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the COMMUNIST

*Theoretical Journal of the Central Committee
Of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*

- **Commodities, Capitalism, Class Divisions—
and their Abolition with the
Achievement of Communism**
- **Social-Imperialism and Social-Democracy,
Cover-Up of Capitalism in the USSR**
(or How Martin Nicolaus and the October League Have
"Restored" Socialism in the Soviet Union)
- **Bourgeois Democracy and the
U.S. Working Class**
- **On the Character of World War 2**
- **Bourgeois Right, Economism, and the
Goal of the Working Class Struggle**

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CORRECTIONS

Due to an error by the printing company the following corrections must be made. The bottom lines on the following pages should read:

page 36:

tradition is between the social nature of production and the private nature of appropriation. This must lead to a 'tension' bet-

page 37:

the managers, the Party officials, in short, the capitalists, are out for nothing else than the maximum accumulation of *private*

page 43:

by enterprise directors. A considerable portion of retained profit

page 44:

funds were far too small to be of great use, and that their employ-

page 46:

ment or retreat of market forms under socialism is "an *index* of

page 52:

"We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that

page 53:

were stripped of all rights and bound, along with a good number of whites, to the semi-feudal system of sharecropping.

page 60:

The policy of "neutrality" was the political program of the

page 101:

Most important, Albania's communists did not limit themselves to the goal of driving out the occupiers. The Communist Party of

page 116:

The bourgeois right of "equal exchange for equal work," getting paid according to work, and the ideology that underlies it, forces

page 117:

cal struggle that arises immediately out of the economic struggle. Lenin sharply attacked this economist view of the task of commu-



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Dedication



Mao Tsetung
1893-1976

This first issue of *The Communist*, theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA, is dedicated to Mao Tsetung, great leader of the Chinese people and the working class and revolutionary people worldwide, who passed away September 9, 1976. Mao Tsetung creatively applied the science of revolution, Marxism-Leninism, enriched and developed it in a way unparalleled in our time.

This issue of *The Communist* appears in the month of October, the month of the historic victory of the Russian October Revolution in 1917, led by Lenin, whose salvoes brought Marxism-Leninism to new millions worldwide, including to China. Mao Tsetung took up this science, led the Chinese revolution to victory in October 1949 and, never resting, summed up the experience of class struggle, particularly the capitalist reversion in the Soviet Union, to make a landmark contribution to the theory of Marxism and the revolutionary struggle of the working class. He pointed out the danger of capitalist restoration, its source in socialist society and "right in the Communist Party" in power, and led the Chinese people in developing new forms of struggle to prevent it. These achievements, too, were great salvoes bringing Marxism-Leninism to many millions, on every continent.

Mao Tsetung's tremendous contributions are a lofty standard and a bright beacon on the path of revolutionary advance.

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Commodities, Capitalism, Class Divisions—and their Abolition with the Achievement of Communism

OWEN NATHA

In the *Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA*, under the section "The Working Class Will Transform All of Society," it says, "The working class in power will have inherited from capitalism its 'division of labor'—division between mental and manual workers, between workers in industry and working people in agriculture, between the city and the countryside, and between workers in different branches of the economy. The working class must break down these divisions and step by step eliminate all aspects of commodity production (production for exchange controlled by private individuals, or groups of individuals, rather than production for use controlled by society as a whole), which contains within it the core of the separation of society into classes, based on private ownership of means of production." (pp. 32-3) The point of this article is to analyze the meaning and implications of the statement that commodity production "contains within it the core of the separation of society into classes, based on private ownership of means of production," to examine the role of commodity production and show that the fact that production in society takes the form of commodity production is not something eternal, and is in fact a reflection of only a certain historical stage of development of production, of a certain stage of society, which will be overcome and transcended by the achievement of communism, classless society.

Another, more fundamental, all-around way of getting at this is what Mao points out in *On Contradiction*, where he notes that Lenin, in discussing the principles of dialectics, had the following to say about Marx's method, "In his *Capital*, Marx first analyzed the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows

us the development (*both growth and movement*) of these contradictions and of this society in the summation of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.' " (Mao, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 319)

The point, then, taking off from what was said in the Programme of the RCP, and even more fundamentally and in an all-around sense what was noted by Mao (quoting Lenin) in *On Contradiction*, is to make an analysis of the role of commodities, and the inherent contradiction in commodities, and how in fact this leads to all the basic contradictions that are characteristic of capitalist society, and how what the Party's Programme says is true, that in order to achieve classless society it is necessary to abolish commodity production.

CONTRADICTION IN COMMODITIES

Flowing from this, the first point is to analyze the contradiction inherent within commodities, and within commodity-producing labor. This contradiction can be expressed in several ways. One is that the contradiction inherent within a commodity is the fact that it has both use value and value (exchange value); value is manifested in the process of exchange as exchange value. Another way of saying basically the same thing, is, as Marx points out in the first chapter of the first volume of *Capital* on commodities, that commodity-producing labor has a two-fold character, that is both useful labor and abstract labor.

In its aspect as useful labor, it creates use value. In this aspect it is a particular form of labor which produces a particular product or a particular material thing, such as the labor which produces cloth or the process that goes on to produce steel. These are concrete forms of labor which produce particular, qualitatively different use values: a ton of steel is obviously different than a yard of cloth.

But what is in common to the process which produces both a ton of steel and a yard of cloth? What is in common is labor in general, labor in the abstract, abstract labor. And in this aspect it makes no difference whatsoever what the particular concrete form of the labor is, whether it is applied to making cloth or to making steel. What establishes both the identity between these two acts of labor, and also the quantitative relationship between them, is the fact that they are both labor in the abstract, an expenditure of human labor power.

Marx uses the comparison that in order for two things to be equated with each other, or to find some relationship with each other that enables them to be exchanged for one another, they have to be equal to some third thing. If you simply have a roll of steel and a yard of cloth, it is not immediately apparent what it is

that they have in common, and therefore it is not immediately apparent why they can be exchanged. There is nothing inherent in their properties, or in the particular form of labor which produced them, that makes them in any sense exchangeable with one another. The only thing which makes them exchangeable with one another is something which is abstracted from any of their material qualities, or the particular form of labor producing the one or the other, that is abstract labor.

These two commodities are exchangeable because they both are the product of a certain amount of human labor, and this human labor, again, is human labor in the *abstract*. If it were in the concrete there would be no way to equate the one with the other. There is no identity between the particular process of making a car and making steel. And if the specific process of labor were the same—and produced the same products—they also wouldn't be exchangeable with each other because there would be no point in exchanging them. What's the point of exchanging a ton of steel for another of steel, provided that the two tons of steel are of the same kind, or quality of steel? There is absolutely no reason, no one would go around, to use a simpler example, exchanging a penny for a penny, or a dime for a dime—taking the universal form of commodity, namely money. Neither would anyone exchange one dress with another which is exactly the same because there is no purpose for such an exchange.

If the process of labor and the concrete result of that labor were identical there would be no basis for exchanging the products. It is only because the particular concrete labor as applied in the labor process and the particular products of that labor are different, on the one hand, in terms of their use value—that is they serve different functions or fulfill different needs or wants which are socially determined—and on the other hand because the products contain, as Marx says, congealed labor power, abstract labor, that they can be exchanged with each other. The quantitative aspect in the exchange relationship, or in what proportion the one is exchangeable with the other, depends upon the quantity of labor—*socially necessary labor*—applied to the process of producing the one or the other. But again it is the quantity of *labor in the abstract*.

Marx gives the example of the area of rectangles as a way of understanding this point. Different sized rectangles do not have exactly the same dimensions, but their areas can be compared the one with the other by abstracting the area from the specific form of the rectangle and coming up with the total area of each, which then makes it possible to compare the area of one with the other.

And this is a specific example to illustrate the point that in order to be exchanged with each other, in order to be equal with each other in their relationship of exchange or to have proportionality with each other in the exchange, they have to be equal to or

have some relationship to a third thing. That third thing is labor in the abstract. Now, when Marx speaks of congealed human labor power he means that there is a certain amount of abstract labor, a certain amount of labor power applied regardless of the particular *form* of labor, embodied in both of these commodities and this is what makes them exchangeable with each other.

So, again, the fundamental thing to understand is the contradiction inherent within commodities that they contain both use value and exchange value, to put it in short form; they contain both useful labor which produces the use value, and abstract labor which is congealed in the product as value (manifested as exchange value in the process of exchange). This, as we will see later, is the key to understanding a lot of the other contradictions of not only commodity producing society in general, but capitalism in particular.

In this very contradiction, whether you express it as the difference between useful and abstract labor, the two-fold character of labor embodied in commodities, or whether you express it as the fact that a commodity contains both use value and value, nevertheless in this very contradiction, lies in embryonic form the germ or the cell of all the contradictions of capitalism.

COMMODITY PRODUCTION

What makes production commodity production? In a short pamphlet that was originally produced by the Revolutionary Union, *How Socialism Wipes Out Exploitation* (later adopted by the RCP), this example was given: if someone produces a quilt and uses it for himself that is not a commodity. No exchange is involved. The thing has use value but no value. On the other hand if he produced a quilt and exchanged it for some other object, then it becomes a commodity and it has not only use value of providing warmth or whatever, but also exchange value in being able to fetch in return for it some other commodity of equal value, some other commodity which contains congealed (or embodied in it) the same amount of labor in the abstract, or *abstract* labor. And it is an essential characteristic of capitalism that the general form of production is commodity production, production for exchange, not for use by the direct producer (or, as was the case with the feudal lord, by the person who owns or semi-owns the producer, the serf). Capitalism, as opposed to natural production or production for direct use, is characterized by production for exchange—commodity production. Under capitalism commodity production becomes the general, if not the completely universal, the overwhelming form, of production; there is still some production for use but it makes up a very small and, socially speaking, insignificant part of production in society.

The distinctive thing about commodity production—which, under capitalism becomes the general form of production—is that the products produced have, to the producers themselves, no function as use value, but only as value, or exchange value, which is realized in the process of exchange. They are not things which he is producing in order to use them, but in fact completely the opposite, he is producing them in order to exchange them. On the other hand for party B, the person who purchases them or exchanges some other commodity with them, the commodities produced by party A have to party B use value.

This is a way of looking, in a different light, in an expanded way so to speak, at the contradictions inherent in commodities, that they have both use value and exchange value. It's a further development of that understanding in the sense that to the producer they have only exchange value, and their use value lies only for someone else—the person who is exchanging another commodity to get them (the person who is buying them if you want to take the simplest way of looking at it). A commodity has use value to whoever buys it but exchange value to whoever sells it and produces it—or has it produced and appropriates it in order to sell it, as is the case in capitalism.

Further as Engels says in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, “We have seen that the capitalistic mode of production thrusts its way into a society of commodity-producers, of individual producers, whose social bond was the exchange of their products. But every society based upon the production of commodities has this peculiarity: that the producers have lost control over their own social interrelations. Each man produces for himself with such means of production as he may happen to have, and for such exchange as he may require to satisfy his remaining wants. No one knows how much of his particular article is coming on the market, nor how much of it will be wanted. No one knows whether his individual product will meet an actual demand, whether he will be able to make good his costs of production or even to sell his commodity at all. Anarchy reigns in socialized production.” (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 138)

Again, under capitalism commodity production is highly developed and is the general form of production. The owners of the means of production still appropriate privately, but unlike earlier forms of commodity production they appropriate the products of production of *others' labor*. In other words, in the early forms of commodity production the separation between producer and seller of commodities did not exist as it does under capitalism. Generally speaking the producers of commodities owned their own means of production or instruments, they produced the commodities and then naturally, since they were the product of their own labor, exchanged them for other commodities. But with the de-

velopment of capitalism (and we will go into this more fully later), the capitalists as owners of the means of production appropriate and sell as commodities (or exchange with other commodities) products which were produced entirely by the labor of others, and not through their own labor. So this sets capitalism off from earlier and more primitive forms, less general forms, of commodity production.

(In pre-capitalist society there was some commodity production; in slave society and feudal society, although the bulk of production supported the lavish consumption of the exploiters, there was to a certain degree the phenomenon that the slaveowner or feudal lord appropriated things produced by slaves or serfs and exchanged them as commodities. But commodity production on a truly wide scale developed in the later stages of feudal society, and this was characterized by *individual* producers exchanging the product of *their own* labor as commodities. It is this that capitalism negated with its separation of actual producer from appropriator—and seller—of the products as commodities.)

Under earlier commodity production, production was in the final analysis, social, in the sense that it was part of the division of labor of society, but a division which grew up behind the backs of and independently of the producers themselves and was not immediately recognizable by them as a social process. In other words, each commodity producer worked independently of all others, and the one place where the social character of what was going on became recognizable was the market where they exchanged their commodities. Other than that it appeared to them that they were by accident or by laws or processes unknown to them producing a particular kind of commodity.

In fact, they were not producing them accidentally but as a result of the exchange taking place through the market, as a result of the social division of labor of production which grew up on the basis of the law of value—in other words, on the fact that the value (or exchange value) of different commodities was determined by the socially necessary labor time contained in their production, or by the amount of abstract labor embodied in them.

But the fact that production was ultimately a part of a social process was not so clearly evident as it is under capitalism where production itself is openly and directly carried on in a socialized way. That is rather than scattered, individual producers, the overwhelming and predominant form of production under capitalism is highly socialized production carried on by hundreds, thousands, even tens of thousands of producers cooperating, each of them necessary for the production of the total product. Thus, Engels points out, at the end of the production of any particular product under capitalism it is impossible for any individual worker to say “*I made that; this is my product.*” And this is another thing

which represents the further development of capitalism beyond earlier forms of commodity production.

BASIC CONTRADICTION OF CAPITALISM

So, under capitalism, production is carried on socially but still the products of production are appropriated privately. And this of course constitutes the basic contradiction of capitalism. Labor power has become a commodity under capitalism and this is one of capitalism's distinguishing features. But in its use, this labor power has a particular special property belonging to it alone among all commodities and to no other commodity, that in its use it creates additional value beyond its own. And this of course is the secret of surplus value, of profit, under the capitalist system.

The capitalist buys and must buy labor *power*—the ability to do work in general—as opposed to labor. He cannot buy concrete labor, but once having bought labor *power*, he applies it to the process of production in a particular way to produce particular products which have concrete features, characteristics, bodily form and concrete use value. But they also have value, the embodiment of human labor in the abstract. So a commodity produced by this labor still has embodied in it the two-fold character of all labor embodied in commodities. But now the capitalists—instead of the direct producers themselves, the workers—appropriate the products and realize their value, including surplus value, in the exchange.

This is another feature which is a fundamental characteristic of capitalism and sets it off from earlier forms of commodity production, that is that a non-producer, but one of that class that monopolizes the means of production, appropriates the products of the labor of the workers and exchanges them. In the process of production the surplus value is created and in the process of exchange it is realized by the capitalist. The fact that in commodity production, production for exchange, the product has for its producer (or appropriator) only exchange value, but has use value to whoever purchases it, this is expressed under capitalism in the fact that capital seeks to produce surplus value not use value, or to put it as the president of GM once said, “GM is in the business of making money, not cars.”

This of course was explained some time ago in the *Communist Manifesto* even before the president of GM was forced to admit it. It was expressed by Marx and Engels in the following way there: “In bourgeois society, living labor is but a means to increase accumulated labor. In communist society, on the other hand, accumulated labor is but a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the laborer.

“In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present;

in communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality." (Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, Peking, FLP, 1970, p. 50)

But still the blind forces of the market operate and the anarchy flowing from the contradiction inherent in commodities themselves still exists. In fact it exerts itself as the compulsion, the law, for the capitalists to compete for the market, that they have to introduce new machinery, expand production to produce the same number of goods more quickly and therefore with less value—or another way of saying the same thing, produce more goods in the same amount of time, each of which is produced more quickly and therefore has a cheaper price (assuming price actually corresponds to value)—in order to undersell their competition and to grab up more of the market.

ANARCHY OF PRODUCTION

This goes back to the statement quoted earlier from Engels where he notes that no one, even under earlier commodity production, knows how much of his product will be sold, how much of a market there is for it. All this operates blindly to the individual producers, or under capitalism to the individual capitalists, companies, etc.

So, the contradiction then arises and expresses itself under capitalism in the fact that planning in enterprise production—and sometimes the most highly developed and sophisticated attempts or means for carrying out such planning by particular companies, through computers and other means—stands in stark contradiction to the overall anarchy of production in society. This constitutes of course a basic contradiction of capitalist society; it flows from the basic contradiction between private accumulation and socialized production. And this, in turn, arises from the contradiction inherent in commodities themselves, of being both depositories of value and use value, of having embodied in them both abstract labor and useful labor.

The anarchy, the operation of the laws of commodity production and the inherent contradiction in commodity production, all of this leads to the tendency of constant capital to replace variable capital, that is (to put it in simple terms) for the worker to be replaced by machinery. Along with this is the long term tendency for the reserve army of the unemployed, as Marx and Engels called it, to arise and to develop and to grow with the further development and growth of capitalism.

This was summarized very powerfully in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, where Engels cites what Marx analyzes in *Capital*: "...The very product of the worker is turned into an instrument

for his subjugation," and "thus it comes about that the economizing of the instruments of labor becomes at the same time, from the outset, the most reckless waste of labor power, and robbery based upon the normal conditions under which labor functions; that machinery, the most powerful instrument for shortening labor time, becomes the most unfailing means for placing every moment of the laborer's time and that of his family at the disposal of the capitalist for the purpose of expanding the value of his capital." (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 141)

Of course all of this is manifesting itself all too sharply today in plants throughout the country where merciless speedup is combined with tremendous layoffs. And in general beyond this particular phenomenon, with the further growth and accumulation of capital, and particularly the growth disproportionately of constant capital—or machinery, raw materials, etc., especially machinery in relation to variable capital, or the capital exchanged for labor power—all this, Engels points out (quoting Marx), " 'establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time, accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e. on the side of the class that produces *its own product in the form of capital.*' " (Ibid., p. 141) In other words, because of the very fact that workers are forced to produce products that function as capital—capital being a social relationship which enables the capitalist to control the production process and exploit the workers to get surplus value—therefore the product of their labor becomes a means for their further enslavement and subjugation.

RATE OF PROFIT

Also, all of the general tendencies described above lead to the tendency for the rate of profit to fall. In particular the fact that constant capital—particularly machinery (or really the money laid out for machinery, as opposed to variable capital, the money laid out for, or exchanged with, labor power)—the fact that this constant capital grows in greater proportion than variable capital, in other words that machinery, relatively speaking if not in absolute terms, is constantly displacing workers, this results in the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

The reason for this is that surplus value—and the sum of surplus value is the same thing as the sum of the profit, though the *rate* of surplus value, as will be explained later, is different than the *rate* of profit—nevertheless the surplus value comes out of only one part of capital, comes only out of the variable part of capital. As stated earlier, labor power, the commodity of labor power, is the only commodity that has the particular quality of being able

in its use to produce more value than it is exchanged for; to produce more value in other words than its own equivalent, to produce, in short, surplus value. So surplus value can come about only out of the labor of the workers.

In other words the exchange of variable capital (in the form of money-wages) results, through the process of production, in the replacement of the initial value laid out to the workers, but also in an additional value which goes only to the capitalist. This is because, in a word, the worker is able during the working day to produce more value than the value of his own labor power—the value of the commodities required to maintain and reproduce this labor power.

This is why Marx talks about necessary labor and surplus labor. The *necessary* labor is what the workers expend in reproducing the value of their own labor power, that is the value equal to what they need in order to live and raise a new generation of workers; and *surplus* labor is what the workers expend producing surplus value, the part of the labor in which the workers actually work for free for the capitalists and produce value, above and beyond the value of their own labor power, which goes only to the capitalist.

The fact that the constant capital grows at a faster rate than the variable capital pushes down or tends to push down the rate of profit. The reason for this is that the rate of profit is determined not simply by the amount of surplus value over the amount of variable capital—which gives us the rate of exploitation of the workers, or the rate of surplus value—but is determined by the total amount of surplus value, or profit, over the total cost of production, which includes not only the variable capital but also the constant capital—in other words, not only the cost in wages for purchasing the labor power to put it to use, but also the cost of machinery, raw materials, auxiliary materials for fuel or whatever.

As this constant capital rises the rate of profit is going to have a tendency to fall because the total amount expended in order to set in motion the labor of the workers to produce more surplus value has grown greater than the amount of surplus value produced by the workers. Despite the efforts of the capitalist to counteract the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, overall it falls nonetheless.

CRISIS

And out of all this arises the crisis that is characteristic of capitalism, which marked it every 10 years in its early stage, and which, with the development of imperialism, has become all the more devastating, as was shown by the last depression of the 1930s. All of this, and the *basis* of this, was described specifically by Marx

in terms of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. And along with this goes the fact that much greater amounts must increasingly be invested to get the same amount of profit. But, in turn, greater investment—which means the greater proportional growth of constant as opposed to variable capital—further the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

And so, capitalism, caught within its own contradictions, continues to spiral in on itself and repeatedly sinks into ever sharper and deeper crises of “overproduction,” where there is an artificial “surplus” population and “surplus” means of production—“surplus” only because they cannot be employed to result in yet more capital.

Marx analyzes this in the third volume of *Capital*, where he writes, “Capitalist production seeks continually to overcome these immanent barriers, but overcomes them only by means which again place these barriers in its way and on a more formidable scale.

“The *real barrier* of capitalist production is *capital itself*. It is that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and the closing point, the motive and the purpose of production; that production is only production for *capital* and not vice versa, the means of production are not mere means for a constant expansion of the living process of the *society* of producers. The limits within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital resting on the expropriation and pauperization of the great mass of producers can alone move—these limits come continually into conflict with the methods of production employed by capital for its purposes, which drive towards unlimited extension of production, towards production as an end in itself, towards unconditional development of the social productivity of labor. The means—unconditional development of the productive forces of society—comes continually into conflict with the limited purpose, the self-expansion of the existing capital. The capitalist mode of production is, for this reason, a historical means of developing the material forces of production and creating an appropriate world-market and is, at the same time, a continual conflict between this its historical task and its own corresponding relations of social production.” (Marx, *Capital*, International Publishers, 1967, Vol. 3, p. 250)

To put it another way crisis comes about because and when the means of production cannot be converted into capital, and labor power into a means of producing more capital, more surplus value. Capital, as Marx revealed, is a *social relation*. It is not money, it is not machines or anything else. It is a social relation. Money or machines can exist independently of capital and need not be capital. They only become capital under certain conditions, under certain social relations, just as Marx pointed out Black people are Black people but under certain conditions of historically de-

terminated production they became slaves. There was, of course, nothing inherent in them which made them slaves.

Capital then is a social relation. It is in short the ability through monopoly of the ownership of the means of production to exploit human labor power. And, again, the crisis of capitalism comes about, as Engels powerfully puts it in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, when "The whole mechanism of the capitalist mode of production breaks down under the pressure of the productive forces, its own creations. It is no longer able to turn all this mass of means of production into capital. They lie fallow, and for that very reason the reserve army of labor must also lie fallow. Means of production, means of subsistence, available laborers, all the elements of production and of general wealth, are present in abundance. But 'abundance becomes the source of distress and want'" (Engels quotes Fourier, here) "because it is the very thing that prevents the transformation of the means of production and subsistence into capital. For in capitalistic society the means of production can only function when they have undergone a preliminary transformation into capital, into the means of exploiting human labor power." (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 143)

As the Programme of the RCP points out about such crises, and particularly about the tremendous growth of the reserve army, that is the tremendous growth of unemployment, during such crises, "In the inevitable crises of capitalism, unemployment grows to tremendous proportions and the criminal absurdity of the capitalist system stands out all the more starkly—the very class that produces the profit on which the system is based finds millions of its members out of work because they cannot be employed profitably!" (pp. 111-112) Or further, as Engels expresses it once again in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, "the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means of subsistence." Again, citing Fourier's description, Engels referred to this as "a crisis from plethora," a crisis of too much abundance or plenty.

"In these crises," Engels continues, "the contradiction between socialized production and capitalist appropriation ends in a violent explosion. The circulation of commodities is for the time being, stopped. Money, the means of circulation, becomes a hindrance to circulation." (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 142) And a little later, "In every crisis [and this means, of course, the crisis of capitalism—O.N.] society is suffocated beneath the weight of its own productive forces and products, which it cannot use, and stands helpless, face to face with the absurd contradiction that the producers have nothing to consume, because consumers are wanting. The expansive force of the means of production bursts the bonds that the capitalist mode of production had imposed upon

them." (Ibid., p. 148) This, then, is the basic underlying cause of the crises of capitalism which have characterized it from its beginning and have become all the more devastating with its development.

CAPITAL IS A BARRIER

Capital, the social relation, the class relations of exploitation of wage-labor, which is essentially what capital is, stands as a barrier to the development of society itself, and to the development of mankind through society in its ability to rationally confront and transform nature.

Society fundamentally is an organized way in which people carry out the production, and on that basis the distribution, of the material requirements of life. But under commodity production, the social relations between people in production and the social relations between people in general are disguised as relations between things, between products, between commodities. People appear to each other as owners of this or that commodity, and, as stated earlier, the fact that they are part of a broader social division of labor becomes clear only when they exchange the commodities in the market.

In this exchange, especially as commodity production and exchange grows more widespread, involving many different kinds of products, and still more as one commodity, money, comes to stand as the universal equivalent of all other commodities—in short, is good as payment to purchase any commodity—it is hidden from the parties in the exchange that what they are really exchanging is labor—abstract labor congealed in particular products. To sell a television set to someone for \$100 and then use that \$100 to buy a record player, for example, is not only exchanging the TV for the record player through the medium of money, but actually represents the exchange of equal amounts of labor that go into these commodities, and the fact that in the exchange described in this example what is fundamentally going on is an exchange of labor, this fact is *hidden*, not immediately evident to the parties involved. So the fact that labor is the bond between people in society, is the very basis for society, is also hidden, because this labor is carried out by isolated individuals (or groups of individuals).

What they produce and in what measure is, in fact, regulated, but it is regulated by the law of value—which operates *blindly*—and the division of labor in society develops *spontaneously*, not through the conscious planning of society.

Under capitalism, although production is carried out socially and this is directly and obviously so, private ownership and private appropriation stands in the way of the social organization throughout society of carrying out this production. As noted earlier there

is the development under capitalism of planning and the attempt to organize production on the part of individual capitalists or individual companies, but the more so this is carried out the more so it stands in contradiction to the overall anarchy of production which, again, stems from the basic contradiction inherent in commodity production itself and in the labor which produces commodities. The more that particular companies attempt to carry out planning, this in no way means that they are more able to alleviate the contradictions of capitalism, to tone down or to alleviate competition, but in fact it only makes the competition sharper, it only makes the struggle for markets sharper and the inevitable crisis which results from the anarchy and from the attempt to expand production as though there were no limits, become all the more explosive once these attempts at expansion run up against the limits of the actual capitalist relations of production.

Capitalism, through its private appropriation and ownership, stands in the way of the social organization of society as a whole to carry out production—and distribution which depends on production—of the material requirements of life. Production under capitalism, as the most highly developed, most general form of commodity production, expresses itself in the blind forces of the market, anarchy, competition and, again, the tendency to expand as though there were no limits and the running up of this expansion against the limits of capitalist relations, resulting in the overproduction crises which have been described earlier.

MORE DEVASTATING CRISES

All of this means that production masters man rather than the other way around. It results in the tremendous waste of productive forces, both human and material. But it should be pointed out, these crises which inevitably occur under capitalism are not simply an endless repetition of the same cycle but as Engels put it, using an example from astronomy, in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, “the movement [that is, the movement of capitalism through a series of crises—O.N.] becomes more and more a spiral, and must come to an end, like the movement of the planets, by collision with the center.”

It is, to use Engels' phrase, “the compelling force of anarchy” (Ibid., p. 140) which we have already shown in its origins in commodity production and in its ramifications in capitalist production, which drives capitalism toward this situation.

This same point was also touched on by Marx and Engels in the writing of the *Communist Manifesto*, where they talk about the inevitability of overproduction crises under capitalism and also the fact that capitalism in the long run not only can't solve these contradictions but in fact through a series of such crises is less and less

able to prevent them and is hit more devastatingly by successive crises.

Referring to “the epidemic of over-production,” they write, “Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce. The productive forces at the disposal of society no longer tend to further the development of the conditions of bourgeois property; on the contrary, they have become too powerful for these conditions, by which they are fettered, and so soon as they overcome these fetters, they bring disorder into the whole of bourgeois society, endanger the existence of bourgeois property. The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.” (*Communist Manifesto*, Peking, FLP, p. 38)

So what we can see here is that capitalism, due to the operation of the basic laws governing it, and in particular due to the basic contradiction of capitalism between socialized production and private appropriation, arrives at the point where its own social relations are too narrow and restricting for the productive forces which under capitalism itself have been developed—though through the labor of the workers and not the capitalists.

These productive forces have become too mighty, too powerful, for the capitalist class and cannot any longer be commanded by the capitalist class without bringing tremendous waste and destruction and crisis into society. These mass of productive forces can only be commanded by that social grouping in society which has produced them in the first place through its socialized labor, that is by the working class, and ultimately by all of society after the abolition of classes. And this is obviously an extremely important point. And here it should be stressed again, that this basic contradiction of capitalism between socialized production and private appropriation, has its seeds in the contradiction inherent within commodity production itself—the separation between use value and value—although this basic contradiction only develops in full form when labor power itself becomes a commodity and the separation is fully developed between the actual *producers* and the *appropriators* of the commodities.

