a result, we notice that the subject areas of both papers are fairly similar. WW gives more attention to international and gay issues, but both papers tail after the insecurities of bought-off workers in the imperialist countries. The Workers World Party describes itself this way: "JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples — Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian and gay, disabled, working, unemployed and students."

Like PWW, the WW opposes NAFTA, supports the players in the sports strikes, makes solidarity with Cuba a special task above solidarity with other Third World countries and believes the conditions of the white working class are ever-declining. MIM does not agree with PWW or WW on any of these issues.

## THE \$10 AN HOUR DEMAND

Typically, the WW does not explain anywhere how it is going to achieve its demand for a \$10 minimum wage for workers of the whole world. It only talks about a \$10 an hour minimum wage for U.S. workers, specifically in the context of a Michigan campaign.(1) Just as the bourgeois candidates ask each other how they are going to pay for more prisons, cops, war and other programs, we must ask the WW how it is possible for U.S. workers to receive a \$10 minimum wage without joining in an alliance with the imperialists to oppress other workers abroad. What the WW is doing with this \$10 an hour thing is like the bourgeois politicians' promising tax cuts without telling how they are going to pay for them. It's just vague opportunism.

MIM does not support a \$10 an hour minimum wage. Of course that will come some day under socialism, but for the immediate future, such a demand only stokes up the chauvinism of Amerikan workers who will make a deal with the imperialists to share in the exploitation of Third World workers. Even if all the profits of the U.S. imperialists were re-distributed to Amerikan workers, the imperialists still could not afford a \$10 an hour minimum wage without sucking even more superprofits out of the Third World. Hence, MIM does not make this sort of demand at this time and instead our first

priority is redistributing U.S. profits to the Third World, because that is where they came from in the first place.

## NO EXPLOITATION OF THE WHITE WORKING CLASS

MIM proved this idea in MIM Theory 1 and subsequently (including in this section), but let's take this opportunity again to undo the distortions of the "Left" and fight for some sense of proportion. Here we use figures previously unpublished by MIM.

The figures on wealth in the United States show, as MIM explained before, not that a class of new trillionaires is created every year, but that the relevant surplus value total extracted by capitalists is never enough to create more than one trillionaire a year (but it never happens that way because then there would be nothing left over for other capitalists), probably something like \$500 billion or less. According to the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1993* "fixed reproducible tangible wealth," including nonresidential equipment, nonresidential structures, residential property and government property

## MIM asks Workers World: How is it possible for U.S. workers to receive a \$10 minimum wage without joining in an alliance with the imperialists to oppress other workers abroad?

increased \$510 billion adjusted for inflation between 1990 and 1991. \$96 billion in that growth of "gross stock" was in government wealth. Other parts of that wealth are mostly owned by the middle classes. That means the growth in gross wealth (which is different from net wealth created) does not all go to the capitalist class, which in this society is dominated by private capital instead of state capital. Once again the evidence points to the surplus-value extracted by capitalists being less than \$500 billion a year in categories relevant to exploitation of white workers.

Of course, if we were to look at the surplus-value sucked in by the white workers as white collar workers in government, advertising, the military, banking and so on, we would be talking about over \$2 trillion a year. We aren't counting that \$2 trillion because it is going to the white workers and we are concerned with whether it can be said capitalists exploit white workers.

We go through these exercises because looking at the same pie it is possible to do different accountings. The same slice of pie can be counted under different names or concepts

invented for accounting purposes. The Department of Commerce offers us at least two more of interest not previously discussed by MIM.

One way of looking at the pie talks about corporate profits and net interest as separate categories. Looking at the 1990 pie of \$4.46 trillion, the Department of Commerce sees \$819 billion of net interest and corporate profits, mostly net interest. Most of this actually ends up in the hands of the middle classes, including the labor aristocracy. Yet it is another way of setting an upper limit on surplus value relevant to our calculations of whether or not the white working class is exploited.

If you don't look at net interest and corporate profits and instead look at things in a different stage, like after the corporate profits have been distributed, then you get a second way of accounting. There was \$124 billion in dividends in 1990. That shows what happens to profits after paying taxes and leaving some around the company to invest. MIM has already shown that the capitalists only own about half the stocks, so they may receive about half the dividends and even 100% of \$124 billion going to capitalists is definitely no sign of white working class exploitation, as we showed in MIM Theory 1. Then if we count people's savings accounts, bonds and pensions, we get \$721 billion in "personal interest." MIM has already detailed in MIM Notes how the largest pension funds are worker-owned. This accounting does not account for inflation from year to year, so this category of "personal interest" is also not very promising for revealing much surplus-value being extracted by the capitalists from white workers.(2) The surplus-value is easily accounted for by exploitation of Third World workers and oppressed nation workers within U.S. borders.

Perhaps the best accounting is the most simple, and it is made possible by figures released in the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*. These figures give us a look at the bourgeoisie roughly speaking, because the cut-off the government chose to use also includes some people in the middle-classes (and of course the government didn't set out to do an accounting of the "bourgeoisie.")

The government looked at the "gross assets" of everybody who has "gross assets" worth more than \$600,000. All capitalists must have substantial "gross assets" unless they control production through the state, which is not the main approach of capitalists here within U.S. borders. On the other hand, not everyone who has large gross assets has high "net worth," which accounts for debts and losses. A large portion of people in the above-\$600,000 gross asset category actually had negative net worth, as shown right in the government table. Yet again, people allowed to roll the dice by the banks may have negative net worth one year and positive net worth the next. One such person is Donald Trump, who has not escaped speculation concerning his net worth being very low or negative at times.

In any case, if you think about people with \$600,000 in gross assets, it's conceivable at an average profit rate of 8%, a person would obtain \$48,000 a year. After inflation and taxes and supporting family, we might think of this as a good cut-off

point number: the cut-off between having to work and being able to live just from owning things. In a corporate capitalist society like U.S. society, this is a distinguishing feature of the capitalist class. Capitalists here may choose to work, but they don't have to because they would survive just by owning things.

The one drawback of what we do with this favors our critics. We count some people in the middle class by using the gross asset definition instead of "net worth." Actually for many with gross assets greater than \$600,000, some or all of that \$48,000 has to go to paying interest on debts. These people aren't really capitalists, but we don't want anyone to say we undercount the number of capitalists or the surplus-value we calculate, so we include the people with low or negative net worth.

This government definition counts about 3.5 million people, many who aren't millionaires. Their net worth totals under \$5 trillion according to the *Statistical Abstract*, so let's round up to \$5 trillion for our final calculation just to make calculations and to flatter our critics further.

The \$5 trillion is one part of the puzzle. The other part we need is the profit rate on capital, the rate of return capitalists get just for owning things.

Luckily for us, by both bourgeois economic assumptions and Marxist economic assumptions, the interest rate is a good indicator of the average rate of return on capital. The reason is that capitalists invest where they can make money. The interest rate tends to reflect the average profit rate because capitalists will borrow money whenever they can make more profits than they pay in interest on borrowed money. They keep borrowing money until they can't find anymore places to make profit exceeding the interest rate. By doing this, they bid up the interest rate to be something like an average profit rate. This is another way of saying the capitalists are willing to loan out money to other capitalists based on supply and demand, so the interest rate will tend to reflect the average profit rate.

In recent months, the "prime rate" of interest has been around 8%. Mortgages are around 8%. As long as we don't think the rate is 80% because we are from Mars, like some "leftists," it won't matter too much whether we use 6% or 10% as our interest rate. In actuality, inflation is 3-4%, which cuts into that, so the real interest rate is lower than 8% per year.

The interest rate is the second part of the puzzle we need here. If the interest rate is 8% and we assume no inflation, then the capitalists with \$5 trillion rake in \$400 billion a year in surplus-value. If the rate is 10 percent, they get \$500 billion. In actuality, a realistic estimate is probably closer to \$300 billion, given inflation. In MIM Theory 1, and again in this issue, we showed it is easy to account for \$300 billion just from discrimination against non-white workers within U.S. borders. There is no way to see any net surplus-value coming from white workers as a class.

#### DIVIDING UP THE BOOTY

Even with figures larger than \$500 billion for surplus-value — extracted by capitalists for themselves and not paid to white workers in advertising and so on — we have already

shown elsewhere that a majority of white workers cannot be exploited. If we take all of that \$500 billion we originally discussed in the section above on "gross assets" and re-distribute it to 250 million U.S. residents, there will be \$2,000 for every person. There will also be no growth in housing, government or workplace property by that means of accounting. If the actual figure is more like \$100 billion, then there is only \$400 a year for every person to re-distribute.

From such calculations we see that giving the entirety of the surplus in wealth to the Third World in re-distribution still would not come close to cutting the inequality between imperialist countries and oppressed countries. If we go further and cut the salaries of the top 5% of the population by two-thirds so that their income is more like that of ordinary people, we might gather another \$350 billion a year. If we go after the top fifth of the population, we can squeeze out about \$700 billion a year.(3) This would mean some very serious political egalitarianism not likely under imperialism.

#### **SPACE-ALIEN RULE**

What the Workers World Party is doing only ends up stoking up the economic demands of workers in a vague sort of way without explaining the economics of socialism. The workers are likely to turn around and ask the imperialists for \$10 an hour to join in exploiting the Third World. The Amerikan workers will not attempt to carry out the above redistribution.

Still, say the workers and imperialists suddenly agreed to a completely equal redistribution of income, or — more realistically — space aliens landed in the United States and through absolutely superior force imposed egalitarianism. MIM would go to these space aliens and suggest that a \$10 an hour *maximum wage* within U.S. borders would be a good first step forward given the history of social relations on our planet, which the space aliens might not know about.

If we take the U.S. GNP and set aside a realistic part for health care benefits and investment in the means of production, then we can have approximately \$4 trillion a year to distribute to workers in wages. How many could we hire for \$10 an hour? If people work 30-hour weeks 50 weeks a year, that will be \$15,000 a year. That means we could hire 267 million at \$10 an hour, in addition to the medical sector and other workers we provide for. This leaves no money for additional programs in the Third World itself for reparations owed to the Third World. That would be a serious drawback of our proposed plan for the space aliens to implement. The oppressed peoples should not have to go to the United Snakes to collect their reparations.

On the other hand, right now, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, only about 120 million have jobs. If we had 267 million jobs at \$10 an hour, we could take care of the unemployment of the United States and open the borders to give jobs to many immigrants — a kind of reparations program, not the only kind and not necessarily the best kind, but a step in the correct direction. Chances are that with that many people working, and working hard thanks to the space alien slave-drivers, a person's \$15,000 would go a lot farther than it

does now, as people get paid for shuffling paper and owning things — welfare handouts for the rich and the labor aristocracy. Economic development throughout the world might be spurred in a socialist way through the establishment of a maximum wage in formerly imperialist Amerika under enlightened communist space-alien rule.

Nonetheless, the above is an interesting arithmetic exercise, but it does not address political realities, since there are no all-powerful communist space invaders to ally with. It is difficult for MIM to see a glimmer of socialism from what WW says, but if WW agreed to \$10 an hour as the maximum wage for Amerikans, MIM might also agree to \$10 an hour as the minimum wage. Usually, MIM is just in favor of "from

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each according to ability, to each according to work," and no pay for just owning things, for the first stage of socialism. The space aliens idea would be much further advanced.

In general, the WW shares with most of the "Left" the incorrect idea that Amerikan workers are exploited. What the social-democrats, Trotskyists, crypto-Trotskyists, neo-Trotskyists and CPUSA all have in common is a mythology of the white proletariat. This means putting together half-baked analyses and half-truths to sustain a sentimental view of white workers as oppressed.

#### **THE SOCIAL-CHAUVINIST STATISTICAL ARSENAL**

One of the more valiant attempts in backing this white proletarian mythology appears here:

"In 1993 the U.S. economy was in an upswing. Official unemployment dropped to 6% from 7.4% the previous year. The overall economy grew by 3%.

"Yet annual income for the median working family dropped by \$300. And a million more people sank below the official poverty line.

"The median income is the one right in the middle. It's the most typical. Half the households have higher incomes, half have lower.

"Last year confirms a longer downward trend. Since 1989, the median annual income has decreased by \$2,344, or 7% of total family income. The U.S. Census Bureau released these numbers Oct. 6."(4)

MIM appreciates this attempt at analysis, which is all too rare. Perhaps the collapse of the Soviet Union and much phony

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

socialism has some people in WW and the PWW using their own brain cells for once.

The above is the best our "Left" can do in defeating MIM's analysis. The last bit is the single most effective statistic in the arsenal opposing us. Let's look at this in more detail.

First, WW mentions the unemployment figure and concedes the possibility given by the government that unemployment actually went down. This is better than what some "leftists" would do: just ignore the unemployment rate without believing any figures and still manage to believe that the unemployment rate is always increasing. Obviously that is not possible because once you get to imagining 100% unemployment it's not possible to fantasize about any further degradation of white workers, so good for the WW for recognizing the possibility that unemployment does not always go up.

Second, poverty is still confined to the bottom fifth of the population, which is disproportionately oppressed nationalities and single women.

With regard to this bottom fifth, MIM does have considerable evidence that its position has gotten worse in recent years. National oppression is largely centered in that bottom fifth and MIM champions the people in that group. Average U.S. income goes up while the income of the bottom fifth can and does go down. Where MIM disagrees with the other organizations is that MIM does not believe it is possible to stand for the majority of people within U.S. borders without selling out the bottom fifth, not to mention the more abundant proletariat outside U.S. borders. This also has the implication that democracy, or majority rule within U.S. borders, is infeasible for progressives. We must instead insist on majority rule without borders, majority rule for the Third World laboring masses. Right now we have majority rule within the white nation determining the rules for the governments peoples everywhere.

The strategy of obtaining a majority for elections or independent movements within U.S. borders necessarily means that the movement is not anti-imperialist. MIM is only interested in movements that can be sustained as anti-imperialist movements in line with the interests of the international proletariat. That is one reason we support the maximum wage idea as superior to WW's minimum wage idea. The more immigrants U.S. residents come in contact with and have surrounding them, the greater the chances a really strong and dominant proletariat can form within U.S. borders. For that matter, that is another reason to hold the internationalist bourgeoisie to its free trade rhetoric and never ally with the anti-NAFTA, anti-GATT Amerika-first bourgeoisie as the CPUSA and WWP do. The U.S. residents will never develop a dominating proletarian consciousness without more open borders.

We also support reparations to the Third World countries in their countries and not just by opening the borders to share the wealth with those who walk in. This is a priority for us before various demands of the white nation working class.

Finally, even if we grant the WW its best statistic, we do not support forming a coalition with the people of the 50th percentile to get their 7% back. Even if the median is down 7% over four years that does not make the 50th percentile people

interested in revolution. They just want their goodies back like in the old days of imperialism. This year, they think they want to cut welfare and keep immigrants' children out of school. That way they think they will get their 7% back. And if we encourage the labor aristocracy of the imperialist countries to think about its 7%, that is what it is going to do, try to shave it off the hides of genuinely oppressed people.

As it turns out, that figure on the median is bound to get a lot of play in upcoming months, so let's look at it carefully. One thing misleading about household or family income is that it does not account for how many wage-earners are in the family or household. If divorce or death rates affect this from year to year, the median family income figure will change from year to year without meaning anything in incomes changed. The figure also can't account for trends in family structure and it arbitrarily defines "primary families" as the only object of study. It turns out that between 1985 and 1993, the size of households and families went down.(5) With fewer people in households and families and the number of single-person households and families rising, of course the median household and family income is going to go down.

What we really want to know is the median of individual workers in 1989 and 1993, adjusted for inflation. When we look at men, we do see a decline. However, female full-time year-round workers did not see a statistically significant decline in income between 1989 and 1993 and their incomes as individual workers have increased dramatically since 1970.(6) More importantly, the number of female workers went from 53.03 million in 1989 to 54.61 million in 1993, while the number and percentage of male workers working has stayed pretty much the same. There were 64.32 million male workers in 1989 and 64.7 million employed in 1993. In fact, the participation rate in employment by male workers with less than a high school education increased between 1985 and 1991.(7)

The figures on male and female participation rates by education level also bring up another problem and a weakness of using median figures. If there are ten people and only three work one year and then seven out of ten work the next year, the median income can go down, but some people will have incomes for the first time. That is one way average incomes can go up while median incomes go down, besides the usual mechanism of the rich getting richer and the middle getting poorer. When it comes to the revolutionary consciousness of white nation workers in their alliance with imperialism, workers employed for the first time may bring down the median figures but they are not likely to be in a revolutionary mood. From their perspective, these new workers think their position has improved and in some sense, they are right because overall a higher percentage of the white nation is employed while the median goes down.

No one contends that average per capita income figures are going down. The latest figures still show them going up — just slower than they used to in the 1950s and 1960s.(8) Furthermore, many misleading statistics used by the social-chauvinist "left" discuss a decline in hourly wages excluding benefits, but the index of compensation including benefits has

always increased. Even between 1989 and the 1993, which is the selection of years the social-chauvinists like to talk about lately because of the recession, compensation including benefits (employment cost index) increased 20.2%!(9) Finally, between 1989 and 1993 even one index that the social-democrat chauvinists like to talk about increased — the share of total income going to employees as salaries and benefits. It went from 73.0% to 73.4%.(10) The remaining 26.6% of the pie goes to the petty-bourgeoisie that works for itself or on its own property, the middle classes' dividends and interest payments, and the capitalists' share of the surplus-value.

In any case, 7% just isn't going to make a class revolutionary. A 7% decline every year over 10 or 20 years would make a difference, but the 1980s saw gains for all but the bottom fifth, so the middle classes still think this is a temporary problem and they are correct.

