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Some burning questions in the struggle against imperialism

On the West European movement against U.S./NATO war preparations

The movement in Western Europe against U.S./NATO war preparations has taken on massive proportions. In the last year huge demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of angry protesters have taken place a-

gainst Reagan's warmongering plans to base cruise missiles and Pershing II missiles in Europe and to go full speed ahead with the neutron bomb. Some of these demonstrations are said to be the largest their countries have seen since World War II. Some demonstrations have directly condemned NATO and demanded that NATO get out or stay out of various countries. As well, U.S. aggression in El Salvador has been widely condemned. The European people are seething with anger at the criminal plans being laid for new aggressive, imperialist wars. These mass actions have taken place all across Western Europe: in Britain, West Germany, Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy, Greece and elsewhere.

The upsurge of the European movement is a major political event. Reagan and the Western imperialists generally have regarded this movement as a sharp thorn in their side, while progressive people the world over have greeted this new wave of protests with enthusiastic approval. The West European movement has encouraged the struggle against imperialist war preparations elsewhere around the world.

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Some 250,000 people denounced the nuclear war preparations of the two superpowers and British imperialism in this October 24, 1981 march to London's Hyde Park.

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Against Social-Democratic and Revisionist Sabotage of the Anti-War Movement

At the same time, this surging mass movement has had to confront various roadblocks and obstacles. This is vividly shown by the present situation in Britain with respect to the imperialist war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands. The Labor Party, which is presenting itself as opposed to militarism and the U.S. nuclear missiles, has come out, in the main, as raving chauvinists and defenders of British imperialism. And this is not an accident. It simply highlights the fact that their alleged opposition to U.S. nuclear missiles is, in fact, only a stand in favor of a slight readjustment of Britain's place in NATO while they remain staunch advocates of NATO overall, fervent supporters of increasing British imperialism's war preparations, and convinced defenders of the U.S. "nuclear umbrella." In brief, the Labor Party simply wants to dress up the NATO military bloc in colors acceptable to the masses.

This being so, what type of role can the British Labor Party have been playing in the movement against imperialist war preparations? Clearly its role has been to try to confine the masses, who want to fight the warmongers, to a framework that is acceptable to the warmongers.

The situation in Britain is by no means unique to that country. In general, the European movement has been faced with the attempts of the social-democrats (such as the British Labor Party) and other opportunists to lead it into a dead end. Last November our Party wrote, in an article hailing the mass protests in Europe, that: "With their actions the people of Europe have demonstrated that they desire a real struggle against imperialist war preparations. At the same time, recent events have shown that the bourgeoisie is striking with all its might to dampen down this movement, to divert this movement from a struggle against the imperialists to the dead-end path of reliance on the chieftains of imperialism. One of the main vehicles for accomplishing this is social-democracy." ("1,500,000 Marchers in

Europe Condemn U.S./NATO Missiles," *The Workers' Advocate*, November 5, 1981, p. 14, col. 3)

The social-democrats support the imperialist system, but see the need for imperialism to take on a new, more deceptive coat of paint in order to retain the support of the masses. For this reason, the social-democrats make extensive use of their "left" wing in order to deceive the people. The basic stands supported by the social-democrats to derail the anti-war movement include the following:

- They do their best to prevent the mass protests against nuclear weapons and militarism from being an anti-imperialist movement. They regard themselves as partners of the imperialists, as is shown by the ardent support of European social-democracy for the aggressive NATO alliance. Indeed, the imperialist bourgeoisie has felt safe to entrust the leadership of the government to social-democrats in such major imperialist powers, in the full bloom of frenzied arming, as France and West Germany.

- The social-democrats promote the idea that the people should entrust their fate to negotiations among the superpower war blocs. They promote the pacifist illusion that the warmongers are reasonable men who can be persuaded to adopt moderate, peaceful positions.

- The social-democrats are especially concerned to whitewash the role of their own domestic bourgeoisie. They are supporters of the neo-colonialism and the aggressive schemes of the imperialists and exploiters of their own country.

- And the social-democrats do their best to disorganize the mass struggle of the people and prevent it from breaking out into an organized class war.

Besides the social-democrats, the revisionists, trotskyites and other opportunists also work in the same direction. For example, the corrupt "Eurocommunist" parties play a major role in undermining the movement in such countries as Italy, Spain and France, while the rotten Brezhnevite pro-Soviet parties play a similar role in Portugal, Germany and elsewhere. The particular opportunist grouping, or collection of groupings, which directly exercises the most influence on the movement varies from country to country. It should also be kept in

mind that a great deal about the revisionists can usually be learned by comparing them to the social-democrats, for, in general, the European revisionist groups imitate the social-democrats and strive hard to unite with them.

For the time being, it is the social-democrats and revisionists that, in general, dominate the leadership of the anti-war movement in Europe, and they have prevented it from being raised to the level of a conscious, anti-imperialist movement. This opportunist leadership poses tremendous dangers and obstacles to the development of the struggle. The struggle against imperialist war preparations must include a fierce and protracted fight against social-democracy and revisionism, including a determined fight against the smooth-tongued liars of "left" social-democracy.

Differences Between Two of the Marxist-Leninist Parties of Western Europe Over the Anti-War Movement

Right from the outset, the Marxist-Leninist parties in Europe have thrown themselves into the midst of the anti-war movement. They have persevered in working to bring consciousness to the masses and to organize them for the fight against the imperialist warmongers. This work of the Marxist-Leninist vanguard is crucial for the further progress of the movement. Such progress depends on the Marxist-Leninist parties and revolutionary activists in Europe step by step leading the masses out from under opportunist domination and onto the road of the revolutionary struggle. It depends on the development of the independent class politics of the proletariat, which must rally all the working masses around itself and against the bourgeoisie and its parties.

The vigorous development of work in the anti-war movement has brought to the fore complicated practical and theoretical problems. Under these conditions, a polemic has broken out between two of the Marxist-Leninist parties of Western Europe. This polemic has attracted wide interest in Western Europe and elsewhere because it involves certain questions of basic revolutionary strategy and tactics. For example, similar discussions to those in Europe are taking place in the U.S. and Canada where the movement against imperialist war preparations finds itself facing similar problems to those in Europe. In this article, however, we will restrict ourselves to examining the theses of the two Parties that have opened the polemic.

The basic question underlying the polemic is how to deal with the fact that the anti-war movement is, for the time being, under the leadership of opportunist and pro-imperialist forces. It appears to us that there are two wrong ideological positions being put forward on this question.

On one hand, one Party, despite its own active work in the anti-war movement, has advocated an ideological

stand that implies that one should stay out of the thick of the mass movement when the opportunists dominate the leadership. This stand, if applied consistently in practice, would lead to boycotting much of the mass movement or, at least, displaying suspicion and hesitancy towards it. This means to forget, in one's theorizing, the basic distinction between the masses, stirring to life and struggle despite various illusions and political inexperience, and the present opportunist leadership. It presents this stand as principled opposition to capitulation to opportunism, but it is actually phrasemongering. This phrasemongering replaces discussion of the burning tasks of the struggle against opportunism with mere cursing of the opportunists. This Party has sometimes even gone so far in its theorizing as to imply that most of the mass movement is a simple creature of this or that superpower, because the slogans at demonstrations did not target both superpowers equally. Such theorizing is reminiscent of the way that the "three worlds" theorists reduced everything to inter-imperialist rivalry.

On the other hand, the other Party stresses work in the mass anti-war movement, but it tends to limit its work to a framework that is, in essence, acceptable to "left" social-democracy. It criticizes the top government leaders of the ruling social-democratic party, but it does not understand the danger of various of the "left" social-democratic slogans, such as neutrality, and makes extensive use of these slogans as one of the focal points of its work. In its theorizing, this Party im-

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On December 6, 1981, more than 50,000 people marched through the streets of Athens, Greece demanding that the Greek government get out of NATO, that all U.S. imperialist bases in Greece be closed down and that all the U.S./NATO nuclear missiles stationed on Greek soil be removed. This march followed on the heels of the 400,000-strong demonstration in Athens on November 15 against the U.S./NATO missiles.

plies that one should accept the level of the movement as it is and that it is wrong to strive to convert the anti-war movement into a movement that protests against the imperialist system, and it also praises the role of the "left social-democrats" in the movement. It also denigrates, in its theorizing, the ideological struggle against opportunism and the dissemination of revolutionary ideas, implying that this is the work of a mere "propaganda sect" as opposed to a "party of action." These stands, if carried out consistently in practice, would give rise to a liquidationist policy leading in the direction of merger with "left" social-democracy.

Both these stands are wrong. Furthermore, despite the apparently opposite character of these views, they

have much in common. To begin with, in their polemic they both tend to replace the discussion of various of the burning issues of the movement with abstract generalities. They both agree in centering the polemic on a subordinate question — in particular, whether it is permissible to come to any agreements with the opportunist-led coalitions that have called various of the mass demonstrations. But they do not pose this question correctly: they discuss it on the basis of generalities about such agreements in the abstract, rather than discussing the issues involved in the particular agreement at stake.

Thus, in their polemic, both sides tend to sidestep discussion of the big issues confronting work in the movement, such as the questions of exposing "one's own" bourgeoisie, of the methods of combatting social-democracy and revisionism, of how the bourgeoisie is resorting to "left" social-democracy as one of its main tools to divert the movement, and so forth. They both tend to ignore the concrete question of how to work in a way that strengthens the anti-imperialist character of the movement: one side because it implies that it is wrong to work to change the character of the movement, the other side because it implies that no work should be done in a movement that is not already consciously anti-imperialist (and anti-Soviet social-imperialist). Both sides, in practice, do not seem to pay sufficient attention to the ideological struggle. In fact, the two opposing theoretical stands in the polemic, if they were implemented in practice and followed consistently, would both lead in the direction of a liquidationist policy, although from somewhat different directions.

Clarity on the questions raised by this polemic is provided by the stand of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. The consistent application of Marxism-Leninism to work in the struggle against imperialist war preparations gives rise to the following tactics:

The Marxist-Leninists welcome with great enthusiasm the upsurge of the masses. At the same time, they do not idealize or romanticize the movement; they are well aware of the present level of the mass movement and of the grave dangers posed by the disorienting and wrecking activities of the opportunists. Yet this does not discourage the Marxist-Leninists, who are also aware of the burning anti-imperialist sentiments of the masses and of the rising ferment in country after country against the local reactionary bourgeoisie. Hence they calmly and with great determination work right among the masses, in the thick of the movement, to step by step transform the character of the movement, bring the masses to revolutionary positions, and sever the masses from the servants of the bourgeoisie, namely, the social-democrats, "left" social-democrats, revisionists, and other opportunists.

If the polemic between the two Parties succeeds in setting off a searching and profound discussion of the

tasks of the Marxist-Leninists in the struggle against imperialist war preparations, then it will have provided a service for the entire international Marxist-Leninist movement. Such a discussion will increase the confidence of revolutionary activists all over the world in the vitality of the Marxist-Leninist theory. As well, such a discussion will be of help to the true unity of the two Parties themselves, for the path of resolving their differences runs through both Parties upholding the best of their traditions by rallying more closely around the Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics. Our Party is determined to uphold our responsibility, as a component part of the international movement, to take part in elaborating the Marxist-Leninist stand on the burning problems of the present-day movement. Joining with our brother communists all over the world, we will make this discussion into a firm defense of the red banner of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism.

We shall now proceed to examine the two sides of the polemic in more detail.

Should One Boycott the Movement Because It Is Led, for the Time Being, by the Opportunists?

To begin with, let us examine more closely the theoretical stand of that Party which implies that one should boycott much of the mass movement — or treat it with suspicion and hesitancy — because the revisionists, social-democrats and other opportunists dominate the leadership at present. This Party points to the sickening stands of the revisionists and social-democrats. They stress the pro-imperialist character of the revisionist ideology and organizations. And indeed, it is true that social-democracy, Trotskyism and revisionism are pro-imperialism. It is true that the role of opportunism is to remove any revolutionary content from the mass demonstrations. It is true that the opportunist slogans are often not just harmless to the bourgeoisie, but even directly in support of the bourgeoisie.

But from this correct premise, this Party theorizes very poorly. It fails to note that, not only do the activities of the revisionists and other opportunists put the movement into great danger, but that the upsurge of the movement in turn endangers the opportunists. The fresh breeze of struggle provides possibilities for undermining the trust of the masses in the revisionists and other opportunists, if a Marxist-Leninist party carries out vigorous and well-thought-out activities right in the midst of the mass movement. Both aspects of the situation must be seen. The disgusting character of opportunism must be seen clearly so as to inspire hatred for revisionism, social-democracy and all opportunism. And the deep ferment among the masses which manifests itself in the mass upsurge must also be seen, so that the revolutionaries know where to find the strength to combat the opportunist treachery.

But this Party fails to refer to this second aspect in

its statements. Moreover, in its theorizing, it tends to tar the mass movement with the epithets which would be fitting for the opportunists. This Party's appeals to uphold an anti-imperialist stand are written repeatedly in such a way that they denigrate the mass movement and seem to suggest that the activists should leave it rather than fight in its midst for a correct stand. For example, a passage that is far more favorable to the movement than most others, reads as follows:

"The objective [of the pro-Soviet revisionists — ed.] is to castrate, in essence, the anti-imperialist movement that is beginning to acquire a new impetus, throughout Europe, against imperialist aggression, around current themes such as, for example, the placing of rockets with nuclear warheads in different countries of Europe, the neutron bomb, The transformation of this movement of opinion and struggle is a weapon in the hands of the social-imperialists to wield against their American rivals. It would remove from the movement all value and alienate those sectors that are more clear-sighted and more honest and that are tired of so much reactionary betrayal and manipulations, who want to participate in a struggle directed authentically against the imperialist threat and aggression, against both imperialist superpowers....

"This objective, the creation of an anti-imperialist



In Rome 200,000 protesters marched past the U.S. and Soviet embassies on October 24, 1981. The demonstrators condemned the U.S./NATO plans to deploy cruise missiles in Europe and called for the withdrawal of Italy from NATO.

movement in open opposition to the U.S. and the USSR, implies the necessity of a merciless struggle, on the part of the Marxist-Leninists and of all democratic forces, against the modern revisionists." (emphasis added)

This passage leaves everything vague and talks in hints. Is it denouncing the mass demonstrations that have bloomed all across Europe as "devoid of all value" because their slogans were generally not clear and their leadership was in the hands of the opportunists? Or is the "transformation" it talks of still a matter of the future? Is it denouncing the anti-imperialist agitation that is already being carried out in the existing mass movement on the grounds that one must leave this movement and found a new one? But whether the formula "the creation of an anti-imperialist movement" is correct or incorrect depends entirely on the meaning given to it.

Of course it is correct to create and build up anti-imperialist organizations, as appropriate, and it is essential to organize the revolutionary section of the movement, but such organizations have the task of working vigorously in the mass movement and influencing it, not running away from it. Yes, there are many fine activists who become disgusted at the disorganization and disorientation in the movement, but the Marxist-Leninists must show them how to distinguish between the masses and the opportunist leaders and inspire them to get organized to fight for anti-imperialism inside the movement, and not tell them the whole movement was a mistake. What we can say, is that this passage does not talk of struggle to transform the existing movement and to raise its level, yet such struggle is an essential component of the work to build a true anti-imperialist movement. What we can say, is that this quotation is one of many which are filled with dark hints that seem to suggest the activists should leave the movement.

What would it mean to boycott the mass movement because of its temporary domination by the opportunists or because the movement hasn't yet taken up the proper slogans? It would mean denying the elementary principle that we fight the opportunists for the sake of appealing to the masses, not to break with the masses. It would mean abandoning the masses to the tender mercies of the opportunists and fleeing the scene of the struggle. In fact, insofar as such a stand is actually applied to the anti-war movement, it is tantamount to the best service that revolutionaries could render for the warmongering bourgeoisie and its opportunist hand-servants. The bourgeoisie wants nothing else so much as that the Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary activists should be kept out of the mass movement. The opportunists do their best to please the bourgeoisie by trying to push the Marxist-Leninists out, suppress the distribution of leaflets and literature, tear down revolutionary banners, and, in general, make the work

of revolutionaries among the masses as unpleasant and difficult as possible.

This Party also generally puts forward the view that the most important issue in the West European anti-war movement is that the slogans should condemn both superpowers equally. It points to the fact that various demonstrations did not condemn Soviet social-imperialism. But this is one-sided. In fact, the opportunist leadership of these demonstrations also did its utmost to tone down and denigrate the struggle against U.S.-led Western imperialism and NATO as far as possible and especially opposed the struggle against its "own" bourgeoisie. Indeed, the social-democrats are often willing to condemn Soviet social-imperialism, but they are unwilling to wage a revolutionary struggle against "their own" bourgeoisie. The social-democrats, revisionists and other opportunists are striking their main blows at the revolution and the political independence of the working masses from the bourgeoisie. The question of Soviet social-imperialism is of great importance, but it is not the only issue being confused by the opportunists.

But this Party goes further. It implies that unless the mass demonstrations condemn both superpowers, they are in the service of one or the other of these monsters. For example, it is implied that unless a demonstration against U.S./NATO missiles has slogans condemning the Soviet social-imperialists as well, then it is a tool of the Soviet social-imperialists. And here it is not referring to demonstrations in Eastern Europe or Russia, but to those in countries which are solidly in the Western imperialist war bloc and whose bourgeoisies are firmly pro-U.S. The implication is that other slogans may have some importance, but that whether or not both superpowers are condemned tells us whether the movement is a mere creation of the superpowers or not.

Thus, we have already quoted a statement which talked of the "transformation" of the movement into "a weapon in the hands of the Soviet social-imperialists" against their American rivals. Another such passage reads as follows:

"It follows thus that the messengers of wars, of the most terrible of wars, dress themselves in a sheep's clothing and, at the same time, they vomit all their bile and with bloodshot eyes, intone pacifist cants and they claim to organize among various sectors of the people, 'peace' movements and initiatives, of varying character and scope, directed against the other superpower, the 'true' enemy of the peace, in short, against its enemy." (emphasis as in the original) Yes, it is true that the superpowers wrap themselves in the mantle of imperialist pacifism in order to carry out their dirty deeds. But here the movement itself appears to be condemned.

We think that such a stand of implying that much of the mass ferment is a simple creation of the superpowers is horribly mistaken. It is a very dangerous



Above: A demonstration against nuclear missiles in West Berlin. Left: On September 13, 1981, 80,000 people protested against the visit of Secretary of Defense Alexander Haig to West Berlin. Shouting slogans against the neutron bomb and war dog Haig, over 1,000 of the demonstrators fought the police on side streets, and an attempt was made to crash through the police barricades to get to Haig. In this confrontation some 44 policemen were injured and over 100 demonstrators were arrested.

stand which this Party should, in our opinion, think over ten times and then once more. Such a position brings to mind the arguments of the "three worlds" theorists. They interpreted every political event in the crudest way simply in the light of the rivalry of the two superpowers. They lost sight of the masses, of the revolution, and of the struggle against their "own" bourgeoisie. The "three worldists" showed where such thinking leads by condemning the revolutionary struggle for disturbing the warmongering U.S.-China alliance against Soviet social-imperialism. The "three worldists" descended to the level of the Reagans and Brezhnevs who each condemn the protests against their criminal policies as simply the creation of the intelligence services of their imperialist rivals.

And note well, our Party places an extremely high value on the struggle against Soviet revisionism including the exposure of the social-imperialism of the new tsars of Russia. We work hard to bring the masses to condemn all imperialism, including both superpowers and the lesser imperialist powers as well. We believe that it is correct to use the support of the pro-Soviet revisionists and trotskyites for Soviet social-imperialism as one of the ways of exposing their sellout nature to the masses. But we believe that it is absolute-

ly impermissible to imply that the mass movement against U.S.-led Western imperialism and the local bourgeoisie is a creation of Soviet social-imperialism. And it is wrong to reduce the criticism of the pro-Soviet revisionists simply to their prettification of Soviet social-imperialism and not to also note that they do their best to eliminate slogans in favor of the revolution and against the domestic bourgeoisie.

Insofar as any revolutionary would really put in practice the stand of boycotting the mass movement, because of the temporary opportunist leadership, this shows isolation from the masses and an inability to see the growing mass ferment. A revolutionary is not he who professes revolution in words and then stands aloof from the masses, but he who understands how to link up with the masses, he who is able to recognize the deep discontent with the bourgeoisie that is stirring among the masses despite all the confusion and disorganization that is apparent on the surface of the movement. A revolutionary is he who knows how to work to bring to the surface the indignation and revolt that is brewing in the hearts and minds of the masses. No one who really understands how the masses come to political life can brush off the mass movement and judge it solely by the misdeeds of the opportunist leadership.

Should One Accept the Level of the Movement As It Is?