As pointed out here, it is due to this basic contradiction of capi-

talism that the capitalist class is unable to fully utilize and command the productive forces that develop under capitalism itself. Leaving aside the workers which are the main motive force of production, and speaking only of the means of production, that is machinery and factories, raw materials, land and what-have-you, and in particular the machinery, it is not only the fact that they have become highly developed but the fact that in order to make use of these means of production it is necessary for production to be carried out in a socialized way, that is of great importance here. In earlier, more primitive forms of society, with less developed means of production, it was not only not necessary but not possible for production to be carried on in this kind of direct socialized way. The development of the means of production did not allow for it.

Under capitalism the reverse is true. It is not possible to utilize them to the fullest unless they are utilized in a socialized way, unless production itself is carried on in a socialized way. And the more so that this develops—and the development of capitalism continually, by the laws we've spoken of, pushes this development—the more so it undermines the basis of existence of capitalism and brings into sharper and sharper antagonism the basic contradiction between socialized production and private ownership, private accumulation, resulting in greater and greater crises and destruction.

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

The only means for resolving this contradiction and for doing away with the crises of capitalism, with the anarchy and with the tremendous waste of the productive forces, both human and material, is to bring the character of ownership of the means of production into harmony with the character of the process of production itself. That is to *socialize* the ownership of the means of production and in the final analysis to make them the common property of all of society, with the abolition of classes.

This is another way of saying that only communism can totally resolve this contradiction. Under socialism, the first and lower stage of communism, even after the socialist transformation of ownership has been mainly completed, while the anarchy and crises characteristic of capitalism are eliminated on the basis of socialized ownership, commodity forms still persist, including the exchange of money-wages for food, clothing and other consumption items.

The amount and kind of work a person does still basically determines the amount of pay; however—and this is a crucial difference from capitalism—labor power is not a commodity, there are no buyers and sellers of labor power, in short no one enriching himself by exploiting another. This is reflected in the basic prin-

ciples of socialist society, "he who does not work, neither shall he eat" and "from each according to his ability to each according to his work."

Still, the persistence of commodity relations under socialism, is, as pointed out at the start of this article, an important part of the soil for the restoration of capitalism. (For more on this and closely related questions, see the article on "bourgeois right" in this issue of *The Communist*.)

Communist ownership, ownership by all of society—which will come only with the full development of communism through the class struggle first to overthrow capitalism, establish socialism and then to continue the revolution under the rule of the working class to eliminate the remnants of capitalism and achieve communism—only this is the means to both make use of the productive forces to the fullest at any time and to constantly and in tremendous proportion develop these productive forces still further.

Communism will make possible and is based on the conscious mastery by man of his own social organization. For the first time in the history of society, by grasping the laws governing nature and society, mankind will consciously confront and transform nature.

Then commodity production, and the contradiction inherent in it, will be abolished. In commodity production, including capitalism, the laws of society operate blindly, behind the backs of the producers of the commodities, behind the backs of society as a whole in fact. But with communism, for the first time it will be possible for society to be consciously organized and for mankind to consciously confront and transform nature by grasping its laws without any social relations acting as fetters or barriers to either grasping these laws or on the basis of grasping them to transform nature.

In other words, mankind will consciously confront nature through its own social organization of which for the first time it has become the master. Mao Tsetung has expressed this very succinctly and powerfully in *On Practice* in the following way: "The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world." (Mao, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 308)

PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

To achieve communism is the historical mission of the proletariat. Communism can only be achieved by social revolution for, despite its inherent contradictions, anarchy, crisis and the tremendous suffering it brings to the masses, capitalism will not collapse by itself. It must be smashed and destroyed. That is why, as the Programme of the RCP points out, the first great revolutionary

step of the working class is to overthrow the rule of the capitalists and establish its own rule. Then the working class must abolish capitalist ownership and replace it with the ownership by the state representing the working class. This, in turn can only be achieved through a series of steps under the rule of the working class; and finally, through continuing this revolution and eliminating the remnants of capitalism classless society, communism, will be reached.

As said before, to achieve all this is the historic mission of the proletariat. As Engels put it in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, "To thoroughly comprehend the historical conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific socialism." (p. 151) And to this we can add that to grasp these laws of scientific socialism—the science of revolution, or as it has come to be called Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought—to grasp and apply these laws and in the course of struggle to arm ever broader sections of the masses with them so that they can consciously take them up and as the Programme of the RCP states, "transform the world through class struggle," this is the role of the Party of the proletariat in every country.

In general then, human labor must always transform nature, must always produce the wealth of society, the use values of society (or, rather, increase them, because, as Marx pointed out and struggled for, certain use values and a certain amount of wealth, as opposed to value—or exchange value—is provided directly to man by nature). Mankind must and always will create use values or wealth—and wealth actually consists of use values, as Marx pointed out—or else there could be no society and no human life.

But as opposed to the production of use values, commodity production and the production of value in addition to the production of use value, only corresponds to a certain historical stage of development of production in society, in which, as stated earlier, the process of production masters man rather than the other way around. And this reveals that not only is it a historically limited but a still primitive form of society in which man has not fully separated himself off from the kingdom of animals in the sense that through his social organization he is not yet directly and consciously confronting and transforming nature.

Marx puts it this way in *Capital*, in the first volume on commodities, "Political economy [by this he means classical bourgeois political economy—O.N.] has indeed analyzed, however incompletely, value and its magnitude, and has discovered what lies beneath these forms. But it has never once asked the question *why* labor is represented by the value of its product and labor time by the magnitude of that value. These formulae, which bear it stamped upon them

in unmistakable letters that they belong to a society, in which the process of production has the mass of being controlled by him, such formulae appear as if by Nature and intellect to be as much a self-evident necessity as productive labor itself." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 100, added) But, as Marx goes on to say, this form of commodity production, and the relations that obtain between man and nature, are only a historically established and historically limited form of production, and form of organization of society, which will be transcended by mankind in achieving communism.

This is why, going back to an earlier point, Marx strenuously, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, laid out the idea that labor is the source of all wealth in society. Marx argues against Lassalle and points out that the source of all wealth is just as much human labor, which itself is only the manifestation of human labor power...The bourgeois have falsely ascribed *supernatural creative power* to labor, precisely from the fact that labor depends on the man who possesses no other property than his own labor power. He must, in all conditions of society and culture, be able to work only with the permission of other men who have made themselves the owners of the means of production. He can work only with their permission." (Marx and Engels, *Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 13)

The point Marx is getting at here is that in a *class* society, those who are the owners of the means of production and on that basis enslave others, always determine the form of organization of society, as well as the form of ownership, and start at that point with labor. Marx goes deeper and asking the questions: Where in nature? How in fact is it produced? What is the relationship between man and nature through production?

These are questions which point to the fact that the form of class society is only transitory and limited to a certain level or stage of historical development, and must and will be overcome by a higher form of production, and until finally private ownership, and on that basis the man who owns the means of production, will exploit them in the labor process, will be abolished.

So by returning to nature and showing that labor can be directly applied to nature without the medium or intervention of class division, Marx is pointing far beyond what the reformists who wrote up the Programme of the RCP were pointing to—rather than a redistribution of wealth, he was pointing to the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and the abolition of class society.

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But as opposed to the production of use values, commodity production and the production of value in addition to the production of use value, only corresponds to a certain historical stage of development of production in society, in which, as stated earlier, the process of production masters man rather than the other way around. And this reveals that not only is it a historically limited but a still primitive form of society in which man has not fully separated himself off from the kingdom of animals in the sense that through his social organization he is not yet directly and consciously confronting and transforming nature.

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in unmistakable letters that they belong to a state of society, in which the process of production has the mastery over man instead of being controlled by him, such formulae appear to the bourgeois intellect to be as much a self-evident necessity imposed by Nature as productive labor itself." (*Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 80-81, emphasis added) But, as Marx goes on to say, this form of production, commodity production, and the relations that stem from it, are only a historically established and historically limited form of production, and form of organization of society, which must and will be transcended by mankind in achieving communism.

This is why, going back to an earlier point, Marx argued so strenuously, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, against the idea that labor is the source of all wealth in society. In that work Marx argues against Lassalle and points out, "Labor is *not the source* of all wealth. *Nature* is just as much the source of use values (and it is surely of such that material wealth consists!) as labor, which itself is only the manifestation of a force of nature, human labor power...The bourgeois have very good grounds for falsely ascribing *supernatural creative power* to labor; since precisely from the fact that labor depends on nature it follows that the man who possesses no other property than his labor power must, in all conditions of society and culture, be the slave of other men who have made themselves the owners of the material conditions of labor. He can work only with their permission, hence live only with their permission." (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 13)

The point Marx is getting at here is that in every form of society, or *class* society, those who are the owners of the means of production and on that basis enslave others, always want to assume the given form of organization of society, assume the given form of ownership, and start at that point with labor, rather than digging deeper and asking the questions: Where in fact does wealth originate? How in fact is it produced? What in fact is the actual relationship between man and nature through the medium of society?

These are questions which point to the fact that each of these forms of class society is only transitory and only reflects a certain level or stage of historical development, development of production, and must and will be overcome by a higher form until finally private ownership, and on that basis the means to enslave others and exploit them in the labor process, will be eliminated.

So by returning to nature and showing that nature provides use values and that labor can be directly applied to nature without the medium or intervention of class division, Marx was pointing far beyond what the reformists who wrote up the Gotha Programme were pointing to—rather than a redistribution of the wealth, he was pointing to the abolition of private, capitalist ownership of the means of production and the abolition of wage slavery.

HISTORICAL MISSION

This, again, is the historical mission of the proletariat, in first overthrowing capitalism, creating its own rule and through the socialist revolution carrying forward the transition to completely classless society, to overcome all the fetters and remnants of capitalism, to suppress and eliminate capitalism, the capitalist class and class society generally, to reverse what has been the previous fact, that the productive process had mastery over mankind, and for the first time to establish the conditions where mankind consciously and voluntarily, as Mao says, transforms itself and the world; where mankind, through its conscious organization of society, confronts and transforms nature and really begins for the first time to move completely away from the animal kingdom and begins, really for the first time, human history.

In summation: capitalism arose on the basis of the extension and generalization of commodity production—including the fact that human labor power becomes a commodity. So long as commodities have not yet been completely eliminated, the basis for capitalism cannot be completely eliminated—and this is a crucial point under socialism, where the continued existence of commodities provides a major part of the soil for capitalist restoration.

But just as surely as capitalism arose on the basis of the extension and generalization of commodity production, the basis for capitalism, for the division of society into classes, will be eliminated with the elimination of commodities and the achievement of communism, with its great principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Social-Imperialism and Social-Democracy, Cover-Up of Capitalism in the USSR

(or How Martin Nicolaus and the October League Have "Restored" Socialism in the Soviet Union)

C.R.

In October, 1974 the Revolutionary Union, a national communist organization which played a key role in the formation of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, published an important analysis of the development and workings of Soviet social-imperialism entitled *Red Papers 7: How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle (RP7)*. At its foundation the RCP adopted this book as one of its own publications.

Since publication of *RP7* it has become more important than ever that the working class and masses of people be armed with a correct understanding of the true nature of Soviet society. In the current world situation, with the continuing contention between the two superpowers, the U.S. and the USSR, intensifying daily and with the danger of a new world war growing steadily from this, it is essential that the working class recognize clearly the class nature, not only of our own rulers, but also of our rulers' main rivals, the capitalists of Soviet Russia.

Moreover, even today when in the U.S. the question of seizing state power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat is not yet an immediate question, it is still important that the U.S. working class begin to develop a scientific and class conscious understanding of the nature of socialist society and the transition to communism, so that we can have the clearest possible picture of our final goal and so that we can be prepared to seize on any opportunity presented to us to move forward from capitalism into a whole new stage of human history.

In this context, of the rapidly changing international situation on the one hand, and of our own struggle for socialism in the U.S. on the other, continuing discussion and study, debate and struggle, centered on the theses and arguments of *RP7* can be one

very important way for communists, advanced workers generally, and other revolutionary forces to deepen their grasp of these complex and crucial questions.

PART 1: OPPORTUNIST LINE HIDDEN BEHIND DISTORTION AND SLANDER

One attempt to contribute to this discussion, an article entitled "Critique of Red Papers 7: Metaphysics Cannot Defeat Revisionism," appeared under the signature of Martin Nicolaus, a self-styled "revolutionary intellectual" and English-language translator of Marx's *Grundrisse*, in the pages of *Class Struggle* (No. 2, Summer 1975), the "theoretical" journal of the October League (OL).

Unfortunately, behind a rather flimsy shield of purported scholarship and not-so-witty sarcasm, this article only distorts the correct understanding of the class nature of Soviet society and of the process by which capitalism was restored there presented in *RP7*. In the manner for which the October League has become justly famous, it offers little more than pages of distortions, misquotes, and outright falsehoods. Characteristically the author is more concerned with finding new ways to hurl muck at the authors of *RP7*, calling them revisionists, Trotskyites, and anarchists all at once, than he is with advancing his readers' knowledge of the subject.

For instance, Nicolaus' contention that *RP7* ends up in fact saying that capitalism has not been fully restored in the Soviet Union but is only being restored or "will inevitably be restored" (which Nicolaus falsely claims to quote from an unnamed page of *RP7*!), must surely come as a surprise to even a careless reader of that book. The pages of *RP7* abound with numerous examples of how the Soviet economy has been completely reorganized along capitalist lines.

For instance, the discussion of the Shchekino Chemical Combine "experiment" on page 49 describes the development of speed-up and unemployment under Soviet capitalism. And while the Soviet Union has yet to experience a classic capitalist overproduction crisis, *RP7* explains how the recent disasters in Soviet agriculture stem precisely from the reintroduction of "the fundamental contradiction of capitalism and imperialism everywhere—the contradiction between private appropriation and social production of wealth." (p. 56) Indeed, on this same page, where according to Nicolaus the startling thesis that capitalism has not yet been fully restored in the Soviet Union is supposedly advanced, we can read a description of how the primacy of the capitalist law of value means the development of capitalist competition. This is then followed by a crystal-clear statement that "*This is what is happening in the Soviet Union today.*" (emphasis added) Today, Mr. Nicolaus, not tomorrow.

Or, similarly, Nicolaus distorts and slanders *RP7*'s discussion of the achievements of Soviet socialism, claiming that "The whole period is painted a dull grey; and indeed the authors characterize this span of years simply as 'the first period in the restoration of capitalism.' This basic approach is very near in spirit and method to the Trotskyist view of Soviet socialism, much as it pays lip-service to Stalin."

No deal, Mr. Nicolaus. *RP7* takes a clear stand on the Stalin question and in defense of the Soviet workers' state. On page 15 we read that "During these years the working class was firmly in power and proletarian policies were being followed in most areas." An entire section is devoted to answering the question "How did the working class build socialism in the Soviet Union?" What *RP7* does not do is spend idle pages waxing eloquent about the very real achievements of the Soviet workers under socialism, solely to create the "sense of loss" which Nicolaus finds lacking. *RP7* takes the correct stand of analysing the past to learn for the present and future. Its authors are not afraid to emphasize the very bitter and sharp class struggle which continued throughout the socialist period, and they do not hesitate to sum up the weaknesses and, yes, the errors of the proletariat and its party. This is not done to minimize or slander the achievements of socialism, in the style of the Trotskyites, but to reveal the causes for the proletariat's defeat so soon after Stalin's death.

As *RP7* states: "Soviet social-imperialism grew from the soil of the Stalin era, from the particular contradictions and struggles that exist under the dictatorship of the proletariat and assume the forms we have discussed during the period of socialist construction under Stalin's leadership. But many more things also took root in this soil, some good, others not so. To understand where the healthy flowers of workers' power, industrialization, economic planning, collective agriculture, lost out to the weeds of revisionism and capitalism is the very difficult task at hand." (p. 20) It is in this spirit that the history of Soviet socialism is discussed.

But if the Nicolaus article were simply an assorted collection of misquotes and distortions its "argument" could be readily dismissed with an admonishment to those who have not yet done so to read *RP7* for themselves so as to set the record straight. And, indeed, such a reading does quite a bit to take the wind from Nicolaus' sails.

However, beneath all the slick distortions, all the quoting out of context, *there is a line*. The mudslinging and the misquotes have a purpose. They disguise the fact that Nicolaus is in fundamental disagreement with one of the most basic theses of *RP7* and of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat—namely, the thesis that socialism is a form of class society and that under socialism class struggle continues. This class struggle is

most fundamentally a *political struggle*. The question of whether a society is moving forward through socialism towards communism or whether capitalism has been restored is, in essence, a question of which class rules and whether or not the basis for eliminating exploitation is being laid. It is not, fundamentally, a question of which forms characterize the organization of the economy, the "free" market, or some type of planning. In opposition to this correct view, Nicolaus supports the position that the essential difference between capitalism and socialism is the difference between the anarchy of the market and the rationality of planning.

PART 2: NICOLAUS REDEFINES SOCIALISM

Nicolaus begins his attack with a frontal assault on *RP7's* definition of socialism which emphasizes the fact that socialism is, in essence, a transitional form between capitalism and communism, completely classless society. The definition is presented on page 9, at the close of a section entitled "What is Socialism?" This section stresses that "only socialist revolution can eliminate the anarchy, destruction and misery caused by the capitalist system" and notes that "socialism resolves the basic contradiction of capitalism by doing away with the *private* ownership of the means of production and the *private* appropriation of the surplus produced by the collective, socialized labor of the working people." (p. 7) But it also notes that "The new socialist relations described by Marx and Engels cannot be established at the stroke of a pen. The final triumph of socialist relations comes from a process which takes time and conscious struggle, class struggle." (p. 9)

Hence, *RP7's* definition lays stress not on any predetermined level of development of socialist economic forms, but upon the degree to which the working class, under the leadership of its Communist Party, is consciously transforming all of society and gradually overcoming the legacy of capitalist production relations.

This does not satisfy Nicolaus who raises as the main question to be answered, "Does the law of value dominate the relations of production or are they dominated by planning?" Now one thing which is stressed throughout *RP7* is that the law of value will continue to operate and have considerable influence for quite some time under socialism. Even where the socialist economy is mainly a planned economy, the planners must still keep in mind the dictates of this law in order to gradually restrict its operation and eventually abolish its basis, commodity production. Planners cannot simply decide to build thirty steel mills, for instance, simply because the working class needs these. They must take into account factors of cost and even of profitability which are still largely determined through operation of the law of value.

Nicolaus argues that *RP7's* definition which places emphasis on

the political dominance of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and not on the economic dominance of planning over the market, tends to merge capitalism with socialism. He points to the Soviet NEP period of the early 1920s, when the Soviet working class was forced to retreat from the system of "war communism" to make use of what Lenin termed "the forms and techniques of state-capitalism," and notes that "by this definition, Soviet state-capitalism during the early NEP period definitely qualifies as 'socialism.'"

Absolutely correct, sir! This was "socialism" because the working class ruled. And even though the workers were forced to step backward somewhat at this time, this retreat was designed to *strengthen* the rule of the proletariat and the leadership of its Party. Would Nicolaus like to make the key dividing line between socialist Russia and capitalist Russia the start of the first Five Year Plan and not the revolution of October, 1917 (as several bourgeois historians have tried to do before him)? Would he like to argue that state-capitalism (and not just its "forms and techniques," as Lenin saw it) was the dominant system in the Soviet Union until it was overthrown, not by the masses in proletarian revolution, but by the plan? If so, and he does, then he misses not only the crucial overriding question of which class rules, but of the particular fact that, during the early NEP period the *proletarian state* exercised control over "the forms and techniques of state-capitalism" and over the remaining capitalist relations and forces.

In fact, the "forms and techniques" not only of state-capitalism, but of individual capitalism too, continue to play a very important role in all socialist societies even where in the main the socialist ownership of the means of production has been established. This is one reflection of the continued existence of the law of value and of classes and class struggle under socialism.

In China just before the Cultural Revolution, ten years after private ownership of the means of production had been virtually eliminated in industry and a planned economy instituted, Mao Tsetung declared that the majority of factories were in the hands of capitalists and run according to the logic of capitalism! But China was, and has remained, the leading socialist country in the world. And even today in China the issue has not been entirely settled with respect to the system of ownership.

In every socialist country that has yet existed in the world the overwhelming majority of agricultural enterprises are owned collectively by the peasants who work them and not by the proletarian state. While these farms mobilize the cooperative efforts of thousands, and while communists on the farms struggle to lead the masses in putting the interests of the whole society above those of the one collective, still production under this system is not simply for the overall good but also ties individual income to the output of the collective farm itself, as well as to the work of the indi-

vidual.

Yet collectivised agriculture is one very important form of *socialist* property, representing a tremendous advance from individual farming. It is a form in transition. The goal of the proletariat is to gradually transform these farms into state farms through a step-by-step struggle against the capitalist class relations which continue to exist even in the collective form. And, despite Nicolaus' protestations, this struggle takes place through *stages*, with the form of socialist property undergoing a transformation from a lower to higher level. It is the dictatorship of the proletariat and not just planning which makes this struggle possible.

The point is that even under socialism many of the forms which we associate with capitalism continue to exist. This is because under socialism, as Stalin pointed out so forcefully in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, and as Mao Tsetung stressed, especially in the period just before his death, commodity relations have not yet been fully overcome. The law of value does exist and does influence production (and not just distribution) under socialism even though its sphere of operation is increasingly restricted as the political power of the working class is strengthened, the initiative, participation and conscious action of the masses is encouraged, and as the productive forces are developed on this basis. The continued influence of the law of value and the existence of capitalist forms reflect the continued existence of antagonistic classes and of class struggle.

The continued operation of the law of value under socialism stems from the fact that in practice real ownership of the means of production by the working class is not entirely complete and this is reflected in the continued existence of "bourgeois right" in distribution according to work and exchange by means of money. It is also seen in the continued persistence of what the Chinese term the "three major differences," between workers and peasants, between town and country in general, and between mental and manual labor. These can only be eliminated step-by-step as, in the course of strengthening proletarian dictatorship and building socialism, the sphere of operation of the law of value is more and more restricted.

Now, one might ask, since the law of value is the law which regulates the market, how is it possible for this law to still operate under planning? The answer is simply that planning by itself is a classless concept. The question is planning for whom and what purpose? The capitalists plan every day. They plan to achieve the highest rates of profit for themselves. On the level of the single enterprise the capitalists plan production and sales to maximize the rate of profit. And on the state level the capitalists can also engage in planning, as in many countries in Western Europe. However, as *RP7* points out, "these plans are drawn up only to insure the pro-

fitability of major monopolized industries." (p. 3)

Socialist planning is not based on maximizing profit. Under socialism planners must plan the economy with the political interests of the working class at heart; they must seek to increasingly involve the masses of workers in the planning process. But this takes time, and for a long time, when the bourgeoisie still exists, the planners must continue to resort to financial calculations, and take account of cost and profit factors. Hence, *RP7* notes that "In all socialist societies established so far, money, rather than the direct calculation of social labor time, continues to be the chief means by which goods are evaluated and distributed. Monetary value and physical magnitudes (weight, length, etc.) are used by the state planners to allocate resources and measure production." (p. 8)

Nicolaus questions this formulation, contending that it "muddles up the rather crucial fact that in Soviet socialist planning, the allocation and measurement of resources and of production in physical terms played the leading and decisive role, while the financial system played the passive role of bookkeeper and expediter."

In this sentence our critic reveals quite a bit more than perhaps he had hoped. For to say that the financial system played "the passive role of bookkeeper and expediter" is to deny that, as Marx said, "economic categories are only the *abstract expressions* of actual production relations." (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*) The financial system was not just a bookkeeper under Soviet socialism nor has it been in any socialist system. To contend that the Soviet financial system was simply a bookkeeping operation is to deny that the socialist system is regulated by knowable economic laws and that among these is the law of value, a law which is expressed through financial accounts and lets us know that the basis for capitalist restoration persists.

Under Soviet socialism the operation of the financial system reflected the fact that planners had to take into account costs of production as determined by the law of value. Careful bookkeeping was needed because the proletariat could not simply deny the operation of the economic laws which exist independent of man's will. Under capitalism man is a slave to the laws of the economy precisely because under that system the proletariat is not free to utilize its scientific knowledge of these laws to "restrict their sphere of action, utilize them in the interests of society and 'harness' them..." (*Economic Problems of Socialism*)

In the Soviet Union in the '30s the same viewpoint held by Nicolaus led some planners to make serious "voluntarist" errors, acting as if the workers could do just about anything under planning without taking into account factors of cost and "value." While refuting the revisionists in the Party who sought to restore the profit motive to the Soviet economy in the late '40s, Stalin also argued against this voluntarist view as a mirror-image of the same bourgeois line.

Both the view which restores the law of value as regulator of the economy and the view which totally denies the influence of this law share in common an idealist denial that the working class can consciously transform society by grasping and utilizing in its own interest the objective laws which govern society. If the proletariat attempts to suppress the law of value to an extent greater than objective conditions permit—as would happen if the financial system is viewed simply as a bookkeeping operation—then this can only lead to intensification of bourgeois resistance through the appearance of black markets and the consequent demoralization of the masses.

Stalin pointed out that “True, the law of value has no regulating function in our socialist production, but it nevertheless influences production, and this fact cannot be ignored when directing production.” (*Economic Problems of Socialism*) Failure to recognize this fact amounts to failure to recognize and combat the continued existence, and resistance, of the bourgeoisie!

So, Nicolaus’ unspoken definition of socialism sets that system apart from all other systems principally through its emphasis on planning. This, as we have seen, leads him away from the fundamental Marxist principle of, in Mao’s words, “taking class struggle as the key link.” The application of this same classless approach also leads Nicolaus into a hopeless muddle when he attempts to formulate a definition of capitalism.

According to *RP7*, “It is the creation of surplus value by the workers and the appropriation of this value in various forms by the capitalist class, to be disposed of according to the needs and desires of that class, which is the distinguishing feature of the capitalist system.” (p. 5) Nicolaus objects to this statement and in particular to a later reference which calls this the “fundamental law” of capitalism. Instead, he gives distorted emphasis to the character of labor power itself as a commodity, one of the essential aspects of capitalism.

Now at first glance this would really seem to be quite a formalistic and academic difference since *RP7* does emphasize this all-important feature of the capitalist system. After all, under capitalism the commodity character of labor power is expressed precisely in the extraction of surplus value, since no capitalist in his right mind would purchase labor power except to create surplus value through the employment of that power in production. What then is Nicolaus’ objection? Surely someone who took such umbrage at what he imagined to be ill treatment of Stalin by the authors of *RP7* must find it difficult indeed to contradict Stalin, who said that “Most appropriate to the concept of a basic economic law of capitalism is the law of surplus value...” (*Economic Problems of Socialism*)

The problem is that Nicolaus confuses the commodity character

of labor power with the commodity character of the means of production and seemingly treats the two as interchangeable. He notes that while *RP7* recognizes the commodity character of labor power, “it still leaves out the other half, namely that capitalism is distinguished from other systems of commodity production in that not only labor power but also the means of production become commodities.” In other words, as will become even clearer, for Nicolaus the buying and selling of labor power and the extraction of surplus value this entails are really just a reflection of the buying and selling of the means of production which is the real distinguishing feature of capitalist production.

As we shall see more fully, this reflects Nicolaus’ view that what constitutes capitalist restoration in the USSR is the fact that—to a limited degree—“reforms” in the Soviet economy allow managers and enterprise directors to buy and sell means of production and labor power outside the state plan. If this were not so, according to Nicolaus, the Soviet economy would not be capitalist. But, in fact, the overwhelming form of buying—and exploiting—labor power is not this “free enterprise” at the enterprise level, but appropriation of surplus value by the capitalists in control of the state, ministries of the economy, large production associations, etc. through the plan. Capitalism in the USSR is *highly developed state-capitalism*. Nicolaus’ insistence on making the essential feature of capitalism “free market” buying and selling of means of production and labor power—and his insistence, in effect, that the two must go hand-in-hand—leads him completely away from a correct analysis of capitalism, especially its main features in the USSR.

In fact, the buying and selling of the means of production, although most extensive under capitalism, exists to varying degrees in all commodity systems, even where commodity production is not the main, or generalized, form of production. Under feudalism and slavery, for example, the lords and slavemasters were free to buy and sell both land and what tools and primitive machinery did exist at the time. But only with capitalist relations does the sale and purchase of labor power for the purpose of extracting surplus value become possible.

Nicolaus thus views capitalism as a system characterized by the regulation of production according to the dictates of the law of value, i.e., according to trade in the means of production. Now certainly the domination of the law of value is one characteristic of capitalism, but the law of value is the general law for all forms of commodity production and it cannot be said to be the distinguishing feature of capitalist society. Stalin explained quite well why this is so:

“The law of value is primarily a law of commodity production. It existed before capitalism, and, like commodity production, will

continue to exist after the overthrow of capitalism, as it does, for instance, in our country, although, it is true, with a restricted sphere of operation. Having a wide sphere of operation in capitalist conditions, the law of value, of course, plays a big part in the development of capitalist production. But not only does it not determine the essence of capitalist production and the principle of capitalist profit; it does not even pose these problems. Therefore it cannot be the basic economic law of modern capitalism." (*Economic Problems of Socialism*)

Nicolaus looks at capitalism not from the vantage point of the working class, whose labor power is exploited by the capitalists, who sees the product of its socialized production turned into chains to further enslave it, but from the viewpoint of the "alienated" petty bourgeois intellectual who is shocked and repelled by the "vulgarity" of a society organized according to mercantile principles. For him socialism does not advance beyond capitalism through the elimination of exploitation, but only through the elimination of competition and the market.

