

COMMUNIST

**PUBLISHED BY THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY
NUMBER 6 / FALL 1992 / \$3.00**

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Fall
1992
Number
6

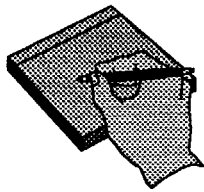
Published by the PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY
GPO Box 808, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202

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Red Letters

Dear Editor:

Your piece on culture in the last two issues is absolutely devastating! It deserves to go down in history, and it surely will get what it deserves! My only additional comment is that the piece ought to be carried to its logical conclusion so that we can all see where it will lead us.

The first two parts are really heavy, as they say. The words and sentences show that the author has a prodigious knowledge of culture and history and just about everything else, and I, for one, found it particularly weighty that he did not waste time describing many examples of bad culture. Bad is bad and that's all there is to it.

But it was in the third part that the author really came into his own and the full force of his argument smashes home.

Particularly telling is the author's emphasis on *form*. He not only says that workers must be won away "from all forms of capitalist culture," he is quite specific: The problem with rap is its form. ("Its essentially reactionary character lies in its very form.") And the novel—the novel, of course!—"is a bourgeois literary

form." This explains clearly why we shouldn't "waste time and effort" on trying to develop revolutionary or communist art and culture—since all the forms we know have been developed by the bourgeoisie, they are all reactionary, and therefore cannot be made useful.

As I said, the author should have carried that to its logical conclusion to give the argument its maximum impact: We must not waste time creating (or performing) not just novels and rap, but any plays, poems, songs (indeed, let us quickly destroy any remaining copies of the PLP records which tried to impose communist words on bourgeois musical forms), and, in fact, any and all aspects of culture from jokes (a bourgeois form the author clearly rejects) to movies to documentaries to sports to science.

I think I detected a slight weakness in the author's early-on praise for the value of math and science. But the more serious weakness comes later when the author urges us to teach young people not only to read the great-great works, but to write. Now here is a real weakness in the author's logic. For what will we teach people to write? Surely not

poetry or drama or fiction or novels! So what then? Essays? But essays are a bourgeois form as sure as the novel. Editorials? My god (sorry to use that term...), editorials are a form developed by the very capitalist media moguls we are fighting to overthrow. No, no, no...there is no way we can allow people to write such reactionary forms.

It is clearly a very short step from writing editorials to rearranging the words so that they come out in rhythm and rhyme as poetry, or setting the words to music so they come out as songs (and maybe even, god save us, rap!). No. The only answer is: no writing, period. Reactionary forms are reactionary forms and people will just have to wait until after the revolution to decide what and how to write.

Having said that, I must apologize for this missive, but I promise to make it my last backsliding into use of the bourgeois essay form.

One more word: The author's description of rap as exerting "the most reactionary influence of all the cultural forms" is truly an argument which deserves to be singled out—more than any other point, it demonstrates the inimitable underlying commitment and spirit which the author brings to this piece. This is especially so when he singles out rap as really, really bad because "the dancing imitates robotic, herky-jerky mo-

tions that bear no resemblance to productive human activity other than sex."

That really says it all! Overlooking the fact that rap doesn't usually involve dancing (confusing rap with break-dancing is a minor factual error which is easy to understand considering how many reactionary cultural forms surround us), it is the author's unqualified rejection of sex which stands out. If only rap or break-dancing could be redesigned to resemble some other productive human activity—like maybe eating—it wouldn't be so bad.

Moreover, the author is brilliantly subtle in his condemnation of the sexuality of certain segments of the population—namely, those who indulge in rap (and break-dancing). And singling rap out for "the gross simple-mindedness of its lyrics" as opposed to Mozart or Beethoven (for whom the author shows a slight weakness, by the way) is the final, decisive blow from the author's fierce fist. The young people who read that will not misunderstand its import.

Finally, the author brilliantly illustrates his point that sectarianism is not the main danger.

His article will surely bring us a long way.

A READER

DO YOU WANT THE PARTY TO GROW?

Do you want the party to grow?

No party member would say “no” if asked this question directly. But, in reality, a profound ideological and political battle is going on in our party over this issue. It’s like the old submarine movie, *Run Silent, Run Deep*. Like submarine warfare, our battle is only occasionally fought in the open. For the most part the political questions are not openly confronted. Frequently there is a quiet or silent avoiding of the issues. And this silence weakens the party. It weakens our will to make revolution.

We all say we want the party to grow. But why do we want it to grow? There is only one reason: it is absolutely necessary for the party to play the leading role in society, and to seize state power. To do this, the party has to grow. The party’s members have to be the organizers and leaders of the struggles to improve the life of working people throughout the country.

For the party to grow, party members must be inspired to lead large numbers of workers and unite them politically across racial and sexual lines, to win power for communism. Party members are supposed to want to be the working class’ organizers and leaders for communism. But too often, organizing the workers, or other sections of the people, is not our outlook. Many of us see our work primarily as selling our literature and doing some modest selective basebuilding. Of course this is necessary, but more importantly, *communists must be good mass organizers. The party can never emerge as a leading force without winning the masses of workers to follow its leadership.* Our party can grow significantly—more than by the

ones and twos that characterize its growth now—only if we become mass organizers and lead the mass movement.

Even a cursory review of the history of our party shows that we grew rapidly and we grew large only when we were engaged in mass struggle and mass organizing. This happened during the antiwar movement at the time of the Vietnam War, for example. During the Vietnam War, a huge, nationwide antiwar movement developed. We initiated this movement, and we always led part of it, even though, as time went on, the leadership of various parts of the movement was taken over by different liberal and revisionist forces. But we continued to lead a portion. When the Students for a Democratic Society emerged, we joined in that development. We built SDS chapters and led many sharp battles against the Vietnam War. As a result, confidence between the party and the masses grew. Large numbers of the more militant and advanced forces in SDS joined the party. Not only did we become the largest force on the Left as a result of all this (which, in itself, isn’t much), but, more important, we became a significant political force in the country. Many of the comrades who joined during those struggles

remain in the party, and comprise a good part of today’s party leadership.

The experience is universal that whenever we do mass work—leading numbers of people into anti-racist struggle, or antiimperialist struggles, or battles over wages and conditions on the job—our party grows. This was also true of the old communist movement in the USA. It grew significantly when it played the leading role in organizing the mass of unskilled and semiskilled workers into unions in the 1930s. During that period the old party produced thousands of fine mass organizers and leaders, like William Z. Foster. Foster was the key leader in organizing the entire U.S. industrial union movement, with its tens of

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millions of members. The old party didn’t have a revolutionary line, but it did do mass organizing and led many militant struggles. This led to mass recruiting as the party distinguished itself in the class war.

Nonetheless, within our ranks there is opposition or reluctance to doing serious mass work. Often this opposition is caused by members disagreeing with doing *reform* work. But at the moment (and it will be this way for some time to come) the various components of

the mass movement—the labor movement or the civil rights movement, for example—are involved *only* in reform struggles. So frequently, the refusal to do the hard persistent work of basebuilding within mass organizing is covered up with “revolutionary” slogans. “Revolutionary work is what we should be doing.” “What’s the point of building these united-front caucuses in the union? Caucuses come and go. We’ve done it all before. The important thing is to build the party.” “Where will the leadership for the revolution come from if we don’t first build the party?”

But if we don’t do reform work vigorously there is no real way to reach large numbers of workers with revolutionary ideology. As a matter of fact, without doing reform work, how can one do “revolutionary” work at all? Without being involved in militant class struggle we limit ourselves to contact with the ones and twos. And they, too, will disappear if the party is viewed as not defending the immediate interests of the workers. But if the party does fight in a principled way for the immediate needs of the working class, then thousands of new leaders will emerge from the mass movement who we will be able to win to communism. (We have no illusion that we will win over the corrupted present leaders of the mass movements.) These thousands will be followed by millions. This sounds grandiose, but it can

be done. As a matter of fact, revolution is doable. It has happened before and it will happen again.

This struggle in the party over doing mass work involves several important political issues, although the opponents of reform work don’t always realize this. Whether you realize it or not, if you oppose mass work you really don’t think the party should play the leading role in society. You really don’t think capitalism makes aggressive war and fascism inevitable. You really think the ruling class should lead the mass movement. You have no confidence in the working class and don’t understand how the working class develops its commitment to the party.

Revolution, not reform is our strategy for leading the mass movement. The tactics we use to carry out this strategy are twofold. One aspect of our tactics is to sharpen the struggles on the questions of the day. We lead by sharpening the class struggle. But this is not enough. We also must figure out how to take the reform struggle and turn it into a fight for communist revolution. This is the second aspect of our tactics. This requires us to act in such a way that what we do today in the reform struggles helps bring us to lead the battle to seize political power for communism. So our task is not merely to hold our noses and wail about how corrupt are the current leaders of the mass move-

ment. Our task is to win the leadership of the mass movement by crushing the political and ideological hold of the ruling class over the workers.

If we want the party to grow, we must see that the mass movement is a crucial area within which we put forward our ideological line, winning workers to a communist outlook.

At the moment anticommunists lead every area of the mass movement. These people are all loyal servants of the capitalist class. But capitalism can never be reformed to serve the interests of the workers. So under the leadership of capitalist reformers, the immediate and vital interests of workers have been betrayed over and over again, and they will continue to be betrayed by these leaders. Our party is the only natural leadership of the mass movement. But to fulfill this role we must enter into the mass movement and win the leadership of the working class and other sections of the people. The party, not the ruling class, must emerge as the leader of the mass movement. Without the leadership of the party the mass movement can never serve the interests of the workers.

The mass movement is not made up only of formal organizations, like unions. Recently, events in Los Angeles spotlighted the *spontaneous* mass movement. But there is a lot of wishful thinking in the

party and among the masses concerning the more militant, violent spontaneous mass movement. Two of the lessons we can learn from spontaneous events are that the masses hate the system and they are willing to fight the system. But more important is a third lesson: the lesson that *we cannot become servants of spontaneity. Spontaneous events, no matter how militant or violent, can never change or topple the system.*

There was wave after wave of ghetto rebellions in the sixties and seventies. Despite these rebellions, racism got worse. Nor did these insurrections automatically lead to the growth of the party. The latest Los Angeles rebellion also proves that spontaneity doesn’t cut it. Unless the party grows as a result of the rebellion the masses will be defeated in their immediate demands, and robbed of any revolutionary outlook. We should judge any event by whether, and to what extent, it helps or hurts the party to grow in influence and members.

When important spontaneous events happen our job is to enter into them and lead them to the Left. That means to lead them so people who participate conclude from their own experience that these spontaneous events cry out for an organized effort for communist revolution. This can only be done by convincing whatever base we have in the mass movement to join into the spontaneous

battle and advance it in a direction toward communist revolution.

Simply getting the party members and their close base involved is good, but not good enough. We can only win the leadership and confidence of the masses by being leaders of the mass movement and having an army under our leadership. In the Los Angeles-type situation this would mean, in part, getting our shops to strike in support of the insurrection. It would mean getting these workers and others to go to the point of struggle and influence it in a revolutionary way.

In the same way we would try and move our base in the high schools and colleges to support the insurrection under the leadership of the party. As Los Angeles showed, in largescale, militant, violent battles the police are quickly rendered impotent. In these cases the rulers call out the Army to subdue the masses. In the case of Los Angeles 20,000 were arrested and thousands were deported. Obviously, if the troops refuse to attack the masses and instead join them, a revolutionary situation is closer.

At some point in the development of our party we will have to lead planned battles that lead to the seizure of state power. (In the not too distant future we should

talk about various scenarios concerning the seizure of state power, but this is not the purpose of this article.) The point here is that no army can win without a plan based on political and military strategy. Unplanned, sporadic violence is a sure loser. It only leads to the demoralization of the masses. It will compound their cynicism and individualism. "See, it proves you can't win, so just grab what you can."

**The Party
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All this shows that the party's role is primary. Without the party the masses do not have their natural leadership. But the growth of the party can only be done by the party. It is a job that is in our hands. The party will never grow automatically. This is not the fault of the masses. It is our problem. Winning political power cannot be done on the cheap. Building the party is a long term job requiring constant and consistent effort.

The fact is that most people realize that mass organizing is hard. In order to do serious mass organizing one has to change her or his own life. Mass organizing is not a sometimes thing. It is a seven-day-a-week, twenty-four-hour-a-day affair. At the risk of sounding trite, the "Three P's" have to come into

play. Mass organizing and political basebuilding require Patience, Persistence, and Perseverance. But if you have the illusion that war and fascism are not inevitable under capitalism, you will have no sense of urgency about fighting to get rid of capitalism. You will have no reason to patiently persist and persevere. Your commitment to make revolution will be weakened.

This pacifist illusion about the true nature of capitalism stems from the belief that liberalism and the liberals can really reform the capitalist system for the better. The demise of the Soviet Union eliminated, for the moment, what was previously the primary contradiction in the world. But this contradiction was immediately replaced by contradictions between the U.S. and the other major imperialist powers, and the tendency of these contradictions is that in the long run they can be resolved only by war between the opposing capitalist classes, either fighting each other directly, or through their proxies.

No antiwar movement can ever change the true nature of imperialism. Only communism, which requires the emergence of the party as the country's nationwide leader, is capable of changing imperialism—by doing away with it.

Since the Vietnam War the U.S. has been involved in many military actions in order to maintain

U.S. business profits. (The most recent of these was the U.S. war of extermination against Iraq.) Over and over again we hear from the liberals either that the U.S. is too strong militarily to be challenged, or that the U.S. is too weak economically to fight. We hear the liberals' myth that the world's economy is so intertwined that interimperialist rivalry "cannot afford" selfdestructive war. Then there is the liberals' refrain that now that the Soviet threat no longer exists "we" have no enemies. These and other false notions are more expressions of wishful thinking.

As the world's capitalist systems weaken, interimperialist rivalry sharpens, not lessens. Competition among imperial powers like the U.S., Germany, Japan, France intensifies. The capitalists' need for new world markets grows as the crisis of overproduction spirals. The fact is that Marxism-Leninism is more valid than ever. The world is governed by laws. Lenin's law of the inevitability of war as long as imperialism exists is still valid. No amount of smooth talk or wishful thinking can block this out.

At this point we might try our hand at another law. The triumph of revisionism/opportunism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China led to restoring private capitalism. This in turn has meant rampant nationalism and civil wars. These wars, for example, in

Yugoslavia, Armenia and Azerbaijan among other places, has led not only to extreme oppression of the workers, but also to Hitler-type fascism, death and destruction. From these experiences we should conclude that revisionism is not simply an error in logic, or a change in class allegiance, or a political error, but that revisionism means war, civil war and fascism. Revisionism is capitalism and is governed by the laws of capitalism.

So for the antiwar movement finally to be effective (and not be merely one more in an endless series of antiwar movements responding to an endless series of imperialist wars) it must be led by the party and won to a strategy for communism. Ultimately imperialist war can only be done away with to the extent that capitalism can be crushed. So our job is to turn imperialist war into class war for communism. Civil war must be converted into war for communism. Only communism is a way out of the capitalist hell of exploitation, racism, fascism and war.

So commitment can only be sustained and strengthened by shedding our illusions. Nobody else can do our job for us or the working class. Our commitment can only be deepened by putting our line forward. Only by practice can our commitment be deepened. And while it is possible to express political disagreement in many ways, among ourselves it is ex-

pressed mainly by avoiding practice, by not doing what the majority has agreed to do but which one or another may disagree with. We must shed the myth that somehow or other capitalist society can serve the interests of the workers or ourselves. It is in this sense that we can't have a foot in both camps. We can only achieve our freedom by knowing our interests and needs and acting to secure them. Only communist revolution can serve this purpose.

Opponents of mass work question the fighting capacity and courage of the working class. But the working people's sustained political courage is linked closely to the development of the party's mass ties and to the growth in the masses' confidence in the party. Many of us know about the mass heroism of the Red Armies of Russia and China. There was the Long March in China. Tens of thousands of Chinese marched and fought pitched battles every step of the way for 8,000 miles to set up a secure base for revolution in a remote area, safely away from the government. These workers endured enormous hardships and casualties to make the Chinese Revolution. They did it in the main because they believed in revolution and had total confidence in their party whatever its shortcomings.

Like the Chinese, the Russian workers waged unbelievable class war against foe after foe. Who can

ever forget their amazing victory over the Nazi siege of Leningrad during World War II? At Leningrad the Red Army saved humanity from the hordes of Nazi brutes by trapping and eliminating the Nazis' entire crack army, with all its generals. As in China, the Soviet workers had confidence in their comrades and their party. This gave rise to mass heroism never before seen in the world.

The international communist movement sparked incredible heroism all over the world. In the fine documentary about the Nazi occupation of Europe in World War II, "The Sorrow and the Pity," Jacques Duclos, leader of the French Communist Party, was asked about courage in fighting the Nazis. Duclos said: "Courage, I'll tell you about courage. A young teen age boy was captured by the Nazis. This teenager was sentenced to death for blowing up a German convoy truck. As he was about to be executed by a Nazi firing squad he raised his clenched fist and shouted 'I'm proud to die for the communist party of Josef Stalin.'" Yes, the communist movement has always been capable of inspiring mass heroism and making it possible to do the seeming impossible.

Confidence by party members in the masses is a necessary prerequisite for doing mass work. This confidence will grow as the party deepens its ties to the workers through political struggle. As the

class struggle for revolution develops under the leadership of the party, confidence in the party by the masses will grow rock solid.

So—on the questions of war and peace, mass struggle, confidence in the working class and the primacy of the party and commitment to the party—there are differences. These differences are expressed in differing ways, but they are there. If they weren't our party would be larger and we would be that much closer to communist revolution

By the time of our convention next May Day, all these differences should come out into the open and be thoroughly discussed. At our convention we should rededicate ourselves to party building. We should realize that every time we recruit someone today it brings us a step closer to tomorrow's revolution. Every class battle we are in brings us new insights into the goal of winning state power for communism. The more we practice the better we will become. This is one reason why our convention discussion should focus on our practice or lack of practice.

We have some good examples of practice of mass work. We write about them regularly in *Challenge/Desafio*. Just to mention a few: In New York some of our members have helped build a united front caucus in a government employees' union. Our

members sell lots of *Challenge/Defias* to union members. The caucus put up a slate to oppose the union hacks and the slate polled 25% of the votes, with the highest vote going to a Pler. In Cook County Hospital in Chicago the form is different. There we have an INCAR caucus which does substantially the same work as we do among the government workers in New York. On the West Side of Manhattan, in New York City, we organize masses of people directly under the leadership of the local party clubs. Over the years we have brought thousands of people to May Day, sold thousands of papers, and recruited many members from this work. At Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles our INCAR group actively sells papers, organizes and recruits. None of these efforts is perfect. All have weaknesses and imperfections. But is the revolution being set back by these caucuses and efforts, or could we use hundreds more like them?

The leadership of the party has been weak or inconsistent in winning the party members to doing mass work. The new leadership must and will do a better job. There is every reason to believe that we can overcome our weaknesses and move to new heights. Currently, many young workers and students are in or around the party. These young people are winnable to consistent, long

range work for revolution. Their lives and the lives of their compatriots are on the line. Capitalism will not allow them to live in the same old way. Revolution is the only hopeful future of the youth.

What we do counts, and nobody is going to do it for us. We have the historic and great responsibility of holding the Red Flag higher and higher. The fact that we can hold this coming convention is proof that communism is not dead, but alive and well.

Today all the objective developments are going our way. Capitalism in the U.S. and around the world is weakening. The rulers are at one another's throat. It is clear that capitalism, whether the Chinese, Soviet, or traditional western style capitalism, is not serving the needs of the international working class. The world's rulers are growing weaker. It is time that the primary contradiction in the world be turned into a deadly fight between bosses and workers. The international working class will triumph because Marxism-Leninism will never die. With this weapon, Marxism-Leninism, in the hands of the working class, and with the growth of the PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY, worldwide victory can be in our grasp. Let us seize the moment! Long Live Communism!

By R.M.

HOW OUR PARTY MAKES ITS POLICY

For years anticommunist propagandists have tried desperately to give *democratic* centralism a bad rap. Capitalist anticommunism has gone to extraordinary lengths to create the notion that *democratic* centralism (which is the communist form of centralism) means "do it or else." Their way of proving this lie is true is by attacking Stalin. A cottage industry—no, a big business—has been built by bourgeois pundits over the years about the supposed evils of Stalin. According to them, Stalin murdered tens of millions of workers who "violated democratic centralism" (meaning Stalin's orders.)

The big hit directed at democratic centralism is that it is an abuse of power, and that it robs people of their individuality. (This falsification is funny, especially coming from the yes-men of the biggest bullies and mass murderers in history. The rulers' attack on Stalin is done not only to blind people to the truth about communism. Just as important to them is to hide the capitalists' own record of barbarism. Untold millions have been killed and more will continue to die as a result of unbridled capitalist oppression. If everything they charge Stalin with were true (and almost none of it is) he would be a pacifist choir boy compared to past and on-going capitalist brutality.)

In addition, if there ever was a system of "do it or else," it is capitalism. If there ever was a system for creating rampant conformity, it is capital-

ism. If there ever was a system that deprives workers of their individuality and their dignity, it is capitalism. *Dictatorial centralism* is an everyday, moment-by-moment experience of every worker. When you get to work the boss tells you to do it faster and cheaper, or else! And if you don't comply, or if business is bad, in the spirit of "individualism" the boss throws you out on the street. (By the way, when you pass the unemployment lines, the very common bread lines, or the homeless shivering on the streets, ask them how capitalism is helping them express their individuality or their creativeness. If you are lucky you might make it to the corner.)

In addition to intimidation, the threat of starvation and terror, the capitalists enforce dictatorial centralism with their media. All bosses use culture to corrupt and deaden the mind in order to create conformity and enforce their political will.

We can't avoid centralism. Corporations are centralized organizations. Factories and offices are centralized institutions. Modern industrial society is a centralized political and economic system. When it is run along capitalist lines, it is run in an autocratic, dictatorial centralized way.

Since we can't avoid centralism, we have to solve two problems. The first is how to make sure that centralism serves the interests of

working people. The second is how to organize centralism so that working people can use it to exercise political power over society, instead of seeing it used to keep working people from exercising state power.

Democratic centralism is the way to do both these things. This is how we organize our party, and our party is an embryonic example of how we will organize society.

AN EXAMPLE OF CENTRALISM

Let's take a brief look at a well-known example of dictatorial centralism. A football team has 45 players. The team has many coaches, especially these days. Aside from making money for the team's owner (actually, in order to do so), the entire team has one purpose. That sole purpose is to win. Each one of the players, and all the coaches, have one goal in common: to get the team to score more points than the opposition. Each player has a very specific role that fits into the collective goal of winning. One of the main jobs of the coaches is to accumulate all the experience from over the years. The purpose of accumulating this information is to use experience (history) to secure victory. What's wrong with that? (There is a lot wrong with sports under capitalism. But this article is not about that.) Now let's take a look how communist centralism

is similar to, and how it differs from, the football example.

In brief, the main similarity is that we develop our policy in a way similar to the way football coaches make strategy for their teams. Our policy is developed mainly by evaluating the history of all the revolutionary efforts by workers.