The other Party in the polemic goes to the other extreme in its theorizing. They argue that one must take an active part in the mass movement. But they then go on to imply that one must accept the level of the movement as it is. They imply that one must accept the general framework imposed on the movement by the present leadership, for fear of trying to "found a new, in the minds of communists, 'correct,' mass movement side by side with the real existing mass movement." In fact, this Party tends to forget the distinction between the masses and the opportunist leadership, just as the other Party does, but derives the opposite conclusion: instead of denigrating the mass movement because of the crimes of the opportunists, it tends to fall into accommodation with "left" social-democracy in the name of integrating with the masses.

Let us examine this theorizing more closely. We will begin with an example that is taken from outside the anti-war movement, namely, the question of the "Solidarity" organization in Poland.

This Party focuses its agitation on Poland on the "Solidarity" organization, whose leaders are pro-Western imperialist social-democrats. To justify this stand, it refers to the need to defend the just struggle of the Polish workers "to defend themselves against a social-fascist regime that exploits and oppresses them." It is correct to defend this struggle, but why does it identify this struggle with the fortunes of the "Solidarity" leaders? This is the content of their agitational slogan: solidarity with Solidarnosc. Under present conditions, this means to support the general political stand of the Solidarity leadership. Yet to truly help our class brothers groaning under revisionist oppression in Poland, we must staunchly oppose the social-democratic traitors who are trying to mislead the Polish workers into another dead end.

But this Party insists that the mass movement is inseparable from the framework that the social-democrats have imposed on it. Its youth wing writes: "Naturally, we do not stand for Walesa's friendship for the pope and we criticize his admiration for Reagan. But Walesa is no more Solidarity, with its ten million members, than likewise (the head of a reactionary trade union federation in Western Europe) is, or says and thinks, as the masses of members of the (reactionary trade union federation)."

In fact, the assurance that the Party does fight the Solidarity leaders and the policy they follow is just a sham. Its agitation is not aimed in this direction. It rarely mentions the treachery of the Solidarity leaders. When it does, it may sometimes simply be to express regret that people make too much of these things, as in the above statement. Instead this passage is a striking expression of the renunciation of the fight to

break out of the framework that the opportunists impose on the mass movement. After all, the policy of an organization is usually expressed in the statements of the leadership, who are always a mere handful compared to the membership.

Let us see how Lenin dealt with the relationship with the handful of leaders and the millions of members. Lenin, discussing the British Labor Party of 1920 (at which time it was a much looser and freer organization than it is today), stated:

"Of course, most of the Labor Party's members are workmen. However, whether or not a party is really a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon a membership of workers but also upon the men that lead it, and the content of its action and its political tactics. ... Regarded from this, the only correct, point of view, the Labor Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeoisie. It is an organization of the bourgeoisie, which exists to systematically dupe the workers with the aid of the British Noskes and Scheidemanns." ("Speech on Affiliation to the British Labor Party," August 6, 1920, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 257-58)

Lenin held that, because of the special nature of how the Labor Party was organized at that time, British communists should seek affiliation, but he drew definite conclusions from its nature as an "organization of the bourgeoisie" as to how the communists should work with respect to it.

A similar principle applies to the trade unions. From the fact that millions of workers are enrolled in reactionary trade unions, it follows that the Marxist-Leninists must work in them. It does not follow, however, that the Marxist-Leninists should reconcile themselves to them and begin to have illusions about the labor bureaucracy.

Now let us return to the anti-war movement itself. Here the Party theorizes against any attempts to raise the level of this movement to that of an anti-imperialist movement.

First it establishes its view of the current level of the movement. It points out that "It would be unrealistic to see this movement altogether as a movement against imperialism. Actually, this movement opposes certain aspects of imperialist policy, but in this movement there are great illusions about imperialism, and only a section of the movement has a clear understanding of the relationship between imperialism and the threat of war. Most of those participating in the movement are opposed to imperialist policy on the question of rearmament, without thereby being for

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On the merger of NAM and DSOC

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On March 20-21 at a unity convention in Detroit, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and the New American Movement (NAM) officially merged and launched the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The DSA is trumpeting this event as the harbinger of a "new socialism." That is utter nonsense. The fact of the matter is that the DSA is just a new signboard for the corrupt social-democratic DSOC. What happened at the Detroit convention is that DSOC finally swallowed up NAM. Or to be more precise, it ate up what was left of NAM since NAM had virtually collapsed as an organization years ago.

There is an important political lesson in the collapse of NAM into the arms of DSOC. While DSOC is a member of the Socialist International and one of the main standard-bearers of official social-democratic politics in the U.S., NAM, on the other hand, was a current which was a product of New Leftism of the 1960's. While NAM was essentially social-democratic too, it however had a "left" phrasemongering veneer. In its early years NAM tried to preach a "third road," an allegedly revolutionary alternative to both reformist social-democracy and revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. However today, a decade after it was put together in 1971-72, NAM has completely fused with DSOC, entirely on the basis of DSOC's positions. The "third road" has shown its total bankruptcy once again.

Today the idea of pursuing a "third road," allegedly somewhere in between Marxism-Leninism and social-democracy, has again become fashionable among various Maoist groups which have adopted out-and-out liquidationist views. But as the experience of NAM shows, this "third road" is a fraud, it is merely a bridge on the road to complete amalgamation with official social-democracy.

The Upsurge of the 1960's and Social-Democracy

The 1960's and early 70's were a turbulent period. They were marked by a tremendous upsurge in the

mass movements. For thousands upon thousands, this was a powerful school. Among other things, the activists developed a great confidence in the power of mass struggle and acquired a strong disgust with the liberal-labor politics of the Democratic Party. Many realized that the enemy was the system of U.S. imperialism. A big wave of activists moved towards revolutionary positions. By the turn of the decade, there was a great ideological ferment as the activists sought to sum up the experience of the mass upsurge and to find out what was the way forward.

Let us briefly survey how social-democratic politics fared in the 1960's. First, we begin with official social-democracy, then we will look at New Leftism.

By the mid-1930's, social-democracy in this country in the form of separate groups officially avowing social-democratic politics was smashed. Since then, official social-democracy has been heavily factionalized into various miniscule sects, cliques of trade union bureaucrats, newspapers and journals, and so on. However, social-democracy has existed as a broader phenomenon in the form of giving a "socialist" or "progressive" tinge to the liberal-labor politics of the Democratic Party. This policy the official social-democratic circles have had in common with a wider section of trade union bureaucrats and other political forces. Indeed, it is precisely because American social-democracy is just a fringe of the Democratic Party liberal-labor marsh that has made it difficult for the social-democratic groupings to grow.

In the period after World War II and into the 1960's, official social-democracy simply became a wing of U.S. imperialism's Cold War offensive. Hence, in the 1960's, the official social-democratic groups, such as the Socialist Party, the League for Industrial Democracy, the Social-Democratic Federation, etc., were in dismal shape. They were nothing but tiny sects of crusty intellectuals and labor bureaucrats with virtually no influence among the activists of the mass movements. They stood firm in their longstanding policy of prettifying the reactionary and warmongering politics of the Democratic Party. Hence they were enthusiasts of U.S. imperialism all down the line and gave fervent support to the aggressive war in Viet Nam. In fact, many of the social-democrats worked in the U.S. government and AFL-CIO bureaucracy and were directly responsible for crimes against the Vietnamese people.

The social-democrats were also vicious enemies of the anti-war movement, the youth and student movement, the black people's struggle, etc.

However, as the mass struggles grew against the Democratic Johnson administration, the heroes of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, the politicians like Robert Kennedy and Eugene McCarthy, were set in motion by the bourgeoisie to posture as opponents of the war and as friends of the oppressed masses. Among the social-democrats, too, a "left" faction developed which sought to prevent the masses from breaking with the Democrats by holding up the Kennedy, McCarthy and later, the McGovern campaigns as the symbols of a new and progressive Democratic Party. This faction was led by Michael Harrington. The SP-SDF disintegrated in 1972, with the arch-reactionary social-democrats forming the Social Democrats, USA aligned with Nixon, the right-wing Democrats and the Meanyite AFL-CIO bureaucracy, while Harrington's faction went on to form the DSOC in 1973.

Thus, by the early 70's, the arch-reactionary social-democrats were openly rooting for Nixon and were avowed enemies of the mass movements. On the other hand, Harrington's faction was trying to dress social-democracy up to appeal to activists from the mass movements, but they had no influence whatsoever on the revolutionary-minded activists. This is not hard to see when one considers Harrington's corrupt and utterly rightist positions, which included kind words even for the Nixonite social-democrats. For instance, in describing the 1972 split in the SP, he wrote: "The sad climax came at that meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Party in the fall of 1972 when I heard 'Marxist' arguments for Nixon.

"Did this mean, to use American radicalism's most favored curse, that Max [Max Schachtman, one of the ultra-rightist leaders of the SP — ed.] and his followers had 'sold out'? Not at all. They were moved, I am convinced, by the most sincere and idealistic considerations." (Harrington, *Fragments of the Century — A Social Autobiography*, 1973, p. 223)

New Leftism

While this was the sorry state of official social-democracy at the end of the 1960's, it should be noted that social-democracy had begun that decade with various projects to contain the emerging mass ferment. Prominent among these was the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). This group had been launched as the student wing of the League for Industrial Democracy. But as a result of the ferment among the masses, SDS soon removed itself from the control of official social-democracy. Instead it came under the influence of New Left ideology.

New Left ideology had emerged in the late 1950's with its roots in liberal intellectuals like C. Wright

Mills, in various elements in the fringes of official social-democracy, and among social-democratic-minded refugees from the "Communist" Party. It came up in a situation where official social-democracy had become a complete adjunct of the Cold War and where the Communist Party had been thoroughly corrupted and taken over by Browderite and Khrushchovite revisionism, thus tarnishing the prestige of Marxism-Leninism.

New Leftism thus preached an alternative both to Marxism-Leninism, which it derided as outdated and dogmatic, and to official social-democracy, which it considered wrapped up in imperialist Cold War liberalism. It took a critical stance towards the Cold War and U.S. imperialism. However, New Leftism remained essentially social-democratic. It saw itself as part of the anti-communist social-democratic tradition; it rejected the class struggle and the need for revolution in the U.S.; it denied the role of the working class as the basic agency of social transformation as well as the need for a proletarian party. It was imbued with concepts of petty bourgeois democracy such as "participatory democracy," which were taken to the extreme on organizational questions, where they verged on anarchism.

The SDS leaders adopted New Leftism as their ideology. But as the mass struggles among the youth and students intensified and the disgust with the Democratic Party grew, the masses of youth, including the SDS members, moved to the left. Among them, from 1966-67 on, interest in revolution and Marxism-Leninism began to grow in a big way. This took place in the circumstances of the emergence of the worldwide battle of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism against the revisionism of the Soviet Union and the pro-Soviet "communist" parties, a battle which restored the prestige of Marxism-Leninism among the masses. In these conditions, the SDS leaders and other New Left ideologues started to give a "revolutionary" coloring to New Leftism and strongly pushed it as a so-called revolutionary alternative to Marxism-Leninism. They began to talk of "revolutionary consciousness," a "new revolutionary ideology," the theory of "a new working class," and so forth.

But by the late 60's New Leftism revealed its thorough bankruptcy and impotence to the activists. It failed to offer any cohesive ideology or program. It blew with every wind, promoting one idea today and another the next. It failed to provide orientation for the advance of the mass movements. Indeed, it showed itself to be repeatedly susceptible to the shiny blandishments of the "left"-wing Democrats and always remained dependent on them. It could not consolidate any organization either. Indeed, New Leftism, with its anarchist and liberal organizational ideas, proved to be a wrecker of any sort of organizational consolidation. In sum, it proved itself flabby and unable to meet the demands of the mass upsurge.

Thus, when at the turn of the decade the revolutionary activists were searching for the way forward, they faced a situation where official social-democracy was utterly discredited and New Leftism, which had been promoted as the ways of the future, had shown its bankruptcy. Hence the revolutionary-minded activists moved towards revolutionary Marxism-Leninism as the reliable scientific theory of the revolution.

SDS collapsed in 1969. By that time, every organized faction among its leaders spoke in the name of Marxism-Leninism. Besides the widespread support for Marxism-Leninism among the revolutionary-minded activists, this also signified the fact that a section of the SDS leaders adapted their New Leftism to Marxism-Leninism. This gave rise to the trend of neo-revisionism among the new wave of Marxist-Leninists that came up in the late 60's. (For the next decade, a bitter fight was to take place between the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists and neo-revisionism to build the Marxist-Leninist party, a struggle which is described in the MLP pamphlet, *The Struggle for the Party Versus Chinese Revisionism*, 1980.)

Meanwhile, the New Left ideologues and SDS elements who had fought against the influence of Marxism-Leninism began another effort to save New Leftism from complete collapse and block the development of the Marxist-Leninist movement. This was the birth of the New American Movement.

NAM and the "Third Road"

NAM was put together in 1971-72 by various prominent ideologues of the New Left, such as Staughton Lynd, Stanley Aronowitz, Michael Lerner, James Weinstein, Harry Boyte, etc. It also picked up "Eurocommunist" elements who had left the "C" PUSA, such as Dorothy Healey.

Like its New Left traditions, NAM's ideology and politics were fundamentally social-democratic. But in order to fit the mood of the times and appeal to the revolutionary activists, NAM adopted a heavy dose of "Marxist" and "revolutionary" phrasemongering. It advocated a "third road" between Leninism and reformist social-democracy. Many of the theories of NAM were borrowed from the arsenal of so-called Eurocommunism.

But from the outset, NAM made it quite clear that it considered itself to be part of the social-democratic milieu. It raised the banner of "democratic socialism" as its goal. This is the code word of official social-democracy, common to the Zionist Israeli Labor Party of Golda Meir, the ultra-rightist Social Democrats, USA, DSOC, and so forth. In fact, there is nothing socialist or democratic about this program of the social-democrats. As life has demonstrated over and over again, "democratic socialism" is merely a fancy phrase for the capitalist "welfare state." NAM too showed that it shared this conception for it never spoke of ex-

propriating the capitalist exploiters or establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, without which there can be no serious talk of socialism.

Indeed, NAM openly acknowledged that it considered itself to be a close cousin of official social-democracy in other ways as well. When DSOC was founded, for instance, NAM leaders found something good in it even while expressing certain criticisms. Thus *Socialist Revolution*, which was in effect the theoretical journal of the NAM ideologues, wrote then: "Yet those of us who differ with Harrington must see his effort as complementary to our own...we must treat Michael Harrington and the rank-and-file of his DSOC, as serious comrades who believe that they are engaged in a task similar to us." (*Socialist Revolution*, July-August 1973, p. 87)

In its practical work, NAM was strictly reformist. They were especially mesmerized with "community organizing," drawing great inspiration from the ideas of Saul Alinsky. Alinskyism is an ultra-reformist trend which goes no further than organizing community groups on the basis of the narrowest of questions. It had been developed with the express purpose of fighting revolution and communism. This ultra-reformism often merged with racism and in fact, many of the Alinskyite "community organizations" have been nothing but thinly veiled racist groups.

This was the essence of NAM's "socialism." In effect, it was nothing but a rebash of "municipal socialism," or what was known as "gas-and-water socialism" or "sewer socialism" in the earlier decades of this century. But NAM had a penchant for combining its reformism with "left" rhetoric. Thus, its "sewer socialism" was painted in glowing colors as the building of "people's power," "popular councils," etc. Reading NAM's descriptions, why, one would think that the Alinsky-style groups were just like the revolutionary Soviets that arose in the Russian revolution!

Thus, even while standing firmly in the camp of "democratic socialism," NAM went out of its way to promote itself as "Marxist." The theoretical journal closely connected to it pretentiously called itself *Socialist Revolution*. This journal, launched in 1970, was interestingly enough the revival of the journal *Studies on the Left* which had been one of the main New Left ideological journals from 1959 to the mid-1960's. (More recently, in keeping with NAM's further move to the right, *Socialist Revolution* has been renamed *Socialist Review*.)

In the early days people in NAM spoke of a "revolutionary socialism" somewhere in between Leninism and reformism. As the Marxist-Leninist movement grew, a "Marxist-Leninist caucus" was even launched within the organization. In 1973, as the idea of party-building gained strength in the Marxist-Leninist movement, NAM even adapted to this. That year, Harry Boyte and Frank Ackerman, two leading lights of NAM, put out a proposal calling for a "mass socialist party"

that would even incorporate some "good ideas" from Leninism! But they made it clear that they reserved their greatest hostility for the essential Leninist idea of forging a vanguard revolutionary party of the proletariat. Indeed, throughout NAM's history, the most vicious epithets were always reserved for the Marxist-Leninist movement, while there were always kind words for other social-democrats.

The "Third Road" Collapses Into the Arms of DSOC

As the 1970's wore on, NAM went into crisis. Its publications all but stopped coming out and less and less was done in the name of the organization. Its activists had completely submerged themselves into the social-democratic milieu. In 1979 negotiations began for a merger with DSOC. In the meantime, many NAM members had already become members of DSOC (prominent among whom was Harry Boyte who has written a whole book recently singing the glories of Alinskyism called *The Backyard Revolution*).

Finally this spring, the merger with DSOC was consummated. This took place completely on the basis of DSOC's positions. In the process, NAM's "left" posturing has all but disappeared. It has had to eat its earlier words all down the line. All its pretensions of being an alternative to official social-democracy are gone.

Today NAM stands damned by its own earlier declarations. For instance, when DSOC was founded, *Socialist Revolution* criticized Harrington's call that socialists must be "loyal members of the liberal community" and wrote, "To be 'loyal' to the liberal leaders is to be loyal to the corporate domination of society." (*Socialist Revolution*, July-August 1973, p. 79)

Now, has Harrington or the DSOC changed their views on this? Of course not. Only a month before the DSOC-NAM merger, Harrington wrote on DSOC's economic program: "We assume, then, a mixed economy solution, a much more radical, investment-oriented liberalism. It is still liberalism, not socialism.... This is, we think, the left wing of the possible in the America of the eighties." (*Democratic Left*, January-February 1982, p. 4, emphasis added) The policy of the DSA is the same old policy of DSOC of providing a "socialist" cover for the liberal-labor politicians of the Democratic Party. It is NAM which has come around to this position, which is indeed nothing but "loyal(ity) to the corporate domination of society."

Socialist Revolution also denounced DSOC's support for the labor bureaucrats and wrote that DSOC "remains dependent on union leaders. Harrington does argue that socialism cannot be made without active participation of working people, but they still are to remain subordinate to liberal labor officials. At the conference [DSOC's founding conference — ed.] it was clear that this means firm opposition to radical rank-

and-file struggles waged against the union bureaucrats." (*Ibid.*, p. 80)

Now, has the DSOC changed on this question? Not at all. DSOC has had a consistent position, as does the new DSA, of cozying up to the worst labor traitors and scabs. It counts among its members many such labor bureaucrats. The DSA was founded in Detroit at the very time when the UAW bureaucrats were busy shoving a huge sellout contract down the throats of the GM workers. Not only did DSA come out in favor of forking over billions in concessions to the auto monopolies, but the DSA convention even gave a testimonial award, the Debs-Thomas award, to Ray Majerus, the secretary-treasurer of the UAW and the very person responsible for working to ram through a sellout concessions deal at American Motors!

In the early 70's NAM also claimed to oppose imperialism and the American empire. But today when they merged with DSOC they have agreed to support U.S. military aid for Zionist Israel, the racist outpost of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East. NAM also agreed with DSA's continued participation in the counter-revolutionary Socialist International, which includes many imperialist and reactionary ruling parties, such as the German Social-Democrats. The Socialist International is today a big instrument of imperialism in various parts of the world, especially in Latin America. Among other things, there it is busy trying to impose an imperialist-dominated "political solution" on the people of El Salvador.

Thus, all down the line, NAM's "third road" has completely collapsed and found full unity with the positions of official social-democracy. NAM's "mass socialist party" has turned out to be nothing but the Democratic Party of monopoly capital.

The basis for the merger between these two groups is clear. Both have all along been social-democratic outfits. They have shared a common ideological platform and a common goal. As well, they have based themselves on the same social strata — the petty bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy. As a social-democratic newspaper friendly to DSA put it: "Both NAM and DSOC are what political scientists call 'elite' organizations. Their members are primarily college-educated, drawn from the staff and leadership of unions rather than the rank-and-file, and from city councils and public interests organizations...." (*In These Times*, March 31-April 6, 1982, p. 5)

Under the impact of the mass upsurge of the 60's and the presence of a large wave of revolutionary activists, NAM postured as "leftist" and "revolutionary." But as the 70's wore on, the bourgeoisie stepped up its activation of social-democracy. The labor bureaucrats took up certain "anti-corporate" phrasemongering, and social-democratic reformism was promoted in a massive way. The attraction of the liberal-labor Marxist proved irresistible as NAM went into crisis. The only thing left for it to do was to melt away in the general

social-democratic milieu in which it had immersed itself or else to sell the name to someone else. DSOC had been actively looking for such a franchise for a long time in order to dress up its appeal to the remnants of the New Left. Michael Harrington finds NAM useful because he can now claim that the roots of his organization include both official social-democracy and the New Left. As well, he knows that the phrasemongering professors of NAM are especially useful to better sell the Democratic Party to the newly awakening masses in the class battles of this decade.