PART 3: NICOLAUS TAKES PLANNING AS THE KEY LINK

Armed with this false conception of the difference between capitalism and socialism, our OL scholar sets out to refute the historical presentation of how capitalist relations of production have been restored in the Soviet Union found in Chapters 2 and 3 of *RP7*. First off, he decides that the authors "dismiss the dramatic power struggles of 1956-57, culminating in the palace coup of June, 1957..."

Certainly the rise to power of Khrushchev was important. The takeover of the proletariat's fortress, its Communist Party, from within, which Khrushchev led, and his revisionist assault on the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, which reached a high pitch in 1956, were surely, as *RP7* declares, "the crucial turning point in the restoration process." (emphasis in original) (p. 53) However, to understand this rise to power, to explain it fully, in the Marxist fashion and from the proletarian class point of view, it is necessary to speak of far more than "palace coups." And we have heard enough of content-less inner-Party "power struggles" from the legions of bourgeois "China watchers." The rise of Khrushchev was a real class struggle! And *RP7* places special emphasis on revealing just how he and his cohorts got to where they did. The rise to power of Soviet revisionism is discussed in class terms, showing how the continuing existence of capitalist production relations under socialism means that the bourgeoisie will continue to be engendered under socialism and continue to strive for a political comeback, basing its main hope on the representatives of its class hidden in the leadership of the

Communist Party itself.

Thus, in contrast to bourgeois presentations of these events, *RP7* does not put much stress on detailing a blow by blow account of the inner-party struggle of the mid-'50s. After all, most of the available factual information relevant to such an account comes from the most dubious of sources anyway and, no doubt, the most damning information is still hidden somewhere in the bowels of the Kremlin. What *RP7* does stress is the sharpening class struggle in the Party during the post-WW2 years, in the spirit of revealing the real contradictions faced by the Soviet proletariat and analyzing the unsuccessful attempts made by Stalin and others to deal with them in a way to prevent capitalist restoration.

Nicolaus, of course, is incapable of grasping any of this since for him the class struggle under socialism is merely an empty phrase which he repeats because he finds it in *Peking Review*. If one accepts his classless conception of what separates the two systems, then one must wonder what on earth the two classes have to struggle over. Did Khrushchev and his ilk struggle against the planned economy because they wanted the right to give up control of the economic power of the Soviet state in order to set up their own businesses? Of course not! The class struggle was not a struggle between advocates of a "free" market and advocates of a plan. The Khrushchevite capitalist roaders wanted to place the pursuit of profit in command of the planning process. They aimed to make the accumulation of profit and the endless cycle of accumulation-investment-accumulation the goal of production with this blind accumulation of profit ending up in the hands of an exploiting class. On the other hand, the genuine communists wanted to strengthen the rule of the working class, mobilize the masses to suppress the bourgeoisie and continue to lead the masses in exercising conscious control over what was produced, and in the interest of the workers and the masses of people.

It is illuminating that Nicolaus wants more talk of "palace coups" but ignores the important discussion of the role played by Nikolai Voznesensky which appears in Chapter 2 of *RP7*. "Voznesensky believed that socialism represents only the most rational and orderly organization of the economy through planning. He did not believe that planning had to be in the interests of the workers and politically controlled by them." (p. 18) His role was important in paving the way for future revisionists, like Kosygin, who studied at his feet. And his line is, in fact, remarkably compatible with Nicolaus'!

But the most serious difference which our critic has with the account of capitalist restoration presented in *RP7* centers on its presentation of the famed economic "reforms" of 1965.

The whole thrust of Nicolaus' line is that the capitalist system in the Soviet Union was "created by the 1965 measures," failing to put the main emphasis on the consolidation of revisionist leadership in the Communist Party. Thus, Nicolaus concentrates his heaviest fire on *RP7*'s discussion of these "reforms."

In describing how the new Soviet bourgeoisie has restored capitalist relations of production since the overthrow of proletarian rule in the mid-'50s *RP7* begins with an account of the measures taken by Khrushchev. Although these measures wreaked havoc with the stable planned economy which the working class had painstakingly created, they did not accomplish the full restoration of capitalist relations in the economy. Instead Khrushchev's main contribution to bourgeois rule was "to destroy the centralized power of the proletarian state" and "to negate the achievements of socialism by breaking up the centralized rule of the working class and dismantling socialist institutions." (p. 53) Khrushchev lost his position of power because under his "leadership" the economy fell into shambles and chaos and new capitalist forces had to come forward to "restore order."

It fell to Brezhnev and Kosygin, who led the Soviet bourgeoisie in dumping Khrushchev, to systematically stabilize and restructure the economy according to consistent monopoly capitalist principles—which they were forced to do by the laws of capitalism and the actual class relations (productive relations) now existing. The 1965 "reforms" played the major role in this effort.

What was the main thrust of these reforms? Did they reorganize the economy into one where hundreds of thousands of individual firms compete freely on the open market? Actually no, although as we shall see market relations, that is, the law of value, began to assume the major role in the formulation of planning policy. What the "reforms" did was drastically reshape the "planning" process to conform to the capitalist nature of the new ruling class. These new capitalists were not out to develop the economy in an all-round way in the interests of the working class. They were out to accumulate the greatest amount of surplus value for themselves. They looked at the means of production, not as resources for the proletariat, but simply as accumulated dead labor which could be worked by living labor to produce profit—i.e., they looked upon the accumulated wealth of the socialist proletariat as *capital* belonging to them as an exploiting class.

Thus the reform reorganized the economy so as to insure the maximum profitability of key industries. This meant that local enterprises were granted considerably more autonomy, and were, in fact, freed to enter into some market-type deals, but this was

done only to facilitate the accumulation of profit by the bourgeois class controlling the state. Planning was now guided by the dictates of the law of value, since profit was in command, but the enterprises and ministries themselves were not transformed into independently functioning capitalist firms. In short, the key features of the 1965 "reforms" were "the introduction of profit maximization as the goal of production and the consequent realignment of the economy according to the dictates of the law of value, and also the institution of capital charges and interest leading to the treatment of the means of production as capital." (p. 50)

How is it possible for the accumulation of profit to be the goal of production and for the law of value to assume a regulating role without the full reinstatement of the kind of market generally associated with capitalism? The answer to this question lies in an understanding both of the differences between competitive capitalism and monopoly capitalism and the specific features of Soviet state-monopoly capitalism. Under competitive capitalism many individual firms compete on the market. Under monopoly capitalism, or *imperialism*, the highest stage of capitalism, a handful of monopoly corporations which combine banking and industrial capital dominate the economy and compete even more viciously, although the operation of the law of value is restricted somewhat since these giants can often fix prices above their value even as they compete with each other on the open market and in many other ways. Intense competition also goes on among different finance capitalists *within* these giants for control of them and their profits.

Under imperialism production is still for profit and not use. As Alfred Sloan, former president of General Motors once said, "GM is in the business of making money, not cars." And within each monopoly corporation the law of value still regulates production, since profit is still in command, even though there is no "market," in Nicolaus' sense, within the company.

By way of shedding some light on this let's look at probably the "purest" monopoly we have in the U.S.—the Bell System telephone company, A.T.&T. This multi-billion dollar company is probably bigger than most Soviet ministries. And each year A.T.&T. makes up a budget, its own "plan" designed to ensure that the company, with all its many subsidiaries and divisions, "earns" the maximum profit possible. Were the company run by the working class under conditions of proletarian dictatorship, maximization of profit and "cost accounting" according to the law of value would still play a role in formulating this plan, reflecting the fact that socialism is still a commodity system with classes and class struggle. But overall the interests of the working class would be dominant. So the accumulation of greater wealth would be achieved not through grinding speedup but by unleashing

the initiative of the workers to expand production by grasping revolution (and phone service might be made available to the masses at a price below its actual value, to meet their needs).

But under monopoly capitalism the Bell system plans its budget to maximize profit and to hell with its workers (and the masses generally). Moreover, when Bell makes up a budget for one of its divisions, say, Western Electric which makes telephone equipment, they don't just give them the materials and workers they need. They budget money. A.T.&T. management says to the management of Western Electric, "Here's X amount of funds for capital construction (machinery), Y amount for raw materials, and Z amount for your wage bill. The way we figure it you should charge A amount for phones, B for accessories, etc. Now go out there and earn as much money as you can for us. And we'll let you keep a certain percentage as an incentive." (There are even cases where giant corporations are experimenting with the method of giving the management of their subdivisions a *general fund* and letting them have a go at making the most profit as they can—deciding themselves how much to spend on wages, machinery, etc. This certainly doesn't make these corporations *more capitalist*.)

The manager of Western Electric will do everything in his power to earn as much as possible. He'll institute speedup, he'll run the lines overtime, etc. And he'll even enter into cutthroat competition with other Bell divisions because if he does well in this competition then maybe one day he'll get to run the entire company. So even though A.T.&T. has a "plan" the whole company is run according to the profit motive and the law of value and there are conflicting interests and struggle at the top levels of the Bell system.

This is (in somewhat simplified terms, of course) how "planning" and the main forms of competition for accumulation of surplus value are carried out in the post-reform Soviet Union. Except that in the Soviet Union capital is much more highly concentrated than under any previously existing capitalist system and there is still a single state "plan." But in the Soviet Union today the ministries and the overall economy operate along principles not fundamentally different than those summarized in the example above, making clear that the law of value can act as the regulating force even where the "market" forms that Nicolaus erroneously insists must characterize capitalism do not predominate or even play a decisive role. And, as *RP7* points out, in the USSR today the law of value not only regulates the production of the various ministries, enterprises, etc., but also regulates exchange between them and production and exchange throughout Soviet society as a whole.

As *RP7* notes, "In any capitalist economy the fundamental contradiction is between the social nature of production and the pri-

ween centrifugal (decentralizing) and centripetal (centralizing) forces: on the one hand, the anarchy of production and spontaneity of the market, on the other hand, the tendency toward concentration and monopoly. These two tendencies exist together and the development of one does not mean the elimination of the other. In fact, as Lenin noted, the development of monopoly *increases* competition, and exists together with it." (emphasis in original) (p. 51)

In the Soviet Union the concentration of capital and the degree of monopoly is much greater than in other monopoly capitalist societies since all previous forms of imperialism are based on the historical legacy of competitive capitalism while Soviet social-imperialism is built on the highly centralized foundation established under the socialist system. The 1965 measures did mark a definite concession to the centrifugal market forces, but this did not change the fact that the system is still based on state-capitalist ownership and control.

Under any form of monopoly capitalism, although competition between rival capitalists does exist in the "free market" it increasingly moves into the board rooms, the state institutions and the political arena, and into imperialist war. Under Soviet state-monopoly capitalism there is competition between different ministries, Production Associations, regions and industries and between rival capitalist forces within these. As yet this competition is still largely confined to the upper reaches of the Communist Party where the different interests battle it out for political influence, and to the meetings which work out assignments according to the plan. Competition is not mainly market place competition, but it is *real* competition and reflects the *real* anarchy of capitalist production—the dog-eat-dog pursuit of profit—nonetheless.

Thus Nicolaus' charge that *RP7's* description of the Soviet economy is a "reproduction in another form of the revisionist Karl Kautsky's theory of 'ultra-imperialism'—the theory of the unification under a single center of all the imperialists..." is pure bunk. The fact happens to be that the Soviet social-imperialists, representing a younger, "hungrier" imperialist power than their U.S. rivals, are indeed more "united" than the imperialists of most other countries. But this is not because they have no "market" in which to compete with one another. In the Adam Smith world of Martin Nicolaus the capitalists may have no *political* interests and may not engage in *political* competition which is an expression of their more fundamental economic rivalries. But this certainly does take place in the real world, including in the Soviet Union. Whether Soviet managers have wide range to buy or sell on the market or not, competition *must* rule the Soviet system because the managers, the Party officials, in short, the capitalists, are

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4. Soviet Social-Imperialism Around the World
5. Everyday Life Under Soviet Social-Imperialism
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(although not always in clear form *personal*) profit.

Similarly Nicolaus' accusation that *RP7* has "discarded any semblance of a Marxist-Leninist theory of fascism" is also rubbish. *RP7* compares the Soviet economy to the Nazi economy, in which "competition between monopolies was held in check by the state which used its control over military spending as one key lever of authority and influence. The economy, of course, remained thoroughly capitalist but the state played the leading role." (p. 51) Nicolaus triumphantly refutes this comparison by informing us that the British scholar, Tim Mason—who is not a Marxist, but one of whose articles the authors of *RP7* found illuminating and hence footnoted—was "soundly thrashed" in some obscure German journal ten years ago when he advanced what Nicolaus assures us was a similar notion.

Well, no matter what anyone thinks of poor Tim Mason, the analysis of the Nazi economy in *RP7* is still correct. Nicolaus attacks *RP7* for not simply employing Dimitrov's 1935 definition of fascism as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic, and most imperialist elements of finance capital." It would not be appropriate in this article to comment on the relevance of the Dimitrov line to the concrete conditions faced by the working classes of Europe in the late '30s, but clearly this definition is not proper to an analysis of fascism today in the USSR—or to the situation in the U.S. This definition has been used by the likes of Nicolaus and the OL to argue that there is a "progressive," non-fascist section of the bourgeoisie with whom we can and must unite.

One might ask Nicolaus who are the "less reactionary, less chauvinistic and less imperialist elements of finance capital" struggling against the rule of the fascists in the Soviet Union today? Perhaps the enterprise managers, whose "independence" is constantly trampled on by the top-level state-monopolists? Does Nicolaus, who views the "free" market as the quintessential expression of capitalism triumphant in the USSR, now want the Soviet workers to join with these smaller capitalists in some kind of "anti-monopoly, anti-fascist front" similar to what the Communist Party revisionists advocate in this country?

In attempting to refute the argument which is presented in a detailed fashion in Chapter III of *RP7* Nicolaus is forced to perform some pretty fancy footwork and his slickly phrased argument aims to sow confusion everywhere. We would strongly recommend that our readers study this chapter closely, especially its final section, as the most effective way of getting past Nicolaus' distortions. For, according to him, the chapter is merely a confusing jumble of contradictions which flip-flops like Jimmy Carter back and forth between saying that the reforms weakened centralism and strengthened centralism.

To the best of our knowledge Nicolaus is the only reader of *RP7* to have been confused by this. Of course, we must offer at least a partial apology because to some small degree his confusion may stem from our error. In the second column of page 53 there is a very unfortunate misprint. Whereas earlier in the text the introduction of the Production Associations in 1973 was correctly described as a further centralization (concentration) of the economy, on this page the word *decentralization* was inadvertently substituted for the word *centralization*. Maybe this explains our critic's confusion, but we think not, since virtually every observant reader of *RP7* that we know of quickly noted this as a misprint since it so clearly contradicts the thrust of the chapter's argument.

At any rate, in spite of his confusion, Nicolaus does put forward his own version of the "reforms." To his mind the most important measure taken in 1965 was not the reinstatement of the profit motive, but the consequent establishment of a "free" market in the means of production.

Well the "reforms" did in fact do this to a limited degree, and more important, since planning is now for profit, there is fierce competition for control of capital between enterprises inside the "plan." But Nicolaus to the contrary, the "free" market in capital goods outside the plan has never developed into a significant sector of the Soviet economy. The fund available to Soviet enterprise managers for purchase of capital goods outside the plan amounts in most firms to only between 2% and 5% of the value of fixed capital, which is not enough for the firm to make any significant investment on its own. As *RP7* notes, in 1969 an average of only 15% of all profit was retained at the enterprise level which includes funds for incentive payment purposes. In that year 99% of all exchange in producer goods was allocated and paid for according to plan. Indeed, free market exchange of capital goods accounts for a somewhat larger share of the capital goods allocations in China today!

So, in the end, Nicolaus runs head on into a brick wall—the facts. For were Nicolaus to carry through his petty bourgeois conception of socialism as planning and capitalism as the market he would have to deny that the Soviet Union is in fact a capitalist state. Because in any truly meaningful sense of the term the Soviet economy is definitely not a market economy. It is a state-monopoly capitalist economy in which there is a unified and directed state plan designed to ensure the highest profitability of key industries and firms and which is based on the exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie, most especially the *state-monopolists*, for private gain.

PART IV: CAPITALIST RESTORATION IN THE USSR THROUGH THE EYES OF NICOLAUS

Since the appearance of the *Class Struggle* article Nicolaus and the OL have published a book, *Restoration of Capitalism in the USSR*, which aims at a more complete analysis of the development and inner workings of social-imperialism. This work first appeared as a wordy and seemingly interminable series of articles in the *Guardian*. (Nicolaus was an editor of that newspaper during the period when the OL and the *Guardian* revealed the fundamental unity behind their respective opportunist lines in an unproductive and comic courtship of convenience).

The book does contain some interesting factual material, especially in a few of the later chapters, but this is rendered useless and worse by the political line it is marshalled to defend. For though the book abandons the unprincipled polemic of the earlier article, it still puts forward the same rotten "theory." Moreover, Nicolaus manages to sneak in some additional confusion, presenting all sorts of things in a distorted and imprecise manner. While long on verbiage, the book is decidedly short on constructive and enlightening analysis. What has been said about Nicolaus' response to *RP7* basically holds here as well.

While a full and in-depth critique of this volume seems unnecessary, several comments are in order. One of the most striking things about Nicolaus' book is its presentation of the rise to power of Soviet revisionism which takes up much of the first third of the volume. Nicolaus offers precious little about the *class forces* which led to the revisionist takeover. In the opening chapters he catalogues the many achievements of Soviet socialism with no real commentary on the role played by class struggle in this and with virtually no summation of the strengths and weaknesses of Party leadership. Then, in two chapters entitled "Bourgeois Right" and "Old Soil," Nicolaus offers his explanation of how, despite what he has described, capitalism could still develop anew in the Soviet Union.

The first chapter seems to be presented mainly as a concession to the recent Chinese political campaign to strengthen proletarian dictatorship, since its analysis is not really continued through the rest of the work. In discussing the persistence of bourgeois right under socialism Nicolaus summarizes some points made by a Chinese article on the subject. But Nicolaus tries to use this article—which deals with bourgeois right in spheres other than ownership—to put across the incorrect assessment that bourgeois right exists under socialism *only* in the sphere of distribution and not ownership. This is quite convenient for Nicolaus since he believes that the introduction of planning eliminates the basis for capitalist property relations.

In the next chapter, "Old Soil," Nicolaus tries to describe the origins of the new Soviet bourgeoisie, emphasizing correctly that this bourgeois class was not the old expropriated bourgeoisie but "a new bourgeoisie engendered within socialism." However, when Nicolaus points to where this new bourgeoisie came from, he misses the mark by a wide margin. According to him the new Soviet bourgeoisie is basically constituted in two social groupings: the collective farmers and "engineering and management personnel."

Now both these groups were important breeding grounds for capitalist elements. But enterprise directors, engineers and collective farm chairmen are, in fact, pretty small fish in the Soviet sea. The real capitalists who today rule the Soviet Union are state-capitalists who control the top leadership of the Communist Party itself.

As *RP7* explains: "Party and state officials who themselves depart from Marxism-Leninism and adopt the class stand and world outlook of the bourgeoisie, use the lower, 'intermediate strata' as their social base, promote their privileges and tendencies to bourgeois ideology, and use them to stifle the initiative of the working class."

But, "there is fierce struggle continually at the top ranks of the Party, between those taking the socialist and capitalist roads. This is part of the overall struggle within socialist society between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, but is also the sharpest focus of this struggle. This is why Mao Tsetung has summed up—both from the experience of the Soviet Union and China (as well as other socialist countries today)—that the main focus of the class struggle under socialism is within the Party itself and particularly in its top ranks, and that the target of the proletariat in this struggle is the 'handful of capitalist roaders' who repeatedly emerge, especially within the top Party leadership." (p. 13)

Indeed, within the past year Mao once more stressed that under the dictatorship of the proletariat "You are making the socialist revolution and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party—those in power taking the capitalist road."

Of course Nicolaus does eventually come round to dealing with the inner-party struggle in the USSR. However, he does so without in any way connecting it to class forces. There is scant mention of the struggle within the Party before Stalin's death and the struggle after 1953 is portrayed as one between personalities—a classless "power struggle" complete with backstabbing and, of course, a "palace coup." Nicolaus' account of these years is taken almost verbatim from the writings of various bourgeois "Kremlinologists," especially Edward Crankshaw, Khrushchev's journalistic biographer.

The rise of Khrushchev and other capitalist roaders in the Party is attributed by Nicolaus not to the class struggle itself but simply

to "a certain mood of self-satisfaction among many of the leading cadre." Such a mood did develop after WWII, as *RP7* also notes, but the point to understand is how this reflected a shift in the class forces. For Nicolaus it is all simply a matter of morale. The key question for him is the mistakes and poor leadership of individuals. In effect Nicolaus argues that the whole revisionist takeover can be attributed simply to Stalin's untimely death. As he says, "All of this, however, would probably still not have been sufficient to ensure a revisionist victory if there had been among Stalin's closest associates in the party a leader of a stature and ability comparable to Stalin's own."

So, the cat is out of the bag, Mr. Nicolaus. You do *not* believe with Mao that "the people and the people alone are the motive force in the making of history." It is the "great man," the "genius," that decides the fate of mankind! Well Nicolaus and his OL backers may fall for this garbage, but Marxist-Leninists look a bit more deeply at such questions.

So in Nicolaus' book the capitalists led by Khrushchev spring from nowhere, take advantage of a crisis in morale, and seize power in a secret "palace coup!" Once in command they proceed to consolidate their rule and, in 1965, under Brezhnev and Kosygin, get around to restoring capitalism in the Soviet Union.

Nicolaus devotes quite a bit of space to discussing the 1965 "reforms." Once again the lynchpin of his analysis is the contention that the means of production have been transformed into commodities. Now, of course, this is in truth the case, but not at all in the sense that Nicolaus describes.

According to Nicolaus this has not been accomplished within the sphere of planning and under the overall dominance of the ruling class of state-capitalists which emerged from the ranks of the Communist Party leadership, but on the level of the individual enterprise. He argues that the 1965 "reforms" set loose the enterprises to compete freely with each other on the open market for the purchase of principal machinery and the equipment of industry. In this context Nicolaus places special emphasis on measures designed to locate control over investment at the enterprise level through retention of profits at this level. He cites Soviet statistics which indicate that by 1969 40% of profit was retained at the enterprise level.

This, however, is a distortion. While the reforms drastically reduced the number of plan indicators sent down to the firm by superior organs, and placed the criteria of profit maximization in command, and while provisions were made for retention of a portion of enterprise profit as an incentive for accumulation, this did not necessarily mean that major investment decisions involving the purchase of producer goods could be made outside the plan by enterprise directors. A considerable portion of retained profit

was not channelled into investment at all but into incentive funds which have become a principal source of managerial remuneration supplementing basic salary. Moreover, Nicolaus' figure includes some portion of reinvestment in variable capital (the wage bill) and minor technological improvements. Major investments in additional capacity or major technical improvements must still be centrally approved, reflecting the dominance of the central state-capitalists which Nicolaus denies.

The serious limitations on the "reforms" in decentralizing investment were very quickly noted by most observers of the Soviet economy. For example, in 1967, one bourgeois scholar—who has a better understanding of this than the "Marxist scholar," Nicolaus—described these restrictions like this: "The state, as the sole owner of the means of production, determines the distribution of profit, the share it takes, and the destination of the remainder. It should be emphasized that the state maintains its *commanding post* not only in distribution between the enterprise and the budget, but also between the shares of profit destined to augment current personal income, housing and welfare measures, and the enterprise's development, considerably restricting the enterprise's maneuverability of resources. These are the crucial control weapons ensuring that the budget will be provided with sufficient revenue (especially worth noting here is the novel 'free' remainder of profit), that current consumption will not be augmented at the expense of investment, and generally that the enterprise should not have enough funds to allow it to get out of hand. The strict control over decentralized funds is essential to the system. Yet such funds can hardly be called decentralized for the enterprise cannot decide at will in what manner they should be spent. The lack of autonomous disposal of funds circumscribes the scope of financial reforms." (George R. Feiwel, *The Soviet Quest for Economic Efficiency*)

Even where the "reforms" did formally grant autonomy to the enterprises, in the real world this has very often been ignored. As originally conceived the reform granted the managers the right to develop their own plans for the size and composition of the work force. But in many instances when the enterprises actually began to adjust staffing, the Soviet journal *Sotsialisticheskii Trud* reported that the central authorities detected "undesired" results (particularly, a padding of white-collar staff to the detriment of overall profitability) and intervened to impose plan targets.

With respect to investment Nicolaus stresses the importance of the Production Development Fund. Yet even in the initial concept of the reform this decentralized investment was intended ultimately to comprise only a fifth of total industrial investment. And in practice enterprises complained that the total sums in the funds were far too small to be of great use, and that their employ-

ment has been severely restricted by red tape. The utility of the funds is further reduced by the fact that state economic plans do not provide adequate materials and construction facilities for such decentralized investment, and ministries redirect unutilized funds to other purposes.

No wonder then that, as *RP7* reported, Soviet managers themselves are clearly dissatisfied with the meager measure of "freedom" afforded them under the reform. In a 1970 survey of Soviet enterprise directors over half the respondents complained that the extension of independence to the enterprises under the reform was insignificant.

In fact, this whole aspect of the 1965 measures is fast becoming a memory in the Soviet Union as the state-capitalists tighten up their economy, consolidate their dominance over all the lesser strata of the Soviet bourgeoisie, increase investment in tightly controlled war production, and in general strive to gear up the social-imperialist economy for an impending confrontation with their U.S. imperialist rivals. In 1973 considerable autonomy was stripped from the enterprises through the formation of giant "Production Associations," which represented a considerable concentration of capital. At the 25th Soviet Party Congress this year the speeches of Brezhnev and Kosygin did not even mention the 1965 decisions, but instead called for further emphasis on creating large-scale units in industry, construction and agriculture; on tighter planning of the use and distribution of producer goods (the means of production); and on improving central control of planning. Indeed, in late 1975 N. Drogichinsky, head of the Department of New Methods of Planning and Economic Stimulation of the USSR Gosplan, writing in the authoritative journal *Sotsialisticheskaja Industriia*, outlined several measures for the restoration of "iron discipline" in the execution of plans.

Thus it is Nicolaus and not *RP7* who takes the Soviets blindly at their word. Like most bourgeois commentators Nicolaus fails to go beyond appearances. He is sort of a little league John Kenneth Galbraith of the Soviet economy. In the mid-'60s Galbraith advanced the ridiculous thesis that the capitalists were no longer in control of the U.S. economy. He argued that in this "new industrial state" the owners of capital are being reduced to impotent coupon clippers and that real power rests increasingly with the managers and technocrats. This absurd idea is exactly what Nicolaus is saying in his book about the Soviet economy. The new bourgeoisie, he says, did not develop at the top levels of the Communist Party. The state-capitalists do not utilize their control of the formerly proletarian state to extract surplus value. The real capitalists are the "little guys" who run the firms. How ridiculous!

PART V: NEW WRINKLE ON OLD REVISIONISM

Nicolaus' line which states that capitalism is equivalent to the market and socialism equivalent to planning is not a new one. In fact, his line has been a favorite of the Soviet revisionists who claim that their economy cannot be capitalist since it is run according to a plan and who, like Nicolaus, are quite eager to have us ignore the *class content* of planning, liking nothing more than to steer us from the more fundamental political question of which class runs the state and all of society. It has also been taken up by the Trotskyites who, in words, stand opposed to revisionism but who have always argued that it is central planning which is the main characteristic of socialism. This is why, despite all their ranting and raving about "Stalinist bureaucrats," the Trotskyites still characterize both the Soviet Union and socialist China as "deformed workers' states," completely obscuring the fundamental differences between bourgeois and proletarian class rule.

In 1968, following the brutal Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, Paul Sweezy, one of the editors of the journal *Monthly Review*, formulated a somewhat less slick version of Nicolaus' line. In the mid-'60s Sweezy played an important role as one of the first in the U.S. progressive movement to recognize that the new Soviet rulers were revisionists. But since Sweezy's understanding was not based on a scientific Marxist-Leninist analysis which recognized that, as Mao put it, "the rise to power of revisionism means the rise to power of the bourgeoisie," he has since found himself in the position of upholding imperialist actions of the Soviet Union, becoming an apologist, for example, for Soviet-Cuban aggression in Angola, in much the same style as the opportunist editors of the *Guardian*. While justly and forthrightly condemning the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia, Sweezy's 1968 article tried to show that this invasion stemmed from the Czechs having gone further in strengthening the market than did their Soviet bosses. The strong implication was that competitive capitalism and the "free" market, as in Yugoslavia, for instance, are somehow more capitalist than monopoly capitalism or imperialism, and that the Soviet rulers were somehow opposed to a "full" restoration of capitalism.

In response to this article Charles Bettelheim made several key points which may well be directed equally to Nicolaus. Bettelheim correctly noted that "to put emphasis on the existence of a 'market' (and therefore also on the existence of money and prices) in defining the nature of a social formation, means precisely to put emphasis on the *surface*, on what is immediately 'apparent'—it is consequently a failure to come to grips with underlying relationships. These exist at the level of production, i.e., at the level of basic social relationships." According to Bettelheim, the development or retreat of market forms under socialism is "an *index* of

the evolution of social relationships, but it is no more than an *index*." "What characterizes socialism as opposed to capitalism," he says, "is not the existence or non-existence of market relationships, money and prices, but the existence of the domination of the proletariat, of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Sweezy & Bettelheim, *On the Transition to Socialism*)

This statement is absolutely correct, for as Lenin stated:

"Those who recognize *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists...Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism is to be tested." (*State and Revolution*, emphasis in original)

As the recent political campaigns to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat in China graphically reveal, the key to understanding the class struggle under socialism is to grasp that this is fundamentally a political struggle aimed at suppressing the bourgeoisie. The question is not simply one of form of whether there is a plan or a market. On the question of the system of ownership, as with all questions, it is crucial to pay attention not only to form but also, and mainly, to its *content*. The control by one class or another decides which class owns a factory in reality, and this is true for the society and the economy as a whole.