Of course, we are also very different from a football team. The team is a capitalist factory. Only the coaches have the right to plan and give orders. The players only have the right to follow orders. But our party was formed for one primary goal: to make revolution so as to transform society in a communist way. Therefore in our party the members are both the coaches and the players. They have the right to make the plans, and the responsibility to carry them out.

Democratic centralism is the scientific method applied to the field of politics. We have one party, and at any given time our party has one line. If we don't act in a united way to carry it out, we can't know if the line is correct, or where it is incorrect. This is the way scientific knowledge is formed. So we have one party, one line. Unity based on the history and the practice of ourselves and others. These ideas aren't unique. They were Marx's and Lenin's ideas.

Operating with democratic centralism we could never have vari-

ous factions that advocated different paths to communism. Is it possible to have one faction advocating parliamentarianism, another faction advocating reforming capitalism until it became communism, and of course, yet another faction advocating the seizure of power by the working class? In the course of organizing, each faction would try and win adherents to its view. Sounds not too bad? Well, it is very bad! First of all, a small party operating in very hostile conditions needs to muster all its power in order to win. But the larger point is that you can't win with the wrong line. Well, how does a correct line get developed? Who determines what's right or wrong? We have changed our line several times over the years and we may do so again. How is it done?

HOW DOES A CORRECT LINE GET DEVELOPED?

The original communist parties had the goal of communism. Socialism was supposed to be the first stage of communism. When we started out, we agreed with this. But we saw that while the the original communists had made impressive first steps, they didn't succeed in getting at all close to communism. The question we asked ourselves was "Why didn't they succeed?" We started a collective evaluation.

The Russian revolution of 1917 succeeded in toppling the capitalist state led by the czar. It was done with armed struggle. Czarist oppression was done away with. So far, so good, we thought. But "so far so good" didn't last long. After only forty years Khrushchev, spokesman of a new class of privileged Soviet citizens, became leader of the Soviet Party. Under Khrushchev's leadership the Soviet Union took qualitative steps along the capitalist road.

Khrushchev attacked Stalin, but not from the Left, not for failing to install communism. Khrushchev attacked from the Right, in the interest of the privileged ruling class he represented. He put his stamp of approval on most of the anti-Stalin slanders in order to cover up his own political and ideological betrayal of the communist revolution. He scuttled the dictatorship of the proletariat. He scuttled the Leninist conclusion that capitalism inevitably produces wars.

Besides Khrushchev's deviations from the real-world truth of Marxist-Leninist theory, he made many pro-private capitalist economic changes, and proposed others, that helped usher in the Gorbachev period. Under Khrushchev's leadership private property

rights were expanded. Wages for his base of technocrats, managers, cultural performers and writers were escalated. These increases left factory workers and farm workers in the dust.

These deviations stimulated us to analyze more deeply the experience of the Soviet and Chinese revolutions. What we concluded from this collective evaluation was that socialism was the wrong goal for communist revolutionaries.

We became convinced that from the start communism should have been their sole goal. We concluded that maintaining important aspects of capitalism (which is what socialism does) forced them to abandon their communist goal.

After a relatively extensive discussion, which included examining our own modest experience, most agreed that our collective negative evaluation of socialism was correct. This was debated for some time in our party. That was new for us, an important change in our line. We spelled this out in *Road to Revolution IV*.

Others looking at the same evidence came up with opposite conclusions. Well, how could revolutionaries who want commu-

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scientific method
applied to politics.**

nism be in the same party as those who want to carry out a process that ends up with Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika? Glasnost and perestroika didn't lead to communism. They didn't even maintain socialism, but led to Yeltsin-Kohl-Bush market economy. Often the "proof is in the pudding."

Today we think communism should be the sole aim of the revolutionary process. So if you join our party today you have been won to fighting for communism, not socialism. We take into account the important contributions of past revolutionaries. They were wrong, not because they were bad people, but because they had wrong ideas. The job of later revolutionaries, who know something went wrong, is not to "correct" the errors by going back to capitalism. (It was capitalism that the Russian workers were trying to get away from in the first place.) The job of revolutionaries is to correct the line from the Left, not from the Right. In this case the Left meant going directly from capitalism to communism.

The line is not changed by giving orders, nor for personal gain, nor to satisfy personal whim. The line is changed by continuously and consistently evaluating the practice we and all other revolutionaries have done, and are doing. This is done collectively, not by an individual. An individual may start

the process, but only the collective can settle the matter.

So the continuous process we are engaged in is something like this: from the workers, to the workers. The point is, the line isn't the creation of this one or that one. The line is a consequence of the practice of the international working class. Communists since Marx have evaluated and summarized their experiences.

Major changes can only be settled by the leadership after careful consultation with the membership. When the line is changed it becomes the property of the entire party. The line is not just the property of those who proposed the change. The application of the line should be done by the entire party whether you agree or disagree. But we know that in the real world some comrades don't act on a line they disagree with.

We know from experience that on most questions of any importance there is a healthy difference of opinion. Also there are different levels of commitment. This results in varying efforts to put forward and fight for the line within and outside of the party. How are differences handled? How do we conduct innerparty struggle given different levels of commitment?

HOW DO WE HANDLE DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE PARTY?

At some point in our deliberations a majority develops around an idea or a set of ideas. Perhaps at that point this becomes the line of the party. But what if some comrades disagree, then what? This is where bourgeois individualism can come into play.

On paper, all comrades are obligated—duty bound—to fight for the line whether they agree or disagree. That is the only way the scientific process can work. But in the real world many comrades cannot bow to the will of the collective. Often someone cannot wait to see the results of the practice or wait to reevaluate the myriad of points previously discussed. Most of us have been trained in capitalist ways. Whatever *we* think, *we know* is correct (idealism.) “The collective is wrong—dead wrong.” Sometimes they may be correct. But unless we act unitedly on the line it is hard to know what is right and what is wrong.

Many peculiar events may occur after the line is agreed on by the collective.

Some who disagreed may form a faction and try to win other members of the party to what they think is right. They have separate group meetings and discussions. They become bitter about how wrong the party is, and how correct they are. This type of activity disrupts and weakens the party's ability to put forward and test the line. This is factionalism. It cannot be tolerated. After brief efforts to try and stop it, if the factionalism continues (it is usually intensified) the party must expel these factionalists.

We expect that seniority should produce more knowledge, more understanding, more devotion, more responsibility. We have to treat different people in different ways.

A leader or member may disagree with a line and simply not practice it. They do not organize a faction. Obviously other members are aware of their ideas and see that they omit that part of the party line from their efforts. This isn't helpful, but it is at least a step removed from factionalism. The method we use to try to deal with this form of disagreement is persistent, continuous persuasion. We try and avoid subjectivity, which leads to disruption. But more importantly, we concentrate on those party members and their base who are trying to fight for the line more vigorously. By struggle

(and with a degree of toleration for those who disagree), we are able to remain focused on the primary thing. And in this case the primary thing is those fighting for the line and constantly evaluating the results.

In some cases a leader or member who isn't won to the line, and who doesn't form a faction, nevertheless conducts guerilla warfare against the line, constantly sniping and criticizing. Such a person seizes on every weakness to say, “See, I was right.” This type of activity becomes extremely antagonistic. Sometimes it calls for expulsion.

Extreme bourgeois individualism cannot be tolerated. If you are correct, time and events will prove you correct. Then the party will change its course. But often patience and constructiveness are not the properties of these individualists. Most times protracted consistent persuasion is enough to do the job, until the party, or the comrade who disagreed, see how the real world unfolds. But, sometimes you have to be tough. “Let the punishment fit the crime.”

At this point our level of practice is modest, even among those who say they agree with the party. So, as we have said, in most cases protracted persuasion is the primary method of principled internal struggle.

Of course, this can't always be the case. In different periods, or at different points, the class struggle is sharper. It is a matter of immediate life or death. In such situations the party cannot tolerate as much time and effort in fighting against deviations from the line. So, the objective conditions are a definite factor in shaping the nature of internal struggle. Struggle cannot be the same at all times. But internal struggle is good. It is constructive. It helps move the party ahead.

HOW WE CHOOSE PARTY LEADERS

You can see that developing and uniting around the line is complicated. A good deal of skill is required in the leadership to keep the party from onesidedness, either too lenient or liberal in dealing with internal divisiveness, or too harsh in fighting for the line. We do have a double standard, one for leaders and another for members, one for more senior members and another for new members. We expect that seniority should produce more knowledge, more understanding, more devotion, more responsibility. The point is, we have to treat different people in different ways. This is the leadership's responsibility. How does leadership in the party emerge? How are leaders chosen?

Football coaches are hired by owners, presumably for their ex-

pertise. Party leaders are chosen by their political colleagues. Many factors go into choosing a party leader. Briefly, we start off with evaluating someone's commitment to the party, the working class and above all, to communist revolution. What is the ability of the comrade to shape and fight for the line while keeping the party as unified as possible? This is very important. In other words, how is the line fought for? Is it done skillfully? Of course, length of service is a factor. Long range struggle requires stability. These qualifications apply not only to the leader of the party. They apply in varying degrees to all leaders of the party.

We realize that there is unevenness in all processes. So that is taken into account when leadership is chosen by the existing leadership in conjunction with the membership. All new leaders must be ratified by the other party leaders. This is because the party leaders have proven to some extent that they are the best trained communists to judge other party members.

THE PARTY DEVELOPS THE INDIVIDUAL

Leading the party is an infinitely more complex task than coaching a football team. In the first place discipline is essentially voluntary, not bought with bucks. Unlike a team, the membership is of all ages, of both sexes and is multira-

cial in character. Their backgrounds are diverse. Members have different experiences. The primary thing is that they are all communists. They are mostly workers and have some degree of allegiance to the party and to revolution. However, dealing with the diversity means developing a much higher level of personal attention and understanding than ever conceived of in a capitalist society.

For example, the ruling class is racist. It makes a big deal about the "ineducability" of young black and Latin youth. But we are recruiting some (although not enough) of these young people. Because they see the party in a positive light they are not alienated from the process of learning the party line. In short order they can express it fairly clearly and carry it out, winning others of their peers to the party. Often many of the youth who join the party become articulate. They start reading a little—some even more. Others start writing about their efforts in the class struggle. They confound the predictions of the ruling class educators who claim they are uneducable. It is the party that develops the individual, while the bosses crush the individual.

We develop all types of people in the cauldron of making the revolution. The communist revolution is the active element of a worker's development. Being use-

ful in the revolutionary process requires skills that far exceed what is required in capitalist society.

The party's leaders and members have the objective of uniting ideologically, then acting as one force for the agreed-upon line. If the line isn't carried out, it can't be evaluated. There is no testing. After a period of practice we determine the correctness of the line by constant evaluation and examination. Our line is primarily based on practice. The old adage "practice makes perfect" makes a lot of sense. (In our jargon we say "practice is primary.") Without first putting forward our line, and then examining the results in a unified way, the idea of democratic centralism has little meaning. The party cannot be a political Tower of Babel with many different points of view constantly fighting each other (factionalism). This would never allow the party to carry out any line.

HOW OUR BASE SUPERVISES THE PARTY

We rely on our base to achieve internal unity. Almost all our meetings are open to nonmembers. Our clubs' meetings are open to everyone in each club's base. This openness extends to all of our higher bodies up to, and including, our Central Committee meetings. In this way our meetings are enriched by the

opinions and experiences of our base.

Involving our base in our deliberations helps us to make our decisions more correct, acceptable and winnable. Our line, while it is the property of the party, also is the property of the masses. We always consult our base and rely on their opinions. Some people in our base often don't agree with, or have serious questions about, our overall line. But they generally support and endorse our activities. Consequently, involving our base in decision-making not only enriches our line, but makes the line more authoritative.

There are certain bedrock ideas that are not to be seriously questioned in the leadership. The strategy of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the need for mass armed struggle, or the primacy of the working class and not uniting with the "better" bosses, or the fight against racism, are some of the concepts that are not up for grabs. On matters like these there can be no deviation. The party is not a discussion group. The party is a revolutionary political organization based on the principle of democratic centralism in the fight for communism.

Organizing and maintaining a party such as ours is very difficult. Often it is easier to attack the party instead of the bosses. Over the years there have been only a few—not many—factional situ-

ations that led to expulsions or breaking away from the party. In each case the faction was going to form another party and show everyone the way to go. But life is a grim teacher. Every one of these factions has disappeared. It is not so easy. Usually the disagreements within the party stem from Right-wing points of view. This happens because some people view it as too hard to fight for a Left line, that is, for communism. As a result, they retreat from, or abandon, the dictatorship of the proletariat. It doesn't start out that way. But it always ends up that way. The rationale for this is that the party is too small, or the workers are too backward, or the international communist movement has failed. So, naturally, that "proves" the fight for communism is wrong, or impossible. We shall see.

The fight for communism is long and hard. You need a long term outlook. Revolutionaries need firm discipline. Democratic centralism is the highest level of discipline. It is stronger than military discipline because it is voluntary discipline. But in order to be

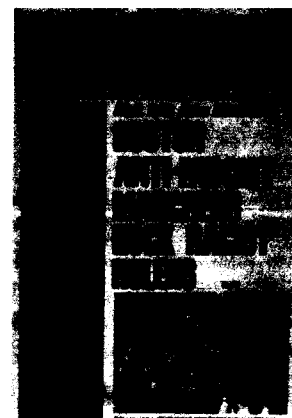
successful, people must be willing to shed their capitalist-individualist skin, and be willing to submit their ideas to the judgment of the collective.

There is nothing more personally liberating or fulfilling than achieving the results we aim for. You can scream your head off against racism or oppression all you want, and nothing will happen. But being a responsible member of a communist democratic centralist organization like our party allows you to get something done about racism and oppression. With the party, and the party's mass base, you could help stop the Klan, or stop instances of oppression, and finally get rid of capitalism altogether.

It is in this real sense that democratic centralism, or communist centralism, leads to the full development of the individual. Whoever can submit personal feelings for the good of the party and the working class, becomes a real person.

By R.M.

BOSTON, '75



The following article is an edited, updated version of a piece that appeared in the Fall 1975 PL Magazine. It describes the previous summer of struggle against ROAR, Boston's antibusing fascists. During June, July, and August of 1975, the PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY and the Committee Against Racism threw down the gauntlet in a bold challenge to the most significant mass-based racist movement in the U.S. at the time—and won hands down.

The movement represented by ROAR had more than local significance, and our defeat of it can truly be said to have "changed history." As the article points out, ROAR was a trial balloon for open adoption of fascist slogans and ideas by the ruling class as "mainstream," that is, for the building of a mass fascist movement by the bosses.

The Boston Summer Project led by our comrades punctured that balloon so thoroughly that nearly a generation later they have still not been able to put open racism and fascism forward as a mass movement... And it is still our business to keep it that way.

Another, and no less significant aspect of Boston '75 is the number of volunteers who were won to membership in PLP in the course of the summer struggle. Many of them remain in the Party, and have become leaders. Perhaps because of the sharpness of the Boston struggles and their experience there, they have helped to lead sharp struggles around the country, fighting the Klan, the Nazis, and their ruling class sponsors.

We hope that this experience and its many rich lessons will interest readers of THE COMMUNIST. In the future, we will carry more articles reflecting the PLP's practical experience in the leadership of class struggle.

The U.S. ruling class decided in the early 1970s to make a racist anti-busing movement in Boston serve as a trial balloon for developing a nationwide fascist base. Boston's black population then was twenty per cent of the whole population, and Boston was one of the most segregated U.S. cities.

The segregation of black and white workers and their children in housing and schools was also reflected at the workplace. For example, the workforce at Lynn G.E.—the major industrial plant in the area—was only 3 percent black. Therefore, the objective unity that existed elsewhere at the point of production between black and white workers against the boss as the common enemy was weaker there than in more highly integrated cities.

To a great extent because of this division in the working class, Boston had and still has a high percentage of unorganized workers. Therefore, the class solidarity that accompanies even the weakest forms of unionization was not firmly embedded in the collective outlook of Boston's working class.

Organized racism, though, had a long history in this city. Louise Day Hicks, the local racist political leader, and her lieutenants had been pushing neo-nazi demagoguery against school integration since the Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s. The Boston School Committee (a majority of whose members had joined Hicks' organization, ROAR, by 1974) spent years deliberately creating segregated school zones and simultaneously presiding over the universal degeneration of the schools.

ROAR came into existence in 1974. Its initials stood for "Re-

store Our Alienated Rights." Its leaders claimed to support the principle of neighborhood schools. In fact, their only basis for unity was the desire to keep Boston as segregated as possible. ROAR quickly grew into the most significant mass-based racist organization in the U.S. It mobilized thousands in anti-busing marches, received copious publicity, and was so brazenly winked at by the mayor, the police, and the rest of the state apparatus that it dared convene regular meetings in the Boston City Council chamber.

All this preparation enabled the racists to seize the offensive during the first weeks of the 1974-75 Fall school term. The stonings of school buses and mob violence against black people that marked the first days of the busing of more than 18,000 school children took place on international television and under the "benign neglect" of the Boston Police Department, which gave the racists the keys to the city.

The 1974-75 school year was characterized by incidents of racist violence, particularly at schools in ROAR strongholds. ROAR developed an image as a significant political force. The Boston Police Patrolman's Association contributed money to it; the sellout leadership of the Massachusetts Building Trades Council endorsed its racist anti-busing position; Mayor Kevin White

dispensed patronage to ROAR members and held secret negotiating sessions with ROAR leaders; and Louise led a Spring march of 1500 racists in Washington against busing. Meanwhile, the cops continued to protect the thugs responsible for racist attacks and to arrest black people for defending themselves; the liberal politicians were secretly in cahoots with ROAR; the leadership of the unions—those who pretended to support busing and integration—did nothing. The NAACP confined itself, as usual, to press conferences and reliance on the bosses' courts.

Not only liberals were in cahoots with ROAR. No fascist movement is complete without a sprinkling of revisionists, phony communists who distort the idea of working class struggle into tailing after the most backward aspects of the working class. In Boston this not-so-comic relief came from the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party. This gaggle of cartoon lefties actually marched with ROAR's South Boston Marshals against busing for integration! They claimed that busing was a liberal ruling-class plot to turn white workers against black people. That's true as far as it goes: the ruling class would rather have working-class disunity than united working-class neighborhoods and schools, but marching with the enemies of multi-racial unity is a

strange way to build working class unity!

Without backing from the politicians and the cops, ROAR was all shadow and no substance. Its leaders were hacks and ward-healers who saw how to make a fast buck out of racism, and its "cadre" were the dregs of society: drunks, ex-cops or their families, young punks, and a handful of sadists. In order for ROAR to play a useful role in the rulers' plans, it had to remain essentially unchallenged by a mass movement against racism.

CHALLENGE TO THE FASCISTS

The only force that emerged to provide leadership in the fight against the racists and their bosses was the Progressive Labor Party. PLP's annual May Day march that year was called for South Boston, which had become a national symbol of the threat posed by racism. When the call went out to demonstrate under the red flag of revolution in ROAR's own bailiwick, 2,500 workers and students came from all over the East Coast to call for unity against the bosses and to chant "Death to Fascism!"

Egged on by the applause of Boston's Nazi Tactical Police Force, ROAR's bullies tried to smash the march before it could start. About eighty of these goons charged the small PLP security force. Twenty-five antiracist fighters met them and kicked the stuffing out of

them, putting them to rout and landing a good number of them in the hospital. When the cops saw this happening, they went on the attack, arresting and injuring several antiracists. But the march took place. It was the talk of the town for days.

The problem now became to transform the battle of May Day into an ongoing offensive that could eventually smash the racist movement. This task was assumed by the Committee Against Racism.

CAR proposed "BOSTON '75: A Summer of Struggle, a Lifetime of Commitment, a Call to Action," a bold national summerlong drive directly in the eye of the storm against the most virulent racist movement since the heyday of the KKK. This was precisely what was needed to put ROAR on the defensive and stall the rulers' plans for a nationwide fascist mass movement. Tens of thousands of brochures flooded college campuses in early spring. They called on "... students and other interested people to join our Freedom Summer AntiRacist Action Project. Its purpose is to give a national/international focus to the antiracist struggles going on in Boston. Summer volunteers will work under the leadership of Boston CAR. Together, they will prepare the way for a strong people's movement which will unite blacks, whites, and other minorities to fight against the racism be-

ing used to wreck the busing program... Boston is the test of whether or not racist mob violence similar to FASCISM, combined with political racism, can succeed in stopping the desegregation movement. CAR says with this summer project, 'THE RACISTS ARE GONNA FLUNK THIS TEST!'

Before it started, BOSTON '75 was faced with two objective limitations. First, most of its volunteers would of necessity come from college campuses. Could inexperienced students carry the message of multiracial unity into working class communities? Second, although some of the volunteers came from Boston, most were from out of town. The forces of racism would surely redbait them and brand them "outside agitators." Could the project flourish under these circumstances?

As the CAR Steering Committee estimated and as events later proved, the answer to both these questions was clearly affirmative. Students had already demonstrated during the Civil Rights movement and the antiwar movement that their energy and creativity, their militancy, and their political commitment more than compensated for inexperience. Besides, as in any endeavor, you learn to swim by swimming. In the second place, although most of the volunteers didn't come from Boston, Boston was in the United

States, and all of the United States was permeated with racism. All of the volunteers had been confronted with Nazi "theoreticians" like Jensen, discriminatory budget cuts, police terror, unemployment, and any number of racism's other hideous guises. Boston wasn't Mars. Finally and most significantly, the project's organizers and volunteers knew that their politics and program met the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of Boston's black and white workers, parents, students, and teachers. The racists had never built a single school or won a single job. On the contrary, they had helped make Boston's schools among the worst in the U.S. (no mean feat.)

Confident in this estimate of the situation and in the responsiveness of Boston's working class, the first wave of volunteers began to arrive in early June. Eventually their numbers would reach 150, and they would come from California, Texas, the Midwest, Washington. D.C., Seattle, New York, and other areas.

CAR'S STRATEGY

The blueprint envisioned several overlapping areas of work: a Freedom School in Roxbury that would bring black and white students together in a friendly atmosphere and help them compensate for the havoc of the previous academic year; the formation of committees to canvass in South

Boston, Hyde Park, Roxbury, Dorchester, Cambridge, and other parts of the greater Boston area; an Outreach Committee to win support from churches, unions, and other mass organizations; and a citywide petition drive to popularize CAR's program for better schools and against the racists. Regular street agitation was planned to complement these activities. The petition drive was conceived as the vehicle that could tie them all together.

From the very outset, the politicians, the cops, and of course, ROAR, served notice that they considered BOSTON '75 a serious threat and would do anything in their power to crush it. Their strategy was to harass, intimidate, and openly terrorize the volunteers in order to prevent the message of antiracist solidarity from reaching the city's working class.

ROAR's plan was put into operation early in the project. In early June, a group of volunteers went to conduct street agitation in Boston. A group of ROAR thugs overturned their table and vandalized their panel truck. No arrests were made. On June 7, 60 CAR members tried to picket the new ROAR office in Fields Corner (an integrated section of Dorchester). Cops immediately arrived and blocked the picket line as well as a planned march through the neighborhood. However, the CAR anti-racists were not deterred. They successfully circu-

lated a petition calling for ROAR's ouster from Dorchester. When cops attacked a CAR rally at Boston State College, 25 CAR members and friends invaded the president's office.