In discussing the merger of NAM and DSOC, special mention must be made of the role of the Institute for Policy Studies, the social-democratic "think tank" which is funded by the bourgeoisie. IPS is a prominent agency for the bourgeoisie's activation of social-democracy and has been actively working to bring the different factions and groupings of social-democracy closer together. One of the pet projects of IPS has been to bring about the merger of NAM and DSOC (just as it has been campaigning for a worldwide merger between "Eurocommunism" and official social-democracy). It has campaigned for this for years through its weekly tabloid, *In These Times*. Indeed, IPS set up this newspaper with the help of a number of NAM's leading ideologists. These people not only figured prominently among the sponsors of *In These Times*, but also formed the core of its staff, including its editor, James Weinstein. Today, now that the merger has finally come a-

bout, *In These Times* is very pleased and calls it "an important symbolic step forward for the democratic socialist left." At the same time, in keeping with its aspiration of being the central organ to give guidance to the whole social-democratic movement, *In These Times* urges DSA to start running candidates for office.

In conclusion, then, the merger between NAM and DSOC is another example of the renegade spirit that has gripped the opportunist and revisionist "left" in recent years. It marks the complete collapse of New Leftism, its return to the fold of official social-democracy and the liberal-labor politics of the Democratic Party. The former New Leftists are themselves today sneering at their earlier "leftist" posturings and singing the glories of the imperialist liberals. For NAM, this renegacy has been a direct consequence of the "third road," a path which never had any stable principles, which adapted to whatever mood was fashionable and was always susceptible to the beckonings of the liberals.

Today, as before, the choice is clear-cut: the only revolutionary ideology is Marxism-Leninism. This is underscored by the fact that over the last decade, New Left ideology guided NAM into crisis and final collapse in the arms of DSOC, while during the same period, Marxism-Leninism provided the powerful guidance to build up the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA into the solid, vibrant and revolutionary force that it is in the political arena today. □

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How the social-democrats push the Democratic Party to the 'left'

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Earlier this year the Democratic Socialists of America was launched with much noise and fanfare. But the mountain brought forth a mouse, or rather, a donkey. Immediately they plunged into the work to shove the Democratic Party to the "left" by declaring that the work of the Democratic Agenda coalition would be one of their main priorities. The Democratic Agenda coalition is the alliance of social-democrats and liberals which has been the main agency for work within the Democratic Party set up by the DSA's main predecessor, the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee.

The Democratic Agenda is currently focusing on a new program it is offering for the Democratic Party. It is instructive to examine this program for this is the real program of the DSA. In the various pronouncements of the DSA one can sometimes come across phrases about socialism and other good things, but for the practical program of the DSA one has to remember that according to them the only "realistic" politics is that which is achievable through the Democratic Party. As Michael Harrington, the head of DSA, puts it so aptly, they only seek to be "the left wing of the possible," and for them capitalism is the only thing that's possible.

Harrington calls this program a "New Beginning" for the Democrats. He and his cronies are claiming the most fantastic wonder-working powers for this program. They assert that it is a move beyond the "old liberalism" of the Democrats as well as a rejection of the "moderate Reaganism" which they say some Democrats are taking up. Harrington claims that if the Democratic Party takes up the Democratic Agenda program then "it will win and it will begin to turn the country around." (*Democratic Left*, "Can the Party Fight Reagan?," January-February 1982, p. 4) Imagine that! The Democratic Party gives up the "old liberal-

ism" at the behest of the "Reagan revolution" — and Harrington euphorically declares that the Democratic Party, no, the whole country, is on the threshold of a "new beginning."

But as we shall see in this article, this "New Beginning" of the DSA is nothing but "moderate Reaganism" which, far from being the policy of a few Democrats, is the general program of the whole Democratic Party and the AFL-CIO bureaucrats closely tied to them. This shows that while the social-democrats talk of moving the Democrats to the "left" they are being led by the nose by the Democratic donkey.

A Response to the Crisis of Credibility Faced by the Democrats

Why does the DSA feel the need to call for a "New Beginning" for the Democrats? This is because in recent years many working people are seeing that the Republicans and Democrats share the same reactionary program, a program of frenzied militarism, imperialist aggression, handouts to the billionaires, poverty for the working masses through wage cuts, cuts in social benefits and ever higher taxes, and growing reaction and racial oppression. Not surprisingly, in the 1980 elections, Carter and Reagan were seen by wide sections of the people as Tweedledee and Tweedledum. Today, while Reagan and the Republicans are the standard-bearers of the capitalist offensive, the Democrats are daily showing that they are nothing but mere clones of Reagan. The two major capitalist parties share the same program because Reaganite reaction is the common program of the entire capitalist class.

In this situation, a wide ferment has been growing among the working masses, a ferment that is moving the masses towards breaking free of the tutelage of the two big capitalist parties. The Marxist-Leninist party of the working class welcomes this development. Indeed, every revolutionary activist who seeks a socialist future should also welcome this, and work to assist the masses to break free from the capitalist political framework and rally them to the cause of the independent movement of the working class.

But not so with the social-democratic scabs of the DSA. They too see the mass disgust with Reaganism but at the same time they are deeply troubled that the

Democrats are merely looking like twins of Reagan. This is a worry which the DSA shares with the rest of the liberal-labor wing of the Democratic Party. The Democrats, being a party of monopoly capital, have nothing else to offer the masses but the Reaganite program of the bourgeoisie. But this creates a crisis of image for the Democrats who try to distinguish themselves from the Republicans as the "party of labor and the minorities." Thus, especially since 1980 when they lost the presidency and the Senate, the Democrats have been crying out that they need a "new ideology," a "new philosophy," a "new program," and so on. But in all cases, once you strip away the fancy talk what you find is that the calls for going beyond the "old solutions" are simply calls to justify embracing Reaganism of one or another variety. The DSA's "New Beginning" is no different; it is simply this social-democratic grouping's effort to dress up Reaganism with a new facelift.

DSA's "New Beginning" — "Investment-Oriented Liberalism"

The "New Beginning" is dressed up in the hype of DSA as something which goes "beyond liberalism." It is supposed to be an alternative to the "old liberalism" of the Democrats. That, Harrington tells us, is no longer workable.

Of course, Harrington, who has been a loyal flunkey of the Democrats for many decades, does not fail to add that the old liberalism was among the greatest achievements of the last half century. He praises it for having brought "full employment policies and social programs for those not in the labor force." (*Ibid.*, p. 3) This is a complete whitewash. Harrington totally covers over the fact that the old liberalism never did away with unemployment or economic crises, which are inherent under capitalism. In addition, the social programs which it set up were among the most miserly in the major capitalist countries and with many reactionary provisions grafted on.

But by saying that the old liberalism is no longer workable, Harrington is acknowledging, though in a backhanded way, that the deep economic crisis over the last decade has proved the old liberalism to be utterly bankrupt. Both inflation and unemployment have remained at high levels and social programs have been steadily being cut back more and more.

But why does Harrington say that the old liberalism does not work any more. This is supposed to be because it "no longer responds to structural problems rooted in the economy, dominated by a corporate power, aided and abetted by the government." (*Ibid.*, p. 1) What a marvelous discovery on Harrington's part. It's almost like he's rediscovered the wheel! As if the economy wasn't dominated by the capitalists in earlier times, during the heyday of the old liberalism. But what is the real meaning of this great discovery? Does he bring

it up to call for a fight against capitalism leading to its overthrow? Not a chance. He raises this to say that the old liberalism has reached its limits, it can't fund social benefits any longer. So don't waste your time fighting against the Reaganite cutbacks or demanding anything that costs the government money; instead you have to focus your attention on the "structural problems rooted in the economy." And the way to do this is to take up the social-democratic prescriptions for "democratizing the corporate power."

Interestingly enough, the Democratic Agenda program does not include a call against Reagan's cutbacks in social benefits. Harrington, in his article, does throw in a call for restoration of all social budget cuts, but by not including even such a mealy-mouthed demand in the Democratic Agenda program the DSA shows that this is an empty call, just a ruse to fool the naive.

As Harrington puts it, "Therefore — and this is the crux of the democratic left program — there must be democratic inputs and controls over the critical investment decisions that will make, or break, an anti-inflationary full employment economy." (*Ibid.*, p. 3) As an example of these "democratic inputs and controls," he points to the UAW bureaucrats' concessions negotiations with GM in which he supports giving concessions to the monopolists in exchange for such things as the "workers' rights to see the corporate books and to help determine pricing policy." Elsewhere, the DSA leaders have also praised the UAW's "victory" in getting Doug Fraser on the Chrysler Board of Directors. Other examples of such schemes for "democratic inputs and controls" over the "corporate power" can also be found in the Democratic Agenda program, such as "democratizing the Federal Reserve Board" and so forth.

What all these schemes of "democratizing" the "corporate power" boil down to is putting some union bureaucrats, or traitors to the black people, or some other social-democratic or liberal bigwigs in high positions on various corporation and government boards. While Harrington colors these schemes with "socialist"-sounding phrases, they are in reality none other than the proposals for labor-management collaboration which are stock parts of the AFL-CIO/Democratic Party platform. These proposals are plans of class collaboration directed against the working class struggle.

Indeed when one examines the rest of the Democratic Agenda program, one discovers that it is really none other than the AFL-CIO/Democratic Party program in its essentials, albeit with some social-democratic demagoguery thrown in for purposes of prettification.

The declared objective of the Democratic Agenda program is an "anti-inflationary full employment economy." So what is the miracle cure that they propose to get rid of unemployment while preserving capitalism? It involves, first, what they call "democratically planning new industries" (Democratic Agenda program).

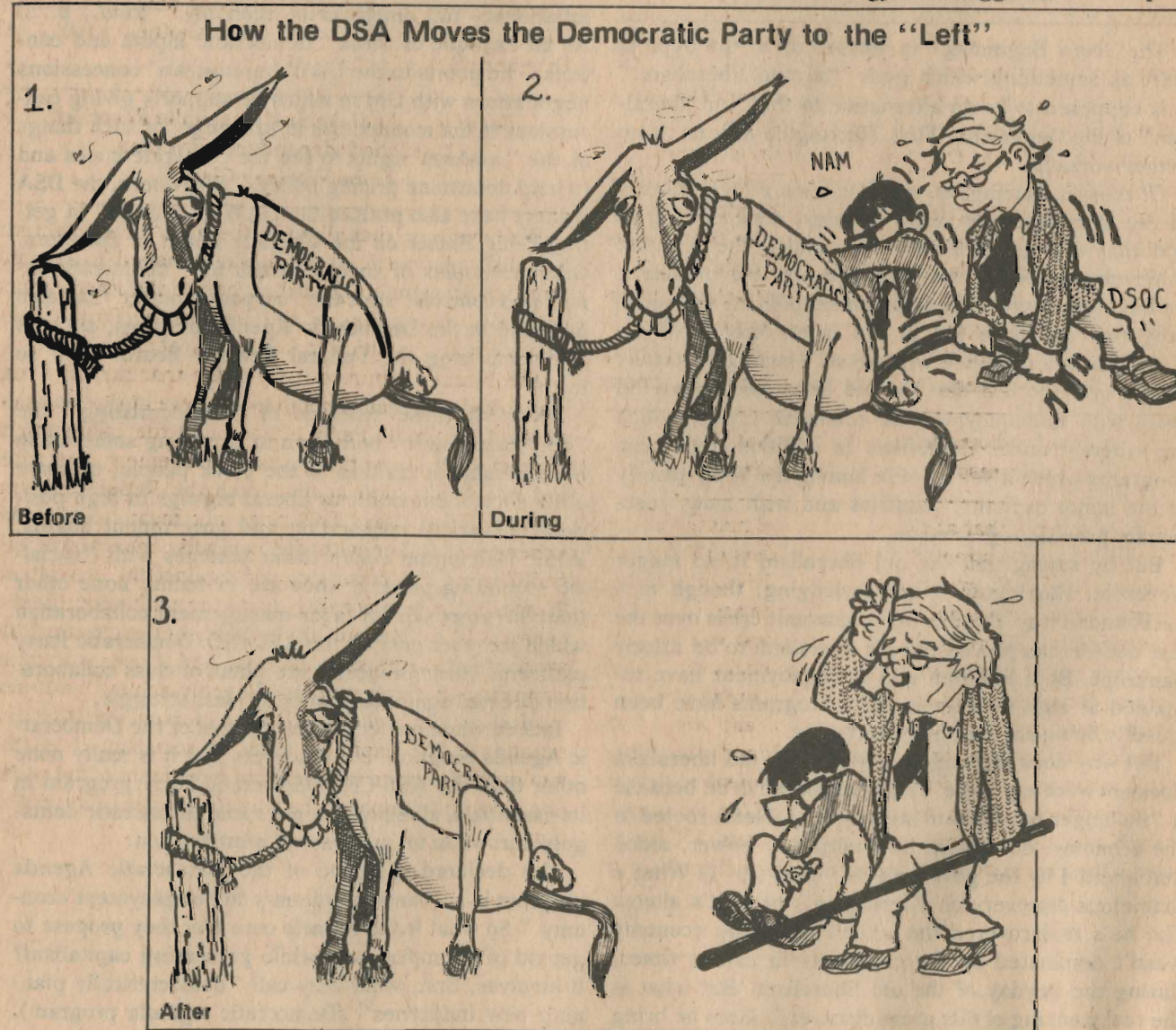
This means the government uses the workers' tax dollars to help set up new industries in areas where the capitalists won't invest because it's not profitable. Examples given include a "high speed train system" and "renewable source energy industry." The second part of the "full employment" plan involves "enrolling private corporations in the democratic plan." (Democratic Agenda program) They spell this out as meaning that the government directly hands over big subsidies to the monopolies for the ostensible purpose of creating jobs.

Interestingly enough, in describing this scheme Harrington openly lets out that the DSA's talk of "socialism" is nothing but eyewash while their real program is what's achievable through the liberal-labor Democrats. He writes, "Significant subsidy should go to corporations that create useful jobs in areas of need. We assume, then, a mixed economy solution, a much more radical, investment-oriented liberalism. It is still liberalism, not socialism (even though democratic socialists are an important group in Democratic Agenda). This is, we think, the left wing of the possible in the America of

the eighties." (Harrington, *op. cit.*, p. 4)

True enough, this is not socialism. It is just state monopoly capitalism. But here Harrington has let out the real meaning of what going "beyond liberalism" means. For what else is "investment-oriented liberalism" but a fancy phrase for Reaganite "supply-side" or "trickle down" economics. In the lexicon of the social-democrats, when Reagan proposes tax breaks for the capitalists then it is welfare for the rich, but amazingly when the social-democrats or liberals propose it then it becomes investment in jobs! What rot.

The Democratic Agenda program for "full employment" is thus the same thing as the AFL-CIO/Democrats' plan for "targeted" tax breaks for the "truly needy" corporations. Indeed, the Carter administration already implemented many features of this "investment-oriented liberalism" with such policies as giving handouts to Chrysler in the name of saving jobs, and setting up the Synthetic Fuels Corporation to give handouts to the energy monopolies to set up new industries in "alternative energy." To suggest that such pol-



icies can harm the "corporate power" in any way or bring "full employment" is complete nonsense.

Harrington and co. assure us that not only will this plan end unemployment but it will also bring down inflation by reducing budget deficits because government spending on social benefits would automatically come down. Just in case that doesn't work, the Democratic Agenda also proposes "specific anti-inflation measures." And what might these anti-inflation measures of the new "radical, investment-oriented liberalism" be? You guessed it. The heart of these measures is none other than wage controls. Harrington writes, "We favor price, executive compensation, interest, rent, and wage controls, when and where necessary, legislated in the form of standby powers and providing for democratic administration of the system (with labor and consumer participation)." (*Ibid.*, p. 4) Once again, the stuff about "democratic administration" is simply the obligatory paint job, as if the presence of some sellout union hacks on a government controls board will make any difference in the fact that wage-price controls will end up being controls on the workers' wages while prices and profits continue to soar.

Wage controls too are, of course, a standard part of the AFL-CIO/Democratic Party program. Thus, all down the line, the Democratic Agenda is simply putting forward the basic Democratic Party program of capitalist "reindustrialization" — handouts to the corporations, takebacks and wage cuts for the workers, and strengthening labor-management collaboration to discipline the working class and promote class collaboration. It is a program to enrich the capitalists while shifting the burden of the economic crisis on the shoulders of the workers. It is nothing but Reaganism.

The Democratic Agenda Does Not Want to Embarrass the Imperialist Warmongers

It is striking that at a time when the masses are out marching in the streets in tens upon tens of thousands against the U.S. government's war drive, the Democratic Agenda does not have anything to say about U.S. imperialism. There is not a word against war preparations, against the bloated nuclear arsenal and conventional forces buildup, or against Washington's imperialist aggression in Central America and around the world! In fact, the only thing mentioned on military questions is a call for "a lean, responsible defense policy which rejects destabilizing and/or excessively sophisticated weapons systems and cuts \$56 billion from the Pentagon while increasing our national securi-

ty." (Democratic Agenda program) Thus these social-democrats have no opposition to the militarism of U.S. imperialism; they limit their criticism merely to "excess" and "waste" which are of course calls that come from many of the liberal-labor warmongers themselves.

Harrington appears to justify this stand of not addressing questions of foreign policy with a typically economist argument. He says, "Let us be frank. DEMOCRATIC AGENDA seeks to unite varied groups that do not always agree and are even diverted from the basic battle against corporate domination of the society into fighting with one another. It has always looked for that common denominator of economic interest that brings us together: without full employment, there will be no gains for unions, for minorities, women, environmentalists, people concerned with the third world, disarmament, and so on." (*Ibid.*, p. 4) In other words, let's all unite around what will be acceptable to the union bureaucrats and Democratic Party bigwigs.

Thus, in the final analysis, the Democratic Agenda's "New Beginning" is hardly anything new. It is merely warmed-over Carter stew, just another variety of Reaganism.

**For a Real Fight Against Reaganite Reaction!
Build the Independent Movement
of the Working Class!**

We have seen that all down the line, the Democratic Socialists of America have again managed to demonstrate their complete groveling before the liberal-labor concealed Reaganites of the Democratic Party. They have no real opposition to Reaganism at all.

The Marxist-Leninist Party holds that the only real way to fight Reagan is not to look in awe at the backside of the Democratic Party but to build the independent movement of the working class, a movement independent of and directed against both the Republican and Democratic Parties. This does not mean looking for schemes to tinker with the capitalist monopolies but building up the mass struggle against the exploiters. It does not mean cozying up to the millionaire liberal politicians and sellout union hacks but organizing the workers and oppressed masses. And it does not mean conjuring up lying utopias allegedly achievable under capitalism but fighting with the perspective that the solution to the capitalist crisis is socialism. It is the building of such an independent movement of the working class that prepares the way for the socialist revolution. □

Social-Democracy, Instrument of Capitalism

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This article by Joao Amazonas, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Brazil, appeared in the Brazilian journal Principios, No. 2, June, 1981. Below we print the first half of the article, translated by The Workers' Advocate staff.

* * *

The author, a veteran proletarian leader, analyzes from a critical point of view the performance of social-democracy, the objective base of its emergence in the country, the channels of political expression it found, and the necessity of combating this anti-proletarian trend in the social movement.

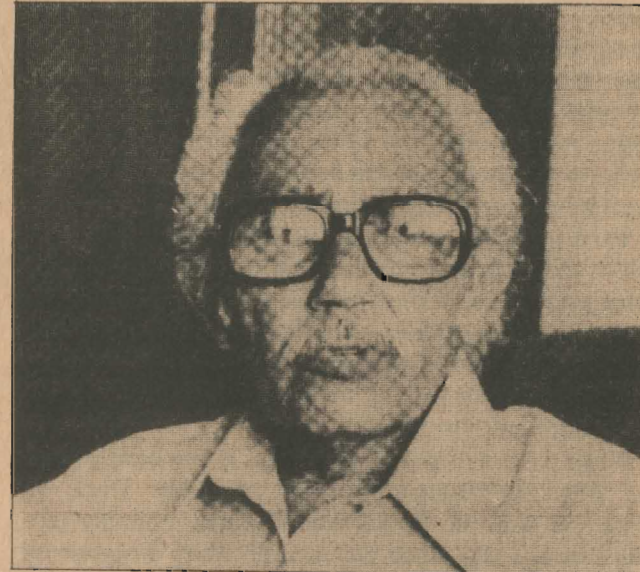
In its struggle for the transformation of society, the proletariat, as the only force capable of accomplishing this transformation, encounters many obstacles. One of the most stubborn and deceptive, as a result of its particular characteristics, is social-democracy, a political current of longstanding operation in the workers' midst. With various designations — social-democratic, labor, socialist and, more recently, communist-revisionist — it has as its basis reformism, class collaboration, and, in the last instance, the preservation of the capitalist system.