Related to this, we are disturbed to see that the CPUSA, the Workers World and the Spartacist League could not use Lenin's term "labor aristocracy" even to refer to the baseball players, who are members of the labor aristocracy, petty-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie. To these fake communist groups, the baseball players are all just exploited workers. At least David North's Trotskyist group said the baseball players were the "most pampered workers," but even those Trotskyists supported the baseball players. MIM for its part does not care. It's like watching a battle between GM and one of its glass or steel suppliers as they haggle over price. The international proletariat

does not care about the outcome of the baseball players strike except in a Hollywood entertainment sense.

In contrast with its stuff on U.S. economic conditions, the WW articles on proposition 187, Haiti, Iraq, Korea and Turkey are more reasonable. As in the case of the PWW though, the good work is just the lure. It is an attempt to mislead the international proletariat into being used by the Amerikan labor aristocracy. What the one hand offers, the other takes away in chauvinist class demands via NAFTA, the minimum wage and general class collaboration with imperialism. MIM invites the WW members to bag WW and the reactionary part of its line and join MIM.

Notes:

1. WW, Oct. 20, 1994, p. 5.
2. The *World Almanac and Book of Facts* 1993, p. 130, is one place to obtain this common Department of Commerce accounting.
3. Based on chart 722, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1993*, p. 463, and GNP figures in the same section repeated in several tables.
4. WW, Oct. 20, 1994, p. 3.
5. *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*, p. 58.
6. Ibid., p. 473.
7. Ibid., p. 397.
8. Ibid., p. 427.
9. Ibid., 431.
10. Ibid., p. 459.



## MAOISM ON YOUR SCREEN



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# Pulse of Capitalism Opposes MIM Thesis

The Pulse of Capitalism is published quarterly, reviewing current political-economic trends. Subscriptions are \$4 per year, available from Pulse Publication, PO Box 140, Gibsonia, PA 15044. POC sent us this letter.

Dear MIM,

One of your favorite themes is that the developed nations prosper by exploiting the cheap labor of Third World people. While in some instances this is true, in a larger, overall economic sense, it is not. If you consider the major symbols of developed countries' wealth — autos, electronics, abundant energy, etc. — they are made possible by technology and organizational skills developed in the First World. The U.S., especially, developed to pre-eminence in the 19th century through an internal market that relied only marginally on imports from abroad. Third World countries are poor today precisely because they do not have these technological and organizational skills.

If you consider the question on another level — the acquisition of raw materials today — the case for exploitation is similarly weak. A copper mine in Chile or Peru, for example, sells in the same world market as a mine in Canada or the U.S. itself. If cheap labor is responsible for profits in the first two, then is expensive labor responsible in the second two? And what about years in which prices are very low and the mines lose money? Are they still exploiting labor? The fact is that total costs depend on many factors in addition to labor costs, and that is why a high labor cost mine can still compete with a low labor cost mine.

What you should focus on (and sometimes do) is the fact that in most instances, Third World peoples are sold out by their own elites. These elites, for example, after appropriating the best land, may use it to grow coffee for export, and then use the ensuing profits to import the luxury goods of the developed world for their own use, paying only subsistence to the actual workers. But who is the real exploiter — the buyer who pays a market price or the elite who fail to use their wealth for further development? They could do this by reinvesting profits in additional enterprises, which is what happened, to a large extent in South Korea, for example. The wealthy in this case become even wealthier, but more of the people benefit as well. Realistically, this may be the only path to development available to them.

These are issues you need to address rather than making vague assertions that the prosperity of First World countries is due to exploitation of the Third World.

Sincerely,

The Pulse of Capitalism

**MIM responds:** No amount of technological advancement or organizational skills in the U.S. auto industry would render the superexploitation of Third World labor (in the extraction of raw materials and the manufacture of automobile

parts) anything less than decisive. If Third World workers, in oil, mining, and other industries were paid the value of their labor power, cars would be prohibitively expensive for the Amerikan working class. Instead, they are paid less than the value of their labor power, and the "market price" of the product is low — constituting a subsidy to the First World working class courtesy of imperialism. Politically, this also solidifies the imperialist country working class support for imperialist plunder.

Furthermore, the existence of technology is not what's important. What's important is who controls that technology. If multinational corporations build high-tech industry in the Third World, only the multinational (and their hand picked managers) benefit. The mere presence of technology does not alter the power relation of imperialism and imperialist-dominated trade in particular, as you seem to suggest.

Perhaps the most remarkable of your claims is that the United States industrialized "internally" in 19th century. What do you call the theft of First Nation land? What do you call African slavery but the exploitation of oppressed nation labor? Amerika would be nowhere without these important sources of exploitation. To collapse the concept of imperialism into the narrowly defined "imports" is to miss the social relation involved.

As Maoists, MIM distinguishes between types of Third World "elites." The elites to which you refer comprise the comprador bourgeoisie. This class indeed sells out its people, and its interests are bound up with the interests of imperialism. The existence of a class of Third World exploiters does not blind us to the principal relationship of imperialism to the Third World. Nor does the bourgeois hype around the so-called miracle economy of South Korea blind us to the central tenets of Maoist economics — overthrow of capitalism and the implementation of *self-reliant* socialism.

You ask who is the real exploiter. MIM asks who else benefits, and thus supports the "real" exploiter? MIM spends so much time asserting our line on the labor aristocracy because so many people calling themselves communists pin their revolutionary hopes on this bought-off class, reinforcing national oppression within their own ranks and their own ostensible struggle against the ruling class.

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# The Black Nation Speaks

## *The Black Panther Newspaper, 1968-1969* Maoism Restored

*In MIM Theory 7 we wrote about the Black Panther Party's Maoism: "Whatever people may say now from the vantage point of the 1990s, the Black Panther Party of the young Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale and Eldridge Cleaver was the Maoist party of the United States in the late 1960s" (p. 50). Here MIM Theory returns to the early Panther history to lay out in greater detail the full extent of the party's explicit Maoism. —MC12*

by MC5

**B**oil — that is what your blood will do when you read the Black Panther Party newspaper from 1968 to 1969. Your class hatred will swell up to make you determined to revive the *true* history of the Black Panthers. The capitalist media, sell-out Bobby Seale and others seem to get away with murder, as if the printed words of the Black Panthers were all burned and buried. The early issues of this newspaper call out from history, demanding that revolutionaries today speak the truth about the Black Panthers. Maoism literally shouts out of the paper's headlines, articles, reprints and photos.

### A YARDSTICK FOR INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

In less than three years of applying Maoism, a self-consciously youthful party engaged in coordinated armed struggles, obtained the support of the plurality of Blacks as the legitimate leadership of all Black people even according to capitalist television polls, inspired the Puerto Ricans and other oppressed nations to form their own vanguard parties, commu-

nicated with admirers from liberation struggles all around the world and inspired the better half of the white student movement of the time. The accomplishments of the Black Panthers were made possible by the mark that previous revolutionaries had made on the consciousness of the world's people. That is the only possible way to explain how the Black Panthers got so far so fast. They outstripped Marx, Lenin and Mao in their first three years of activity; that's how good the Black Panthers were. Only other great leaders such as Jose Maria Sison of the Philippines had comparable or greater success so fast at such a young age, and we are proud to make such a comparison. Huey Newton's party also did not have the advantage of geographic proximity to or similarity of conditions with China.

On the other hand, the Black Panthers obviously had many problems, not the least of which was the coordinated and highly modern state repression that Mao warned about in the imperialist countries, but which the Panthers took too lightly, almost as a matter of perceived internationalist duty to the Vietnamese, to whom they offered support with a Black battalion to fight U.S. troops. The Black Panthers were in a hurry and believed that U.S. imperialism was going to collapse imminently; except in prison they operated in the open. By mid-1969 they were emphasizing the united front against fascism to prepare for the last desperate moves of the oppressor, so great was their confidence in the international situation and their own organizing.

Another problem for the Black Panthers was the division



**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

of the white student movement between crypto-Trotskyists trying to use Mao to gut Maoism and other students who eventually realized they had to form their own Maoist parties. However, the biggest problem was not Blacks or the students — both were on the whole ready for revolution. The problem was that white women and white labor did not want to move for revolution. If either white women or white labor had been ready, there could have been a more evenly matched revolutionary civil war on the scale of previous civil wars and qualitative leaps beyond the lop-sided war that did take place.

In Paris 1968, a white student movement sparked the highly organized sectors of industry into action. The appearance of student-worker unity would seem superficially to indicate that there was a basis for a white working class revolution in France. Upon closer examination, the difference between the French movement and the movement within U.S. borders is telling.

“Danny the Red” openly explains in his writings on the subject that he and other like-minded leaders did not attempt to seize government power. They strolled passed the government ministries in their demonstrations when those ministries had already been abdicated. Furthermore, the Communist Party of France had members who were the key military officers in the imperialist government. When one considers this and the combined student street-fighting and worker factory take-overs, clearly the French people had demonstrated sufficient brute force to be able to overthrow the government. This stands as a lesson to all who say it is not possible. On the other hand, it did not happen — thanks to the predominance of anarchism over Maoism in France at the time. A revolution in France may have sparked NATO intervention and civil war, but the anarchists had no concern for the Vietnamese or others fighting U.S. imperialism and didn’t attempt to draw off the imperialist forces that way.

The student movement in France was similar to the one in the United Snakes, but even more inclined to anarchism. In Euro-Amerika, the leaders of the student movement all claimed to be Maoist, even if what that meant was rather new to students with at most two or three years of studying Maoism. The Black Panthers, and to a lesser extent the Progressive Labor Party, were key reasons why the movement was not dominated by anarchism as it was in France.

Although the imperialists of France and the U.S. Empire are equally able to roam the globe in search of surplus-value, and although they share in each other’s financial institutions to divide the loot, the movement in France had fewer oppressed nationalities in the lead. U.S. Maoists were relatively stronger.

This accounts for the two great mysteries and surprises of the French uprising of 1968. One surprise is that it failed despite the momentary but apparent success of the movement. That is explained by a lack of Maoist leadership relative to anarchism. Second, and part of the whole romance of 1968, is that the revolution quickly withered after a few wage concessions and an election. This stems from an incorrect understanding of the political economy of the French working class.

How did a movement so strong turn around so suddenly

and then vote DeGaulle back into power? How did so little get left behind from this “revolution”? The romantic aura of 1968 is retraced repeatedly, fueling book and coffee-shop sales.

As Huey Newton explained, the anarchists succeeded in mobilizing the middle-classes while the old revisionist Communist Party did not have much to say to either students or workers politically, never mind the middle-classes.(1) The Old Left revisionists were mired in imperialist economism with little to say about seizing state power or even opposing the government that coopted them. And the New Left organi-

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zations were not ready to fill in the gap.

In contrast, the anarchists appealed to the individualism of the middle- classes. In 1968, the middle classes — the petty-bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy — could clearly see that imperialism was not invincible. From Vietnam, Mao’s rising prestige, students fighting police or the anti-colonial struggles throughout Africa, the middle-classes knew that their usual imperialist allies were not unshakable.

The result was not a middle-class identification with the proletariat. Instead, the middle classes went into action on their own: they discredited their government, their trade unions and their school administrations just as the anarchists told them to, but no more. They did not want power, just the aggrandizement of their own class’s illusion of independence from the laws of economics — a heightened individualism of the kind that led Margaret Thatcher to proclaim England a “classless society.” This kind of individualism left the power structure in France unchanged, essentially because they didn’t believe there was one.

Herein lies the ugly truth: within U.S. borders the Third World-descended peoples and the students were ready to move, but they inspired no such parallel militant movement of workers. The workers of France responded to a middle-class ideology and the Euro-Amerikan workers would have too, but the high profile of the Black Panthers, the alliance with the lumpen element and disciplined vanguard organization all repelled the Euro-Amerikan workers. The movement was too proletarian for the tastes of Euro-Amerikan workers intoxicated by superprofits.

In this Mao erred and succeeded in confusing the imperialist country communist movements — even though he constantly advised communists from other nations not to take his

advice too literally, because ultimately they were responsible for analyzing their own conditions. Ironically, Mao didn't even want to re-establish a Comintern-type organization because he knew the importance of applying revolutionary science within concrete conditions, but still the comrades of many countries followed Mao as if he were a Comintern. But this is not a surprise; it was the tremendous prestige attached to what at the time was called "Mao Tse-tung thought" that created this situation.

On the one hand Mao talked about principal contradictions, national struggles and the need to avoid the straight jacket of class reductionism. He even sanctioned Lin Biao in 1965 to say the imperialists were the cities of the world which had to fall last because of unspecified "temporary reasons" — which at least some in the Chinese Communist Party believed referred to the thorough corruption of superprofits:

"Since World War II, the proletarian revolutionary movement has for various reasons been temporarily held back in the North American and West European capitalist countries, while the people's revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been growing vigorously. ... In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population."(2)

Bob Avakian has been calling us Lin Biaoists for more than 10 years because we uphold this line, but there is no other interpretation of history in line with materialism and the truth that the masses make history.

On the other hand, Mao maintained faith that the proletarian parties, once set up, would be able to attract the support of the workers from the imperialist nations. The 1960s proved this was not true with the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), China's officially fraternal U.S. party. The PLP attempted a "student-worker alliance," as their expression of Mao's faith in the industrial workers, and degenerated as a result. Throughout the imperialist countries, people who started out as good Maoists slammed their heads against the wall of the labor aristocracy and ended up coming unraveled.

These disoriented former Maoists have a lot to do with today's perception of the Black Panthers, even in progressive circles. In competition with the Black Panthers in the 1960s, the Progressive Labor Party took up the Trotskyist line that "all nationalism is reactionary." They only heeded Mao's incorrect advice on being rooted in the industrial workers. Later, Bob Avakian and some PLP critics with closer ties to the Black Panthers did the same thing. Avakian hems and haws much more, but eventually he also adopted the line that, in the end, all nationalism is bourgeois. He attempted to straddle the Black Panthers and PLP and ended up being a more complicated crypto-Trotskyist than PLP's leaders. Avakian's attacks on Stalin and Mao are more shrouded.

Avakian wrote at least three articles for the Black Panther newspaper in the period reviewed. He also appears to have hand-written an ad for the paper advertising his Bay Area

Union organization in a self-conscious attempt to follow Black Panther advice to "form your own party." At the time, Avakian clearly bought into Mao's workerist thesis and went about organizing industrial workers. Not surprisingly, as a result, he moved even further away from the Black Panther Party. Avakian eventually watered down his criticism of the Black Panthers in a pamphlet "summing up" the Black Panthers, but that was years later, in a period of sentimentality regarding the dead Panthers, after Avakian's own self-criticism for earlier economism and as a result of MIM's attack.

PLP and Avakian's Revolutionary Communist Party-USA (RCP-USA) have done much to distort the image of the Black Panthers. They have succeeded to such an extent that many people believe the Black Panthers were narrow nationalists and never tried to be Maoists. The truth is that the PLP and RCP-USA were and are crypto-Trotskyists while the Black Panthers were the genuine Maoists. We will review the distortions of the historical record after first making clear what MIM upholds and what we do not.

Omali Yeshitela of the African People's Socialist Party (APSP) has criticized us because we uphold the young Huey Newton, but not the APSP, while Huey Newton in later years endorsed the APSP. Unlike most of our critics, Omali Yeshitela is partly correct. The APSP can indeed lay a claim to what MIM calls the late Black Panthers and APSP rightly defends that claim against those who continued the Black

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Panther Party but took it in a clearly reformist direction into the 1970s and 1980s. Once Bobby Seale sold out the struggle, we can mark a clear end of Black Panther history. The Panthers, after losing their best leaders, were not even a shadow of their former selves.

MIM is willing to let the APSP have the later Panthers, when they were more eclectic and toned down their communism. MIM upholds the original Black Panthers, from their foundation in 1966 to 1969. While some relatively good books from the Black Panthers continued to come out in the early 1970s, on the whole things were already going downhill by the end of 1969. We uphold some Black Panther articles that APSP of today would not. The difference is a matter of timing. The APSP can claim they uphold the concentrated experience and wisdom of the late Black Panthers. MIM upholds the earlier stage that generated the huge success in the first place.

**MYTH #1: THE PANTHERS WERE “NARROW NATIONALISTS”**

The reactionaries and the crypto-Trotskyist former Maoists attack the Black Panthers for being nationalists. Although the Panthers denied it repeatedly till they stopped denying it, the reactionaries said the Black Panthers hated whites and substituted one racism for another. The crypto-Trotskyists chimed in that the Black Panthers isolated themselves from their class allies among whites. All these claims are as false as the printed word is black. The Black Panthers

**Right into 1969, the Black Panthers were saying, “Not only are we for the right of self determination, but we’re also internationalists.”**

willingly gave up Stokely Carmichael’s support by opposing Black capitalism, and they had two comrades give up their lives in opposing the narrow nationalism of US’s Ron Karenga. How many members of PLP were killed in the line of duty opposing white racism?

Countless BPP articles criticized “cultural nationalism,” or “pork-chop nationalism,” and in a way consistent with Maoism. The Black Panthers applied Fanon, but only in a way consistent with Maoism and in specific to Black people. The consistent theme is that culture has to be revolutionary to support the people.

The Black Panthers hated the slogans “Black is beautiful” or “I’m Black and Proud.” They believed that these ideas were used as a substitute for a real culture of struggle. “Those who believe in the ‘I’m Black and Proud’ theory — believe that there is dignity inherent in wearing naturals; that a buba makes a slave a man; and that a common language; Swahili; makes all of us brothers.” This led to an emphasis on sleeping with people who had the right hairdos. “On the way to and from this shopping and spending they are still observing the oppression and exploitation of their people — in different clothes. ... Cultural nationalism manifests itself in many ways but all of these manifestations are essentially grounded in one fact; a universal denial and ignoring of the present political, social, and economic realities and a concentration on the past as a frame of reference.”(3)

Sometimes people say “it’s a Black thing” to mean cultural nationalism. Other times we hear this about the Panthers in the same breath as the lie that they weren’t communists. This lie comes after the fact, taking advantage of the repression of the Black Panthers and the inaccessibility of their old writings. That is the very common method of distortion used against the Panthers today.