These opening skirmishes proved that the ruling class's stake in Boston's fascist movement was such that they weren't about to let "free speech" for anti-racists interfere with Hicks & Co.—and that CAR's fighters weren't about to back down in the face of petty harassment.

Therefore, the bosses and their agents decided to up the ante and see if they could wipe out the project before it got off the ground. On June 14, 25 CAR members were at Uphams Corner for a street rally. The rally took place in orderly fashion with anti-racist speeches, leafletting, and petitioning to kick ROAR out of Dorchester. Soon, about ten men carrying bats, a hockey stick, and a sawed-off boat oar, arrived and began viciously attacking the CAR members, all of whom were weaponless. Five minutes before the attack began, all the cops who had been watching the rally since its start disappeared. The CAR members fought back. Suddenly the police "reappeared." A CAR worker made a speech to the 100 onlookers who had gathered by this time, explaining that the attack was caused by ROAR goons working with the police and that the anti-racist movement would

not be intimidated by these tactics. He was immediately arrested. The ROAR attackers were never arrested.

The CAR volunteers—barely over 50 by the time of Uphams Corner—refused to yield an inch in the face of racist terror. Two days later, they were back on the streets, this time picketing City Hall to expose the collaboration between the racist movement and the Boston City Council (8 of 9 Council members admitted to ROAR membership). The racists were so shameless about advertising their Jim Crow ideas that they plastered the letters "ROAR" in the windows of City Council offices. The "right" to strut racism in this manner was upheld several times in court as an exercise of "free speech." However, on June 16, this "right" was unceremoniously abridged when several CAR members ripped the hated letters off the windows. The Uphams Corner attack had proved that the fascists were ruthless and had to be treated with their own medicine. Henceforth, every CAR event was to have adequate preparation for security and self defense in case of attack. This measure and the militancy of the CAR security force helped insure the project's survival during the course of the summer.

REACHING THE MASSES

By late June, BOSTON '75 could count two significant accomplishments: it had established itself as the only organized public challenge to ROAR, and it had survived all attempts at intimidation. The bulk of the volunteers were to arrive by early July. But a serious political problem remained: despite a fair amount of public agitation, CAR had yet to approach the mass of Boston's workers, parents, and students with its positive program for fighting racism and winning improved conditions in the schools. The petition drive to oust ROAR from Dorchester succeeded in gathering 2,000 signatures; however, this brief campaign still did not provide a vehicle for uniting black and white people throughout the greater Boston area.

All along, the publicity for BOSTON '75 had announced CAR's six-point program: 1) Build 25 new schools in Boston; 2) Hire 1,286 teachers (to reduce teacher-student ratio to 15:1), of whom 500 must be black or Hispanic; 3) Expand bilingual programs for all relevant languages; 4) Indict Hicks, former School Committee head John Kerrigan, and the ROAR Executive Committee for conspiracy to violate the civil rights of school children; 5) Expand and upgrade cafeteria and athletic facilities; 6) End the prac-

tice of conducting segregated parents' meetings.

Because it combined the demand for vitally needed concessions within the schools and the fight against ROAR as a major roadblock in the way of winning these concessions, this program could serve as a shot in the arm to Boston's black and white workers and students. The bosses had already made their own program abundantly clear. While ROAR ran amok in the streets, Mayor White announced that he was slashing the school budget by \$30 million and laying off 600 provisional and nontenured teachers. The objective conditions for a mass campaign on these issues could not have been better. All that remained was to get the campaign underway.

An initial sluggishness prevented the campaign from opening with the vigor it needed to succeed. The problem was political: Did the volunteers really believe that most of the 640,000 Bostonians did not belong to or sympathize with ROAR, and that their interests actually required the smashing of racism? The press had constantly pushed the lie that the majority of Boston's white workers, who had been passive during the 1974 busing, were committed racists. The citywide campaign for CAR's six-point program was slow getting underway primarily because the CAR members and the PLers fighting

alongside them lacked sufficient confidence in the objective anti-racist aspirations of Boston's working class.

Then two black families moved into virtually all white Hyde Park in late June. Each was savagely attacked by gangs of racist punks, who specialized in assaulting young children. CAR volunteers played an instrumental role in organizing a defense committee in both cases, despite the usual harassment from the police. The punks who attacked these families had also been responsible for terrorizing white families in Hyde Park. The material basis for anti-racist unity against these petty goons clearly existed. CAR acted upon it and organized a meeting to discuss the problem at the home of one of the black families. Despite threats from ROAR and the police, an integrated group of thirty people attended and discussed methods of dealing with the attacks.

That the meeting took place at all under such conditions meant far more than the particulars of its agenda. As a result of CAR's initiative, thirty black and white working people had sat down to discuss a common menace in a neighborhood where some of 1974-75's worst racist incidents had taken place. Imagine the possibilities if 150 CAR volunteers spent hours daily taking their program into the streets, the shops, and the schools. Tens of thousands could

be motivated to move Leftward on the question of anti-racism. After the unity meeting in Hyde Park the mass aspect of Boston '75 goes underway in earnest.

The six-point petition suddenly became a commonplace sight in dozens of greater Boston neighborhoods, at street-corner rallies, in projects, at plant gates, and on campuses. In Dorchester, Hyde Park, Roxbury, Southie, Jamaica Plain, Cambridge and elsewhere, hundreds responded every day to the demand for improved schools and the call to crush racism. Eventually, these hundreds would become thousands. The harassment, invariably aided by the cops, that accompanied CAR's canvassing in Hyde Park and Southie deterred neither the volunteers nor the bulk of ordinary people in these neighborhoods who wanted to learn more about the program.

The CAR Outreach Committee went to work and received endorsements from several church groups as well as from the 30,000-member regional organization of the American Federation of Government Employees. The AFGE leader who gave the endorsement later withdrew it when he became frightened of being identified with "radicals," but beforehand, he had sent a copy of CAR's petition to every AFGE member in the Massachusetts area. Thousands of these workers were later to play a

part in CAR's major demonstration of the summer.

FREEDOM SCHOOL

The Roxbury Freedom School was conceived as a dual effort to promote multiracial unity and to provide instruction that could help compensate for the illiteracy fostered in the Boston public schools. It opened at the Charles Street A.M.E. Church on July 7. The first days of school were filled with numerous activities that proved the feasibility of integrated antiracist education. In one class students read and discussed a leaflet entitled "Racism Hurts Us All." In a history class led by a PLPer, the students wrote and performed a skit entitled "Strikers and Scabs" that had been adapted from a *Challenge/Desafio* article. Other courses included Art, Math, English, and Spanish. Trips visited local parks and swimming pools. A Freedom School basketball team formed. Free lunches were provided. By the end of the first week, over 60 students had enrolled, and their numbers were to grow as the summer progressed. Parents actively participated in all phases of school activity.

Meanwhile, CAR continued to combine mass work with militant action against the rulers. The week of July 14, Mayor White announced his \$30 million school budget cutback, claiming that 1,200 teachers, aides, bus moni-

tors, and others were unnecessary for quality education because the Boston public school population was shrinking. Naturally it was shrinking—the schools were that bad!

When White announced these cuts, not a peep was heard from union leaders or Boston's established loyal opposition (NAACP etc.). Only CAR raised its voice. On July 17, the project called a picket line in front of White's posh Beacon Hill home. As the group was assembling on the Boston Common, the cops came and told the demonstration's leaders: "The Mayor said not to let you picket his house, so we aren't going to let you." So much, once again, for "free speech" against racism in the cradle of U.S. democracy. About 100 CAR volunteers tried to march anyhow. And, the very next day, 200 CAR members held a sit-in in White's City Hall office, while another 70 picketed outside. White stayed away, but his aides and the rest of City Hall were in a panic.

Clearly, BOSTON '75 was becoming more than a pinprick in the rulers' side. So far nothing had succeeded in stopping or intimidating the antiracist fighters. Moreover, the newspapers, radio and TV began giving reports about CAR activities. CAR's actions, its mass sixpoint petition drive, and its inroads in the labor movement could no longer be concealed. No matter how much

the media lied, they could not disguise the most significant new element of class struggle in Boston: an integrated, organized force was throwing down a challenge to racist ROAR and its bosses in City Hall, on Beacon Street, and in Washington.

RACISTS UP THE ANTE

The CAR sit-in at City Hall was the last straw for White and his ROAR allies. They decided to try

to rid themselves of the anti-racist movement. The "new" approach was to trap the CAR volunteers into combat with ROAR at unfavorable odds, and then arrest the anti-racists on phony felony charges. The occasion they chose was a July 23 unity meeting at a Hyde Park's school. When a group of fifteen CAR members and Hyde Park residents arrived at the school, they found the meeting room occupied by 50

ROAR members with weapons. The fascists locked the school doors. Suddenly, the police appeared, and instead of evicting the ROAR trespassers, they ordered CAR to leave. The CAR members returned to their headquarters, followed by the police and some of their ROAR side-kicks. The cops arrested seventeen people, including a volunteer doing his laundry across the street!. The arrested anti-racists were taken to the Hyde Park Station House, where a lynch mob organized by ROAR and the cops chanted, "Give us the n.....rs!"

But the next day, CAR members were back on the streets of Boston, picketing the West Roxbury Courthouse while the seventeen were being arraigned, canvassing and rallying in the streets, and running the Freedom School. The forces of racism were growing desperate. The antiracist movement was conducting business as usual.

WHITE-ROAR AXIS

It is worth noting the relation between ROAR and Boston's ruling class, particularly Mayor White. White had impeccable liberal credentials. He had entered politics as part of the Kennedy machine. He had been mayor since 1967. He was on excellent terms with ROAR. Six days after ROAR endorsed White's plan to take personal control of the

school board, ROAR leaders started getting jobs on the city payroll.

By late 1974, White announced that he would give ROAR city funds to oppose the busing program. White reminded ROAR of the services he had provided for the racist movement, including taxpayers' funds for an anti-busing appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court; advocating a change in the Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Law, which calls for integrating the public schools; and asking "... my staff to assist you as much as possible in staging your rallies."

ROAR could not survive without White and the rest of the ruling class. The patronage dispensed through Hicks to the other petty nazis served to ensure the loyalty of the open fascist forces to the big bosses. Left to its own devices, ROAR was little more than a gaggle of savage but inept slobs. It constituted a significant presence only insofar as it received publicity from the bosses' media, protection from the bosses' cops, and payoffs from the bosses' coffers.

The decision to unleash the combined forces of ROAR and the official state apparatus on the BOSTON '75 volunteers was made at the very least on the highest level of the Boston city government. By the end of July, the antiracist campaign had begun to have a telling effect on the city's



C.A.R. and P.L.P. members arrested... Guilty of fighting racist anti-busing fascists.

Boston Troop's Terror Tactic Shaky Rulers Fear Anti-Racist Line

political climate. The rulers could no longer lay claim to complete mastery of the situation. The schools were due to open in another month. Thousands were responding favorably to the CAR program. If CAR's volunteers had enough daring to sit in at the Mayor's office—after—they had been victimized by a major frameup, what would they do next? More ominously, from the bosses' viewpoint, what would happen if some of the thousands who were signing the petition began to take action to win its demands?

CARSON BEACH I

Motivated by fear of this threat and following the recipe they had already developed for fascism, Boston's combined racist forces decided to raise the ante once again. The pretext was an incident that took place Sunday, July 27, on South Boston's Carson Beach. Six black bible salesmen decided to take Sunday off. They probably looked for the nearest beach on a map and chose Carson. While relaxing on the beach, they were attacked and brutalized by a mob of batwinging racist punks.

This incident was the most serious racist attack of its kind in a summer that had already been punctuated by a series of gang assaults against black people. Immediately, the press, the police, and the Mayor's office moved in to add more grist to the racewar

mill. Instead of apprehending and imprisoning the racists, the cops and newspapers suggested the absurd idea that a handful of black men had gone to Carson Beach for the purpose of provoking a fight. A ROAR leader was quoted in the *Globe* as saying: "We've always welcomed good colored people on Carson Beach but we won't tolerate black militants and communists." However, he added that no "colored" people ever came and blamed CAR and PLP for Sunday's incident. The bosses had made their point; Jim Crow was the law of the land in Boston.

CARSON BEACH II

The following Sunday, a similar fascist assault took place when, according to news reports, an even larger gang of batwinging racists attacked first a black taxi driver and then a Puerto Rican family in the vicinity of Carson Beach. The next day, the *Globe* and the *Herald* once again carried interviews with ROAR officials, who lied to justify these barbaric acts by asserting that CAR and PLP had distributed a leaflet that called for denying "honkies" access to the beach.

Mayor White and the police chiefs made fatuous utterances about allowing all citizens freedom to use the beaches but, once again, no arrests occurred.

The NAACP made a few cautious statements but issued no call

for action. The union leadership stayed mute.

CAR issued a call for "Beach Liberation Day" and urged masses of black, Latin and white Bostonians to go to Carson Beach the next weekend and assert their right to use it without being assaulted by ROAR's racist stormtroopers.

As soon as CAR issued its call White said that "free access" to the beaches did not include "provocative" demonstrations.

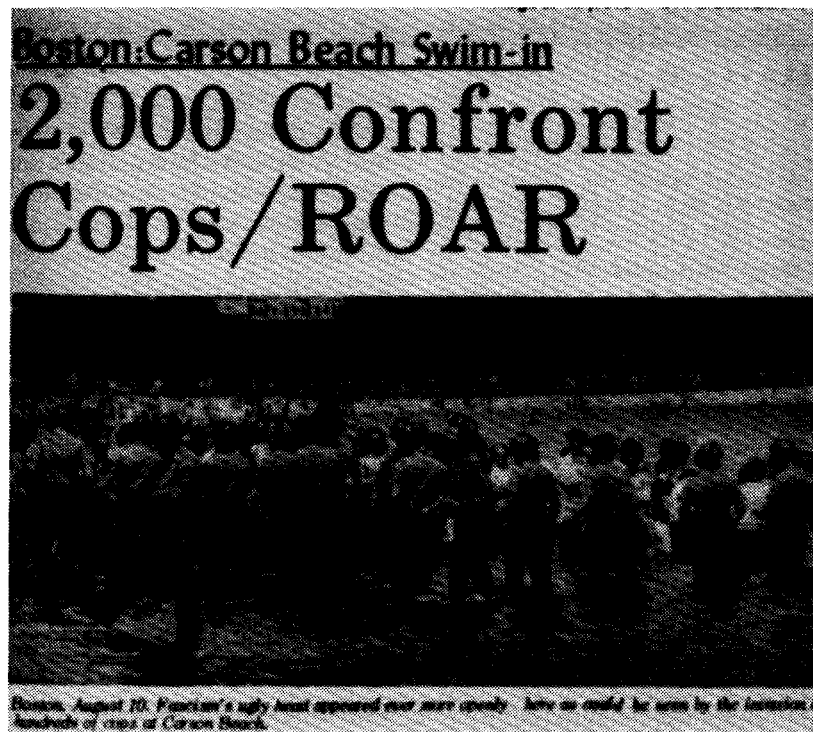
CAR's announcement provoked NAACP head Thomas Atkins, (who had told a CAR leader several months earlier: "We're going

to drive you out of Boston"), to suddenly announce plans for his own "Carson Beach picnic" to be held in two days.

Despite Atkins's timing, which ensured that his event would be illorganized and, at best, modestly attended, two thousand black, Latin and white people participated in it.

CARSON BEACH III

As the demonstration assembled, a leader of the Trotskyite Young Socialist Alliance, urged the group to look upon what they were about to do as "an outing," a "picnic," and not a demonstra-



Boston, August 30. Freedom's rally last appeared near more openly. Here as well, he was by the invasion of hundreds of cops at Carson Beach.

tion. He said he could guarantee police protection from the racists. A PLPer interrupted this treacherous drivel to state that the fight against fascism was no picnic, that this was a demonstration of anti-racist forces, and that if the action was attacked, it should defend itself without placing false hopes on the cops. The crowd cheered this speech.

A motorcade of about 200 cars proceeded to the beach, met by about 1,000 racists, whom the police had allowed to assemble on the beach. Eight hundred riot cops had positioned themselves between the two groups. As soon as the antiracists arrived within range, some of the racists began throwing bricks and bottles at them. The missiles were thrown right back. The cops then tried to force the antiracists off the beach, but under leadership from CAR members and PLPers, many antiracists linked arms and shouted militant slogans. A group of ROAR marshals broke toward the antiracist ranks, and the cops faked an attempt to stop them. Hundreds of black and white demonstrators chanted: "Let 'em come!" The ROAR thugs made a fast retreat.

In addition to ROAR and the uniformed cops, nationalist provocateurs attempted to divide the demonstration from within. They attacked several white antiracists as well as a number of black and latin people who opposed this ob-

vious attempt to cripple the anti-racist ranks. The provocation failed, as most of the demonstrators reaffirmed their commitment to multiracial unity and against ROAR.

The ruling class wanted to provoke a period of race war to exceed anything that had yet happened in Boston. White, Atkins, the nationalists, the Trotskyists, ROAR, and the police had all collaborated in organizing the Carson Beach "picnic" as a trap. The message: fight racism and you'll get killed. Only the courageous leadership of CAR members and PLPers and the militancy and solidarity of hundreds of workers and students succeeded in preventing a catastrophe.

The next day, rebellion broke out in different sections of Boston. The Carson Beach attack was the last straw for many black working class youth who had suffered their entire lives under racism and police terror. They fought cops with everything at their disposal. The police responded by running amok in ghetto projects, breaking into homes and unleashing trained killer dogs on elderly people and children.

The rebellion was somewhat tainted with nationalism. A few black youths stoned cars carrying white passengers or otherwise attacked white people. Given the racist atrocities that had taken place daily in Boston for years and

the absence until very recently of a mass campaign against them, this error was not surprising. The press reported the rebellion as "black-mobs-out-to-kill-whitey."

Meanwhile, ROAR escalated its fascist violence, leading indiscriminate mob attacks against black workers several nights in a row.

Some of the most serious physical and political attacks against BOSTON '75 took place during the week after the Carson Beach fight. The day after the beach incident a small group of CAR members were leaving a TV studio, when a ROAR goon squad of about 40 attacked with clubs and other weapons, including a machete. The antiracists fought back valiantly; they were able to make good their escape into a city bus thanks to the help of the white bus driver who slammed the door on the fascists and drove away. The CAR members went to Boston City Hospital for treatment. While they were in the emergency room, the cops showed up with the ROAR thugs and arrested the antiracists for "assault with a dangerous weapon."

BOSSSES' REDBAITING

In addition, the ruling class launched a red-baiting campaign. Suffolk County D.A. Byrne claimed that the violence at Carson Beach had been caused by "highly paid outside agitators" who had come to Boston to start

"racial disorders." He named CAR and PLP and said 18 special prosecutors would work 24 hours a day on the case. Deputy Police Supt. John Doyle told the newspapers that CAR members had thrown the first rocks at Carson Beach. And the lies went on and on. But the red-baiting campaign proved a complete fiasco. The task force of special prosecutors vanished as suddenly as it had appeared—without producing a single indictment. Most significantly, the workers of Boston didn't fall for the redbaiting. The organized fascist forces represented by ROAR failed to grow during the period after Carson Beach. Meanwhile, thousands of Bostonians continued to sign CAR's petition.

BOSTON '75's last major action was a demonstration planned for August 18, when the volunteers intended to present CAR's petition, with 35,000 signatures, to the regularly scheduled City Council meeting.

Weeks before, CAR had gotten a permit to march to Government Center. However, the mayor and the police had one more trick up their sleeves. Late Friday afternoon, three cops came to the CAR office with a letter from the traffic commissioner revoking the permit for the Monday march for no stated reason. The ruling class obviously thought that this timing would make it impossible for CAR to organize against the ban. Their

press announced that the march would not take place.

As usual, they were wrong. Early Monday morning CAR members and their lawyers went to court. The judge bent over backwards to help the police lawyers present their case. But they had no case, even by the lopsided standards of capitalist "justice." The cops' lawyer was reduced to arguing that since the commissioner had cancelled the march, it was too late to assign enough police to it. This he said despite the hundreds of cops stationed along the march route at that very moment—waiting to prevent it!

The judge faced the alternative between vindicating open fascism in a public courtroom or restoring the permit for the sake of the system's "democratic" facade. This time, the mayor and the police had gone too far, even by their own standards. The march took place, and it was one of the summer's highlights. Three hundred people participated in it. Thousands of workers watched from the street and shouted friendly encouragement to the demonstrators.

One speaker, CAR's chairperson, sent the crowd into a frenzy as he said: "We will turn ROAR into a mee-ow!" and then, pointing to Hicks, O'Neill and Co. who were watching from their cozy offices, led the demonstrators in giv-

ing these fascist cretins the collective finger.

The August 18 march provided a fitting climax to the BOSTON '75 campaign. Afterwards, most of the volunteers returned home to prepare for the new college semester. Some chose to remain in Boston to consolidate the gains made over the summer and to build both the Party and a permanent CAR organization in the city.

LESSONS AND WEAKNESSES

BOSTON '75 proved that a relatively small number of anti-racists can put the ruling class on the defensive and begin to turn fascism into its opposite if they act boldly, take their line to the people, fight back every time they have to, and view each attack as an opportunity to make progress. Nonetheless, the project fell short of accomplishing a number of goals well within its reach. Future advances in the battle against racism and fascism depend today as much upon understanding and correcting these weaknesses as they did in 1975.

In the first place, the day-to-day work of BOSTON '75 was carried out by 150 volunteers at most. Given their numbers, what they accomplished was extraordinary. But their numbers could easily have been doubled if not tripled. The error did not lie in the lack of prior agitational material about

BOSTON '75. The project had been amply publicized. Rather, the error lay in the quality of anti-racist work that had preceded BOSTON '75 on the college campuses. Since its founding conference in 1973, the CAR organization had put forth a three-pronged strategy for students and intellectuals: organize against racist theorists, respond to major racist attacks in the community and elsewhere, and take the offensive against increasing devastation by racist college budget cuts.

On the campuses where CAR and its supporters in PLP carried out this program, large numbers of students and teachers became involved in the process of fighting racism; some militant actions took place; and the CAR organization grew. The problem was that these cases constituted the exception rather than the rule.

The result was predictable. How could CAR grow if it didn't fight racism? How could the party pull the mass movement toward the left and crush the growing fascist threat if it provided weak leadership on this question? Important political developments such as this are not rabbits to be pulled out of hats.

Because CAR and the party had not fought hard enough against the racist theoreticians, racist attacks in general, and the budget cuts, the hundreds of students

who could have been won to BOSTON '75 through these campaigns never materialized. The 150 who did come to Boston did not represent a significant new force of students won over to the anti-fascist movement in the course of recent struggle. The foundation for a breakthrough had not been laid.