To determine whether the dictatorship of the proletariat is in control or not, we must judge according to *real* policies and not just declarations of intent. The domination of the proletariat is reflected in its development of new socialist production relations in opposition to bourgeois relations, in the restriction of "bourgeois right" and in the narrowing of the "three major differences" and other soil engendering capitalism. It is the substance of these things which the definition of socialism in *RP7* puts stress on.

Attempts to cover up and disguise the class struggle, the class nature of socialist society and the need for proletarian dictatorship, have characterized every opportunist and revisionist line on the differences between socialism and capitalism. In China Teng Hsiao-ping tried to put over the notion that in economics "It doesn't matter if a cat is black or white; any cat that catches mice is a good cat." In the Soviet Union Khrushchev advanced the thesis of the "state of the whole people." The Social Democrats have long put forward that capitalism can peacefully grow into socialism, without class struggle, through nationalization of the means of production. They, like Nicolaus, say that with the subsuming of the "free" market by monopoly the basis for capitalism spon-

taneously disappears.

Despite all his flashy erudition Martin Nicolaus does not in the least comprehend what makes the Soviet rulers capitalist. At the present time this opportunist finds it politically convenient to pose as a great enemy of the Soviet imperialists. But since his analysis is founded on nothing solid, like Sweezy it is not at all unlikely that Nicolaus may one day change his tune. He and his OL sponsors could easily decide—if it serves their political fortune hunting—that since there really is a plan in the Soviet Union, and since planning to them means socialism, well then the Soviet Union must be socialist after all.

Moreover, when applied to the U.S. Nicolaus' line also has very dangerous implications. For if the workers were to accept this "planning equals socialism" garbage, then it would be easy for all kinds of phony "socialists" and imitation progressives to pimp off the working class struggle by putting forward some make-believe capitalist "plans" disguised as "steps toward socialism."

This shows that Nicolaus' line on the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union is not simply incorrect. It is a dangerous line which stems from the same roots as the overall reformist and reactionary line of the October League. The working class must see clearly the face of all its enemies. Here and in the Soviet Union the struggle for socialism is a *class* struggle. There is a real *class* enemy—the bourgeoisie. Nicolaus' line tries to blind us to this fact, to turn our eyes away from the enemy, away from the class struggle which must be waged to defeat this enemy.

Some Preliminary Thoughts on Bourgeois Democracy and the U.S. Working Class

J. WERNER

This year's Bicentennial campaign by the bourgeoisie represents the most concerted action by the capitalists in recent years to shore up faith in their political and economic system. Key to this is their efforts to "remind" the masses of people of the message of their high school civic classes and of countless TV programs, movies, etc.—that this country is ruled by the consent of the governed, that it is a *free* country, that despite whatever weaknesses or flaws may exist, ours is still the "greatest democracy on earth." Now with the '76 election campaign the capitalists have preached a similar message: do your part as a citizen, *get out and vote no matter who you choose to vote for*. They might as well add, it's not who wins or loses, but how the game is played.

Of course the results of the working class' counter-offensive around the Bicentennial, culminating in the historic Philadelphia demonstration, along with the general lack of enthusiasm among the masses for the Bicentennial hoopla, is a sharp reflection of the fact that all is not smooth sailing for the capitalists, that their declarations of "freedom and justice" for all has a hollow ring for millions. Similarly this presidential election has stirred little fervor, in spite of a giant promotion effort including televised debates.

But it is possible, and dangerous, to overstate the extent to which the masses of workers see through the charade of the capitalist political system. Millions of workers will turn out on election day, and among a significant section of the working class, the top "labor leaders" have succeeded in stirring up some motion (if not enthusiasm) for Jimmy Carter. And while the cynicism around the Bicentennial and dropoff in voting reflect a certain embryonic understanding (or more accurately put, *feeling*) that the government does not represent the "will of the people," still the political significance of this cynicism and distrust of bourgeois political system must not be exaggerated; only among a very small section of the working class has opposition to the bourgeoisie reached a conscious political level.

The Bicentennial flurry saw the capitalists reaching into the past to serve their present interests. They both reached back into the past history of the country to glorify the political shell (the Constitution, Bill of Rights, etc.) through which they govern society and appealed to the experience of workers after World War 2 that for a while things were getting better.

In 1912 Lenin wrote:

“The state of affairs in the American labor movement shows us, as it does in Britain, the remarkably clear-cut division between purely trade-unionist and socialist strivings, the split between *bourgeois labor policy* and socialist labor policy. For, strange as it may seem, in capitalist society even the working class can carry on a bourgeois policy, if it forgets about its emancipatory aims, puts up with wage slavery and confines itself to seeking alliances now with one bourgeois party, now with another, for the sake of imaginary ‘improvements’ in its indentured condition.” (“In America,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 36)

It must be said that Lenin’s description of the “bourgeois labor policy” accurately portrays the policy actively promoted by the George Meanys and Leonard Woodcocks and a policy which is spontaneously subscribed to by the bulk of workers in this country. At the same time it must be recognized that there is a section of workers who are breaking with this bourgeois labor policy, abandoning the bourgeois parties and are rediscovering the emancipatory aims of the working class. The significance of this contingent of workers lies not in its size (which still is small) but in the fact that the path these workers are now taking is the future road that the great mass of workers in this country must, and will inevitably, follow.

In order to best be able to lead the masses of workers to break, in the course of struggle, with the bourgeois labor policy, it is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the historical roots and material basis for the bourgeois illusions and prejudices that exist among U.S. workers; to see how the capitalists try to seize upon (and distort) features of the development of U.S. society in order to strengthen these illusions; and most importantly, to grasp how the very conditions that gave rise to these illusions are being undermined, creating the material basis for the Party and the advanced workers generally to lead the masses forward on the road of proletarian revolution.

This article is an attempt to lay out some initial points on this subject and to initiate further study, discussion and struggle so as to deepen the understanding of the Party and others on this crucial question.

In examining the roots and material basis of bourgeois democratic prejudices in this country, and especially to understand the particularities that these take in this country as opposed to other advanced capitalist countries, it is necessary to examine two distinct but related periods in the development of the U.S.: the era of competitive capitalism, “free enterprise;” and the present era of monopoly capitalism, imperialism, the final and highest stage of capitalism.

DEMOCRACY AND EARLY U.S. HISTORY

The early history of the United States is the history of an extremely rapid and wide-scale growth of capitalism. It is a period which left its mark on the modern U.S. and which created the ideological foundation (or as Stalin put it, one of the criteria of a modern nation, “the common psychological makeup”) upon which the rulers of today try to build.

Some of the most important features of early (pre-monopoly) U.S. society that must be considered are the following: the relative lack (compared to Europe) of remnants of feudalism (either economically or politically); widespread political liberty (free speech, free press, widespread suffrage, etc.); a constantly expanding frontier; a relative shortage of labor and widespread immigration, resulting in a very heterogeneous and fluid working class in this country.

The basic political institutions in this country, the Constitution, Bill of Rights, etc., and the basic political trappings that accompanied them, “freedom and democracy for all,” the “rule of the people” etc., developed because they were the best possible political shell for the development of capitalism; not surprisingly, they took shape particularly in the American Revolution of 1776 and the Civil War which together comprised the *bourgeois democratic revolution* in this country, the political revolution in which the capitalist class established its rule over society.

Both the 1776 Revolution and the Civil War were fought under the name of freedom and democracy, of opposition to injustice and tyranny and of equality under the law. The need of the bourgeoisie to mobilize the masses of farmers and workers to fight first the war with Britain and later—together with freed slaves—to undertake the assault on the slavocracy of the South, required them to grant fairly widespread political rights to the masses—for Black people, of course, they were greatly limited, even after slavery was legally ended.

This did not happen automatically or without struggle. For example, during the 1776 Revolution many democratic rights had to be fought for in the face of vigorous opposition of the

most powerful section of the bourgeoisie at that time, the merchants. But the fact that the nature of the bourgeoisie, as an exploiting class, even in its infancy, kept many of its representatives from perceiving its interests in any but the most narrow and immediate sense, in no way changes the fact that the democratic rights achieved in the Revolution, in fact, were favorable to the development of capitalism—at least insofar as they allowed for the development of a mobile working class, with a certain level of education, etc.

This can also be seen in the fact that the leaders of the masses in fighting for democratic liberties were the farsighted political representatives of the bourgeoisie, like Samuel Adams and Tom Paine. The bourgeoisie always appeals to the masses not openly in its own class interest but as representatives of the nation as a whole; when as a rising and revolutionary class the bourgeoisie is leading battles which are objectively in the interest of the whole society, their political program and ideology will naturally have a broad and deep influence on the masses of people.

In the U.S. the illusion of democracy and the *state* standing above class conflict and representing society as a whole was spelled out very succinctly in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed." (emphasis added)

It is no wonder that, to this very day, the Declaration of Independence is required study in the schools, or that the date and place of its signing (July 4, Philadelphia) was the centerpiece of the Bicentennial extravaganza, for in it is contained the basic *deception* of bourgeois democracy—that the capitalist government derives its authority from the consent of the governed and that it is based upon the equality of man.

In commenting on the philosophy of bourgeois revolutionaries in France whose words were strikingly similar to the Declaration of Independence (in fact, men who greatly influenced the thinking of the revolutionary bourgeoisie in America and were in turn influenced by the 1776 Revolution) Engels wrote the following passage:

"...henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression, were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal justice, equality grounded in Nature and the inalienable rights of man.

"We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing

eternal justice found its realization in bourgeois justice; that equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, the Contract Social of Rousseau, came into existence, and could only come into existence, as a bourgeois democratic republic." (*Anti-Duhring*)

The completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the U.S. with Lee's surrender at Appomattox, saw the U.S. emerge as one of the most thoroughly democratic states in the world at that time. The right to vote was guaranteed to every man, hereditary titles were unheard of, and the masses were insured the basic democratic rights of free speech, the press, religion, movement, etc.*

But the presence of widespread democracy in no way prevented the bourgeoisie from increasing its exploitation of the working class tenfold in the period after the Civil War. On the contrary, this period is vivid proof that bourgeois democracy is the *preferred form of rule* of the capitalist class and the best possible political system for the rapid development of capitalism.

This is true for several reasons. By granting personal freedom to the masses, bourgeois democracy hastens the development of a "free proletariat" with no other means to live than to sell its labor to the capitalists and gives each capitalist an "equal opportunity" to employ, and exploit, workers. As Marx and Engels put it in the *Communist Manifesto*:

"The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors,' and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment.'"

By the same token, the bourgeois democratic political system provides the framework for the capitalists to best resolve their conflicting interests. As the *Manifesto* puts it, "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." Bourgeois democracy enables the capitalists to influence the state more or less proportionally to the amount of capital they control, through the direct bribery

*Approximately 10 years after the Civil War the bourgeoisie found it most profitable to reverse the gains of the bourgeois democratic revolution in the South. Blacks were stripped of all rights and bound, along with a good number of whites, to the semi-

of public officials, through the interlocking of the government bureaucracy with business, and through enabling the capitalists to use their wealth to monopolize the printing presses and news media.

Most importantly, bourgeois democracy is the preferred form of capitalist rule because it allows the capitalists to hide their rule behind the mask of the "will of the people," covering up rather than exposing their dictatorship over the masses and promoting illusions of "harmony" between the oppressors and oppressed.

THE EXPANDING FRONTIER

An important feature of U.S. society in its pre-monopoly stage was the expanding frontier. The original inhabitants, the Indians or Native Americans, were driven further and further back by a brutal policy of robbery and extermination by the relentless expansion of the capitalist' system and the slave system.

For many generations new land was available for settling for little or no cost, and millions headed West. This had many profound effects: it created very favorable conditions for a rapid growth of capitalism by providing a vast market for industrial goods and, especially in the decades after the Civil War, gave great impetus to the development of the railways, an important prerequisite to building a modern capitalist nation; it created a vast petty bourgeoisie, unfettered by relics of feudal ownership of land, and it resulted in a significant slowing down of the development of class consciousness in the U.S. by offering some workers the chance to escape wage-slavery and become small farmers and holding out the *illusion* of escape to the workers in their millions.

Engels wrote of the importance of the land question in America:

"Land is the basis of speculation, and the American speculative mania and speculative opportunity are the chief levers that hold the native born worker in bondage to the bourgeoisie. Only when there is a generation of native-born workers that cannot expect anything from speculation any more, will we have a solid foothold in America." (*Letters to Americans*)

Engels is stressing the point that as long as the opportunity (and the illusion of the opportunity) for large numbers of workers to go into business for themselves, become individual owners (and like all small owners, dream of becoming big ones) the workers could not, in their masses, come to see themselves as a class in *opposition* to the bourgeoisie; for the desire to speculate

is itself a capitalist striving.

The particular characteristics of capitalist development in the U.S., especially the rapid settling of an immense expanse of territory, also resulted in a relatively favorable position for the workers to conduct their economic struggle against capital compared to the conditions in Europe.

Unlike the situation in Europe where capitalism created a surplus population by the ruining of the peasantry and the constant displacement of workers by machinery, in the U.S., though machines did continue to displace workers, there was an actual labor shortage for several decades. This left the workers in a better position to wage strike struggles and win concessions from the capitalists. To fill this shortage, and even to have available a surplus of workers, the capitalists enticed millions of immigrants to come to the U.S. from Europe, promising a land of opportunity and political liberty. Even today the ruling class seizes on the great hope for a better life held out to the toiling masses of Europe and many a patriotic movie includes the famous words "Give us your tired and hungry masses yearning to be free" accompanied by sentimental music and stirring pictures of the Statue of Liberty.

But of course the ruling class did not encourage immigration to "free" anybody. Instead they took advantage of successive waves of immigrants, handicapped by speaking a foreign language and for the most part in no position to head off to the frontier, to man the factories and mills in the rapidly growing industrial centers of the East Coast and Midwest. It was among these immigrant workers that revolutionary class consciousness first began to develop, by virtue of their worse economic situation and the fact that many came from countries where the working class movement was far more developed.

Still, horrible as conditions were for the immigrant, they were generally better than conditions that they were fleeing in Europe and, for the most part, the rapid growth of capitalism led to a fairly rapid assimilation into overall American society—though it did not end all discrimination against immigrants, degradation of their cultures, etc. Thus, even among the most downtrodden section of the U.S. working class at that time, the immigrants, there was still some material basis for capitalists to get over with their claim that through hard work and sacrifice their children, at least, might escape the misery of the capitalist profit mills.

The division in the working class between the native-born workers and the immigrant workers was for many years the most significant division within the U.S. working class. Engels wrote in 1892:

“Your great obstacle in America, it seems to me, lies in the exceptional position of the native-born workers. Up to 1848 one could speak of a permanent native-born working class only as an exception. The small beginnings of one in the cities in the East still could always hope to become farmers or bourgeois. Now such a class has developed and has also organized itself on trade-union lines to a great extent. But it still occupies an aristocratic position and wherever possible leaves the ordinary badly paid occupations to the immigrants, only a small portion of whom enter the aristocratic trade unions. But these immigrants are divided into different nationalities, which understand neither one another nor, for the most part, the language of the country. And your bourgeoisie knows much better even than the Austrian government how to play off one nationality against the other: Jews, Italians, Bohemians, etc., against Germans and Irish, and each one against the other, so that differences in workers’ standards of living exist, I believe, in New York to an extent unheard of elsewhere.” (*Letters to Americans*)

All of these conditions (widespread bourgeois democratic rights, an expanding frontier, relatively high wages and a very heterogeneous working class) combined to hold down the political consciousness of the U.S. working class. At this time workers in the U.S. were beginning to wage some extremely fierce and heroic battles—including the nationwide fight for the eight hour day in 1886. And in fact the U.S. had already entered the race for leading industrial power in the world. Nevertheless, all the conditions discussed above retarded the development of class conscious and independent political action by the U.S. working class, which lagged far behind the workers in Europe in developing political organization and class consciousness.

Even during this early period of the U.S. working class there were workers who were striving for revolution. As early as the Civil War there were some Marxists active in the struggles of U.S. workers, including the fight against slavery, guided by the careful attention paid by Marx and Engels to the development of the struggle in this country. In addition to Marxists, there were other non-scientific revolutionary trends in the U.S., most notably anarcho-syndicalism (the political philosophy of the Haymarket martyrs in the eight hour day struggle among others).*

*Anarcho-syndicalism is a political trend which belittles the importance of the political organization and political struggle of the working class. It holds that the dictatorship of the proletariat is unnecessary and that the working class can somehow abolish capitalism without holding state power. Marx and Engels led a consistent struggle

Nevertheless the ranks of the advanced workers remained small and the conditions for the masses of workers to follow the advanced section of the class were not yet ripe. In the pre-monopoly period revolutionary organizations among the workers, the most significant of which was the anarcho-syndicalist Socialist Labor Party (which quickly degenerated into a sect), were based almost exclusively on newly arrived immigrant workers and remained small in numbers limiting their work mainly to propaganda activities. This is especially significant in light of the fact that at this time Marxism was rapidly gaining ground in Europe, where the parties of the Second International were growing at a fast rate and leading the struggle of literally millions of workers. In fact, even attempts to form a labor party in the U.S. along the lines of the British party (that is without a revolutionary program) did not succeed during this period.

As pointed out earlier, this period of time of the rapid growth of capitalism into its monopoly stage was marked by fierce struggle. The working class was brutally exploited and fought back and was growing rapidly in size. Increasingly the workers saw the power of the government being used to break strikes and in other ways suppress the growing struggle of the workers. “Free enterprise” was rapidly giving birth to monopoly. The whole society was being more and more dominated by smaller and smaller numbers of capitalist robbers. To a growing degree the masses were beginning to see through the hypocrisy of the claims of “equality” and “freedom” as a handful of incredibly wealthy capitalists completely dominated the government from top to bottom.

The growth of monopoly was met with resistance, not only from the workers who were forced to struggle to keep from being driven into the ground as the strength of capital swelled, but from broad sections of the masses—especially from the farmers and other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, a great many of whom were being crushed.

A great movement developed among the farmers and which also attracted support from many workers—the Populist movement. The Populist movement, crystallized into the People’s Party in 1892, represented an attempt to resist the growth of monopoly—fundamentally it was the strivings of the petty bourgeoisie to hang on to the period of “free enterprise.” Its political program was based on opposition to the trusts and a call for going on the silver standard, which was the latest of a series of

against this trend during their lifetimes. Since then, it has developed into an anti-working class, counter-revolutionary tendency. But in the U.S. during the 19th century large numbers of revolutionary workers held anarcho-syndicalist beliefs, not out of opposition to Marxism, but in ignorance of it.

financial panaceas that had been suggested over several decades for curing the plight of the small producer under capitalism.

The populist movement was typical of the petty bourgeoisie, recognizing the domination of society by the bourgeoisie yet trying to eliminate that domination within the framework of the bourgeois system. In fact, William Jennings Bryan, the leader of the People's Party, was to lead that party directly back into the arms of the bourgeoisie when he accepted the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party in 1896.

Bryan, who the bourgeoisie still today casts as the heroic fighter for the "little man," is typical of the demagogues (like George Wallace) the bourgeoisie has made use of in steering the discontent of the petty bourgeoisie into dead-end roads and trying to tie sections of the working class onto the tail of the petty bourgeois movement. Bryan combined his political sophistry (he was known for his "golden tongue") with religious fanaticism. His last public act was prosecuting and whipping up public hysteria against John Scopes for teaching the scientific theory of evolution in Tennessee public schools.

The reactionary role of people like Bryan and the ultimate collapse of the Populist movement reflect the fact that the petty producers are historically a dying strata. Left to themselves their fight is, as noted in the *Communist Manifesto* one "to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class," and is "therefore not revolutionary but conservative," even "reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history." Freeing the working class from the influence of these petty bourgeois strata, and enabling it to fight for its own revolutionary interests has been and remains a crucial question—and, as a matter of fact, is the only way these strata can be mobilized as allies of the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie.

While the petty bourgeois outlook reflected in the Populist movement is the classic view of the ruined small producer, it did, and continues today, to exert influence within the working class itself. Jimmy Carter has declared himself a "Populist" (and given it as an excuse for his hodge-podge of "liberalism" and "conservatism") and the capitalists themselves, when forced to comment on the divisions in society, try to obscure the class content of those divisions and paint things as simply the "little man" against the powerful and wealthy. Engels addressed the influence of the petty bourgeoisie on American politics when he wrote, "Hence the ups and downs of the movement, depending on whether the mind of the industrial worker or that of the pioneering farmer gains predominance in the average man's head." (*Letters to Americans*)

Such were the main features of the class struggle in the U.S. as the era of "free enterprise" was drawing to a close in an orgy

of capitalist exploitation of millions of workers and the ruining of countless small producers. The proletariat was waging sharp economic struggles and forming its trade unions and a small section of workers were striving for the abolition of the system of wage slavery. The whole country was rebelling against the domination of monopoly. But while these rebellions were powerful and sometimes took a class-conscious form, the working class had not, in its great majority, come to see itself "as a class for itself," was yet to make a radical rupture with the bourgeois political system and begin to wage its political struggle under its own banner, and was yet to build a political party which would be capable of leading the class toward revolution, socialism and communism.

IMPERIALISM

The particularities of the development of capitalism in the U.S. during the "free enterprise" period left its mark on U.S. society, particularly the fact of the low level of political consciousness and political organization of the U.S. working class. Nevertheless, the characteristics of modern U.S. society in general and of the bourgeois democratic prejudices among the workers is not mainly shaped by past history—though this does play a significant role—but by the features and laws of the present era, imperialism, and even more specifically the situation of the U.S. in the world since WW2.

Of course, there is no Great Wall separating pre-monopoly capitalism and imperialism. As was pointed out in this article, many of the particular deceptions of the bourgeoisie that developed out of the conditions of the 19th century have significant influence today among the masses of people. But were it not for the fact that capitalism in its imperialist stage creates new material conditions which establish a new basis for bourgeois prejudices to develop among a section of the workers and for the bourgeoisie to reenforce and build upon the illusions of a previous era, then the "you can make it if you try" mentality of the frontier (for example) would have long disappeared with the frontier itself.

In his analysis of the monopoly stage of capitalism, Lenin analyzed the political effects of imperialism on the working class movement. He described how the bourgeoisie is able to use the superprofits secured from extending the domain of its capitalist robbery to other countries and from its monopoly position to bribe a small handful of leaders from among the proletariat, turning them into "labor lieutenants of capital." Lenin wrote:

"Lucrative and soft jobs in the government or on the war industries committees, in parliament and on diverse commit-

tees, on the editorial staffs of 'respectable,' legally published newspapers or on the management councils of no less respectable and 'bourgeois law abiding' trade unions—this is the bait by which the imperialist bourgeoisie attracts and rewards the representatives and supporters of the 'bourgeois labor parties.' ” (“Imperialism and the Split in Socialism,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 23)

Lenin also described how imperialism, especially in the “Great Powers,” creates a privileged stratum among the workers themselves, sometimes referred to as the “labor aristocracy.” In particular this refers to some mental workers and certain sections of skilled workers who through their organization into craft unions are able to maintain a monopoly on their skill and thus extract greater concessions from the capitalists than the mass of unskilled and semi-skilled production workers. The bourgeoisie and its “labor lieutenants” try especially to use these workers as a base for their bourgeois policies of class collaboration.

At the same time he was pointing this out, Lenin stressed, “For the trusts, the financial oligarchy, high prices, etc., while enabling the bribery of a handful in the top layers, are increasingly oppressing, crushing, ruining and torturing the *mass* of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat.” (Ibid.)

This split between the great majority of the working class, for whom the advent of the imperialist era meant greater misery and exploitation, and the handful of traitors who saw their opportunity to sell themselves to the bourgeoisie was common to *all* of the imperialist countries, only the *form* varying as this bourgeois trend adopted itself to the political climate in each individual imperialist country.

In the United States the growth of capitalism into imperialism produced a strata of traitors as despicable as any in the world. Their chief representative was Samuel Gompers, head of the AFL and former “socialist.”

Gompers and the AFL preached the “neutrality” of the trade unions from politics, but in fact he was a vigorous supporter of the bourgeois political system and constantly fought against working class politics. In fact, in 1912 Gompers published the programs of all three bourgeois parties in the U.S. at that time (Democratic, Republican and the notorious imperialist Theodore Roosevelt’s “Progressive” Party) without mentioning the program of the Socialist Party, which by 1912 had become very influential within the working class, gaining, for example, one million votes in 1920 for its Presidential candidate, Eugene Debs, who was in jail for opposing World War 1 as a war between imperialist bandits, including the U.S. ruling class.

The policy of “neutrality” was the political program of the

principal “labor lieutenants of capital” right up until the election of Franklin Roosevelt. Lenin described the “non-party principle” this way:

“Hence, in practice, indifference to the [political] struggle does not at all mean standing aloof from the struggle, abstaining from it, being neutral. Indifference is tacit support of the strong, of those who rule....The non-party principle in bourgeois society is merely a hypocritical, disguised, passive expression of adherence to the party of the well-fed, of the rulers, of the exploiters.” (“The Socialist Party and Non-Party Revolutionism,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 10)

Despite the treachery of Gompers and his ilk, the advent of imperialism in the U.S. saw the real beginnings, on a mass scale, of the working class breaking loose of the stranglehold of the bourgeois parties and taking a revolutionary political stand. Imperialism greatly intensified the misery of the masses of workers, and the advent of monopoly and the closing of the frontier struck deep at the illusory promise held before the workers, that they would be able to make it out of the working class. The Socialist Party was formed and its left wing and other revolutionary working class organizations like the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) fought for the establishment of socialism (though these forces often lacked a thoroughly scientific understanding of this) and exposed the hypocrisy of the bourgeois political system. When the imperialist system plunged the world into the first world war, and the Russian working class made its successful revolution, the working class in the U.S. made a tremendous historical advance in the forming of its Communist Party which declared war on the capitalist system and led the working class in mass struggle against the ruling class for several decades.

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

In 1929, after a brief period of stabilization and an orgy of “rationalization” following World War 1, the world capitalist system plunged into its greatest economic crisis to date—the Great Depression. The Depression led to incredible hardship and misery for the masses in the U.S. and led to a tremendous upswing in the struggle of the working class.

Faced with this, the capitalists and their labor lieutenants were forced to give concessions in the face of protracted and heroic struggle. Franklin Roosevelt, who presided over the bourgeois state for most of the Depression, played a skillful demagogic role of trying to make it appear that the fruits of the workers’ struggle were the results of the benevolence of

the bourgeois state. He vowed he would "throw the money changers out of the temple" and claimed he would protect the interests of the "little man" against "big business." During the Roosevelt years, the labor lieutenants of capital abandoned their previous policy of "neutrality" and overwhelmingly swore allegiance to the Democratic Party and the "Roosevelt coalition," where they remain today.

Roosevelt's role in many ways was similar to the Social Democratic parties of Europe who had abandoned the revolutionary struggle and become "bourgeois labor parties" and in several countries were in power during the Depression years. But there were significant differences, the principal one being that because of the low level of class consciousness in the U.S. the bourgeoisie did not find it necessary to resort to coloring its bourgeois democracy with a socialist tinge, finding it possible to appeal to the workers as part of the mass of "common people" without making a specific appeal to them as a *class*.

The bourgeoisie's political goal during the Depression years, of preventing the workers from advancing their fierce economic struggle into an overall political struggle aimed at bourgeois rule, was greatly aided by opportunism which emerged within the ranks of the workers' own party, the Communist Party, USA, (CP) even as the Party continued to lead the class forward. Under the influence of the opportunism of Earl Browder, the CP began to preach that "communism is 20th century Americanism," and that socialism was simply the logical extension of "democracy" (meaning bourgeois democracy)!

WORLD WAR 2

The bourgeois democratic prejudices of the Roosevelt era fully flowered during the second World War. That war pitted the U.S. ruling class on the same side as the then-socialist USSR and revolutionary people worldwide (after the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany). The *form* that the conflict amongst the imperialist powers took was the bourgeois democratic states on the one side and the fascist powers on the other.

Even after entering into alliance with the Soviet Union and revolutionary movements in a number of countries during the war, the U.S. ruling class of course tried to turn the fight against the fascist Axis to its own imperialist advantage, but it was forced to modify this because of the actual balance of forces in the war. Faced with this necessity the U.S. imperialists tried to turn it to their advantage, posing as champions of those oppressed by the fascist Axis and guardians of "democracy." Their aim in this was to prepare to grab up and plunder shortly what they could not seize and rob right then.

Anytime the bourgeoisie is forced to go to war they must attempt to win the proletariat to its standard. This is especially true in world war which requires the complete mobilization of the resources of the country. And in WW2, after the Nazi invasion of the USSR, despite the fact that the U.S. ruling class had to tone down considerably its anti-communism and allow some of the truth about the advances of the working class in building socialism in the USSR to come through, it was also aided in pushing the notion of collaboration between workers and capitalists by the very alignment of forces in the war—the fact that the Soviet Union was allied with one bloc of imperialist powers and that the working class shared an *objective interest* with these imperialists in defeating the fascist powers which were threatening to wipe out what was then the world's only socialist state.