If the Black Panthers were just a “Black thing,” then why did they have all that international news in their newspaper, offer to fight for the Viet Cong, call for Third World solidarity,

follow Mao, print articles from whites, Chinese and people of all other nationalities, support their Latino and Puerto Rican comrades and even run an article in Chinese once? The Black Panthers helped Latino and Puerto Rican comrades print their own newspapers; the inserts are included with the Black Panther papers. The Black Panther papers also had their own articles about the Latino comrades.(4)

Right into 1969, the Black Panthers were saying they were internationalists. “Not only are we for the right of self determination, but we’re also internationalists.”(5)

From the beginning the Black Panthers focused on Vietnam, which is why Huey Newton offered to organize fighters to send to Vietnam to help the Viet Cong. They referred to Vietnam as the “highest manifestation” of U.S. imperialist violence. That’s not narrow nationalism.

When the Black Panthers asked for support in the effort to free Huey Newton and other leaders, they did not stop in the Black nation. Panthers including Bobby Seale went to Sweden for support and made sure to criticize the Swedish government for not opposing the Vietnam War. Moreover, they called on support from the African, Latin and Asian brothers and sisters. In the same pages, they made a determined effort to support the Arabs against Israel. Articles such as “Third World Appeals for Huey’s Freedom” belie the claim that the Black Panthers were just narrow nationalists.(6)

**MYTH #2: THE PANTHERS DIDN’T FIGHT REVISIONISM**

In line with the narrow nationalism charge, there is the charge that since the Black Panthers only cared about national struggle, they ignored the struggle against revisionism. This lie is countered by the truth that the Black Panther newspaper ran articles from Mao’s Chinese press service verbatim.

The Black Panthers demonstrated a detailed knowledge of who supports revisionism and who doesn’t throughout the period reviewed. In one article, they wrote about Albania: “TIRANA—Today’s ‘bashkimi’ (unity) in a commentary entitled ‘30 years after Munich’ strongly denounced Soviet revisionism and U.S. Imperialism for their collusion to re-divide the world into their spheres of influence and to plot another Munich.”(7)

The Black Panthers also linked the U.S. bombing of Laos to Moscow:

“Trends in this country to form closer ties to the Soviet Union and the experts of the Soviet Union to reciprocate are further indications of revisionism, which has led the people of Russia and the people under her control, i.e. Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, East Germany and Yugoslavia closer into the gaping jaws of colonialism and the searing teeth of capitalism and has produced the aggressive movements of Russian troops and cut out movements of Russian troops and diplomatic barks thrown at our brothers in China.”(8)

**MYTH #3: PANTHERS HAD NO CLASS THING**

If the Black Panthers were just narrow nationalists who didn’t oppose revisionism, the same slander and libel would continue to add that the Panthers didn’t grasp the class contra-

diction within U.S. borders. In truth, the Panthers shared Lenin and Mao's ambivalence about the labor aristocracy workers and wondered how bad the situation was and how far the labor aristocracy would go in opposing revolution. On the other hand, for a time they took Mao's official line on class. Those who oppose the Black Panthers of this period are only opposing Mao's line, not defending it.

Black Panther interviewer: "It's true, is it not Huey, that racism got its birth through economic reasons so that one group could superimpose its economic power over another."<sup>9</sup>

Huey Newton: "I would agree with that. It think the prime thing was the economic rape of Africa."(9)

In the same issue of the paper, the Black Panthers celebrate the fifth anniversary of Mao's statement on the condition of Blacks in North America. Under a picture of Mao in a later issue, an article explains some of the things that have happened since Mao's statement. The article is so Maoist in content that MIM cannot be sure that it was not written by the Chinese news services, because it appears that the Black Panthers sometimes ran articles from Hsinhua without crediting it.

Without anywhere disagreeing with Mao, and referring to him as "our great leader," the Panthers adopted the position that the Black nation is just another oppressed nation. It fits within Maoist theory as an oppressed nation, not as an imperialist country needing long, legal struggle. "At present, the Black American struggle is, in the main, taking the form of violent struggle."(10)

## **Referring to Mao as "our great leader," they quote important parts of Mao's article: "In the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle."**

The Panthers point to violent outbreaks by Blacks in 120 cities in 10 days. They also say that the assassination of Martin Luther King after Mao's statement changed the climate: "The fact that an exponent of non-violence like the clergyman Martin Luther King fell a victim to the violence of the white racists is itself a hard and bitter lesson."(10)

They go on to quote important parts of Mao's article: "In the final analysis, national struggle is a matter of class struggle." This reminds us of problems the Euro-American labor movement was having. While Lenin said "politics is concentrated economics," he also said that no struggle that is not political and opposing the government is a class struggle of proletarians. Just because politics boils down to economics doesn't mean we can ignore politics. Likewise, the revisionists

reading Mao take the above quote to mean that since national struggle boils down to class struggle, then we can ignore national struggle, when Mao clearly stated the opposite. In "On Contradiction," Mao explains that class struggle may take the backseat to national struggle under conditions of occupation and war. In other words, superficial class struggle will take the backseat to are really more important class struggles.

The article continues: "The broad labouring sections among the white people of the United States have common interests with the Afro-Americans." Quoting Mao further, they say, "The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation. ... The struggle of the Black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class." (11) Elsewhere we will handle the fact that what Mao predicted about the white workers did not come to pass.

## **MYTH #4: THE ORIGINAL PANTHERS WEREN'T MAOISTS**

Headline titles, beginning quotations, ending quotations, whole pages of quotations, book ads, regular printing of Mao's "Eight Points of Attention" and the "Three Main Rules of Discipline," record ads and Hsinhua and Peking Review articles from the Chinese Communist press reprinted — all of these paid homage to Mao's works. One would have to be blind not to see all the effort in applying Maoism.

Before the Black Panthers existed, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP), with its multi-"racial" working class approach, obtained recognition from Mao as the vanguard within U.S. borders. This caused the only jab against Mao found anywhere in two years of the Black Panther paper. "PL, with Mao's support, has done everything possible to slander, expose and jail every Black nationalist leader. PL used the prestige of Chinese support and urged Malcolm X to work openly."(12) PLP broke with Mao in 1971 and said the break dated back to 1969. Elsewhere, we will look at the changing relationship between the Chinese Communist Party and its fraternal parties within U.S. borders.

The Black Panther paper of this period was as clear as could be that the Black Panthers were Maoists and internationalists, not just revolutionary nationalists. Page 1 of Oct. 19, 1968 has one article and it starts in bold print headlines: "Chairman Mao's great statement points out direction of struggle of the Black people in the United States." Again, the paper goes over the statement from Mao of Aug. 8, 1963 concerning Black people.

In the same issue, an article on Japan exclaims in all capital letters: "Long Live Mao Tse-tung's Thought!" Then it quotes Mao again in a typical statement: "The Japanese revolution will undoubtedly be victorious, provided the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism is really integrated with the concrete practice of the Japanese revolution."(13)

The extent of this dedication includes a good practice of

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

criticism and self-criticism. Having run a photo of Mao and Lin Biao together, later issues of the paper made an apology to Chairman Mao. In one mystery of foresight, the Black Panthers spoke of Lin Biao as "purged" long before it became official.(14)

The Black Panthers loved to run articles hailing Mao from all over the world. They showed that liberation fighters everywhere were taking up "Mao Tse-tung thought." Examples included the statements from the Pan-Africanist Congress, the Bechuanaland People's Party, ZANU of Zimbabwe, a New Zealand party, South West African communists — all of whom supported Mao Tse-tung Thought and opposed Soviet revisionism.

We don't know how much clearer the Panthers could have been when they said, "Revolution Depends On Mao Tse-Tung's Thought" in their article on Southwest Africa.(15)

The Panthers did not only adopt Mao as their leader, they also saw China as a key ally of the world's people. "Now with the advent of the People's Republic of China on the scene as an alternative supplier of essential goods, the United States is no longer in a coercive position. The non-white nations can now go to China for their needs. This freed them from the strings which forcibly attached them to the United States."(16) The Black Panthers did not take a narrow nationalist view where international aid is necessarily refused, especially where the result will be greater dependence on U.S. imperialism.

#### **MYTH #5: THE PANTHERS WERE JUST CHARITY WORKERS**

Many now want to remember the Black Panthers as only a breakfast program for children or medical clinic, devoid of revolutionary content. Again and again, even making it a front page headline, the Panthers said, "youth make the revolution," and "Feed the youth and they will feed the revolution."

An article by Landon Williams explained the original view of the breakfast program: "The chain was broken: a free breakfast program was born in Oakland. ... To the half-baked, the narrow-minded and the avaricious fool, this may seem as though the Black Panther Party now endorses reform action and is no longer interested in revolution."(17)

#### **MYTH #6: THE PANTHERS DIDN'T HAVE A PARTY STRUCTURE**

After one article in the newspaper suggested how to organize "rip-offs," Huey Newton and the Central Committee acted swiftly in following issues of the newspaper. First there were criticisms of the whole idea of having rip-offs as just an action of "provocateurs" and various fools. Then there was a purge that went into 1969.

The purges of 1969 followed Mao's advice of combating liberalism and ultrademocracy. They adopted the strategy of raising the ideological level of the membership and not taking in new members. This was especially important because later in 1969 the BPP changed strategies and emphasized its united front against fascism, as Mao signaled it should by among other things references to Nixon's fascism.(18)

"The governing body of the Black Panther Party, which is our Central Committee, has decided that in order to pre-

serve democratic centralism and to destroy ultrademocracy in our ranks, that it is of absolute necessity to understand the decadence of ultra-democracy. ... In conclusion, we say that all those who aspire to opportunism are directly related to the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat."(19)

During this purge, Bobby Seale mustered his most radical stuff before copping out entirely shortly thereafter. He attacked cultural nationalism, opposed Black capitalism, defended white revolutionaries, supported purges and drew the line on accepting new members.(20)

David Hilliard also took a strong role at that time. According to Hilliard, "we relate to what Lenin said, 'that a party that purges itself grows to become stronger.'" Addressing fears of Stalin that white radicals and others were raising, Hilliard said, "the one thing we respect about Stalin, is that Stalin was able to capture the will of the people. He was able to put forth the will of the people more so than anyone else."(21)

Hilliard had a poster of Stalin on his wall. The Chinese probably supplied the poster as they did many graphics used on the pages of the Black Panther newspaper. The connection between the Chinese Communists led by Mao and the Black Panthers was both ideological and highly concrete. Just as in the 1960s, tiny Trotskyist sects criticized the Black Panthers for "Stalinism," so today the crypto-Trotskyists hide behind their own alleged Maoism or "Marxism-Leninism" and libel and slander the Black Panthers as part of their continuing plot against Maoism.

#### Notes:

1. Dated references are to the Black Panther newspaper. Nov. 16, 1968, p. 12.
2. "Long Live the Victory of the People's War!" Sept. 3, 1965.
3. Feb. 2, 1969, p. 6.
4. See "One Pig Dead — One Wounded: Brown Brothers Beat the Heat," May 11, 1969, p. 4; "Persecution of the Young Lords," May 19, 1969, p. 14.
5. Aug. 9, 1969, p. 13.
6. Sept. 14, 1968.
7. Oct. 12, 1968, p. 8.
8. "Why We Support China," April 20, 1969, p. 20. See also "Washington/Moscow Collaboration Intensified," March 3, 1969, p. 8; "Nuclear Fraud Betrays People's Interest," March 31, 1969, p. 11; "Inducing & Forcing Arab People to Surrender," March 31, 1969, p. 15.
9. March 16, 1968, p. 18.
10. May 18, 1968, p. 11.
11. May 18, 1968, p. 25.
12. "Imperialism, White Chauvinism and PL," April 20, 1969, p. 7.
13. Oct. 19, 1968, p. 4.
14. October 26, 1968.
15. Oct. 12, 1968, p. 8; Nov. 2, 1968, p. 2; Dec. 21, 1968, p. 18; March 16, 1969, p. 12.
16. Sept. 14, 1968, p. 3. See also twice reprinted article from Peking Review, "The Just Struggle of the Afro-Americans Is Sure to Win," May 25, 1969, p. 14.
17. "Reform or Revolution?" March 3, 1969, p. 12.
18. The turning point for that is seen in the May 31, 1969 issue, when they started the practice of printing lengthy quotes from Georgi Dimitroff in 1935 on the united front.
19. Jan. 25, 1969, p. 17.
20. March 3, 1969, p. 10. See also "What is Ultra-Democracy?" Feb. 2, 1969, p. 14.
21. April 20, 1969, p. 18.

# Biography Calls Up Appreciation for Du Bois

W.E.B. DU BOIS: BIOGRAPHY OF A RACE

BY DAVID LEVERING LEWIS

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY, 1993

by MC5

This excellent biography increases our appreciation for W.E.B. Du Bois. MIM recommends this book to its readers with few reservations.

The most apparent weakness of the book is that it ends in 1919, while Du Bois lived until August 28, 1963. By 1919, Du Bois did not yet consider himself a communist as he did later in life. The other most obvious weakness of the book is that it aims itself partly at the academic elite. The vocabulary used in the book is tough going.

Given Lewis' bourgeois academic credentials, including funding from dubious sources, MIM worried that the book would be narrowly apolitical in approach and attempting to tone down W.E.B. Du Bois as so many histories of Black leaders do. As if to forestall this criticism and as if he knew all along that his book would not fully cover Du Bois's life, Lewis made abundant references to the post- 1919 Du Bois to show the implications and durability of Du Bois's work. Readers should find the book entirely relevant to this day.

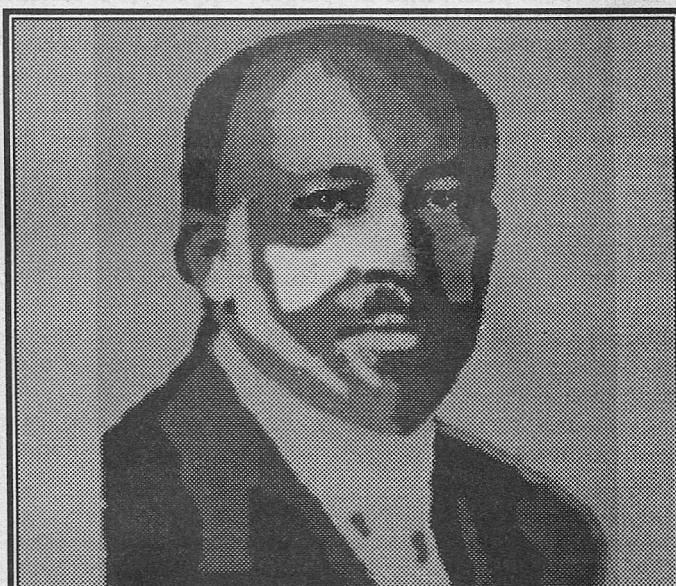
Unlike the typical academician, Lewis uses colloquial expressions which are useful to telling Du Bois's story. Lewis continually refers to Booker T. Washington by the derogatory but deserved term the "Wizard." Narrow-minded academia may find that Lewis' work handles subject matters that it does not approve of as legitimate — especially matters of ideology, communism, organizational bickering, gender and race.

The benefits of the density of this book include a real learnedness on an immense variety of important subjects. Academicians will value this book, because it does not accept Du Bois at face-value and so the book checks up on Du Bois's version of events and claims to correct it at numerous points. For our part at MIM, we review this book with an eye to what Maoists learn from it and why it is worthwhile to plow through.

## DU BOIS ON NEOCOLONIALISM

Later in life Du Bois made frequent self-criticism for not picking up Marxism-Leninism and thorough class analysis fast enough. However, in his political career he was never too far from the correct line.

As explained in MIM Theory 7 "Proletarian Feminist Revolutionary Nationalism on the Communist Road," imperialist multinational corporations are much too powerful relative to entire African and other Third World countries for small elite classes to steer their countries on independent courses. For this reason, capitalism may seem to work in imperialist countries, but capitalism cannot bring national independence to countries oppressed by imperialism. It's much easier to buy



*"The Negro is exploited ... and the exploitation comes ... from the white capitalist and equally from the white proletariat."*

— Du Bois

off, threaten, imprison or murder a small class of people that attempts to pursue its interests independent of capitalism than it is to intimidate a whole country armed for Maoist People's War.

Long before Du Bois took to Marxism-Leninism, and before de-colonization took place, Du Bois recognized that the upper classes of the colonial countries would not be strong enough to be independent. A "body of local private capitalists, even if they are black, can never free Africa; they will simply sell it into new slavery to old masters overseas." (p. 9) This was a good prediction — made in 1914.

## WHITE WORKING CLASS

A strong theme running throughout the book involves the white working class. While still in graduate school, Du Bois wrote feminist fiction in which talented Black women seek to make their way in the business world. While white capital is willing to use Black female talents, white workers rebel to get Black women fired and according to Lewis, Du Bois concluded that his "fiercest enemy is the white working class." (p. 133)

At the same time, during the early years, Du Bois believed that some day decades in the future the Black worker and white worker would be united. (pp. 393-4) His beliefs on this very much parallel MIM's. The road to unity is not at all

straight. There will have to be a few strategic periods of time in which the white worker will be treated as enemy, including a period of dictatorship of the oppressed nations over the oppressor nations. (See MIM Theory 7, pp. 15-36.)