This weaknesses forced BOSTON '75 to operate with narrower limitations than were objectively necessary and led to other shortcomings. Although the mass response of Bostonians to CAR's program and politics was excellent, the campaign never became as broadbased as it could have with a greater number of volunteers from various backgrounds. Other than through street agitation, no real attempt was made to reach workers in key industries in the greater Boston area. If CAR members and PLers had fought harder against racism locally in the two years prior to BOSTON '75, many more volunteers could have been signed up months in advance; the preparations could have been better organized; plans could have been made to get jobs in politically useful industries; a campaign to house the volunteers with antiracist Bostonians could have been launched.

The same criticism applies to the campus activities of BOSTON '75. Although most of the volunteers were college students, very little consistent student work took

place aside from regular bullhorn rallies at several schools. A planned petition campaign against racist budget cuts never really got off the ground. Attempts to enlist active support from antiracist professors were perfunctory at best. Here again, a larger group of volunteers who had already gained experience in fighting racism at home could have enrolled in Boston summer school programs and worked out strategies in advance.

The mass campaign that did take place around the sixpoint petition was the glue that held BOSTON '75 together. The 35,000 signatures gathered on it provided an eloquent statement of the needs and sentiments of most Bostonians. The figure represented an impressive accomplishment. However, it was far lower than the figure that could have been reached even if the number of volunteers had not increased. In the first place, the campaign was slow to start, and valuable time was lost in June. Secondly, like most things, the campaign was uneven once it did get underway. If 100 people had collected 20 signatures a day for 40 days, the drive would have reached 80,000 signatures. The figure was possible. Doubling the amount of signatures could at least have doubled the number of fresh local antiracist activists and new CAR members. It was within BOSTON

'75's grasp to make a good thing better.

PLP'S ROLE

Finally, a point should be made about the role of the Progressive Labor Party in the project. By spearheading the drive to smash the resurgence of racism from the first moment of the great working class ghetto rebellions of the 1960s, the PLP helped create a favorable climate for the development of CAR. By organizing the 1975 May Day March in ROAR's own bailiwick, the PLP helped put the fascists on the defensive and gave heart to antiracists everywhere. Furthermore, PLP gave full organizational and political support to BOSTON '75 itself. Many of the project's volunteers were also PLPers. As members and leaders, they canvassed, conducted agitation, fought the fascists when necessary, and participated in the countless other tasks vital to the campaign.

However, as in every case where the party tries to combine the fight for reforms with the fight for revolution, an opportunist danger develops. Many party members and leaders became so preoccupied with the daytoday CAR work that they neglected the task of creating an independent presence in Boston for the PLP. The most common formulations of this error were the questions: "How can I put forth CAR's program and the party line at the

same time?" or "How can I both sell *Challenge* and circulate the petition?" Experience showed that those who did both did more of either than those who didn't. The party's line linking racism, ROAR, and the economic crisis to the bosses' plan for war and fascism was the only explanation that could move the workers and students of Boston beyond the struggle for immediate demands to an understanding of the need for crushing the profit system. The fight against fascism cannot succeed unless under *all circumstances* the primary goal of the communists who help lead it is to destroy capitalism and build the revolutionary party.

These were some of the key weaknesses in BOSTON '75. We mention them here because nothing is perfect and because antiracists and communists have everything to gain by grasping and correcting the faults in their practice.

A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

With all its shortcomings, BOSTON '75's accomplishments derailed the fascist offensive planned for the beginning of school. The day before the schools opened, ROAR led a demonstration of 3,000 people at City Hall Plaza, down 80% from their demonstration the year before. Sporadic racist violence characterized the 1975-76 school year, but it never reached 1974-75's

proportions. ROAR's public activities dwindled to a series of poorlyattended antiintegration "mothers' prayer marches." Hicks soon abandoned politics altogether. Shortly after BOSTON '75, the ROAR organization was dead in the water. The militant alliance of anti-racists and communists in CAR and PLP had killed it.

ROAR's demise provided the greatest of that summer's many political lessons. It showed that fascists can be beaten even when they are protected to the hilt by the bosses' state apparatus and made to seem invincible by the bosses' media. The battle of May Day had already exposed ROAR as a paper tiger. In the ensuing months, the tiger lost its fangs and claws. The BOSTON '75 volunteers were relatively few in number. Most had little experience in politics or class struggle. They were young, the majority in their twenties. They had to live on a shoestring. They confronted the daily fury of the ruling class's dictatorship. *Between June and September, the volunteers saw the inside of Boston's jails more than two hundred times.* Some people were arrested twice or even three and four times.

Yet they won a clear strategic victory. They proved that a small force of determined antiracists can shake the foundations of capitalist power, if they have revolutionary communist leadership

which puts forward a political line that corresponds to the deep needs and hopes of workers, and acts boldly and militantly.

The boldest of that summer's rallying cries was the chant: "In Boston Seventy-five, the racists won't survive!" ROAR did not survive, but racism remains alive and well in Boston and throughout the world, because capitalism continues to survive. In the generation since 1975, the former ROAR member and South Boston Marshall Raymond Flynn has become Boston's mayor. The bosses' racist economic attacks have ground down every aspect of workers' lives. Unemployment has soared through the roof. The collapse of the schools continues. Racist violence continues to occur on a daily basis. The most oppressed working class sections of virtually every major city have become virtual concentration camps. The economic devastation of workers is worse than at any time since the Great Depression. Racist terror has become the order of the day from New York to California. The decline of U.S. imperialism, which had well entered its initial stages in 1975, has rapidly intensified.

The Party has also grown. In the years following BOSTON '75, it led scores of thousands in pitched battles with the KKK and the open Nazis. Its cadre are more firmly

embedded in the working class and the mass movement than ever before. Its political line has developed and sharpened. With PLP leadership collectives and clubs now established in a score of countries and on several continents, it has made significant strides toward leading a new international revolutionary movement that fights for the immediate abolition of the wage system and for egalitarian communism immediately after the seizure of power.

As for the BOSTON '75 volunteers, many remain in the Party today. Some have become important Party leaders. Some have children now in the Party. Others, a few, decided to abandon the movement. They spent the best, most productive moments of their lives on the hot streets of Boston seventeen years ago. Others left for a while, recognized their mistake, and returned to the movement. The Party welcomed them back with open arms. A new generation of youth, mostly working class, have entered the Party and have begun to lead it.

BOSTON '75 belongs to the living history of the Party and the working class. For three months, against great odds, communists and antiracists turned a great city upside down. In the future, we—and the workers—will turn the entire world upside down once and for all.

THE HEROIC WE, THE HESITANT I, AND THE TAKING OF COLOMBIA POINT

The dawn was rosy, the day was May Day 1975, and about 25 of us PL'ers found ourselves surrounded by fascists with a plan. Motorcycled members of Boston's Tactical Patrol politely removed—"for your own protection," they smiled—the wooden beams supporting our communist banners. Next they confiscated whatever steel-tipped rubber truncheons and *Challenge/Desafio*-covered steel pipes

they could discover. Finally they left us alone, retreating with their great grins and little guns to the rear of the deserted shopping center.

The police helicopter pilot must have been happy too with his sky-seat view of this unfolding set-up: one sound truck with twenty-five of us seemingly defenseless guardians in an empty parking lot, isolated at the bottom of Columbia Point Hill—exposed to the racist wrath of at least one hundred heavily armed "sportsmen" hidden from our sight, gathering swiftly on the other side of the hill, equipped with baseball bats, hockey sticks, and rowing oars, incited by the flyers widely distributed the previous night throughout the South Boston Projects calling on all local bigots to protect their segregated white ghetto against the "coming invasion" of busses from all across the East Coast, integrated with thousands of black, Latin, Asian and white PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY members and friends determined to march that May Day.

The grins on all the fascist faces would soon turn to grunts, however, for two reasons—one of which they should have realized and the other they could never come to know. First, in their glee at getting the weapons we had chosen to expose, they neglected to notice that all twenty five of us were attired in the latest of communist spring wear: spike-buckled

belts. Second, and beyond the understanding of these fascists, we were all armed with the collective courage of our communist convictions. Individually, each of us would not have hesitated to flee from such an ambush; together, though, we fought a heroic fight that day, completely puncturing the enemy's plan to decimate our security squad, trash our sound truck, occupy the parking lot, and annihilate each and every arriving bus, thereby putting an end to this historic May Day march before it could begin.

Our preparations for this moment of truth were both physical and political. For weeks before, we assembled our own spring training: meeting in Central Park with our red hats, organizing ourselves into groups of three responsible for each other, learning how to isolate and immobilize an attacker three-on-one. We were big and little, women and men, white and black, muscular and flabby, white-collar and blue-collar and jobless, new Party member and veteran. Some of us had traveled every weekend to Boston to help the few comrades there prepare for May Day '75. Weekend warriors as it were, we had faced the ferocity of the Fascist Movement there first-hand and then returned to our home bases to report to comrades all along the East Coast that fascism was not a future figment, but was the present reality in Boston, and that

we'd better get ourselves ready to beat up on it before it beat us.

Such experience and practice gave us the confidence to volunteer for the exciting assignment of securing May Day '75 and provided us with the keen awareness of the need to take our enemies by surprise even as they dreamed they were surprising us. So we arrived the night before the march and slept fitfully in Boston comrades' homes, anxious to awaken to the first of our surprises for ROAR (Restore Our Alienated Rights). Before breakfast, we drove brazenly into ROAR's heartland of South Boston and picketed the house of the fascist leader of this anti-busing, segregationist movement, Louise Day Hicks—may she slowly roast in hell. Before her astonished neighborhood had time to wipe the webs from their eyes, we were in and out, awakening it like red roosters with chants of "Power to the Workers," and "Death to the Fascists," and leaving it just as carloads of bat-bearing Southies were coming to its belated defense.

By dawn we were famished and regrouped for the best high-cholesterol breakfast many of us would ever have, at Linda Mae's Restaurant, where we filled our bellies with bacon and eggs and bouyed our spirits with jokes about Hicks' well-fed housedress and the strike-out swings of her "keystone cop" defense forces.

But we knew the main battle was about to be and one of our more literary-minded members—a college-teacher type, a bit tipsy with this early victory—tried unnecessarily to fortify us with memories of Homer's epic, the *Iliad*, and Odysseus' famous pre-battle speech about full stomachs sustaining successful warriors. Immediately he was met with cries of "less talk, more food," and sat himself down for seconds. We all grabbed gobs of Linda Mae's bountiful butter biscuits and were on our worried yet merry way to Colombia Point early enough to infiltrate selected members—among whom were white, anti-racist South Boston residents—into ROAR's rallying point.

So, unbeknownst to the fascists below, above, and behind the hill, we were aware of our enemy's

every move. We anticipated being "disarmed" by Boston's finest and were quite ready, willing and able to ambush our ambushers. At the very moment the fascist gang made its attempt to congregate on the hilltop, and before they could then surge down it and squeeze us in a pincer movement twixt the blue devil behind us and the clover-green sea in front of us, we unbuckled our belts, rolled them onto our fists, and advanced—with the military principle in mind that the best defense when trapped is a decisive, unexpected offense.

My group of three was in charge of the surprise assault and no one was to move before we did at the prearranged signal from the sound truck. Our objective was to get to the top of Colombia Point Hill first and immediately identify



Anti-fascist members and friends of PLP and C.A.R. tell off ROAR racists in Queens, N.Y.

PLP-led Fight Hits Queens, N.Y. ROAR:

Rip Rosedale Racist

ROSEDALE, QUEENS, N.Y., Sept. 6—More than 100 anti-fascist members and friends of the PLP and the C.A.R. and racist Scales, pointing out how Scales and his followers have been using a working class

and take out an enemy leader, preferably the biggest boor we could find. As we began our gallop up the hill, our group-of-three leader pulled the two of us back, yelling: "Hey, wait up! I'm in charge here; I go first!" I was only third-in-command, thank god, and figured I could always rely on my numbers one and two. But as we met the enemy at the hilltop—since #1 insisted on being first and because I was slower than #2—I got there just in time to see the two of them being arrested by motorcycle cops who had tried to outflank us after they became astonishingly aware that we were advancing up the hill before ROAR had a chance to charge down it.

But I didn't have the luxury to contemplate the irony of my situation because I found myself face-to-chin with a hockey-stick-wielding behemoth about to beat my brains in, and I now knew why I'd always hated hockey. Instinctively I deflected the miserable stick with my left hand and whipped my unrolled belt at his disbelieving face with my right. Bleeding profusely from his puffy cheek, eyes agape in awe, he fled, dropping the hockey-stick, which I quickly picked up for the first and only time in my life, and which I naturally started using as if it were a more familiar baseball bat. As usual, I kept striking air only, but I nevertheless managed to empty the space around me of

enemies. How pleased I was to see them stepping over one another back down the other side of the hill away from the parking lot, beaten back toward the projects!

Next I noticed that this helter-skelter retreat was the pattern along the breadth of the hill, as by now all the cops were huffing to regroup behind us to block our return to the sound truck. I sensed my horror become elation when I felt the presence of the fattest beast in blue barreling up at me—baton drawn but gun holstered. I knew that even slow-footed me would be able to bend below his bilkoated belly and disappear safely down the hill. I hurriedly helped to gather those of us who hadn't been arrested or disabled so we could regroup for the counterattack which never came because by this time the buses—some with shattered windows but most unscathed—were rolling into the untaken parking lot and red-hatted reinforcements disembarked to guarantee the starting point's security for good.

Now that I found myself the titular head of the growing security forces, I followed the pattern instilled in me throughout the preparing for and carrying out of this assignment: I did what I could myself, and relied on others to do what I couldn't or didn't know how to do. Through quick and ongoing consultations with other arriving Party leaders, whatever

hesitancies I had about following through to ensure the integrity of the march itself dissolved as I subsumed any lingering fears and doubts in the Heroic We phenomenon I saw unfolding around me. Incoming comrades swarmed around the sound truck, congratulated us for successfully defending the command post, and took initiative after initiative to see to it that the personal safety and communal spirit of all our members and friends were maintained.

There was no need for me myself to solve every problem that was fast developing, or answer every question that was being asked. The Party Collective exhibited an almost instantaneous creativity under these still-tense conditions. But the main factor was that our mass heroism, based on our com-

mitment to egalitarian communism, melted away the enemy's menace and made May Day 1975 a signal event in my life particularly and in the life of the PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY in general.

A few comrades, it is true, ran up and down Colombia Point Hill, fought valiently there, and then left the Party due to the rude, rough awakening of the threat of fascism that the day's events represented. But most of us twenty five defenders of May Day '75 have remained active PL'ers. The three of us, in fact, who were given the opportunity to lead this action are still responsible—these seventeen years later—in important ways for securing our Party's survival and growth under any and all conditions of fascism.

By C.P.

PERU'S TARNISHED PATH

"How's business?"

"It's dead."

Since 1980 this has perfectly described all of Latin America's traditional export-based capitalist economies. It is why Latin American economists call this the "dead time."

Nowhere is it deader than in Peru. Between 1988 and 1991 total Peruvian economic output shrank 30%. By 1991 traditional exports had fallen to one-third what they were worth in 1975. Workers' living conditions were cut in half. The political system shriveled with the economy, as the main parties, each representing a different faction of property, failed to figure out how to get the world market to accept its commodities. Even the traditional "Left" tried. Bankrupt ideas, bankrupt economy—they go hand in hand.

But it is not true that capitalism doesn't work at all in Peru. Only traditional capitalism is in crisis. The capitalists are able to make one part of their system work—the cocaine business. They just don't like to talk about it. But cocaine is Peru's largest industry. Roughly 15% of the entire Peruvian workforce is employed in the coca trade.¹ Coca paste



accounts for anywhere from 33% to 70% of the country's total exports (estimates of the value of this illegal export naturally vary.)² Drug trade dollars finance Peru's imports.³ Drug trade dollars are soaked up by the Peruvian Central Bank and the rest of the government owned banking system to the tune of up to US\$4.7 billion per year, and are used by the government to service the country's US\$21 billion foreign debt (principally to pay USA banks)⁴ and as collateral for more loans.

Imagine what it must be like to be a worker forced to earn a living in Peru. If you are not a farm worker or a miner you have to live in Lima. That is where the capitalists have put the jobs. Nearly everything manufactured in Peru is produced in Lima. Lima is also the national capital and most of the white collar jobs are located there as well. So Lima is bursting at the seams. From a population of just under 230,000 in 1920, Lima mushroomed to 2.4 million by 1964. But that is nothing. In the

next 25 years the business system forced another nearly 5.5 million working people to move to Lima to try to earn a living.

Today nearly *eight million* (almost all desperately poor workers) are jammed into Lima and more keep arriving every day in a search for paid work. They are forced to live in a series of shantytowns, each of several hundred thousand population, thrown up on garbage dumps, or on any bit of vacant land they can seize. There is no housing, no schools, no sewers, no public transport, no garbage collection, no electricity, no indoor plumbing, and—because Lima is in the middle of a desert—no water. And, of course, despite the workers' needs and hopes, there are no jobs. Unemployment and underemployment for Peru as a whole is over 90%.

Lima's poor cannot even afford charity. A typical network of soup kitchens in one shantytown (called Villa El Salvador) gets its food from U.S., Spanish, Cana-

February, 1992, page 77

- 1 Phillip Smith, "Grappling with SHINING PATH," in *New Politics*, December 1991, page 95
- 2 U.S. Department of Commerce, *Peru*, U.S. Government Document 1234C, 1991, page 12
- 3 Andreas and Sharp, *ibid*, page 78

¹ Andreas and Sharpe, "Cocaine Politics in the Andes," in *Current History*,

dian and Italian "aid" agencies. Despite the fact that it gets free food, the soup kitchen network scandalously and outrageously charges 30 cents a meal. This may seem cheap, but it isn't. The network's manager told the *New York Times*, "Eating in a soup kitchen is becoming a luxury. About 65 percent of Villa's population [which is 320,000] eat in soup kitchens. A lot of the rest can't afford it."⁵

Still, all things considered, living in Lima is better than living anywhere else in Peru. That is why, outside of Lima, Peru is pretty sparsely populated. Eight million are crammed into Lima. Thirteen million are spread throughout the rest of this immense area.⁶

Living on the coast (where Spanish-speaking, mostly mestizo workers live, as do black and Chinese workers) is easier than living in the Andean highlands (where mostly Quechua-speaking Indian workers live.) The coastal mestizo workers are paid seven times

more than the highland Indian workers. The Indian workers can expect to be dead by the time they are 45; the mestizo workers live a little longer.

If you were forced to earn a living in Peru, you would be trapped in a racist capitalist system which over the years has been dominated by one social class—Spanish-speaking, European-cultured, white, Lima-based owners of huge country estates, descendants of the 16th-century Spanish conquerors. This class was dominated first by Spain's rulers, then by English bankers and finally by U.S. bankers (Italian and Japanese bankers playing a smaller part up to now.)

The Peruvian ruling class made its money by enslaving workers in a racist system and playing ball with the international bankers. If the bankers wanted to lend money to develop phosphate, rubber, cotton or copper exports, the Peruvian rulers obligingly bor-

⁵ *New York Times*, April 15, 1992, page 12

⁶ Peru is pretty big. It is as big as all of Mexico from the Rio Grande to below Mexico City (an area in which 52 million people live). It is as big as Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Italy and Germany combined (where 213 million people live.) It is as big as all the eastern states of the USA from Maine to Florida put together, with West Virginia and Tennessee thrown in (where 96 million live.) It is as big as the West Coast of the USA—Washington, Oregon and California, with half of Arizona added (an area where 35 million live.)

rowed the money and had their workers expand phosphate, rubber, cotton or copper production until the bottom fell out of these markets. (This had no connection with the needs of Peru's working people. For example, these huge farm-owners always imported food since it was more profitable for them to grow cotton for export than to grow food to eat. This raised the price of food sky high, but that didn't bother the land-owners—they could afford it. Only the farm workers starved.) When the bankers wanted to lend money to build unnecessary railroads, the Peruvian rulers borrowed the money and their workers built railroads to nowhere. (But no road or rail system adequate for the Peruvian working people's needs for transport and communications was ever built.) It was in this way, by borrowing for projects whose only benefit was the profits they produced for the elite, that the government built up a US\$21 billion foreign debt.

In the view of the U.S. government, "It is a fact of life that...the country is on the edge of disaster."⁷ Are they kidding? The Peruvian working people have long been buried in disaster. But it is

the business class, not the working class, that is the U.S. government's concern. The "disaster" the U.S. government is worried about is communism. What the U.S. officials mean is that if the breakdown of traditional capitalism alone could produce a communist revolution, there would be one in Peru.

But as it happens, a communist revolution requires communists. That doesn't mean anyone who chooses to call himself or herself a communist. It means Marxist-Leninists organized in a party with correct ideas of what communism is and of how working people can transform their ideology and take steps to reorganize their society from capitalist to communist. Is there such a party, with such a line, in Peru? (Communists are not like Christian evangelists, who can promise anything they want in heaven. The evangelists will never be tested. No one will ever be able to prove they are wrong. But communists who win power have about twenty years to make good on their plans. If you do the wrong things, a new exploitative class structure emerges, and you are back to square one.)

⁷ U.S. Department of Commerce, *ibid*, page 11

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SHINING PATH

Now, since May 17, 1980 there has been an armed revolt in Peru led by an organization calling itself the Communist Party of Peru, but known more popularly as the Sendero Luminoso, or SHINING PATH.⁸ SHINING PATH claims it now rules "liberated areas" in which 30% of the Peruvian people live.⁹ This achievement cost some 24,000 lives (most murdered in cold blood by the reactionary government army and its death squads.)

The SHINING PATH originated in 1959, when a group of young professors teaching at the university in the southern mountain city of Ayacucho joined the Peruvian Communist Party's regional committee. One of them, Abimael Guzman Reynoso (SHINING PATH's future "President Gonzalo"), a philosophy professor, and later Dean of the Faculty, became chairman of the Party regional committee. Guzman soon formed

a secret group within the Party, which called itself the "Red Faction."

In 1964 the Peruvian party split, with a smaller group (including the leadership, which historically had close ties with the Communist Party of the U.S.) supporting the Soviet party, and the larger part supporting the Chinese. The "Red Faction" allied with the pro-China party.

Guzman spent most of 1965 in China studying the Chinese Communist Party's then current political line and military tactics, returning to Peru determined to carry out this strategy.

Within a few years the "Red Faction" had secured a base in the student federation and among the faculty in Ayacucho. It helped organize an Ayacucho municipal federation of community organizations and helped lead a massive regional movement against government plans to eliminate free education.

⁸ SENDERO LUMINOSO—Spanish for SHINING PATH—is the name the bourgeois press hung on the Communist Party of Peru (CPP) to distinguish it from other Peruvian organizations also using the name "Communist Party." The name's origin is from a CPP slogan: "Follow the SHINING PATH of Mariategui." This is to honor Jose Carlos Mariategui for being the founder of Peru's communist movement. He died in 1930.

⁹ Comments by representatives of the CPP leadership at a meeting with a PLP delegation in February, 1992

In 1970 (Guzman was in jail at the time) the pro-China party was convulsed by an inner-party struggle (in part over the question of whether or not a "revolutionary situation" existed in Peru), and as part of this struggle, Guzman and his "Red Faction" were expelled. When Guzman got out of jail later in 1970, the "Red Faction," which held that there was a "revolutionary situation," decided to transform itself into the "Communist Party of Peru." The membership (which was, and remains, secret) was made up mainly of professors and students at the Ayacucho university.