In Brazil, social-democracy encountered difficulties in structuring itself. Not because the reformist concept of the social struggle doesn't exist, but for lack of clear ideological foundations and also of certain objective conditions. The attempts undertaken came to naught. Presently it is trying to implant itself in the country, especially by means of the Workers Party, which, not withstanding its name, does not represent the basic interests of the proletariat.

The examination of this variety of opportunism, both in the political and theoretical fields, will help to illuminate mistaken sectors about the significance of social-democracy as an obstacle to the realization of the liberating ideas of the working class and of the oppressed people.

Origins of Social-Democracy

Social-democracy was born as a revolutionary cur-



Joao Amazonas, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Brazil.

rent. It emerged after Marxism defeated, in the ideological field, Proudhonism and Lasalleianism, anarchist and petty-bourgeois conceptions that predominated in the workers' movement of the middle of the 19th century up till the Paris Commune.

Step by step in the economically developed countries there grew up new proletarian parties based on the Marxist doctrine in order to struggle against the bourgeoisie for a social democracy. This came to give it its designation. In 1889 they formed the Second International. Marx and Engels attentively kept up with the emergence of these parties, striving to implant in them a well-defined class character, vigilant against the remnants of the harmful ideas of the earlier phase.

The contemporary social-democratic current was born from that betrayal of the principal interests of the proletariat and from the renunciation of the revolutionary postulates of Marxism.

These new organizations of workers' struggle in a short period of time achieved important successes. They spread the ideas of the founders of scientific socialism, they contributed to the raising of the political consciousness of the proletariat. Their ranks grew. In

many electoral campaigns they achieved considerable success. In Russia, the Social-Democratic Party, affiliated with the Second International, led the revolution of 1905 that brought about valuable lessons. Also in Bulgaria the workers' vanguard took part in the popular uprising of that same year.

Drawing near to the war of 1914-18, the Second International and the parties that composed it repudiated, at the International Socialist Congress of Basle (Switzerland) of 1912, and in the German Social-Democratic Congress of that year, the military conflict that was approaching. They pointed out in their resolutions the tactics to follow: to take advantage of the revolutionary situation created by the war in order to "arouse the people and hasten the overthrow of capitalism."

All the same, those parties still hadn't managed to completely assimilate the revolutionary methods of the class struggle because they were acting in a period of relatively peaceful development. Their Marxist ideological base hadn't been consolidated. In addition to the existing reformist concepts, the majority of them had not detached themselves totally from the bourgeois nationalist prejudices, even though they might propagate Marx's inscription: *Proletarians of all countries, unite!*

In that way, these parties (with the exception of the Bolshevik Party) and the Second International put aside the resolutions of Basle when the clash between the imperialist powers began, and joined with the bourgeoisie of their countries.

Kautsky, then the most outstanding leader and theoretician of the workers' movement, sought to justify that criminal joining-up. He considered that although the war "after all might be imperialist" it was also a "national war." According to him, the ruling classes were revealing in that armed confrontation imperialist tendencies, but the people and the proletarian masses displayed national aspirations. With such sophistry, he supported the unjust war in contraposition to the decisions of 1912, in which it was declared to be a crime for the workers "to shoot down one another for the benefit of capitalism." All the other sections of the Second International took chauvinist positions. They lined up on the side of the belligerents and the oppressors of their own and of the other peoples.

Proceeding in this manner the Second International collapsed beyond repair.

The contemporary social-democratic current was born from that betrayal of the principal interests of the proletariat and from the renunciation of the revolutionary postulates of Marxism. The parties which completed that betrayal changed into "national-liberal workers' parties." At the same time, the revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist workers' movement rose again with the creation of the communist parties which founded the Third International in 1919.

Contemporary Social-Democracy, a Bourgeois Movement

The fundamental interests of the working class are in its total liberation from the system of wage slavery, only possible with the overthrow of capitalism, through the revolution and the building of a socialist life. This objective demands the building of a party of class struggle, armed with Marxism-Leninism, the theory of the emancipating movement of the proletariat. It is the essential factor in order to impart a correct direction to that struggle, to forge the unity of the workers, to educate and mobilize the proletariat, making it conscious of its historical mission. Everything that serves to draw the working class away from that perspective helps the bourgeoisie. There is no middle ground. Either the proletariat follows its own road, of the merciless struggle against the exploiting class, or the road of the bourgeoisie, of class conciliation, of the impossible harmony of interests between capital and labor; either build a party of revolution or a party of social reforms which, in themselves, don't seek the replacement of capitalism, but simply seek to perfect the labor laws and improve the conditions of life of the exploited.

In that context, present-day social-democracy presents itself as a movement of bourgeois character in the midst of the proletariat, trying to avoid the revolutionary solution.

A weapon to mislead and to divide the workers, it has as its social base the alliance of a section of the workers, (in general the semi-petty-bourgeois aristocracy of the working class) with the bourgeoisie, against the fundamental interests of the proletariat. Its attitude in the course of the First World War was not simply mistaken, but it was a taking of a definitive position at the side of and in favor of the exploiters, the adoption of opportunism as the foundation of their actions and objectives.

In its activity, it exalts the precarious and limited bourgeois democracy preaching the coming of socialism through elections and parliamentarianism. It is guided by class conciliation and practices trade union pluralism. Its favorite aim is the systematic struggle against the genuine party of the working class, all in order to hamper the consolidation and the growth of its influence among the masses.

On several occasions, social-democracy, in fear of the revolution, opened the path for fascism or for the more conservative right.

The practice over several decades proves the opportunist and traitorous orientation that it follows. Almost all the parties of that tendency have already been or are in power. And what have they done? The Socialist Party of France, for example, was in the government in the

period of the war against Algeria. One of its leaders, Francois Mitterrand, in the position of Minister of the Interior, became a rancorous hangman of the Algerian people in their struggle for national independence; the British Labor Party has occupied the post of command of the British Empire several times, administering to its heart's content the interests of the English imperialist community; the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden remained at the head of the government for nearly forty years, contributing to the "prosperity" of capitalism; in Italy, in Belgium, in Norway, in Holland, and in Denmark, also, the parties of that type occupied ministerial offices. In West Germany which presently has one million unemployed, the social-democrats have governed for long enough, resorting frequently to repressive methods of a fascist type, like the liquidation of political prisoners in the prisons. All of them perfected themselves in the techniques of managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie. None did away with wage slavery, none put an end to the ills of capitalism, none led the proletariat to scientific socialism.

Especially in times of crisis, they restrained the working masses and led them to resign themselves to unemployment, to the lowering of wages and the elimination of many of their victories. They help the capitalists to do away with their difficulties at the expense of the workers. It is moreover, a politics which they carry out today in Europe, with more than ten million unemployed, where the high cost of living increases without letup, as well the taxes which fall upon the wage earners.

On several occasions, social-democracy, in fear of the revolution, opened the path for fascism or for the more conservative right. Hitler came to dominate the Reich thanks to the treacherousness of German social-democracy, which preferred the tyrant of the swastika to the united front with the communists against Hitlerism. Recently the British Labor Party and the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden favored, with their vacillating and inefficacious orientation, the victory of more hardened conservatism. In Portugal, the socialists of Mario Soares, together with the revisionists of Alvaro Cunhal, facilitated the advance of the fascistic right. In Spain, the Partido Socialista Operario is one of the powerful arms of the monarchy inherited from Francoism. Trailing behind the King, it leaves the field free for the reactionary military and coup d'etat-ists.

Exposed as a camouflaged stronghold of the bourgeoisie in the midst of the proletariat, social-democracy lost influence, while the revolutionary movement of the working class grew and which on the eve of and after the Second World War, represented powerful forces acting in an independent manner and with their own socialist banners.

Although eroded, social-democracy did not disappear. Its present tendency is to become more and more counter-revolutionary, a phenomenon, in a certain

sense, inevitable. Because the bourgeoisie becomes more monopolist and exploitive, aggressive and fascist, a process which is reflected in the conduct of its agents in the midst of the workers. Its principal place of support, today, is in West Germany where Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, old "political henchmen" and servants of reaction, govern.

In this period of the general crisis of capitalism and of generalized discontent of the proletariat and of the broad masses, German social-democracy arm in arm with North American imperialism and the Vatican, is seeking to create new social-democratic parties in the countries of definite capitalist development, in particular in those where the revolution is maturing and the dictatorial regimes are beginning to disintegrate. That happened in Portugal, in Spain and in Greece. In Iran it arrived late, when the insurrection already had gained the streets. In the same way, it proceeds in Latin America seeking direct contact with popular leaders and the workers. It encourages finances, gives cover to, provides experience. Those new parties connected to it aim at not only diverting the working class from its path. They also serve to indirectly support the penetration of German capital, knowing that the German investments like those of Japan, arrive immediately after those of North America in the dependent countries.

Along with the former social-democratic form, another version of this opportunist current took shape on a world scale.

New Version and Strengthening of Social-Democracy

In the middle of the decade of the 50's, a profound division of the international workers' and communist movement took place. In a certain sense, the phenomenon of 1914/18 which gave birth to present social-democracy and stimulated the regrouping of the Marxist-Leninist parties was repeated. But it was repeated in a worse sense, as it was the Soviet Union that opened the path to the disguised enemies of the revolution and socialism. The point of separation was the 20th Congress of the CPSU, in 1956. There a new line for the workers' movement was proclaimed, a line of the peaceful path, of peaceful competition and of peaceful coexistence, basically the same positions of social-democracy. In appearance, it was retaining the principles, it was talking of Marxism-Leninism. The changes would only be the results of the "new epoch"... that, meanwhile, remained imperialist. In fact, it was only done to assume the false and hypocritical position of which Lenin accused the social-democrats at the time of their betrayal in the course of WWI.

The head of the Bolshevik Party said that the social-democratic deserters were nothing but continuers of Struveism. "*Struveism* — he emphasized — *is not only a Russian (bourgeois) tendency, but also, as the latest events* (referring to the period of 1914/18) *proved with*

particular evidence, the international sighs of the theorists of the bourgeoisie to kill Marxism by 'softening it,' to choke it with a tight embrace, recognizing in appearance 'all' the truly scientific aspects and elements of Marxism, except its 'agitational,'...and 'utopian blanquist side.'" And he added: "*In other words, they took from Marxism everything that is acceptable to a bourgeois liberal, even the struggle for reforms, even the struggle of classes (without dictatorship of the proletariat), even the 'general' recognition of the socialist ideas and the replacement of capitalism by 'a new system,' leaving aside 'only' the living soul of Marxism, 'only' its revolutionary spirit.*"

Both the social-democratic trade union organizations and those which find themselves in the hand of the revisionists, work in the same direction: to restrain the struggle of the proletariat and to help the bourgeoisie come out of the crisis.

In fact, the formerly Marxist-Leninist communist parties, when adhering to Khrushchovite revisionism went on to separate from Marxism only that which suits the bourgeoisie. They have as a principal characteristic reformism, the conciliation of classes. Its major desire (in the countries where capitalism predominates in its classical form) is to become the bourgeois authority and to administer the affairs of the capitalists, in collaboration with those who serve it, receiving from that collaboration some crumbs for the working class in order to keep it "Comportada" [contained], inactive, without perspective.

There are many examples. The Italian Communist Party of Berlinguer, wanting to gain the good graces of the Italian bourgeoisie and the confidence of North American imperialism in order to occupy posts in the government, takes leave of all revolutionary adornments and advocates the "historic compromise" of keeping loyal to the bourgeois institutions, to the detriment of the essential interests of the proletariat. The

Communist Party of Santiago Carrillo, in Spain, which succeeds in transforming itself into a pillar of the monarchy, against the republican ideas of the Spanish people does likewise. In France the revisionist party of Georges Marchais persists in the alliance with Mitterrand, in the hope of obtaining government posts. In Portugal, the party of Alvaro Cunhal is drawing closer to the reactionary generals, attempting to find a bridge for its return to the government. Several of those parties, in their conciliatory development, renounce publicly the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of revolutionary violence, even indeed a formal declaration of being guided by Marxism-Leninism. The powerful trade union organizations which follow their orientation were transformed, like the social-democratic trade union organizations, into a shield against the fighting actions of the masses, into a check on the more courageous initiatives of the working class. In the present crisis in which the capitalist world exists, both the social-democratic trade union organizations and those which find themselves in the hand of the revisionists, work in the same direction: to restrain the struggle of the proletariat and to help the bourgeoisie to come out of the crisis. Notwithstanding, due to their former positions beside the Soviet Union, which today competes with the U.S. for the control of the world, and on account of their recent origins, the parties of contemporary revisionism do not yet deserve enough credit to occupy offices of government. They constitute a reserve of the bourgeoisie for future utilization, probably in a moment of revolutionary crisis. For the time being, they are points of support of the reactionary government in the midst of the masses, in Parliament and in other institutions.

That betrayal of the revisionists of the workers' movement strengthens social-democracy as an anti-socialist, counter-revolutionary doctrine and practice. Evidently, social-democracy, in its distinct versions, constitutes at the present the principal instrument of the bourgeoisie aiming at obstructing social progress, restraining the revolution, and sustaining the declining capitalist system. □

The Maoist RCP Scabs on the Auto Workers' Struggle

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The experience of the fight against the capitalist concessions drive in the auto industry has given further evidence of the liquidationism and renegacy that has become the hallmark of the revisionists and trotskyites today.

Liquidationism is that opportunist political trend that is distinguished not only by its ardent opposition to building the vanguard Marxist-Leninist party of the working class but also by its disgusting attempts to squelch every impulse of the workers toward organization that is independent from the union bureaucrats, social-democrats and other flunkies of the Democratic Party. In auto the revisionists and trotskyites almost universally disgraced themselves by avoiding the fight against concessions for years in the hopes of currying favor among the arch-sellout union hacks like Doug Fraser. Only when a section of the UAW bureaucrats, under the pressure of the opposition of the rank and file workers, declared themselves against takebacks did the liquidators even discover that a fight against concessions exists, and then only to try to tie the workers to the tail of this vacillating, reformist and impotent bureaucrat opposition. (See "Riding the Tail of the UAW Bureaucrat Opposition" in *The Workers' Advocate* of May 24, 1982.)

But while the majority of the liquidators have shown their disdain for the workers' struggle against concessions by avoiding it, downplaying it, and of late, trying to channel it into the arms of the UAW bureaucrats, the Maoist "Revolutionary Communist Party" has recently discovered the anti-concessions fight only to denounce it outright. The RCP actually chastises the anti-concessions struggle as not only "wrong" but "more than that extremely reactionary." Such repugnant contempt for the workers' struggle is an expression of the depths of renegacy to which the RCP has sunk and is further

evidence of how the RCP too assists the union bureaucrats. While the majority of liquidators are working day and night for merger with the trade union bureaucracy, the RCP, by leaving the field of the anti-concession fight and denigrating the struggle against the labor bureaucrats, is actually assisting them to escape exposure. This stand shows that, despite the revolutionary phrasemongering of the RCP, Chinese revisionism and Mao Zedong Thought lead straight down an inclined plane to vulgar liquidationism.

The RCP has approached liquidationism from a different angle than most of the Maoist liquidators. For a number of years the RCP has made its mark by trying to cover up the ultra-rightist soul of the "three worlds theory," and the right opportunist essence of Mao Zedong Thought as a whole, with wild and extravagant anarchist and trotskyite phrasemongering. But the RCP's opposition to the workers' struggle against concessions, and their tacit support for the sellout UAW bureaucracy on these grounds, brings to light many of the ugly features that the RCP has in common with the other liquidators. Profound skepticism and disdain for the revolutionary capacity of the working class; abandonment of the essential work of building the vanguard Marxist-Leninist party of the working class; renunciation of the struggle against social-democracy and the labor bureaucracy; sneering at Marxism-Leninism and renunciation of its basic principles — all this RCP holds in common with the other liquidators. RCP's anarchist despair over the slow development of the revolutionary process and its impatience with the arduous and painstaking day-to-day revolutionary work is nothing but an echo of the sniveling moans over the "lost hope of revolution" by other Maoist liquidators such as the CPML. These are just two sides of the same liquidationist coin which robs the working class of its class independence and condemns it to always be a mere plaything in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

RCP Condemns the Fight Against Concessions to the Auto Billionaires

Most of the liquidators try to conceal their unease over the struggle against concessions, but the RCP has taken its gloves off. In an article entitled "UAW/Ford

Contract Renegotiation — Trouble in Auto, Turmoil in the Empire" in the February 26, 1982 issue of *Revolutionary Worker*, the RCP launches a barefaced broadside against the anti-concessions struggle and especially against those "leftists" who have been organizing the workers for this fight.

The RCP declares, "With only subtle variations, the unanimous cry of the multifarious opportunist organizations of the U.S. left [in fact there was no such unanimous cry and only the MLP waged a serious fight on this question — WA] has been: 'Auto workers must fight back against company attacks on the wages and benefits they have won. If Japanese wages are lower, then they should be raised rather than U.S. wages lowered. The companies say they're broke, but they have the money. And if the companies are in crisis, let them bear the costs, not the workers.' *This line, playing upon the spontaneous tendencies of the workers, is dead wrong. To put it bluntly, from the standpoint of political economy the companies and the UAW have a better case than do these 'champions of labor.'*" (p. 19, emphasis added) To put it bluntly, the RCP has gone over to the side of the auto monopolies and the arch-sellouts like Doug Fraser against the workers.

But perhaps this is just a wrong phrase, a typographical error that has somehow slipped into RCP's otherwise enlightening article. Not a chance! This article, in fact, presents a very lengthy pseudo-analysis of the economic crisis in the auto industry which "proves" that auto monopolies have no choice but to snatch concessions from their supposedly "overpaid" workers. After pages of supposed analysis of the economic crisis, the RCP concludes that the auto monopolies "do have to keep from going under (which may include some big investments — as much as they can swing). Even staying on their feet and keeping from going under involves cutting the costs of production as much as possible, and where else can the companies concentrate their cost-cutting than in the cost of labor-power." (p. 19, emphasis added) In other words the giant auto monopolies should certainly not cut the billions of dollars in interest payments to the banks; nor should the billions of dollars in dividends to the capitalist stockholders go unpaid; nor should the millions of dollars paid to the executives who manage the monopolies be touched; and above all don't stop the billions upon billions for job-eliminating automation. Oh no! The auto monopolies can cut nothing but the workers' pay.

And why not? After all, according to the RCP the workers are overpaid anyway. They write, "auto workers — as well as those in steel, rubber and a whole section of the working class comprising most of those in the large-scale and unionized industries in the U.S. — do have gilded chains, in that they occupy a better-off position within the working class and are in fact paid above the value of their labor power." (p. 19) Thank you, learned Maoists. Neither GM head Roger Smith

nor Ronald Reagan could have put it any better.

Such lessons in "political economy" show that the RCP has simply taken the monopoly capitalists at their word and ended up with a cynical expression of the "practical" politics of liquidationism. The capitalists are in crisis and are working to shift the entire burden of this crisis onto the workers' shoulders. The workers are only now beginning a fight against the capitalists' attacks, a fight that must become more determined, more organized and more conscious to even partially hold back the massive layoffs and wage cutting. But the RCP rushes forward to declare "No! Workers, stop your struggle! Don't you know that capitalist 'political economy' demands job elimination and the slashing of your pay? Don't you know that you're overpaid anyhow? Put an end to your silly 'unrealistic illusions' that fighting against the capitalists is worth anything. Instead, come join with us, the RCP, to preach the gospel of the 'realities' of capitalism while we wait for the great days of revolution to descend on us from heaven."

But the workers will never accept this "realism" of the liquidators. They will organize for a tenacious fight against the capitalist concessions drive. And in this fight the Marxist-Leninist Party will play its part to organize the workers in their own independent class movement, to train them and prepare them for the revolutionary struggle to put the entire system of capitalist exploitation in its grave.

Anarchist Opposition to All Economic Struggle

The RCP's denunciation of the anti-concessions fight in auto is an expression of its anarchist disdain for the economic struggle of the workers in general.