The radicals in the early years of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) believed that workers must unite. On the other hand, labor leaders like Samuel Gompers were already setting the tone for a century of white working class chauvinism. Gompers, a Jewish labor union leader, denied reports that he called for expelling Blacks from the union movement, but a telegram from Gompers to Du Bois did say that he doubted that Blacks could understand the labor movement. (p. 394)

One of the earliest sociologists, Du Bois conducted statistical survey work in the Black community. Among other things, he learned that early 20th century labor unions actively excluded oppressed nationalities. In 1902 less than 40,000 people out of 1.2 million were not white. (p. 222)

While doing this sort of sociological work, Du Bois came to a conclusion Maoists recognize: "only learn by intimate contact with the masses, and not by wholesale arguments covering millions separate in time and space." (p. 285)

In 1912, Du Bois was dealing with the white working class labor aristocracy the same way that Lenin and Zinoviev would during World War I. He divided the issue into two, saying that when labor fights for humanity its "mission is divine," but when it fights to exclude all but whites from the unions, then Blacks saw the "union white man as their enemy." (p. 420) Indeed, it was in that context that Du Bois urged Blacks to cross white picket lines. In 1933, after the period covered in this book, Du Bois would write, "The Negro is exploited ... and the exploitation comes ... from the white capitalist and equally from the white proletariat." (*The Crisis* Vol. 4, No. 5)

Du Bois backed up his socialist rhetoric by voting for Eugene Debs for President in 1904. (p. 421) At that time there was no communist party in the United States. Lenin later expressed his sympathy for Debs as well.

At the beginning of World War I, Du Bois may have beaten Lenin and Zinoviev to the punch on the problem of the white working class. He saw clearly the causes of the war and the contract offered by the European imperialists to their own working classes: "The white workingman has been asked to share the spoil of exploiting 'chinks and niggers.'" (p. 504) By itself, this quotation raises the question of whether or not Du Bois had fewer illusions than Lenin going into World War I. This is a question we cannot answer here. We can say that in all the essentials, Du Bois hit the nail on the head. According to Du Bois, the capitalists sought to unite their workers with them to exploit the world through a "nation composed of united capital and labor." (p. 504) Toward this end, the capitalists did not propose equality of property but a certain percentage of the gross.

According to Du Bois, "By threatening to send English capital to China and Mexico, by threatening to hire Negro laborers in America, as well as by old-age pensions and accident insurance, we gain industrial peace at home at the mightiest

cost of war abroad." (p. 505) This one sentence sums up the whole problem of the imperialist countries this century, a problem MIM is still trying to address.

### INTERNATIONALISM

One of the reasons that MIM can claim Du Bois for its own movement is Du Bois's lifelong internationalism and feminism. From his earliest days, Du Bois linked together the struggle of Black people with oppressed people everywhere.

As editor of *The Horizon*, Du Bois wrote about Galician Jews, the Belgians in the Congo, U.S. imperialism in Cuba and the Philippines and the Seminole Wars. Unlike narrow nationalists, Du Bois did not assume his people were the only oppressed ones in the world. In fact, he considered the 1898 invasions of Cuba and the Philippines the most criminal acts since the Seminole Wars. (p. 338)

Using the example of the Irish and after mentioning imperialism in South America, the Congo and Turkey, Du Bois justified revolutionary war against the British as in the 1916 Easter Rebellion. (p. 516) At about that time, Du Bois's view favoring revolutionary violence was demonstrating itself to be consolidated.

On the upbeat side, Du Bois wrote an article about Japan's defeat of Russia in 1904, arguing that it was the beginning of the end of "white supremacy." (p. 370) Later Du Bois would find heroes in Mao's China.

As time went on, the progressive nature of internationalism became more and more clear to Du Bois. Criticizing racist, pacifist socialists of his day, he said that the revolution they envisioned was for white people. Pacifism among whites ignored the violence of imperialism in the Congo, the Amazon, South Africa, India and the South Seas — misnaming it "carrying civilization to the natives." (p. 526)

Du Bois went on to correctly link such international examples to his own cause. The actions of imperialism abroad only taught Du Bois the nature of his enemy. He asked why white workers opposed Black migration to the North. Furthermore, he said that Blacks had come to view white workers as their greatest enemy: "White Northern laborers find killing Negroes a safe, lucrative employment which commends them to the American Federation of Labor." (p. 526)

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

One of the things Du Bois is best known for is supplanting Booker T. Washington's leadership of the Black people. Washington was a Black educator and scientist who took up a career as the top political leader and patronage source of Blacks. Even more than Martin Luther King Jr. would later, Washington believed in "turning the other cheek" to the point of professing concern for bad Black morals that caused them to get lynched and the pain that must have caused white mobs to deviate from their Christian beliefs.

Washington's program was simple: obtain economic power first and concede whites everything else. Toward this end, he believed Black people must focus on vocational education, live separately and unequally, give up voting rights and eschew liberal arts educations. Since such a program was

pleasing to the white ear, white philanthropists and government officials gave Washington considerable funding, power over Black appointments, and media attention. The white ruling class also agreed to rein in the rednecks from the white working class since Washington had pretty much granted everything the white working class wanted anyway. (p. 175)

Du Bois came to stand for obtaining the same education for Blacks that whites received, equal voting rights and legitimacy for inter-marriage. He originally believed that the "Talented Tenth" of Black people must obtain education and political power and lead their own peoples.

Though elitist, Du Bois's conception was more progressive than Booker T. Washington's idea at the time. As Maoists we are fans of vocational education and opponents of the kind of education that simply certifies a ruling class's fitness to rule. Hence, on the surface our ideas might seem to be close to those of Booker T. Washington's, but in reality, Washington would have disagreed completely with our putting "politics in command" in education. We stress the "red" in "red and expert," because it never does any good to have an education (of any kind) without knowing what to do with it and how to apply it toward that end.

At the time of the Washington/Du Bois split, at the beginning of this century, vocational education was not accorded the prestige that it deserves and was hence undeveloped compared with what we as Maoists plan under socialism. Washington and his white backers supported industrial (vocational) education for Blacks in the transformation from an agricultural slave economy to an industrial capitalist economy in the south. Power comes from having college education in the current society, and Du Bois understood that to defeat the enemy it was necessary to know its weapons. That approach remains correct within capitalist society until that time when the revolutionary forces establish their own base areas and education systems, and vocational education can take its rightful place as an honorable course.

Occasionally the industrialists and businesspeople of today complain about the irrelevance of liberal arts degrees or the excess of college graduates. Yet, their criticism of liberal arts education is different than ours. The capitalists want a pliant and large supply of skilled workers willing to live a life of stagnation in the economy of late imperialism. To them it sometimes seems that liberal arts education gives too many people skills and understandings of power. It's not that they want to accord vocational education its due respect; they just plan for college graduates or people with their skills to rule without anyone capable of looking over their shoulders.

#### **SWITCH FROM ELITIST IDEALISM TO MATERIALISM**

The breakpoint in Du Bois political career is connected to his career as an academician. Originally Du Bois believed strongly in the ability of people like himself to point out the irrationality of racism to white society. As educated people like himself arose, he expected they would obtain many laurels in academia, extensive funding from the government, and finally recognition from white capitalists who would fund their work. In short, Du Bois took academia on its word that merit is

rewarded without regard to politics and that good ideas conquer all.

Yet, even as the accolades flowed in from Max Weber, William James and other leading lights of his day in academia, Du Bois never obtained substantial resources for his academic work. After a decade at Atlanta University in which he made that university famous for annual research on race, Du Bois came to realize that he would never have as much influence as he thought by staying on the academic road. White capitalists and the white working class were not even sure that Black people should be educated, and they were not as open to supporting his kind of education and research as he presumed.

It was at this time that Du Bois made the switch from academician to agitator with the encouragement of advanced elements of the Socialist Party. At the time, the Socialist Party was much more advanced than it is today, though even today it retains a strong opposition to capitalist war and bourgeois politics — a regular fountain of wisdom compared with, for example, the Socialist Party in France.

In the switch from professor to agitator, Du Bois played a leading role in founding the Pan-Africanist Congress and later the NAACP. To the lessons learned about obstacles to academic work Du Bois was now to add lessons about obstacles to political organizing. It was only a matter of time before Du Bois took up Marxist materialism, consistently and thoroughly.

In politics, Du Bois's experience with Booker T. Washington taught him the same kinds of lessons that Lenin was learning on the need for correct movement leadership. Booker T. Washington was the epitome of opportunism: "It wasn't a matter of ideals or anything of that sort... He had no faith in white people, not the slightest, and he was most popular among them, because if he was talking with a white man he sat there and found out what the white man wanted him to say, and then as soon as possible, he said it." (p. 274)

#### **GENDER**

Lewis pays appropriate attention to gender. Du Bois always propagated a good line on gender, sometimes to counter lines of other Black male activists such as William Monroe Trotter, who is sometimes thought of as more radical than Du Bois.

Du Bois explicitly defended alliance with Euro-American women when some raised doubts about the usefulness of such an alliance. He sought an equal role for women in political organizations, in education and in voting rights. Although MIM has shown that later in the century Euro-American women as a group were not a natural ally of Black liberation, MIM believes it reasonable and progressive for Du Bois to have tried this approach at the beginning of the century.

On the book jacket the publishers wisely appeal to feminist and pseudo-feminist audiences by making it clear the book treats gender issues. To do so, the publishers make use of an advance review by Paula Giddings which says, "David Lewis skillfully evokes 'Will' the man — inspiring, flawed, a mass of contradictions, not the least of which was his feminist passion and patriarchal practice."

In defense of Du Bois, MIM argues that Giddings has vul-

garized the word "practice" into a backdoor for Liberalism in a way that will be popular with pseudo-feminists unwilling to examine social structures and the need for political action. Excluded from the idea of "practice" in Giddings's mind is Du Bois's fight to include women in the Niagara movement, his numerous published essays on feminist issues and his preference to install a radical white woman as president of the NAACP. Du Bois might as well have skipped his historic and precedent-setting work behind these actions as far as his impression on Giddings was concerned, because she was still going to conclude that he had a "patriarchal practice."

By "practice" Giddings really means "lifestyle." Lewis portrays Du Bois as a man who did not choose to marry or treat his wife as an intellectual equal (and Lewis identifying with Du Bois in this elite regard agrees his wife was not Du Bois's equal), Du Bois as a distant father not playing much of a role in family matters and as a man running around four continents having extra-marital affairs as he went. This is what Giddings meant by "patriarchal practice."

MIM agrees with Giddings, to a point, that one should lead as progressive a lifestyle as possible under a system of oppression. We are not aware of the detailed kind of context around 1900 that enables us to say that Du Bois was better than or worse than other biological men in lifestyle matters. How many men bothered to educate their daughters and put a majority of their salaries into educating their daughter at a forward-looking private school? What portion of men allowed women to run the family finances and found a way to give the wife the amount of money she asked for to educate her daughter and pay for other expenses while admittedly shipped off to distant England? How were extra-marital affairs regarded in that context? Lewis admits that he doesn't even really have Du Bois's wife's opinions on these matters, nor does he explain what would be considered a progressive lifestyle at the time.

To expect Du Bois to have married (or treated his wife as) an equal is to ask something impossible in his time. Du Bois was the first Black Harvard Ph.D. in an age where Blacks were deemed uniformly unworthy of college admission. It was not his lifestyle's fault that Black women were not trained by the system in the skills of wielding power. That is a group level problem, not the problem of Du Bois's lifestyle.

We see here the logical marriage of ultraleft Liberalism with idealism, in that Giddings adopts some rhetoric to the left of Du Bois but demands something obviously impossible given the group oppression that existed at the time. Indeed, nowhere in the book do we see that Du Bois claims his gender-related "lifestyle" is something to emulate as a path to liberation. True radicals in class, gender and ethnic matters such as Du Bois do not make such false and impossible claims. They recognize that true progress is achieved only through uniting social groups of people to struggle for group-level change.

In fairness to Giddings, we should say that a book jacket is a means of selling books and not a way to make accurate analytical statements and MIM does not doubt Giddings's contributions in selling Lewis's book. Furthermore, in an overall sense, as long as we recognize that all individuals have "a

mass of contradictions" and "patriarchal practice" under a patriarchal system, then we can agree somewhat with Giddings, who only errs in pitting that "practice" against Du Bois's political work for feminism.

#### RAPE AND RACE

Although he lived long before the theoretical contributions of Catharine MacKinnon on rape, Du Bois never accepted the mob discourse of rape of his day. On the surface of critical events like the watershed race riot of Atlanta in 1906 there was the alleged assault on white women by Black men, and beneath that was economic competition of Blacks and whites. (p. 334)

According to Du Bois, his own sexual life was jumpstarted by a rapist biological woman. Having grown up as a bookworm and tireless manual laborer, Du Bois appears to have been inexperienced in connection to his own body as a young man. His own explanation of his initiation was that "I was literally raped by the unhappy wife who was my landlady." (p. 71)

No doubt outside of radical political and highly intellectual circles, Du Bois's idea would be seen as unmanly and something to scoff at. Yet, it was not the only sense in which Du Bois sought to understand gender issues from the ground up without any preconceptions. MIM would say that Du Bois showed insight into the issue of appropriation of sexuality and hence gained a possible understanding of the situation of oppressed biological women.

Du Bois also wrestled with an ancient dichotomy, the pedestal and whore contradiction. Supposedly "respectable" women of the time aimed toward motherhood. Men come to view the mother-image kind of women as inappropriate for sex. Other women are whores, and both appropriate and inappropriate for sex. Du Bois reflected on the group that was simultaneously mother, wife and whore. According to Lewis, Du Bois's thoughts on these subjects and initial sexual experiences made him "pathological" for life in sexual matters. In contrast, MIM would only say Du Bois lived in a "pathological" patriarchy and like everyone else, did not escape it: women's roles as mothers, wives and whores appear separate but do in fact flow together under patriarchy.

Often the "commoner" reflects the values of the ruling class and has a harsh judgment of radicals, Blacks and intellectuals. In the case of Du Bois, all three are rolled up in one and this makes for a dynamite combination in issues of sexual mores. His collection of essays on Black conditions was such a call for equality that whites took it as a threat to "their" women. In response to Du Bois's publication of the *Souls of Black Folk*, the Houston Chronicle called for Du Bois to be indicted for "inciting rape."

Fortunately many others reviewed the book more seriously. On the positive side, Du Bois heard from socialists who supported him and called for solidarity with white workers. This gave him something to think about. On the other hand, he had his opinion of white trash reaffirmed. Hence, despite being basically idealist, Du Bois continued to learn about and express some economic explanations of racism. On the other

hand, he also expressed the opinion from his experiences of seeing lynching first hand and his experience of how reviewers felt threatened by him—that the whole race problem boiled down to control of women. White men wanted control of both Black and white women, while they wanted to deny access to white women by Black men.

Seeing this dynamic very early was Ida B. Wells-Barnett, a Black woman who organized the first anti-lynching efforts. We make a mental note from reading this book that Ida Wells-Barnett deserves further investigation for her historical role as a leader compared with other Black leaders. She, Du Bois and others spent much of their political careers running from one lynch mob scene to another to cover it for newspapers, to arrange for protection of the victims and to put local officials and police on the spot. These events that killed 100 or 200 Blacks every year were so pivotal that one of Booker T. Washington's biggest and most common (but false) complaints against Du Bois was that Du Bois lacked the physical courage to rush to the Atlanta race riots while Washington himself risked himself to go. In actual fact, "Du Bois rushed to the city by train to sit on the steps of South Hall to protect [his wife and daughter —MC44] Nina and Yolande with a shotgun." (p. 335)

On the other hand, Du Bois realized where the ideology protecting women led. The "northern version of the Atlanta riot" in Springfield, Illinois was the force that welded together Du Bois and various whites, including the politically advanced white woman Mary Ovington, into the NAACP. The Springfield riot was instigated by a white woman: "What the hell are you fellas afraid of?...Women want protection!" (p. 388) she yelled to the white mob gathered outside a jail. "Boardinghouse keeper Kate Howard's bawling challenge (the press called her 'Joan of Arc of the mob') led to more than eighty injuries, six fatal shootings, two lynchings, more than \$200,000 in damage, and the flight of some two thousand African-Americans before the National Guard restored order." (p. 388) In this sense, we can say that Kate Howard was the mother of the NAACP, just as Ronald Reagan was the father of the Black Panther Party.

Like historical literature on Asian immigrants from the time, Lewis's biography does no cheerleading for white women generally, while it accords hero roles to white women like Mary Ovington. From the perspective of the immigrants and Blacks of the day, white women might be even more narrow-minded than men. While some capitalists and political leaders could at least deal with Blacks and immigrants, white women staying at home had no such cosmopolitan experiences. We learn for instance that the original leader of the NAACP and white male was not allowed by his wife to bring Blacks or Jews into the house. (p. 400)

#### GENDER: SUFFRAGE

Du Bois himself did not believe "the slightest reason for supposing that white American women... are going to be any more intelligent, liberal or humane toward the black, the poor and unfortunate than white men are." (p. 418-9) He also called out white suffragists who said, "Do not touch the Negro prob-

lem. It will offend the South." (p. 417) Nonetheless he polemicized against Blacks who said no alliance with white woman should be made. Quite the contrary, he held that Blacks must support women's suffrage as a matter of principle. (p. 419)

#### DU BOIS'S PRAGMATIST MISTAKE

If we are to avoid idealism, then we must choose from options that exist within the real world. Sometimes the need for this materialist approach is confused with the reactionary philosophy of pragmatism, which taken literally means the philosophy of being practical without regard for larger issues.

Unfortunately for Du Bois, he literally learned something of a materialist approach in his classes with the grandfather of American pragmatism, Harvard professor William James. James called on students to make real world choices, choices of the possible — and not fall for big Germanic philosophical abstractions, like Hegel's which amounted to a call on God.

It was the Bay Area organization that today claims the name of the Black Panther Party which first pointed out to MIM Du Bois's mistake of working for U.S. military intelligence, literally with the mission of spying on Blacks and shoring up the U.S. effort in World War I. This mistake will no doubt cost Du Bois much support among today's youth, who instinctively realize the evils of pragmatism perhaps without fully understanding it.