The new party spent its first five years working out a systematic ideological and political line (a line identical to what Guzman was taught in China in 1965), training its members in this line, and trying to develop a base of support. Guzman's plan was to hold a party congress in 1978, at which the call to start the "peoples war" would be issued. But despite everything, a significant part of the party's members and leaders—apparently the majority—disagreed

with the idea of armed struggle. A congress to initiate armed struggle could not be organized. So Guzman decided to start the armed struggle first, and then hold the congress (finally held ten years later.)

This [situation] led us in 1978 to postpone the congress in order to carry it out when we would be amidst the peoples' war. Our reasoning was plain and simple: being in war, who could oppose the people's war? A congress and a party with arms in hand, with a vigorous people's war, how could there be anyone who would oppose the development of the people's war? They would not be able to generate any harm for us any more.¹⁰

For the next two years the small party fought over the question of armed struggle. At a Central Committee meeting late in 1979 Guzman was able to expel from the party most of those who opposed starting the armed struggle. At a followup meeting in February, 1980 the remainder of the opposition was expelled. "We had to prune the Central Committee itself strongly."¹¹

¹⁰ Abimael Guzman, "President Gonzalo Breaks the Silence: An Interview From the Underground," *El Diario*, Lima, July 24, 1988, reprinted by Red Banner Editorial House, page 39. This document was given to a PLP delegation in February, 1992 by representatives of the CPP leadership as an authoritative document of the CPP. The account of SHINING PATH's history given here is based on this interview.

That done, concrete plans were made for the first actions. On May 17, 1980, the day before the first national presidential elections in 17 years, a group of young people broke into the town hall in the mountain town of Chuschi, about thirty miles southwest of Ayacucho, took the ballots and voting lists to the town plaza, and publicly burned them. This was the first "armed action" by the first of the party's "armed detachments." Dynamite bombs were set off in the following weeks in other places. The "people's war" had begun.

In Peru in 1980 the civilian government did not trust the army. (A 12 year military dictatorship had just ended.) For its part, the army command was completely demoralized. As a result, the army could not be called out against the SHINING PATH. The SHINING PATH was left alone by the army from May, 1980 until the end of 1982. Militarily the SHINING PATH had only the local police forces to contend with. For more than two years SHINING PATH armed detachments were relatively free to spread north and south to villages throughout the southern mountains to destroy police outposts

and chase away the police and the local political bosses, replace them with secret "People's Committees," capture weapons, and recruit.

We generated a void in the countryside and we had to establish a New Power without having defeated large armed forces because they had not taken part, and if they did, if they participated, it was because we had established the People's Power.¹²

By December, 1982 the national government's fear of the rebels was finally greater than its fear of its own army, and the army was sent in.

The army's plan was simple: kill the SHINING PATH and reestablish the old structures of power by terrorizing the local population, killing indiscriminately, expelling people from their villages (to make it impossible for SHINING PATH to organize) and forcing peasants into anti-SHINING PATH paramilitary groups (called, in Peru, "rondos.")

SHINING PATH's leadership met in early 1983 and decided to defend their "New Power" against the army's campaign in two ways. First, by reorganizing their armed

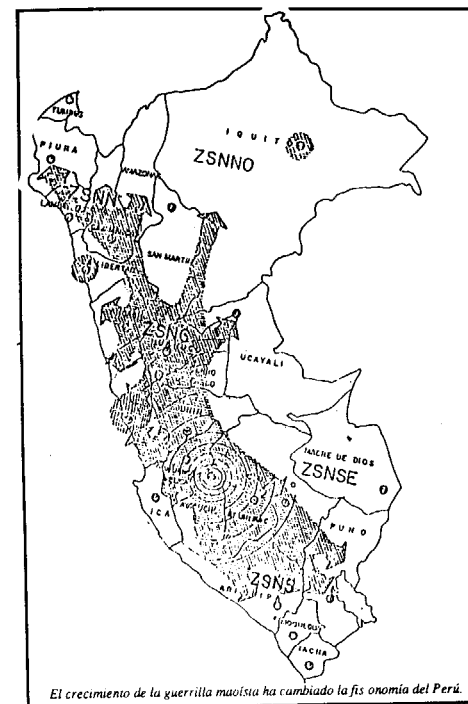
11 Guzman, *ibid*, page 66

12 Guzman, *ibid*, page 55

detachments into a centrally-led "People's Guerrilla Army." Second, by organizationally grouping the secret village "People's Committees" in each area to form "base areas."

Revolutionaries need base areas to rest in, grow their food, train and recruit. They need places that are secure and stable. Otherwise these places are not base areas. A base area can be secure only if and when the local population supports the revolution and enters into it. It can be stable only if and when the government army is unable to enter and occupy the territory of the base area. This means the revolutionary armed forces are big enough, experienced enough and powerful enough to fight and win in positional warfare. (Hit-and-run sneak attacks are not good enough; it is the enemy who has to run away.) A base area therefore starts out insecure and unstable, and gets transformed over time, through political work and fighting. But the whole process is impossible unless the revolutionaries have already achieved a certain military strength.

Whether or not the SHINING PATH leadership felt it was militarily strong enough to take on the army (their forces had no actual combat experience), they were convinced they had no other choice. They had already "created the void," and filled it with their organization. They had cre-



ated embryonic base areas. What choice but to try to defend them? And if they were defended successfully, then they had to be developed.

A highly bloody and merciless genocide took place. We responded by fighting fiercely. The reaction, and concretely, the armed forces, believed that by 1984 they had already defeated us. I refer to [their] documents...where it even said we were not a danger anymore...But what was the result? That the People's Committees and the base areas multiplied themselves, and that led us, later on, to develop the base areas.¹³

By the end of 1984 the SHINING PATH claimed to have a larger army, more "People's Commit-

tees," more base areas and a larger party. For its part, the army extended military rule over 40% of the country and continued a merciless reign of terror, torture and assassination against any suspects it could get its hands on.

In 1985 SHINING PATH took the next step with its "Plan To Develop Base Areas." The result¹⁴ was a string of base areas running throughout the central highlands, led by secret SHINING PATH-controlled "Peoples' Committees." They ruled these base areas in the way they thought appropriate for the "united-front new bourgeois revolution." The "Peoples' Committees" maintained security, distributed land, administered market relations by setting production targets and prices, ran a school system, judged civil disputes, provided welfare for the elderly and recruited new members for the revolutionary forces. One policy the SHINING PATH is proud of is its effort to convince coca farmers to stop growing coca and grow food and fruit instead. They claim this

policy is successful in their base areas. Other policies they are proud of include eliminating drug use and prostitution in their base areas, and not tolerating wife or child abuse, going so far as to shoot offenders. By 1990 SHINING PATH felt so strong that they revealed the membership of the Peoples' Committees. They also decided to set up a national government, based on the twenty-four base areas and led by "President Gonzalo," to rival the bourgeois state led by Fujimori. (But a SHINING PATH leader told a PL delegation he did not know how this new "Republic of New Democracy" actually functions.)

The army high command, who control an 80,000 man force, revealed in November, 1990 that it was prepared to crush the SHINING PATH, and they thought it would take a 20-year military dictatorship and killing 600,000 people to do it.¹⁵ More than half the country was already under military rule when, on April 5, 1992, President Alberto Fujimori took what looks like the next step in the army high

13 Guzman, *ibid*, page 57

14 The following account was given by representatives of the CPP leadership to a PLP delegation, February, 1992.

15 Nelson Manrique, "Time of Fear," in *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. 24, Number 4, page 38

command's plan and suspended the constitution and the judicial system in the rest of the country and dissolved the Congress altogether.

Just because the army plans to suppress the SHINING PATH doesn't mean it will be able to. But that is the army's concern. We have a different concern. What if SHINING PATH wins? If SHINING PATH wins, will it bring about a classless society—no exploitation, no oppression, no privilege, equality for all in satisfying everyone's needs—in short, communism? Nothing short of communism will solve the problems of Peru's working people. And communism is what SHINING PATH seems to be promising. This is what has won them a huge following from Peru's young people and from the poorest of Peru's poor, who know they have no future in capitalism, and who desperately want a complete change in society. They think that by supporting SHINING PATH they are fighting for a communist Peru. They admire SHINING PATH because it kills oppressors, crooks and thugs; because it seems to know what it is doing and seemingly can't be stopped; because its

cadres are disciplined and moral. The poor look on it as their avenging angel. We decided to meet with the SHINING PATH to learn from them directly what they are all about.

We concluded, unfortunately, that SHINING PATH doesn't aim to, and isn't capable of, leading Peru to communism. After speaking to their representatives, and studying their material, it is clear to us that no one should count on SHINING PATH for this. Despite all the "communist" hoopla, their politics are really very reactionary.

SHINING PATH'S 'MAOISM'

SHINING PATH promotes something they call "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, and Gonzalo Thought," as the latest word in revolutionary Marxist thinking. As they describe this "new, third and higher stage of Marxism:"

...Marxism leads us to Leninism and Leninism to Maoism. Of all these three, Maoism is principal. Moreover, Maoism leads us to Gonzalo Thought, which is the universal truth specific to the concrete reality of Peruvian society and specific to the concrete conditions of the class struggle today.¹⁶

16 Guzman, *Speech*: "On the Rectification Campaign Based on the Study of the Document *No To Elections, Yes To Peoples' War*," Central Committee, Communist Party of Peru, August, 1991, page 4

There is not much in this "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, Gonzalo Thought," and what little there is in it is false. As the above quote makes clear, it all hinges on whatever it is they call "Maoism." But a problem arises immediately when you try to learn what exactly is in "the new, third and higher stage of Marxism." After all, Mao himself never claimed to have developed a new stage of Marxism, so you can't refer to his writings for any insight. In fact, SHINING PATH tells you outright that Guzman, not Mao, invented "Maoism." "The principal contribution of Gonzalo Thought is to have developed the definition of Maoism as a new, third and higher stage of Marxism."¹⁷ But what is it? The closest Guzman gets to "defining" "Maoism" is this:

Revolutionary violence, class struggle, socialism, proletarian dictatorship and struggle against revisionism. Of these four, socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat are principal.¹⁸

But this combination of ideas originated with Marx many years before Mao was born. They were more fully developed by Lenin

when Mao was still a child. Lenin added to these ideas the idea of the revolutionary, democratic-centralist working class party, and altogether this was the legacy of the Bolshevik revolution to all communists. Mao was one of the inheritors of this legacy, which he applied unchanged to Chinese conditions.

The only conclusion which Mao drew from Chinese revolutionary experience which he felt was a new, unique contribution to Marxism-Leninism which could be applied by revolutionaries in other countries besides China was what he called "peoples' war." He held that whenever the working class had to make war, whether to seize power in a revolutionary civil war of class against class, or in a war of national defense against imperialist aggression, that war should be fought in a protracted way, based on communist political organizing, and emphasizing guerrilla warfare to annihilate the enemy army. Important as this is, and true as it may be, it is not an ideology. Mao never claimed it was anything more than a contribution to Marxism-Leninism in the political and military fields.

17 Guzman, *Speech*, page 24

18 Guzman, *Speech*, page 24

There was one other area where Mao began to develop a distinctive body of ideas, but he didn't get too far before he died. These ideas were conclusions Mao drew from the experience of all the socialist countries, and not only of China. Mao concluded that in socialism there is a constant movement to restore private capitalism. This movement has a social base in socialist society's new privileged elite groups, such as managers, professionals, intellectuals, artists and bureaucrats, rather than in the old dispossessed classes. The movement's leadership was within the leadership of the ruling communist party itself. So Mao felt the working people should rise up, overthrow the party leadership and institute new social policies which restricted privilege, with the long term goal of eliminating it. The workers should be prepared to do this over and over again, as needed. This process he called "Cultural Revolution." But he had no clear idea how to do these things successfully, or how to ensure that privileged groups don't arise to begin with, and he opposed those within the Cultural Revolution—the Left—who did have such a program.

In developing his ideas, both about "peoples' war" and about the need for "cultural revolution," Mao relied on the characteristic method of Marxist-Leninist reasoning,

called the principle of contradiction. Mao developed a slogan to help people use this method: "One divides into two." Other phrases with which he, and other Cultural Revolutionaries, expressed the same idea, were: "Analysis is primary, synthesis is secondary." "Struggle is constant, unity is temporary."

During the Cultural Revolution this slogan, "One into two," became an important political issue. Mao's opponents—Liu, Deng and the other "capitalist roaders"—were accused by Mao of betraying Marxism-Leninism by misstating the principle of contradiction. They were charged with putting unity first and class struggle second—or "two into one." For this they had to be struggled against and overthrown.

Now, bearing all this in mind, when we return to considering SHINING PATH's "Maoism" we find a very curious thing. *They oppose Mao's insistence on the primacy of the idea of "One into two." Instead they support the capitalist roaders' formulation of "Two into one."* "President Gonzalo" said this very clearly:

Pay attention to analysis and synthesis. These are two aspects of a contradiction and synthesis is the principal one...Synthesis is the decisive aspect, the main aspect...from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism...synthesis is the principal aspect.¹⁹

While SHINING PATH states that the "Cultural Revolution is the

greatest achievement of Chairman Mao," they oppose Mao's whole idea for the Cultural Revolution. Mao felt there was a ruling socialist elite class, led and protected by the Communist Party leadership, which was implementing policies and laws which were capitalist. They had to be thrown from power, and society had to be reorganized to eliminate privilege.

SHINING PATH opposes this. They don't see any privileged social class or even any social process. *They oppose Mao's conclusion that capitalism develops out of socialism.* As they see it,

The revisionists...in China with Deng from 1976 to the present usurped the dictatorship of the proletariat, restored capitalism and destroyed socialism.²⁰

From this viewpoint there was no point to the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966—ten years before the "revisionist conspiracy destroyed socialism."

There is not much one can say about a "Maoism" which crucifies Mao, and then pretends to worship him. Instead (and more fruitfully) we examine the three most

important elements of SHINING PATH's politics. They are all reactionary.

The imperialists are cocky and arrogant these days, and it would be nice if some revolutionary communists were already strong enough to really hit them in the head with a two-by-four. But it won't be the SHINING PATH.

I. SHINING PATH'S AIM

First—the most reactionary thing—is what they aim for. They are trying to reform capitalism. They are not trying for communism. They talk a lot about communism, but the talk is all deception. Communism for them is a goal for the distant, unknown future, a goal they don't believe the Peruvian working people can reach through their own efforts and, moreover, a goal they themselves have no idea how to reach. As Guzman put it:

...as a Communist Party we have one goal: communism...This is our final goal...But until everybody on earth will arrive there, nobody enters communism...Either everybody or nobody will enter communism...[So] we believe the road to communism is a long one.²¹

19 Guzman, *Speech*, page 3

20 Guzman, *Speech*, page 6

Everybody at once?²² How in the world could this ever happen? It seems childish, but really it is just reactionary politics.

SHINING PATH apparently has decided that Marxism-Leninism is wrong in its conclusion that capitalist societies develop unevenly, some faster, others slower. It is this uneven development that produces a world capitalism that can be imagined as a chain with some strong links and some weak links. It is in the "weak links" that proletarian revolution has its best chances of succeeding. That was Lenin's idea. It is the basis of the communist movement. It was the basis for Mao's work. Guzman obviously disagrees with Lenin and world communism, and instead agrees with the old rightwing social democrats, from whom Lenin

split to form the communist movement in the first place.

SHINING PATH obviously believes the oppressed can't free themselves from oppression. They are not bashful about calling their revolution a "bourgeois revolution [our emphasis] of a new type, which only the proletariat can lead...[and which] is the only way to transform the world."²³ This is what they mean by "New Democracy" (as in "Republic of New Democracy.") Where they have political power, and the ability to put their plans into practice, they do no more than supervise capitalism to smooth out its roughest edges.

Mariategui—whose heritage SHINING PATH claims to be redeeming—must be turning over in his grave at this. He completely

21 Guzman, *Interview*, page 110.

22 This reminds us of the fight in the Bolshevik party in the mid-1920s over whether they could build socialism in the Soviet Union even though the socialist revolution in the main European industrial countries had failed. The rightwing, then led by Trotsky, argued that the Bolsheviks could not go forward alone to socialism, and they shouldn't try. But even Trotsky didn't demand that "everybody on earth" be ready to spring into socialism. He would have been content with Germany. Is Presidente Gonzolo more rightwing than Trotsky?

23 Central Committee, Communist Party of Peru, "On Marxism-Leninism-Maoism," in *Fundamental Documents*, Red Banner Editorial House, 1988, page 12. This document also was given to a PLP delegation in February, 1992 by representatives of the CPP leadership as an authoritative document of the CPP.

disagreed with any kind of bourgeois revolution, either the "old type" or the "new type."

When people claiming to be communists get involved with "new type" or "new democratic" bourgeois revolutions it is because they are trying to win over peasants, a group they believe are really capitalists. The problem for these would-be communists is, what should you do with the land owned by the feudal landlords? The "new style" bourgeois revolution breaks up the huge latifundia into small farms and distributes them to the peasants, who become small landowners. This "fulfills" the peasants' presumed capitalist dreams. SHINING PATH follows this policy in the areas they control. But, of course, this is exactly what happened in the "old style" bourgeois revolutions the capitalists led! SHINING PATH deludes itself into thinking it is doing something new because it concerns itself with the problem "who should get what?" Should the poor peasants get everything? Should the middle peasants get anything? What about the rich peasants? How do you distinguish between one group and another? But in the end, what's the difference? The end result will be that

some group will become property owners, (just as in Poland, for example, where the communists followed the same policy. That was a great success!) What the capitalists did, and what SHINING PATH is doing, is the same. Capitalism is being reproduced and expanded.

SHINING PATH's policy is completely opposed to what Peru's peasants need or want. Mariategui himself (and not PL) was the first to point this out. As far back as 1928 he wrote:

Everyone must know that according to individualist ideology, the liberal solution to this problem [the problem of how to abolish the great feudal farms] would be the breaking up of the great feudal farms to create small property...[This is] orthodox...capitalist and bourgeois...

I believe that the moment for attempting the liberal, individualist method in Peru has already passed. Aside from reasons of doctrine, I consider that our agrarian problem has a special character due to an indisputable and concrete factor: the survival of the Indian "community" and of elements of practical communism in indigenous agriculture and life.²⁴

This is the key to Mariategui's unique contribution to commu-

24 Jose Carlos Mariategui, "The Problem of Land," in *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, University of Texas Press, 1990, pp 33

nist theory, his actual "SHINING PATH." He felt Peru needed a communist revolution as the only way to end the oppression of the Indian and the worker. He felt Peru was ready for communism because there already existed a communist structure on which to build a communist Peru.

This structure is the traditional Indian *ayllu* ("community") with its collective ownership of land and cooperative labor. The *ayllu* existed a thousand years before the Inca, who founded their empire only in 1400 A.D. Inca civilization used the *ayllu* as its social basis. (For this reason Mariategui characterized the Inca period as "Inca communism," even though the Inca ruling elite forced the *ayllus* to support their parasitical aristocratic class system.)²⁵ The *ayllu* continued a vibrant existence in Mariategui's time (he ar-

gued in 1928 that "the Indian 'community' is still a living organism and...shows unmistakable potentialities for evolution and development."²⁶ *The ayllu is alive at this very moment.*

The Indian...has not become an individualist. And this is not because he resists progress, as is claimed by his detractors. Rather, it is because individualism under a feudal system does not find the necessary conditions to gain strength and develop. On the other hand, communism has continued to be the Indian's only defense. Individualism cannot flourish or even exist effectively outside a system of free competition. And the Indian has never felt less free than when he has felt alone...²⁷

In Peru, communal property does not represent a primitive economy that has been gradually replaced by a progressive economy founded on individual property...The latifundium compares unfavorably with the 'com-

25 "If the historical evidence of Inca communism is not sufficiently convincing, the 'community'—the specific organ of that communism—should dispel any doubt...Modern communism is different from Inca communism...The two communisms are products of different human experiences. They belong to different historical epochs. They were evolved by dissimilar civilizations. The Inca civilization was agrarian; the civilization of Marx...is industrial...It is therefore absurd to compare the forms and institutions of the two communisms. All that can be compared is their essential and material likeness, within the essential and material difference of time and space." Mariategui, *ibid*, page 74

26 Mariategui, *ibid*, page 56

27 Mariategui, *ibid*, page 57



Mariategui (in bed) meeting with comrades shortly before his death

munity' as an enterprise for agricultural production [in terms of crop yield]...²⁸

The 'community'...is a system of production that keeps alive in the Indian the moral incentives that stimulate him to do his best work...in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. [A Peruvian sociologist] very correctly observes that "the vigor, industry and enthusiasm with which the communal farmer [works], joking with his companion...present a profound and

decisive contrast to the indolence, indifference, apathy and apparent fatigue with which the [workers on a feudal farm] do the same or similar work."²⁹

During the 1960s, when the leaders of what became the SHINING PATH drew up their capitalist reform program for the future (they had a written draft ready by 1968 and they haven't strayed far from it since) they ignored 4,500

28 Mariategui, *ibid*, pp 5860

29 Mariategui, *ibid*, page 61

active ayllus whose members communally worked 11% of Peru's farmland. Apart from the communal farmers, 60% of the rural families in Peru were landless farmworkers.³⁰ The general picture has not changed to this day. By what crazy logic are Peruvian communal farmers and rural workers a capitalist-class-waiting-to-be-born?

All of this shows not only the reactionary nature of SHINING PATH's "new bourgeois" or "new democratic" revolution, but also that SHINING PATH opposes Mariategui's own shining path.

2. SHINING PATH'S STRATEGY

There is no way the CPP can achieve communism with their present reactionary politics. As SHINING PATH explains it,³¹ today they are leading a united front people's war of the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie (the self employed and the professionals) and themselves (representing the working class.) The peasants are the base, the working class leads. This united front is fighting for the "new style bourgeois revolu-

tion." Their aim is to replace the old bourgeois state with the new "front-state," called the "Republic of New Democracy." That is happening now. The "front-state" already exists (based on 24 base areas the CPP controls) and is now assuming nationwide responsibilities. The minute it controls the whole national territory, the revolution automatically will turn "socialist." and all productive capacity will be nationalized. A "party-state" will replace the "front-state." The "party-state" will build socialism and lead cultural revolutions to prevent capitalist roaders from creeping into power. Meanwhile, it will wait for the "international proletariat and the oppressed nations" to carry out their own people's wars so everyone can enter communism.

The CPP actually embodies many elements of the most Left-wing version of the old international communist movement's fatally flawed strategy of "revolution for socialism." That strategy had a lot of truth and latent strength buried in it. Among those truths were: that revolutionary violence to win state power is

30 InterAmerican Committee on Agricultural Development, in Hector Bejar, *Peru, 1965*, Monthly Review Press, 1970, pp13839, 14142

31 Comments by representatives of CPP leadership to PLP delegation, February, 1992

the only way working people can liberate themselves from oppression, and the most generalized expression of this is people's war; a revolution needs a revolutionary party; and the party must rely on base building. The CPP has obviously applied these correct elements of the old strategy to the horrible conditions Peruvian capitalism has created. This is the reason for SHINING PATH's current success, a success which baffles and amazes anti-communist political analysts.