The RCP admits that the fight in auto is no run-of-the-mill contract fight, but is in the center of the fight against the takeback offensive of the entire capitalist class. They actually emphasize that "there is a bourgeois campaign to get these sorts of cutbacks on a broad scale. It is put forward that the UAW has always been the toughest bargainers — now if this union is recognizing the need to accept wage and benefit cuts in the interests of the industry, surely it's a portent for the labor movement generally. Before the Ford agreement was reached, newspapers and magazines, pointing to wage concessions by teamsters and meatpackers as well as the auto negotiations, were headlining stories 'Labor Seeks Less' and 'Does Labor Face a Year of Givebacks?' All this is obviously part of preparing the way for similar agreements in other industries where contracts will be expiring." (p. 18)

But instead of concluding from this the particular importance for Marxist-Leninists to be in the center of this fight, the RCP denounces all struggle to defend the workers' wages and benefits. They argue, "But the point is that these cutbacks in the wages and benefits of

workers are part of a much larger scene, integrally bound up with the whole motion of things toward a re-division of the world — which throws much larger issues on the agenda, as we'll see [what we shall see is that this 'larger scene' with 'larger issues' is none other than the ultra-rightist 'theory of three worlds' — WA], and in terms of which a political focus on *the fight to retain benefits becomes quite wrong and more than that extremely reactionary.*" (p. 18, emphasis added) Later, drawing out their anarchist profundities, they stress, "In this context, the whole effort to focus the attention of workers and the masses of people exclusively on cutbacks, 'givebacks,' and the dread spectre of 'Reaganomics' is profoundly stultifying and reactionary. How can it be anything but politically stultifying and demoralizing to hold your sights down to the mundane and day-to-day at a time when the tremors of the approaching shake-up of the whole world are beginning to be felt?" (p. 19) Here is RCP's anarchist logic to a tee. The fight against the capitalist offensive on the workers' livelihood be damned, the great days are coming. Sneering at, ridiculing and condemning the workers' economic struggle in the name of the approaching revolutionary storms, this is all that RCP has to offer the workers.

Of course, the RCP tries to paint up its opposition to the economic struggle as a fight against "economism." They denounce a "political focus" on the economic struggle and focusing attention "exclusively" on the economic struggle. But this is just a very thinly veiled ruse. If the RCP were actually fighting economism as they claim, then they would have worked in the auto workers' struggle in the same way that the MLP did. The MLP carried out its work in the anti-concession fight in such a way as to expose the UAW bureaucrats, to build the Party and organize the workers. That is, the MLP worked in the economic struggle in such a way as to serve the organizing of the revolutionary movement; not using the anti-concession fight to promote reformism, but as a basis for revolutionary work. At the same time, the MLP always combined this struggle with work to draw the workers into politics, to bring them into the center of the anti-imperialist struggle, into the fight against racial discrimination and fascization. And the MLP carried out persistent agitation for socialism and the revolution, including major campaigns for May Day and in support of socialist Albania. But the RCP carried out no such work among the auto workers and in fact has been deserting the factories altogether.

The RCP is *not* denouncing economism — that opportunist trend which tries to limit the perspective of the working class movement to the economic struggle, while in the political struggle downplaying the building of the party and maintaining that the workers should trail behind the liberals. No, the RCP is denouncing the economic struggle itself. In fact, the RCP is on a broad crusade, writing one article after another, to condemn

the economic struggle and in particular the Marxist-Leninists' work in the economic struggle as "economism."

One example of this can be found in a major "theoretical" article entitled "Imperialist Economism, or the European Disease" which is carried in the May, 1982 issue of the journal *A World to Win*. Here the RCP pontificates, "One of the main lessons of the history of the degeneration of the great majority of Communist Parties that made up the Third International is what a pernicious influence economism has exerted in the history of the international movement. As far back as the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1928, when, it should be pointed out, the Comintern was following an overall revolutionary line, *serious economist deviations were already in evidence — in particular the call of the Comintern for the parties in Europe to become 'mass parties' and to fight for leadership of the day-to-day struggle of the workers.*" (p. 6, emphasis added) Could anything be clearer? The RCP defines economism not as the restricting of the class struggle to only the economic struggle, but as any attempt of the Marxist-Leninists to fight for leadership of the day-to-day struggle.

The RCP has a historic prejudice that the economic struggle itself is "economism." In fact, for most of the 1970's, the RCP approached their work in the factories in precisely an economist fashion. They recently as much as admitted this. In their present crusade they have been promoting themselves as "*What Is to Be Done?ists,*" trying to cloak themselves in the mantle of Lenin's powerful work against economism. But in this article they admit that in the past the RCP did not follow Lenin's teachings against economism and in fact held that they did not apply to the U.S. They say, "One hears often (*indeed, such a line existed powerfully in our own Party*) that *What Is to Be Done?* can only be understood on the basis of the particularities of Russia to which, alone, it is applicable." (*A World to Win*, p. 5, emphasis added)

In the past, RCP's approach was marked by the following characteristics:

1) They reduced their work at the factories to economic work. They held that the workers were backward and could only be approached on the most narrow, economic basis. Their leaflets were written down to the workers in a vulgar style.

2) They negated the work of building up party organization in the factories and refused to instill the revolutionary party spirit among the workers.

3) At the same time, they expected rapid miracles by dealing with economic issues. Failing to see the economic struggle as one front of an all-sided and coordinated class struggle, downgrading politics and the need to build up a core of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist workers, they adopted exaggerated and unrealistic expectations of a sudden great breakthrough on the

economic front.

4) They allied with various opportunists, including elements of the trade union bureaucracy, in an attempt to make fast gains. Instead of using the economic struggle as one of the ways of exposing the opportunists, the RCP joined with the opportunists.

The RCP did not and has not corrected this economist approach. Instead they swung to the other extreme of denouncing the economic struggle itself as "economist." This extreme flip-flop does not mean that their earlier economism is now repudiated. The RCP still firmly believes that if the struggle for higher wages, benefits, and so forth is carried out, then it must be carried out in the same old economist fashion. Thus, although today they have taken up wild anarchist phrasemongering, the RCP still holds to the same basic ideas that motivated their earlier economism. So, for example, they still:

1) believe the workers are backward. In the past this meant appealing to the workers only in the most vulgar economist terms. Now, having repudiated "economism," the RCP is simply abandoning work in the factories altogether and denouncing the industrial proletariat as being bribed and bought off. But we will say more on this later.

2) are not carrying out work to build party organization in the factories since they are deserting the factories altogether.

3) ally with various opportunist forces. Today this comes up in two ways. On the one hand the RCP spends a great deal of their work building up networks of pacifists, liberals and social-democrats to sign their legal defense petitions and speak at their war crimes tribunals. At the same time they denigrate the struggle against social-democracy and repeatedly in practice downplay the struggle against the labor bureaucrats, as can be seen in the auto workers' struggle. The RCP's constant refrain is that the struggle against opportunism, the social-democrats, the trade union bureaucrats, etc., is not so important; rather the "real" fight is always something else.

The RCP's apparent vacillation from one extreme to the other is but a typical expression of the neo-revisionist dichotomy of seeing the economic struggle as everything or condemning the economic struggle altogether. U.S. neo-revisionism, which is in the main an American expression of the international opportunist trend of Chinese revisionism, could never understand the Marxist-Leninist policy on work in the economic struggle. They could never grasp how to use economic struggle to build the party or how to correctly combine the economic and political struggle. Instead they constantly ran from one extreme to the other. The RCP recently revealed this dichotomy in their writing against "economism." They claim that "More recently a group of professed Maoists in West Germany, the Communist Workers League of Germany (KABD), has made the

fight for the 35-hour work week central to its political work, even going so far as saying on the occasion of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that the way to oppose war developments was to intensify the struggle for the 35-hour work week...." ("Imperialist Economism, or the European Disease," *A World to Win*, May 1982, p. 9) If this is true, it is a striking manifestation of the exaggeration of the significance of the economic struggle that the RCP itself was once prey to. But in criticizing this view the RCP simply swings to the other side of the neo-revisionist dichotomy and denounces the economic struggle altogether. With its present anarchist phrasemongering, the RCP has not taken one step forward, but remains stuck in the same neo-revisionist framework as of old.

Having abandoned the economic struggle, what has the RCP replaced it with? The fact is that their arguments against the economic struggle also apply against every other struggle except for the final moment of insurrection. The RCP has shown a striking disdain for the movement against U.S. imperialist aggression in El Salvador, the movement against nuclear weapons, and other anti-imperialist struggles. The fights against segregationism, racial discrimination and racist terror also, by and large, do not meet up to their standards. With the exception of their own anarchist actions and a few acts of pacifist "civil disobedience," the RCP shows virtually no interest in any struggle. They are left in the situation described vividly by Lenin, when he showed how the revisionists and anarcho-syndicalists were really two sides of a single coin.

"The revisionists regard as phrasemongering all arguments about 'leaps' and about the working-class movement being antagonistic in principle to the whole of the old society. They regard reforms as a partial realization of socialism. The anarcho-syndicalists reject 'petty work,' especially the utilization of the parliamentary platform. [Or in the case of the RCP, they direct their main sermons against the economic struggle — WA] In practice, these latter tactics amount to waiting for 'great days' along with an inability to muster the forces which create great events. Both of them hinder the thing that is most important and most urgent, namely, to unite the workers in big, powerful and properly functioning organizations, capable of functioning well under all circumstances, permeated with the spirit of the class struggle, clearly realizing their aims and trained in the true Marxist world outlook." (Lenin, "Differences in the European Labour Movement," December, 1910, *Collected Works*, Vol. 16, p. 349. All emphasis added except for the word "all.")

Renunciation of the Teachings of Marxism-Leninism

The RCP is quite clear that, in opposing the economic struggle as "economism" and in rejecting any partial struggle short of the insurrection itself as being "reformist" and "economist," they are coming out against Marxism-Leninism.

Today, in fact, RCP's leader, Bob Avakian, is writing one treatise after another against Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. In these lengthy tirades, Avakian is introducing one after another his corrections, revisions, reinterpretations and straight-out mocking of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

Recently, in RCP's crusade against "economism," Avakian has dubbed the RCP "What Is to Be Done?-ists." For years, while our predecessors promoted *What Is to Be Done?* in order to encourage the trend in favor of building the party, Avakian ridiculed what he called "What Is to Be Done?-itis." But now the RCP is trying to drape itself in the banner of Lenin's great polemic against economism. Nevertheless, Avakian does not fail to emphasize that, here too, he has his disagreements with Lenin's writings against economism. In the article "Why We Are 'What Is to Be Done?-ists'" Avakian arrogantly proclaims, "Sometimes people have said, 'you just uncritically take everything in *What Is to Be Done?*, you don't even have any criticisms of it.' And I say, yes we do, we have some points of disagreement with Lenin because there are some places where he still made certain concessions to the German social-democratic (which really was social-democratic) trend." (*Revolutionary Worker*, January 1, 1982, p. 14) Indeed, Avakian does have his disagreements with Lenin and this is no accident. There is no way that the RCP can maintain its present attitude toward the economic struggle without departing from Marxism-Leninism.

Since the RCP has made such a muddle of the issue, it is necessary to draw out from the writings of Marxism-Leninism a few points on the economic struggle.

From the beginning, Marxism has recognized the economic struggle as one facet of the class struggle of the proletariat. It is not the whole class struggle, nor is it a diversion from the class struggle, but one part. The Marxist-Leninist classics long ago defined the class struggle as having three components, three great fronts, namely the political struggle, the ideological/theoretical struggle and the economic struggle. Since the RCP is so fond of promoting themselves as "What Is to Be Done?-ists" let's take a look at what Lenin actually said.

Today, as in the past, *What Is to Be Done?* exposes the anti-Marxist ideas of the RCP. Lenin, unlike the RCP, does not sneer at the economic struggle or renounce it. Rather he recognizes it as one of the facets of the class struggle and demands that the Marxists combine the different components of the class struggle

into a single powerful assault on the citadels of capital. In the first chapter of the book Lenin quotes Engels' words on the Marxist movement (then called social-democratic) in Germany:

"It must be said to the credit of the German workers that they have exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time since a workers' movement has existed, the struggle is being conducted pursuant to its three sides — the theoretical, the political, and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists) — in harmony and in its interconnections, and in a systematic way. It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 372)

Here is a concise expression of the Marxist-Leninist view of the economic struggle. But the RCP is departing from Marxism-Leninism in order to denounce the economic struggle. The fact that this strikingly clear statement is enthusiastically quoted by Lenin in *What Is to Be Done?* can only lead one to presume that this is one of those "concessions to the German social-democratic...trend" that Avakian is criticizing Lenin for making.

But if the economic struggle is one part of the class struggle, then what attitude should be taken to it, in what relation does it stand to the revolutionary movement of the working class? From the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels down to the present, all Marxists have recognized the necessity to use the economic struggle, neither overestimating it and taking it as a substitute for the political struggle and the revolution, nor neglecting its value.

Marx, for example, is well known for his teachings on the necessity for the working class to organize itself as a political force in order to carry out the revolution. But he did not, like RCP, use this as an excuse to denounce the economic struggle. No, Marx is also well known for his polemics against the petty-bourgeois socialists and others who, like the RCP, had their aristocratic disdain for the economic struggle. For example, in his book *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx, among other things, defended the economic struggle against the petty-bourgeois anarchist Proudhon. Or take Marx's well-known pamphlet *Wages, Price and Profit* which is entirely devoted to defense of the economic struggle. Marx, of course, proves that capitalism can not satisfy the demands of the working class, that it will always exploit them to the bone. But he does not denounce the economic struggle on these grounds, as the RCP has done. Rather, he draws the following conclusion:

"Such being the tendency of things in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at

making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past slavation.... By cowardly giving way in their every-day conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

"At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these every-day struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market.... Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'" (Karl Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit*, pp. 77-78, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1969, emphasis as in original)

The RCP simply cannot understand this Marxist assessment of the relation of the economic struggle to the revolutionary movement. They follow, instead, the tactic of waiting for the axe to fall, of applauding the misery of the working class and claiming that this alone will bring the workers to revolution. The Marxist-Leninists, on the other hand, understand the necessity for waging the economic struggle and how to use it as a force in favor of developing the revolutionary movement.

Marxism-Leninism, in fact, emphasizes that the economic struggle is a factor for the development of the organization of the workers. Marx and Engels repeatedly pointed this out and Lenin too emphasized it. It is notable that in his polemics against the economists, Lenin emphasized that the economic struggle should be used to build the vanguard party of the working class. For example, in the article entitled "Apropos of the *Profession de Foi*," Lenin asserts that:

"For the socialist, the economic struggle serves as a basis for the organization of the workers into a revolutionary party, for the strengthening and development of their class struggle against the whole capitalist system. If the economic struggle is taken as something complete in itself there will be nothing socialist in it; the experience of all European countries shows us many examples not only of socialist, but also of anti-socialist trade unions.

"...the task of the socialist is to bring the

economic struggle to further the socialist movement and the successes of the revolutionary working class party. The task of the socialist is to further the indissoluble fusion of the economic and the political struggle into the single class struggle of the socialist working-class masses." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 293-94, emphasis added)

The RCP has never been able to grasp this clear Marxist line. They could never see how to use the economic struggle to build the Marxist-Leninist party, nor how the Marxists combine the economic and political struggle to advance the revolutionary movement of the working class. As a result, they vacillate back and forth, one day submerging their organization in narrow economist activity and the next day detaching their organization from the workers and denouncing the economic struggle altogether.

The RCP's departure from Marxism-Leninism on the question of the economic struggle is also related to their denigration of the struggle against revisionism and opportunism. Marxism teaches that, for the party to be built and for the workers to be organized into their own independent revolutionary movement, an unremitting struggle must be waged against revisionism and opportunism. And, as well, Marxism teaches that the economic struggle is one field for this struggle, that the economic struggle should be used to expose the revisionists, the social-democrats, the trade union bureaucrats and other misleaders of the workers, to break the masses free from their influence.

A good example of this attitude can be found in Lenin's article "The Conference of the RSDLP Groups Abroad." This article was written in 1915, during World War I, when social-chauvinism had split the working class movement, disintegrated the Second International, and undermined the vast majority of the Marxist (then called "social-democratic") parties. The social-chauvinists had completely abandoned revolutionary struggle and worked to turn all the old methods of parliamentary and economic struggle to reformism. Lenin counterposed to this disgusting social-chauvinist treachery the slogan of converting the imperialist war into a civil war of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and in this article he indicated the necessary steps towards this civil war, including: the building of the required underground organization; fraternization among the troops; support for revolutionary mass action by the proletariat; etc. But, at the same time, Lenin did not call for abandoning the economic struggle because of the growth of chauvinism; much less did his lecture that the very waging of the economic struggle means to promote chauvinism, as we shall see the RCP does later on. Lenin never argued that these old methods of struggle should be abandoned to the opportunists. To the contrary, he argued that these fields of struggle must be utilized in a revolutionary manner to

expose the opportunists and to train the masses for revolution. With regard to the parliamentary and economic struggles Lenin explained:

"The organization of the working class has been badly damaged. Nevertheless, a revolutionary crisis is maturing. After the war, the ruling classes of all countries will make a still greater effort to throw the proletariat's emancipation movement back for decades. The task of the revolutionary Social-Democrats — both in the event of a rapid revolutionary development and in that of a protracted crisis, will not consist in renouncing lengthy and day-by-day work, or in discarding any of the old methods of the class struggle. To direct both the parliamentary and the economic struggle against opportunism, in the spirit of revolutionary struggle of the masses — such will be the task." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, pp. 160-61, emphasis added)

Lenin's approach is quite clear. But the RCP denigrates the fight against revisionism and opportunism as a whole and sneers at using the economic struggle against them as mere competition with the revisionists. For example, the RCP preaches, "it is certainly true that this worsening of living standards will propel workers to struggle. But...revolutionary communists cannot 'outbid' the revisionists and imperialists in their appeals to the workers on an economic basis." ("Imperialist Economism, or the European Disease," *A World to Win*, May 1982, p. 9) No, instead, the RCP preaches, the communists should abandon the economic struggle altogether and leave the field free for the opportunists to saddle the workers with takebacks, or, at best, to confining the workers' struggle to the meekest reformism. Not an uncompromising and all-sided struggle against revisionism and opportunism, as Marxism-Leninism teaches, but denouncing the Marxist-Leninists for using the economic struggle to combat the revisionists, this is the bankrupt course proclaimed by the RCP.

But we must look at one final point from the Marxist-Leninist classics on the economic struggle. Since the RCP denounces the economic struggle in the name of waiting for the revolution, let us see what Lenin says about the role of the economic struggle during an actually insurrectionary period. Consider Russia in the era of the 1905 revolution and the two revolutions in 1917. Here we have a time of political and social revolutions par excellence. Here we have a time when the Marxists stressed over and over again that the movement could not be confined to the economic struggle, that not only was political struggle necessary, but in fact the most energetic insurrectionary struggle.

Did the Bolsheviks, therefore, follow Avakian's advice and decide that the struggle for higher wages was in contradiction to the revolutionary struggle, that it was a mere gilding of the chains of capitalist slavery, a "mundane," "stultifying," "reactionary" and "de-

moralizing" fight for the leftover crumbs, and hence that it should be abandoned? No. Instead the Bolsheviks defined the particular role of the economic struggle and used it to build the revolutionary movement. In summing up the experience of the 1905 revolution, Lenin wrote:

"A distinctive feature [in the 1905 revolution — WA] was the manner in which economic strikes were interwoven with political strikes during the revolution. There can be no doubt that only this very close link-up of the two forms of strike gave the movement its great power. The broad masses of the exploited could not have been drawn into the revolutionary movement had they not been given daily examples of how the wage-workers in the various industries were forcing the capitalists to grant immediate, direct improvements in their conditions." (Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 240-41)

The February and October revolutions of 1917 were a powerful reaffirmation of this important lesson of the 1905 revolution. For example, let us examine a passage from *The History of the Civil War in the USSR*, which was edited by no less authorities on the subject than Stalin, Kirov, Zhdanov and other leading Bolsheviks. Within its account of the growing revolutionary crisis in the immediate days preceding the earth-shaking October Proletarian Socialist Revolution, this *History* points out that:

"...everywhere in the provinces the labour movement at that period furnished striking evidence of the ability of the Bolshevik Party to combine partial demands with the general aims of the movement.

"True to Lenin's precept — always with the masses and at the head of the masses, never running ahead, but never lagging behind — the Bolshevik Party defended the everyday demands of the workers for higher wages, improved working conditions and food supply, control over the hiring and dismissal of workers, and the protection of female labour. The Bolsheviks acted boldly and energetically, not only as organisers of political campaigns but also as leaders of the disputes and strikes of individual groups of workers. They went among all grades of workers, took a hand in every form of the struggle and linked it up with the general aims of the movement. The Party regarded the partial demands of the workers as a sort of ladder by which the various groups of workers could mount from small, local problems to the general problems of revolutionary policy." (International Publishers, pp. 418-19)

By guiding the economic struggle, by linking up economic and political strikes, the Leninists did not renounce the revolution, but instead made use of the economic struggle in favor of the revolution. Conversely,

the RCP-style tactics of denouncing the economic struggle as "economism" would have resulted in isolating the advanced workers, taking the power out of the movement, and ensuring that the economic struggle was thrown into the hands of the economists and reformists and used against the revolution. Only the thoughtless revolutionary (or an aristocratic anarchist like Bob Avakian) denounces the economic struggle. The Marxist-Leninists formulate the correct policies on how to use the economic struggle in favor of the revolution.

Maoist Distrust for the Industrial Workers

The RCP replaces the teachings of Marxism-Leninism with "three worlds-ism" and Mao Zedong Thought. In fact, one of the chief bases for the RCP's contempt for the economic struggle is its profound Maoist skepticism for the industrial workers.