During presidential and Congressional elections, the pragmatists are always the ones to say we must vote for Democrats, because they are the lesser of the two evils. These pragmatists are correct to say that either one or the other must win the election, and they thus confuse dialectical materialists who seek change on the basis of real world choices.

For his part, Du Bois thought he was waging a principled fight against idealists with no real world plans for change by pushing Blacks to get behind U.S. imperialism in World War I. The imperialists offered the carrot of military power and integration, first by offering to train perhaps two thousand Black military officers, and second by giving some Black leaders such as Du Bois military laurels such as a captain or major's rank in the Army. Moreover, Du Bois was aware of the potential unifying effect of war on a nation. He thought Blacks might indeed win full voting rights for fighting in the war and become accepted as hyphenated Afro-Americans, as the Irish and Italians had become.

Du Bois was not naive about World War I. In fact, until 1918 he wrote against it extensively and even foreshadowed some of Lenin's arguments in his book *Imperialism*. Du Bois believed that World War I was most centrally a war over colonies in Africa put over on the masses by financial circles in Europe.

Yet in 1918 Du Bois saw no way to stop the U.S. entry into the war and believed the choice was between having Black military officers and not having them. Having witnessed the number of times in U.S. history that trained Black troops were the only counterweight to white mob lynchings, (e.g. read about the 24th Infantry in Houston, p. 541) it is not surprising that Du Bois concluded that Blacks needed the military experience and power that went along with a role in a world war.

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**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

V. I. Lenin's success in getting Russia out of World War I should have inspired Du Bois into realizing some of the potential of his own material situation, but he became fixated on the narrow issue of Black civil rights and ended up setting back Black power and bringing disunity to the emerging Black nation. At that time, Du Bois did not yet have the broader perspective and theoretical tools on the forces of social progress that he did in later life. Rather than always starting from the vantage point of the international proletariat, Du Bois did what seemed to be good for the narrow interests of Black workers. He did not realize the full implications of setting the Black proletariat against proletarians from other nations to die in a war for colonies and military vendors' profits. If he had started from the interests of the proletarian class internationally, he would have realized that proletarians gain nothing from killing each other for the imperialists and he would have sought to weaken the war effort, however imperceptible the results might have been at first.

The exercise of setting out to discover who one's friends are and who one's enemies are might seem overly abstract and difficult, too much an issue of theoretical political economy. Yet Du Bois did not quite realize who the friends of Black progress were during World War I and he ended up setting back Black progress with his pragmatist mistake of joining U.S. military intelligence.

Seeing such mistakes and the mistake of voting for hopelessly imperialist Democrats, some people jump to the other extreme and take up idealism. The Progressive Labor Party and other Trotskyists and crypto-Trotskyists are clear examples of this sort of idealism where all that matters is reciting the correct poetry, having distant communist goals and good intentions. As a result, the PLP always sidesteps the issue of who concretely should have been rallied to defeat the Nazis during World War II. The PLP rejects Stalin's and Mao's concept of united front essentially because the PLP believes that the goal of defeating the Nazis did not justify the alliance with impure class forces including imperialists. This sort of approach goes too far in avoiding real world approaches and not surprisingly, no PLP or other Trotskyist or crypto-Trotskyist revolution has succeeded anywhere in the world. It seems that pious intentions are not sufficient to replace the analytical work of theory.

To judge the real-world choices we have made, it is important not to judge them on overly narrow bases on the one hand or only on the bases of impossible abstractions on the other hand. When we judge a theory and corresponding line, we must evaluate it from the international and historical perspective overall. Trotskyists and other idealists of today have gone too far in criticizing Stalin and Mao without demonstrating that their alternative was in fact superior in the real world. The absence of Trotskyist or other idealist revolutions is too much to ignore. On the other hand, Du Bois made the opposite mistake of making a real world choice unconnected to his long-range goals. Implicitly he lost sight of the larger social actors that were more important than a few thousand possible Black officers in the U.S. Army, and in so doing he con-

tributed to the slaughter of Black and other proletarians in the inter-imperialist World War I, when he should have done everything possible to weaken and hence end the war.

In July 1918, Du Bois had his newspaper *The Crisis* do an about-face to support war with the article "Close Ranks." At the same time, the U.S. government finally decided it could not accept Du Bois as a military officer. Du Bois would later claim nothing much ever came from the idea of joining military intelligence. Nonetheless, at the very least it was a propaganda coup for the imperialists to see *The Crisis* "Close Ranks."

Soon Du Bois would again be the target of intelligence-gathering. His investigation into the conditions of Black soldiers in Europe got himself in trouble with the postmaster, who considered censoring his report to *The Crisis* called "Returning Soldiers" in the May 1919 issue.

#### **CONCLUSION**

There may have been more progressive Black leaders than Du Bois at the turn of the century, but MIM is not aware of them (although we will look at the work of Ida B. Wells-Barnett more closely).

Nonetheless even a handful of individuals who might have been superior to Du Bois do not constitute sufficient reason for a negative evaluation of Du Bois, as it is obvious that the progress of a nation is the work of more than a handful of individuals. Though flawed, Du Bois's history is one to uphold; it has vastly more merits than demerits. This is also what Mao Zedong concluded in 1963. He sent his eulogies to Du Bois's funeral. We would ignore such eulogies in the case of government leaders as a matter of pure formality, but in the case of Du Bois, who died in Africa having lived a life mostly as a proletarian intellectual, Mao had no reason to pay attention to such formalities and we conclude that Mao's admiration of Du Bois was not at all contrived for strategic or tactical reasons: "One devoted to struggles and truth-seeking for which he finally took the road of thorough revolution. His unbending will and his spirit of uninterrupted revolution are examples for all oppressed peoples." (p. 10) In fact, China under Mao celebrated Du Bois's birthday as a national holiday. (p. 3)

The recipient of Lenin and Stalin prizes, a friend of Mao's and a defender of Stalin against Trotsky, a key leader in Pan-Africanism, the path-breaking and crucial fighter against the Black comprador Booker T. Washington and someone generally far ahead of his time in connection to the principal contradiction of today, Du Bois is someone MIM can claim proudly for its own historical tradition.

Contact MIM to find  
out about becoming a  
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your area.

# National liberation: Who's Lumpen?

The following is excerpted from a letter to a comrade written in 1994. Some of the original letter has been cut here, as it appeared in MIM Theory 7. -ed.

September 27, 1994

Dear Comrade,

This letter is a reply to your essay "Black Lumpen on the Cutting Edge." This reply has two basic parts: the first is a reply to your class analysis of the U.S., and the second is a reply to your discussion of Maoism, including your proposal that a new party should be built.

## POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE U.S.

Other than some problems of terminology, MIM has a lot of unity with you on the central question your essay addresses: the question of the social base for revolution in North Amerika. MIM looks to the masses of the oppressed nations of North Amerika: the First, Black, Asian and Latino nations. The question of terminology is important, however, because without some unity on this, we may have some trouble communicating effectively with one another.

The basic disagreement here is over what to call the "brothers and sisters on the block." MIM calls most unemployed Black masses proletarian. You call the unemployed Black masses "a new Black urban lumpenproletariat." You base this in part on the speculation that these masses will remain permanently unemployed. Traditionally, Marxism says that it is possible to be both proletarian and unemployed, but that the permanently unemployed and unemployable are lumpen. The "reserve army of labor" is part of the proletariat. You show that the group you are discussing is actually proletarian when you say that strike-breakers ("scabs") are "members of the lumpen." In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx described the lumpenproletariat as "that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society." Strike-breakers are neither passively rotting nor thrown off by society; they serve a crucial function for capitalism.

Many so-called "Marxists" (including Trotskyists, social-democrats and "neo-Marxist" academics) in this parasitic country confuse the issue by incorrectly referring to bought-out white workers as "proletarian," (the white working-class in fact is a non-revolutionary, non-proletarian labor aristocracy) while calling the Black, Latino, Asian and First Nation proletarians "lumpen."

If we can overlook this differing terminology, and assume you mean "proletarian" where you say "lumpen," it appears that we have significant common ground. We agree that the Black proletariat "is on the cutting edge of genocide or revolution," that revolution and not reform is the way forward, and that class analysis which ignores the truly oppressed "is either racist, outdated or futile."

## MAOISM

What caught MIM's eye in your article is your endorsement of "Black Maoist Revolution" and Maoism generally. Your article only discusses part of Comrade Mao Zedong's most important life work. We think it is important to discuss more to see whether you are genuinely a Maoist.

Your essay upholds some of Mao's important contributions: his development of the concept of Protracted People's War, his break from the dogma which said peasants were not ready for socialism and that more capitalism was needed before they would be, his fostering proletarian class-consciousness among peasants, and his success in building the peasant-proletarian alliance. Furthermore, you correctly uphold Mao as "the most advanced revolutionary practitioner of this century."

According to Mao himself, he had two main accomplishments — things we believe made him stand out in the communist movement: "Driving Japanese imperialism out of China and overthrowing Chiang Kai-shek, on the one hand, and on the other carrying through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."(6) Recognition of the Cultural Revolution as the farthest advance of communism in human history is a dividing line between real Maoists (e.g., MIM, Communist Party of Peru, Communist Party of the Philippines) and revisionists (e.g., Deng Xiaoping's social-fascist government in China).

Your article ends with a call to build a new party to raise proletarian consciousness and to serve as the leading force of the coming Black Maoist revolution. Before you form a new party on your own, MIM wants to make sure you are aware of our existence; hence, this letter. MIM believes that all real Maoists in North Amerika, regardless of nationality or "race," should join MIM. (The only exception would be foreign nationals who belong to a genuine, foreign Maoist party).

We hope that, instead of building a new Party, you join and build MIM. First, of course you should learn a bit about MIM so as to bring to light the areas of unity and disunity which may exist between you and MIM. The best concise introduction to MIM is on page 2 of the enclosed copy of MIM Notes, under the heading, "What is MIM?" We would like to hear whether you agree with MIM's three dividing-line questions, listed in the "What is MIM?" box. If you wish to research any of these questions further, we can recommend and/or sell some readings.

Your call for "Black Maoist revolution" (as opposed to just "Maoist revolution" or even "Liberation of the Black Nation through Maoist revolution") raises the question of whether Maoists in North Amerika should build single-national parties or a single, multinational party. MIM's line on this has two main aspects. First, we believe that the multinational approach is the most correct approach at this time. Second, we believe that the next stage of struggle will see the development of Maoist vanguard parties in the separate oppressed nations of North America.

## THE MULTINATIONAL VANGUARD OF THE PRESENT

Right now MIM is clearly the most advanced party for all nationalities within U.S. borders. This is no doubt in large part

because of its firm anti-imperialist history of struggle on behalf of Third World oppressed nations.

We encourage all oppressed peoples to join, because joining is necessary to maintaining a vanguard orientation in this period when we are recovering from the state's smashing our most class-conscious organizations. It is a period of regroupment and education of the youth for the creation of new Maoist forces.

MIM is currently an organization with no membership restrictions. No person of any class, gender or national background is excluded if he or she fulfills membership requirements.

To understand how this came about, it is necessary to understand the history of Maoist revolutionary struggle within the borders of what is called the United States. In the late 1960s and even to an extent in the early 1970s, there were Maoist vanguard parties for many of the oppressed nations within North America. The largest was the Black Panther Party [see review in this issue -ed].

In those days, there were several strong Maoist parties. Newspaper circulations and other gauges of independent power of the oppressed had readings that were very high. Today, MIM takes a multinational form in one organization and it still does not have the independent power anywhere approaching that of the Black Panther Party by itself.

Many comrades becoming communists in the 1980s and 1990s knew nothing of the revolutionary nationalism of the 1960s within the United States. For this reason, MIM has become perhaps the largest distributor of some crucial revolutionary works from the 1960s. Nonetheless, at this time MIM can only work toward the day when there are Maoist vanguard parties in the oppressed countries and a joint organization of the Maoist parties that lead the dictatorship over the Euro-Amerikan nation.

Some have criticized the MIM for not supporting existing nationalist organizations in 1994 as the vanguards of their oppressed nations in North America. In the 1960s, MIM would have recognized the Black Panthers, the Young Lords and other organizations as the vanguards of their nations. Today, MIM is playing the vanguard roles in all the nations in North America. Indeed, there is no other genuine Maoist party in North America, only revisionist ones and some progressive bourgeois nationalist organizations. MIM has on occasion had talks with revolutionary-minded nationalist groups that are friendly to Maoism, but so far there has been no success in finding or establishing unity between MIM and these organizations on the cardinal questions —the experience of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and China, the Chinese Cultural Revolution and the nature of the Euro-Amerikan working class. Such single-nationality organizations existed in the 1960s and 1970s, but because of state repression, only non-Maoist imitations of them exist today.

There have been many times in history where communist movements took advantage of their multinational side as a launch pad into revolutionary nationalist struggle. In the Chinese revolution, the general staff of the Communist Party

first met in France of the 1920s. That includes top leaders like Zhu De, Zhou Enlai and even Deng Xiaoping when he was still a revolutionary.(1)

Vietnamese and other "Indochinese" comrades cut their teeth in the French Communist Party itself before going to Vietnam and launching a successful national liberation struggle.

Lenin had an important refuge with comrades in Finland. Finland served as a meeting place and a source of funding and arms.(2) And of course it is well known how Marx and Engels had to move from country to country because of state repression.

In all these cases, what is important is using whatever advantages in struggle that are available. Huey Newton also put this very well. He did not regard a single-national vanguard party as sacrosanct, just a means to an end, the internationalist future. By the time of the following quote, Newton was already backing off the position that he formerly had and that we still hold on nationalism and internationalism, but he describes here something that happened earlier in the party's history.

Interviewer: "You are talking about this ideology of inter-communalism as part of the program of the Black Panther Party and telling us that the idea is to strive for unity of identity. Yet a few minutes ago you mentioned that the Party only accepts blacks as members. That sounds like a contradiction to me.

"Newton: Well, I guess it is. But to explain it I would have to go back to what I said earlier. We are the spearhead most of the time, and we try not to be too far ahead of the masses of the people, too far ahead of their thinking. We have to understand that most of the people are not ready for many of the things that we talk about.

"Now many of our relationships with other groups, such as the white radicals with whom we have formed coalitions, have been criticized by the very people we are trying to help. For example, our offer of troops to the Vietnamese received negative reaction from the people. And I mean from truly oppressed people. Welfare recipients wrote letters saying, 'I thought the Party was for us; why do you want to give those dirty Vietnamese our life blood?' I would agree with you and call it a contradiction..."

"So I would say we are being pragmatic in order to do the job that has to be done, and then, when that job is done, the Black Panther Party will no longer be the Black Panther Party."(3)

There exists today a neo-colonial trend of thought called "multiculturalism" that places more emphasis on who is speaking than what is said. There are those who say that oppressed nationality peoples are always correct and oppressor nation individuals always incorrect. This line of thinking leads to paralysis once people learn that oppressed nationalities and oppressor nationalities are not monolithic. There is Mao Zedong and there is Chiang Kai-shek. There is Malcolm X and there is Clarence Thomas. Everyone has their own opinions and ideologies. To get anywhere, we cannot support the opinions of all members of oppressed groups equally. We have to take a side, something the "multicultural" advocates don't

**MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996**  
**THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY**

understand.

In organizing a very large campaign to cut U.S. ties to apartheid South Africa in the early 1980s, MIM predecessors often fanned out to organize numerous meetings and debates. In this organizing work, it was not always possible to have the masses of Azania there to help us, though they and their leaders strongly requested that we do this work to stop the U.S. imperialists from propping up the apartheid regime. Sometimes, an Uncle Tom would show up at a small meeting here or there to deny that he had "any use" for the movement to cut U.S. ties to South Africa and sometimes there would be no other Black people at the meeting. That's what we mean that no oppressed nationality is monolithic in its opinions, and the other people there at the meeting had an obligation to criticize the line of thinking being put forward by the Uncle Tom, and support the masses of Azania. No person, no matter what nationality, can keep his or her political bearings without keeping the general interests of the international proletariat at heart. There is no other way to avoid confusion and paralysis.

It is our obligation to point out that MIM disagrees with Stalin on this question. Stalin confused the realm of political necessity in leading the masses with the realm of scientific struggle that must occur within vanguard parties. In so doing he tended to contradict his own formulations on the general problems facing revolutionaries on the national question. We support Stalin when he spoke generally and not just "as a Georgian."

"If the struggle against Russian chauvinism were undertaken not by the Russian but by the Turkestanian or Georgian communists, it would be interpreted as anti-Russian chauvinism. That would confuse the whole issue and strengthen Great Russian chauvinism. Only the Russian communists can undertake the fight against Great Russian chauvinism and carry it through to the end."(4)

"The intention is to point to the duty of the local communists, the duty of the non-Russian communists to combat their own chauvinists. Only the Tatar, Georgian and other communists can fight Tatar, Georgian and other chauvinism."(5)

In contrast, MIM would say that it is precisely among the communists where the scientific method must be protected at great cost if need be. Chauvinism is chauvinism and must be discovered and recognized as such by all communists.

Those who attempt to cut down multinational organizing undercut revolutionary science. The correct line is correct regardless of who speaks and organizes for it. This is part of what MIM understands Mao to mean by "ideological and political line is decisive." We should notice that he didn't say that "subjective factors" or "intentions" are decisive. No, he said "line" to stress the decisiveness of the science of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism.