In the old strategy these truths serviced an overall false idea—somehow socialism leads to communism, so to get to communism you should fight for socialism. Of course, this has already been tried many times. It never worked, and for a good reason. After all, what is socialism? Socialism is nothing more than a form of state capitalism. Lenin pointed out that socialism's only purpose is to develop economic production within capitalist forms, but under the "supervision" of a party claiming to be devoted to "ultimately" bringing about communism.

But results showed that socialism doesn't "grow" into communism any more than any other form of capitalism does. Who controlled the party and dominated society in socialism? It was the educated cadres, the managers and administrators, the intellectuals. There was a cult of "expertise." The highest goal for a worker or

farmer—who remained trapped having to sell their ability to work in return for a wage—was to become an engineer, or scientist or other expert. Then he or she could leave the working class. Expertise naturally brought rewards in the form of higher wages and effective ownership of property; otherwise why bother to be an expert? This privileged group, centralized in the party, fought for socialism against the communist needs and desires of those who actually worked on the land and in the factories.

Socialism, like all forms of capitalism, has to be overthrown in a revolutionary struggle for communism. So far the only attempt to do this was by workers and students in the so-called "Cultural Revolution" in China during the last part of the 1960s. That revolution was led by a coalition of Left and Right elements. Within the revolutionary coalition there was intense, violent struggle. The Left was overthrown by the Right. Then the Right was defeated by the socialist state capitalists in a bloody struggle for power. The name "Cultural Revolution" hardly describes what was at stake or what was happening. It was a communist revolution against socialism. Its necessity proves that for working people, whose needs can only be satisfied by communism, socialism is a wrong path.

Although SHINING PATH says "cultural revolutions" will be needed in the future, they actually have no understanding of the Cultural Revolution. They don't agree with the communist critique of socialism that was the basis for the Cultural Revolution, the critique which shows that socialism actually strengthens and reproduces capitalism. They don't understand the political economy of socialism. They don't see the facts because they look at socialism in the light of Marxist concepts that prevailed before there was a Marxist critique of socialism. In their view the Cultural Revolution was needed because traitors snuck into the leadership and "diverted" socialism to a capitalist path through a coup. It was all a conspiracy. If you ask them how a cultural revolution would work in Peru, they confess they have no idea, since it is inconceivable to them that traitors will succeed in infiltrating their leadership.

To make sure this won't happen, they promote a cult of their leader, "President Gonzalo." Follow him and you won't go wrong. (Their slogan is "Long Live President Gonzalo, Guarantor of Victory!") They learned this from Chinese socialism. Socialism requires this "cult of personality," but not, as bourgeois sociologists explain it, because of any desire to create a "secular religion." Socialism requires it because the party

establishes a hierarchical society and uses its control of the means of production to plan production on the basis of profitability. It cannot be supervised by the masses of working people. (This supervision we call the "mass line"). As a result, the party which is supposed to be the party of the working class instead appears as its boss. (Stalin was actually called "The Boss.") The working class remains alienated from the means of production and from political power. *Therefore to maintain its link to the working class, the party requires a party institution appealing directly to the working class behind the back of the party!* This institution is the cult of the party leader. This was the reason for the Stalin cult in the Soviet Union and the Mao cult in China.

But in communism, because an egalitarian society is being built, not a hierarchical one, the working class exercises supervision over the party, and production is planned to satisfy workers' needs. To bring about these conditions requires a hard class struggle to help people transform their ideology and consciousness. The people must also forge new ways of relating to each other based on a communist spirit of class solidarity. (Production of what people actually need and want expands as a by-product of the new social relations of conscious class solidarity. Shoddy, rotten goods aren't tolerated because the aim

PERU: 1980-1992



GUERRA POPULAR EN PERU
DEMUESTRA LA VIGENCIA
DEL MARXISMO-LENINISMO

**¡VIVA EL
PRESIDENTE GONZALO!**

A SHINING PATH leaflet displays the Gonzalo cult

isn't to increase production as an end in itself.) The implicit authoritarianism behind a cult of the party leader would only get in the way of the revolutionary transformation of social relations required by this communist organization of society.

The cult of "President Gonzalo" already plays the same reactionary

role (replacing the mass line) for the SHINING PATH as it did in Soviet and Chinese socialism. A U.S. sociologist who has studied women in the SHINING PATH, confirms this, reporting:

SHINING PATH cadre see the centralization of political authority in 'Presidente Gonzalo' as a guarantee that grassroots power will not be sub-

verted...Paradoxically, the existence of hierarchy in the party is regarded as an assurance that selfishness or egotism on the part of local cadre will not prevail over the common good.³²

3. SHINING PATH OPPOSES ANTI-RACISM

The third significant reactionary element in SHINING PATH's politics is its attitude to racism.

"Racism" is a word that describes two separate parts of material reality. (1) Racism is a set of social relations, ranging from discrimination to mass murder, all based ultimately on one relation: the super-exploitation of a socially distinct group. (2) Racism also is a set of ideas, all of which ultimately boil down to the notion that all groups, other than the racist's own group, are sub-human.

We know that today racism is capitalism's main ideological weapon and nowhere is this more true than in Peru. But what is often overlooked is that racist social relations have always been one of capitalism's main structural elements. (The Social Democrats have never understood this.) After all, why should a boss pay a worker what that worker wants if he can force an-

other worker to do the same job for less? (This is the highest point of capitalist efficiency.) So one group of workers is singled out to be super-exploited because it is easily identifiable by color or being foreign. However little most workers get, the super-exploited workers get less. The justification for this is that super-exploited workers "deserve" to get less because "they wouldn't know what to do with more," or some variation on the *real* theme—the *super-exploited are really subhuman*.

The super-exploitation of a socially distinct group of workers is like a rope tied to the rest of the workers' legs. The capitalists jerk the rope to pull the other workers down to the level to which they have forced the super-exploited. The general level of capitalist profitability is set by this maneuver. In addition, (taking only the USA as an example), every year tens of billions of dollars of *extra* profits, profits above "normal," are squeezed out of U.S. minority workers through racist super-exploitation.

When the mass of workers accept the racist idea preached to them constantly by the ruling class that super-exploited workers

32 Carol Andreas, "Women At War," in *NACLA Report on the Americas*, Vol. 24, Number 4, page 27

deserve to be abused by racist social relations because they are "subhuman" (or, when minority workers respond with racism's mirror image, nationalism, which asserts that the minority is superior to the majority) then they are all lost. Even penny-ante pay raises become almost impossible to win. Definitely such workers cannot realize themselves as a conscious working class able to act in their class interest. They are condemned to remain mere labor power, merely an atomized component of capital, at the beck and call of capital.

Do you want to unite isolated workers into a *working class*, and then go forward to win the liberation of the working class from exploitation? Well, that obviously requires that anti-racist struggle, both to change social relations and to change ideas, be in the forefront of your activities. You cannot wipe out capitalism anywhere in this world without making anti-racist struggle primary. Karl Marx long ago made this point. Especially in Peru is capitalism composed of racist exploitation combined with racist ideas.

But this isn't so obvious to the SHINING PATH. In fact, the SHINING PATH doesn't agree with this. They think that anti-racist struggles are wrong. In their view anti-racist struggle would only call attention to differences within the working class and hold back mobilizing working class unity for the revolution.³³

People who want to look for excuses for SHINING PATH react to this by saying, "Well, this is a group which thinks the class struggle is primary, so they take a tactical hands-off position on racism. It's not as good a position as it could be, but at least it's not racist."

But it is racist. There is no way to be neutral about racism. This is the way liberal capitalists are racist. This is the way people who don't want to understand anything about the objective structure and laws of capitalism, and who despise dialectical reasoning, are racist.

Marxism holds that insofar as they are expressed, ideas are material things. This may be hard to understand, but a deduction from this is very simple and clear: one way an idea takes material form is

33 The SHINING PATH leader who explained this to a group of PLers responded to their shock at what he was saying by assuring them that naturally SHINING PATH "opposes prejudice."

as the basis for social action. Then it exists in the material world as the activity of social classes, as a way in which one class relates to another. As an example, one way in which racist ideas are real material things is as they are embodied as a set of activities, founded on racist super-exploitation, and ranging from discrimination to mass murder.

Now, if these racist social activities are constantly going on (as they are in this world), and if SHINING PATH chooses to ignore them (as it does), does that make them disappear? Only psychotics imagine the real world disappears when they choose to ignore it.

Marxism teaches that life is constant activity. Social life is constant class struggle. "Struggle is constant." Everything we do has its effect. Everything we fail to do has its effect. To not do something is another way of doing that thing's opposite. We are swamped in a racist high tide. To go with the flow is to go with racism. To oppose racism we need to swim actively against the current. That is why SHINING PATH's hands-off attitude to racism appears to be neutral, but can only take material form as the opposite of neutral—as partisan, as pro-racist.

There is a good example from the Second World War of how central anti-racism is to the struggle against capitalism. When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Un-

ion in 1941 to re-establish capitalism, anti-Jewish racism (anti-Semitism) was the main way they tried to win over the Soviet citizens they were trying to conquer—mainly Russians and Ukrainians, who, before the Communist revolution, had been well trained in anti-Semitism. The Stalin leadership didn't try to dodge the issue. They rejected the SHINING PATH line that they should be "neutral" on racism, or that would hold back mobilizing support for the Soviet state. Instead, the communists took a forthright anti-racist position. Ilya Ehrenburg, then the leading Soviet writer, put it this way: "You are either an anti-Nazi or an anti-Semite." What was the result? Support for the Soviet state was never higher than during World War II, although by SHINING PATH logic, that should not have happened.

On the other hand, there are two instructive examples of how SHINING PATH "neutralism" becomes open racism.

The March, 1991 issue of the SHINING PATH monthly newspaper refers on page 4 to Peruvian President Fujimori (whose parents were Japanese) as "the slant-eyed ruler." The actual colloquial meaning of the phrase in Peru is much more vicious. It is a brutal racial insult typical of the Klan, of France's racist politician Le Pen, of Hitler and Goebbels. It is unimaginable that such a phrase could be uttered by a communist,

much less be printed in a communist newspaper.

The second example has to do with the USA group that SHINING PATH refers to as its close ally, a group which also promotes "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism-Gonzalo Thought." This is a small group which calls itself the "Revolutionary Communist Party", and which has been around since the early 1970s. Its line on racism has always been the same SHINING PATH line we have been discussing. In 1974-76 fascist forces in Boston tried to organize a mass racist movement, using opposition to school integration as their organizing device. At first they were very successful, and they were looking forward to leading a nationwide anti-black racist mass movement. PLP determined to try to stop this dangerous fascist threat by killing it in its cradle. PL sent cadres to Boston, organized volunteers, and worked with working people in Boston to organize against the Boston fascists' movement. PL succeeded, which was important. Conditions in the USA would have been even worse if there had been a mass racist movement active.³⁴ But guess who joined the fascist effort and participated in the fascist demon-

strations? Right—the "Revolutionary Communist Party." What was their excuse? The SHINING PATH line, expressed this way: "Busing black students to predominantly white schools to integrate the schools is a liberal plot to divide the working class, and stir up whites against blacks."

Marxism holds that the main way humans are different from each other is through class division. The working class has interests and needs which are antagonistic to the capitalists. The working class outlook on life is in basic conflict with the capitalist outlook on life. The idea that "anti-racist struggles would only call attention to differences within the working class and hold back mobilizing working class unity for the revolution" actually amounts to justifying the opposing notion: that humans are unbridgably divided by skin color and culture, and that class divisions in society are a secondary division. (By this logic Peruvian bosses are not as bad—for Peruvian workers—as U.S. bosses, whereas Peruvian bosses are worse—for U.S. workers—than U.S. bosses.)

But this is completely senseless. Are differences in skin color or in culture the product of different species of humans? Are there different species of humans? Are humans like cats and dogs, lions and lambs—not to be stirred up? If this is the working class' true nature, then the working class would be able to achieve its liberation in communism only if it remained ignorant of its true nature!

Modern science has given the lie to what is implied by the SHINING PATH position. Modern science has conclusively shown that all people alive today are descended from common ancestors who arose about 200,000 years ago in Africa, and that class division in society is the primary way humans are "different" from each other. SHINING PATH is justifying precisely what the Nazis said in a crude way and what today's sociobiologists promote in a sophisticated "scientific" way. A "communist" movement that doesn't combat this kind of thinking tooth and nail isn't worth spit.

SHINING PATH's idea also attacks the great history of Peruvian people's resistance. The history of the Peruvian people from the Spanish conquest in 1533 up to the present is one of horrible racist op-

pression and heroic resistance. The largest of hundreds of revolts was put down at a cost of 200,000 Indian lives. In no country has racist oppression been more ferocious than in Peru.

When Pizarro, the Spanish representative of burgeoning European capitalism, "discovered" Peru in 1526 there were some 20 million Peruvians living in an agrarian communist society in the continent's most developed and powerful civilization. By 1570, as a result of the Spaniards' holocaust (which combined slaughter, smallpox, slavery and starvation) the population had been reduced to 1.3 million. Continued oppression killed another half, so that only 600,000 remained alive in 1630.³⁵ The Inca civilization was destroyed, although the basis of Indian society—the ayllu—was not. (The population didn't recover to pre-Conquest levels until the 1980s.)

The Spanish capitalists came to Peru to loot and enslave. In 1532 alone they melted down enough Incan art objects to ship back to Spain seven tons of gold and fourteen tons of silver—a value greater than any European king had then at his disposal. In 1534 they shipped back another four

34 See "Boston, '75" in this issue of *The Communist* for details about this campaign.

tons of gold.³⁶ Adventurers, gold and silver prospectors, priests and lawyers came to Peru, not settlers. They super-imposed a feudal system of huge farms on the ayllus, turning the free Indian farmers into serfs, bound to the soil, absolutely dominated and controlled by the landlord and forced to work for him for free. This feudal landlord ruling class controlled Peru until the 1970s.

But the capitalists' policy was contradictory and self-defeating. From the capitalist point of view, there were both too many Indians and too few Indians. There were too many Indians because the ruling class was too small to control them. To solve this problem the rulers took two tacks. First, they needed a buffer population to stand between the mass of exploited and oppressed Indian labor and themselves. They created a native class of ruling-class hangeron: judges, policemen, and other petty power-holders to help police and administer the feudal order. And they imported slaves from Africa. (By 1600 there were

already 30,000 African slaves in Lima, the colonial capital.) The second tack had three aspects: exterminate the Indians; breed the "inferior race" out of existence;³⁷ assimilate them (ban Quechua, their language, force them to learn Spanish, ban their culture, etc). Still, no matter how hard the Spanish rulers tried (and they tried very hard indeed), they couldn't get rid of the Indians and Indian culture.

But the problem of controlling too many Indians was overwhelmed by a more serious problem: the ruling class found it actually didn't have enough Indians. The rulers needed more labor power to exploit the natural wealth they had conquered. They tried importing slaves from Africa, but that didn't work because they couldn't import enough. In time they couldn't import any at all. When they ran out of black slaves they imported contract labor from China. It was in this way, through agony, murder, slavery and racism, that the capitalists

36 Wright, *ibid*, pp 82, 179

37 From this arose the *mestizos*, people of mixed Indiancaucasian parentage who today number more than 40% of the population. Though most mestizos are working people, there is an upperclass small town mestizo elite. This is the group that traditionally oppressed the Indian peasants, and spread the "mestizo ideology" that "Indians are inferior."

created their Peruvian labor force.

From colonial times until today labor was always a shameful and oppressive condition forced upon mainly nonwhite workers. The white ruling class always lived a life of luxurious indolence in Lima. How well they benefited from racist exploitation is easy to see. In the mid-1960s (a time when everybody agrees life was better in Peru than it is now) the 24,000 individuals who basically made up the white Lima ruling class each had an average annual income equivalent to US\$62,500. The rest of the population combined had an average annual income equivalent to US\$157. Indian farmworkers had an average annual income of \$10. Moreover, in 1965 the mostly mestizo workers living on the coast were paid seven times more than the mostly Indian workers living in the mountains were paid.³⁸

Racism, therefore, has been the ideological, political and organizational pivot of Peruvian capitalism. The Peruvian working people are exploited and oppressed by Peruvian capitalism, which is a racist exploitative system. Peru is a hothouse of ruling-class-promoted racism: anti-Indian, anti-

black, anti-mestizo, coastal groups against highland groups against forest groups. Racism is deep in the Peruvian social consciousness. No one, except the SHINING PATH, denies this. Racism runs through every social issue of the last 400 years up to this very moment. You can't get rid of the exploitation without at the same time getting rid of the racism, just as you can't get rid of the racism without at the same time getting rid of exploitation. Both the market for labor power and the ideology of racism are primary targets of communist revolution. Anti-racist struggle therefore must be a central aspect of the Peruvian communist movement and its revolution.

A FINAL WORD

In the early 1960s the Left within the old communist movement denounced almost all the existing parties for having turned into fascist organizations. They denounced the socialist countries for having become fascist societies. The old movement disintegrated, as the Left split from the old parties and set up new parties. This is how PL was formed.

In those days Mao explained how a Communist Party could easily "change color" and become a

38 Peruvian National Planning Institute, in Bejar, *ibid*, page 27

fascist party. All it needed to do was promote pro-capitalist policies and abandon the mass line. This would cause it to change class position and turn it from being a workers' party to being a capitalist fascist party.

The Cultural Revolution carried the process of defining what a communist party should stand for a step further. The communist rebels who destroyed the old Chinese Communist Party, because it was turning fascist, wanted to replace it with a communist party that stood for egalitarianism, no money relations, no buying or selling of labor power or of anything else, planned production of those goods and services which working people needed, the mass line in politics, culture, education and health care, and democratic centralism. This is what the PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY stands for.

Now along comes the SHINING PATH, endlessly quoting Mao's words, while consistently opposing their meaning. Despite what

they may think about themselves, or say about themselves, what are they actually up to?

The SHINING PATH themselves tell us they are trying to lead a new bourgeois revolution to set up centralized state control over a bourgeois economy. They don't believe you can carry out communist revolution. Their political theory is to be guided by the authoritarian cult of the all-knowing Leader, not practicing democratic centralism based on the mass line. In fact, their only interest in the masses is to mobilize them to support the Leader's orders. They explain to us why it is not so bad to be implicitly racist, but already they are a little explicitly racist.

Our experience as communists already has taught us that there is no way any working class can benefit from this program. This is not the shining path to communism.

By B. T.

IT'S NAZIS vs NAZIS IN YUGOSLAV CIVIL WAR



Serb prisoners of war in Bosnia giving the Nazi salute on orders from their Croatian captors.

While the whole world watches the bloody conflict among the peoples of Yugoslavia with justifiable horror, the western media, the U.N., European political institutions and western military experts are at a loss to explain fully the roots and the nature of the conflict. The warring parties (in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone at least a half a dozen heavily armed groups are fighting each other and murdering civilians) are set on prolonging the slaughter. But all of them, as well as western imperialist powers, agree that 45 years of "communism" and "communist repression" in Yugoslavia caused the current civil wars.

Contrary to this ideological portrayal by the imperialist powers and their servants, this essay will argue that it wasn't communism but the *lack* of communism led directly to the disintegration of the country and the bloodshed. The essay will focus on the role of the Communist Party of

Yugoslavia (later renamed "The Yugoslav League of Communists") which successfully led the fight against the Nazis during World War II and won power in the country. However, after seizing power, the party, at first gradually and then with accelerating speed, abandoned its revolutionary role and paved the way to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the restoration of capitalism in its most ferocious form — Nazism. Although the current international situation — the rampage of the extreme right throughout the world — certainly helped both the disintegration of the country and the upsurge of Nazism, the Yugoslav League of Communists with its reformist and revisionist policies on ethnic and economic issues bears the main responsibility for what the West refuses to recognize as a civil war between competing groups of Nazis. The historical analysis of the mistakes which the Yugoslav communists made, frequently with the best intentions, should serve as a lesson and a warning for communists and the radical Left around the world.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A brief historical overview of Yugoslavia and its peoples provides a necessary introduction to an analysis of The Yugoslav League of Communists's role in post-World War II Yugoslavia. History contradicts the wide-spread belief, pro-

moted by the western capitalist press, about supposed "centuries old animosities" among the Yugoslav peoples.

The country encompasses an area of roughly half the size of California. It is home to over 23 million people. Depending on who is counting it can be said that the peoples of Yugoslavia consist of at least six major ethnic groups. In Tito's Yugoslavia all these ethnic groups, except for the Yugoslav Albanians, used to be called "nations." These groups speak at least four (some would have it five) different languages, and are influenced by three major religions (Catholicism, Christian Orthodox and Muslim). These peoples lived in six relatively autonomous republics/states (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia) and two autonomous provinces within Serbia (Kosovo and Vojvodina) whose rights in the federal parliament equaled the republics'. Generally the republic/state borders did not follow ethnic divisions.

Throughout history, different conquerors occupied large portions of the land for periods of time that stretched from several years to several centuries. From the Middle Ages, when some ethnic groups had their independent kingdoms, until the nineteenth century when Serbia and Montenegro established their own kingdoms after the deterioration

of the Ottoman Empire, Yugoslav peoples lived subjugated by their more powerful European and Asian neighbors. The upper, mostly feudal, classes adopted the customs and languages of the conquerors in return for a share of power, while the peasantry and the nascent working class lived in abject poverty.

In 1918, after the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, representatives of the old empire's south slavic ethnic groups (today's Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) travelled to Belgrade to accept the Serbian King and form a new country named "The Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs." This later was renamed "The Kingdom of Yugoslavia." With the formation of the Kingdom the peasants and workers had their foreign exploiters replaced by domestic ones — the newly emerging capitalists.

Inside the kingdom the workers started to organize under the influence of the Bolshevik revolution. The new communist party competed against various nationalist parties, and was so successful in bourgeois elections in the late 1920s that the king imposed a dictatorship, banning political parties. Throughout the 1930s the communists were regrouping in an attempt to organize despite their illegal circumstances, and Tito emerged as their leader. After participating in the Spanish

Civil War the communists were the only political force in the old Yugoslavia trying to warn and educate people about the threat of fascism.

In 1941, when Hitler's war campaigns were well under way throughout Europe, Duke Pavle (ruling in place of the still underage heir to the throne, Peter) signed a pact with Hitler and his allies. The people, organized by several thousand communists, opposed the pact with demonstrations in the major cities. The young Peter assumed the throne and renounced the pact. The Axis invaded Yugoslavia from all sides, and defeated the king's army in a few weeks. The royal court fled to England, leaving behind small bands of the king's elite soldiers (called "chetnicks") supposedly to fight the Nazis. The fascist conquering powers divided the country into quisling states that had varying degrees of independence. One of the most infamous was the "Independent Republic of Croatia" (NDH), which emulated the Nazi ideology. It organized a variety of death camps for the mass executions of Serbs (primarily), Jews, Communists and Gypsies. The victims of the biggest camp, Jasenovac in Croatia, numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

In the summer of 1941 Tito's communists started to organize an insurrection throughout Yugoslavia. The communists were

joined by anti-fascist workers, peasants, students and intellectuals to form a multi-ethnic partisan force based in the countryside, which worked in unison with communist and communist-youth guerilla groups inside the cities. From the winter of 1942 on, in the hills of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia the partisans controlled liberated territories which, combined, were the size of Switzerland. Throughout World War II Hitler was forced to keep 37 divisions in Yugoslavia unsuccessfully trying to eradicate the partisans.