Millions of American workers fought heroically against the fascist powers and in doing so made a great contribution to the cause of the international working class. But they fought under the banner of "democracy," and "freedom vs. slavery," cast in bourgeois terms—fascism vs. bourgeois democracy. This strengthened the hand of the U.S. imperialists and their agents in furthering bourgeois democratic prejudices in the minds of the working class.

This was even more the case because of the emergence of full-scale revisionism within the CPUSA during the war when its head, Earl Browder, completely submerged the interests of the working class to that of the U.S. imperialists and parroted the very bourgeois-democratic deceptions coming from the bourgeoisie itself. But these deceptions would not have struck as deep roots as they did if the victory of the U.S. in WW2 had not temporarily strengthened the position of the ruling class and enabled it to make certain concessions to the workers' demands for a better life in the years following WW2. (For more on WW2 itself see article, p. 76.)

U.S. IMPERIALISM'S MONOPOLY POSITION AFTER THE WAR

The U.S. imperialists emerged from the Second World War in a stronger position than ever: war production had been a tremendous boost to production; industry was booming full speed and profits were at record highs. The fascist powers were completely defeated and militarily occupied, and the "democratic" imperialists of Europe (Britain, France, etc.) emerged war-torn and greatly in debt to Wall Street.

Very quickly the U.S. established its clear domination of the entire capitalist world. The Marshall Plan was used to bring the countries of Western Europe under U.S. domination, as well as

to head off socialist revolutions in key European countries. The old colonial powers, Britain, France, the Netherlands, emerged from the war unable to hang onto their far-flung empires, and the U.S. was quick to replace them as the leading exploiter of the peoples of Asia and Africa, turning vast areas of those continents into neo-colonies similar to those in Latin America that the U.S. bourgeoisie had long dominated. The capitalists howled that the "20th Century is the American Century."

The monopoly position of U.S. imperialism within the capitalist world for two decades is the material basis and the most important single factor for the relatively low level of class consciousness among workers in this country today.

To understand this point it is helpful to review some of the writings of Engels and Lenin on Britain's period of commercial and industrial monopoly between 1848 and 1868 (which continued, to a certain extent, for some years longer). Engels wrote:

"The truth is this: during the period of England's industrial monopoly the English working class have to a certain extent shared in the benefits of the monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out amongst them; the privileged minority pocketed most, but even the great mass had at least a temporary share now and then. And that is the reason why since the dying out of Owenism there has been no Socialism in England. With the breakdown of that monopoly the English working class will lose that privileged position; it will find itself generally—the privileged and leading minority not excepted—on a level with its fellow-workers abroad. And that is the reason why there will be socialism again in England." ("England in 1848 and in 1885," from *Articles on Britain*)

In the more than three decades between 1858 and 1892 Marx and especially Engels traced the development of opportunism in Britain showing how it was an outgrowth of England's monopoly position. They pointed to the corruption of leaders of the British labor movement ("it is a pity that the whole pack of leaders did not get into Parliament. This would be the surest way of getting rid of the whole lot," Engels' "Letter to Sorge," 1894); the growth of an "aristocracy among the working class" and of a "privileged minority of workers" (preface to the second edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*). At the same time they pointed out that among the masses of workers "the great bulk of them experienced at best but a temporary improvement." (Ibid.)

The point of Marx and Engels' analysis of the partial *bourgeoisification* of the British proletariat was not, as has been the case with certain dogmatists and outright revisionists in this country,

to deny the revolutionary potential of the working class or cast the bulk of the industrial proletariat into the camp of the enemy. On the contrary, Marx and Engels spent many long years in exile in England and devoted much of their time to giving guidance to revolutionary workers in that country, never losing heart when the struggle faced difficulties. Indeed, Engels' joy is unmistakable when he was able to report, "I hold it to be the most important and magnificent in the entire May Day celebration [in Europe and America] that on May 4, 1890, the *English proletariat*, rousing itself from forty years of slumber, *rejoined the movement of its class*." ("May 4th in London," *Articles on Britain*)

Engels and Marx's analysis of Britain provided much of the basis for Lenin's thesis on the political effects of imperialism on the working class movement in the "Great Powers."

Here are some of Lenin's remarks at some length:

"Between 1848 and 1868, and to a certain extent even later, only England enjoyed a monopoly: *that is why* opportunism could prevail there for decades. *No other countries possessed either very rich colonies or an industrial monopoly.*

"The last third of the nineteenth century saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital *not* of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly... This difference explains why England's monopoly position *could remain unchallenged* for decades. The monopoly of modern finance capital is being frantically challenged; the era of imperialist wars has begun. It was possible in those days to bribe and corrupt the working class of *one* country for decades. This is now improbable, if not impossible. But on the other hand, *every* imperialist 'Great' power can and does bribe *smaller* strata (than in England in 1848-68) of the 'labor aristocracy.' Formerly a '*bourgeois labor party*,' to use Engels' remarkably profound expression, could arise only in one country, because it alone enjoyed a monopoly, but, on the other hand, it could exist for a long time. Now a '*bourgeois labor party*' is *inevitable* and typical in *all* imperialist countries; but in view of the desperate struggle they are waging for the division of spoils, it is improbable that such a party can prevail for long in a number of countries." ("Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23)

What Lenin terms "improbable" in the article above—especially the bourgeoisification of a large section of the working class in one country—has, in fact, come about. The U.S., particularly in the years 1948-65, enjoyed a *colonial* monopoly at least equal to Britain's in the period described (mainly in the neo-colonial form) and, if not an industrial monopoly equal to

Britain in 1848-68, certainly industrial strength far outstripping its nearest competitors. To this must be added U.S. imperialism's *financial* monopoly (using this to mean its great investments of finance capital in the other Western-bloc imperialist countries and its domination, during that period, of the world "money market" through the Bretton Woods agreement by which the dollar replaced gold as the international standard).

What were the effects of monopoly position of the U.S. imperialists in the post-war period on the class struggle in this country? To answer this question we must look at: the expansion of the outright bribery and corruption of "leaders" of the working class; the growth in the size and political influence of the labor aristocracy; and the effects on the *masses* of the proletariat.

Prior to the Second World War, the bourgeoisie had concentrated on purchasing the top leadership of the AFL, which was composed mostly of craft unions. With their bankrolls swelled following the war, the imperialists were able to extend this policy greatly. One after another, the industrial unions of the CIO, which were built through great sacrifice and struggle by the masses of production workers in basic industry, were captured from within by a whole new battalion of "labor lieutenants of capital." The bribery and corruption of the trade union officials was extended beyond the top strata (many of whom became actual capitalists controlling and investing vast union funds) down to the majority of full-time union officials, including most business agents, for example. This was accompanied by an all out assault on communists and other revolutionary workers who were hounded by the reactionaries and forbidden by law from holding union office. As noted earlier, the line of the CP during WW2, and to a significant degree after it, of tailing after bourgeois democratic prejudices, left the working class less conscious and more vulnerable to these attacks. It also made it easier for the bourgeoisie to isolate and attack the CP and class conscious workers generally.

The monopoly position of the U.S. did not and could not eliminate the basic contradiction of capitalism or the crises that inevitably result from it. In fact, in the period after WW2, even during the heyday of U.S. imperialism there were a number of economic "recessions." But for many years the U.S. imperialists were able to stave off a deep and prolonged crisis through their monopoly position in the world, forcing lesser imperialist powers and developing countries to bear much of the burden of the U.S. economic "recessions."

All this enabled the U.S. capitalists to broaden the ranks of the "privileged minority of workers" or labor aristocracy. In the construction industry for example, the majority of skilled workers enjoyed a relatively comfortable position during this period. This

was only partly due to the monopoly of skilled workmen by the building trades unions for while, to this day, these unions continue to try to restrict membership through lengthy apprenticeship programs and other means, the introduction of new machinery has rapidly reduced the level of skill required. More to the point was the massive growth of the construction industry due in large part to the tremendous underwriting of that industry through the GI Bill, guaranteeing savings and loan corporations, and other forms of government spending which represented a subsidy by the capitalist class as a whole.

The policy of subsidizing the construction industry not only enabled construction workers to maintain a relatively favorable position for a time, it also enabled a large section of workers to own, or look forward to owning, their own home for the first time in U.S. history.

Similarly, the trucking industry in another example of where the capitalist class as a whole was in a position to subsidize an entire industry and to make possible increases in the standard of living of the workers. By building the massive highway system at public expense, the capitalist class as a whole, while pursuing its general interests, was also basically providing the main capital expenditure for the trucking companies, meaning the companies were forced to invest little more than the cost of trucks and the wages of the workers. In the long haul trucking industry also, workers were able to win through struggle a considerably higher standard of living than the majority of the proletariat.

In both the trucking industry and construction the position of U.S. imperialism not only allowed a section of the workers a higher standard of living, it also allowed significant numbers of workers to become small owners, to become independent truck drivers or open a small construction outfit. Such phenomena, which of course were not restricted to these two industries, helped to resurrect the hope of escaping the working class far beyond the real possibility.

In addition, the growth of certain new branches of industry brought into being new sections of "better off" workers and new sections of the petty bourgeoisie. The needs of the aerospace industry, to take one example, required a large number of highly trained technical personnel. The needs of administering a government bureaucracy growing by leaps and bounds gave rise to other new sections of the petty bourgeoisie, for example, social workers whose ranks now number in the hundreds of thousands.

During this period there was a massive upswing in higher education, spurred on by new needs of production and financed through U.S. imperialism's global empire. This fact also led to increased hopes on the part of the masses of workers that at least it might be possible for their children to escape the factory.

For the masses of production workers in basic industry (auto, steel, rubber, etc.) the "benefits" of U.S. imperialism's monopoly were (to quote Engels' words on the mass of British proletarians during that country's period of monopoly) "a temporary share now and then." True, living standards rose somewhat, especially compared with the Depression years, but for the great majority it was still a matter of getting by from one paycheck to the next and for most becoming entangled in a net of consumer debt (another mechanism used by the imperialists to temporarily expand their market). For the masses of workers the rate of exploitation increased during this time, that is the percentage of the value of their labor going to the capitalists grew greater.

Any advances that were made in the standard of living came only as a result of sharp struggle and during this whole period of time workers continued to battle the capitalists over the terms of sale of their labor power. This is shown very dramatically in the cases where workers were in a weak position to wage the economic battle. In the electrical industry, for example, where the capitalists succeeded in crushing the industrial union and dividing the workers up into many different organizations, wages fell way behind those of workers in other basic industries.

Hand-in-hand with the ruling class' efforts to establish an "American Century" came an all-out political offensive within this country, especially in the form of a protracted anti-communist crusade. Their goals were several fold: to rob the working class of its vanguard, its communist party; to prepare public opinion for its interference in other countries and wars of aggression aimed at maintaining its global dominance and turning back the tide of revolution sweeping the world; and generally to mobilize the masses of people around its political "pole."

In the course of this holy war on communism the capitalists reached deep into their political arsenal of myth and deception for weapons, old and new, with which to attack the working class. The bourgeoisie tried to twist and pervert the experience of the Second World War, picturing it as a battle of democracy vs. dictatorship, and portraying communists as the equivalent of fascists. Especially in opposition to socialism and working class rule, the bourgeois electoral system was held up as if it was the highest achievement of man. All of these arguments of the bourgeoisie about the superiority of its political system were very much tied in with a barrage of propaganda about the superiority of its economic system—that "free enterprise" really "delivered the goods"—the implied threat being that the worker had to choose between putting up with capitalist exploitation or giving up his few personal possessions.

Naturally the tendency toward the bourgeoisification of the U.S. working class during this period created a strong basis for

the capitalists to make some headway with their political attack. Nevertheless the extent to which they succeeded was by no means inevitable and there was political resistance from communists and advanced workers, even at the height of the anti-communist frenzy during the Korean War.

A successful political counter-offensive which could have minimized losses would have required correct leadership from the workers' own political party. Yet the Communist Party, itself under sharp attack and many of its leaders jailed or driven underground, had never thoroughly eradicated the revisionist line, even though Browder and some of his more hideous revisionist theses were driven from the Party. During the period in which it was under attack the CP more and more fell into apologizing for its revolutionary aims and trying to hide behind, and appeal to, the "democracy" of the American political system.

Under such circumstances it was necessary to expose the contradiction between the self-proclaimed democracy of the bourgeoisie and its denial of political rights to the political representatives of the working class and also necessary to fight to hang on to democratic rights which could be used by the masses as weapons in the struggle against the capitalists. Lenin wrote:

"Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the 'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*. It is precisely this contradiction that is opening the eyes of the people to the rottenness, mendacity and hypocrisy of capitalism. It is this contradiction that the agitators and propagandists of Socialism are constantly exposing to the people, *in order to prepare them for revolution!*" (*Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*)

But the CP limited its criticism of the U.S. political system to the lack of consistent (bourgeois) democracy (including constantly howling that fascism was around the corner) and not focusing on the main point: that even the most thorough bourgeois democracy remains an illusion and a deception since it masks the rule of an exploiting handful over the great majority of people. Instead of exposing this contradiction the CP basically portrayed itself as the "true defenders" of democracy, in the tradition of Roosevelt and Jefferson, fighting its "betrayers" like McCarthy and Truman.

In the late '50s, following the capture of the USSR by revisionists led by Khrushchev, the CP completely abandoned revolution and the working class and became the traitor party that it remains today. This degeneration of the CP was a most serious

loss to the working class. It left the working class without a vanguard and thus politically disarmed, leaving the bourgeoisie a clear field to push their political poison. But it could not eliminate the basic contradictions of capitalism, the exploitation and oppression of the masses of people under this system—or their resistance, which was shown especially in the Black people's struggle and also the movement against the war in Vietnam, as well as continuous strikes, often very militant, of the working class itself during the period after WW2.

GROWING CRISIS

As far back as 1848 in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels, in discussing the recurring crises of capitalism, pointed out:

“And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by the enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.”

This statement certainly applies to the developments in the U.S. since World War 2: the very measures that enabled the bourgeoisie to get out of the depths of the Great Depression, and to minimize the effects of the several post-war “recessions,” paved the way for the steadily deepening crisis of today and has greatly reduced the ability of the capitalists to further postpone the inevitable further deepening of that crisis.

The vast U.S. economic and military presence in the homeland of its rivals has, to a large extent, turned into its opposite; these very countries now challenge the U.S. monopolists, even in the home market of U.S. imperialism itself, and the large presence of U.S. dollars in those countries has greatly contributed to the collapse of the “dollar standard” and to successive devaluation of U.S. currency.

The empire of the U.S. imperialists has suffered under the telling blows of revolutionary struggle. First China freed itself from the clutches of imperialism and its faithful servant Chiang Kai-shek, then the masses of Korean people backed by their comrades-in-arms of the People's Republic of China beat back the U.S.-led invasion of north Korea and held the powerful U.S. to a standstill. Then, during the 1960s, came the heroic armed struggle of the Vietnamese and other Indochinese people which greatly weakened the U.S. capitalist class.

And of tremendous significance has been the emergence of the USSR as a capitalist superpower capable of challenging the U.S. on a global scale.

All of these things, coupled with the even further saturation of U.S. imperialism's home market and the greatly increased capitalization of the South, the principal region in the country where the bourgeoisie found it profitable to invest massive amounts of new capital, has created the basis for the present crisis.

Already the economic and political effects on U.S. society have been great. Real wages for the working class have declined since the mid-'60s. Sections of the working class which enjoyed a “better off” position in the past, such as construction workers, have come under fierce attack so today over 40% of all commercial construction is non-union. Unemployment generally has reached the highest rate since the Great Depression and inflation continues to climb higher. Where previously many working class families lived on one income, now the paycheck of both husband and wife is necessary for most to get by.

The moribund nature of the imperialists, hid for many years under a glittering facade of “prosperity,” stands out in stark relief as whole cities fall into greater and greater decay, the capitalists lack the necessary capital to re-tool their industrial plants, even the railroad tracks stand in disrepair and ruin, and all of the social evils that accompany the decay of the economic system soar.

The ability of the capitalists to further postpone the even further decline of their system is increasingly reduced; in fact, while the bourgeoisie is not utterly without freedom and there will be some ups and downs in the development of the crisis, there is no way short of world war and a new favorable redivision of the world which might result from winning such a war, that the capitalists of this country could return to a respite from crisis even remotely resembling the post World War 2 period.

Whereas the decades following World War 2 saw material conditions favorable to the growth of bourgeois prejudices among the working class, for the strengthening of old illusions and the creation of new ones, the present period of deepening crisis is undercutting the basis of these very illusions. For the “bottom line” of bourgeois democratic illusions among the workers is the myth that capitalism can provide a tolerable life for the working class and that wage slavery is not an intolerable or inescapable condition which must be forcibly *overthrown*.

The capitalist crisis also weakens the ability of the bourgeoisie to join ranks and put up a common political front against the working class. Marx noted:

“So long as things go well, competition effects an operating fraternity of the capitalist class...so that each shares in the common loot in proportion to the size of his respective investment. But as it no longer is a question of sharing profits but of sharing losses, everyone tried to reduce his own share to a minimum and to shove it off upon another...The antagonism between each individual capitalist's interests and those of the capitalist class as a whole, then comes to the surface, just as previously the identity of these interests operated in practice through competition.” (*Capital*, Vol. 3)

This is the economic basis of the “dirty politics” that has grown so prevalent today. In recent years scandal after scandal has rocked the political arena. Individual capitalists and their political representatives, out of their narrow and immediate interests, expose each other and, unwittingly, expose the very political mask of democracy that they all share in common. And while the current Ford/Carter election has been mainly an attempt to restore some credibility to the increasingly tattered political system, there can be no doubt it won't be long before new exposures of corruption in high places and of “abuse of power” (as the capitalists call their extra-legal wiretappings, assassinations, etc.) will come to light.

None of this is meant to imply that objective conditions alone—the deepening crisis, the increasing misery of the masses and the disarray of the bourgeoisie—will by itself wipe out bourgeois democratic illusions. What it does mean is that life under capitalism will become increasingly intolerable for the masses of people, that the domination of the society by the bourgeoisie will stand out all the more sharply and the broad masses will search for a solution, a way out, of their exploitation and oppression.

At the same time, the intensification of the contradictions of capitalism and the rise of the mass struggle will *intensify* the ideological struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie will find its rule more dependent than ever on deceiving the masses about the possibility of peaceful change through its political framework and hiding the irreconcilable antagonism between the workers and the capitalists. This will be true even as the capitalists are increasingly forced to use their state apparatus to suppress the struggles of the people and even as they restrict the bourgeois democratic rights of the workers and others.

The objective basis for the accelerating expansion of the ranks of the politically class conscious workers, who have radically broken with the politics and ideology of the bourgeoisie and fight for the “emancipatory aims” of the working class lies precisely in the fact that all of the evils and miseries of capitalism will in-

crease—it cannot be otherwise. But the experience of the masses of workers is uneven and contradictory and counter currents to the general decline of U.S. imperialism continue to exist.

While the world situation is qualitatively different than it was during the heyday of U.S. imperialism in the '50s and early '60s it would be wrong to think that its monopoly position has been completely eroded—it remains, after all, one of only two super-powers in the world and still dominates a vast, if shaky, empire. It would be ridiculous to say that *no* workers are able to escape into the petty bourgeoisie or that *no* workers are able to maintain a relatively comfortable and “better off” position even though the general direction of development is the ruining of the petty bourgeoisie and the driving down of “better off” workers to the level of the mass of the proletariat.

In December, 1975 an article appeared in *Revolution* entitled “Mass Line Is Key to Lead the Masses in Making Revolution” which pointed out:

“But the experience of the masses, in their struggle to produce, in the class struggle and in scientific experimentation, does not take place in a vacuum, of course. And in capitalist society, along with their monopoly of ownership of the means of production, the capitalists control the media of mass communication, the educational system, etc.

“They constantly try to ‘sum up’ the experience of the masses according to their own upside-down world view.”

This is certainly true when it comes to summing up the experience of the masses with the bourgeois-democratic political system. A few examples should help clarify this point.

The Black people's struggle was the cutting edge of revolutionary struggle in the U.S. beginning with the early civil rights movement of the mid '50s through the high tide of the Black liberation struggle of the late '60s.

What gave that struggle its revolutionary thrust, and will again, is that the oppression of Black people is rooted in the capitalist system of exploitation and that the liberation of Black people can only come through working class revolution. Indeed, the most significant contribution of the Black liberation struggle of the '60s was rekindling revolutionary spirit among masses of working people of all nationalities and increasingly aiming its blow at the rule of the bourgeoisie.

But the bourgeoisie, through its political representatives within and outside that movement, tried to turn reality on its head and portray many of the gains won by the Black people's struggle (like civil rights legislation, for example) as proof of the “vitality of the democratic system” or, in a slicker variety of the

same line, that the goal of the struggle was to *perfect* the bourgeois democratic system.*

Similarly, when powerful sections of the U.S. ruling class saw their inevitable defeat in Indochina some of their political representatives rushed to try to head off the massive movement of the American people against that war. Trying desperately to hide the fundamental character of that conflict, that it was an imperialist war waged for the sole benefit of the monopoly capitalist class, these politicians tried to tell the people that the Vietnam war was a departure from "traditional democratic values" and that the big mistake was supporting a "dictator" in south Vietnam.

More recently the example of Watergate comes to mind, which exposed the "extra legal" side of the bourgeoisie's infighting and their dog-eat-dog nature. Yet once again the capitalists tried to turn this around, declaring that the near impeachment of Nixon and his forced resignation was living proof of the "health" of the constitutional process.

There are countless other examples of attempts by the bourgeoisie to reenforce the bourgeois democratic deception even as it is being battered by reality. This just further underscores the point made in the "Mass Line" article cited earlier, "At each point in the development of the struggle the bourgeoisie and the proletariat will contend not only in the practical battlefield, but also in the sphere of ideology."

This battle "in the sphere of ideology," to which the fight against the bourgeois democratic deception belongs, is crucial to the success of the revolutionary struggle. In this battle the Party and advanced workers play the decisive role. Without the painstaking work of communists, without repeated political exposures of the rule of the bourgeoisie, the masses of workers will not be able to free themselves of the shackles of bourgeois democratic illusions no matter how deep the crisis becomes.

This exposure must pierce beneath the surface—the talk about democracy—and get down to the real class relations that lie at the bottom of this and all political phenomena. As Mao Tse-tung wrote:

"...freedom and democracy do not exist in the abstract, only in the concrete. In a society rent by class struggle, if there is freedom for the exploiting classes to exploit the

*In doing this the capitalists tried to take advantage of the fact that there is a bourgeois-democratic aspect to the struggle of Black people. This was especially true in its earlier civil rights phase when the struggle was aimed at winning basic democratic rights, such as the right to vote and so forth, but remains true now.

working people, there is no freedom for the working people not to be exploited, and if there is democracy for the bourgeoisie, there is no democracy for the proletariat and other working people. The legal existence of the Communist Party is tolerated in some capitalist countries, but only to the extent that it does not endanger the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie; it is not tolerated beyond that. Those who demand freedom and democracy in the abstract regard democracy as an end and not a means. Democracy sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means." ("On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Readings*)

The real question is the class question—which class rules society. The revolutionary goal—though it involves far greater democracy for the masses of people than in any past society—cannot be seen as some kind of straight line extension or expansion of existing democracy. Only on the basis of establishing the rule of the working class by overthrowing the capitalist system and its bourgeois democracy (or other forms of rule) can the working class exercise dictatorship over the overthrown class of exploiters, practice its own democracy and end all forms of oppression.

Bringing out these class relations is an important task of communists. As the crisis of the imperialist system deepens, conditions are ripening for this socialist agitation and propaganda, conducted in the course of leading the struggles of the working class forward, to achieve more and more favorable results.

In 1892 Engels wrote about the United States, "In such a country continually renewed waves of advance, followed by equally certain setbacks, are inevitable. Only the advances always become more powerful, the setbacks less paralyzing, and on the whole the cause does move forward." And, Engels concluded, the very rapid and powerful development of capitalism in the U.S. has laid the basis for a revolutionary struggle of the working class that "will one day bring about a change that will astound the world." (*Letters to Americans*)

On the Character of World War 2

JOHN B. TYLER

This is the first of three articles dealing with the origins, nature and effects of World War 2 and the role of communists in relation to it.

The escalating contention between the rulers of the United States and the Soviet Union over which will dominate the imperialist world is leading inexorably to a third world war. What strategy and tactics communists the world over should follow in the event of such a war is a question of the highest importance. A correct approach will greatly advance the interests of the proletariat worldwide and raise the real possibility that the working class can come to power in countries where capital, vulture-like and hideous, now reigns supreme.

In hammering out this approach, communists must study the international situation as it develops, applying the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, and taking advantage of the historical experience already gained by the working class through bitter struggle and sacrifice. This, then, is the reason for this preliminary study of the Second World War.

A correct and thoroughly Marxist understanding of World War 2 must have at its foundation a grasp of one pivotal event—the massive invasion on June 22, 1941 of the Soviet Union by Germany. The invasion changed the entire character of the war. At its inception it was an imperialist war, a war between two opposing camps of robbers for the right to plunder the world's people. After the invasion, this ceased to be the principal aspect of the war. In the words of the *Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA*:

“It was no longer just a battle for the spoils among the imperialists. It became a battle for the defense of the future, as it was already being realized by the Soviet working people in building socialism. Millions of workers and other oppressed people around the world fought and died to defeat the fascist Axis in order to defend socialism and to advance their own march toward socialist revolution.” (p.11)

Both the outbreak of WW2 and the sudden change in its

character two years later posed fresh and complex tasks for the working class in every country. Further, these tasks varied greatly within each stage according to the concrete conditions in each country—belligerent or “neutral,” Allied or Axis, imperialist or colony, occupied or not, etc. In particular, there were differences in the tasks facing the working class where it held state power, in the Soviet Union, and in those countries where the proletarian revolution had not yet been victorious.

A new world war would have its own specific features, including some different than WW2 (or WW1). It too would pose fresh and complex twists and turns on the road to proletarian revolution and important lessons can be drawn from the degree of success of various communist parties in analyzing the objective conditions facing them and developing policies to advance the interests of the working class and masses of people during WW2.

WORLD WAR 1

When World War 2 broke out, it was not entirely an unprecedented phenomenon. In fact, the First World War twenty-five years before had given birth not only to the Soviet Union, the world's first socialist state, but to the international communist movement itself. Many European Communist Parties and the Communist International were formed in response to the betrayal of the working class by the social democratic parties in the various imperialist countries when the war broke out and the resulting collapse of the Second International to which they had belonged.

The social democratic parties before World War 1 were the most advanced political organizations the working class had succeeded in developing to fight for its interests and many of their leaders repeatedly vowed that they upheld revolutionary Marxism.

Using Marxist political economy and the science of dialectical materialism, the Second International predicted years before 1914 that a war on a world scale was coming as a result of the rivalry for colonies and markets by the capitalist powers and summed up that the workers had no stake in such a war of robbers. The social democratic parties agreed to oppose the drive of their capitalist classes toward war, by mobilizing the masses through anti-war agitation, having social democratic representatives in Parliament vote against military funds and other moves toward war and preparing mass actions—some parties even called for a general strike—to oppose the war when it broke out. Furthermore the International adopted in 1907 and reaffirmed in 1912 an additional proposal put forward by the Russian and Polish delegates, headed by V.I. Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg: “In case a war should nevertheless, break out, the Socialists shall take measures to bring about its early termination and strive with all their power to use the economic

and political crises created by the war to arouse the masses politically and hasten the overthrow of capitalist class rule." (quoted in William E. Walling, *The Socialists and the War*, New York, Henry Holt & Co., 1915, p. 39)

When the war actually broke out with the Austrian invasion of Serbia in August, 1914, however, the leaders of most of the social democratic parties acted as if they had never heard of the resolutions of the Second International. One after another they scrambled terrified beneath the skirts of monopoly capitalists of their own country, voting not against but for war credits, calling not for demonstrations or a general strike but for "defense of the fatherland," urging the workers not to use the crisis to go for power but to lay down their lives in the trenches for the bandits who robbed them every day.

Some social democrats stood firmly with the working class. Foremost among them were the Russian Bolsheviks whose leader, Lenin, summed up the class nature of the war:

"...this war is in a treble sense a war between slaveowners to fortify slavery. This is a war firstly, to fortify the enslavement of the colonies by means of a 'fairer' distribution and subsequent more 'concerted' exploitation of them; secondly, to fortify the oppression of other nations within the 'great' powers, for both Austria and Russia (Russia more and much worse than Austria) maintain their rule only by means of such oppression, intensifying it by means of war; and thirdly, to fortify and prolong wage slavery, for the proletariat is split up and suppressed, while the capitalists gain, making fortunes out of the war, aggravating national prejudices and intensifying reaction..." ("Socialism and War," in *Lenin on War and Peace*, FLP, Peking, 1970, pp. 10-11)

The opportunists who had become "defenders of the fatherland" offered up dozens of excuses for their conduct—their country was attacked and the other side the aggressor, their country more democratic and the other side more reactionary and so on. Lenin ripped away their rationalizations, "The character of the war (whether it is reactionary or revolutionary) does not depend on who the attacker was, or in whose country the 'enemy' is stationed; it depends on *what class* is waging the war, and of what politics the war is a continuation." (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, FLP, Peking, 1975, p. 80)

Furthermore, Lenin and the Bolsheviks derived from their class analysis of the situation their policy, revolutionary defeatism, summed up in the slogan, "convert the imperialist war into civil war." They pointed out that the war crisis itself created untold suffering among the masses and increased their revolutionary sentiments,

and that it was the responsibility of communists to fan these sparks into a revolution. With this goal in mind, the communist approach to the imperialist war the ruling class had become embroiled in could only be to build resistance to the ruling class, both in society generally and within the armed forces and prepare for an insurrection. With this standpoint and objective the communists welcomed, not feared, the defeat of the "fatherland," that is, the capitalists who rule it and whose military setbacks will make easier their overthrow.