Those who take a simple position on this question by opposing all multinational organizing fall into narrow nationalism, sometimes with an ultraleft veneer. White people, men and upper class people are less likely to organize on the proletarian side than oppressed nationality people, women and proletarians. It is also true that the oppressed need to make no compromises with the oppressor groups in order to liberate themselves. The oppressed will liberate themselves. Yet none of this means that multinational organizing is incorrect. Those who cut down multinational organizing cut down the Chinese, Vietnamese, Eritrean, Tigrayan, Peruvian and Russian revolutions of this century. In other revolutions there was a single nationality composed of various "races," as in the case of Cuba. Hence, to oppose multinational organizing in all circumstances is to oppose communism. To oppose communism is to oppose all the genuine nationalism of the oppressed nations.

#### THE SINGLE-NATION VANGUARDS OF THE NEXT STAGE

MIM recognizes that there are times when vanguard forces from the oppressed nationalities believe they must have separate, single nationality vanguard parties. MIM recognizes the right of self-determination of such vanguard forces and hence would defer to such a party on the question of organizing the oppressed nationality in question and believes that the validity of single-nationality organizing has been proven in communist history.

MIM defines as "vanguard" those forces with a demonstrated experience of supporting the Cultural Revolution in China and opposing post-Stalin Soviet revisionism. In 1994, these issues are more clear-cut than ever. Anyone who doesn't recognize the ex-Soviet Union or China as capitalist cannot be leading the masses anywhere toward classless society.

In North America, MIM has the added stipulation that an organization applying the science of Maoism must be able to recognize that the Euro-American working class is not a proletariat, but instead a labor aristocracy, which means that the masses of Euro-American people are not objectively allied with proletarian revolution. The answers of any organization in North America to these three scientific questions are what separates those genuinely practicing the science of Maoism and those just claiming the Maoist science and mouthing the slogans.

Currently, and on the basis of these cardinal criteria, MIM is aware of no genuine Maoist single nationality party in the United States except those incipient in MIM circles; although in the 1960s and 1970s there were many, so there is some basis to expect them to arise again. Already there are rumblings around re-forming the Black Panther Party. Other Mao-leaning groups such as "Free My People" may yet step up their roles to party status. For that reason, MIM does not discount the possibility that single-nationality Maoist parties in North America will form outside MIM circles. On the other hand, the oppressed nationality comrades of the MIM may find themselves in a position to form the single-nationality vanguard party of their nation. Currently, MIM is the vanguard organization of all the nations in North America.

Should a genuine Maoist single-nationality party form outside of MIM circles, a simple majority vote within MIM will determine whether or not that party is recognized by MIM as the vanguard of the oppressed nation in question. Yet, even should the MIM recognize that new party as the vanguard, we will still recognize as Maoists those oppressed nationality

members of MIM who refuse to join the new Maoist single-nationality party. This may sound like a contradiction, but it is a contradiction in the struggle for self-determination that cannot be resolved until the completion of the New Democratic stage. Just as individuals in the party do not escape the patriarchy merely by reforming their lifestyles, so it is not possible for oppressed nationality comrades to resolve this contradiction in a simple way (i.e. just by joining the right Maoist organization) until the system has changed with the completion of the New Democracy period, and self-determination is actual and not just ideological. The fact that oppressed nation comrades are always of two minds on this question of the form of organization causes great frustration, but it is unavoidable in the current system.

MIM is aware from history that oppressed nationalities may themselves sharply divide on the question of multinational parties and applying the spirit of this resolution will require arduous struggle. In the event of the formation of a Maoist single-nationality party, MIM will struggle to inform its members of the views of the single nationality party, remain on good terms with all genuine Maoist groups and leave party membership open to the decisions of individual oppressed nationality comrades. Those oppressed nationality comrades who do not opt for a single-nationality party will always have a place in the organizations preparing for the day of the joint dictatorship of the oppressed nations over Euro-Amerika.

At the same time that MIM does not call for a single party for a mythological multinational proletariat, MIM also does not make the question of the form of organization a cardinal question. Whether oppressed nationality comrades favor multinational organizing or single-nation organizing, it is not a dividing line question in the Maoist camp. This is something that anti-revisionist forces have failed to grasp in the past and it is a line that represents MIM's unique application of the universal science of Maoism to conditions in North America. The goal of self-determination of nations is universal and the analysis of Maoist single-nation organizing within U.S. borders is MIM's particular summation of conditions in North America.

The reason that the form of organization (multinational or single-nation) is not a cardinal question is the same as the reason for why self-determination is a dividing line question but the liberation of national territory by oppressed nations of North America is not a cardinal question. As Eldridge Cleaver once said, the point is not to force one thing or another down a people's throat. The point is to organize the people for the actual power to choose between alternatives. The oppressed nations will choose in a plebiscite whether or not they want a liberated territory. On the way to those plebiscites, successful completion of many lower stages of struggle will have to lead the way.

Given MIM's analysis of the current period and the need for single-nationality parties, most glaringly in the First Nations where armed struggle is already fairly developed, it becomes necessary to identify a good point for MIM comrades to develop single-nationality parties. This will become appar-

ent as the strength of MIM develops in practice, particularly as the MIM institutions and the independent power of the oppressed grow.

MIM is growing in order to facilitate the mutual development of revolutionaries in North America. At some stage that development will entail the formation of single-nation parties. When the struggle will take that form is principally a practical question, a question of when the struggle would be best served by its taking the single-nationality form. Once again, MIM must stress that while it voices these opinions on these questions, the line on these questions is not a dividing line among Maoists.

History has shown that Huey Newton was correct within U.S. borders and also South Africa. In both places, the struggle against imperialism and colonialism took its most advanced form in single-nation parties. This is one reason that MIM believes that the struggle will continue to take single-nation forms in the future. The reason is not hard to find: great nation chauvinism of European descended peoples has created a distrust of multinational organizations on the part of the oppressed masses. In their own scientific way, the oppressed nation masses have compared all multinational political organizations with all single-nation political organizations and have come to conclusions favorable to single-nation organizations.

### **CONCLUSION**

As the above may be a lot to sort through, MIM reiterates that the most important questions of the day are those listed in the "What is MIM?" box on page 2 of MIM Notes. Our most important question for you is what level of unity you have with these three questions. Please respond at your earliest convenience.

Notes:

1. Robert Scalapino has written a number of books on the early history of the Chinese communists, including in France.
2. E. Tani and K. Sera, *False Nationalism False Internationalism*. Chicago: A Seeds Beneath the Snow Publication, 1985. pp. 16-21.
3. Kai T. Erikson, intro., *In Search of Common Ground: Conversations with Erik H. Erikson and Huey P. Newton*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973. pp. 42-3.
4. Stalin, Works Vol. 5, pp. 272-3. We credit the organizations that put forward "In Defense of the Right to Political Secession for the Afro-American Nation," for discussing this, even if incorrectly.
5. Ibid.
6. Charles Bettelheim, *China Since Mao*. NY: Monthly Review, 1978. pp. 64-66.

**See the literature list in the back  
of this issue to order MIM  
Theory 7, "Proletarian Feminist  
Revolutionary Nationalism on the  
Communist Road," 128 pages for  
\$6 from MIM.**

# Reviews & Briefs

## On the origins of The Democratic Socialists of America

THE ROAD TO DSA STARTS WITH Trotsky, or so we learn from Socialist Party co-chair David McIntyre in an April 14, 1995 memo, re-circulated among the Committees of Correspondence on the Internet.

Max Schactman wrote an introduction to a famous edition of Trotsky's work called *The New Course*. This same Schactman, who was an independent follower and contemporary of Trotsky — a neo-Trotskyist, went on to take over the Socialist Party.

In previous literature MIM advised its non-communist readers to join the Socialist Party rather than DSA, because of DSA's chauvinist and militarist bent. Lenin had great respect for the Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs who went to prison rather than cave in on World War I like most of the socialists in Europe. The Socialist Party appeared to continue such a tradition with the War Resisters League and its own literature.

This turns out not to be true. According to McIntyre, Schactman had a follower named Michael Harrington. In the mid-1960s, the Socialist Party drifted toward support of the Vietnam War. By 1971, Harrington had succeeded in passing a resolution in the Socialist Party supporting the Vietnam War, so vehement was his pandering to bourgeois democratic illusions and his anti-communism. (By this time Schactman also went off the deep-end into right-wing waters, which is why the organization named Solidarity and the International Socialist Organization members often don't seem to know that Schactman is the leading light in their foundation. It's too embarrassing to know.)

In 1972, Harrington got the idea to take the McGovern for President campaign remnants and turn them into the

Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, which later became Democratic Socialists of America. This apparent evolution also meant having to posture against the Vietnam War, finally. Anti-Nixonism was greater than anti-communism — or maybe it was just that Harrington noticed that the polls had turned against the war in Vietnam.

Now there is talk of merger between the DSA, Committees of Correspondence and Solidarity. In Heaven, Trotsky, Schactman and Harrington all smile.

## MIM strengthens Line on First Nation self-Determination

IN 1994, MIM APPROVED A RESOLUTION that included this text with regard to the future division of North America:

"Delete: 'If ultimately given such authority by the First nations.' Liberated socialist areas do not need to be given 'authority' by formations that are not necessarily socialist; and the liberated areas have their own power for self-determination. This recognizes that no socialist government will oppress any nation or encroach on the territory any anti-imperialist nation inhabits or has seized from Amerika."

In 1995, MIM rejected this passage, recognizing it as self-contradictory and objectively a great-nation-chauvinist liquidation of the right to self-determination of the First Nations. It is self-contradictory because denying the First Nation masses the right to self-determination is itself a form of oppression. Lenin recognized that the right of oppressed nations to self-determination extended to the right to bourgeois nationalist secession from a socialist state. Likewise, the right of the peoples of colonies of settlement, such as the First Nations, to self-deter-

mination, extends to the right to outright deport the settlers to their or their ancestors' country or continent of origin. MIM does not expect such a drastic measure to be well-advised or necessary — a proletarian dictatorship over the settlers would likely be a more effective method of preventing colonialist-restoration. Nonetheless, a government on North American soil cannot be truly socialist if it does not have the support of the majority of the First Nations masses.

## Agricultural Work debates

AT A SHOWING OF *HARVEST OF SHAME* last fall, MIM and RAIL led a discussion that touched on several recurring topics. We summarize this discussion here, and offer a qualified endorsement of the film, for others who are looking for films to show, or are considering these questions.

*Harvest of Shame* is an old (1960) documentary which shows the oppressive conditions of migrant workers in the U.S. who produce food for the best fed country on earth — the United Snakes. In the film, for example, one grower is quoted, "We used to own our slaves, now we rent them."

Some of the interviews in the film are with white families. White agricultural workers in such a desperate situation would be difficult to find these days. The availability of legal and illegal immigrant labor and the "legal" temporary workers shipped to Amerika from other countries enables farm owners to avoid laborers who might successfully claim safe working conditions or a competitive wage. White-nation workers are able to seek out more lucrative work while Third World peoples slave to produce their food.

In a racist way, *Harvest of Shame* briefly discusses the old Bracero program in the Southwest by which Mexican men were encouraged to come to the U.S. for jobs, and blames them for taking jobs from Blacks and poor

whites. This federal program has now been replaced by the H2A program, which includes Jamaican workers, Filipino workers and others.

### PEASANTS IN CHINA

In contrast to the way agricultural workers were treated by 1960s Amerika, in China under Mao the peasants and workers were correctly recognized as the backbone of society upon which everything else was dependent. Land reform liberated poor peasantry from enslavement by landlords. Industrialization was planned to lessen the contradictions between the cities and the countryside. Changes made in the superstructure, such as in education, served peasants and workers and gave them opportunities which were formerly available only to the elite.(4)

One attendee raised a topic frequently referred to by opponents of Maoism: the use of "backyard" steel furnaces during the Great Leap Forward. The backyard furnaces were not manifestations of Mao's eccentricity, as the audience member had heard. It is not surprising that opposition to Mao comes with such little substance. Writing off economic policies as manifestations of eccentricity serves to further perpetuate bourgeois approaches to history, which portray it as fragmented and senseless.

During the Great Leap Forward large communes consolidated collective ownership. Along with agricultural work, the communes engaged in small industrial production including developing small and medium furnaces and converters, and small chemical and machine-building works. Commune industry produced satisfactory quality output and relieved the limited transport system. It was different from the "backyard" steel furnaces that were used mostly in early 1958 before the main Leap Forward. The government quickly recognized that "backyard" steel furnaces generated low quality products and burdened the transport system. As a result they were halted. However, this does not mean overall rural steel production was not useful. It served as a way to organize the peasants and include them in industry. This political advantage was itself beneficial.

Small industry continued to develop in

the rural areas after the halt of the "backyard" steel furnaces. The majority of small industry yielded successful political as well as economic outcomes. Stressing rural industrialization and avoiding overdevelopment of the coastal areas resulted in innovative approaches to industry and encouraged rural self-sufficiency.(1) However Mao also recognized in hindsight that ignoring the development of the coastal areas altogether until 1958 was not efficient.(2) Yet working to lessen the rural and urban contradictions without sacrificing immediate advances in the production relations necessitated learning from practice.

In China today, almost 20 years after the restoration of capitalism began with the overthrow of the "Gang of Four," unequal development between different regions is again being noticed as a serious problem.(3) But this is much different from the problem that the Maoists faced when they were in power. In China today, as in many capitalist Third World countries, the extreme poverty in

some areas of the countryside is necessary for the limited industrial development of the "booming" areas. The poor countryside, which the revisionists created by destroying agricultural communes and concentrating land ownership, provides the flow of desperate, starving potential workers for the new industries. The great "supply" of these people means wages in the "booming" cities are low enough to sustain export-oriented production. Under socialism, the task is not to bring capitalist development to all areas equally, as some now argue is necessary in China, but rather to develop as much self-sufficiency as possible, as a whole country and as different regions.

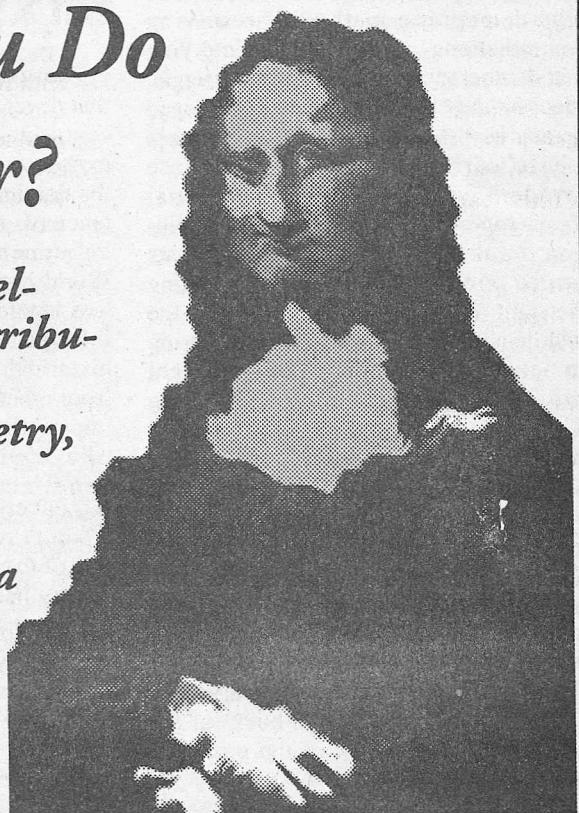
Notes:

1. Wheelwright and McFarlane, *The Chinese Road to Socialism*, Monthly Review Press, 1970, p.48.
2. Mao Zedong, *A Critique of Soviet Economics*, Monthly Review Press, 1977, p.76.
3. New York Times Dec. 27, 1995.
4. See MIM Theory 7, pp. 92-94, for more on migrant conditions in the U.S. and the improvements for peasants under Mao.

## Can You Do It Better?

*MIM Theory welcomes your contributions of articles, reviews, art, poetry, whatever.*

*This journal is a tool of struggle. Don't just criticize. Get involved.*



## Review: 1981 POL

ALLYN AND ADELE RICKETT.

PRISONERS OF LIBERATION.

SAN FRANCISCO: CHINA BOOKS, 1981.

IN THE PREFACE TO THE 1981 EDITION of *Prisoners of Liberation*, the authors write that "the Gang of Four and six other high ranking communists have just been convicted at a trial in Peking (Beijing) for mass murder, the indiscriminate abuse of power, and plots to overthrow the government." Further they blame "the Anti-Rightist Movement, with its emphasis on class struggle" for the "gross excesses of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

The authors' underestimation of the importance of class struggle during socialism, and failure to recognize the Chinese regime in 1981 as revisionist, reflects a non-Marxist liberal deviation. Quoting Mao's 1957 speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," the authors raise "the democratic method of resolving contradictions" to a principle, implying that democracy outweighs class struggle. Mao, on the other hand, never privileged democracy over class struggle. Maoists wholeheartedly fought the Japanese invaders during the War of National Resistance, never attempting conciliation (unlike the liberal KMT). Maoists carried through land reform by isolating the right opposition and uniting with the middle and poor peasants. So too, during socialist construction, Maoists fought capitalist roaders, such as Deng Xiaoping, who attempted to restore capitalism in the People's Republic. Communists purged Deng from the party (during Mao's lifetime) because at that point in China's socialist construction, unrepentant capitalist-roaders were the chief threat. Proletarian democracy includes elements of dictatorship over the people's enemies. Liberalism, always seeking to defend the status quo (disguised as "consensus"), bucks at the notion of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

Chinese communists, led by Mao,

learned from the experience of building socialism in the Soviet Union that a new bourgeoisie will rise up in the party and try to restore capitalism. The only possible solution is another revolution led by committed communists in the vanguard party and carried out by the masses in order to wipe out bourgeois ideology (elitism, profits over politics, top-down leadership, and so on). Cultural revolution is a necessary step toward communism, and Mao thought that several would be needed. While one is correct to criticize the excesses of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in order to correct them, it is definitely not progressive to throw out the baby with the bathwater — as liberals often do — and oppose the revolution on principles like "democracy" or "nonviolence." Capitalism is undemocratic. Imperialism kills. For the oppressed peoples of the world, revolution is the only solution.