The king's "chetnicks" were at first willing to co-operate with the partisans, but dissatisfied with Tito's communism, they sold themselves to the Nazis. Throughout the war they were responsible for some of the most atrocious slaughter of civilians, although they never operated death camps. In addition to these forces, among the various ethnic groups the fascists and nationalists organized other anti-communist bands.

By 1943 Tito's partisan army was so numerous that even the British and Americans had to accept his fighters as the only viable anti-fascist force in Yugoslavia. In December of 1943 Tito laid the foundations of a new post-World War II Yugoslavia — Yugoslavia was to emerge as a federal republic in which all ethnic groups would have equal rights. The so-

cio-economic make-up of the country was to be decided after the war. Since the founders of the partisans and their leader Tito were the communists, after they expelled all foreign invaders in 1945 and defeated the mostly fascist anti-communist groups inside the country, the communists had no difficulties in winning elections in 1946 and gaining power.

In conclusion, the Yugoslav peoples were always an interesting and lucrative target of imperialist powers. The communists were the only force in this geographical area which managed to escape the pitfalls of extreme nationalism. Except for the World War II slaughters organized by local nationalists and fascists supported and encouraged by the Nazis, the Yugoslav peoples never waged wars against each other on any major scale, but instead they lived peacefully together and intermarried.

ETHNIC QUESTIONS

The injustices perpetuated in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia caused it to be nicknamed "the prison-house of peoples." In order to avoid these injustices Tito's Yugoslav League of Communists tried to establish a balance between the various ethnic groups in the new Yugoslavia. Instead of putting up an effective fight for internationalism, which in Yugoslavia would have meant a fight for a "Yugoslav nationality," the party unfortu-

nately pandered to various nationalisms.

Tito's insistence on the ethnic balance is comparable to current ideas of "multi-culturalism." His policies managed to prevent one ethnic group from dominating another in any significant degree (despite the recent accusations of various Nazis to the contrary.) Unfortunately this solution to the ethnic question prevented the forging of a united, communist Yugoslav working class.

Recently the nationalists in all parts of the country have claimed that Tito's communists favored "Yugoslavs" over the distinct ethnic groups. In fact, the official communist party policy towards "Yugoslavs" was full of contradictions. Since marriages between different ethnic groups were increasingly commonplace (not just in major cities which all had extremely diverse populations, but even in more traditional rural areas), an increasing number of people considered their ethnic background simply "Yugoslav." Nowadays, it is difficult to find, for example, a Croatian family that doesn't have a Serbian relative. (Of course, in the present situation few Croatian families will boast of or even admit to that fact.) According to the last reliable census, held in 1981, people who considered themselves as "Yugoslavs" or of undecided ethnic background run well over two million (10% of the overall popu-

lation and greater or equal in number to some of the major ethnic groups—Montenegrians, Slovenians and Albanians).

Although the communists did not discourage intermarriages, the party ideologues never quite agreed whether "Yugoslavs" fulfill the criteria for a "nation." (Remember that in Yugoslavia "nation" is a term used for a major ethnic group.) The main problem was language. "Yugoslavs" spoke different languages depending on the republic/state in which they resided. A common language, however, was considered one of the primary requirements for "nationhood." Therefore, officially the term "Yugoslav" was reserved for defining citizenship, while the ethnic background of the people who declared themselves "Yugoslavs" was recorded as "undecided."

In the early to mid-1970s, the controversy around "Yugoslav" was so great that Tito made a public appearance to state that his ethnic background is also "Yugoslav." (The mainstream press continues to conveniently forget this fact—Tito's mother was a Slovene and his father was a Croat; he was raised in Croatia and after World War II resided in Serbia). To show the confusion the whole issue was wrapped up in, Tito stated that people's feelings had to be respected no matter what the party's theory was, and that census takers had to record "Yugoslav" as a



How
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choice for ethnic background even though that choice was to be later ignored, since "Yugoslav" was statistically lumped with "undecided."

The half-hearted measures towards "Yugoslavs" put a damper on breaking down ethnic divisions. If ethnic divisions had been effectively broken down, this would have certainly slowed down if not prevented the recent popularity of various breeds of Nazi ideologies all over the country that directly led to the break-up of Yugoslavia and to bloody civil wars.

And even more importantly, the communist party's obsession with

rehashing the "ethnic question" led Tito's communists to ignore the important "class question" (see the next section). If the Yugoslav League of Communists had built a communist society by destroying class differences, Yugoslav workers and peasants would now be aware of their common class destiny and wouldn't be that easily fooled into slaughtering their equally poor and unemployed brothers and sisters of different ethnic background.

ECONOMY AND CLASS

Despite the highly charged "ethnic question," the economy is the most important reason for the current Nazi victory and the re-

sulting civil war in Yugoslavia. From the early 1950s on Tito's communists attempted to establish their own version of socialism. Instead of breaking up the class structure of the society and destroying the capitalist economic relations, Yugoslav socialism promoted development of a so-called workers' "self-management" inside a society still divided by class barriers and inside an economy based on the primary importance of money. Yugoslav communists also failed to see that the integration of the country into the international capitalist and financial markets would bankrupt the country and bring the full restoration of capitalism.

Claiming they were following Marx's idea of the "free association of producers," Tito's party did not establish legal collective public ownership of the factories and land. Instead they were declared legally the property of the particular workers who worked in them and the communities that depended on them for their economic survival. The workers did not own shares, but they were supposed to have a legal right to participate in decisions about production, distribution and profits. Companies were to compete in the market without the influence of the state and the party. Small private ventures were allowed, as well as private ownership of the smaller parcels of land.

Although promoted as an effort to bring greater freedom to the workers, the policy of "self-management," like any claim of "self-determination" under capitalism, could not be fully executed since class divisions were not destroyed and the economy was based on money. At the very best, such a policy could only result in workers being managed by a capitalist market, and "managing" their own exploitation. In this situation, the so-called "self-managed" workers were easily manipulated by management and politicians who were becoming a new capitalist class in socialist Yugoslavia. Local party bosses insisted on building up their own empires, without regard to the usefulness or even possible profitability of the ventures they were creating. For example, every province had to have its own sugar factory or oil refinery, despite the inability of the economy to provide enough sugar beets or crude oil for the full operation of these companies. The losses of one factory were covered either by the profits from another more successful company under the pretense of "workers' solidarity" or, more commonly, by foreign loans. The former solution pitted workers against other workers while the latter one made Yugoslavia more and more dependent on western foreign powers.

While many Yugoslav companies successfully competed in the in-

ternational capitalist markets because of low Yugoslav wages (especially construction companies, the textile industry and furniture makers), foreign loans created the bubble of "Yugoslav prosperity." Since Tito's resistance to the Soviet bloc endeared Yugoslavia to the western imperialist powers, they were always ready to provide the country with innumerable loans—which Yugoslavs took hastily and used unwisely.

Under these economic policies for a brief time Yugoslavs in general had quite a high standard of living. During the sixties and seventies shortages were unheard of. Yugoslavs had cars, refrigerators, TVs, washing machines, and other modern amenities. Food was always plentiful and relatively cheap.

In the late 1980s, just before the break-up of the country accelerated, various nationalist parties, as well as "reformed" communists (who nowadays call themselves "socialists,") unanimously blamed the policy of "self-management" for the failure of the Yugoslav economy. The truth lies somewhere else. The Yugoslav economy collapsed not because Tito's communists actually brought about true workers' self-management in place of traditional capitalist economic policies, but rather because the policy of "self-management" did not break with capitalism. Economies that do not completely break

with capitalism will eventually be swallowed by international imperialism. Because of their flirtation with capitalism from the start of the revolution, the idea of "self-management" could not be executed, if by this we mean workers' control of production — Marx never intended the workers' "free association of producers" to be in a capitalist economy! — and Yugoslav communists enabled the capitalist ideology and its worst incarnation, Nazism, to capture the minds and lives of Yugoslav peoples—workers, peasants, students and intellectuals.

BANKRUPT IDEOLOGY AND THE 1980's CRISIS

Hand in hand with the unfortunate and compromised ethnic and economic policies went the Yugoslav communist party's openness towards capitalist ideology and consumerism. Instead of promoting revolutionary consciousness and spirit, the Yugoslav communists mistakenly believed that the people will support socialism automatically if they are living well, so the communists put very little effort into the education of the youth and their own members.

By the late 1970s anybody could become a member of the communist party — the party's membership swelled to over 3 million people (almost half of the active work force in Yugoslavia), but unfortunately only a few of them

were committed to communist revolution. The communist party increasingly accused its more revolutionary members of "ultra-leftism" and "anarchism." (The most famous incident is the case, around 1968, of young intellectuals gathered around the magazine "Praxis" who criticized the bureaucratization of the party and society and demanded radical change.) Afraid of "enemies," the party leaders promoted the most mediocre cadre, those who were willing to blindly toe the leaders' line. Many progressive members left the party. A few stayed on hoping to fight for change from within the party.

In spite of these problems, Tito himself was widely admired and beloved inside and outside the party throughout Yugoslavia. Although the current Nazis desperately want to rewrite especially that part of Yugoslav history, on May 4, 1980, when Tito died, the whole country went into mourning for days. Tito and his co-workers thought they had designed a political system that would allow the country's ethnic groups to continue living peacefully together. This system, however, proved cumbersome and bureaucratized. But, more than its political system, what finally finished off Yugoslavia was its foreign debt.

By the early eighties it was obvious that the country's economy could barely pay the interest on

the loans from the West, and the West was unwilling to postpone the payments. Yugoslav officials undertook a series of "reforms" that made the situation worse: all the "reforms" aimed at ending "self-management" by centralizing control of the companies' foreign currency profits in government hands. Numerous corrupt and criminal financial deals were suddenly revealed. The culprits were either nowhere to be found or protected by the party bureaucratic apparatus. Products that required foreign raw materials were suddenly scarce. The general population experienced for the first time since the war a considerable decline in its standard of living. The inflation rate was steadily climbing. Shortages of gas, coffee, detergents and even staples like cooking oil were repeated through the years. Dissatisfaction broiled among the people of Yugoslavia for a decade.

Since the communist party had abandoned its revolutionary role as the ideological avantgarde, and since Yugoslavia was more or less integrated in the international capitalists markets, capitalist ideologies found easy prey among the peoples of Yugoslavia, increasingly irritated by economic misfortunes. In the mid-eighties the most popular show on TV was *Dynasty*. Workers finished their shifts early to hurry home and see the Carringtons, whose lifestyle was thought to be accessible to every-

body in the West. The plight of African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Latin-Americans, the homeless, farm workers and workers in American factories were rarely portrayed in the American movies devoutly watched by Yugoslavs. If somebody pointed out these problems, people said that he or she was toeing the out-dated communist line. Yugoslavs wanted VCRs, PCs, CDs, and Carrington's mansions. They accepted all western capitalist propaganda about the importance of commodities for people's happiness. Unfortunately the "communist" officials were leading the way.

MILOSEVIC AND THE NAZIS

In the mid-80s, with its economic policies in shambles and with its bankrupt ideology, the Yugoslav League of Communists split in two factions: the "hard-line" Serbians and Montenegrins and the "reformist" Slovenians and Croats. Bosnia and Herzegovina's and Macedonia's parties were in the middle. Although these two factions at first seemed radically different, they both later supported extreme nationalism in their respective republics/states.

Slobodan (the name means "Free") Milosevic rose through the ranks of the Serbian communist party in the mid-80s. He completely ignored Tito's tradition and he is known to never mention

Tito's name. His rise to power was due first, to the dissatisfaction of Serbian workers and peasants with the old communist party bureaucratized apparatus, a dissatisfaction which he exploited in a demagogic fashion; and second, to the Albanian separatist movement in Kosovo which he mercilessly crushed in the late eighties and used to stir up Serbian nationalism.

The Albanian separatist movement started in the early 80s; the number of Albanians, the only non-slavic major ethnic group, rose steadily during the post-World War II period due partially to the high birth rate, disproportionate to the other ethnic groups in Yugoslavia, and partially to immigration from Albania. Despite the Yugoslav communists' professed attempts to carefully balance the interests of ethnic groups, Albanians in Yugoslavia were shortchanged. They had an autonomous province within Serbia (Kosovo), but not their own republic/state as did the other major ethnic groups. They suffered as victims of racism: because their language is different from Slavic languages and their skin complexion is a shade darker in comparison to other Yugoslavs. They lived in the most underdeveloped area of the country in poverty unknown to other Yugoslavs. Sporadic, mostly unsuccessful, attempts were made to help out the economic development of

Kosovo, but unemployment continued to run rampant. These conditions provided the basis for the separatist movement.

The movement was held at bay during the middle eighties by the Yugoslav army and the special federal police force. The communist party leaders did not address the poverty and justified grievances of Albanians. This, in turn, led to the entrenchment of the Albanian separatists.

Milosevic continuously talked about Yugoslav unity, but for him this was an effective code for Serbian nationalism: he was promising to bring Kosovo back to Serbia. With the blessings of the politicians from other Yugoslav republics/states, who did not know what to do with Kosovo's economic and ethnic problems, in 1989 Kosovo was stripped of its autonomy and lost its parliament and constitutional laws. Milosevic's next step was to brutally attack Albanians with the Serbian police force. Albanian schools and the university were closed and Albanians were fired from their jobs. Other Yugoslavs watched, rarely expressing any outrage.

Although then officially a leader of Serbian communists, Milosevic's behavior towards Kosovo revealed that despite his use of left-wing rhetoric his practices are those of an extremely opportunistic nationalist who will

do anything to gain and preserve power. (Around the time he ordered the police attack on Albanian workers he promised striking Serbian workers that nobody would ever have the right to beat them — only to turn his police loose against Serbian workers during the 1991 spring demonstrations in Belgrade.) Now Milosevic and his newly rechristened "Socialist" party co-operate with the various Serbian Nazi extremists — the most well-known of whom are Seselj's "chetniks."

The Yugoslav League of Communists, long stripped of its revolutionary spirit, provided the vehicle for Milosevic's fascist career. The last party congress, in December, 1989, ended with the disintegration of the Yugoslav communist party, as the Slovenian and Croatian delegations walked out and set themselves up as independent parties. Now both parties co-operate with the Nazis. The disintegration of the Yugoslav League of Communists left the stage open for the rise of other nationalist parties throughout the country and the ensuing civil wars.

The economic crisis not only opened the doors wide for capitalist ideology but also to its even more fearsome companion, Nazism. After World War II, the various Yugoslav Nazis tried to run from Tito's partisans. In May, 1945 the partisans managed to encircle a couple of thousand of the mostly

Croatian "ustashi," a vicious group who were responsible for running death camps during the war. They were trying to escape with a German Army Group. They were quickly court martialed and executed. Now the "democratic" government of newly independent Croatia has honored these war criminals "as fighters for free Croatia." It also renamed the "Square of the Victims of Fascism" in Zagreb (the site of the biggest Nazi torture prison) as the "Square of Croatian Kings."

Yugoslav Nazis fled to many western countries (Germany, Australia, and the U.S.) where they were welcomed for their anti-communism in spite of the governments' official support for Tito because of his anti-Sovietism. Throughout the post-World War II decades these "freedom fighters" attempted many, mostly unsuccessful, terrorist attacks against Yugoslavia. Yugoslav emigrant communities world-wide were under the strong influence of these extreme nationalists. Since Yugoslav economic policies did not advocate, much less produce, full employment, many young people left the country for the West and came under the influence of these extremists. Now they have returned home, and in various ethnic militias they have free reign to put their fascist beliefs into practice. The most famous of them is Arkan, a criminal on the Interpol wanted list, who is leader of one of

the most infamous bands of the present-day chetnicks, who continue their World War II practices of cutting the throats of their victims. The West continues to claim to be shocked by the savage practices of these fascist "freedom fighters" whom they secretly supplied and supported for decades under the pretense of fighting communism.

BLOODSHED

Faced with great domestic dissatisfaction and with the Yugoslav party dissolved, the Slovenian and Croatian communist party leaders hoped that multi-party elections might enable them to stay in power. They hurried to drop the word "communist" from their names. But the elections held in both republics in the spring of 1990 resulted in victory for the extreme nationalists ("Demos" in Slovenia and "HDZ" in Croatia) who advocated separatist programs. The other republics followed the Slovenian and Croatian examples. Even Milosevic held multi-party elections and changed his party's name to "Socialist."

The newly elected presidents of the republics then started to negotiate about the future of Yugoslavia. The negotiations were mostly a sham. The participants attended the meetings because the West was yet unwilling to accept the disintegration of Yugoslavia). The Presidents of Croatia

and Slovenia wanted unconditional separation (under the pretense of a confederation), Milosevic and the President of Montenegro claimed that they wanted a federal Yugoslavia (Milosevic in fact wanted a centralized country dominated by the Serbians), while the Bosnian and Herzegovinian and Macedonian heads of state seemed truly puzzled. A year of negotiation ended with Slovenia's and Croatia's decisions to conduct referendums in the Spring of 1991 supposedly to let the people make their own choices. However, the people were never given any explanation of their options and the questions to be voted on were misleadingly worded: the citizens of Croatia were literally asked whether they were for the "Croatian" proposal or for the "Serbian" proposal.

Meanwhile the nationalists further destroyed the economy. General privatization began. The workers were stripped of any rights. Unemployment started running rampant. Religion started to play its old reactionary role. Medical care was cut. Women's rights taken away. The nationalists in all republics were preparing for a military confrontation. The new nationalist Croatian constitution does not consider the Serbian population in Croatia to be a constitutive element of Croatia, so the large Serbian population in Croatia, by the Summer of 1990, had started

to rebel, and demanded separation from Croatia.

The Croatian government and its officials, have for months demanded concentration camps for Croatian Serbs (in the fashion of World War II camps for Japanese-Americans) They support a Croatian independent state in southern Bosnia. Their fighters are modern-day "ustashi" with all of their fascist paraphernalia (including swastikas) and Nazi ideology. Milosevic's approach to the various bands of chetnicks and their "ethnic cleansing" practices (that includes the cutting of throats and the forcible expulsions of the non-Serbian population) reveals that his populism only thinly veils his own brand of Nazism. The Bosnian government cannot be that easily categorized. Bosnians are certainly responsible for some despicable practices—the just relieved commander of the UN troops, McKenzie, accused both Serbians and Bosnians of shelling their own sides in order to provoke the collapse of the cease-fires— but the Bosnian government still claims that it represents all ethnic groups. However, it lost the trust of the majority of its Serbian population when it declared its independence. The relationship between the Muslim Slavs and Croats is at best tenuous; Izetbegovic, the president of Bosnia and Herzegovina, naively trusts Tudjman to respect Bosnian inde-

pendence although he knows that Croatian nationalists claim that Muslim Slavs are "Croats of different faith."

All ethnic wars are exceedingly monstrous, with civilians always fair targets. The Muslims are already killing Serbian civilians in rural areas to the extent their weapons allow. They would certainly engage in ethnic slaughter on a mass scale if they receive more weapons, as the Croats have already done to their own minority population. (During the most heated months of the war between Croatia and Serbia, evidence was found that both sides committed massacres of civilians). The situation in Serbian prison camps is certainly despicable; the Croats and the Bosnians also have their own prison camps where atrocities are alleged to have occurred.

CONCLUSIONS

From the very start of the conflict in Yugoslavia the Western imperialists proved unable to offer any help to the Yugoslav peoples. First, they advocated the unity of Yugoslavia while banning the use of force to preserve it. Then they rushed to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia and later of Bosnia and Herzegovina, although it was obvious that the recognitions will only accelerate the civil war. At first they blamed all sides equally, but then they started turning the whole

Serbian population into monsters — and that policy only strengthened Milosevic and other Serbian extremists at home. The West is gearing up for military action against Serbians because Milosevic is still labeled as "communist," although already in Kosovo he proved to be instead an extreme nationalist obsessed with power. Claiming to support humanitarian causes, the West will get involved in the Yugoslavian conflict because of its own selfish reasons: Germany sees Yugoslavs as its sphere of influence, France and Great Britain fear the rise of German influence inside the European Community. The United States wants to preserve its position in the "new world order." Bush also faces the real possibility of losing the elections and is trying to score points on foreign policy issues.

Western military involvement will only prolong the warfare in Yugoslavia. Faced with foreign aggression the civilians will only strengthen their support of the extreme nationalist leaders because the extremists are the only organized political force left in the former Yugoslav republics. The prolonged warfare in Yugoslavia and foreign military intervention can easily lead to the spread of war beyond former Yugoslav borders to Greece, Albania etc. as well as potentially provoke WW III. If war spreads, Russia, Greece and even France, have his-

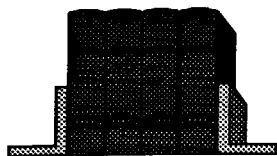
torical and strategical reasons for siding with Serbia, while Germany and Austria are totally in the Croatian camp. The U.S. and Great Britain are vacillating over which side it is in their best interest to support, although their government and media propaganda is certainly slanted against Serbia. The continued widening of the conflict is the most likely occurrence, despite the frantic rounds of peace talks and conferences.

Despite the involvement of the imperialist forces, the peoples of Yugoslavia could have continued living peacefully together, only if the Yugoslav League of Communists did not long ago abandon its revolutionary role of leading workers, peasants, students and intellectuals of all ethnic backgrounds towards the true communist revolution instead of towards bourgeois capitalist reforms. By 1989 not only was the promise of communist society unattainable for them, but it was already too

late even to preserve the country's unity. The insanity of ethnic war was inevitable. The lesson is that it is impossible to negotiate with the Nazis. They have to be stopped from the very start. Allowing them "democratic freedoms" leads directly to bloodshed.

Unfortunately, the Yugoslav example is by no means exceptional. Many multi-ethnic eastern European countries face a similar future. After the collapse of Communist Party rule the power is in the hands of extreme nationalism. The ethnic wars postpone the workers' realization that international capitalism can bring them only trouble: extreme unemployment, the lack of medical care and neo-colonialism. Only a true communist revolution, absorbing the painful lessons of past history, can bring hope, peace and prosperity to people of all ethnic origins.

By C.Y.



Red Reads

THE RISE AND FALL OF A COMMUNIST-LED MASS MOVEMENT

Robin D.G. Kelley

Hammer and Hoe:

**Alabama Communists During the
Great Depression**

(The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

WHY STUDY HISTORY?

For those of us committed to building a revolutionary movement today, one reason is to learn about the successes and failures of others who have tried in the past. Our plans, activities, ideas - in short, our "line" - is not a catechism found in ancient texts but continuously grows out of an analysis of the struggles of oppressed people. This includes not only our own direct experience but also historical experience. Another reason for studying history is that it can be a source of inspiration. At a time when the international working class is in retreat; when cynicism, passivity and individuality appear to be the response to the ever-increasing brutality and decay of a capitalist

world, reading about oppressed peoples and a communist party succeeding in doing many of the things we are trying to do is inspiring.