By 1917, the Russian people, sick of war, oppression and exploitation, rose up. The Bolsheviks put forward a program and a slogan which summed up their demands and helped mobilize them into struggle—Land, Bread and Peace! With the communists providing leadership, the masses threw off not only the Tsar but a "liberal" capitalist government which continued his policies and the war, and established the world's first socialist state.

The Russian Revolution provided the most important lesson of World War 1, that war is not merely some inexplicable and overpowering phenomenon, in the face of which the working class can only fall into line under the national flag or stand helpless, hoping piously for peace. War is the continuation of politics by other means; its causes, nature and laws can be comprehended and if they are the working class can greatly advance its cause in the course of the war.

The immediate aftermath of the war had a great effect as well on the communist movement which was just coming into being and on the later development of World War 2. The infant proletarian state, the Soviet Union, was invaded by the armies of a dozen imperialist countries who were working to help homegrown reactionaries overthrow it. This showed the bitter and implacable hatred with which capital regarded socialism and underlined the fact that not all wars were unjust, as the world war had been. War in defense of socialism was fully justified and demanded and deserved the support of workers the world over.

The invasion of the Russian Republic (which became the USSR in the early 1920s) was not the only thing that put the lie to the claims of the American-French-British that they had been conducting a "war for democracy," a "war to end all wars." No sooner had the imperialist war ended than its politics were continued in an imperialist peace. The victorious gangsters met in conference to divide the spoils. The result was the Versailles Treaty which aimed at soaking defeated Germany for billions in reparations, "liberating" oppressed nations which had been held within the old Austro-Hungarian empire to make them part of the spheres of influence for the victorious European powers, which parceled out Germany's African and Pacific colonies, etc. Communists from the beginning attacked this as a bandits' peace and pointed out

that sooner or later it would result in a new imperialist war, to redivide the spoils afresh.

THE WAR BEGINS

World War 2 began with the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, in an attempt to annex it.* This represented a significant escalation in German imperialism's drive to redivide the world. The German capitalists' share of this plunder had been cut down by its rivals after its defeat in World War 1. The ruling classes of Britain and France feared further consolidation of German power in Europe, where it had already devoured Austria and Czechoslovakia. Therefore, they decided to "honor" their mutual defense treaty agreements with Poland by declaring war on Germany, although neither sent substantive aid to the armed forces of Poland which, totally unprepared for modern war, crumbled in a matter of days before combined air, tank and infantry assault by the Wehrmacht, the German armed forces. Now two great imperialist blocs were locked in combat, while a third bloc headed by the United States remained neutral, as did the USSR.

The best sum-up of this new war was made within a few weeks of its outbreak by Mao Tsetung, head of the Chinese Communist Party and great leader of the international proletariat. He declared:

"On whichever side, the Anglo-French or the German, the war that has just broken out is an unjust, predatory and im-

*There has been some analysis that the second world war had been going on for several years prior to the German invasion of Poland. Referring to events such as the Italian seizure of Ethiopia, German and Italian support for Franco in Spain, Germany's occupation of Austria in 1938 and Japan's war of aggression in China, The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks): Short Course, written in 1938, says: "All these facts show that a second imperialist war has actually begun. It began stealthily, without any declaration of war. States and nations have, almost imperceptibly, slipped into the orbit of a second imperialist war. It was the three aggressor states, the fascist ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan, that began the war in various parts of the world. It is being waged over a huge expanse of territory, stretching from Gibraltar to Shanghai. It has already drawn over five hundred million people into its orbit. In the final analysis, it is being waged against the capitalist interests of Great Britain, France and the U.S.A., since its object is a redivision of the world and of the spheres of influence in favor of the aggressor countries and at the expense of the so-called democratic states." (p. 333, White Publishers, 1939)

However, since World War 2, Marxist-Leninists have generally used the September, 1939 date, which signalled the actual commencement of the war in the form it was to take. For instance, in More on the Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Us, the editorial staff of Hongqi, theoretical journal of the Chinese Communist Party, says, "From September 1939 to June 1941 when the German-Soviet war began, a war had been going on for almost two years in the capitalist world and among the imperialist countries themselves." (p. 65)

The period leading up to the outbreak of war in 1939 and the nature of the military conflicts during it will be covered in the second article in this series.

perialist war."

Following in the tradition of Lenin, he looked at the *class nature* of the war, at the politics of which it was an extension. Did it matter greatly that Germany invaded Poland (or that Britain and France were the first of the large imperialist powers to declare war)? Was it crucial that the bourgeois dictatorship of one belligerent, Germany, was naked and terrorist, fascist, in form while on the other side, it normally took the form of bourgeois democracy, although limited by the war situation? No, neither of these factors changed the class nature of the war.

"Germany started the war to plunder the Polish people and smash one flank of the Anglo-American imperialist front. By its nature, Germany's war is imperialist and should be opposed, not approved. As for Britain and France, they have regarded Poland as an object of plunder for their finance capital, exploited her to thwart the German imperialist attempt at a world re-division of the spoils, and made her a flank of their own imperialist front. Thus their war is an imperialist war, their so-called aid to Poland being merely for the purpose of contending with Germany for the domination of Poland, and this war, too, should be opposed, not approved."

Mao also pointed out that the war would not necessarily retain this character throughout its course. The key factor making possible a change in this war from the pattern of World War 1 was the existence of the Soviet Union, a socialist state under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which represented and upheld the interests of the working class and the great majority of people worldwide.

"Only if the nature of the war changes, if the war in one or more countries undergoes certain necessary changes and becomes advantageous to the Soviet Union and the peoples of the world, will it be possible for the Soviet Union to help or participate; otherwise it will not." (All the preceding quotes from "The Identity of Interests Between the Soviet Union and All Mankind," *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, Volume 2, FLP, Peking, 1967, pp. 275-82)

In fact, the existence of the Soviet Union had already had a tremendous effect on the development and outbreak of the war. On August 23, 1939 the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact between Germany and the USSR was signed, stunning the world. For years the Soviet Union had been trying to make use of contradictions in the imperialist camp to create a system of alliances

to contain Germany, an up-and-coming imperialist power aiming to carve itself a bigger piece of the action and posing the greatest immediate threat to the Soviet Union. The bourgeoisies of Britain and France, however, had preferred to follow a policy of attempting to force Germany into war with the Soviet Union thus killing two birds with one stone. (This period will be evaluated at length in the forthcoming article mentioned above.) The signing of the ten year non-aggression pact turned German attention away from the Soviet Union and freed it from the immediate threat of waging a two front war. England and Britain for their part could no longer afford to give Hitler a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe in the hopes that he would be forced to take on the USSR. War between the two imperialist blocs was the immediate order of the day, and broke out within two weeks of the signing of the pact.

For the Soviet Union, the pact was a diplomatic master stroke. First and foremost, it bought time, almost two years as it turned out, for the Soviet Union to prepare itself militarily and politically for the eventuality of being dragged into war. It broke the double encirclement of the Soviet Union by both main camps of imperialists, particularly that headed by Germany, whose ally Japan had twice in the late 1930s unsuccessfully attempted to seize sections of Soviet Asia. It pitted the two camps of imperialists squarely against one another, thus insuring that even if the Soviet Union were later attacked, it would have potential allies and not have to defend itself alone.

In addition there was a secret clause in the pact. Under its terms Germany was forced to relinquish all political interests in and control over Estonia, Latvia, Eastern Poland (or the Western Ukraine) and the Bessarabian section of Rumania. Soviet leaders felt that a free hand in these areas was necessary for a stronger and more extensive defense against the eventuality of war with Germany. All of this was territory that had been stolen from the newly victorious Russian Revolution by Germany at the Treaty of Brest Litovsk and then stolen from Germany at the war's end and divided up to encircle the Soviet Union by Britain, France and the U.S. At the same time, however, it had stayed under capitalist rule for the last twenty years, and the masses of people had lived through two very different decades from their brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union.

With the Polish government in a state of collapse and the German Army moving fast, the Red Army entered and occupied the eastern half of Poland in late September. Tactics, timing, were key here. For three weeks the Soviet Union ignored the frantic demands of German diplomats that it should move into Poland and occupy the areas conceded to it in the secret clause. This delay firmly established Germany's responsibility for the attack on

Poland and the ensuing war. Had the Soviet Union moved earlier, when the Polish government still existed, there would have been an excuse for the governments of Britain and France to declare war on the Soviet Union in an effort to shift the focus of the entire European conflict against the USSR. Had the Soviet Union moved later, the Germans might have pushed forward, dangerously closer to the Soviet border and heartland.

The Soviet march into Poland was mainly a blow against Germany as some of the more perceptive Western imperialists realized, like Winston Churchill, not yet Britain's prime minister, who said, "The Soviets have stopped the Nazis in Eastern Poland, I only regret they are not doing it as our allies." They did not, however, like what was happening in the area into which the Red Army had marched. Peasants were given their own land and collective farms established. Unemployment ended as 978 idle plants were reopened and 500 new ones built in the first year. Local communists led in building socialist relations in the area. The Soviet Union followed by establishing military alliances in October with the governments of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania which was supposed to be in Germany's "zone."

Continuing its efforts to try and secure all of its borders against attack, the Soviet government then tried to open negotiations with Finland, whose government replied by mobilizing its army, evacuating Helsinki and appealing to Britain and America for "sympathy and moral support." Only then did negotiations begin. Finland first refused a military alliance. The Soviets then offered a trade of territory to create a larger buffer zone around Leningrad to protect it in case of war. Again the Finnish government refused, egged on by promises of support from the U.S. and British governments. War broke out and in a four month winter campaign the Soviet Union broke Finnish military power and occupied the territory protecting sea and land approaches to Leningrad.

To many in the world, this war seemed to be just a case of the big Soviet Union vs. little Finland, a view the Western imperialists worked overtime to perpetuate. During this period, a reader of the British press might almost have thought it was the USSR Britain was at war with, not Germany, so much was made of the Finnish war. In fact, the British and French governments during these months were making desperate last minute attempts to turn Germany's military drive East by conducting what became known as the "phony war" or "sitzkrieg" in the West, hoping Germany and the USSR would clash in Poland or the Baltic. But Hitler was not ready to take on the USSR and the Soviet Union did not push its advantage by liberating all of Finland and giving Britain an excuse to drag the Soviet Union into the war.

Everything changed rapidly in the spring of 1940. The Wehr-

macht unilaterally ended the "sitzkrieg" in the West with the famous offensive that conquered Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, and smashed France, occupying the northern half and establishing the puppet Vichy regime in the southern.

The ruling class in several other countries hastened to sign up with the apparently unstoppable Axis military alliance, including not only those already leaning toward the German camp like Rumania and Hungary, but some who were shifting coats pretty quick, like the Finnish government. Britain alone was still at war with Germany, and its military forces had been sorely hurt by fighting on the continent.

Here, again, the freedom of maneuver the Soviet Union had within the new situation permitted it to affect the development of the war. With the Germans in control of Western Europe and turning their attention to Britain, the USSR moved the Red Army, on June 15, into Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, where Nazis were plotting pro-German coups, and established socialist governments there.

Then the Soviets demanded and got the return of Bessarabia from the Rumanian government, by this time a German ally. Led by Marshall Timoshenko, whose whole family had lived under Rumanian rule in Bessarabia for 20 years, Red Army units marched into the territory on June 28.

Although these moves were "permissible" according to the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, their effect was profound. It was not in the Soviet Union's interests to have Germany unconditionally victorious in Western Europe. These political developments and troop movements prevented a nervous Germany from pressing its attack against Britain. Hitler openly confessed (in his declaration of war against the Soviet Union): "While our soldiers from May 5, 1940, on had been breaking Franco-British power in the West, Russian military deployment on our eastern frontier was being continued to a more and more menacing extent...[which resulted in] the tying up of such powerful forces in the east that radical conclusion of the war in the west, particularly as regards aircraft, could no longer be vouched for by the German High Command." Even as they took these steps, the Soviet leaders did what they could to maintain the agreement with Germany and keep from getting embroiled in the war. This meant, among other things, continuing trade in oil and other materials Germany's rulers needed for their war effort.

The political maneuvering the Soviet Union carried on during this first phase of the war, including the incorporation of border areas into the USSR, played a significant role in strengthening the Soviet Union for the trials that were to come and helped lay the foundations for victory. At the same time, however, for all that the Soviet Union did to involve the masses, the sudden and

unexpected transformation of the social system, particularly where entire nations were involved, was somewhat mechanical in nature. This sowed the seeds of certain problems in building a genuine socialist society which began to take root after the end of the war—when these problems were in fact reproduced on a larger scale in Eastern Europe.

COMMUNISTS AND THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WAR

When the war first broke out there was some confusion in many of the world's Communist Parties as to the correct analysis of the situation and the correct line to be followed. In both Britain and France, for instance, communist leaders originally took up positions of national defensism arising out of their social-democratic errors in the earlier period, errors like those under whose influence the French CP adopted slogans on the order of "Long live free, strong and happy France, faithful to its mission of progress, liberty and peace!" In Britain, CP leader Harry Pollitt called Britain's imperialist military effort a "people's war." In France, Communist deputies in Parliament voted for war credits and members were encouraged to enlist in the armed forces "to defend the French nation."

Within a few weeks, however, the line "defense of the fatherland" was defeated in both countries through internal struggle and study of the analysis put forward by the CPSU, the Comintern and other Marxist-Leninists. In countries around the world, communists became the leaders of the fight against the new imperialist war.

In Germany, Italy and Japan where vicious repression by the fascist governments had decimated the Communist Parties, the tasks did not change greatly. The underground struggle against the bourgeoisie continued, with the war providing new fuel for agitation among the masses. Communists joined the armed forces in order to organize against the war, difficult though this was in the first flush of Germany's military successes. In the war plants they continued to organize the sabotage that had begun during the period of the Spanish Civil War, when German and Italian arms were used to destroy the Spanish Republic and crush the workers' movement there.

In the "democratic" belligerents, France and Britain, the struggle against the war took the form of the "fight for peace" and, to the extent possible, the intensification of the economic struggle. While the parties put forward to some extent the perspective of revolution as a possible outcome of the war, the question of peace was generally raised in isolation from this and without clear class content. Lenin in World War 1 emphasized against opportunists peddling pacifist ideas, "Slogans must be brought forward so as to

enable the masses, through propaganda and agitation, to see the unbridgeable distinction between socialism and capitalism (imperialism), and *not* for the purpose of *reconciling* two hostile classes and two hostile political lines." ("The Question of Peace," *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Moscow, 1964, pp. 290-91) He summed up the tasks of Marxists very sharply in "Socialism and War:"

"The sentiments of the masses in favour of peace often express incipient protest, anger and consciousness of the reactionary character of the war. It is the duty of all Social-Democrats to utilize these sentiments. They will take a most ardent part in every movement and in every demonstration on this ground; but they will not deceive the people by conceding the idea that peace without annexations, without the oppression of nations, without plunder, without the germs of new wars among the present governments and ruling classes is possible in the absence of a revolutionary movement. Such a deception of the people would merely play into the hands of the secret diplomacy of the belligerent governments and facilitate their counter-revolutionary plans. Whoever wants a lasting and democratic peace must be in favour of civil war against the governments and the bourgeoisie." (*Lenin on War and Peace*, pp. 25-26)

This was evident, too, in the United States, which was sitting out the early stages of the war "so as to be able to come on the scene later and contend for the leadership of the capitalist world," as Mao predicted they would just before the outbreak of the war in 1939. ("Interview With a *New China Daily* Correspondent on the New International Situation," *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 266)

Breaking off their flirtation with Roosevelt and the bourgeoisie's New Deal, the Communist Party attacked the government's sale of strategic materials and military hardware to Japan as well as France and Britain and its growing ties with British imperialism. They raised the correct slogan "Get out and stay out of this imperialist war" and put it forward in popular form as well, "The Yanks are not coming." Party members also led important trade union struggles at plants engaged in war production like Allis Chalmers in Milwaukee and North American Aviation in Inglewood, California, openly challenging the bourgeoisie's war preparations and "national unity" spiel.

At the same time, however, they created illusions that the imperialists could be prevented from dragging the country into the war by "pressure" from the masses. Instead of explaining why America's rulers, imperialists themselves, were being drawn inexorably into this vast world conflict, the CP's leaders constantly invoked Gallup polls showing that over 90% of the American peo-

ple opposed U.S. entry into the war. The work of the CP had certainly helped to create this sentiment, but popular feeling alone has never been a match for the forces that drive a ruling class to war. This slip into a position that was in many ways pacifist rather than class conscious made it more difficult for the CP to help the workers understand the rapid changes that were to take place in the war and easier for the CP itself to be led into a position of class collaboration.

The situation in many Western European nations changed drastically in the period from April through June, 1940. The German blitzkrieg smashed the defenses of country after country and occupied them, generally establishing powerless local puppet governments headed by Nazi sympathizers in the bourgeoisie and the military, like Quisling in Norway and Petain and Laval in the Vichy government in Southern France. (The North was under direct German rule.)

At this point the question of the tasks of the Communists in the occupied countries had to be examined anew in the light of the new situation. The state apparatus and the economy of the occupied nations were reorganized to serve German needs and staffed by local fascists and large sections of the ruling class who took the stand that half a loaf was better than none. The superstructure too, particularly the media and the educational system, was reorganized on a broad scale by the occupiers. At every level German occupation officials—or "advisors" where the pretence of independence was maintained—had the final say on what happened. In short, state power was in the hands of new forces, whose rule rested on Germany's bayonets.

Did this mean the nature of the war had changed? No. The conflict was still fundamentally a clash between Germany, after 1940 formally allied with Italy and Japan on the one hand, and on the other Britain, along with members of its "Commonwealth," some of which were lesser imperialist powers in their own right like Canada and Australia, and with increasing backing from U.S. imperialism. The issue was still the same—which bloc would dominate the world, including not only the lesser capitalist nations but the colonies and semi-colonial nations as well.

But the occupation of France, Norway, etc., and the establishment of new imperialists—German—in control of the state, did change the situation for the working class within each of these countries. Unfortunately, the Communist Parties did not grasp fully, and take the maximum advantage of, these changes. When Denmark was occupied on April 9, 1940, for instance, the CP did not follow the course taken by large sections of the active membership of the other political parties in the country and go underground to organize resistance to the occupiers and their lackeys. Instead the Party opted for maintaining legal status, which meant

among other things strict neutrality toward the German forces and blaming the occupation entirely on Social Democratic collaborators in the puppet government—because before the invasion they had been too friendly with Britain! This stand isolated the Party from the masses of the Danish people and in fact won them something of a reputation as collaborators in their own right.

Although Denmark is perhaps the worst example, CPs failed to exercise their freedom to the fullest in other countries as well. The French Party was illegal and in the “unoccupied” zone called for building “action and mass movements which will sweep away the capitalist clique in Vichy and make way for the people and the government of the people” and even for “the socialist France.” But it did not unite with and build the resistance movement in the German held area in any large-scale way. It also clung to slogans about peace, proclaiming “One party alone struggles for peace; it is the Communist Party,” although France had been effectively knocked out of the war. In these circumstances, the slogan hit not the German occupiers and their puppets who held state power in France, but the small military forces headed by General DeGaulle, who had denounced the armistice and represented the capitalists who were not siding with Germany but allying themselves with England, and the internal resistance that was coming into being.

These errors are the result of the mechanical application of policies and slogans which were developed taking into consideration *only* the overall character of the war at its outbreak and not the particular developments that took place within different countries thereafter.

To genuinely lead the masses could only mean to lead them in the struggle against their new rulers. Faced with an open terrorist dictatorship on the German model, including in its highest circles many figures from the old regime, enforced by military occupation of the German armed forces, the masses certainly saw the need to resist. The job of communists was to build this struggle on every level—economic struggle against vicious exploitation to enrich German capital and fuel its war machine, political struggle like non-cooperation movements aimed at the occupiers and their puppets and military struggle, made possible in many places by the deep and unanimous hatred for the occupiers among the masses.

Such a policy would have carried with it many dangers, chief among them that of limiting the goals of the struggle to driving out “the invaders” and *restoring* the old “independent” and “democratic” society, and thus basically continuing the bourgeoisie’s imperialist war on their behalf and *de facto* taking sides with Britain. To avoid this error, communists would have had to give particular emphasis to assigning the blame for the war not only to Germany and not even to both imperialist blocs but to the whole

capitalist system, whose “normal” operation invariably breeds unjust wars. Similarly, extreme caution would be called for in uniting, even tactically, with other resistance forces which represented the monopoly capitalists and/or were tied in to one side in the imperialist war.

THE WAR AND THE COLONIAL COUNTRIES

There is much to learn on this point from the experience of the Chinese Communist Party, although the differences between China and the European countries should not be underestimated.

China was a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country in which large sections of the bourgeoisie could be united with in the struggle against imperialism and some even won to follow the leadership of the working class in this struggle. This was hardly the situation in the various advanced capitalist countries which had long before been welded into modern independent nations under the rule of the bourgeoisie and were now imperialists themselves, although with varying degrees of power.

Furthermore, China had been waging an all-out, a just war against Japanese invasion for several years. The just character of this war was not changed by the outbreak of World War 2, by the German-Soviet pact, or by Japan’s formal entry into the war as a belligerent with the consolidation in 1940 of the Germany-Japan-Italy Axis and Japanese moves into French Indochina (ostensibly ruled by the Vichy clique). These circumstances thrust China toward the British side in the war, and the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Tsetung resisted this trend. “To maintain that China should join the Anglo-French imperialist war front is a capitulator’s view, which is harmful to the War of Resistance as well as to the independence and liberation of the Chinese nation, and it should be flatly rejected.” (“The Identity of Interests Between the Soviet Union and All Mankind,” *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 282)

The CP did not, on the other hand, mechanically break its united front with the Kuomintang, which was closely tied to British and U.S. imperialism, or pull out of the war and begin raising slogans about peace. The position cited above was the line around which the CP fought *within* the united front to strengthen it and direct the strongest possible blows against the Japanese invaders. To have followed any course that failed to do this would have played into the hands of Japanese imperialism and been greeted with relief by the Kuomintang, which preferred attacking the forces led by the CCP to taking on the Japanese. While the Chinese people continued their war against the imperialist invaders, this correct policy did not change the overall imperialist character of the world war in the period.

A different case of taking advantage of the war in a colonial

situation was India. The war, and British moves to raise troops from the Indian population and to convert the Indian economy to a war footing to aid Britain's military efforts, greatly increased discontent among the Indian masses and weakened Britain's colonial grip. The Communist Party of India seized this opportunity to further expose the criminal nature of imperialism and build the struggle to drive the British out and win independence. The CP, which had been illegal since 1934, was able to build stronger unity than before with Mohandas K. Gandhi's umbrella Congress Party, led by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist forces which had a large following among India's Hindu masses. The Congress Party took a similar stand to the CP's on the war. By grasping the opportunities for both struggle and unity presented by the war, the CP was able to extend its influence and greatly deepen its ties to the masses, especially India's industrial and transport proletariat, helping them resist the increased exploitation that came with the war.

THE INVASION OF THE SOVIET UNION

Everything described above changed with drastic swiftness on June 22, 1941. Germany unilaterally broke the non-aggression pact. The Wehrmacht rolled across the new borders of the Soviet Union on a drive that eventually took German imperialism 2500 miles inside the USSR en route to total defeat. This changed the nature of the war and required a totally new orientation. As Mao Tsetung pointed out the next day in an inner-Party directive: "For Communists throughout the world the task now is to mobilize the people of all countries and organize an international united front to fight fascism and defend the Soviet Union, defend China, and defend the freedom and independence of all nations." ("On the International United Front Against Fascism," *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 29) This remained the general line for the duration of the war.

The change in World War 2 was not fundamentally to a "war for democracy" or merely to an "anti-fascist war," although it possessed both these aspects. There was no change in the character of class rule in the imperialist powers—for the "worse" in Germany, Italy and Japan or for the "better" in England, the U.S., etc. The new character of the war was determined by the event which changed it, the attack on the Soviet Union and its entry into the war.*

*In a speech in his "election district" in 1946, at a time when the USSR was struggling to prevent the breakup of the Soviet-U.S.-British wartime alliance, Stalin referred briefly to the war in terms that contradict this analysis. He said: "Unlike the First World War, the Second World War against the Axis states from the very outset assumed the character of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation, one aim of which was also the

Firstly, the German attack changed the objective character of the war. From June 22 on, the Soviet front was the decisive theater in the whole war. Nearly all of Europe was under the thumb of Germany and its Italian ally. Joint German-Italian forces were advancing across North Africa toward the Middle East. Britain was preparing to defend itself against a possible Axis invasion from the mainland. But the German General Staff did not dare strike at Britain with an increasingly powerful Soviet Union at Germany's rear. The overwhelming forces that invaded the Soviet Union were expected to conquer most of the European part of the USSR in three months. Instead, these troops and wave after wave of reinforcements tried for over three years to crack the resistance of the Soviet masses and their Red Army. It was on this front that the decisive battles of World War 2 were fought and the pride of the German army was shattered by the hammer blows of the Soviet people.

Secondly, the Soviet Union was nothing like the other belligerents. It was a socialist state, the world's first, a proletarian dictatorship whose defeat would have been an immense and tragic loss for the great majority of the world's people (as, indeed, was the restoration of capitalism there in the 1950s, although by then the proletariat held and was able to keep power in a number of other countries). Millions of workers the world over, including many who were not communists, saw the Soviet Union as a *workers'* state, looked to it with pride and love as their own, as a great advance guard blazing a path for their class, and were willing to make great sacrifices to defend it.

Thirdly, the invasion created a new situation both for the Soviet Union and for the Western Allies. The Soviet Union needed to ally itself tightly with all enemies of Germany and the Axis* to

restoration of democratic liberties. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against the Axis states could only enhance, and indeed did enhance, the anti-fascist and liberation character of the Second World War." ("For Peaceful Coexistence: Post War Interviews," N. Y. International, 1951, p. 8)

If this is taken to mean the war before June 22, 1941 was other than an imperialist war, it is incorrect. Stalin himself returned to the question of World War 2 in 1952 in Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR. While in it he never directly addresses the question of periods in the war, he refers to the Second World War as the product of "the general crisis of the world capitalist system" and says, "Each of the two capitalist coalitions which locked horns in the war calculated on defeating its adversary and gaining world supremacy." (FLP, Peking, 1972, p. 30)

And Marxist-Leninists since have continued to maintain that the Second World War was divided into two phases—essentially imperialist and unjust at its start and after June 22, 1941, just and progressive. See, for instance, William Z. Foster, History of the Three Internationals and the Chinese pamphlet More on the Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Ourselves, cited on page 80 above.

*On the eve of the German invasion the Soviet Union was able to conclude a separate mutual non-aggression treaty with Japan, once again driving a wedge in the Axis

preserve itself and avoid the situation of doing all the fighting for British and U.S. imperialism. The British and later the Americans needed all the help they could get in defeating Germany and its partners and dreaded the thought of a separate peace on the Russian front. The war thus was not simply a battle between imperialist and socialist countries—it was between some imperialist countries and a *united front* including socialist, imperialist and colonial and semi-colonial countries.

In the formation of this united front, the main participants had to make concessions, the Soviet Union to join together with some of the greatest exploiters and oppressors of the world's people, the imperialists to bind themselves to a country they hated because in it they sensed their eventual doom. Furthermore, the united front was extended within the various countries in the Alliance, uniting various fundamentally antagonistic classes and social groups, which had to make concessions, too. Even the Soviet Union for instance permitted various organized religions a wider scope of operations free of criticism to the extent that they built the struggle against the Axis.

Within every united front there is struggle, and this one could hardly be an exception with so many deep-going contradictions—between imperialist and colony, between different imperialist powers, between bourgeoisie and proletariat, between capitalism and socialism. The necessity of the war constricted the different forces and forced them to make concessions. At the same time the new situation also provided new opportunities for the various forces to advance their interests to the extent they understood what was happening and exercised the freedom they had to the utmost within that.

For the working class worldwide the situation was, overall, extremely favorable. The bourgeoisies were forced to grant the workers' parties in the Allied countries new freedom of operation, enabling them to contend for leadership of a massive, if temporary, united front. The nature of the war and the concessions the working class had to make did not mean the end of the class struggle, merely that it had to be carried on along new lines. When this was mastered, great advances were won.

Finally, the presence of the Soviet Union as a powerful component of this wartime alliance provided some degree of insurance that what began as an imperialist war would not just end with an imperialist peace. Thus, many gains won by the proletariat and oppressed nations during the war could be consolidated through

encirclement and lessening the danger of having to conduct a two front war. Although Japan's rulers were no more "honorable" than Germany's, the thrust of their imperialist drive was directed southwest into Asia and east into the Pacific and this treaty remained in their interests through the end of the war.

struggle. At the end of World War 2, Britain, the U.S. and France, were sure to bend every effort to reinforce their colonial empires, extend their "spheres of influence" in Europe and so on, but their ability to do so was constricted by the changed character of the war, especially the necessity of cooperating with the Soviet Union, which stood as a symbol and an active defender of resistance to imperialism and revolution.

Such were the factors which made World War 2 after the entry of the Soviet Union a "battle for the defense of the future," a battle in which millions of workers and other oppressed people around the world fought and sacrificed to win victory and advance their own struggle for emancipation.

