

Introducing Crossroads

As you look over this first issue of *Crossroads*, you are bound to wonder at some point—and with some reason—whether the left really needs another magazine. We think the answer is that the left, around the world and in the U.S., needs all the help it can

get. If *Crossroads* can make a dent in the disunity and confusion that plagues the left, and make a contribution to overcoming our political isolation and powerlessness, then the effort being invested in this new monthly will have been well worth it.

We are launching this project because we think that a thorough, candid assessment of new realities, international and domestic, has become imperative. A jolt of fresh thinking is indispensable for developing effective strategies in the battle against the injustices that are devastating our communities and the perils that threaten the very survival of the human race.

And we believe this task cannot be accomplished by any single group or tendency on the U.S. left. It requires a genuine cross-fertilization of ideas and a cooperative effort. *Crossroads* has no intention, no illusion, of doing this work alone; but we are determined to help get it done.

Events of the watershed year 1989 have driven these points home with a vengeance. Political arrangements which were entrenched for decades—along with the theoretical systems which explained and justified them—have been radically altered, or have completely collapsed. The changes are not limited to the Cold War's rather abrupt conclusion or to the upheavals and crises gripping the countries that have tried to build socialism, though these are the most spectacular and world-shaking of the transformations underway. Within the U.S., there have been deep-going changes in political economy, the shape of the working class, the conditions faced by communities of color, and the cultural production that saturates popular consciousness.

U.S. capitalism continues to spawn misery here and around the world, and the fight against it is as pressing as ever. But the terrain of battle has undergone tremendous change. If the left is to break out of its current marginal status in U.S. political life, we need a

theoretical, strategic and practical overhaul. The goal is not the formulation of yet another "correct line"; the goal is achieving enough of a grasp of reality to develop a serious relationship with the masses of people who actually do make history.

The magnitude of this task makes exchange of ideas and practical cooperation among the left's diverse tendencies essential. The questions we face are too big, and each strand of the existing left too small, for answers to come from one source alone. We truly do face a new situation, whose contours do not fit into the framework propounded by any existing left current. New syntheses and assessments are required, which will draw upon contributions from diverse sources through dialogue and debate—with no forbidden zones.

CROSSROADS' VOICE

These ideas are not unique to those of us starting *Crossroads*, and this publication is hardly the only vehicle to take up the discussion at hand. This is all to the good. We look forward to a cooperative relationship with other institutions and organizations working to strengthen the left and progressive movement. Our goal is not to compete with other publications, but to add additional resources and another voice to the process of sorting things out.

We will attempt to make that voice partisan as well as probing. We don't plan to flinch from straight talk about the depth of the problems in the existing models of socialism, but we're not in any mood to let capitalism off the hook, either. We believe that the left's analytic efforts must be closely connected to practical involvement in mass struggles, and believe that the most important "new thinking" we must engage in is thinking that fosters meaningful political action rooted in this country's realities.

Of course, we're hardly starting from scratch in the search for more effective strategies. Many lessons are to be drawn from the Rainbow movement that has been the most vital driving force of U.S. progressive politics over the last decade. A host of struggles stretching back decades show us

See You In September

This initial issue of *Crossroads* is a "pilot," timed so we can spend the summer gathering feedback, summing up, and preparing to go on a monthly schedule in the fall. Send us your criticisms and suggestions, and watch for our first regular issue this coming September.

that no durable radical movement can be constructed unless anti-racism, internationalism and a thoroughgoing commitment to democracy are built into it from the ground up. And even though many tenets long considered sacred principles of Marxism are up for re-examination, *Crossroads* editors are convinced that a revitalized Marxism will prove indispensable for reconstructing a relevant left.

Crossroads is initiated mainly by the staffs of two previously existing publications, *Frontline* newspaper and *North Star Review* magazine. Also involved are many individuals not associated with either of these groupings, but who share the vision of a dialogue toward a more united left. Beyond the editors collective, a working advisory council is in formation which will provide input from activists with diverse perspectives and a range of practical experience. *Crossroads* also begins with a core of supporters committed to finding ways to use the publication to stimulate discussion and debate through forums, discussion groups and other means.

We are optimistic about *Crossroads* prospects, our enthusiasm buoyed by the increasingly open climate taking hold in broad sectors of the U.S. left. We have assembled the political and human resources to get *Crossroads* off the ground (though we could use some serious help with money—see our fund appeal across from page 40). What we need next, and what we need most, is to obtain feedback from the people who read this pilot issue. Send us your criticisms and suggestions—and we'll see you in September when we begin regular monthly publication. ■

Crossroads Advisory Council

To obtain regular input from a broad range of left activists in shaping this new publication, *Crossroads* has established an advisory council for the magazine. Over 50 activists with diverse perspectives and experiences will be participating in this body (see list on the adjoining page).

The goal is to institutionalize the link between *Crossroads* and the heartening process of dialogue which is currently underway on the U.S. left. We hope to convene the advisory council periodically, roughly twice a year, to evaluate the magazine and discuss developments on the U.S. left. We'll be reporting on the progress of this aspect of *Crossroads* in future issues.