Of course, as with other matters, the RCP couches its distrust for the industrial workers in revolutionary phrasemongering. In this case, they suggest that their preachings against the workers are a fight against "national chauvinism." For example, the RCP argues that the workers' struggle to defend their jobs and wages against the concessions drive of the auto billionaires has the same effect of promoting "imperialist chauvinism" as the UAW hacks' support for the auto giants through "the 'Buy America' campaign and pushing the line that American workers must seek to benefit themselves and 'their' country by 'stopping the hemorrhaging of our jobs overseas.'" (*Revolutionary Worker*, February 26, 1982, p. 18)

This is absurd logic because, of course, it is quite possible to fight against the national chauvinism of the sellout UAW bosses as part of the fight against concessions to the auto monopolies. This is precisely what the MLP has been doing all along. The MLP has been using the anti-concession struggle to expose the UAW bureaucrats, to attack their campaigns for national chauvinism and to train the workers in the spirit of the international working class struggle against capitalism. For example, the MLP agitation emphasized that the workers should not follow the chauvinist policy of the UAW hacks to compete with the workers of other countries over who can take the biggest cuts, but, instead, should join with the workers of Japan and elsewhere in a common struggle against capitalist exploitation. Repeatedly the MLP stressed that the task of the American workers is to fight our "own" domestic exploiters while supporting the struggles of the workers of other countries against imperialism and their "own" bourgeoisie.

But the RCP is not interested in this kind of fight. Their anger is not directed against the UAW bureaucrats who have sold themselves to the monopoly capitalists and who are promoting national chauvinism in order to defend these same exploiters against the work-

ers' struggle. Rather, the RCP denounces any and every struggle to defend the workers' jobs and pay as itself being inherently chauvinistic. The RCP is distorting the well-known teachings of Lenin on the bought-off labor aristocracy which is based mainly on the union bureaucracy and a section of the skilled workers. This labor aristocracy is bribed out of the imperialists' superprofits and is the social basis for the spread of opportunism and chauvinism among the mass of workers. But the RCP is not interested in fighting the corrupting influence of the labor aristocracy. Rather, it denounces the basic production workers, who are the vast majority of the workers in the big industries, claiming that these are bribed and bought off. Here is how the RCP puts it: "...how can it be anything but reactionary to harness workers to the imperialist war machine by urging them to exert every effort to hang on to the gold on their chains?" (*Ibid.*, p. 19, emphasis added) Further on, elaborating this outlandish view, the RCP claims that the supposedly "gilded chains" of the "auto workers — as well as those in steel, rubber, and a whole section of the working class comprising most of those in the most large-scale unionized industries in the U.S...is principally due to the kingpin position of the U.S. imperialists in the spiral since World War 2 and the fact that they and their agents have been able to consciously buy off this section of workers." (*Ibid.*, p. 19, emphasis added)

Here we have the heart of the RCP's view of the industrial workers. They are, according to the RCP, bought off and profiting from U.S. imperialist exploitation of the people of other countries. Therefore, a fight to defend their jobs and pay is simply a fight for a bribe, a fight to benefit from the misery of the oppressed nations, a fight necessarily based on "imperialist chauvinism." So, don't fight the concessions drive of the capitalists, don't fight the imperialist chauvinism of the UAW bureaucrats, don't use this struggle to organize the workers and prepare them for the revolutionary battles that lie ahead. Rather, stand aside and applaud the agony of the workers. Stand aside preaching that only if the workers are crushed to one level mass of wretches past salvation, then, and only then, will the imperialist "hold on" the workers be broken. This is the topsyturvy logic of the professional phrasemongers of the RCP.

The vast majority of the basic production workers in auto and other industrial sectors are anything but bought-off. Rather, they themselves are exploited to the bone by the monopoly capitalists. Today, for example, hundreds of thousands of auto workers have been thrown into the streets where, without a job and, for most, without any other source of income, they are facing extreme hardships. Those still on the job fare only slightly better. Their wages and benefits are being slashed right and left and they face ever intensifying overwork at the plants. The current economic crisis is

squeezing the auto workers to the extreme, but even in the best of times they are cruelly exploited by the auto monopolies. Their pay, while relatively higher than the starvation wages of the non-unionized workers, only barely allows them to make ends meet. They face regular intermittent layoffs. And the harsh assembly line conditions, the continual speedup and job combinations, means a life where they are literally being worked to an early grave. This can hardly be called living high on the hog.

It is notable that in the late 1960's, during some of the best of times for the auto industry, the auto workers launched a broad strike movement against the brutal exploitation by the auto giants, a strike movement that included many wildcats against the UAW bureaucracy and which developed well into the 1970's. It is notable too, that it was during these "best of times" that a significant section of the auto workers joined in the black rebellions in Detroit, and across the country many turned to revolutionary politics. The fact is that the auto workers are one of the more militant sections of the working class, a section that has over many years taken a definite interest in politics and among whom can be found many workers inclined towards the revolutionary movement.

No, the masses of production workers in auto, and those in other industrial sectors as well, are not bought off. Rather, they are the backbone of the approaching revolutionary storms. The struggle to defend the jobs and livelihood of these workers is not a fight for "imperialist chauvinism." Rather, it is a necessary struggle against the monopoly capitalists and one which, if carried out correctly, will help to organize the workers and prepare them for their historic mission as the gravediggers of the capitalist system. But the RCP cannot see these obvious truths because they are blinded by the corrupting prejudices of Chinese revisionism and its ideological mainstay Mao Zedong Thought.

The Maoist leaders in the Communist Party of China never trusted the industrial workers. With such Maoist theories as "encircling the cities from the countryside" they downplayed the role of the workers in the Chinese revolution and replaced proletarian hegemony in the revolution with that of the peasantry.

The Chinese revisionists were not only skeptical about the Chinese proletariat but they also distrusted the industrial workers in all of the capitalist countries. For example, the official Chinese literature extended the concept of encircling the cities from the countryside to a theory on the course of the world revolution, with the "countryside" of Asia, Africa and Latin America surrounding the "cities" of the imperialist metropolises. This idea, which was promoted widely in the 1960's, is one of the basic anti-Marxist underpinnings of Mao Zedong's "three worlds theory."

This primeval "three worlds-ism" was very prevalent in the U.S. in the 1960's and early 1970's. It dove-

tailed with the New Leftist concept that the working class is bought off and no longer the main and leading force of the American revolution and merged with New Leftism in the ideology of neo-revisionism. Some neo-revisionists took these concepts to anarchist and terrorist conclusions that American revolutionaries should simply carry out isolated acts to cause "material damage" to the U.S. imperialists and, in this way, assist the revolutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Other neo-revisionists concluded that since the workers are supposedly bought off, then they can only be approached on a narrow economist basis. The predecessor of the RCP, the Revolutionary Union, actually held both views. Eventually, in the early 1970's, it split over them, with the Avakian wing turning to economism.

But the RU, and the RCP after it, was unable to organize the industrial workers with their Maoist ideas. Today, instead of denouncing Maoism, they are even more vehemently denouncing the industrial workers. Having swallowed Maoism whole, the RCP has gotten sick with a bellyache and is regurgitating the "three worlds-ism" of old as the justification to write the industrial proletariat out of their program, to denounce the workers as "bought off" and to ridicule the workers' struggle.

"Three Worldist" Contempt for the Workers' Movement as a Whole

But the RCP's "three worlds-ism" doesn't stop here. The fact is they are unable to appreciate the economic struggle, or for that matter, any struggle of the workers against their "own" capitalist class, because their eyes are riveted to the contradiction between U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism. The RCP is completely imbued with the "three worlds" prejudice that strategy and tactics must be based principally on the maneuverings between the two superpowers.

Amazing as it may seem, the RCP actually "analyzes" that the chief issue in the anti-concession struggle in auto is the clash between the two superpowers. They tell us that the issue is *not* the fight of the workers against the auto giants. No, to believe this is not only "unrealistic" and "quite wrong" but "reactionary." They tell us as well, after a lengthy discussion of how the U.S. auto monopolies are scrambling against the Japanese auto monopolies, that this is not the issue either. Instead, they say, "It is the dialectical relation between the crisis in the U.S. bloc, the crisis in the Soviet bloc, and the rivalry between the two which accounts for the situation in which these imperialists are caught — a situation from which they cannot escape except through winning a world war.

"This is the context of the crisis in the U.S. auto industry, and explains what principally shapes the bourgeoisie's response to it." (*Ibid.*, p. 19)

Now it is of course true that U.S. imperialism and So-

viet social-imperialism are at each other's throats. And it is important in organizing the workers that they are trained to not line up on the side of U.S. imperialism and to have no illusions about Soviet social-imperialism as well. But to deny the workers' struggle on the grounds that the contradiction between the two superpowers is heating up is simply "three worlds-ism." And this is exactly what the RCP is doing.

The RCP's lengthy dissertation about how the conflict between the two superpowers stands behind the crisis in the auto industry leads them to no other conclusion than that it is "reactionary" for the workers to fight against the U.S. auto firms.

But perhaps someone will say that the RCP is just denouncing the anti-concession fight in order to urge the workers to take up the struggle against the war preparations of U.S. imperialism, since they stress over and over again that "the real issues being thrown upon the agenda of history are those of a slavemasters' war, the violent redivision of the world..." (*Ibid.*, p. 19) Don't bet on it! In the article on the auto contracts the RCP draws no such conclusion. They say only that the fight against the capitalist takeback offensive is wrong. Elsewhere, however, the RCP makes it clear that it is not only the economic struggle that they are against, but in fact any struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Take, for example, Bob Avakian's long-winded ramblings entitled "Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will." Here Avakian actually claims that "focusing the attention of the workers narrowly on the sphere of their relationship with their own employers or even their own bourgeoisie and their own state is in fact a recipe for turning the workers against the rest of the international proletariat." (*Revolution*, December 1981, p. 40, emphasis added) Strange internationalism, is it not? The U.S. imperialist bourgeoisie is one of the two greatest enemies of the world's peoples, oppressing and exploiting the working masses in countries all around the globe. But the U.S. workers should not support those people being oppressed by

U.S. imperialism by concentrating its fire against its "own" imperialist bourgeoisie, by striving to bring down this international slave master. Oh no, this would be, according to the RCP, "turning the workers against the rest of the international proletariat." Is this not the most amazing balderdash?

Lenin teaches that:

"There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is — working wholeheartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement in one's own country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) this struggle, this, and only this, line, in every country without exception." ("The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 75, emphasis as in the original)

But the RCP simply cannot grasp this real internationalism of Lenin. They are so completely enmeshed in the "three worlds" theory, they are so completely caught up in the inter-imperialist conflicts of the two superpowers, that at every turn they lose sight of the struggle that is unfolding against the bourgeoisie and they turn their backs on the tasks of building up the revolutionary movement.

Today the RCP is fond of raving against "imperialist chauvinism." But the fact is that they share a common ideological platform with the social-chauvinists. The RCP itself does not extend its "three worlds-ism" to the social-chauvinist conclusion that the American workers should ally with U.S. imperialism in its war drive against Soviet social-imperialism. Nevertheless, by its constant promotion of basic ideological tenets of the "three worlds" theory, and by its anarchist disdain for the economic and virtually every struggle of the workers, the RCP is assisting the social-chauvinist groups and the "imperialist chauvinist" union hacks to undermine the class independence of the workers and to keep them tied to the coattails of the capitalist exploiters. □

MARXIST-LENINIST BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

NEW YORK: 256 W. 15th St., New York, NY 10011

SEATTLE: 4421 1/2 Rainier Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118 telephone: 723-8409

BOSTON: 695 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139
telephone: 547-7160

OAKLAND: 3232 Grove St., Oakland, CA 94609
telephone: 653-4840

CHICAGO: 2167 S. California, Chicago, IL 60608
telephone: 927-4311

struggle for the revolutionary destruction of imperialism."

We note that this description makes no distinction between the strivings of the masses and the framework imposed on these strivings by the revisionists and social-democrats. Moreover, this description is phrased in such a way as to hide the strivings of the masses altogether. The masses have a burning hatred for imperialist war and imperialism. They don't express it in clear terms, and they have illusions and backward ideas as well. Nevertheless they are stirring to political life. In one form or another, this hatred of imperialism bubbles to the surface in the anti-war movement. It is the job of revolutionaries to find ways to link up with this sentiment and bring consciousness and organization to the masses. The whole value of the movement lies in the anti-imperialist content that is seeking a way to come to the surface. But this Party denies it. Instead of seeking ways to bring the mass ferment to the surface, it defines the ferment away. It poses a series of tests: "Well, do you say you are against imperialism as a system?" "Are you for the *revolutionary destruction* of imperialism?" "Well then, but don't you still have some illusions left about imperialism?" We're surprised the list doesn't go on to add "But are you for the dictatorship of the proletariat? the leading role of a single party? the Marxist theory of the state? etc., etc."

In fact, its description of the present situation is so vulgarized that there are some doubts about whether the masses, even in a revolution, could pass the test. It won't consent to do agitation against imperialism as a system unless the activists are already for the "revolutionary destruction of imperialism," but is it true that even in an uprising that the masses all have a "clear understanding" of imperialism and lack "great illusions"? Didn't the Bolsheviks convene the bourgeois democratic Constituent Assembly *after* seizing power in the Great October Socialist Revolution in order to let the masses learn from their own experience the uselessness of this institution in a socialist republic with the Soviet system?

Nevertheless, it is true that the present-day movement is still, in general, an anti-war movement rather than a consciously anti-imperialist movement. From this premise, Marxist-Leninists see before them the task of revolutionary agitation to raise the level of the movement. But from this premise, this Party draws the conclusion that it is wrong to do anti-imperialist work in the movement. Of course, it doesn't oppose the word "anti-imperialism." No, it redefines the very concept of "anti-imperialism" so that it excludes agitation against imperialism as a system. It states: "In our vocabulary the phrase 'anti-imperialist struggle' would be

generally used regarding struggles which are in no way against imperialism as a system, but rather, merely against certain effects of imperialism and certain aspects of imperialist policy."

As to going beyond this to fight against imperialism as a system, this Party emphasizes that: "We hold it to be completely unrealistic to speculate about a mass movement with the 'creation of an anti-imperialist movement in open opposition to the USA and USSR.' The mass movement is there. The communist party stands before the alternative, either to work *in* the mass movement, or to shrink from this, and criticize the movement from *without*, the latter obviously leading to isolation from the masses in the movement. The possibility of establishing a new, in the minds of the communists, 'correct,' mass movement side by side with the real existing mass movement sometimes arises in the fantasies of some comrades, but never so much in reality.

"... The communist party cannot remove a not entirely correct movement and thereby set up a new, correct one...." (emphasis as in the original)

Here the Party is discussing the quotation from the other Party that we also discussed in the last section. We note that the two Parties in this polemic actually agree in slurring over the distinction between the masses and the opportunist leadership. Both miss, in their theorizing, the deep ferment which manifests itself in the movement. Both imply that to do anti-imperialist work one must leave the mass movement. Both imply that mass organizations consciously opposed to imperialism as a system cannot be regarded as part of the mass movement. Only at this point in their theorizing do they part company. One thereby starts hinting that we must boycott the mass movement, while the other discards the idea of agitation against the imperialist system in the name of staying in the mass movement.

The quotation continues. It says that the mass movement is not something final, but it changes. It draws the conclusion that: "Because that is so, the communists are well advised to fantasize less over the *creation* of movements and instead to concentrate their efforts on influencing the real, existing mass movement in the direction of the Marxist-Leninist positions."

The "creation of movements," in the sense of the organization of the revolutionary section of the mass movement, is not a fantasy. It is the day-to-day work of revolutionaries. We have discussed the formula of "the creation of an anti-imperialist movement" in a previous section and seen that whether it is right or wrong depends on the meaning given to it. It seems to us that the two Parties give differing meanings to this formula, but they both appear to agree in counterposing work to "influence the real, existing mass movement" with the work to organize the revolutionary section of the movement.

However, we note that this quotation claims that the



On July 5, 1981, "Day Against NATO" protests were held in cities throughout Spain. The above picture shows the 60,000-strong demonstration in Madrid.

Party works to influence the mass movement "in the direction of the Marxist-Leninist positions." We welcome this statement. But we think that the fly in the ointment is that this statement comes in the middle of a passage that stresses that, in this Party's view, the "Marxist-Leninist position" is that "anti-imperialist struggles" are not directed against imperialism as a system. This theoretical stand appears to correspond to the Party's practice, for its agitation in the anti-war movement does not seem to oppose imperialism as a system. This means that its work to influence the movement tends to be restricted to a narrow framework that excludes the attempt to raise the level of the anti-war movement to that of an anti-imperialist movement.

But we cannot agree that working in the mass movement means renouncing struggle against imperialism as a system. It is true that the Marxist-Leninists base themselves on a sober assessment of the actual level of the masses. It is also true that the social-democrats and revisionists have done their best to keep any anti-imperialist character out of the movement against NATO and U.S./NATO missiles. But Marxism-Leninism teaches one to study the level of the movement in order to have a solid basis from which to plan how to push the movement forward, not in order to renounce advancing. Marxist-Leninists assess the actual level of the masses in order to help formulate policies and devise slogans that will step by step drive a wedge between the masses

and the reformist and opportunist leadership, that will move the masses step by step closer to the revolution. As against the semi-anarchists, the Marxist-Leninists do not curse the mass movement with cries of despair. But, as against the reformists, Marxist-Leninists don't reconcile themselves to the temporary domination of opportunism in the mass movement either. On the contrary, Marxist-Leninists work in the movement precisely in order to organize the revolutionary movement.

When this Party implies that one should not go beyond the character the movement already has, they are making a dangerous error in theory, one that can have serious consequences in practice. To theorize on this basis means to preach tallism, the following of spontaneity "...is in favor of the politically conscious elements of the movement not hindering the movement from taking its own course; it is in favor of the Party only heeding the spontaneous movement and dragging at the tail of it. The theory of spontaneity is the theory of belittling the role of the conscious element in the movement, the ideology of 'Ehvozion,' [Russian for tallism — ed.] the logical basis of all opportunism." (The Foundations of Leninism, III. Theory, emphasis as in the original)

In the Framework of "Left" Social-Democracy

What is the result of this tailist theorizing? This Party carries out extensive work in the anti-war movement. But this activity has, to a certain extent, been restricted to a framework compatible with "left" social-democracy.

What is "left" social-democracy? The right-wing social-democratic leaders, who campaign for more armaments and sing the glories of militarism, naturally have a hard time retaining the confidence of the masses who are marching against war preparations. In order to retain its influence despite the mass ferment, social-democracy resorts to "left" phrasemongering leaders. These are only lefts in quotation marks, so-called lefts, whose job is to sugarcoat the social-democratic policies and prevent the masses from breaking with the bourgeoisie.

Of course, genuine lefts may arise in the ranks of social-democracy, and there are honest masses under social-democratic influence. It is precisely to keep the working masses and honest activists under social-democratic influence that the bourgeoisie resorts to "left" social-democratic phrasemongers. It is precisely for this reason that the right-wing social-democratic leaders tolerate the "lefts" in their party. And it is precisely to help emancipate the working masses and honest activists from social-democracy that is one of the main reasons why the Marxist-Leninists subject "left" social-democracy to a withering criticism.

Stalin, analysing a similar phenomenon at the end of the 1920's, stated:

"The second question is that of the fight against Social-Democracy. In Bukharin's theses it was stated that the fight against Social-Democracy is one of the fundamental tasks of the Sections of the Comintern. That, of course, is true. But it is not enough. In order that the fight against Social-Democracy may be waged successfully, stress must be laid on the fight against the so-called 'Left' wing of Social-Democracy, that 'Left' wing which, by playing with 'Left' phrases and thus adroitly deceiving the workers, is retarding their mass defection from Social-Democracy. It is obvious that unless the 'Left' Social-Democrats are routed it will be impossible to overcome Social-Democracy in general. Yet in Bukharin's theses the question of 'Left' Social-Democracy was entirely ignored." ("The Right Deviation in the C.P.S.U.(B.)," Works, Vol. 12, p. 23)

Today "left" social-democracy is one of the main dangers to the movement against war preparations both in Western Europe and in the U.S. Actually the present-day "left" social-democrats in the anti-war movement are hardly distinguishable from the right-wing social-democratic leaders except for their neutralist or pacifist rhetoric. Nevertheless, it is "left" social-democracy which is the main channel for social-democratic influence on the mass movement.

But the Party not only fails to recognize this danger, but it praises "left" social-democracy to the skies. (Naturally, it does not put the word "left" in quotation marks.) It denounces the official social-democratic party and those of its leaders who openly advocate warmongering, but, in a major article in its theoretical journal on the military policies of the social-democratic party, it stresses that "...we do not deny or have doubts about the upright motives of many left social-democrats and that the left social-democrats have made and are making an important contribution to the development of the peace movement."