Along these lines, *Hammer and Hoe* proves to be an interesting, useful and, in many ways, uplifting historical work. In this carefully documented book (200 pages of text and 100 pages of footnotes), Kelley chronicles the history of the Communist Party (CP) in Alabama from 1929 to 1941. Alabama around 1930 was a hell-hole of capitalism. Racism and fascism ruled the land. Lynchings of black youth by the KKK were almost a weekly occurrence (35 reported lynchings in one year). Shootings of black men by cops were seldom reported despite being widespread and sound much like the shootings that occur today. For black workers, Birmingham's mines and mills had become industrial monsters with inhuman working conditions and near starvation wages. Black workers made up

55% of Alabama coal miners and 65% of its iron and steel workers. Overall, 90% of Birmingham's unskilled labor force were black, constituting one of the largest black urban communities in the south. In addition to the urban population, the black rural population existed as "sharecroppers", property-less workers whose lives and incomes were at the mercy of white landowners. The sharecroppers existed in a world which made the poverty-stricken streets of Birmingham look like a paradise.

Before 1929 the CP did no political work in the south. Late in the year of 1929 the Party sent three white veteran organizers from the north to Birmingham. By August, 1930 the original cadre of three had grown to over 90. Over 500 working people populated the Party's mass organizations, of whom 80-90% were black. By 1933, the CP dues-paying membership in Birmingham alone rose to 500 and 3,000 people that year went to a May Day demonstration in Birmingham. They were met by cops who arrested and beat many of them. By 1934, 5,000 came to May Day.

WHAT WERE THE KEYS TO THE PARTY'S GROWTH?

Essentially, three approaches were used: 1) grass-roots organizing with a multi-issue, multi-com-

munity focus; 2) militant and many times violent tactics in protesting injustices; and 3) teaching cadre the principles of Marxism. In terms of building grass-roots movements, organizing the unemployed was the key to the Party's growth in the early 30's. In addition, mass organizations grew around industrial organizing in the city and building the Sharecroppers Union (SCU) in the country-side. The history of these organization is punctuated by violence perpetuated by the cops and the KKK. Organizers and members of their families were beaten, jailed and killed during this period. The black community fought back, many times successfully, using both face-to-face self-defense as well as evasive, cunning forms of resistance.

A large number of organizations were built by the CP in response to the different needs and issues of different groups. The organization, however, that began to eclipse all other established black organizations was the International Labor Defense (ILD). The ILD offered free legal council and active public support for those many black workers framed and railroaded by the southern "justice" system. The movement grew enormously around the Scottsboro case. In 1931, nine black men, ages 13 to 29, were accused of rape. Although no evidence of rape was introduced by the prosecution, the "Scottsboro

boys" were tried, convicted and sentenced to death within three days by an all-white jury. In defending this and other similar cases, the ILD grew to 3,000 members by 1934. Under CP leadership, black and white activists in the ILD asserted themselves as defenders of the black community's basic civil constitutional rights and thus entered a realm of political practice usually considered the preserve of the black bourgeoisie or liberal interracial movements. The ILD was not just one additional voice speaking out on behalf of poor blacks; it was a movement composed of poor blacks.

Of equal if not greater importance than its grass-roots organizing was the educational and ideological impact the CP made on many of its new black members and their base. The movement built in Alabama in the years between 1930 and 1935 was not made of intellectuals or veteran labor organizers but of poor blacks with no previous experience in the radical movements. The CP offered more than a vehicle for social and economic contestation; it offered an ideological framework for understanding the world and challenging other ideologies, most importantly the ruling and all-encompassing ideology of white supremacy and the petite bourgeois politics of the black middle class. Above all, the CP's educational policy created

an atmosphere in which ordinary people could analyze, discuss and criticize the society in which they lived.

The Party's version of Marxist education taught poor blacks to connect their own lives to struggles throughout the world, and the Party's economic theories provided explanations for a number of phenomena, including the roots of poverty, wealth, and racism. But blacks also found within these study groups a source of pride, for after all, many were now receiving what white society had too often denied them - an education. John Garner, a semiliterate coal miner who gave up sharecropping in Bullock county for the Birmingham mines, recalled that one of the main reasons for joining the Party and remaining a Communist for so long was the education it gave him. (His membership lasted over half a century).

Black Communists fortunate enough to study at the "Workers School" in New York, or in some cases at the Lenin School in Moscow, found the experience tantamount to obtaining a diploma of sorts and returned to Alabama proudly exhibiting their newly acquired knowledge. In 1934, Hosea Hudson - who was illiterate at the time - along with two other Communists "rode the rails" to New York in the dead of winter to attend a ten-week course at the Workers School. Hudson re-

turned a changed man: "I felt like I'm somebody....I'm talking about political economy, about the society itself, how it automatically would breed war and fascism. I'm discussing about the danger of imperialist war."....Hudson often shared his knowledge with non-Party people, using as his forum the customary social habitat of black males: "I'd be discussing socialism in the barber shop...We'd start the conversation off, then we'd talk about socialism, and how the workers conditions would be improved under socialism...They'd sit down there and wouldn't no one ask no questions, wouldn't interrupt what I'm saying. They wanted to see what I had to tell. (pg. 94-95)

By 1934-35 the CP in Alabama had reached the height of its powers. The Communist-led rank-and-file committees in the mines and factories were infused with new recruits, the ILD was on the verge of overshadowing established black middle-class organizations, e.g. the NAACP, and the SCU had ballooned to six thousand members.

THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

The demise of the CP in general has been analyzed in many PL articles and Kelley's detailed history of the Alabama CP in the period 1935-41 confirms our critique of the CP. In summary, in response to the rise of Hitler in Germany

and the growing threat of fascism in Europe, the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern in 1935 promoted broad-based coalition politics that would incorporate liberals and leftists of nearly every stripe, including anti-Communists - the Popular Front. Following this line, the CP in Alabama abandoned its militant grass-roots organizing and Party building. Within a few years the membership in the Alabama CP had fallen dramatically. In their commitment to building mass organizations, the CP leadership forgot about its commitment to building the CP. Their alliance with southern liberals, pure trade union work in the CIO and retreat from working class militancy led to a collapse of the many organizations they had built in the early 30's and a decline in black Party membership.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM HAMMER & HOE?

Most importantly, the CP seems to have done some of its best organizing when it fought against racism. We also learn how a few CP organizers planted the seeds of Marxism among a semi-literate oppressed black population with no radical background (although a rich history of spontaneous rebellion and protest). Along with bold, courageous organizing, the CP in Alabama quickly grew into a mass movement. Poor black workers and sharecroppers

joined the CP and May Day marches with thousands took place in the center of a racist and fascist south.

So can *HAMMER & HOE* be recommended without qualification as an inspiring chronicle of Communist organizing? Not at all. As should be evident in this review, not a single sentence about revolution can be found in the entire book. Kelly's hatred for the racist and fascist system carefully stops short of the need for the violent destruction of capitalism which breeds the very horrible conditions he depicts so vividly. No-

where in his editorializing about the need for mass, militant anti-racist struggles is there the slightest hint that the working class could or should seize power and build a new society free of wages and the racism it engenders. Here is classic revisionism - a "Marxist" line devoid of revolution. Perhaps the most important lesson we can learn from Kelley's book is that the failure to build a revolutionary Party quickly led to the bankruptcy and collapse of the working class movements.

By H. L.

'TWO NATIONS'...TOO RACIST

Andrew Hacker

TWO NATIONS: black and white, separate, hostile, unequal
Scribner's, 257 pp, 1992

"The space between the covers of this book is too wide," was Ambrose Bierce's complete review of a book he didn't like. He wasn't referring to Andrew Hacker's *Two Nations*, but had he lived into our age to review it, he might have also added that the mind behind the ideas in this book is far too narrow.

Bierce was an abolitionist who nearly lost his life as a volunteer in

the Union Army; he was a practicing political scientist whose last years were spent with Pancho Villa's troops during the Mexican Revolution. Hacker is a life-long liberal, an armchair political scientist at Queens College; his name itself embodies his role as a hack whose last years are being spent spinning sociopathic myths. In an interview with Lynn Karpen (*New York Times Book Review*, March 8, 1992, p 24), he discloses only some of the isolation, ignorance, and egotism that inform his book:

People don't often ask themselves what it means to be white...It's taken for granted. They don't often ask

themselves what it's like to see if they have their sight—only if it's taken away. What, then, would it mean to have our whiteness taken away?...Of course, there's a black culture, a whole black literature, that must be left to others. This book is written by a white person, but at least I am prepared to tell you, just as I do with my black students, this is what America really thinks about you.

Does he know how stupid is his premise that being white is worth everything? Can he really claim to be the omniscient pale voice telling the real truth to an unknowing dark audience? One wonders in what wise ways this great white master has fought against racism and for multi-racial unity at Queens College these past 20 years that have seen the rise and fall of Open Admissions!

To judge from the enthusiasm of the book-jacket endorsements, the childlike cheers from *New York Times* heroes like Tom Wicker on the front page of the *Sunday Book Review* (March 8, 1992) and Sam Roberts in the *Metro Matters Column* (March 16, 1992), the US ruling class would like nothing better than to guarantee that the title of this book become a self-fulfilling prophecy in order to mask their responsibility for racism. Not accidentally, just two weeks after the Los Angeles uprising, a full-page ad appeared in the *Times* quoting Claude Brown, author of *Manchild in the Promised Land*, endorsing *Two Nations* in big, bold

type as "The most candid book on American racism to be written in the 20th century." This lie fits the contorted character of the book it helps to sell and insults the memory Dr. W.E.B. DuBois whose landmark work *The Souls of Black Folk* indeed appeared in the 20th Century (1903) and introduced one of the most candid comments on racism into the vernacular: "The problem of the 20th Century is the problem of the color line."

As his subtitle implies, Hacker would not disagree with the letter of this statement, but he is not in harmony with the spirit of the DuBois dictum. In fact, the older DuBois got, the more of a class—rather than a narrowly racial—analysis he was to embrace, even joining the Communist Party toward the end of his long life. And even in early works like *The Souls of Black Folk*, he doesn't come close to Hacker's broad-brush approach of blaming racism on some phantom collective called "most white people." "Still, the unhappy fact remains," in Hacker's sourceless opinion "that most white people believe that, compared with other races, persons with African ancestries are more likely to carry primitive traits in their genes" [pp 23-24].

Not only are "most white people" now Jensenists and Schockleyites, according to Hacker, but they are the ones—not the capitalist ruling class, not the President, not the Congress, not the

Supreme Court, not the Police Force—responsible for all the racist inequity and injustice visited on African-Americans and discussed throughout his book: “But white Americans, who both grant and impose racial memberships, show little inclination toward giving full nationality to the descendants of African slaves” [p 15]. In New York City where the good professor lives and works, “the poverty rates rose most sharply for whites, nearly doubling from 1979 to 1990” (*New York Times*, June 10, 1992, p B3). “White Americans,” so-called, have no power “to grant and impose” themselves a job, much less give “full nationality” to anyone!

I am not a racist myself, Hacker holds; on the contrary, I am generalizing and detailing and quantifying the horrors of being black in America, he tells all his readers. I am your friend; it is other whites who are your enemy, he tells his black readers. Hacker personally doesn't blame the victim; rather his study depicts, usually very accurately, the depth and breadth of African-American victimization in the USA of today. It is his *ad nauseum*, nationalist misidentification of the victimizer as White America that sickens the honest reader in touch with the class nature of reality. Spike Lee should buy the movie rights to this book!

Not every reviewer has spewed forth preposterous praise for this

unreadable book, though, which is replete with other idiotic insights:

If the European heritage imposes the regimens of standardized tests, the African dream inspires discursive storytelling celebrating the soul and the spirit. (p 14)

So all Euro-Americans can succeed in exams, while all Afro-Americans can dream and tell stories.

...to be black is to be consigned to the margins of American life. It is because of this that no white American, including those who insist that opportunities exist for persons of every race, would change places with even the most successful black American. All white Americans realize that their skin comprises an inestimable asset. It opens doors and facilitates freedom of movement. It serves as a shield from insult and harassment. Indeed, having been born white can be taken as a sign: your preferment is both ordained and deserved. Its value persists not because a white appearance automatically brings success and status, since there are no such guarantees. What it does ensure is that you will not be regarded as *black*, a security which is worth so much that no one who has it has ever given it away. (p 60)

Do we have a choice! How many homeless men and women have warmed themselves with the “inestimable asset,” the “security,” of their shivering white skin! And though they be cold, homeless, and unemployed, white workers

are nevertheless among the oppressors if Herr Hacker is to be believed:

No matter how degraded their lives, white people are still allowed to believe that they possess the blood, the genes, the patrimony of superiority. No matter what happens, they can never become ‘black’. White Americans of all classes have found it comforting to preserve blacks as a subordinate caste: a presence, which despite all its pain and problems, still provides whites with some solace in a stressful world. (p 217)

Can this warped depiction of a fanatic KKKer as the average white American have any credence outside the deep cushions of Professor Andrew Hacker's armchair? Pity his poor students who surely can find no solace in the “stressful world” of his classroom.

Jim Sleeper, writing in the *Fanfare* section of *Newsday* (March 15, 1992, p 33), is not afraid to describe the nakedness of this academic emperor:

In its strange mix of exhaustive documentation, arch moralism and muddled thinking about blacks' and whites' actual experiences, *Two Nations* represents a mindset, profoundly offensive to most whites and insufferably patronizing to blacks, that is widely shared among liberal elites of a certain age, widely disseminated and terribly destructive. Call it white liberal guilt run wild; it begins by denouncing whites and ends by belittling blacks. Because it is so

deeply entrenched, we can expect that *Two Nations* will be warmly received.

And with minor exceptions like the above, the ruling class press has outdone one another in heaping praise for this trash because it perpetuates what Professor Benjamin DeMott of Amherst College has called “The Myth of Classlessness” (*New York Times*, October 10, 1990, p A23):

This country is in shackles, its thought, character and public policy locked in distortion and lies. The deceit stands at the root of Federal and state budgetary chaos and corrodes every aspect of national life. It causes the chief executive to expatiate on the defense of ‘our life style’—*our* life style—as though the way of life of the privileged were universal. And that obliviousness is but a minor symptom of a vast, countrywide self-deception...Several hallowed concepts—*independence, individualism, choice*—are woven into the web of illusion and self-deception. But presiding over the whole is the icon of classlessness.

Only an intellectual who worships this icon—who is ignorant of the existence of classes—could finish this book. When Professor Hacker refers over and over again to “whites” and “white people” and attributes to them the vilest of racist opinions and feelings, he is actually slandering the white working class. And he counts on the anti-working class assumptions of his readers because—de-

spite the presence of pages and pages of statistics and footnotes—he never cites any sources for his most atrocious conclusions.

Almost every page of this book contains the phrases “whites this” and “Americans that.” So the reader may be hoodwinked by his many other, cited statistics regarding objective, quantifiable facts into also accepting as fact Hacker’s distorted views on how “most whites” must think. And his racist portrait of the average white worker would embarrass Archie Bunker!

At the most visible level, growing numbers of white people are expressing misgivings over how black people are conducting themselves. Along with complaining about welfare dependency and violent crime, more and more whites have come out against preferential programs, and increasingly condemn blacks for casting their race as victims who have no control over their condition. In the same vein, white Americans are franker to admit their support for racial barriers, all the while denying that they have gained any advantages because they are white. More typically, they describe themselves as bystanders, who must watch while their country is held hostage by a demanding minority. In their view, the behavior of blacks is a major explanation for what ails America. (p 201)

Of course, if Hacker’s collective picture were true, then the divisions, hostilities, and inequalities that do exist in the working class could never be overcome; racism

with all its attendant misery for workers and profits for bosses would always be with us; and communist revolution which requires multiracial equality and unity would forever remain a fantasy.

One more example out of hundreds will have to suffice. On page 214 of *Two Nations*, Hacker comes to the following conclusion entirely without any sources even though the preceding and following pages are crammed with referenced statements:

...few white Americans feel an obligation to make further sacrifices on behalf of the nation’s black minority. They see themselves as already overtaxed; feel the fault is not theirs; and that money cannot achieve a cure. About the only funding the public approves is for more police and prisons.

How interesting that Hacker would have us believe that there is all-class unity on the question of government spending as if workers and bosses agree we need more prisons and cops and less programs for minorities. By the way, he knows as well as does the *New York Times* (March 12, 1992, p B1) that the percentage of white inmates (64.9%) in prisons nationwide is more than double that of black inmates (32.5%) but to say so wouldn’t further his myth-making. Thus he asserts with no backup material whatsoever that the so-called “public”—or all whites in his scheme of misinfor-

mation—“is for more police and prisons.” Yet, according to the front-page statements expressed in the *New York Times*/CBS News Poll (May 11, 1992, p A1), “Los Angeles Riots Are a Warning...U.S Must Face Racial and Urban Problems”:

Majorities of both whites and blacks said investing in jobs and job training programs was a better way of preventing future turmoil than strengthening the police forces.

So Hacker’s is a book better burned than read, worth reading

By Z. D.

THE POLITICS OF HEROIN

Alfred W. McCoy
**THE POLITICS OF HEROIN:
 CIA Complicity in the
 Global Drug Trade**
 Lawrence Hill Books, 1991

There is no honor among thieves. That’s what the old adage says. Since the greatest crooks in all the world are the capitalists who rule it, we shouldn’t be surprised that the US bosses make deals with drug dealers all over the world in order to defend their financial interests.

Alfred W. McCoy’s revised edition of *The Politics of Heroin: CIA Complicity in the Global Drug Trade*

only if you’re prepared to go out and organize against the racist, anti-working class ideology it represents. It is being pushed by the ruling class because it incites race war. PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY reviews it only to asphyxiate its ideology and fuel the fires of class war. Building working-class unity in order to make the communist revolution that would forever outlaw racist careers such as Hacker’s and forever ban anti-proletarian propaganda like *Two Nations* is the best read his book could get.

is a thoroughly documented study of the U.S. government’s role in the international drug trade. McCoy convincingly argues that covert U.S. government operations over the last forty years have consistently involved, included and supported big time drug dealers, and that anti-communism has been their most common excuse.

When Dr. Frankenstein created his monster he was unaware of its destructive power. When Harry Truman created the CIA he and the other U.S. bosses knew just what they wanted. The CIA grew from the petri dish in Washington’s laboratory of anti-communism in 1947 and immediately began to do business with Corsi-

can gangsters in Marseilles, France.

McCoy explains that after World War II in Marseilles, "Communist leaders could no longer hold back the discontent of the rank and file." Militant workers were ready to strike and close down the docks. Marseilles, of course, was an essential port in the U.S. bosses' Marshall Plan. Many U.S. exports were to pass through Marseilles on their way to the war-devastated European continent. In Marseilles and throughout France wildcat strikes erupted in Mid-November, 1947, bringing the French economy to a virtual standstill. The U.S. bosses, who had a desperate hunger for control and influence, sent the CIA in to break the strikes. They used their lackeys in the French Socialist Party and right-wing gangsters as a battering ram to bust the picket lines.

Another CIA ally in the fight against the French working class was the American Federation of Labor's President, George Meany. The CIA, through the AFL, pumped two million dollars a year into the pockets of the anti-Communist labor leaders in Europe. Through its contacts in the Socialist Party, the CIA supplied arms and money to Corsican syndicate leaders for assaults on Communists picket lines and attacks on union officials. The gangsters continued their alliance with the Socialists for 20 years, acting as

bodyguards and campaign workers for Socialist Party candidates.

By 1965 these same Corsican gangsters were the United States' main heroin suppliers. The money and support they received from the Socialists and the CIA helped them to secure their hold on crime in Marseilles and to establish heroin laboratories that linked the opium of Turkey with the streets of New York.

According to McCoy, opium was first discovered and grown in Neolithic times. It first is mentioned in Greek medical documents of the fifth century BC. McCoy uncovers that opium was originally cultivated in the Mediterranean area, and that by the eighth century AD it had made its way along Asia's trade routes to India and China. However, until the 16 century, opium was used mostly for medicinal purposes. What changed opium from a medicinal drug to a high-priced addictive commodity was the arrival of the European sea trade with Asia. The Asians had little desire for European goods, but Asian textiles, and spices commanded a big price in Europe. The trading captains of Europe saw opium as a way to make profits off the Asian goods without having to invest their gold and silver. By 1681 the drug was a basic trading commodity. By the 18 century the British East India Company established an opium monopoly in their Indian colony, and for the next 130 years they

exported opium to China., defying Chinese anti-drug laws, and fighting two drug wars to keep the Chinese market open. By 1900 China had 13.5 million addicts doing up to 39,000 tons of opium. In 1907, when the British abandoned the drug trade, opium was a global commodity just like coffee, tea or tobacco.

McCoy's extensive research traces the growth of the drug trade all through Southeast Asia and through the world market. To try to summarize each step of this process would take up too much space. In short, McCoy proves that the opium trade—and later the heroin trade—is, and has been a big bucks business, one that brings together many legal and illegal capitalist crooks in worship of the bottom line.

McCoy argues that drug crop cultivation has "three requirements: finance, logistics and politics." Such was the case in Burma where in the 1950's expansion of the drug crop "required CIA air logistics, Thai military support and Taiwanese capital."

McCoy points out that "the DEA remains unwilling to challenge the CIA when any of the CIA's covert operations becomes involved in the drug trade."

In Southeast Asia, for example, the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics (which was replaced by the DEA) opened its first office in Bangkok with just three agents in the late

1960s. This was more than a decade after a major CIA covert operation—backed by several hundred agents and a fleet of aircraft—had installed a 12,000 man opium army in the mountains of northern Burma. While a handful of drug agents worked out of lowland drug smugglers, the CIA's massive covert apparatus had been operating in the opium highlands, allied with the very drug lords that the U.S. narcotics agents were trying to arrest.

The CIA was also complicit in addicting many U.S. soldiers in Vietnam to heroin. The Hmong tribesmen who were battling the Laotian Communists used the CIA's Air America to pick up opium from scattered villages so that it could be processed in laboratories in the Golden Triangle and sold to U.S. troops.

McCoy traces CIA involvement in the drug trade up to and including deals with the Contras in Nicaragua. The book is difficult to read at points, mostly because of the density and documentation of his research. But the information it provides is extremely useful. It justifies all the suspicions you ever had about drugs and the CIA. But brilliant scholarship aside, missy's solutions are quite lame. He recommends drug regulation—which would include education and treatment, cooperation with UN. Narcotics agents and reform of the CIA—to control the drug trade. It seems hard to believe that

he can really mean this, after just proving that drugs have been a major source of profit for the bosses for close to four hundred years.

Like nationalism, racism, sexism and imperialist war, drug addiction is part of capitalist social and economic relations. Communist revolution will end the economic incentive for drug supply, but the

emotional damage inflicted on those who are addicts will not disappear when their drug of choice is removed from the market. This will be a long process, one that will take commitment to internal and external development of communist social relations, patience, time and struggle.

By Rutgers Red

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