THE SOVIET UNION IN THE SECOND STAGE OF THE WAR

The overwhelming concentration of German forces which pushed into the Soviet Union in the weeks after the invasion found the going rougher than the earlier rapid and relatively painless plunges into Poland and Western Europe. The Red Army fell back before the onslaught, fighting desperately every foot of the way, as workers labored heroically to dismantle whole industrial complexes, ship them behind the Ural mountains and rebuild them. As the Germans advanced, stretching out their supply lines, they found few sources of food and other supplies. What hadn't been moved was hidden, what couldn't be hidden was destroyed. Workers, peasants from the collective farms, soldiers who had been cut off in the fighting formed large partisan guerrilla units behind the enemy front which tied up more and more forces and destroyed communication and supply lines, for example in the single month of August 1943 blowing up railroad tracks in 20,505 different places!

The Soviet Army, which Hitler and the Western Allies alike felt could only last a matter of months, continued to withdraw all the way to mid-1942, holding the Axis forces in front of major cities like Moscow and Leningrad. One such stand in Stalingrad in late 1942 became the turning point of the war as soldiers and citizens stopped an entire German field army only a few hundred yards from the Volga River. As they held out week after week, Red Army forces to the north and south prepared and then sprung a trap which surrounded then killed or captured an entire German Army group. From this time forward, the Soviet Army was on the offensive driving toward Berlin and the crushing of the Third Reich.

The people of the Soviet Union bore the main brunt of the Second World War. By its end, over 22,000,000 Soviet soldiers and civilians had died in breaking the arrogant might of German imperialism. Yet despite the losses and sacrifices they suffered, the

people of the whole Soviet Union fought as no other people in the war could or did fight, for they had more to fight for. They were defending socialism, a system where they were not the ruled but the rulers, a country whose wealth they had not only created but owned. Scores of years before Frederick Engels, one of the great fathers of scientific socialism, had predicted, "In case of war...the member of such a society will have a *real* fatherland, a *real* home to defend, and therefore he will fight with an enthusiasm, perseverance and courage before which the mechanical training of any modern army must scatter like chaff...." (*Marx-Engels Collected Works*, German Edition, Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, Moscow, 1933, Vol. 4, p. 376) The incredible heroism of the people of the Soviet Union proved these words true a thousand times over from 1941 to 1945.

During this time the Soviet Union carried the main burden of the war against Germany. From the invasion on, a constant Soviet demand in negotiations with the rulers of Britain and the U.S. was for a second front against Germany in Western Europe, which would force Germany to split its forces more, take some pressure off the USSR and permit the Red Army to go on the offensive sooner. Such a second front was first promised for 1942, but particularly the British had no intention of carrying it out. While the Soviet Union continued waging its heroic struggle, the Anglo-American forces were thrown against the ill-supplied German-Italian armies in North Africa where they were threatening Britain's hegemony over Egypt, the Suez Canal and the Middle East.

Again in 1943 the British and Americans promised a second front in Europe. This time in an open delaying move they invaded Italy to avoid taking pressure off the Soviet Union. So painful was Allied progress up the Italian peninsula that it had still not been entirely conquered until the time Germany surrendered, two years later. By 1943, however, the Soviets were no longer counting on promises and made skillful use of contradictions between their imperialist allies, both of whom had their own ideas about what a postwar world should look like. Britain was still opposed to launching an invasion across the English channel, but the U.S. bourgeoisie was increasingly eager to bring the war in Europe to an end to have a free hand and, it was hoped, Soviet help against Japan in the Pacific. As a result, under joint U.S.-Soviet pressure the invasion was finally planned and carried out on D-Day, June 6, 1944 on Normandy Beach in France.

The Soviets, of course, were no suckers who were being taken for a ride. While maintaining their end of the wartime alliance in principled fashion, they extracted concessions as well, like the lend-lease aid from the U.S. which helped in the rapid Soviet advances from 1943 on, and refused to compromise on the main goal of defeating Germany and ensuring the survival of the Soviet

Union, turning down repeated American demands that they become embroiled in their own two front war by attacking Japan.

One area in which the cooperation and contention can be seen clearly is around the question of exile groups and governments. Britain had, after the fall of Europe, helped establish within its shores a number of "governments-in-exile" and less pretentious exile groups made of some sections of the old ruling classes in the occupied countries which had not openly collaborated with the occupiers. The Soviet Union recognized and established relations with most of these groups as part of the wartime united front. Two in particular, however, the Soviet Union eventually refused to deal with: the openly anti-communist and anti-Soviet Polish government-in-exile and the Yugoslavian monarchy-in-exile whose main man in Yugoslavia, General Mihailovic, was waging a civil war with German aid, arms and approval against the communist-led partisan movement which was leading the fight against the Germans.

The Soviets also took advantage again of contradictions within the imperialist camp of the Allies, aiding and encouraging General DeGaulle, leader of "Free France," in his efforts to see that postwar France was not under Anglo-American occupation or domination. But most important the Soviet Union helped insure that representatives of the internal resistance movements, including the communists who generally led them, were included in the councils of the exile groups, thus further increasing the freedom which the Marxist-Leninist parties in these countries had to advance the interests and struggle of the working class.

Despite the spirit of unity with which the Soviet Union participated in the wartime alliance, as victory drew closer and the alliance less necessary for the absolute survival of its members, the cracks began to deepen. It was obvious that Germany and Italy were on their last legs and that as occupied nations were wrested from the grip of the Axis the question of which army would move into the area had a great deal to do with what forces in that country would be built up and lead the destiny of their people. The response of the imperialists in the Allied camp to this realization was one of unparalleled savagery. Not free or able to attack the advancing Red Army, they resorted to other tactics. One such was the incendiary bombing of Dresden, Germany. This non-industrial town was of no importance to the German war effort—on the contrary its significance lay in the fact that it was in front of the advancing Soviet forces. Over 200,000 men, women and children burned to death or suffocated in a vast firestorm the British and American imperialists intended as a "warning" that they would stop at nothing to protect their interests—which included investments in Germany itself.

Even this crime was topped by the U.S. on August 8, 1945.

Earlier that year, on February 11, the Allied powers reaffirmed with a public statement at the Yalta Conference an agreement originally struck in Moscow in 1943: "The leaders of the three Great Powers—the Soviet Union, the United States of America and Great Britain—have agreed that in two or three months after Germany has surrendered and the war in Europe has terminated, the Soviet Union shall enter into the war against Japan on the side of the Allies..." With Germany's defeat, the Soviet Union agreed to enter the war against Japan in mid-August. In the meantime, however, the U.S. ruling class had successfully tested its first nuclear weapon.

The Soviet Union, whose aid and sacrifice had been desperately sought only months before, now represented only a threat to U.S. imperialism's control of postwar Asia and the Pacific. With Japan headed for collapse, the U.S. imperialists did not pursue surrender negotiations or arrange a demonstration of the atomic bomb's power on an uninhabited site. Instead, to forestall the Soviet Union's full entry into the war, and to intimidate the people of the world, they bombed Hiroshima on August 8 and Nagasaki a few days later. Tens of thousands died at the war's end, sacrificed on the altar of U.S. imperialism's drive for world hegemony.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE WITHIN THE UNITED FRONT

One concession the Soviet Union had to make had direct bearing on the class struggle in the other countries on both sides of the war. This was the dissolution in 1943, on the initiative of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), of the Communist International. The Comintern was dissolved to answer the charges of those in the Allied camp, including Axis agents, that the Soviet Union was "exporting revolution." Over the quarter century of its existence the Comintern had helped guide the international working class in its battles and helped develop and spread these battles around the world. It had, in the course of this, also made some serious errors which resulted in setbacks for member parties and, since the outbreak of the war, had been further handicapped by difficulties in communication in its ability to maintain contact, sum up, and give guidance. Nevertheless, ending the Comintern was a sacrifice and the CPSU and other parties around the world took all possible steps to uphold proletarian internationalism and maintain ties and communication with each other throughout the war and after to limit the effects of this sacrifice.

For communists in the Axis countries, the attack on the USSR changed the perspective from which they organized against the war among the masses—the question of classical "revolutionary defeatism" had changed to encompass working actively not only for the defeat of their own country but for the victory of its ad-

versaries. This was made easier by the growing suffering the war imposed on the masses and the increasingly obvious certainty of defeat. The communists continued to organize sabotage of the war effort, led mass desertions, especially on the Russian front and in Italy, where the bourgeoisie was weaker than in Japan or Germany and the CP had had the longest time since the imposition of fascism to rebuild. The Italian CP headed a powerful strike movement which helped topple Mussolini and led a partisan movement which aided Allied military forces and liberated sections of the country.

The change in the war had far greater implications, obviously, in countries which were part of the wartime Alliance. Inside the U.S. Communist Party developed a major deviation, called Browderism after its main advocate, the Party's General Secretary, Earl Browder, which amplified many of the key errors committed by other parties in the Allied and occupied countries at this time. The CPUSA's original response to the change in the war had, despite weaknesses, been quite dialectical about the character of the wartime united front. William Z. Foster, addressing a National Committee meeting six days after the invasion of the Soviet Union, said:

"The Communist Party will support every measure of the United States Government that is directed against Hitler and Hitlerism. At the same time we will reserve our Party's right of criticism. Certainly we will not support American capitalism's attempt to throw the burden of the costs of the war upon the toiling masses of our people, to set up a military dictatorship in this country, or to dominate Latin America. On the contrary, we will continue to oppose all such reactionary policies.

"While supporting the Roosevelt Administration in all blows it may deliver against Hitler, we do not forget the imperialist character of the government nor its imperialist aims in this war. We do not forget that the reason the great capitalist powers started this war was to redivide the world among themselves to the profit of the great monopolists."

This speech also declared that within the united front the Party of the proletariat would continue to uphold its interests, that:

"...our Party will support resolutely the workers' struggle for better wages, for the right to strike, for the organization of the unorganized, against excessive taxation, against profiteering monopolists, for the rights of the Negro people, against the persecution of the Communist Party..." (William Z. Foster and Robert Minor, *The Fight Against Hitlerism*, New

New York, Workers Library Publishers, 1941, pp. 4-5)

However, shortly after this Earl Browder was released by President Roosevelt in the name of "national unity" from the Atlanta pen where he had been doing time on a phony passport rap. This proved to be an even smarter move than Roosevelt may have thought at the time.

Browder took the necessity of uniting with the bourgeoisie and created from it an entire ideological, political and organizational capitulation to the bourgeoisie, elevating class collaboration to the highest principle. His crimes—dissolving the Party, declaring that absolute harmony between labor and capital was possible and necessary, etc., etc.—are so familiar that they need not be fully recounted here. Two examples, among many, of the Party's betrayal of the working class' interests in the name of winning the war were its enthusiastic championing of piecework, especially in the electrical industry where the left-led CIO had smashed it during the organizing drives of the late '30s, and its equally enthusiastic support for the no-strike pledge signed by the leaders of the AFL, the CIO and the railroad brotherhoods.

Because of Browder's treachery, it is all too easy to look at the Second World War as having been an unfortunate but necessary recess in the class struggle in the United States, something to be gotten over with as quickly as possible so as to get back to the real business of fighting the capitalists. Such a view fails completely to understand how the class struggle could and should have been advanced during this period.

Consider the examples of piecework and the no-strike pledge given above. The working class had every interest in increasing and maintaining production for the war effort. The problem is that the CP worked to carry out this task by the bourgeoisie's methods and on their terms. Instead, especially in the industries and unions where its influence was very strong, electrical for instance, the CP should have put forward a policy demanding things like regular political education sessions on company time on the war, its nature, the issues, the workers' stake in it. The Party could have argued—and proved in practice—that it was possible to get out more, and better, production this way than by traditional sweatshop tactics. In addition, of course, such a program would have provided the opportunities for developing class consciousness on a wide scale. And for this reason the bourgeoisie would have bitterly opposed it. The class struggle over such steps is no less real for taking place under conditions demanding certain unity.

Likewise to support and encourage the top trade union leaders who voluntarily gave up the right to strike was a severe error. Of course, there was a danger that strikes waged on narrow trade

union grounds or incited by Axis fifth column agents could cripple war production, but the only way to answer this is politically. In fact, the workers needed the right to strike not only to protect themselves against the attacks of the capitalists who are driven to maximize their profits, war or no, but also to fight sabotage of the war effort by individual capitalists. If the working class movement had been built correctly from the earliest stages of the war, the strike might even have been a weapon the workers could have used to influence affairs of state!

The fact is that the CP did do some good educational work among the masses about the importance of key issues which related directly to the conduct of the war, like the second front, but when it came to building *struggle* with the bourgeoisie over this within the wartime united front, the communists generally fell down. They mobilized tens of thousands of people but resorted to big public meetings, often with politicians and businessmen as featured speakers. The correct approach would have been making it an issue for the class, consistently building demonstrations and other forms of militant struggle and on this basis united behind the working class' banner the broad sections of the people who could to one extent or another see the importance of the second front.

The same basic point holds for the question of the war in China, around which the CPUSA also did much basic education among the masses of people. Several sharp political issues concerning this front in the war were raised by people like the Yankee mission which visited Yen-an early in the war or General Joe Stilwell, who stingingly criticized Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang for their failure to fight the Japanese and called for aid to the communist-led Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. Like other Americans sympathetic to China, even these representatives of the bourgeois diplomatic corps and military were either ignored or punished by the bourgeoisie for their efforts—Stilwell lost his command in 1944.

A related question that went even closer to the heart of the bourgeoisie's conduct of the war was raised by a petty bourgeois military officer, Major Evans Carlson. Under the influence of China's people's war against Japan, he established a special Marine unit, Carlson's Raiders, based on political discussion and motivation, breaking down rank differences and conducting criticism/self-criticism, all under a slogan from the Chinese people's army, "Gung ho"—"work together." Although this experiment produced the best American fighting forces of the war, the brass shut it down quick as a threat to the entire bourgeois military (retaining the popular slogan "Gung ho" with its meaning reduced to something like "Geronimo" or "Yee-hah").

Issues like this provided communists with the opportunity and

the obligation to take them up not merely around the question of winning the war, but more broadly around what kind of world, what kind of society the working class and masses of people wanted to see come out of the war. It provided them with the opportunity and the obligation to carry on real class education but doing it in the course of carrying on the class struggle within the united front.

The same thing holds true for the struggle on the "home front." During the course of the war the CP failed to take advantage of the freedom it had to advance many of the important battles cited in the Foster speech above. Great numbers of Black people took on segregation and discrimination in the armed forces and society as a whole with the "Double-V" movement for "Victory over the Axis abroad and Victory over Jim Crow at home." CP members helped initiate some of these struggles, but under the revisionist line pushed by Browder, the Party soon attacked the movement as "divisive" and a "hindrance to the war effort." Nonetheless this movement won significant victories. How much more could have been accomplished had it had proletarian leadership and closer ties to the working class movement!

During the course of the war some gains were made in organizing the unorganized, but the possibility existed of doubling or even tripling union membership during the course of the war had militant organizing drives been accompanied by a political fight that all government contracts had to be with union shops. All of the above suggestions of course have a strong element of Monday morning quarterbacking, and do not deal with the complexities of the class struggle in a temporary united front with the bourgeoisie—dealing with the class collaboration of the hacks, fighting "treason" charges, determining the approach to participation on special government war boards, etc. And most important, none of these things could have been accomplished easily. The ruling class would have fought them every step of the way. But even setbacks in this struggle, especially if correctly summed up, would have armed and strengthened the working class a million times more than Browder's treachery.

Still, these comments should give an overall sense of how the working class movement could have grown in class consciousness, strength and organization had the CP tried to be more than just the best fighter in the war—on the bourgeoisie's terms! They should show that the CP and the working class need not have been so ill-prepared for the U.S. ruling class' domination of the post-war imperialist world, the cold war, the bourgeoisie's attacks on the communists, the trade unions and the masses of people.

THE SECOND PHASE IN WESTERN EUROPE

In looking at European countries under Axis occupation the best example of communists combining the tasks of the war and the resistance against the occupiers with the struggle for working class revolution is provided by Albania. The country had been seized by Italy early in 1939, even before the German invasion of Poland. With only small disunited local communist groups in different cities, the Albanian Marxist-Leninists focussed their main efforts on forging a Communist Party, while building militant demonstrations and a small guerrilla movement against the Italian occupiers, which after the formation of the Communist Party of Albania (CPA) (now the Albanian Party of Labor) became a powerful partisan movement. From the beginning the CP based its work on the premise that "the old anti-popular regime of Zog [Albania's monarch—J.P.T.] was a reactionary pro-fascist regime. The Italian occupation of the country deepened still further the reactionary character of this state apparatus which placed itself at the service of the occupiers [although the 'royal family' itself fled—J.P.T.], adapting itself to their needs."

The Albanian communists' answer was to develop local national liberation councils initiated and headed by the CPA and coordinated on a national level as organs of state power, both in occupied areas and zones liberated by the partisans, although their tasks were obviously different in these different situations. Writing to regional party committees for the Central Committee in 1943, CPA leader Enver Hoxha defined the issue clearly: "In the first place we are faced with the question of state power. No ambiguity should exist on this matter, only the power of the councils and no other power should exist. There is no room for compromise and duality on this."

The tasks of the CPA were facilitated by the fact that Albania, a small and backward country, had only a weak and underdeveloped bourgeoisie and no other significant organized political parties. Still the Party itself was small, growing from 200 members when it was formed to 2800 by the war's end, and the united front had to be constructed of many individuals and social strata which were not communist or proletarian. Furthermore, the CPA was confronted with hastily formed phony "nationalist" organizations like the Balli Kombetar. The Party made repeated efforts to bring this outfit into the national liberation movement or even coordinate activities, but it chose to follow the road of Mihailovic in Yugoslavia and launch military attacks on the national liberation forces in close cooperation with the Italian occupiers and the Germans who succeeded them.

Most important, Albania's communists did not limit themselves

Albania patiently won other members of the local councils and the National Liberation Congress (and the National Liberation Council, which led when the Congress was not in session) not only to the position that the local national liberation councils and the higher bodies should exercise state power, but that the only road ahead for these bodies and the masses of people they represented in Albania was not to revert to the hated old society, but toward a socialist People's Republic.

The Albanians also recognized that in their situation, with the struggle under open communist leadership and the collaborators exposed, the main danger of a restoration of the old society came from their temporary allies within the international wartime united front, the British and U.S. monopoly capitalist classes. Under the guidance of the communists, when the 1943 Permet Congress met it was "decided to refuse to recognize any other government that might be formed inside or outside Albania against the will of the Albanian people, which was represented only by the Anti-fascist National Liberation Council." (The above quotes, including the one by Enver Hoxha were taken from an article by Luan Omari entitled "The Questions of State Power in the Anti-fascist National War of the Albanian People" in *Albania Today*, May-June, 1975).

When British commandos landed, unrequested, in Albania in 1944 to "help wage the war" at a point when the National Liberation Army had nearly cleared the country of the occupiers after years of heroic struggle, the Albanians in line with the decisions they had taken, politely sent them packing.

Unfortunately the experience of the Albanian communists in exercising and expanding their freedom within the necessities imposed by World War-2 was not typical. Most countries tended to follow the pattern of the Greek Communist Party of which two Albanian scholars have commented:

"Essential differences of views and attitudes existed between the CPA and the Communist Party of Greece. The latter concealed its leading role in the EAM (the Greek Anti-fascist National Liberation Movement), gave a predominantly defensive character to the armed struggle in Greece and maintained profoundly opportunist attitudes towards the question of state power, and towards the Greek reaction, behind which were the governments of Britain and the USA." (S. Ballvora and O. Manushi, "The National Liberation Movement of the Albanian People and the Anti-fascist World War," *Albania Today*, September-October, 1975, p. 51)

The resistance of the Greek people began with the conquest of the country by Germany in April of 1941, and surged forward

after the invasion of the Soviet Union. Inside the country a liberation army, tens of thousands strong, linked with the EAM and also led by the CP, succeeded in liberating large sections of the country. The EAM itself by 1944 held the allegiance, even Western imperialist authorities admitted, of between 75 and 90% of the Greek people. The British gave the EAM and its army some military aid, but simultaneously built up a smaller right wing "liberation" group based among the bourgeoisie, big landlords and other supporters of the old monarchy.

Outside the country, the British maintained the usual government-in-exile composed of a king, members of the old state apparatus and its officer corps and other bourgeois forces. The EAM not only recognized this government but subordinated itself to it and accepted a few cabinet ministries in the government-in-exile. Yet this government was not recognized by the masses of the Greek people who had no desire to return to the way things had been before the war. In fact, the great majority of the army and navy of the government-in-exile, several thousand men stationed in Egypt, wanted to join the fight in their country and opposed the restoration of the monarchy so much that they revolted in 1944 in support of the EAM. The British promptly broke the rebellion and jailed them all!

Despite this when, with Germany virtually driven out of the country, British troops entered Greece to "liberate" it, the EAM joined in welcoming them. Within weeks, however, the British forces, in alliance with the puppet "liberation" group they had created, launched an attack on the EAM. Even as the war against Germany still raged in the rest of Europe, the EAM and its armed forces were driven out of Athens, beginning the Greek "Civil" War, which ended with defeat of the revolutionary forces.

The situation in occupied countries throughout Europe was similar, in many respects, to that in Greece. While not adopting the same kind of total philosophical system that Browder had come up with, their practice followed the same line in many particulars. Everywhere communists were in the forefront of the struggle against the German occupation and its local puppets. The CPs were able to play this leading role because their organizational form was designed to function under conditions of illegality, because their understanding of the situation and mastery of strategy and tactics, however flawed, was incomparably superior to those of other forces and, most importantly, because as selfless fighters representing the best qualities of the proletariat, the class of the future, their members were willing to make unparalleled sacrifices to advance the struggle and were able to rely on and mobilize the masses of people.

Guerrilla movements and urban undergrounds led by the CPs throughout Europe waged heroic and protracted combat, crip-

pling Germany's new empire from within. For instance by 1943, the Danish resistance was wreaking such havoc on Germany's very border that the puppet Quisling government there was forced to resign and turn the country over to direct German administration because it was totally unable to quell the struggle.

The struggle in all these countries posed the difficult question of unity with bourgeois forces. In some countries, like Denmark, the CP occupied, to a great extent, the dominant position within the united front, but in others the situation was even more difficult. For instance in France, although the bourgeoisie was largely unpopular as capitulationists before the war and/or collaborators after, General Charles DeGaulle had denounced the Vichy Armistice and rallied to his banner many of the French troops in French colonies not occupied by the Axis, forming around this army, "Free France," yet another government-in-exile. His stand had won him many followers in France, although the main underground forces there were the Franc-Tireurs led by the CP, and thus most local liberation councils tended to be led or strongly influenced by the CP also.

The CP participated in the various organizational forms "Free France" took, especially when it moved to North Africa after the Germans were driven out there. The CP, although leading the struggle in France, was kept in a subordinate position in these. The communists argued for widespread guerrilla war in France and the creation of liberated zones. DeGaulle did not want this but favored a mass uprising to support an Allied invasion of France in which his army would play a prominent, if not particularly valuable, role. The CP, rather than conducting an open debate, especially within the French Resistance, over the two lines and what they represented for the ongoing struggle and the future of France, basically bowed to DeGaulle's line. In fact, far from public criticism, they constantly hailed DeGaulle as the great leader and national hero of the French Nation.

In France, and the other Western European countries as well, the CPs had reverted to the nationalism of the immediate pre-war period and wrapped themselves entirely in the national flag. Even inside the parties, the singing of the national anthem was placed on an equal footing with or, worse still, replaced the singing of the Internationale, the great battle hymn of the world proletariat.

Obviously, the national aspect of the struggle during this stage of the war was a significant factor in these countries. It provided the basis for greatly broadening the united front, but if that became the limit of the content of that united front, it could not move the struggle ahead. Nationalism, especially in an advanced capitalist country, is one of the most valuable tools the bourgeoisie has for obscuring the fundamental class divisions of society.

Many of the Communist Parties grew to their largest size ever during this period, including the CPUSA, and had the greatest influence in their country, but where it was based only on the Party being the best fighter for the "nation," this strength was not solid and evaporated as the terms of the struggle changed in the post-war period.*

That the restriction of the struggle within such nationalist boundaries was a general line in the international communist movement is shown by something that happened early in the war in Yugoslavia. The Communist Party there, in addition to openly leading the general partisan struggle, had formed a number of thousand man "proletarian brigades." These were based on Party members and communist-minded workers and peasants, and acted as shock troops taking on the most difficult and dangerous military tasks and carrying out communist propaganda among the masses. Georgi Dimitrov, head of the Communist International, sent a message criticizing this step, "Why did you need to form a special proletarian brigade? Surely at the moment the basic, immediate task is to unite all anti-Nazi movements, defeat the invader and achieve national liberation." To see the two things as contradictory is, in fact, to confine the struggle to a national struggle and seriously set back the fundamental revolutionary goal of the proletariat.

Again, the purpose of this article is not to second-guess everything communists did during World War 2, but to try to indicate the general outlines of a correct approach. It would be an error to assume that the Albanian example could have been repeated everywhere, as if concrete conditions did not exist and differ in different countries. Nonetheless, the prospects existed *everywhere* for exercising freedom and a powerful independent role within the united front. In these occupied countries the battle was not just against foreign domination in the abstract, but against a state. The question naturally arises in such a situation, what is the goal of the struggle? A return to the old ways? For broad sections of the masses, even those not won to the need for socialism, the answer will still be no. The task of communists was to unite with, crystallize and give these ideas back to the masses in a more developed form—we cannot go back to a system that got us into this mess and inevitably will again; instead we must continue to forge our own destiny and move to throw off those who would stand in our way.

Throughout the war, the various parties, like the French, blamed and attacked not the system but the politicians and sections of the ruling class who capitulated to Germany and those,

* The development of the class struggle and questions of state power after the defeat of the Axis occupation and the war's end will be the main focus of the third and final article in this series.

often the same, who collaborated with it. This approach only confused the history and causes of the war and obscured the class question of whose rule and what system had been fundamentally at fault. They did not take advantage of the experience won in battle to show the masses: we have through our own efforts defeated these enemies and we can use this strength to defeat other enemies and to build the future.

Once again the example of China provides valuable lessons despite the many differences with the situation in Europe. The Chinese Communist Party through the entire course of the anti-Japanese war maintained the united front with the Kuomintang and even occasionally referred to Chiang Kai-shek as the leader of the united front and the Chinese people (although by no means as frequently as did communists in other countries who were not constrained by the same necessity). Within this united front the CP engaged in tit-for-tat struggle not only militarily when attacked by Chiang's forces, but politically, making open criticisms of the practice of the Kuomintang in the war, thus winning over many honest and patriotic elements.

While the CCP modified its program from the period of the Civil War, for instance ending the confiscation of the land of non-collaborating landlords in order to extend the united front as far as possible, they still made it clear that there was no going back to the way things had been before. This they proved in practice with the development of steps like the rent reduction movement in the countryside which maintained the forward momentum of the earlier period under the new conditions.

Throughout this period, as is well known, the forces led by the Chinese Communist Party bore the brunt of the fighting with Japan and, by facing the necessity presented by this situation, vastly expanded the liberated areas and the influence of the Party and its line among the masses of Chinese people. These advances could not have been made and consolidated without simultaneously carrying on the struggle within the Anti-Japanese United Front and continuing the battle to transform Chinese society in its entirety.

Unfortunately the struggle in some other colonial areas was conducted under a line which more closely resembled that of the European CPs. India is a good example (although after June 22, 1941 the Communist Party of India [CPI] originally took a "left" position before falling into class collaboration).

The Indian communists, while condemning the German attack and pledging support for the USSR, did not change its line and policies for six months. Instead the CPI continued to basically ignore the war and attack Britain as the main enemy. This was incorrect because, despite such factors as the hatred of Britain, a powerful drive for independence, famine and other economic

troubles resulting from British plunder to finance its war effort, there was not a revolutionary situation in India.

A successful new democratic revolution on the road to socialism would have been a tremendous contribution to the international proletariat, and strengthened the worldwide united front. Had revolution been on the agenda, the task of Indian Marxist-Leninists would have been to make it. But, in fact, the Congress Party attempted a nationwide uprising in the fall of 1942 which was easily broken up by the English colonial regime, demonstrating clearly that the situation was not ripe.

In the meantime, however, the leaders of the CPI had come to understand that the character of the war had changed, but failed utterly to grasp the nature of the changed situation and their tasks within it. Indeed, they fell into outright capitulation to imperialism, essentially taking the opportunist and idealist position which held, as the Party said in a 1947 self-criticism, that imperialism itself would vanish from the face of the earth with the defeat of the Axis powers!

This represented total abdication of the struggle against India's British overlords, rather than continuing it under the special conditions of the wartime united front. India had a significant part to play in the Alliance. It was the jumping off point for the Burma Road, the base area from which military supplies and other aid was shipped to China, supplies which, even though the Chiang Kai-shek clique seldom turned them against the invaders, by their very presence helped tie down significant Japanese forces. India in effect served as a rear base area for the second front against Japan in China, Burma and Southeast Asia. India was itself the target of unsuccessful invasion efforts by Japan, which included an "Indian Liberation Army," led by forces within the Congress Party who claimed this was the way to liberate India. Although the masses of Indian workers and peasants didn't buy this road, the CPI's line did not offer a revolutionary alternative.