Perhaps the Party is making a distinction between honest elements at the base, who might be called genuine lefts, and the "left" social-democratic leaders? Not in the slightest. The article opens by referring to "60,000 organized social-democrats" who came to an anti-war demonstration, only to immediately ecstatically praise the participation in the demonstration of a Protestant pastor who is a member of the 12-man national executive of the social-democratic party and a leader of the "left" social-democratic phrasemongers. These "left" social-democrats advocate such things as a nuclear-free zone — protected by the U.S. imperialist nuclear umbrella. This particular "left" is well liked by such social-democratic journals in the U.S. as *In These Times*. He is something like a European version of Senator Ted Kennedy; actually, to be precise, he is more like a European version of former Senators George McGovern and Eugene McCarthy, "peace candidates" of the Democratic Party. But the article enthusiastically assures us that "...on the question of military policy — to be sure, not only on this question — he stands in clear opposition to the social-democratic regime's policies, and assuredly as a leader of the left social-democratic opposition against the policy of rearmament of the social-democratic-led regime he carries weight." Too bad the article doesn't specify exactly what this "clear opposition" consists of. Instead the article assures us that the inner-party struggle inside the social-democratic party waged by these "left" leaders "is a component part of the peace movement and makes it more difficult for the warmongers to accomplish their devilish plans, and our Party seeks collaboration with that kind of social-democratic forces."

This Party not only praises the "left" social-democrats, but it has taken certain ideological stands that are compatible with "left" social-democracy. For example, it has consistently refrained from highlighting the aggressive imperialism of "its own" bourgeoisie. While it regularly denounces the government, it does not do so from the point of view of stressing its role as the chieftain of the domestic imperialists. Indeed, it only occasionally mentions the imperialism of its "own" bourgeoisie at all. Instead it stresses that its "own" government "submits completely to U.S. imperial-

ism." The main brunt of its agitation against the war danger tends more in the direction that it is the superpowers that will make its "own" country into a battlefield, and that its "own" government is submitting to the U.S. "war policies," while ignoring that its "own" bourgeoisie is straining at the bit with their own imperialist plans and is notorious the world over not only for having drenched other countries in blood in the past, but also for its revanchism at present as well.

Furthermore, this Party detaches the struggle against the war danger from the struggle against imperialism as a system. That is the meaning of its definition, which we quoted above in the last section, that "In our vocabulary the phrase 'anti-imperialist struggle' would be generally used regarding struggles which are in no way against imperialism as a system, but rather, merely against certain effects of imperialism and certain aspects of imperialist policy." Insofar as this definition actually reflects this Party's stand on the anti-war movement, it means that the Party has tended to adopt a reformist perspective on the struggle against imperialist war preparations. The fight against the war danger cannot be presented as something in the nature of a struggle for a minor reform that can be accomplished by some minor tinkering with the policies of the present governments and ruling classes. The fight against the war danger must always be linked up with the development of the revolutionary movement, or else one is simply throwing dust in the eyes of the masses and prettifying the imperialist system. This is one of the most fundamental teachings of Leninism. It is one of the dividing lines between Marxism-Leninism on one side and social-democracy and pacifism on the other.

But this Party has not only tended to adapt its stand on the anti-war movement to such a social-democratic framework, but it has also taken certain of the key slogans of "left" social-democracy and made them a focal point of its agitation. "Left" social-democracy in Western Europe has centered its agitation on pacifist and neutralist slogans. This Party supports various of these slogans. For example, a leaflet of the youth wing of the Party, prepared for an international gathering, stated: "In this situation, our Party...has published a plan for peace which shows the way to escape from the threatening devastation: neutrality for (our country), withdrawal from NATO, the creation of a neutral zone in Europe from Sweden to Portugal, free from nuclear weapons. The (youth wing of the Party) and (the student wing of the Party) fight for this aim and they strive for a broad unity of all the opponents of the war."

What is the content of these "neutrality" and "neutral zone" slogans as they are presently being used in Western Europe? They are tools used by social-democracy to blunt the struggle against imperialism. They are used to imply that the European bourgeoisie — bloodstained, aggressive, neo-colonialist and cunning — is

simply an innocent victim of the two superpowers and desires nothing more than to live in peace and quiet. Besides, along with these slogans, the social-democrats often end by implying that even the superpowers aren't all that bad. The main point of the imperialist pacifist propaganda is to paint pretty utopias that embellish imperialism in shining colors, while distracting the working masses from getting organized, building the revolutionary movement, and fighting the imperialist warmongers. These pacifist slogans are as elastic as India rubber. In one breath, they can be presented as slogans of struggle against NATO and the superpowers, and in the next they can be put forward as relying on NATO's protection or even as meaning that the European imperialists should have more say in NATO. They can even be used to prettify the aggressive "Eastern policy" of the West European warmongers, who are stretching out their tentacles to Eastern Europe in order to maneuver between the two superpowers.

Insofar as the Party uses these "neutrality" slogans, it is merging its agitation with that of "left" social-democracy. True, the Party continues to fight for such slogans as getting out of NATO and for the demonstrations to explicitly condemn the "U.S. war course." That is all to the good. But combining these slogans with the "neutrality" slogans does not prevent the "neutrality" slogans from remaining part of the social-democratic framework. This is all the more true as the Party combines its advocacy of the "neutrality" slogans with its stand that the struggle is not against imperialism as a system, but just a certain "aspect" or "effect" of imperialism. As well, the Party does not differentiate its use of the "neutrality" slogans from that of the "left" social-democrats. It not only does not carry out a rigorous criticism of the way the "left" social-democrats use these slogans, but it praises them for their stand. Indeed, it seems most likely that this Party itself is quite aware of the relationship between its use of the "neutrality" slogan and that of the "left" social-democrats. It could hardly avoid seeing that this would provide an ideological basis for that collaboration with "left" social-democratic forces that it says it is working for.

This Party does, however, insist that, along with its work to collaborate with the "left" social-democrats, it also fights the social-democratic ideology. It says that: "At the same time, our Party fight the social-democratic ideology, which is simply and solely of use to the warmongers and we strive among the broad masses of workers and also the peace forces in the (social-democratic party) to break the illusions in this party. The (social-democratic party) is not the party of peace, it is not even a party of peace, but it is a party of war preparations...." This criticism of social-democratic ideology boils down to nothing more than criticism of the top leadership and advocacy that the "peace" forces of "left" social-democracy will never win control of this

leadership. This alone does not take one outside the framework of social-democratic ideology.

This Party also says that it is fighting against pacifism. It is true that a struggle against the pacifist illusions fostered by social-democracy is an essential task. This Party's desire to fight pacifism is a good thing. But we believe that it should think over the context of its agitation and measure it up to the requirements of a fight against social-democratic and pacifist illusions. It praises "left" social-democracy, it upholds the "neutrality" slogans, it fails to highlight the expansionist imperialism of "its own" bourgeoisie, and it implies that it is wrong to raise the movement to the level of a fight against imperialism as a system. Under these conditions, how this Party can actually be said to be fighting pacifism is a mystery that we, for one, cannot fathom.

Marxist-Leninist work in the anti-war movement is precisely that work which is aimed at raising the political character of this movement and bringing it to the level of an anti-imperialist movement. It is work that targets the imperialism of "one's own" country as well as that of the superpowers. It is work that helps orient the masses, towards the building of the revolutionary movement and prepares them, step by step, for the socialist revolution. It is wrong to renounce this work on the plea that one must stay within the present level of the movement; in effect, this is to blame one's own backwardness on the masses. In fact, the masses are striving to go forward, but they do not yet have the political consciousness of what must be done. It is the job of the Marxist-Leninists to lead the masses, to bring revolutionary science to them, and to help them organize independently of the bourgeoisie. It is only when this work is done that one can truly speak of a struggle that breaks out of the bounds of pacifism and social-

democratic ideology.

The Debate on Whether It Is Ever Permissible to Come to Any Agreements With Opportunist-Led Coalitions

The two Parties have themselves centered their polemic on the question of agreements with the revisionists and social-democrats. One Party says that it is necessary to have a "united front from above" to supplement the "united front from below," while the other Party stands by the slogan "no unity with the opportunist chieftains" and especially not with the pro-Soviet revisionists. As far as we can tell, the concrete issue they are polemicizing over concerns whether it is ever permissible to come to agreements with the coalitions that have been the official sponsors of various of the large demonstrations in the West European anti-war movement. The particular coalitions concerned appear to be loose coordinating committees dominated by the revisionists or social-democrats. But the polemic itself has not discussed the particular character of the coalitions or the proposed agreements, but has tended to argue about agreements in general.

In our opinion, this debate on agreements with the opportunist-led coalitions has, to a certain extent, been used to obscure the main political issues involved in work in the anti-war movement and to replace these political questions with abstract generalities of doubtful value. For example, instead of discussing the need to expose one's "own" bourgeoisie as part of the struggle against the superpower war blocs, or the special tasks needed in order to combat "left" social-democracy, these issues and others as well have been submerged in a discussion about agreements in general. Yet, without clarity on the basic political issues, it is difficult to



In London on March 24 this year, 20,000 protested against U.S. imperialist aggression in El Salvador and denounced the Thatcher government for backing the fascist Salvadorian junta.

evaluate any proposed agreements with the opportunist-led coalitions.

Nevertheless, certain general political stands have been expressed in the heated polemics on the question of agreements. On the one hand, one Party has tended to eulogize such agreements with opportunist-led coalitions as the only real work to win the masses. And, on the other hand, the other Party has ruled out all such agreements in principle, independent of time or place or the terms of the agreements. We believe that both these ideological stands are wrong.

To begin with, let us consider the stand of the Party which has tended to limit its work in the anti-war movement to a framework which is, in essence, acceptable to "left" social-democracy. This Party has tended to present agreements with opportunist-led coalitions as the magic key that will automatically win millions for the revolution. They present matters euphorically, as if previously everything was dark, but now the great revelation has struck. This revelation was the necessity for "united fronts from above" with the revisionists. They go as far as to present the supplementing of the "united front from below" with agreements "from above" with the revisionists and social-democrats as the essential ingredient marking mass tactics, as the crucial dividing line between sterile propaganda and mass tactics.

This theorizing is wrong and dangerous. Insofar as it is reflected in practice, it raises the danger of falling into a liquidationist accommodation with opportunism. In our view, the revolutionary forces must have confidence in themselves. Mass tactics means to address the burning questions agitating the masses. Mass tactics means organizing right in the midst of the mass struggle. The criterion for whether one is a party of action or a mere sect, for whether one is implementing mass tactics or isolating oneself from the mass ferment, is not whether one has a "united front from above" with the opportunist-led coalitions. On the contrary, it is only the independent activity of the revolutionary forces that creates the conditions that allow one to utilize, when appropriate, agreements "from above" and that creates the maturity that allows one to judge correctly whether to conclude any particular agreement.

On the other hand, there is the stand of the Party which implies that one must display morbid suspicion towards the anti-war movement because of the activities of the opportunists in this movement. This Party argues that any agreement with the opportunist-led coalitions in any country and under any conditions is impermissible on principle. In our opinion, such a stand is simply phrasemongering. Moreover, it serves to obscure the actual policies that this Party follows with respect to the various opportunist currents.

For example, consider the question whether it is ever permissible to come to certain agreements with the opportunist groups, knowing full well the evil character of

opportunism, in order to gain access to the honest working people under their influence. This Party answers that no agreement is ever possible with the revisionist and social-democratic "chieftains" because revisionism and social-democracy are agencies of imperialism. If the answer were this simple, it would seem to rule out agreements at any level of the opportunist organizations. But the Party goes on to say that such agreements, or "unity," may be acceptable, not just with the rank and file under the influence of the opportunist organizations, but with the "local or intermediate levels" of the opportunist organizations. They seem to redefine the concept of "unity at the base" to include everything underneath the top opportunist chieftains, apparently right up to the provincial level of the opportunist apparatus.

Well, it is true that the distinction between unity of action "from below" and agreements "from above" is one of the basic distinctions in the Marxist-Leninist theory concerning "united front" tactics. Nevertheless, Marxism-Leninism teaches that agreements "from above" cannot be ruled out on principle. One must judge the political character of any such proposed agreements and the concrete conditions of the times.

For that matter, unless one takes the liquidationist stand that all agreements with "local or intermediate" levels of the opportunist groupings are good, independent of their terms, then clearly one must believe that there are certain conditions that distinguish acceptable agreements from unacceptable ones. The sole factor cannot be whether they are made with the national headquarters or a local faction. Therefore, in order to discuss seriously the question of agreements with the opportunists, these conditions should have been given. The agreements that this Party makes with the "local or intermediate" levels of the revisionist, trotskyite or social-democratic organizations may be perfectly acceptable, but one has no way to judge without knowing what political criteria govern these agreements. Thus, it turns out that the talk of opposing agreements "from above" appears to obscure the actual policy of this Party towards the opportunists, just as the other Party obscures the content of the particular agreements they make with the opportunist-led coalitions by talk of the permissibility in general of such agreements.

Furthermore, both Parties seem to present matters as if agreements with the opportunist-led coalitions were the same thing as work in the mass demonstrations. This is not true. Yet the Party which eulogizes agreements with the coalitions presents these agreements as synonymous with work in the mass movement, while the other Party apparently agrees with this, for in its theorizing it finds it necessary to denigrate the anti-war movement in order to justify its stand against such agreements.

Both Parties err in trying to settle the question of agreements in the abstract, rather than getting down to



Carrying the banner "For Peace, War Against Imperialisms," activists of the Union of Revolutionary Communist Youth, the youth wing of the Communist Party (Reconstructed) of Portugal, denounce the nuclear war preparations of U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism in a big demonstration in Lisbon, Portugal.

discussing the particular agreements at stake. But the stand of Marxism-Leninism towards agreements with the opportunists can be compared to its stand towards compromises. Marxist-Leninists condemn sellout compromises with all their heart and soul and make it one of the main points of their work to train the masses in recognizing and condemning sellouts. But even if 99 out of 100 compromises being made at any particular time are sellouts, the Marxist-Leninists do not condemn all compromises on principle and for all time, just because they are compromises, but train the masses to examine the content of each particular compromise.

Thus it is no wonder that the Party which opposes all agreements on principle tacitly admits that it is ignoring the general principles of Marxism-Leninism concerning such agreements, principles that this Party denigrates as the mere "letter" of Marxism-Leninism as opposed to its spirit. But it is no better with the other Party, which eulogizes the agreements "from above" to the skies, for they also go against the criteria set out by Marxism-Leninism when they defend particular agreements with abstract talk about the permissibility and value of agreements in general. Lenin pointed to the error of both extremes, stating in his book *Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder* that:

"Of course, to very young and inexperienced revolutionaries, as well as to petty-bourgeois revolutionaries, of even a very respectable age and very experienced, it seems exceedingly 'dangerous,' incomprehensible and incorrect to 'allow compromises.' And many sophists (being unusually or excessively 'experienced' politicians) reason exactly in the same way as the British leaders of opportunism mentioned by Comrade Lansbury: 'If the Bolsheviks may make a certain compromise, why may we not make any kind of

compromise?'" (Ch. VIII, "No Compromises?")

The Struggle Against "One's Own" Bourgeoisie

In our view, both participants in the debate on agreements with the opportunist-led coalitions have tended to obscure the question of the concrete tasks of the Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary activists in the anti-war movement. If one is discussing the damage caused to the movement by the social-democrats, revisionists and other opportunists, then one should focus on such issues as their blunting of the struggle against their "own" bourgeoisie.

One must bear in mind that the social-democrats are servants of their "own" bourgeoisie and rabid adherents of imperialism. And the pro-Soviet revisionists in Western Europe not only prettify the Soviet social-imperialists, but they also serve their "own" domestic bourgeoisies — they are servants of two masters. The same goes for other varieties of revisionists as well: they not only glorify the bourgeoisie of this or that revisionist power, but they serve their "own" domestic bourgeoisie as well. Furthermore, whether social-democrat or revisionist, their main aim is to fight against the revolution and prevent the proletariat from standing up as an independent revolutionary force, independent of and fighting against the bourgeoisie. The question of the socialist revolution, and the question of making the necessary preparations for this revolution by organizing the proletariat as an independent force, is entirely tied up with the question of one's stand toward one's "own" bourgeoisie.

Yet both Parties have tended to ignore this question in their theorizing. The Party which condemns all agreements "from above" on principle, stresses the question of the stand of the anti-war movement towards Soviet social-imperialism. In its polemic, it has stressed the question of the stand towards the two superpowers. Meanwhile, the other Party, despite its advocacy of the magical powers of "the united front from above" with the pro-Soviet revisionists, has not shown any slackening of its hostility to Soviet social-imperialism. Not in the slightest. And it regularly denounces U.S. imperialism. The weakness in its agitation centers on its tendency to ignore the issue of the imperialism of its "own" domestic bourgeoisie. This is one of the key issues on which it tends to restrict its agitation to a "left" social-democratic framework.

We think that the question of the struggle against one's "own" bourgeoisie should receive far more attention. The struggle against U.S./NATO missiles, for example, is a struggle against U.S.-led Western imperialism. But how is one to fight this imperialist bloc? Clearly, one must fight against the component of this imperialist war bloc that is in one's own country. One must utilize the burning indignation of the masses against U.S. imperialism and the U.S. imperialist dom-

ination of Western Europe in order to push forward the general movement for revolution in one's own country. There is no other way but the socialist revolution for the working masses of Western Europe to actually escape from the grasp of the Western imperialist bloc.

Marxism-Leninism has always stressed the inseparable connection between the struggle against the war danger and the struggle for the socialist revolution. Unlike pacifism and semi-anarchism, both of which, from different angles, sever the connection between the anti-militarist cause and the class struggle, revolutionary Marxism-Leninism indissolubly links the struggle against militarism and war to the class struggle. Militarism and warmongering aggression are components of capitalist imperialism. Marxism-Leninism fights against the pacifist illusion that the war danger can be eliminated without touching the foundations of capitalism. Marxism-Leninism shows that it is precisely the working masses led by the working class who are the bulwark against imperialist war, and it is by overthrowing the bourgeoisie that they finally liberate themselves altogether from capitalist militarism.

Thus it is Marxism-Leninism that shows the path that leads to the strengthening of the mass struggle. Marxism-Leninism does not denigrate the anti-war struggle on the grounds that only socialism will bring liberation from the war danger, but instead converts the struggle against militarism, imperialism and the war danger into a powerful source of strength for the socialist movement. It shows how to work step by step to convert the anti-war struggle into an anti-imperialist movement and how to orient the anti-imperialist movement so that it serves as one component part of the general movement for socialist revolution. The war danger causes massive discontent not only among the proletariat, but among millions upon millions of non-proletarian working people and petty-bourgeois. The struggle against the war danger is one of the methods of rallying the working masses around the proletariat. The working class utilizes this to step by step create sympathy and support for the class struggle and the socialist revolution.

To utilize the movement against war preparations in the interests of the revolution is inseparable from inculcating a hostile attitude towards one's "own" bourgeoisie. This does not mean that the Marxist-Leninists are dogmatists or sectarians who insist that all those demonstrations, mass actions or organizations that do not repeat a preconceived formula of the revolution should be denounced. On the contrary, Marxist-Leninists are creative and dynamic revolutionaries who determine the slogans and actions that will bring the masses step by step into revolutionary positions. They don't hide the fact that the socialist revolution is needed to eliminate imperialist war, but they also determine the next immediate slogans for the mass movement, slogans that will keep moving the masses



350,000 demonstrators in Amsterdam protest against the Dutch government for its part in NATO's plan to deploy 48 cruise missiles in the Netherlands. Several hundred Dutch soldiers in uniform joined the November 21, 1981 march, defying a ban by the government's defense minister.

closer and closer to the stand of the class struggle and the revolution.

And these slogans must be judged from the angle of exposing one's "own" bourgeoisie in the eyes of the masses, smashing all illusions about one's "own" bourgeoisie standing apart from the world imperialist system, and calling for the masses to organize independently from the bourgeoisie if they really want to fight war preparations. Such a stand, and only such a stand, as opposed to utopian pacifist illusion-mongering, results in bringing the masses the truth about the nature of the war danger, in organizing the masses as a powerful class force, and in preparing for the revolution.

The masses may not yet accept the full program of the socialist revolution, but they are indignant at the bourgeoisie and this indignation can and does set them thinking about the question of how to build a movement that can fight the bourgeoisie. The Marxist-Leninists do constant agitation among the masses in favor of the socialist revolution, while at the same time putting forward for the movement the next slogans, based on the present level of the movement, that will push the movement forward to a higher level.

The revisionists and social-democrats direct their work against this revolutionary program. They help the bourgeoisie speculate on a "national unity" of exploiters and exploited, with both allegedly equally interested in peace. They present the imperialist chauvinism of the Western European bourgeoisie in

flaming liberation colors and try to divert the ardent, progressive sentiments of the masses against U.S. imperialist domination away from the socialist revolution and towards support for their "own" bourgeoisie. They help the bourgeoisie do its best to extinguish the spirit of the class struggle and of revolutionary socialism.