—by a member of RAIL

## Comment: On Zionism

ZIONISM IS A POLITICAL IDEOLOGY that developed through the 19th and 20th centuries to popularize and justify the existence of the state of Israel. It is now the dominant rationalization for the existence of a Jewish settler colony built in Palestine through the agencies of First World imperialism. Zionism is an effective ideological tool because it successfully privatizes the Israeli and Jewish historical experience, separating it out from other instances of colonization and imperialism through special categories like Jewish manifest destiny, anti-Semitism, the pioneering nature of Israeli settlers, and the historical "fact" that there was no nation of Palestinians. These "unique qualities" that supposedly differentiate Zionism from any other settler ideology are in fact hardly uncommon. They are accepted by Israelis and Amerikans because they fulfill a social need: they justify colonialism and imperialism.

The special mission of the Jewish people is a central concept in Zionist

ideology. According to Jewish and Christian tradition, God picked the Jews to be a light to the nations, a chosen people, and a nation of priests. The Jews would spread God's word from Mt. Zion and usher in a messianic age where all peoples would live in peace and commune with God. Zionists thus link the founding of the state of Israel in what was then Palestine with the outstretched arm of God, not British imperialism. The return from exile is a prelude to messianic times, not the importation of First World capital and Amerikan hegemony in the Middle East. The secular version of Jewish manifest destiny promises European culture to the "backward" Arab natives, perfect social democracy for the Israeli Jews, and a tie between East and West. While the messianic role of "Israel" occupies a privileged place in Western culture, the idea of the manifest destiny of settlers colonizing a non-European country is hardly new. Thus the First Nations peoples of North and South America, as well as Black Azanians, are not generally pro-Zionist.

Anti-Semitism is also one of the main pillars of Zionist ideology. It is important to recognize the persistent oppression and attempted genocide of Jews in Western history without privatizing the experience and making that a justification for Zionists oppressing and attempting genocide on Palestinians. Jewish nationalism, insofar as it organized Jews against oppression in the past, could have been a progressive force in the same vein as Chinese nationalism, Black nationalism, or First Nation nationalisms. The problem is that Zionism is a form of national chauvinism, justifying another people's oppression to escape one's own. That genocide was perpetrated against the Jews is awful and needs to be opposed with the same vigor as we oppose genocide in Puerto Rico, East Timor, Vietnam, and Amerikkka. The offensive content of Zionism is that it privileges Jewish tragedy over any other. In particular, it is used to rationalize the genocide of Palestinians. And, of course, while Jews face some bigotry, on the whole they are no longer oppressed as a group, especially in the United Snakes, where they have among the highest

incomes among whites.

The third myth of Zionist ideology is that of the self-sufficient, Israeli settler-colonizer. According to this myth the lazy "natives" never developed the land or basic industry, but the settlers did it "all by themselves." While it is certainly true that lots of settlers drained swamps, built homesteads, and developed industry, it is also true that they imported capital (capital built with the surplus labor of the exploited proletariat), hired Arab laborers, and received money from Europe and Amerika. The myth of settler self-help is prevalent among Amerikan and South Afrikan whites. It goes along with the general Euro-Amerikan chauvinism privileging all things Western and "civilized." None of the settler societies (Israel, South Africa, Amerika) are self-sufficient now, nor have they ever been. They are world parasites, feeding on the expropriated surplus value of the Third World. Hard work can never be a justification for imperialism and genocide.

Zionists sometimes justify the colonization of Palestine by saying that there was no Palestinian nation in the early 20th century, so no people was expunged. This again reflects the racist Eurocentrism of imperialist ideologies: "As you do not measure up to our standards of nationhood, we will make you a minority in the land you recently called home — assuming the hegemonic imperialist is willing." Palestinians weren't considered a nation because of racist assumptions about their culture. The Zionists founding the state of Israel never polled the inhabitants of Palestine to determine if they were a nation or if they minded Jews setting up a state there. They lobbied the Ottomans and the British. By European accounts, the Jews hardly met Western requirements of "nationality" either. They had a language, and limited territorial cohesion (like the Black nation in North America, there were Jewish ghettos in Russia and Europe), but the differences between the mostly-assimilated British or German Jews and their Russian counterparts were huge. It is also problematic to show the identity of some ideal Jewish "nation" over the last 3,000 years, yet

this is exactly what Zionists claim. The Jewish Israelis are supposed to be the same nation that lived in Judea and Israel, were exiled, returned, exiled, and returned again; but Palestinians are "just" Arabs who might as well go to the other Arab states. Zionists facilitate this claim with the Israeli Law of Return, an ideological prop to establish identity between the Israeli state and the Jewish people. The Law of Return says that any Jew can move to Palestine, thus establishing both a potential and legal equivalence between the categories of Jews and Israelis. The two categories are not equivalent, however, and one can oppose Zionism, Jewish national chauvinism, without being anti-Jewish.

Zionism is a Eurocentric and pro-imperialist ideology that justifies both settler rule in Palestine and the Amerikan financing of settler rule. It needs to be opposed by all anti-imperialist forces. The Israeli regime, a bastion of social-democracy with nice welfare packages for Jewish immigrants, is Amerika's right hand in keeping the Third World in line and comprador governments well supplied. Expose Zionism, smash Amerikkkan imperialism!

—by a member of RAIL

**MIM adds:** In the course of resisting the Israeli state, the Palestinian nation was made more cohesive itself, so that it is now more a nation than it was in that past. Likewise, the Israeli Jews have become a nation in the time that they have settled and conquered Palestine, where they were not one nation before. This Israeli nation does not include all world Jews, of course, but it is a nation nonetheless. But although Israel is a nation, like white Amerika, in the course of overthrowing imperialism it will have to lose its self-determination: MIM believes the Israeli nation should go through a receivership under the rule of the currently-oppressed nations, just like the white Amerikan nation, in order to rejoin non oppressing humanity in the future.

## Cashing in on Oppression

As MIM WORKS TO DEEPEN AND expand its theory on the state of the labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries, we are pushing the question of the labor aristocracy — what it is, where it is and which working classes comprise it — on the international scene. MIM couples its work to clarify the national question within U.S. borders with this broader international effort. In one city, we responded to a flyer advertising Racism Healing Groups for White People by explaining that racism and white people's psyches are not the principal contradiction in the world today.

The text of the flyer follows:

### RACISM HEALING GROUPS FOR WHITE PEOPLE

We believe that the minds of all white people have been saturated since birth with harmful stereotypes and prejudicial misinformation about people of color — particularly Afro-Americans and Native Americans.

Diversity education and multicultural programs are not enough to de-program us from the constant and pervasive socio-psychological brainwashing.

Concerned white people must courageously and honestly examine and explore deeply internalized perceptions in order to overcome and heal the psychosocial disease of white racism. It is for this purpose we provide safe, non-judgmental and growthful racism healing groups.

- 10 week introductory groups
- 3 month advanced groups
- Call for group times, starting dates and fees.

Kilpatrick Associates is a diversity services and anti oppression collaborative dedicated to helping people understand, overcome and heal racism, sexism, classism and adultism.

This is a classic example of an attempt to profit off of the injustices and

inequalities in Amerikan society. By claiming that inequality is a "psychosocial disease," the Kilpatrick Associates set themselves up to offer the cure: "healing groups." Maybe if every white person would just go to a healing group, we would have an equal and non-oppressive society.

This spin-off of the pseudo-progressive psychology trend serves national oppression by pretending that it doesn't exist. Kilpatrick Associates claim they are fighting racism, but really it is impossible to fight racism without also fighting national oppression. Racism is only an ideology that supports national oppression, it is not an independent oppressive structure, and cannot be destroyed without the structure to which it contributes also being destroyed. If whites who feel bad about racism only need to "heal" themselves then national minorities should expect better paying jobs, no discrimination and no police brutality once the white people's bad feelings are washed away.

The whole concept of racism is flawed because it implies that attitudes are the real problem. MIM focuses on national oppression instead to underscore economic and social inequalities between nations. Incorrect attitudes among white people are not the main problem; so we work to replace the social structure that oppresses whole nations and fosters these incorrect attitudes. Racism is a product of systematic economic and social oppression of one nation by another, not a disease. Racism can not be eliminated without eliminating the system that creates it.

Companies like Kilpatrick Associates are making a profit off of legitimizing Amerikan inequalities and injustice by turning these things into complexes rather than structural flaws. Kilpatrick

Associates is part of the problem and will quickly be eliminated by the people in the course of nationalist and socialist revolutionary struggle. These struggles, which will attack the underlying causes of racism, are the only struggles which will be able to eliminate racism itself.

## Review: Away With All Pests

*An English Surgeon in People's China*

1954-1969

Dr. Joshua S. Horn

Monthly Review Press, 1971

DR. JOSHUA S. HORN IS AN ENGLISH surgeon who went to serve the people's revolutionary struggle in China. In his book he shows the importance of combining theory with practice and how the struggle between the capitalist line and the socialist line permeated every sector of society. Dr. Horn writes about the struggles he and other doctors he was working with had to wage against self-interest: "The capitalist society, in which I was born and bred, fosters the conviction that ... the driving force in society should be self-interest." (p. 143) The comforts and privileges that one receives in the imperialist countries, which come from imperialism's exploitative policy against the Third World, make it even more necessary to fight against our self-interest.

Before liberation the Chinese people were dying of preventable diseases like schistosomiasis (a disease which makes the belly extremely bloated), constipation, whooping cough, tuberculosis and other preventable and easily curable sicknesses and diseases that continue to plague Third World countries today. Dr. Horn points out how the Chinese people put politics first in attacking all problems. While many people think that social ills and health problems are separate from politics, the revolution in China shows that the people can only combat social ills and health problems by increasing revolutionary consciousness and seizing state power.

In China, the most emphasis was put on the countryside and the well being of the peasants. In feudal times, the peasants thought that diseases were curses put on them by the gods for the sins of their ancestors. With the introduction of

science, medicine and Maoism, these superstitions were swept away and the people became more confident in tackling any hardship that confronted them.

Dr. Horn's book is important today because so many people in the Third World die on a daily basis due to imperialist domination and deprivation of decent food, and health care. This book shows that once imperialism is thrown out and genuine scientific socialism is implemented, the people began to effectively change themselves and their society to combat all of the ills that once plagued them, including selfishness.

—a New York Prisoner

## Review: Discussion

Quarterly Review of Contemporary Marxist-Leninist Thought

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Vol. 1, Number 2, Winter 1994

THE HOXAITES — PROPAGATORS OF the thought of Enver Hoxha who was the leader of Albania's socialist revolution — are regrouping and taking on new shades of opinion. *Discussion* is the Canadian theory journal of this current, and there are even more such publications in England. In Amerika, the Hoxhaite groups have splintered and demonstrated the most confusion. The main organization here dissolved entirely, as addressed in MIM Theory 6, "The Stalin Issue."

One common strategy among phony communists (revisionists) everywhere in regroupment since the collapse of the Soviet Union is to focus on Cuba. Claiming to continue the struggle against revisionism, the new Hoxhaite movement focuses on Cuba and Korea. Previously, the Hoxhaites had considered Cuba and Korea to be revisionist-led countries. Now as revisionism is collapsing all around, the Hoxhaites rush in

to resuscitate the old-style revisionist movement. They wish to fill in where the Gus Hall left off, so they now embrace Cuba and northern Korea just as these models of socialism have been fully discredited.

This issue of *Discussion* reprints two speeches: one from Fidel Castro and one from Kim Jong Il. While there are some good things in both speeches, especially as Castro rails against U.S. oppression of his country, they are not good enough to be called socialist. Neither speaker addresses the restoration of capitalism as it has happened. Kim Jong Il makes some complaints about the human factor not being there for the creation of socialism. Neither Castro nor Kim takes responsibility for supporting the Soviet Union's so-called socialism (social-imperialism). Neither addresses Mao, or faces the fact that Mao was proven correct on questions of revisionism. Since MIM thinks it unlikely that Kim and Castro will ever face facts in their lifetimes, we go ahead and build a socialist movement among the youth who do not carry around so much baggage that they need to justify.

Cuba and Korea are countries oppressed by imperialism. Neither country's leader — like Qaddafi in Libya or former Panamanian leader Noriega — is considered a good puppet by the imperialists. It has nothing to do with socialism, because there is none there for the imperialists to oppose. Noriega was no socialist, just too independent-minded. MIM protests every time an independent-minded leader of an oppressed nation is threatened or removed by imperialism. We do not oppose national oppression only when an alleged socialist leadership is involved as in Cuba and northern Korea. We say "Hands off Cuba! Hands off Korea! Hands off Panama! Hands off Grenada! Hands off Libya! Hands off Iran!" etc. We are not just in solidarity with one or two oppressed nations, and we certainly won't be confusing the oppressed by trying to mobilize them in the name of the phony socialism of Cuba and northern Korea.

The Mohawks also have leaders that have shown great independent-minded-

ness. They may be closer to getting on the socialist road than Cuba or northern Korea. The Mohawks have been so maligned by the imperialists, that some think the Mafia and Qaddafi must be doing something right, because the imperialists are always defaming the Mafia and Qaddafi as smugglers and terrorists.

Even more infuriating than the efforts to patch up the Titanic ship of pro-Soviet revisionism in Cuba and northern Korea is the speech by Hardial Bains of Canada. He goes on vaguely about the "human factor" as a grab-bag of things to blame the failure of socialism in the Soviet bloc on. Then he says, crucially, "a new bourgeoisie, who usurped power and concentrated it in their own hands, began to emerge from the ranks of the Communist Party and state organizations like the government, the armed forces, the police and the mass organizations." Welcome to Maoism, Hardial Bains: we only wish you had noticed this a couple decades ago, but we thank you for this small bit of progress while condemning you for not mentioning its source.

## **Reject the Outdated idea of An "Emerging Center"**

**MIM APPROVED THIS RESOLUTION AT  
our 1995 Congress.**

"While the Revolutionary Communist Party-USA (RCP-USA) leads the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and claims it is the "emerging center" of the international communist movement, we at MIM hold that the RIM is not yet applying Maoism in the imperialist countries. In addition, the RIM is not applying Maoism in the question of relations amongst proletarian organizations on a world scale.

"When Leninism was young, there was a world party connected to a conception of quick overthrow of imperialism centered in Europe. Since that time, and as Lenin himself sometimes predict-

ed, the revolutionary initiative passed to the East, and also the South. It was Mao who fully embodied this truth and under imperialism it will be impossible for technology to speed up the communications and translation of languages sufficiently to justify a world party which would have to lead a revolution whose social forces are more than 80% located in the Third World. Meanwhile it is Trotskyism in its various forms that is so stressing the European industrial worker-based revolution led by a Fourth International. For these reasons, attempts to reform the RIM from within can never fully succeed and struggles starting with the assumption of a RIM can only mire themselves in confusion.

"At this time the idea of "an emerging center" of the international communist movement is itself in contradiction with Maoism. We at MIM instead see "an emerging leadership by example" in the case of the Communist Party of the Philippines on questions of international relations amongst proletarian organizations. Since there is confusion and difference on these questions, we urge our comrades to study the example of the Communist Party of the Philippines on questions of international organization, bilateral relations and so on."

## **Review: Winona LaDuke**

*MIM prints these notes as a means of illuminating the spectrum of anti-imperialist politics. When examining questions of the growth and position of the labor aristocracy it is important to understand also why we even care about this issue. We care because we are intimately concerned with the interests of people oppressed by imperialism, those people against whom the labor aristocracy stands in its ever tightening alliance with the First World bourgeoisie. We hope that this summary of Winona LaDuke's comments, along with other statements by and from the perspective of oppressed nations, will make clear the perspective and the interests from which we work. MIM hopes that understanding*

*our perspective will help readers to also grasp the importance of understanding the labor aristocracy, its interests and its composition.*

**WINONA LADUKE SPOKE AT THE**  
University of Massachusetts in Amherst on October 10, 1995. Her lecture covered the differences between Indigenous and industrial thinking; gender and national self-determination; and environmental colonialism and degradation.

LaDuke said that in Indigenous thinking, "natural law is preeminent" — it is higher than legal system." Because Indigenous thinking strives to produce practice which coincides with natural law, its societies are sustainable. Indigenous thinking includes neither national nor species extinction, and derives knowledge from spiritual practice and traditional ecological knowledge derived from many generations of a people living in one place. Indigenous thinking assumes "that which is around us is alive."

Industrial thinking calls trees "timber resources" and corn "an agricultural product." It promotes "the commodification of the sacred." Industrial thinking constructs categories like "wild/primitive" and "cultivated/civilized" that reflect racism and colonialism. Finally, industrial thinking is capitalistic. LaDuke recognizes that "there are fundamental problems with capitalism" insofar as it aims "to combine labor, capital and resources for accumulation" which means practically "[capitalists] always take more than [they] need and don't leave the rest." Industrial thinking and capitalism are "out of order with nature" and will be replaced.

On the question of gender, LaDuke said that "all issues of concern to our nations are concerns to women." She is not normally involved in the feminist debate because she is involved primarily in the self-determination struggle of her nation. But she noted that the commodification and homogenization of McDonald's/GATT/Amerikan culture is of primary importance to women and indigenous people. LaDuke quoted Chief Seattle as saying "what befalls the Earth, befalls the people of the Earth"

meaning that indigenous peoples, who live closest to the Earth, are most affected by environmental destruction.

Even though indigenous nations each have their own common economies, territories, languages, histories and governmental institutions, they are denied a voice at the United Nations. "Decisions are not made by nations but states," most of which have only existed since World War II, or perhaps for the last 200 years. Even more than by states, decisions are made by 47 transnational corporations and their international financiers in the World Bank. "What gives these corporations a right which supersedes the right of the people who live on the land?" asks LaDuke. "It is not the law of the Creator, but their illegally appropriated wealth ... They should have no such right ... We will recover these rights as women and indigenous people."