Given the situation in India and the world the CPI was correct in aiming the main blow at the Axis and Japan in particular, but at the same time had to conduct intense struggle within the united front, standing up at the head of the Indian people to the imperialists. They had to not only put forward the immediate demands of the masses against famine and impoverishment, but also take advantage of all opportunities, even including all the imperialist Allies' wartime rhetoric about "freedom," to apply maximum force in the battle to win independence. Carrying out such a policy would not have been an easy task, and would have involved bitter struggle with the British, but it was the real road forward for India's workers and peasants. That it was not taken was a great loss.

CONCLUSION

World War 2 was born out of the rotten and bloodsoaked workings of the capitalist system itself. Two blocs of imperialists, no longer able to resolve by any other means their conflicts over which was to be the chief exploiter of the world's people, turned to war. At its start this war, on either side, was not in the interests of the masses of people, and for communists this meant not only exposing and opposing it but using it to advance toward the overthrow of the capitalists whose insatiable drive for profit, whose whole system, bred the war in the first place. Only to the extent they summed up the concrete conditions facing the working class and masses of people were they able to do this. For the proletariat in power, in the Soviet Union, the key task was avoiding getting embroiled in the imperialist war while making preparations against an attack. For the proletariat elsewhere, the tasks were greatly affected and in many cases determined by the existence and nature of the war *and*, as this article has emphasized, by the particularities of the situation in the country. Of these particularities the most important, especially in the imperialist countries, was who ruled, who controlled state power.

World War 2 changed in character overnight with the invasion of the Soviet Union which changed the objective situation, the necessity, and thus the opportunities for advancing the struggle of the working class. Where the working class party correctly grasped the nature of its tasks under this new situation and maintained its initiative and independence and relied on and mobilized the masses, the working class was able, with the support of the Soviet Union, to make real strides forward and in a number of countries to move forward to socialism during or shortly after the war.

Failure to grasp the nature of the wartime united front within different countries contributed to the Communist Parties' failures in many cases to seize the opportunities it presented for building the class struggle. Instead, even while fighting with the utmost heroism for the defeat of the Axis, they did not "play the piano"—pay sufficient attention to other contradictions while focussing on the main one. They fell into nationalism and class collaborationist positions which weakened even the immediate struggle, let alone the ability of the class to wage the battles it would face in the future. A key lesson of World War 2 is that the only way for communists to move the struggle forward through all the twists and turns it takes is to never for an instant lose sight of the final goal of the working class in that struggle—to overthrow the capitalist class and smash to rubble their system of exploitation and oppression, to emancipate itself and all mankind.

Bourgeois Right, Economism, and the Goal of the Working Class Struggle

MATT BUTLER
LEE KORSZNECKI

Can exploitation be ended once and for all? Can all forms of slavery, all oppression be ended? Can all systems of production that exploit the labor of the great majority for the benefit of the few be done away with?

The bourgeoisie says no. They are very fond of saying that things cannot really change, that there will always be classes, that new exploiters are bound to arise in every society. They say people will always "be out for number one," will only operate on the basis of their own self interest. This bourgeois outlook also exists within the conscious ranks of the working class as well. One of the main political forms it takes is economism. In capitalist countries this economist line holds that the working class cannot consciously take up the task of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie and establishing its own rule. Under socialism, economism holds that the working class cannot grasp and move toward the final goal of its revolutionary struggle—the abolition of classes and the elimination of the basis for all exploitation and oppression once and for all.

The bourgeoisie points to the Soviet Union as proof that capitalism is inevitable, whether the working class overthrows the old ruling classes or not. They argue that in China, despite 27 years of socialism there are still many inequalities that exist among the people, that some make more than others, that people in positions of influence and authority still try to feather their own nest at the expense of others. Really they say, things are not much different than they were before.

In a sense they are right. But fundamentally they are wrong. A new exploiting, capitalist class has come to power in the Soviet Union. But in China the working class and the masses of people under the leadership of Mao Tsetung and the Communist Party saw how state power in the USSR was snatched from the hands of the proletariat and is now wielded by a new capitalist class. Led by Mao, they analyzed the basis on which capitalism was restored in the first socialist state and summed up tremendously important

lessons from this tragedy, lessons that have guided the continued development of socialist revolution and socialist construction in China.

There *are* inequalities, many people still try to push their own narrow interests ahead of those of the society as a whole. But that is not surprising. For as Marx pointed out, communist society does not appear full-blown with the overthrow of the political rule of the capitalist class. Socialism "...emerges from capitalist society [and] is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges." (Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*)

Lenin put it very graphically: "When the old society perishes, you cannot nail its corpse into a coffin and lower it into the ground. It disintegrates in our midst. The corpse rots and poisons us." This is because much of the old capitalist society continues to exist under socialism. In fact Lenin says that the bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie continues under socialism, because the socialist state has to maintain—while step by step restricting—these remnants of capitalism for a time. These "birthmarks" of the old society provide the material basis for the emergence of a new bourgeoisie from within the socialist state.

As was pointed out in the October 15, 1976 issue of *Revolution*, "the commodity system, wage differentials and what is called 'bourgeois right' still exist under socialism. This means that the communist principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs' is not and cannot be yet realized; instead the guiding principle is 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work,' " although this is also combined with the principle that "he who does not work, neither shall he eat," and means that no one is allowed to live parasitically off the labor of others, "workers are no longer forced to sell their labor power and no one lives by exploiting the labor power of others." But "money is and must be used to exchange commodities...Workers are still paid wages with which they must buy the means of life—food, clothing, etc., as well as entertainment and so on."

In other words, the bourgeois right of private accumulation based on private ownership of the means of production is eliminated, but bourgeois right, for example equal pay for equal work, still operates in the sphere of the exchange and distribution of the products of society's labor.

In addition, the law of value, the exchange of products according to equal value—measured by the equal amounts of socially necessary labor embodied in them—still operates. Thus as a general rule workers with greater skill and knowledge are and must still be paid higher wages than those with less skill and knowledge, because it takes more socially necessary labor time to develop a

"mental laborer" than someone who does manual labor.

"Even where wages are equal, two different people have different sized families, different numbers of people in the family working, and so on, so that 'equal pay' results in actual inequality.

"In addition, in the countryside in China, socialist ownership does not, in the main, take the form of state ownership, but *collective* ownership by groups of peasants, organized into communes. These communes *sell* products to the state, and income is divided among the different peasants according to their work, and some other standards. Here, too, commodity relations and exchange through money continue to exist." (above quotes from "Chinese People Will Carry Out Mao's Line, Continue Revolution," *Revolution*, Oct. 15, 1976, Vol. 2, No. 1)

Under socialism bourgeois right and the operation of the law of value and other remnants of capitalist society can only be restricted, eliminated step by step. This is because production has not yet developed to the point where products of labor can be distributed to everyone on the basis of need. More importantly, the old social relations, ideas, habits and ways of doing things developed in centuries of exploiting societies cannot be eradicated overnight. And the fact that small-scale production continues, particularly in the countryside is, as Lenin said, a source constantly generating a new bourgeoisie.

As Mao summed it up,

"Our country at present practises a commodity system, the wage system is unequal, too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Piao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system." (Marx, Engels and Lenin, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, FLP, Peking, 1975)

This is a practical life and death question for the working class and its party. It is a matter of continued, complex and acute struggle over line and concrete policies flowing from ideological and political line. The success or failure of the battle to restrict bourgeois right, the operation of the law of value and other remnants of capitalism, determines whether society moves backwards to the seizure of power by a new class of exploiters and the restoration of the slavery and exploitation of capitalism, as happened in the Soviet Union, or advances to communism, classless society.

The task of the whole historical period of socialism is to wipe out the remnants of capitalism and completely transform society. As Marx and Engels point out, communism not only involves "the most radical rupture with all traditional property relations" but also "the most radical rupture with traditional ideas." *Communist*

Manifesto) It is no easy task. As Lenin said,

“The bourgeoisie in our country has been vanquished, but it has not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even utterly broken. That is why a new and higher form of struggle against the bourgeoisie is on the order of the day, the transition from the very simple task of further expropriating the capitalists to the much more complicated and difficult task of creating conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, or to arise anew. Clearly, this task is immeasurably higher in importance....” (Lenin, “The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 27)

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT A TRANSITION

This is why the class struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie not only necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat but why this proletarian dictatorship must be exercised, in every sphere of society, until the bourgeoisie and classes are finally eliminated altogether. The working class must seize and wield state power to remove from society the basis for the existence of all class distinctions, by abolishing all the relations of production on which they rest, all the social relations that correspond to them and by revolutionizing all the ideas that result from these social relations. Thus, although it is a tremendous advance, *the dictatorship of the proletariat is not an end in itself*, but it is a necessary step, a transition to a higher form of society where all classes and all exploitation are abolished.

The struggle to exercise its dictatorship, to gradually restrict and eliminate the remnants of capitalism, is precisely the battlefield of class struggle under socialism. And it comes down to the practical political question of what is the road forward at any point. How and to what extent should material incentives for production be eliminated? On the question of the elimination of wage differentials, should emphasis be put on lowering the higher levels or even on raising the wages of those on the lower rungs, or on lowering the prices of necessities, in effect removing them from complete determination by the law of value and restricting the operation of this law?

At every step, bourgeois forces that emerge within the working class and its party will attempt to gut the heart out of the dictatorship of the proletariat and block the restriction of the operation of the law of value and bourgeois right. In opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat, Khrushchev raised the “state of the whole people.” In China, Lin Piao could not openly emulate the Soviet revisionists’ slogan, because it had been exposed by Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Party and masses in

sharp ideological and political struggle, so he shouted “long live the dictatorship of the proletariat” while attempting to overthrow it. Like Khrushchev and “China’s Khrushchev,” Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao promoted material incentives and the theory of productive forces. This line, basically an economist line, says that the way to achieve communism is through the development of the productive forces till abundance is reached, and to motivate workers to increase production on the basis of increasing material incentives. But far from achieving communism or abundance, this leads away from class struggle, the struggle to develop production on the basis of a “radical rupture” with the old property relations and ideas, and leads straight back to capitalism. This is why Mao said in opposition to the theory of productive forces, “grasp revolution, promote production.”

As stated before, so long as the law of value determines payment for work, and distribution is based on work, mental labor, for example, will be valued more highly than manual labor. People who do mental labor, those who have the least direct relationship to production—technicians, administrators, party functionaries—will be able to trade on their positions, to use them as capital to grab for power, prestige and wealth for themselves.

This is what Lenin meant when he said that:

“Yes, by overthrowing the landlords and bourgeoisie we cleared the way but we did not build the edifice of socialism. On the ground cleared of one bourgeois generation, new generations continually appear in history, as long as the ground gives rise to them, and it does give rise to any number of bourgeois. As for those who look at the victory over the capitalists in the way that the petty proprietors look at it—‘they grabbed, let me have a go too’—indeed, everyone of them is a source of a new generation of bourgeois.” (“Report on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 27)

The continued existence of the remnants of capitalism, the organization of distribution on the basis of equal pay for equal work, the contradictions between mental and manual labor, the fact that urban industry is more developed than agriculture and the resultant disparity, particularly in a country like China, between the standard of living, social organization and consciousness of workers and peasants, and the continued existence of small-scale production are the basis for what Lenin characterized as a petty bourgeois “they grabbed, let me have a go too” outlook to exist and be constantly regenerated in socialist society, especially among those in authority, but even among the masses of people.

This “revolution for revenge” was the basis on which many

petty bourgeois forces supported the new democratic revolution in China that overthrew the old feudal classes and the foreign imperialists. But when it came time to moving beyond new democracy and building a socialist state based on the dictatorship of the proletariat, this line became politically indistinguishable from the bourgeoisie's efforts to sabotage and overturn the consolidation of working class rule and the transformation of society.

In all the struggles to abolish the basis for all classes and exploitation there are advanced, intermediate and backward ideas and forces. The bourgeoisie constantly tries to unite with and promote the most backward sentiments of the masses in order to drag back the broad masses and isolate the advanced. And it must be realized that under socialism, where classes still exist and neither the ideological nor material basis for communism has been created, backward ideas and bourgeois ideology in general still have considerable influence among the masses and gain in influence, especially in times of temporary hardship and difficulty and to the degree that the vanguard of the proletariat does not correctly carry out the mass line and unite with the advanced to raise the level of the masses of people and win over the backward. In short, it is idealistic to think that in socialist society the masses will spontaneously and consistently grasp and apply the communist outlook.

Of course under the dictatorship of the proletariat nobody (or almost nobody) comes out and openly hoists the banner of the bourgeoisie. Instead capitalist forces try to obscure and distort scientific socialism, distort the aim of the class struggle, and try to replace the goal of elimination of classes and exploitation altogether with the goal of the narrow, short-range economic advancement of the working class. According to Khrushchev, communism meant to eat well, to be well dressed, for everyone to be able to eat goulash, while for Liu Shao-chi it meant to make yourself up, put on lipstick, speak of daily life. And Lin Piao claimed that what communism means is that everyone becomes rich, everyone lives well.

RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

This view of "communism" differs little from the bourgeoisie's promises of what capitalism can mean. It requires, in this view, no radical transformation of society, but only developing the forces of production in a more efficient and "socialized" manner. This "realistic" and so-called materialist view of the class struggle rests solidly on the ideology of "me first" and promotes revenge as the only basis for the masses taking up the revolutionary struggle—"let me get my share."

In the Soviet Union this petty bourgeois and economist outlook was exposed by Lenin and sharply refuted by the practice of the

Soviet working class under the leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. Thousands of workers engaged in unpaid labor on Saturdays (called *subbotniks* or "communist Saturdays") in order to advance production, not for the good of the particular worker, but for the whole society. Lenin said:

"Things that are 'communist' begin only with the appearance of subbotniks, that is, unpaid labor with no quotas set by any authority or state, labor performed by individuals on an extensive scale for the public good. This is not help rendered to a neighbor, such as has always been practiced in the countryside; this is labor to satisfy a general need of the state, organized on a wide scale, and unpaid. It would therefore be more correct to apply the word communist not only to the name of the Party, but also, and exclusively, to such economic phenomena in our social life as are communist in fact. If there is anything communistic in our present system in Russia it is the subbotniks, and only the subbotniks; everything else is but a fight against capitalism for the consolidation of socialism, from which, after its complete triumph, should grow that communism which we observe in the subbotniks, as something not in books but in real life." (Lenin, "Report on Subbotniks at a Moscow City Conference of the RCP (B)," quoted in "Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," FLP, 1975.)

The history of the Bolshevik revolution is filled with brilliant examples of the fact that workers are fully capable of making a radical rupture with the old capitalist outlook and ways of doing things, of putting the interests of their class as a whole above their own individual immediate interests. They are capable of grasping the real goal of the revolutionary struggle: the abolition of classes and the elimination of exploitation. In the period right after the seizure of power, in order to preserve the worker-peasant alliance, which was the bulwark of the new power, workers made great sacrifices, in many cases even temporarily living with less income than before so that the state could pay more to the peasants.

Countless examples from China provide living proof of the same thing. In 1964, for example, Mao raised the slogan, "In agriculture, learn from Tachai." In the 15 years since liberation, under the leadership of the local Party branch, the people of Tachai had transformed their commune into an extremely productive area. But learning from Tachai was not just the question of "learning production." Key to what was to be learned from Tachai was the question of *why* and *how* Tachai was able to advance production. Transforming this poor agricultural area was tremendously hard work. And everyone did not just leap at the chance to do such

back breaking labor, nor could people be just enticed by material incentives or browbeaten and cajoled to take up the task.

The key, as summed up by the Party in Tachai was that the masses were won to see that:

“although the new project called for quite a big investment with little immediate benefit, yet in making socialist revolution we must see 10 or even 100 years ahead instead of confining our vision to merely one or two years; we must not only think of bettering our own livelihood but also have in mind the whole country and the people of the whole world; our strength and money must go where they were most needed. It was precisely through fierce ideological tussles and education by contrast that the masses had achieved unanimity in transforming our hills and rivers.” (from “Persist in Vigorously Criticizing Capitalism and Building Socialism,” by Kuo Feng-lien, appendix to “Let the Whole Party Mobilize for a Vast Effort to Develop Agriculture and Build Tachai-Type Counties Throughout the Country,” a speech by Hua Kuo-feng, Peking, FLP, 1975.)

Building socialism and advancing to communism is not just a question of knocking down the old order, of expropriating the old exploiters. Socialist revolution requires a radical rupture with the old order, a complete transformation of society from top to bottom, in the economic base and the whole superstructure. The old order is knocked down. As Mao said, “After liberation, we rooted out a number of counter-revolutionaries. Some were sentenced to death for major crimes. This was absolutely necessary, it was the demand of the broad masses of people, it was done to free the masses from long years of oppression by the counter-revolutionaries and all kinds of local tyrants; in other words, *it was done to liberate the productive forces.*” (“Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” *Selected Readings*, emphasis added) Lenin said that the overthrow of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, the violence, expropriation and forcible suppression of their resistance “was a very great historical task, but it was only the first step. What matters now is the purpose for which we crushed them.” (Lenin, “Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 27)

If that purpose is revenge—I have suffered so much, been so oppressed and exploited and now I deserve everything I can get, the petty bourgeois outlook of overthrowing the old ruling class so that a new class or a new group can “have a go too”—it will lead not to the eventual realization of communism, but back to capitalism, merely replacing one set of exploiters with another.

The bourgeois right of “equal exchange for equal work.” getting

people to look at things individually, as a cold cash calculation. The capitalists always put forward the question of “what’s in it for me” as the only operating principle. As Marx and Engels said, capitalism “has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment.’” (*Communist Manifesto*) Under socialism this bourgeois ideology and its petty bourgeois expression of revenge as the only basis for revolutionary action take political form in the economist line that claims this “naked self-interest” is the only basis for building “socialism.” This can only be combatted and rooted out in the class struggle to exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat to restrict the operation of bourgeois right and other remnants of capitalism in the process of transforming the material conditions of society that give rise to them.

SAME VIEW LEADS TO ECONOMISM

But under capitalism—where bourgeois relations and ideology dominate society—there is a much more powerful material basis for this bourgeois “me first” ideology to flourish in the ranks of the working class. As a political line this comes out as nothing more than economism which prevents the working class from taking the first step of overthrowing its exploiters and keeps it chained to the grinding mill of capitalist wage slavery.

The ideology underlying economism promotes the view that workers cannot see any further than the satisfaction of their own individual economic needs. According to economism, the only basis on which workers will fight the bourgeoisie is on the petty bourgeois basis: “they grabbed, let me have a go too.” Economism denies that workers will be able to take up the fight to end slavery once and for all, to unite and lead other oppressed sections of the people and completely transform society in order to free the working class and all mankind. The economist outlook leads to the line that the workers will not really fight as a class, conscious of itself and its role in history, but only as a group of individuals, who will act in common only as long as each individual sees that he will get something out of it. The highest form this struggle can take is trade unionism, and its bourgeois politics, where the working class struggles solely for “the sake of imaginary ‘improvements’ in its indentured condition.” (Lenin, “In America,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 36)

Because, in this view, there is no basis for workers to take up broader struggles, the economist line restricts the task of communists to merely uniting with the spontaneous struggle of the working class for better wages, working conditions and only the political struggle that arises immediately out of the economic struggle.

nists:

“Its [the communist vanguard] task is not to serve the working-class movement passively at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence. Isolated from Social-Democracy [communism], the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and betrays the great principle: ‘the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working class as themselves.’” (Lenin, “The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 4)

The consequences of this bourgeois, economist line were tragically demonstrated in Germany in 1919. The German working class, after having had to fight a bloody imperialist war, in which the German ruling class was defeated by the other imperialist powers, was on the verge of insurrection. Brought to a fairly high level of revolutionary political consciousness through the work of genuine communists in the German Social Democratic Party, one million workers were in the streets demanding an end to the oppression they suffered at the hands of the German bourgeoisie. But Kautsky and other traitors who were then in leadership of the Party, some of whom were members of the government, rather than leading the working class forward to the seizure of state power, proceeded to negotiate a whopping wage increase for the workers and successfully turned around the revolutionary sentiment of the class. Of course the bourgeoisie was only too happy to grant the wage increases in order to save their skins. And they were quick to snatch back that wage increase and launch further attacks on the workers, once the revolutionary upsurge of the working class had been betrayed and had subsided.

In opposition to those who said that workers are only capable of taking up struggle against the bourgeoisie on the basis of their most narrow economic interests, and that the workers’ Party would only be isolating itself from the broad masses if it tried to organize them on any other basis, Lenin (though talking specifically about the political task of fighting the Russian autocracy for political liberty) summarized the following general principle:

“...this task should, in our opinion, be explained by an exposition of the class nature of the present-day Russian autocracy and of the need to overthrow it, not only in the interests of the working class, but also in the interests of social development as

a whole. Such a description is essential...because, from the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat—the interests of the working class movement as a whole are higher than the interests of a separate section of workers or of separate phases of the movement.” (Lenin, “A Draft Programme of Our Party,” *Collected Works*, Vol. 4)

This does not mean that the economic struggle of the working class is not important, or that communists should abandon the daily struggle of the working class against exploitation and other similar battles. If workers abandoned this struggle they would be “degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation.” (Marx, “Wages, Price and Profit”) Workers hate and are outraged by these abuses and want to and must fight back against them. In the course of these daily struggles workers fight against being crushed and begin to develop a sense of their own strength as a class, they begin to see more clearly the face of the enemy and to raise the question of why things have to be this way.

But it is not enough for communists to unite with these sentiments of hatred and outrage of abuses that are heaped on workers daily and on that basis organize the struggle, for example, for jobs. An understanding of the need for the revolutionary transformation of society cannot come from seeing unemployment as merely an outrage, horribly affecting those thrown out of work, or even just as an attack on the masses of people that results in great misery and suffering. It is necessary that workers come to understand unemployment from the point of view of the development of society as a whole, see it in relation to the laws of capitalist society, including the fact that its very workings will result in more unemployment until it is overthrown. But more, workers must come to see that unemployment represents the destruction and waste of the productive forces of society because the capitalists are driven by the laws of capitalist accumulation to produce only for profit.

But it is *in the course of* the concrete struggle against being crushed, where the working class led by communists draws the line of battle with the bourgeoisie, fights to win everything that it can win and beat back all attacks, that the Party has to train and arm broader and broader numbers of workers to see unemployment and all other outrages and other attacks resulting from capitalism from the point of view of the development of society as a whole—to see that capitalism has to be overthrown or society can advance no further. It is on this basis that new communists can be brought forth from the ranks of the working class, workers who are conscious of the final goal of the struggle and who take up the tasks necessary to reach that goal.

In short, communists cannot go around preaching about the

dictatorship of the proletariat like so many mindless dogmatists, forgetting about uniting with the day to day economic struggles of the working class. But neither can they simply unite with and tail after workers around their spontaneous struggles and ignore the revolutionary goal. Mao put it very clearly when he said that socialism is "the great future goal to which our present efforts are directed; if we lose sight of the goal, we cease to be Communists. But equally we cease to be Communists if we relax our efforts of today." (Mao, "Win the Masses in Their Millions for the Anti-Japanese National United Front," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1)

Economism chains the working class to the treadmill of having to fight for particular gains, only to see them snatched back time after time by the capitalists. At most, extending the outlook at the basis of the economist line as far as it can go, the task of the working class, rather than the overall transformation of society, is confined to getting rid of the current bourgeoisie so that workers can "rule the roost." And, in fact, this view could not lead to the working class ruling society, but to a new handful of tyrants seizing power and riding the workers' backs.

The recent election campaigns run by the revisionist Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party are disgusting and pathetic examples of this. The pitch of SWP candidate Peter Camejo played openly on the petty bourgeois "let me have a go" outlook. Camejo, in a radio interview, in effect argued that the problem is that not enough workers can make it to the top, into positions of wealth and power, under the current setup. Gus Hall pleaded for people to "vote Communist" and "put a worker in the White House," promising that he, as a representative of the working class could certainly even work with a Republican Congress. The task of the workers, according to these revisionists, is to show that they can be just as "good"—just as bourgeois, in fact, as the current rulers.

This same outlook also characterized the political line of the bundists, those nationalists claiming to be Marxists, whose view of Marxism is simply as a way for Blacks to "get over"; their line comes down to saying that the goal of the struggle of Black people and other oppressed nationalities is to eliminate the chains of national oppression and discrimination so that they—and actually, of course, a bourgeois stratum among them—can have a shot at being number one. But no matter how this "me first" outlook is dressed up in the guise of pseudo-working class politics, it will lead nowhere but to the continued exploitation of the masses of people by a few parasites at the top—and it makes no difference to the masses of workers whether those bloodsuckers were born in the working class or into capitalist families!

FIGHT AGAINST ALL OPPRESSION

Lenin heaped scorn on those who attempted to choke off the struggle of the working class to end exploitation and all oppression, those who attempted to limit the struggle to what each worker could see to be in his own interest, those who claimed that as far as workers were concerned "a kopeck added to a ruble [a dime to a dollar] was worth more than any socialism or politics," and who claimed that workers "must 'fight, knowing that they are fighting, not for the sake of some future generation, but for themselves and their children.'" (Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*)

This line is heard frequently in the ranks of the trade union movement from the hacks who attack communists and advanced workers for "preaching pie-in-the-sky plans" to end exploitation *someday*, while, according to them, workers are only interested getting the best deal possible out of the next contract. Communists seldom fall into such rank economism, but this same outlook often takes the form of calling the economic struggles themselves potentially revolutionary. This boils down to approaching the economic struggles of the working class as if on this basis alone workers could develop revolutionary consciousness of the need to overthrow the capitalists and their system and replace it with the rule of the working class. Such an erroneous line not only cannot lead to this, the first step in proletarian revolution, but wipes out altogether the further, even greater, task of carrying forward the revolution after the seizure of power to the elimination of classes and the achievement of communism. It wipes out, in other words, the historic mission of the working class.

The working class cannot come to an understanding of itself as a class or its historic role unless it sees in a practical way the relationships between all the various classes in society, unless it sees that all the oppression in society flows from the basic contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie, unless it sees that the cause of the misery of all the oppressed sections of society are the "same dark forces" that are the source of its own exploitation.

Workers do not take up the struggle against all oppression on the basis of altruism, running around like a bunch of liberals trying to take care of everybody else's problems. It is not out of altruism but in the course of the struggle and through communist leadership, propaganda and agitation, that workers come to see that as long as classes exist, as long as the basis for exploitation remains, the victories of the working class against its own oppression, no matter how great, will always be in jeopardy. And until, through the work of communists summing up the class relations behind all events in society, the workers see the capitalist class as responsible for more than economic attacks, but as the source of

every misery and the barrier to all progress of society, they will not see the need to overthrow them. In the course of its struggle against the capitalists with the leadership of its Party, the working class can begin to see that unless it takes up the struggle against all oppression, unites with the struggles of other oppressed and aims these struggles against the bourgeoisie, the capitalists, whose system is the source of all the contradictions in society, will exploit these contradictions and use them against the working class. It will always pit white workers against Blacks, men against women, and on and on, attempting to get each to blame the other for all their misery and suffering.

On the other hand, it would be pure idealism to assume that workers will go beyond the limits of their day to day struggle for economic survival and take up the fight against all forms of tyranny and oppression in society only when they see the need for communism. Most workers do not enter these struggles in a fully class conscious way, but because they feel oppression and the need to fight it. But in the course of taking up the struggle against all forms of oppression they learn, through the work of the advanced detachment of the working class, to take them up from the viewpoint of communism.

Under socialism the working class cannot just accept all of the inequalities and effects of oppression resulting from capitalist rule. It cannot—to focus on a crucial question, especially in our society—ignore the national oppression suffered by Blacks and other minorities. The working class cannot take the attitude of, well, they will just have to make it as best they can, now that they are no longer discriminated against. The working class has to consciously take up the task of rooting out all the remnants of bourgeois rule. That will mean special measures to compensate for centuries of national oppression, it will mean safeguarding the national heritage of oppressed nationalities while insuring their full participation in working class rule. All this not because of moralism, or “justice” in the abstract, but because the working class cannot free itself unless it frees all mankind. And for this same reason the working class cannot just accept inequality under capitalism either—putting off the fight against it “until socialism”—or there won’t be any socialist revolution. In fact proletarian consciousness under capitalism is mainly developed as the working class takes up the struggle against all oppression and takes it up from its own class viewpoint and in its own class interests—the general and long-term interests of the working class as a whole, not the narrow and short-term interests of only a section of the class. And those interests are nothing short of the elimination of the basis for exploitation and class distinctions.

EXPLOITATION AND SLAVERY CAN BE ENDED

All forms of slavery and oppression can be ended once and for all. For the first time in history it is possible to advance to a classless society, free of exploitation and exploiting classes. Up until now the advancement of society was dependent on exploitation, now it is impossible to advance without doing away with exploitation. All past revolutions had to take as their ultimate political aim the replacement of the rule of one class with the rule of another—in fact one set of exploiters with another. This is not the case with the proletarian revolution. Not only does the seizure of power by the proletariat and the establishment of its state represent, for the first time in history, the rule of the non-exploiting majority, but even more fundamentally the working class is the only class in history that can, will and must take up the task of seizing power and establishing its dictatorship with the aim of continuing the struggle against all inequalities and class differences to reach the goal of finally abolishing classes altogether. The deepest desire of the working class as a whole, to do away with exploitation, is in accord with the necessary course for the actual advancement of society.

This great mission can only be accomplished if at every turn the working class led by its Party resolutely battles every attempt by the bourgeoisie to limit the goal to the satisfaction of the narrowest immediate interests of individual workers or sections of the working class—illusory gains which cannot be maintained in the long run—instead of the interests of the working class and the development of society as a whole.

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