This is one of the questions that the discussion on the anti-war movement should focus on. Clarity on the stand towards the bourgeoisie, on what the bourgeoisie is planning and how to fight it; clarity on the tricks used by the social-democrats and revisionists to divert the struggle away from opposition to the bourgeoisie; clarity on the need to link the struggle against the war danger and against the superpower war blocs to the struggle against one's "own" bourgeoisie — such clarity will go a long way to resolving such other issues as whether to employ this or that tactic and what attitude to have to the opportunist-led coalitions. On the other hand, to debate this or that subordinate question, while remaining silent on the question of the stand against one's "own" bourgeoisie and other burning political issues, can easily degenerate into nothing

but empty quibbling.

Forward in the Struggle Against Imperialism!

Thus, in our view, the discussion over the tasks of the Marxist-Leninists in the anti-war movement should pay more attention to such burning issues as the struggle against the bourgeoisie of one's own country, as how to combat the obstruction of "left" social-democracy, as the concrete tasks in the ideological struggle, and other important issues. This will lend more concreteness to the discussion and help it to provide clear orientation for advancing the all-important work of the Marxist-Leninist parties in leading the struggle against imperialist war preparations.

The struggle against U.S./NATO nuclear missiles and other war preparations can and will be raised to the level of a consciously anti-imperialist struggle. This and other anti-imperialist struggles have a great role to play in preparing the coming socialist revolution. In the work to organize the mass struggle, it is the strategy and tactics laid down by the consistent application of Marxism-Leninism that lights the way forward. □

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The Falkland Islands, Social-Democracy, and Fighting One's 'Own' Bourgeoisie

The British Labor Party — Her Majesty's Social-Democrats in Defense of the Empire 41
The Necessity for Struggle Against One's "Own" Imperialist Ruling Class 42

The ongoing war in the South Atlantic is bringing to the surface a number of the most important problems facing the West European anti-war movement. In particular, it is revealing to the light of day the despicable and traitorous role of social-democracy, and it is underscoring the necessity for a consistent struggle against one's "own" imperialist bourgeoisie.

The British Labor Party — Her Majesty's Social-Democrats in Defense of the Empire

In Britain, the social-democratic Labor Party is the principal parliamentary "opposition" to the Conservative Thatcher government. Playing a role similar to that of the "left" wing of the Democratic Party in the U.S., the Labor Party politicians have been posing as champions of "peace" and critics of the Reagan/Thatcher policies of unrestrained warmongering. The Laborites have tried to place themselves at the head of the movement against U.S. missiles and have even flirted with chatter about "unilateral nuclear disarmament." But the present war over the Falkland Islands has put the anti-militarist rhetoric of these social-democratic politicians to the test.

And what has been the outcome of this test? The war between Britain and Argentina is a reactionary war on both sides. The fascist Argentine junta gambled with this military adventure to stave off imminent collapse, while the sinister Thatcher government has launched its military aggression with the aim of colonial conquest and to rescue itself from the hatred of the masses for its arch-reactionary policies of hunger, racism, and imperialist warmongering. The British bourgeois ruling class is in the throes of a rabid jingoist campaign. And the Labor Party? Far from opposing this war and exposing British imperialism, instead it has, in the main, competed with Thatcher's Conservatives and the other bourgeois parties in displaying its patriotic enthusiasm

for the glory of Queen and country. Indeed, Party leader Michael Foot and the other main Labor leaders have expressed their ardent support for the senseless slaughter in the South Atlantic for the defense of British imperialism's "right" to colonial possessions eight thousand miles from Britain's shores and for the British imperialist moneybags to plunder the oil reserves off Argentina's coast.

What then stands behind the Labor Party's shameful support for British imperialism's military adventure? Is this just a mistake? An unfortunate accident? Not in the slightest! It is the natural outcome of the fact that the social-democrats of the British Labor Party are in no way opposed to British imperialism and the world imperialist system.

Hence when the Laborites flirted with resolutions on "unilateral nuclear disarmament" at their conference in the spring of 1981, they simultaneously endorsed the aggressive NATO alliance. The very idea of taking a stand against British imperialism and the U.S.-led Western imperialist bloc never crossed the minds of these social-democratic politicians. Rather, their concept of "unilateral nuclear disarmament" was explicitly based on the assumption that reductions in spending for British nuclear armaments would pave the way for beefing up the conventional armed forces even more rabidly than the ultra-militarist Thatcher is doing. Meanwhile British imperialism would still be shielded by the U.S. "nuclear umbrella." The Laborites argued that the world's people should entrust their fate to the "balance of terror" between the two superpower war blocs, while Britain adjusts its role within the Western imperialist bloc to the best advantage of British imperialism, to avoid having Britain take more than its share of the danger, to preserve Britain's ability to maneuver in Europe, and so forth.

In short, the pacifist, nuclear disarmament rhetoric of the Labor Party has been tailored to serve the aggressive war drive of British imperialism. This has been confirmed completely by the Falklands crisis. Not only have the Laborites come out as flaming jingoists, but they are trying to out-warmonger "Iron Lady" Thatcher herself, blaming her for the crisis by creating an alleged weakness in the British conventional forces,

forces which in fact comprise a monstrous machine of international aggression and slaughter.

The Necessity for Struggle Against One's "Own" Imperialist Ruling Class

The support of the self-styled "peacemongering" social-democrats of the Labor Party for British imperialism's robbers' war in the South Atlantic exposes the rottenness of their alleged stand against militarism which is not based on a struggle against imperialism. It shows that in the major imperialist world powers — not only in the two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, but also in the other big imperialist states such as Great Britain, West Germany, France, Canada, Japan, China, etc. — there cannot be any talk of a serious struggle against the warmongers without the most determined struggle against one's "own" imperialist ruling class.

The stand of a political newspaper in Britain on the Falklands crisis illustrates further lessons on the struggle against the imperialist warmongers. This newspaper quite appropriately denounced the military adventure and the warmongering hysteria of the British imperialists. This stand has a great deal of importance given the all-out chauvinism spewing from the British bourgeois press and political parties.

Nevertheless, there was a fly in the ointment. Certain flaws appeared in this agitation. In particular, this newspaper raises the strange issue that a major factor in the present Falklands crisis is the alleged betrayal of the "national interests" on the part of British imperialism. Among other things, it is said that one of the aims of the British imperialists in this war is to divert the struggle of the British masses against the "anti-working class, anti-democratic, and anti-national policies of the Thatcher government." And it is strongly indicated that this betrayal of the "national interests" on the part of British imperialism played a major role in unleashing the war in the South Atlantic.

In our opinion, the question of British imperialism's betrayal of the "national interests" has no place in this agitation against the British imperialist invasion of the Falklands. Perhaps, in the ultra-jingo atmosphere presently being fanned by the bourgeoisie, this mistake will pass unobserved or be written off as only an unimportant flaw. At first, the issue in Britain may simply be — who is for and who is against the armed adventure in the Falklands. But, as time goes on, this mistake can only have the effect of blunting the required razor sharp exposure of one's "own" imperialist ruling class and obscure the idea of the class struggle with that of a struggle for national interests.

The reality of this danger is quite apparent when one examines the efforts of this newspaper to drag the question of the betrayal of the "national interests" into its analysis denouncing the British imperialist warmongers.

For example, in the discussion of the forces behind the war over the Falklands we find the following passage:

"What murky train of events, what precise interests, were at play in unleashing and inciting the events in the Falkland Islands have not yet emerged into the open. What is certain is that the U.S. imperialists are exercising their superpower status to intervene and resolve the dispute between their allies, naturally to the interests of U.S. imperialism and its global strategy.

"British imperialism, the junior partner of U.S. imperialism, swears by the 'national interests' but subjugates Britain to the policy of U.S. imperialism for the sake of its own economic, political and strategic interests. Even the run down of the British 'conventional' forces which the Labor Party John Bulls are bemoaning is an expression of this subservience, pursued both because of the relative weakness of British imperialism but also for very good and profitable reasons on the part of the British monopolies....

"The U.S. evidently loses nothing in this situation whatever the precise details of the events leading up to it...."

From a number of angles this passage indicates that the question of the "national interests" simply doesn't fit here. Rather, it has led the authors to tone down, to take the edge off of their own repeated condemnations of aggressive British imperialism. For instance, there is nothing murky about what precise interests were at play in Thatcher's order for a military adventure to seize the Falklands. It did not require secret directives from Reagan to twist Thatcher's arm to act. On the contrary, ravenous British imperialism threw itself on the Falklands with all the feeding frenzy of a shark that has smelled blood. It is fighting for its own plunder of the potential oil reserves off the Argentine coast, for its own status in the sun as a "great power" that cannot be trifled with, i.e., as a great thief, bully and parasite upon the world's people.

In fact, our authors have themselves spelled out the aggressive aims of British imperialism. But in their efforts to introduce the idea of British imperialism's betrayal of the "national interest," all of a sudden what precise interests were at play have become a mystery, "have not yet emerged into the open," etc. And the only thing that is implied to be a certainty is that it is the U.S. imperialists who instigated and unleashed the South Atlantic conflict and are the ones who have nothing to lose from it. Thus, instead of concrete analysis the authors lapse into generalities about how it is the two imperialist superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, which are the real architects and determining forces in all world events. "It is the two superpowers," our authors repeatedly explain, "which overall preside over the imperialist world and carry overriding weight in deciding the outcome of such conflicts as the present one."

The problem here is that such abstract generalities tend to blur the real living contradictions and forces at work. In particular, in this case they tend to reduce to insignificance the distinct plunderous and aggressive aims of the British imperialist ruling class as well as the distinct reactionary aims of the Argentine fascist generals. Moreover they tend to paint a picture of superpower omnipotence, obscuring the powerful forces — both the inter-capitalist contradictions as well as the forces of the revolutionary struggles of the working and oppressed peoples — that are shaking these greatest bulwarks of international imperialism and reaction.

This passage muddies the exposure and condemnation of the British imperialist warmongers in other ways as well. For example, it criticizes the Labor Party John Bulls for not recognizing that the alleged "run down of the British 'conventional' forces" is an expression of the betrayal of the "national interests" and subservience to U.S. imperialism. But wait a minute. Far from being "run down," the overbloated British military machine is armed to the teeth with the most modern implements of mass murder. Apart from the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Britain spends a higher percentage of its national product on its armed forces than any other major imperialist power. This feverish militarism of the British bourgeoisie has been exposed before by the very same authors of this passage.

One highly doubts that this journal is in favor of this military machine, although it says that this machine is "run down" as a result of betrayal of the "national interests." This shows how muddled they have gotten over the "national interests." Probably, however, they would also argue that the Thatcher government's massive military budgets are part of its "anti-national" policies, tying Britain to the U.S. war bloc, etc. But the point is here, whether in exposing the feverish arms buildup, or lapsing into the error of giving credence to the lie of Britain's military machine being "run down," raising the issue of the "national interest" simply doesn't belong in this issue.

It appears that this mistake stems from an attempt to redefine the concept of "national interest" in a way which cannot be done. In general terms, the aggressive, warmongering path of British imperialism would be defined as the very essence of how British imperialism is militantly defending the "national interests." But the journal opposes this invasion. Actually it does so from a class basis. Instead of trying to create a refined, ethereal concept of "national interests" that agrees with the workers' interests and opposes the imperialist bourgeoisie's interests, it would seem preferable to bring the class differences out into the open. Instead they argue that "the demagoguery that the British bourgeoisie is a defender of the nation is a fraud.... this bourgeoisie willingly barter and sells out the sovereign rights of the British workers and people to a foreign power, in particular to the U.S."

But by playing with definitions and redefinitions, a mistake with potentially serious repercussions is being made. Instead of the perspective of the class struggle of the exploited and the oppressed against the exploiters and the oppressors, the perspective is created of a struggle in defense of the "national interests" and "sovereignty." Yes, the weight of U.S. imperialist exploitation and oppression is a burden on the backs of the British working masses, along with the exploited toilers in other capitalist-imperialist states. But as our authors themselves point out, this is a matter not of the oppression of the entire nation, of both the British exploiters and exploited, but of the "workers and people." From this one would conclude that it is imperative to draw out the class question, to train the workers in the spirit of class struggle for the socialist revolution and the overthrow of both the domestic and foreign capitalist exploiters. The struggle against U.S. imperialist domination should be linked to the class struggle and the socialist revolution — which will give the anti-U.S. imperialist struggle a vigorous impetus — and it does not require playing at innumerable redefinitions of the "national interests." But instead, painstaking efforts are made to arbitrarily place such clear expressions of class exploitation and oppression as British imperialist militarism in an "anti-national" framework. As seen by the flaws in the agitation on the Falklands conflict, this can only serve to blunt the class struggle and to dampen the fiery hatred against one's "own" bourgeoisie, warmongering British imperialism.

In essence the authors of this newspaper are making the same mistake that the German revolutionary Marxist Rosa Luxemburg made in World War I, when she denounced the social-chauvinists who voted for war credits for German imperialist aggression as having betrayed the fatherland and having injured the defense of the fatherland. In this way Rosa Luxemburg forced attention away from the class struggle towards a national program, and in a situation where the socialist revolution was the issue. As Lenin wrote: "... *The fallacy of his [Rosa Luxemburg had written under the pseudonym "Junius" — ed.] argument is strikingly evident....*

"He suggests that the imperialist war should be 'opposed' with a national program. He urges the advanced class to turn its face to the past and not to the future! In France, in Germany, and in the whole of Europe it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution that, objectively, was on the order of the day in 1793 and 1848. Corresponding to this objective historical situation was the 'truly national,' i.e. the national bourgeois program of the then existing democracy: in 1793 this programme was carried out by the most revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie and the plebeians, and in 1848 it was proclaimed by Marx in the name of the whole of progressive democracy. ...

"At the present time, the objective situation in the

biggest advanced states of Europe is different. Progress, if we leave out for the moment the possibility of temporary steps backward, can be made only in the direction of the socialist revolution. From the standpoint of progress, from the standpoint of the progressive class, the imperialist bourgeois war, the war of highly developed capitalism, can, objectively, be opposed only

with a war against the bourgeoisie, i.e., primarily civil war for power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; for unless such a war is waged, serious progress is impossible; this may be followed — only under certain special conditions — by a war to defend the socialist state against bourgeois states." □

Soviet Revisionism— Enemy of Revolution and Socialism

The March 1982 issue of *Proletarian Internationalism* is devoted to the exposure of the true nature of the present-day Soviet Union and the refutation of the Soviet revisionist ideology. Revolutionary Marxism-Leninism holds that the Soviet Union, which was a path-breaking socialist country in the days of Lenin and Stalin, has been transformed by the Khrushchovite-Brezhnevite class traitors into a reactionary, capitalist country. The Soviet revisionists are socialists only in words, but bloodstained fascists and imperialists in deeds. Soviet revisionism is not Marxism-Leninism, but a doctrine of capitulation and betrayal. Carrying forward the fight against Soviet revisionism is an important task facing all revolutionaries and class conscious workers.

A firm stand against Soviet revisionism is indissolubly linked to maintaining a revolutionary stand against our own reactionary bourgeoisie. In fact, the revisionists and trotskyites who prettify the Soviet Union as an alleged "socialist" country also bow down before U.S. imperialism. This is highlighted by the fact that they are bootlickers of the Democratic Party who dress up its capitalist program in "progressive" and even "socialist" colors. What lies behind this craven liquidationism is support for state monopoly capitalism, the system which is common to both the Soviet Union and the U.S. Prettification of state monopoly capitalism in its "socialist" disguise in the Soviet Union goes hand in hand with prettification of state monopoly capitalism in the U.S. in its liberal-labor disguise.

Furthermore, in advocating a reformist attitude towards the U.S. bourgeoisie, the liquidators are taking their cue directly from the Soviet revisionists themselves, who have long elaborated such a stand towards the Western capitalist countries, including the U.S. The Soviet revisionists are notorious for advocating the subordination of the working class movement to the bourgeois liberals and the replacement of the revolutionary struggle with the most craven reformism. For this purpose, the Soviet revisionists call for collaboration and merger between their followers and the sold-out social-democrats.

Thus the question of fighting Soviet revisionism is not some question remote from the fighting tasks of the revolutionary movement, but is indissolubly connected with them. Our Party fights Soviet revision-

ism precisely from this perspective of ensuring the correct orientation for the socialist revolution. This has been the consistent stand of our Party, right from the founding of our predecessor, the American Communist Workers Movement (Marxist-Leninist), in May 1969. In fact, the ACWM(M-L) came into being with the goal of reconstructing a genuine communist party of the revolutionary proletariat, seeing as the "Communist" Party of the USA had been destroyed by Browderite and Khrushchovite revisionism.

There is a lively interest in the question of Soviet revisionism among activists in the mass movement. The movement against U.S. imperialist aggression and war preparations is constantly confronted with the question of what stand to take towards the aggressive acts of the Soviet Union, such as the savage occupation of Afghanistan or the threats to invade Poland. We believe that a firm and consistent struggle against U.S. imperialism entails fighting against all imperialism. This includes fighting the new tsars of Moscow who, along with the militarists of Washington, are the biggest exploiters and oppressors of the world's peoples today.

The question of Soviet revisionism is particularly coming to the fore today because of the attempts by the various pro-Soviet opportunists to make hay out of the betrayal of Mao Zedong and the present-day Chinese rulers. These apologists of Soviet social-imperialism point to the counter-revolutionary U.S.-China alliance and claim that the roots of this lie in opposition to Soviet revisionism. But the disgusting betrayal of the Chinese leadership does not discredit the anti-revisionist struggle. On the contrary, it proves that the Chinese leadership is anti-Marxist-Leninist and revisionist. It proves that Mao was a revisionist who did not fight Soviet revisionism from a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist standpoint, but from bourgeois nationalist and pragmatic motives.

Indeed, today the followers of Chinese revisionism themselves are reconciling with the Soviet revisionists. Those who championed lining up with U.S. imperialism in the name of fighting the supposed "main danger" of the Soviet Union are today declaring that the Soviet Union really is a "socialist" country. All these renegade antics of theirs underscore that relying on one imperialism to fight another, and losing sight of the

working masses and the revolution, mean capitulation to all imperialism.

This issue of *Proletarian Internationalism* has, with the exception of introductory articles from the Marxist-Leninist Party of the USA, been compiled from publications from socialist Albania. The Party of Labor of Albania has played an outstanding role in the struggle of the world's Marxist-Leninists against Soviet revisionism. The materials being included here from the PLA cover the period from the early 1960's to the present and show the powerful scope of the Marxist-Leninist analysis made by the PLA.

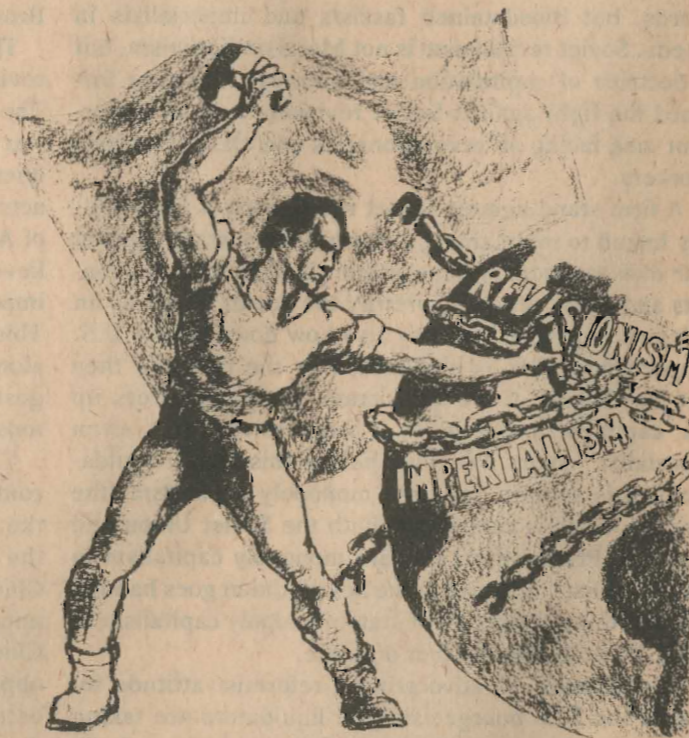
The contents of this issue include articles on many subjects: on the capitalist economy and social order in

the Soviet Union; on aggressive Soviet social-imperialism, including its stand towards the now-oppressed nations inside the Soviet Union as well as the peoples abroad; on the history of the struggle against Soviet revisionism; on the roots of the tragedy of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union; and so forth. As well, there is a strong section on the Soviet revisionist policy of merger with social-democracy, which vividly shows how Soviet revisionism opposes the struggle against the bourgeoisie of the Western imperialist countries and spreads the policy of liquidationism. Other important articles expose the bourgeois class character of the revisionist parties and condemn the revisionist prettification of state monopoly capitalism. □

Proletarian Internationalism

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Soviet Revisionism— Enemy of Revolution and Socialism



This issue of *Proletarian Internationalism* is devoted to the struggle against Soviet revisionism. It is a collection of 28 articles from socialist Albania with introductory articles by the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA.

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