LaDuke asserts that "the origin of the problem is the predator-prey relationship. Women, like indigenous people, have been treated as prey." The answer is that "women need to organize." LaDuke also pointed out that matrilineal societies have been and are being obliterated by colonialism. Women interested in not being prey should support national liberation struggles.

LaDuke attended the women's conference in Beijing and made the following suggestions to the conference:

First, we can't trade ecosystems for running water; no more stratified development-underdevelopment at the expense of the planet and indigenous nations.

Second we should recognize that World Bank development strategies replicate patriarchy. Like the U.S. imposed Tribal Councils where members make \$250,000 a year in communities where the average income is around \$10,000 and workers in casinos make minimum wage, World Bank proposals increase inequality and oppression.

Third, LaDuke pointed out the cold-blooded industrial thinking behind the human genome project, which LaDuke and others have called "the vampire project." The project works to preserve indigenous peoples' DNA but not the people themselves. LaDuke exposed the

hypocrisy of bourgeois laws which allow human genetic material to be patented by researchers; while indigenous peoples, who are responsible for discovering 75% of all plant derived pharmaceuticals, get no credit whatsoever.

LaDuke does not support the rhetoric of gender equity because "in theory it means that women and men should be equal, in practice it means that in seats of power white men are replaced by white women." Instead, she supports "the fundamental right of self-determination" as the best hope for women to gain their liberation.

LaDuke cited environmental colonialism inflicted on Indigenous and Third World peoples, cataloging dam projects from India to China to James Bay, nuclear testing on Mororoan and Shoshone land, and clear-cutting within U.S. borders. She said that "the North-South analysis is not appropriate when discussing Indigenous people because it is the same on a reservation as it is in India." She continued, "it is not a coincidence that Inuit women in Canada have PCB levels in their breast milk 28 times higher than other women." LaDuke stated that "a prerequisite of long-term self-determination of our destiny... [is] control of our bodies...what befalls mother Earth befalls her daughters ... I consider us [indigenous peoples] to be the miner's canary."

Finally, LaDuke discussed First World consumption: "until we address levels of consumption in this country we will never get real security." She said that Amerika is the largest energy market in the world and, after Canada, has the highest per capita energy consumption (it's colder in Canada). She advocated people participate in "Unplug America Day" on October 13 by not using any electricity. "You just don't realize what a junkie you are until you try not to consume." Ultimately, LaDuke sees consumption of scarce resources as the fundamental issue, explaining that "there's just not a left of goodies left to plunder." Unplug America Day is about "reflecting on how much we actually consume" and "decoupling quality of life from how much you own."

In the question and answer period, LaDuke responded to a RAIL member's question about the current struggles of the Chippewa nation and said that her main work was rebuilding the traditional institutions of her people's power. She advocated attempting to co-opt the Tribal Councils and eventually reinstating traditional forms of government. She said activists should struggle to get the government to demilitarize itself around the reservations and return federal landholding inside the reservation. In advocating this, LaDuke showed her tactical skill at picking winnable battles (the government won't give back lots of land but might release some landholdings within the reservation) as well as recognizing that a people's strength lies in independent organizing and not with occupying states and their comprador running dogs. LaDuke's lecture was truly revolutionary and inspiring.

All power to the People!

—a member of RAIL

**MIM adds:** We support LaDuke's analysis of the place of gender struggles; they must be fought solidly within the context of struggles for national self-determination because without national self-determination, Indigenous and other oppressed nations will continue to be subject to the oppressor nations for enforcement of supposed gender equality. We must add our disagreement with LaDuke's terminology dichotomizing Indigenous and industrial thinking. MIM sees a future world in which currently oppressed nations will have won national self-determination and will be able to run their own economies and production on a basis of self-sufficiency. We see no use for excluding the possibility that these nations will use industrial tools — these tools have demonstrated themselves able to make production more efficient for previous socialist societies and future socialist societies should be able to use them as well.

## The Covert Action Quarterly and Fascism

**LETTER FROM AN ALLY: EVENTS THIS** year show a sharp move to the right in the political mood of the Amerikan white nation. The bombing of the Oklahoma federal building and the awarding of \$3.1 million to the Weaver family are significant, as well as the sympathetic press coverage of Weaver and the negative coverage of the FBI. The Amerikan government has shown that, whatever conflicts arise between them, they will maintain an alliance with the white labor aristocracy.

*Covert Action Quarterly* (CAQ) has a great deal of information documenting increased fascist tendencies in Amerika. Both the white nation and the Amerikan federal and state governments are moving toward the right.

Proposition 187 has passed with the strong support of suburban middle-class whites in California. It helps preserve the supply of cheap immigrant labor, farmworkers and household servants. Gov. Pete Wilson has championed the issues of this white constituency, and Democrats like Diane Feinstein have replied by calling for increased Immigration and Naturalization Service patrols on the California border.

At the same time, politically repressive legislation has been introduced into Congress this year. The Omnibus Counterterrorism Act "would criminalize any support to any organization that the president designates as 'terrorist,' including lawful activities ... The bill would make deportable the tens of thousands of non-citizens who send humanitarian aid back home to organizations that have engaged in armed resistance." Any organization supporting Third World revolutionary movements would be legally threatened.

House Resolution 666 guts the Fourth

Amendment to the Constitution. Evidence obtained from warrantless searches would be admissible in court "if police thought they could have obtained a warrant."(2)

In recent CAQs, there are well-documented articles on the militia movements and their connections to the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan and the military. For example, former Green Beret Bo Gritz, who ran for vice president in the Populist Party alongside ex-Klanman David Duke, and John Trochman, who formed the Militia of Montana, both organized support groups for white supremacist Randy Weaver after the Ruby Ridge siege.(3) Militia movements are using Army training grounds, buying and stealing military equipment from the Army, and recruiting from the Army as well.(4)

There are a few good articles on prison labor in the Fall issue of CAQ. It has a lot of evidence corroborating MIM's analysis that prisoners are a source of surplus value for Amerika capital.

For example:

- "prison industries sales have skyrocketed from \$392 million to \$1.31 billion."
- prisoners make blue workshirts for 45 cents an hour at Soledad Prison.
- Oregon prisoners sew jeans at wage rates from \$0.28 to \$8.00 an hour (and 80% of the wages are withheld).
- pay phones have increasingly been put in prisons. "A single prison phone can gross \$15,000 per year, five times more than a street phone box."

• Lockhart Technologies Incorporated had a factory built in Lockhart, Texas, using only prison labor, supplied by private prison firm Wackenhut. Prisoners work at the assembly plant at minimum wage.

The author is concerned about the threat that prison labor poses to

Guevarism, which it mentions in the same breath.(p. 37) The same group is also notable for thriving in the violent upsurges of the masses.

In Belgium, the PTB led by Ludo Martens is a more advanced party is. Claiming to uphold Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, the PTB nonetheless holds a revisionist line on the question of imperialist country workers. Likewise the ICG makes a point of dismissing the whole concept of "labor aristocracy" in passing (p. 5) and thus breaks with Lenin. The only facts that ICG cites in refuting the labor aristocracy thesis all have to do with peoples of oppressed nations. Hence the ICG positions itself to use oppressed nationality workers for its purposes without providing any evidence that white workers share their interests.

Indeed the main weakness of this and many other publications claiming to be straight "Marxist" is that it has no distinction between oppressed and oppressor nations. The ICG imagines that since nationalism in European countries is reactionary, nationalism everywhere is reactionary. Throughout the publication, the ICG spits on "anti-imperialism." Like other one-dimensional phony internationalists in the imperialist countries, ICG does not understand when Mao said, "nationalism is applied internationalism" in the oppressed nations. Despite all its talk about class, the ICG doesn't understand the class content of national oppression. In the semi-feudal countries that comprise the vast majority of oppressed nations, the frustration of the people with how the imperialists buy out and make puppets of their leaders has both class and national content. This differs from the imperialist country situation in that while money is the medium of politics as in the oppressed nations, political leaders usually come from the home country. Being too poor, the semi-feudal nations cannot afford to have their own bourgeois politicians and executives be loyal to them.

This publication makes a valiant effort at translation, coming out in English, Spanish and French. It also has some informative articles about Bosnia and some regurgitation of correct theory on

capitalism and war. Overall, MIM does not recommend this publication for reading, because its weaknesses on empirical substance and the national question outweigh its strengths in other areas.

## **Scottish Workers Party interview**

**I N NOVEMBER 1995, MIM INTERVIEWED** an ex-militant of the Workers Party of Scotland, a party with some Maoist leanings. Like few other parties in the imperialist countries, the Workers Party agrees with MIM that the majority of workers are what Marx called "unproductive" workers, and have different interests than the more basic workers of the world.

**Q:** Some anarchist writers have said that the anti-poll tax movement proves that a movement can be successful without vanguard leadership. Do you think that is true, or is it only true in situations like the poll tax, or was it not even true in the anti-poll tax movement?

**A:** Well, Maoists started it, and lots of anarchists and Trots were involved in keeping it going, but the main thrust was the huge scale of mass participation. The Trots here, although eager to confine the movement to constitutional channels, were very hard working and did a great deal of real mass work. As far as I am aware it is the only time that the Trots have ever done that in this country.

**Q:** Paul Cockshott's 1984 pamphlet on the national question raises the point that the republicans of the Six Counties would probably lose any referendum or plebiscite. Yet at the same time the forces they are fighting are a labor aristocracy, settlers and the British imperialists. How do you weigh the value of peace among workers and the issue of land? If the settlers encroach on First Nation land, should the First Nations abide by a referendum? Should they settle for smaller pieces of land where they have the majority? Won't that encourage further settler aggression and takeover? Should the proletariat of the Six Counties trade peace for guarantees of no further immigration from England?

**A:** I think that they should. You must bear in mind that when talking about settlement we are speaking of events some three centuries ago. There has been no significant immigration to northern Ireland from England for some 200 years. The population movements have overwhelmingly been the other way. In addition to large scale Irish settlement of the USA, Australia etc., there has since the early 19th century been a steady migration to Scotland and England from Ireland. At present in the west of Scotland perhaps a third of the population is of Irish descent. Thus the issue of immigration into the north is not an issue. Given the depressed state of the economy there, people are steadily leaving the place.

[MIM interjects: With peace that could change, but the comrade has said that they should receive guarantees of no further immigration, so we won't make an issue with that.]

You should also be wary of seeing Ireland as analogous to a third world country. It is not and has never been one. It was one of the birthplaces of industrial capitalism, and, until the early part of this century one of the more economically advanced parts of the capitalist world. It now enjoys one of the most rapid industrial growth rates in Europe. The unionist population in the north is mainly of Scots descent and mainly Protestant, thought there is a substantial section of the Catholic Irish population that also votes for a unionist party (Alliance). It is also true that the unionist population was generally pro-empire. I view peace among sections of the working class more important than claims to land.

The first nation to become established in Ireland was the Ulster Scots, who reached the stage of national development in the late 1700s as a result of the more rapid development of bourgeois production in the north. They allied with revolutionary France through the United Irishmen and tried to set up an independent bourgeois republic on the island. At that stage they had insufficient support among the Catholic population, who were at a pre-national stage of development. The Irish Catholic nation devel-

MIM Theory • Number 10 • 1996  
THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY

oped second during the mid-19th century. All this was extensively investigated by the Irish Communist Organisation in the late 60s and early 70s, who, basing themselves on Stalin's writings on the national question, clearly distinguished between national and pre-national stages of development. In territorial disputes between bourgeois states, it is always in the interest of the working classes for these to be resolved by referenda in the territories concerned.

**Q:** If Scotland would be an imperialist power in its own right, under what circumstances do you think the Scottish national struggle is progressive? We see you used it in the anti-poll tax fight, but under what conditions could the proletariat come to power in Scotland?

**A:** Finance capital in Scotland has never supported independence. Maclean saw the establishment of a workers republic here as a way of breaking apart the British empire. I tend to see the middle class nationalist movement as unable to make any real progress. I think that only an explicit movement for a workers republic using revolutionary means would have any hope of headway. However to do this the movement would have to be much more ideologically motivated than any at present existing on the left here.

**Q:** The Scottish comrade Paul Cockshott's calculations regarding exploitation in his book *Towards a New Socialism* do not break the workers down by ethnicity and do not assume any transfers to Britain hidden in the multinational corporations inner-corporation transfers (the largest trade in the world), or more straightforward superexploitation of the Third World. Where does the Workers Party stand on reparations to the Third World? Don't you agree we need to figure this out and bring it to the workers?

**A:** Britain has been a net exploiter of the Third World for almost every year for which statistical evidence is available. To account for this one would have to add the visible trade deficit to the net acquisition of overseas assets in the capital account. There is no need to look for "hidden" sources of exploitation of the Third World. It is all open and above

board; the bourgeoisie are proud of their achievements. The prime form of reparation would have to be the handing over of all overseas assets held by UK firms and residents to the states in which they were held. However, I do not accept that productive workers, who are certainly a minority of the UK work force, are net recipients of exploitation from abroad or anywhere else. The vast unproductive salariat employed in the financial sector or servicing that sector are another matter. These sectors form the bedrock of reaction and their social function as it exists today would vanish in a revolution.

**Q:** Have you taken a stand on the RIM declaration, the one put out by the RCP-USA?

**A:** Don't know of it.

**Q:** *Towards a New Socialism* is an inspiration to apply expertise toward red goals. Just as superabundance was deemed by Marx a prerequisite of communism, his book reminds us how it will be easier to be communist as time goes on if the species survives and technology makes any progress. How do you regard the group of people with programming, economics or statistics careers. What is the role of such people now in the proletarian movement and how will it be regarded during socialism?

**A:** I am not convinced that Marx held superabundance to be a prerequisite of communism, certainly not of the first phases of communism. Mao did not think that it was. To my mind it was the Trots and revisionists that made a fetish of superabundance to delay facing up to contradictions.

The attitude of people with programming skills varies according to the sort and scale of industry in which they work. They constitute a category of skilled and relatively highly paid workers. Those who work in productive industry and are in contact with other productive workers tend to identify more with the working class, others probably see themselves as middle class.

Economists are overwhelmingly reactionary. In the event of there being a strong working class movement, a section of economists will go over to it and become advocates for it, but their ideo-

logical background makes it in my opinion, a risky sort of support. I see no difficulty on the other hand, for a revolutionary movement being able to draw on people with computing skills.

## When I see a fascist

When I see a

fascist

it makes me want to

blast this

sawed-off

shotgun

and floor

one

or maybe two or

three

however many it takes until we are

free

When I see Bob

Dole

it makes me want to

pull

an Uzi and trigger a

blast

because I think about the

past:

the toiling

slave

the Indian

brave

the wretched of the

Earth

poor from

birth

fucked up the

ass

by the upper

class

And it's time that the Left

say

let pass not one more

day

before we get off our asses and

rebel

give the pigs

hell

Mao said it first and we've echoed it

since day one:

POLITICAL POWER GROWS FROM  
THE BARREL OF A GUN.

—A RAIL friend

## Winnable Battles

[MIM replies to the previous poem ... -ed.]

Things too normal in the White Nation  
It's a fucking abomination  
Things ain't going ka-blow, ka-blam,  
Bam-bam-bambam-ba-bam-bam-bam

Things are quiet — too quiet  
Makes me wanna start  
A fucking riot  
But I know we'd be a fool to try it  
'Til we know we can finish what we start

"Dare to struggle, dare to win!"  
To forget about winning is a terrible sin  
I'd have some fun in "Days of Rage,"  
But I'd rather push for victory in a future age  
So for now I'll bone up on some rational knowledge

Things are too quiet in college.

—A MIM Comrade

## Oh Henry

When Kissinger cantorial crooned his rumble bass  
goodbying apple-pie Americans and rice-lean  
Viets to memory. The most noise heard  
in round-roof Congress was of paper.

Smoky scientists and best-smelling authors  
joined coffin-makers looking blackwards,  
while warm and kicking bodies jungle tangled  
or lasted nights with random condoming.

Sanctified choppers, bombs blessed  
and oval-officed, power-priested  
unrespected skin, designated drivers  
of uncadillacced funerals to early earth.

Kissinger, of the other Nancy, lied.  
He lied bassly in multiculture.  
He agent-oranged more than bodies, he unsouled  
a generation of elided lives.

Oh Henry, where will we niche  
Your solemn sconce of boombox  
oratory —  
your lazy-lipping sentencing of youth  
to endless autopsy?

—A New York Poet

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# Anarchists!

**Don't give up on ending oppression to maintain the purity of your ideals! Communist revolution isn't perfect. But it's done more than anything else to defeat imperialism and end oppression.**

**Find our more... Read  
MIM Theory 8:  
“The Anarchist Ideal &  
Communist Revolution.”**

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# Anarchists!

The Maoist Internationalist Movement works for communist revolution — beginning with national liberation struggles — as the best course for a society free from the scourge of imperialist patriarchy.

*What do you suggest?*

Don't make up a lot of pretty ideas that don't work — and then hold real-world actions to your idealist standards.

*Show us something that works better.*  
We want nothing more than to get out of this hell-hole. Where will anarchist strategies takes us? So far, they've gone nowhere.

**Find our more... Read  
MIM Theory 8:  
“The Anarchist Ideal &  
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# Get A Grip!

The International Communist Movement has to understand that the workers of imperialist nations — the white workers, by and large — benefit from imperialism in a thousand ways. If you don't agree, prove us wrong.

**Find our more... Read  
MIM Theory 10:  
“Coming to Grips with  
the Labor Aristocracy.”**

*Struggle with, work with,  
finance and join the Maoist  
Internationalist Movement.*

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# Who Are They Kidding?

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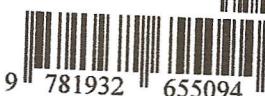
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